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Mrs. S. Chitra

Research scholar

Government college of Arts and Science, (Autonomous)

Coimbatore, Tamilnadu, India.

chitrakaran85@gmail.com

Dr. G. Bhuvaneswari,

Guide, Asst. Professor,

Government College of Arts and Science, (Autonomous)

Coimbatore, Tamilnadu, India.

CLL – A Collaborative Way of Mastering the Target Language for Tribal Children.

Abstract

The article “CLL – A COLLABORATIVE WAY OF MASTERING THE TARGET LANGUAGE FOR TRIBAL CHILDREN” mainly focusses on the language education of the tribes. It spotlights the introduction of the target language to the students of multi-cultural and multi-lingual background and it compares the span of language acquisition of tribal children with urban and rural school children. The article also aims at mastering the competences of the target language through merging of COMMUNITY LANGUAGE LEARNING method with ACTIVE LEARNING METHODOLOGY (ALM) such that the students get a richer experience of the new language.

Background

India is a country of varied culture with spectacular features. It is the responsibility of each citizen to preserve the tradition and culture of all communities without neglecting their practices and customs. In order to maintain a balanced society, all the people of our country irrespective of caste, creed and community should get an equal opportunity in all fields such as education, medicine, trade, media etc... Because of the increased globalization, educators are pushed indirectly to introduce a foreign language especially English at the primary and secondary levels of education. Few countries like India, Pakistan, Singapore etc. has a foreign language (English) as their second official language so as to compete with the global scenario of trade, commerce, education, defense and health. Here a major question arises...! Does all the children in the country has mastered the second official language? The answer is almost NO. The children belonging to urban region and most of the rural children have no great problem in acquiring the language when compared to the children of the tribes. Because tribal people firmly attach to their customs and culture and will never come out to mingle with the society. However they are also the part of the education system and those people also should be educated to survive in this competitive world. Therefore the teaching methodologies should be modified in a way that even the children from the nook and corner of the country should acquire and master the target language.

Exposure of the Language.

Normally, the students of the primary classes have a greater influence of their mother tongue in English classes. Since English is a non-native language, the children have an artificial fear of learning the new language and its concepts. This is fear is very much higher in tribal children when compared to children of urban and rural areas. Because these children are not exposed to the language in any way whereas the urban and rural children have a

greater exposure to the language. Even there is a large difference in language acquisition. So the first and foremost duty of the language teacher is to expose the language to the children through various communicative activities and creating different interactive situations so that the fear of learning the new language may be eradicated.

Community Language Learning:

The tribal people belonging to Tamilnadu uses dual language for their communication. The first is their mother language and the second is the Tamil language. So when these children enter into the school and are exposed to the third language i.e. English, they are in a higher state of confusion and hesitate to come forward which at last results in drop-out. In order to put an end to this problem, Community Language Learning proves to be a good method in introducing the language concepts to the students of multi-lingual background. Because the learners are the active participants in this method and the role of the teacher is just a facilitator. The teacher simply guides the students with various activities. In CLL, the students are divided into groups and the learning occurs within the group. Each group acts like a community and the students take their own responsibility as the community members. A sense of belongingness is created within the community and the children doesn't hesitate to participate in the group activities.

CLL and ALM.

Active Learning Methodology – An interactive and innovative method followed by the schools of Tamilnadu and the Community language learning can be merged together to acquire language at a faster rate. Before introducing the language concepts through these methodologies, the teacher or the facilitator should keep in mind about the following points.

- The students will have a greater influence of the mother tongue in the language classes.
- The students are never exposed to the target language in their society since most of the parents are not educated and illiterates.
- Fear of learning a new language with the students.
- Fear about mistakes.
- Fear of handling the language in the society.

Stages of Learning:

Stage 1: (Introduction)

As a first stage of learning, a free conversation is open to the group, where the students discuss about various concepts related to the lesson. Mostly the conversation takes place in their mother tongue and here comes the role of the teacher as a translator. The teacher translates most of the frequently used words into the target language.

Stage 2: (Not confident to little confident.)

As the learners gain little confidence, they try to work in pairs within the group and here comes the Active Learning Methodology where the children tries to find out the new words and their meanings.

Stage 3: (Mind mapping)

When mind mapping is introduced by the teacher, the students feel free to express their views about the topic. Even at this stage, the children are influenced by their mother tongue and takes a little effort to use the target language in the discussion.

Stage 4: (Evaluation)

During the evaluation process, the learners tries to rectify their mistakes and even the criticism of the teacher is not affected because the confidence level of the students become higher at this stage.

Stage 5: (Reinforcement and Remedial teaching)

At this stage, a strong reinforcement and remedial teaching of the language elements makes the students to acquire certain language skills and continuous practice of the target language leads to the reduction of mother tongue influence in the language classes.

Activities That Can Be Integrated With CLL.

- Translation
- Small group discussion
- Free conversation
- Quiz
- Imitation
- Debate
- Role-play
- Language games (e.g.: messenger and scribe)

Some suggestopedic activities like One Word Dialogue can also be integrated with CLL to enhance mastery of the target language.

Span of Acquisition of the Target Language.

A sample study was conducted in three government schools and the span of acquisition of the children were identified. The schools taken for the study were:

<u>S.no</u>	<u>Name of the School</u>	<u>Type of area</u>
1.	Panchayat union middle school, Housing unit.	Urban
2.	Panchayat union middle school, Bettathapuram.	Rural
3.	Panchayat union middle school, Dhoomanur.	Tribal

A small passage from an external resource was dictated to the students and their listening and speaking skills were analyzed. The students were asked to discuss about the paragraph and below are the results obtained after observing the students.

S.no	Name of the school	Type of area	Listens to the Paragraph	Understands the meaning	Reproduces the paragraph
1.	Panchayat union middle school, Housing unit.	Urban	7/10	7/10	6/10
2.	Panchayat union middle school, Bettathapuram.	Rural	7/10	5/10	5/10
3.	Panchayat union middle school, Dhoomanur.	Tribal	5/10	2/10	Nil

The above study reveals that the span of acquisition of the language is very less than the children from the Urban and rural areas. So the normal teaching methods will never have a greater influence on the children with respect to foreign language teaching and hence introducing and integrating the Community Language Learning method with the current teaching method will surely have a greater impact of mastering the target language and its basic skills.

Conclusion

Tribes, the gift of nature are also a part this society and educating these tribes is very much necessary in this current scenario. Language is the greatest problem faced by these children when they mingle in the society and that barrier should be broken by the educators/teachers through innovative methods. CLL is one such interactive method which ensures the active learning and practicing of the target language such that the students who are ignorant is now a little proficient in their second language learning.

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