

**English Language Teaching for Sustainable Development:Reimagining
Teaching, Learning and Assessment in the 21st century**

Dr. J. Mangayarkarasi, M.A., M.Phil., PGCTE., Ph.D.,

Department of English

Ethiraj College for Women, Chennai- 600008

drmangai.phd@gmail.com

Abstract

The paradigm shift in language education in recent years can be regarded as a fruit of growing importance of English Language in all spheres. Advanced methodologies devised globally have been used regardless of the background of language learners. How do we contextualize the expectations of learners, progress in teaching and the changes required in assessment as we are heading forward? What are the psychological aspects of language acquisition? This paper analyses the possible ways of envisaging modern techniques in Asian context with the help of ICT and drawbacks of the existing methods used.

Key words: Digital Course book, Materials, Challenges, Methodologies, Oral assessment

Understanding the existing scenario

Language education is extended beyond the temporal and spatial boundaries of specific classes. As we progress in devising methodologies incorporating the most modern technologies, we fail to understand the learner and his struggle. But with the growing trends, it's evident that language can be acquired even outside the four walls of a classroom. From media to audio visual classrooms language has found its way to the learners. The growing scope of language acquisition can even be encouraged with the help of platforms like Netflix or YouTube. As we

advance in our means of standardizing the materials used for teaching, we should be sensitive to understand the problems faced by the learners. In most Asian countries, existence of textbook marks the reassurance quotient for teachers and parents. How much ever we advance in producing teaching materials, textbooks remain as the skeleton for teaching and learning. As Michael West coined the phrase 'mental age of the textbook' to denote the proportionality of age and the contents provided in the textbooks (259). Exposure and attitude are other important factors that favor language learning in a psycho-analytical way. The learner failing to understand the importance of English would show indifference to English language acquisition. Inculcating the right interest at the right time can bring in lot of advantages. Class participation and the co-operation in the class are directly proportional to this interest quotient.

Next generation Teaching and Learning

Amidst the continued dispute over teacher-centered learning and learner-centered learning, the paper entrusts importance on materials. The so called 'centered' process depends on factors like the efficiency of the teacher, the background of the learner, access to technology, the exposure towards language and respective mother tongue. Language teaching should cater students from all sectors irrespective of their abilities or inabilities. To provide standardized teaching, teacher has to depend on an organized framework which helps student acquire language of actual use. Of all the skills, speaking skill is the most important skill and henceforth English Language teaching should be in 'Speaking-Centered' way. Speaking skill acquisition is regarded as the most challenging phase of language learning. But considering the growing global importance of English, teachers should accept the challenge to surpass phonetic, linguistic and phrase building hindrances.

As Tickoo says in *Teaching and Learning English*, "A good course should therefore focus on both accuracy and fluency, and reduce risk-taking when accuracy is being developed, and when correct habits and skills are being built and, especially at the intermediate or advanced stage, facilitate and encourage risk-taking to make communication natural and effective" (161).

While mapping the degree of acquisition, listening comes first. Only a good listener can imbibe inputs. Reading is a secondary output of listening. For beginners, reading is an imitation of what is being read out in the class. The students associate meanings and images to words. Silent reading but insists on understanding what is being read. But speaking is a productive end result

of effective listening and reading. Writing follows speaking which involves sentence formation, grammar and creative skills. Before a student could write he/she would have spoken the same in mind.

Course book should be formulated by incorporating both native English and non-native English. This would help student to understand the different kind of English used across the world. Effective language acquisition takes place when language is being taught through multiple sources. The audio visual teaching and its impact on learners still continue to build curiosity and interest among learners. But as we proceed to develop materials and course book, a globally standardized digital course book with accessible materials and links to audio visuals would be appropriate for Next generation teaching. The Asian language learners somehow face similar challenges in language learning and these problems can be addressed in a single digital course book.

For eg: Before teaching prepositions, a video demonstration of in/on/at followed by the exercises for each and every student that they have to answer on screen is the most effective means to engage every single student in the process of learning.

PREPOSITION OF TIME	EXAMPLES
IN	In 2018
IN	In January
ON	On January 2nd
AT	At 7 pm
IN	In the morning
AT	At night
ON	On 2-5-2016

As whole persons, we seem to learn best in an atmosphere of personal security. Feeling secure, we are freed to approach the learning situation with the attitude of willing openness. Both the learner's and the knower's level of security determine the psychological tone of the entire learning experience. (Curran 1976:6)

For a wholesome learning experience subject matter should have an intrinsic appeal for most learners in class. The digital course book also could ensure learning process for its bigger impact. Thus classrooms are neither student-centered nor teacher-centered instead material-centered. The existing mass-answering system does not attend to each and every student in the class room. Thus it is difficult to assess the output. The teacher who teaches effectively with the help of a course book should also be able to be on the other end. The suggested digital course book would have exercises and practice sheets which can be answered before winding up the topic. As we talk about the e-based learning and other technology based methodologies there are schools across the globe that fail to extend basic infrastructure. Next-gen learning should equate the challenges faced by such schools and promote English language teaching in such schools. Identifying such schools and providing assistance are huge responsibilities as we reimagine teaching and learning in the 21st century. It includes providing

- Global awareness on the importance of English language
- Assistance with subject experts
- Teaching assistance with technology based teaching and learning
- Methods to overcome mother tongue influence
- Insisting on the importance of speaking skill

Importance of Oral Assessment

Assessments have been carried out in a written way by which the writing skill alone is tested. As we place speaking skill as the most important skill, it is important to assess the speaking abilities of students too. For the primary level students, assessment should include reading too. The course book should be formulated in order to enhance the professional oriented speaking skills of students. The sole purpose of language is to communicate and oral assessments would grade students' phonetic, linguistic improvement and also the vocabulary. The rate at which the students overcome the mother tongue accent can also be tested this way. The difficulties language learners face is regarded as a consequence of the degree to which their native language differs from English. The Chinese find it lot more difficult than Germans. Speakers of Japanese, Korean and Chinese varieties have difficulty distinguishing [r] and [l] whereas Spanish has difficulty in identifying [b] and [v]. Oral assessment should focus on evaluating

- Consonant phonemes
- Vowel phonemes
- Syllable structure
- Stress timing

Language is generally understood by multiculturalists to be one of the expressions of culture (De Gaetano, Williams & Volk,1998; Hernandez,1989;Nieto,2000), and the deep structures of a culture determine when, where and with whom particular language variations may be employed says Piku Chowdhury, in *Emerging Trends in English Language* (225). As the boundaries are getting thinner, multiculturalism is another big challenge ELT professionals will have to face. The course book which is supposed to supplement the learners globally, it should be sensible and sensitive towards the cultural aspects too.

References

1. Chowdhury, Piku. "*Emerging trends in Teaching English*". Aadi Publications, 2016.
2. Chitragad, Sunita. "*Research Methodology in English*". Omega Publications, 2017.
3. White,V. Ronald. "*The ELT Curriculum Design Innovation and Management*". Oxford, 1988.
4. Nunan,D. "*Syllabus Design*". Oxford UP,1988.