

The Present English Curriculum

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Abstract: *The present status of English in India today, symbolizes people's aspirations for quality in education and a fuller participation in national and foreign life. Thus, challenges before teachers and the students, in present day ELT are highlighted and the way in which students could put their learning into practice in day-to-day use to fulfill their practical demands through effective communication skills apart from gaining command over English language is being discussed. The paper also deals with pragmatic way of teaching English language in the present curriculum, apart from conventional teaching and learning.*

Keywords:

Pragmatics: *The branch of linguistics dealing with language in use and the contexts in which it is used, including such matters as deixis, the taking of turns in conversation, text organization, presupposition, and implicature.*

Communicative Language Teaching: *It is an approach to language teaching that emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of study.*

Soft Skills: *It is a term often associated with a person's "EQ" (Emotional Intelligence Quotient), the cluster of personality traits, social graces, communication, language, personal habits, friendliness, and optimism that characterize relationships with other people.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The objective of this research paper is to present the existing gap between university education and job requirements in India and to suggest the means of bridging them. Private agencies look for excellence and their "hire and fire" temperament keeps the young newly-graduated professionals always on their toes, until these graduates land firmly somewhere in an area where their expertise is duly valued, and needed. Methodologies are not universal, and Indian contexts are distinct. At present, international companies are fast emerging in the Indian job market. The paper focuses on some of the vital needs for survival and success with English language interview skills.

The syllabi that universities design do not fulfil the demands of the industry. There is a mismatch between the outdated contents/materials in the syllabus. The focus of this paper is on the changes to be brought in the syllabi and the need of the hour related to the communicative approach of teaching. In Communicative Language Teaching method drilling is a must; any device which helps the learners is accepted- varying according to age, interest, etc. Attempts to communicate may be encouraged from the very beginning. Communicative competence should be the desired goal. Students need to interact with other people, either in the flesh, through pair and group work, or in their writings according to Finacchiaro and Brumfit (1983: 91-3). The need of the hour is contextualized teaching, to seek comprehensible pronunciation and the ability to use the linguistic system effectively and appropriately. Fluency and acceptability are the primary needs. There is definitely a need to bridge the gap between need and demand. How can this be achieved? In India, there has been an explosion of institutions in street corners growing up with tempting posters, promising a lot to prospective participants. Can a programme from an unskilled and inexperienced instructor perform marvels in this delicate matter of choosing a career? What are the expectations of the present day job market? How to prepare the aspiring youngsters? Whose job is this?

I being the former employee of Frankfinn Institute of Air Hostess Training and working as a Manager at Ahmednagar branch visited most of the colleges in and around Ahmednagar. The company had formulated a few standards of selecting candidates for the training in Aviation, Hospitality and Travel industries. The company never compromised on physical measurements, presentability and language skills of candidates. The day we visited any college for a Career Seminar there were hundreds of

aspirants who would walk in. But the selection used to be just 10 to 20%. Why? Is it that the students don't fit in measurement criteria or are not beautiful? The answer is in negative. It is just the language skill that they lack in. Who is to be blamed? The students who are at the mercy of teachers? Or the whole management and method of imparting knowledge? It is a serious problem and needs perfect and careful handling. In my 12 yrs of teaching experience in various premier institutions like Ahmednagar College, National Defence Academy, ICFAI National College, Frankfinn, I have noticed and practiced the professional approach to teaching of English which happened to be need based. The officers of Armed Forces use English for professional and social purposes. English taught to the cadets at NDA is for specific purpose so as to make them stand before their superiors and converse. In ICFAI the Soft Skills are taught to the management students to make them eligible and effective at their work place. The subscribed syllabi whether at NDA or at ICFAI were student-specific and as per the requirements of the Armed Forces and corporate sector.

When the student comes out of the college after the completion of his/her Degree s/he has to tread his/her way alone and it's only when s/he gets through Group Discussion and Personal Interview s/he is employed. It is a subsequent thought process that in what way the syllabus in the colleges is contributing to students' career. These days in India there is a particular need to ensure that young graduates and PGs excel in 'GDs and PIs' ('Group Discussions and Personal Interviews'). This is the reason why good interviewing skills in English (both for an interviewer and an interviewee) in India of the 21st century are crucial. However, it is also commonly known that when these students enter in final year of their studies, and go to work placements, it turns out that they are unable to manage interacting in English for professional contexts or for the workplace.

Good manners, pleasing personality, effective communication, decision making, stability in behaviour, ability to think outside the context are some of the aspects to be focused upon. The problem does not lie with the students, it is the studying environment, class room teaching, teaching approaches and understanding the current demands of the work force which needs to be catered to. The employers demand professionalism in each and every aspect of behaviour and approach of the employee. And who are the employees they are your own students whom you as teachers mould. Thus, considering the present scenario, itself suggests that Pragmatic approach is required to teach the students of rural areas where the exposure to the outside world of employment needs to be given. The students require the need based education so that they don't lag behind while competing with the urban lot to get the best of the jobs. There is enough potential in rural students, they are financially capable of doing extra courses for better jobs. It is just the language competency that they lack in. And it is the professional responsibility of a teacher to make his students competent in each and every field he or she wants to venture in.

2. CONCLUSION

To sum up, Pragmatics comes as a final touch after the learning of language. As it is an Art of Speaking. First and foremost the task is to teach the students English language and further the ways it has to be spoken. There is a great need to change the approach of teaching the language in a smart way (i.e. Pragmatic way) using thorough practical method of teaching executing confidence building, role-plays, creating a corporate atmosphere using modern aids of teaching, making the students computer savvy, grooming, personality development lectures, social etiquettes, interview techniques, need to incorporated in teaching of English language.

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K. Shabana Swarnakanth, is a Post graduate in English with an M Phil. She possess 15 years of teaching experience in varied institutions in Maharashtra, India. Another 4 yrs of experience as a Free Lancer. Presently working as an Assistant Professor of English, in K L University, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, India. Interested research area is Pragmatics and Soft Skills.