

'Realia'-a teaching tool to enhance 'Speaking' Skill

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Abstract - 'Realias' as a teaching tool is an effective approach in teaching speaking skill. The universal language that is widely and more popularly used by people across the globe is of course English. People are using English as a second/foreign language today for all purposes. Communicative language teaching is based on real life situation and teachers should create a classroom ambience where students have access and feasibility to 'authentic activities' and 'tasks' that promote oral communication and speaking skills. Communicative activities should involve learners in activities that give them both the desire to communicate and a purpose which involves them in a varied use of language. Such activities are vital in language classroom since the students can best use language Teaching aids and materials. Teachers need teaching aids and materials, a major prerequisite, to bolster and strengthen their teaching. 'Realia' in the English Teaching classroom refers to real objects or things that are potable to carry into the classroom: for instance: fruits, dolls, vegetables, flowers, boxes, a stone, toys etc. Use of 'Realia' helps students remember the classroom lessons lifelong since the learners are able to correlate links between the objects and lexemes or phrases they represent. In short, 'Realia' invigorates the learners' senses and encourages creativity.

Keywords: Realias, teaching, tools, speaking, authentic, objects, remember, senses, creativity.

I. INTRODUCTION

An Overview of Language

Language is a medium of communication through which human beings express their ideas, feelings and emotions to each other. It is a fundamental need that humans use to exchange meaning with one another in the society. Language is the unique possession of human beings gifted by god among all living creatures. The only distinguishing feature between animals and humans is language. Only human beings have the amazing gift of communicating with other humans by using language. Hence all languages are equally significant for possessing communicative values,

'English' for all Purposes

The universal language that is widely and more popularly used by people across the globe is of course English. People are using English as the first and common language today for all purposes. There are many roles played by English in different scenarios as it is employed for international trade and commerce, technology, education, entertainment and key aspects of social life. It is the language of success for people in local, national and international communication. Based on this principle, the truth is that anyone who does not

possess sound knowledge of communicating in English proficiently will be lagging behind in all aspects. Jespersen describes language in the following words:

"Language is not an end in itself...

it is a way of connection between souls.[1]

(1904, p.4)

Richards et al. (1999, p. 91) defines language as

"...the system of human communication which consists of the structures, arrangements of sounds for their written representation into larger units,

e.g. morphemes, words, sentences, utterances.[14]"(1999, p.91)

The opinion of varied linguists on language is a reflection that language is a complex human phenomenon and the end role of language is communication.

Skills of Language

Learning a foreign/second language is a feat that has to be learnt and mastered by each individual particularly the learners to enable them to communicate. In fact, that

foreign/second language learning class is directed to enrich students with the language skills which are the dire need of the hour. A student needs mastery of all the four language skills for speaking/communication. These receptive and productive skills of language are very essential for all students to possess expertise and gain an edge over others in English communication. A learner has to realise that within each domain skill, there is an overlapping of number of sub-skills, which reinforce one another and held in the strengthening of English speaking.

Significance of ‘Speaking’

A person’s expertise in English speaking can be judged only by the way he or she communicates. Based on from this perspective, one can assume that one of the most significant skills in the acquisition of a new language is certainly ‘Speaking for all levels of learners especially for students pursuing professional courses like MBA and ENGINEERING. Speaking is the ability to express oneself fluently in a foreign language. Despite being a complex and complicated skill, yet it involves lot of thinking and the learner should focus carefully on what is to be said. It means that using language appropriately in social interaction is the need of the hour.

Speaking in English does not merely accompany the right use of grammatical and semantic rules, employing supra-segmental features such as, pitch, stress and intonation with equal command. Non-verbal communicative elements such as ‘body language’ which includes gestures, postures, facial expression also accompany speech. Munby identifies the following sub skills of speaking.

1. Articulating sound in isolate forms,
2. Articulating sound in connected speech,
3. Manipulating variation in stress in connected speech,
4. Manipulating use of stress in connected speech,
5. Producing intonation patterns and expressing attitudinal meaning through variations in pitch, pitch range and pause (1979, p.36).

Activities for teaching ‘Speaking’

Usually a second/foreign language is taught through activities which enable the learners to interact. Communicative language teaching merged with collaborative teaching serves the best task to accomplish this goal. The approach known as Communicative Language Teaching creates a classroom environment where students have access to real life situations, authentic activities and meaningful tasks that facilitates oral communication.[6] In this methodology of teaching, students involve in tasks/activities that ensures the learners’ zeal to speak. These

activities are vital in the classroom and gives scope for them to speak efficiently. Ample research shows that speaking requires some degree of confidence unlike reading, writing and listening activities.

Realia reinforces language skills especially speaking and it appeals both visual and kinaesthetic learners of all ages. It also useful to teach vocabulary which helps to learn language. It motivates students to learn language through fun way. It also stimulates creativity and give scope to them to use their senses.

II. TEACHING AIDS AND MATERIALS

Any material to teach English/foreign languages used by the teachers to explain his/her lesson better should be based on ‘realia’[10]. Such material for teachers save time and effort and arouses interest on the part of students. Teaching aids and materials in language teaching is immense and indispensable. Along with certain approaches and methods of teaching, every teacher needs tools like realistic materials to enhance his/her teaching. All the materials can be brought to classroom alive. Visual aids such as pets, plants, geometry-box, clothes, flowers, furniture, material objects, blackboard, chalk, flannel board, flash cards, charts, realia, matchstick figures and pictures help students to focus their attention on objects, events and situations which give meaning and context[12]. They help students to remember things for a long time Students do not pay attention to what is happening in the classroom in their absence. Therefore, teaching aids and materials are very much essential in language teaching.

Varieties of choosing ‘Realia’

Teachers need not preferences in choosing teaching aids. ‘Realia’ is anything that is audible or visible which help students learn the language quickly and accurately. According to Cross (2003, p.6),

“Realia refers to the real things. It can be brought to school:

a piece of bread or fruit, a whistle, a stick, toys, eggs and so on are easily carried. They also create interest”.

Similarly, Richards et al. (1992, as cited in Smith, 1997), state that

“Realia refers to actual object and items which are brought into the classroom as examples or as aids to be talked or written about and used in teaching[12].”

The use of ‘Realia’ helps students learn English lessons and classes easily and is memorable as it creates a link between the object and the words they represent. It stimulates the learners, and is considered an encouraging method of teaching which improves creativity. Realia saves time, effort and energy of the teachers as well as learners because recognition of an object is immediate. Realia are useful for

engineering students as it fosters quick and easy learning of a language visually since the aids/tools are present before them.

Outcome of using 'Realia' as a Speaking Tool

One of the effective methods of teaching English is the use of 'realia' as an aid. This approach/ method help students learning the language with lots of interest and allow them to acquire solid knowledge and gain an edge over others in the class. Generally the realia is used to teach vocabulary, preposition, language functions and skills and so on. Some of the benefits of using realia in the language classroom are:

- arouses motivation and promotes memory power
- less cost and affordable, but very effective.
- provides structural support for novices.
- Adaptable to any teaching style classroom ambience
- good vehicle for authentic and meaningful communication
- learnt in a less time.
- Realia can dispel the monotony of practice work by creating variety

III. CONCLUSION

The effectiveness of 'realias' in teaching English shows that using real objects certainly plays a key role in enhancing congenial and effective learning. Realias' as a teaching tool is an effective approach in teaching speaking skill. Students can improve their communication skills if teacher uses appropriate realia. It is also a gate way to learn speaking skill. If Realia is authentic, it creates interest in students to learn language and it motivates them to participate in various speaking activities. So it instructed to all teachers and facilitators of English Language Teaching to implement the use of Realia as an aid/approach in the classroom teaching to make the learners proficient and masters of English speaking

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