Strategies for English as the second language for Rural Students-A Task Based Approach

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Abstract— Today situation in colleges, students from rural areas suffered a lot for learning English as second Language Since most of the students are first generation learners, English language seems to be an alien to them. Our examination system is such that it makes students rote memorization rather than testing their analytical and creative skills. Acquisition of mother tongue is natural phenomenon but learning of secondary language can be hampered by social, cultural background and level of awareness of students. Task Based activities are set up with social situations so that students can have meaningful discussions with one another. Group work is the indispensable Task-Based Learning, this type of classroom arrangement creates a completely different atmosphere from that of a traditional teacher centered class, Task-Based Language Teaching is successful in developing the speaking skills of learners. It has been accepted as an effective Language Teaching Methodology for developing the purpose driven communicative language which is built around the use of real-world tasks. Present paper focuses on the problem of rural student by analyzing critical factors and the methodology to follow for the rural students.

Keywords— English Language, Pedagogy, Teaching methodology, Rural students, Difficulties, Learning Environment, Task Based Approach.

I. INTRODUCION

The rural students generally pursue their studies in government public schools in which the medium of instruction is their mother tongue. The teacher simply translates everything into his/her mother tongue and explains using bilingual or translation method.Though this method offers them sound knowledge in the content, it prevents them in acquiring communication abilities in English. The teacher here plays more as a translator than a genuine English teacher. There are primarily four skills involved in the English Language learning i.e., Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW).

The students from different states have been trained well enough in reading and writing. But listening and speaking skills which play a greater role in communication have been neglected and ignored. Thus, our educational system lacks on important dimension. It enables the students to concentrate on reading and writing only. The examinations evaluate them mainly on how good their memory is? Nobody can speak a language without listening to it. No child starts speaking before listening to a language for a period of time.

They relate this situation with the lack of opportunities. Students perceive English classes as a boring activity. They have this negative perception because the classes a r e focused on both grammar and translation. Most of the time, the students are asked to translate texts. Mostly, the teachers focus explanations on grammar teaching and they perceive these classes as monotonous activities. Ahmed (2013:19) states how student is unmotivated when the English teaching strategy is focused on "lecturers dealing with grammar. ". Secondly, the students perceive English as the other subject matter of curriculum. They feel that English Learning is only a requirement to advance to the next grade. While some other

students say, "English is not important because they do not have the expectations of travelling orworking abroad where English is needed". Most of them decide it's an impossible goal for them.They view economic factors and the language as their main difficulties to travel abroad.

II.   MOTIVATION

Peacock (1997) states that English learning consists of a high degree of persistence in achieving the learning task. This concept is focused on inner reasons, which are only perceived when positive attitudes of the learners appear during the learning process. In other words, motivation entails feeling as involvement, effort, persistence and enjoyment during the learning process. A motivated learner frequently looks enthusiastic and participative. Motivating them is not an easy task. In this regard four motivating strategies should be connected. They appear chained to one another. Whenthe content is based on the student's preferences, they show more attention. Additionally, the teacher can create many opportunities for their improvement. English teacher must promote settings where English teaching enhances both communicative competence and the opportunity to select the best life style. Apart from that, they have lack of motivationalso. Students do not perceive this language as a necessary tool for the future.

Motivation is an essential factor in the English Language Learning process (ELL). The more they are motivated, they will be better in their English learning. For a long time, some students request permission to go home. The absence is especially notorious in the English classes according tothe student's register. The students who attend classes are asked about this situation. Mostof them mention their lack of interest with English classes. By administering a questionnaire, the common causes of this motivation can be found out. Thus, our young students are deprived of speaking abilities because they have not been properly guided in Listening Skills. Speaking Skill can be improved in language labs. Young people are as diverse in their tastes as adults. They tend to favor entertainment – oriented content, with lively and interesting characters, informal style and language and engaging presentations. They are also naturally drawn to subjects that interest them - music, sports, style, culture, celebrities.

Task Based Language Teaching:

Task Based Language Teaching focuses on the use of authentic language The students are asked to do meaningful task using the target language. Such tasks can include visiting a doctor, conducting an interview or calling customer service for help. Assessment is primarily based on task overcome rather than on the accurate language

forms. This makes Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL)effective and for developing language fluency and confidence. As such TBLL can be considered as a branch of Communicative Language Learning (CLL). We have already suggested that vast difference in the competence of students seems to be our own creation. The socio cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students do play an important role in their linguistic skills. However, the general feeling is that such things are beyond the teacher's control. "We need not dwell too much on the home and socio-economic background of the learners" (Ramadevi2002-35).Likewise, "we need not dwelltoo much on factors like aptitude, age, previous world experience, etc. These are clearly not under the teacher control and nothing much can be done about them".

Task Based activities are set up with social situations so that students can have meaningful discussions with one another. When students use English to co-operate and interact with each other, classes are more effective according to Brown (1994). Interactive classes have the following features.

a) There are a large number of pair and group works.

b) Students engage in spontaneous and authentic conversations.

c) Students write for actual audiences and purposes and not artificial ones.

d) Task prepare students for the real world outside the classroom.

III.   GROUP WORK

Group work is the indispensable Task-Based Learning. This type of classroom arrangement creates a completely different atmosphere from that of a traditional teacher centered class. Instead of strictly controlling the students, the teacher coordinates their work. According to Brown group work creates a favorable climate for communication by relieving students of the anxiety of having to talk in front of the whole class. Brown reports miraculous changes in students who had been too shy to talk until they worked together in groups. (Brown 1994, 174).

Group work increases the speaking time

In a class... according to Bryne (1988, 31)," unless you have a very small class, you will never be able to give your students enough oral practice through whole class work." For example, if you have 30 students and 30 minutes of oral work, each student will almost have only oneminute to talk". On the other hand, if you divide your students into pairs for just five minutes,each student will get

more talking time during those five minutes than during the rest of the lesson". (Bryne 1988, 31). the Task-Based Approach was used to develop the interaction skillsof the students.

IV.   METHODOLOGY

Task-Based Approach is experimented with to students by field work, project and also by pre-test. This pre-test is based on the questionnaire that is given to the students which help the teachersto find out their needs. The students have to speak about them, describe a place or a settingand give their views on a topic in the classroom. The second stage was the intervention stagewhere the learners are asked to do certain Tasks.

Sample Tasks

Task 1: Speak about your city

Aim/ Objective – to enhance debating and discussion skills

Method:

1.   Activity A

Do you like the city? Why/Why not?

Teacher makes a list of the positive and negative comments mentioned by the pupils.

2. Activity B

The Perfect City

The class now makes a list of characteristics of a perfect city. For example, this could include clean environment with bicycle path, no smoke, sports facilities, no violence, beautiful buildings, culture, etc.

3. Activity C

Compare your city with another one you know and makes a list of the comments.

V.   CONCLUSION

The classrooms should be equipped with audio video materials. Student's talking time should be maximized. Now day's Language Lab has come into existence. It provides good opportunityfor the students to improve their knowledge. If rural students are employed with TBL the problemof learning English language can be solved. The educational system may use a combination of formal, informal and non-formal learning methods. The Task-Based Activities were successful in the classroom as those could improve interaction and speaking skills of the students to some extent. This can be observed through the response of some of the students.The following are a few examples.

- The fluency activities in the class increases the

confidence and enable the learners to realize their potential in speaking English.

- The activities really make interactions so interesting in the class and now the students perform better in English debate competitions and group discussions,

- The students are nervous in their first class but gradually they get rid of the fear and become familiar with English language, the role plays and the class survey activities which are so interesting. As a result, they learn a lot.

Apart from the descriptive views from the students, from classroom observation the student's interaction is more during the performance of tasks, which not only boosts their confidence but also enhances their speaking skills. Thus, Task-Based Language Teaching is successful in developing the speaking skills of learners. It has been accepted as an effective Language Teaching Methodology for developing the purpose driven communicative language which is built around the use of real-world tasks.

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