

Evolving a Communicative Module for the Underprivileged First- Generation Undergraduate Students of Pollachi Region

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Abstract

English as a widely spoken language is marked by its global appeal and communicative reach. It is uniquely positioned to simultaneously equip learners with cultural capital and expressive finesse. The language teacher becomes central to structuring innovative pedagogic methodologies through which students engage with English as a process of second language acquisition. The teacher's role is defined by the ability to facilitate comprehension, foster conceptual understanding, encourage openness to discussions and help students grasp the crux of information. This article foregrounds the importance of learning a second language by

analysing the socio-cultural context of students from across a diverse social spectrum in the region of Pollachi. The learning module is specifically designed to meet students' career needs while also opening newer avenues for professional development. In addition, this paper examines the Communicative Basic English in select feeder schools focusing on the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills of the underprivileged first-generation undergraduate students.

Keywords: English Language Teaching, Communicative English, College Level Education, Lesson Module, Undergraduate, First Generation, Underprivileged Students, Pollachi.

Introduction

In India, second language acquisition plays a vital role in shaping students' professional growth. The country, renowned for its unique culture, history, and literature, places significant emphasis on the importance of affective learning through the development of communication skills. Braj Kachru, for instance, observes, in his essay 'English as an Asian Language' (1998) that, "English is the main medium in demand for acquisition of bilingualism/multilingualism in the whole Asian region" (94). The entire process of language acquisition holistically engages the learners in diverse areas such as, language fluency, cognitive development and social skills. This also encompasses the ability to pique their interest in the learning process, thereby aiding them in broadening their horizons. Second language teaching involves the formulation of complex pedagogic methodologies and is considered fundamental to effective learning. Furthermore, the teaching of a second or foreign language must be coded as an essential process of learning that promotes comprehension in knowledge acquisition. The aim of such holistic learning practices cannot be confined to or assessed solely based on the learners' expressive abilities. Rather, it should foster staunch commitment to learning without essentially undermining the learner's first language. The pedagogic process must involve aiding the learners to recognize the potential influence of the native language while simultaneously

encouraging them to develop sustained interest and proficiency in the second or foreign language.

The acquired pedagogic influence should aid learners recognize the importance of linguistic transformation and highlight the need to develop the skills required for effective language learning. By drawing upon the instances from their native language, the second language pedagogy is expected to enable the learners to familiarize themselves with the usage of the target language. This fostering of language learning demands neither high-end laboratories nor technological equipment, but an earnest commitment towards teaching and a sustained engagement in a goal-oriented learning programme. In doing so, the second language acquisition decisively contributes to students' intellectual and professional development as it is geared towards strengthening their skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Despite radical pedagogic developments and methodological innovations in the teaching of second languages, unequal access to educational resources and linguistic exposure continues to persist, particularly in the rural southern parts of the country. This article focuses on English language acquisition among underprivileged first-generation undergraduate students in the region of Pollachi and examines their interest in improving their proficiency in the foreign language. The study is based on observations conducted in select feeder schools chosen on the basis of the linguistic competency and educational background of students belonging to the aforementioned category.

Methodologies and Review of Literature

The second language learning process is marked by its dynamic nature across the primary, secondary, and higher levels of the education system. These pedagogic practices strengthen the linguistic framework through their significant contribution to the acquisition of a second language. The process is meticulously designed to enhance students' language skills and help them overcome the possible challenges they might encounter in their academic and

personal lives. Through second language acquisition, learners gain the confidence to adapt to different social and professional environments, thereby improving their career prospects and personal growth. Braj B. Kachru's observation on the emergence of the English language in *World Englishes: Agony and Ecstasy* (1996) becomes particularly relevant here:

“English continues to alter the linguistic behavior of people across the globe, and it is now the major instrument of initiating large-scale bilingualism around the world-being a bilingual now essentially means knowing English and using English as an additional language, as a language of wider communication, with one or more languages from one's region.” (138)

The methodology adopted for this research is primarily based on the observation of English language teaching and learning practices among teachers and students in select feeder schools. The study examines cultural influences and differences, awareness and usage of the second or foreign language, teaching attitudes, language learning styles, module and dictionary references, learner autonomy, and behavioural responses. The feeder schools were selected on the basis of the level of language acquisition among underprivileged first-generation undergraduate students exposed to college-level education. This study further analyses the effectiveness of curating pedagogic modules for the academic welfare and linguistic development of the students. The second language pedagogy is delicately crafted through practical training aimed at developing learners' communication skills. Such a comprehensive module is enabled so as to reinforce the significance of second language acquisition for the learner's academic, professional, and personal growth. The methods adopted in teaching the English language to first-generation graduate students in rural areas therefore require sustained commitment and consistent effort from both teachers and learners.

By establishing new learning goals, adopting innovative teaching methodologies, and employing learner-oriented approaches, language teachers can create a flexible and supportive

environment and offer quality education to learners. The observations are primarily based on practical teaching sessions in which teachers use diverse experimental pedagogic and linguistic techniques to enhance learners' aspirations, language skills, and overall development. The fundamental objective of these approaches and methodologies is directed towards strengthening the process of second or foreign language acquisition, thereby moving beyond an exclusive approach limited to native or first-language learning systems.

English Language Teaching and Learning Methods

Adequate exposure to other languages and an awareness of their importance are regarded as key factors in motivating learners to explore new opportunities that will possibly contribute to their future development. Since the teaching of a second language is primarily aimed at first-generation graduate students, the effectiveness of the learning process tends to be shaped by parental background and societal influences. The learners' attitudes towards language acquisition rely on and affected by the social, cultural, emotional and financial conditions of parents, and the prevailing social moods and adversities. As Braj B. Kachru observes in *English as an Asian Language* (1998),

“Once the importance of paradigm shift is realized, we will certainly realize the limitations of our current imported materials and colonial constructs, their limitations in terms of our multilingual and multicultural societies, and their economic ends” (104).

This can be deemed as the one of the most fundamental reasons for learners' diminishing interest and reduced engagement in learning a foreign language. In this context, the teachers are expected to aid students recognize that their own abilities can transform their lives and contribute to their career goals. Besides, language teachers must acknowledge the strengths and limitations that are consequent upon the learners' diverse social and environmental conditions. Teachers can adopt structural methodologies and pedagogic theories

to address learners' needs and evaluate their abilities and interests through questionnaires and regular evaluations. Such approaches, in turn, enable learners to think critically and engage more effectively with language learning. The practical teaching of a foreign language requires a comprehensive understanding of learners' lived experiences and the ways in which such experiences affect their mental engagement with language acquisition. An interdisciplinary approach to second language teaching would be useful in training first-generation graduate students to become confident and capable learners, thereby preparing them for their future academic and professional endeavours.

Teachers, as the primary guides for students, must adopt innovative approaches to sustain learners' attention and interest in both the practical and theoretical aspects of language learning. As Raju and Joshith opine, "Linguistic interference can lead to correct language production when the mother tongue and the target language share many linguistic features" (49). Linguistic experiments and assessments are useful in understanding and assessing students' levels of language proficiency and demonstrating how the native or first language may function as a support system in second or foreign language acquisition. Bilingual learning in the educational system becomes particularly significant during the initial stages of acquiring an additional language. However, excessive reliance on experimental methods might lead to miscommunication and a poor transmission of knowledge to learners. Thus, a lack of clear understanding, communication, and interaction can negatively affect the learning process. Ensuring a positive and inclusive learning sphere that encourages learners is therefore essential to enrich the learners' intellectual abilities; this, in turn, can assist learners in critically evaluating their own growth and understanding of the language. In this regard, Stephen D. Krashen observes in *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning* (2002):

"If aspects of aptitude relate directly to conscious language learning, while attitudinal factors generally relate to subconscious language acquisition, certain predictions should

hold true” (24).

The construction of consecutive behavioural similarities and differences among the students in relation with the process of studying by having the experimentation of practical and theoretical sessions which also focuses on the teacher’s influence among the students’ welfare more often. The cognitive linguistic way of teaching a second language relies on the sociological and psychological aspects of the process of creating a transformational method for the students to get into the systematic situations of gaining knowledge through language acquisition from theoretical to practical and vice versa. The purpose of implementing the improving platform for the acquisition of second language learning is to bring out essential needs of the learners.

Classroom Observation

Evaluating the significant role of hypothetical practices and the attempts of interference in strategic ideologies deals with the process of acquaintances learning the respective target language or second language. The students need motivation, support, acclamation, confidence in contrast to their hindrances such as stress and anxiety of facing the realistic world and they worry about the stage of being judged by the people for not having the level of perfection in their skillful education. ”The purpose of implementing classroom management strategies is to enhance prosocial behaviour and increase student academic engagement” (Suba & Nagarani 6102). The main motive of introducing the secondary language learning system for the students is to provoke the concept of producing the efficient learning methodologies and strategies in order to improve the required skills of the learners. It certainly focuses on the development of the grammatical areas through the explicit use of the linguistic languages in communication skills.

The following are a few extracts from the observation on the class handled in the feeder schools regarding the introductory basic level of English Language Teaching and Learning for the children.

For instances,

- Students were taught sounds of English letters like 'c', 'g', 't', 'd', 's', 'z' and a few more consonant sounds. A student was asked to pronounce the above-mentioned sounds and asked the other students to repeat which helps the whole class to grab the accurate sounds of a letter easily. A chart with English alphabets along with its phonetic sounds was displayed in black board and the students were asked to repeat the different phonetic sounds. Then the words like 'Man', 'Map', 'Tap' were taught with phonetic sounds which helps the students to pronounce the word in the correct sense. To enhance the students' communication they were indulged in role play and asked to communicate in English with simple sentences.
- Students were introduced to blends after the basic introduction to phonetic sounds. It means, when two or three consonant sounds are shared right, 'b' and 'l' are consonant sounds, that is, when two or more consonant sounds come together and share their sounds to make one sound, they are called blends. Are you hearing any other sounds? No, you are hearing only a little of 'b' and 'l'. For example, 'l' blends are like "bl", "cl", "fl", "gl", "pl", "sl". These are called initial blends because it comes at the beginning of the word. Students were trained to take care of their pronunciation by the teacher.
- Students were taught pronunciation of English words along with its spelling. They started to learn with two letter words and they learnt till five letter words each with alphabetic examples which helps students to remember the spelling accuracy as well. Also, they were given care in pronunciation individually.

- two letter words - at, be, do, go, if, etc.
- three letter words - air, dog, hot, ink, pen, etc.
- four letter words - cake, eyes, lamp, name, rich, etc.
- five letter words - dairy, happy, laugh, paint, zebra, etc.

These strategies of phonetics understanding can improve the interest and the learners also indulge themselves in contributing their part as a skillful student in the acquisition of learning the second language as an objective essential in their daily life.

“Strategies are linking the concepts to stand on their stature in the communication, which also breaks communication disruptions. There are many possibilities when alternative approaches connect with language classrooms. It provides the flow of consistency to maintain the target language competency” (Meenambal & Meenakshi 1962).

The success of this part of attaining the second language acquisition, that is, target language can be analysed by the input given by the teacher and output given by the student during the examining process. It clearly proves the need for the teaching methodologies and the practises might differ from person to person due to the circumstantial growth of their life, and the discussions can create an innovative style of learning in different ways of dealing with the factual acquisition of learning the language. It proves that communication is the key factor in the learning process of a second language and it can be quite helpful in many ways of acquiring the importance of producing the communicative role of the learners in discussion sessions with the teachers. They can be in several ways like following many practices that are easily accessible in everyday life. The natural way of gaining knowledge not only depends on the learning of grammar and its uses in the second language, it is also based on the acquisition level of other sources related to language and the main notion will be competing with the

existence of the linguistic qualities and the level of acquired the further areas in the second or foreign or target language.

English for the Underprivileged First Generation Undergraduate Students

The existing practices of learning the second language in the primary and higher level of education has the same analytical development of the welfare of the students regarding the acquisition of the respective language and its betterment. There are several traditional methods in the teaching process of the foreign language and these existing ones are basically helpful only for the initial period of learning the language. The methodologies are mostly based on the improvement of grammatical skills and the contexts are widely connected with the first or native language by learning with the help of a bilingual method of acquiring the other language. There are other methods like direct method and silent method where the role of native language is quite passive and mostly the language is taught in a straight-forward manner along with the situational and strategic approaches in handling the growth of language learning acquisition among the students. The other practices include the usages and purposes of having the approaches related to the physical activities and the help of audio-visual aids. This helps in attracting the attention of the students to focus on the importance of the pictorial and audio formational aspects of acquiring the second language. There are a few more approaches and methodologies used in the learning process of second language acquisition such as the importance of the communication skills and the other important listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

The main notion of having such approaches is to invoke the importance of competence in the communicative processes and the growth of linguistic expression in the language outcome. The pedagogical, functional, and cognitive way of learning the language plays a vital role in the development of the other foreign languages among the learners in seeking the importance of the welfare and career growth along with the importance of understanding the

role of knowing the second language and its acquisition in their life. As Braj Kachru says about the Pedagogical Competence in 'World Englishes: Agony and Ecstasy' (1996),

“The paradigms of pedagogy (methods and materials) have yet to catch up with the new challenges that world Englishes provide. This lack is specifically noticed in the conceptualization of, for example, communicative competence, English for specific purposes (ESP), and the construction of tests of international competence in English” (142).

The linguistic competence is seen mostly in the areas of communication and cognition level of language learning in most of the areas. These traditional approaches are practically considered to be the effective way of teaching methodologies and these ways of teaching ideas and methods are recognised as the naturalistic way of treatment in the language acquisition process till date. It suggests the readers to understand the purpose of gaining the pedagogical language learning processes with the influence of the cognitive and linguistic competences in the suggestive method of learning the second language.

Conclusion

Language, as a central medium of representation, serves as a fertile site for expressing thoughts and ideas that are intricately interconnected. The core process of second language learning relies equally on students' capabilities, their engagement with learning practices, and on the innovative dimensions of the teaching process. Although methods of teaching English as a second language to first-generation graduate students have long been in practice, their effectiveness and relevance continue to require critical evaluation. Hence, the adoption of innovative approaches and techniques has indeed become the need of the hour. The present study is an attempt to redress the issue through the creation of a module designed to better assist first-generation graduate students in learning the language effectively.

“So it would be better to include the listening and speaking skills section in the first year itself, where he finds more time to grasp the basics and perfect them gradually. Besides that, Listening and Speaking skills have to be given priority than the Reading and Writing when learning any language. Since the acquisition of listening and speaking skills lays a base and leads to the other skills, inverting the order of learning may not be very fruitful.” (Kathiresan & Arulmurugan 162)

The study thus elucidates how second language acquisition necessitates the adoption of innovative approaches suiting learners’ diverse social locations. Linguistic competence, along with various theoretical approaches to language acquisition, must be emphasized through comprehensive discussion and effective pedagogic practices. The primary objective of this research is to strengthen the listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills of underprivileged first-generation undergraduate students in the region of Pollachi. The present study concludes that reading and writing skills are significantly improved through the development of listening and speaking abilities. The feeder schools follow this pedagogic principle and strategy in enriching students’ linguistic competence and language acquisition skills.

Conflict of Interest: The corresponding author, on behalf of second author, confirms that there are no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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