

## A STUDY ON TEACHING- LEARNING STRATEGIES USED IN TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

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### ABSTRACT

**Classroom Focus:** Different T-L Strategies used in teaching English language classrooms in 4 Nagar Nigam Pratibha Vidiyalaya, MCD schools of Delhi

English has been introduce at the primary level in all the Nagar Nigam Pratibha Vidiyalaya of MCD schools. However, even after many years of having English medium sections in NPV MCD schools, vast numbers of elementary and secondary class students are not able to make use of English language in speaking , reading or writing even simple English phrases or sentences. Consequently, for most of such students, access for professional education, higher education and employment and the entire spectrum of technical knowledge e.g using computers and the Internet, will also be limited.

### INTRODUCTION

This study investigated teacher's teaching strategies through focus group, discussions with teachers and students used by Assistant Teachers in selected Nagar Nigam Pratibha Vidiyalaya, MCD schools of Delhi. This simple Research study will help our understanding in knowing How English language is being taught? And what different pedagogies / strategies are used in English language classroom by the teachers of these selected MCD schools?.

This pilot study on 4 Nagar Nigam Pratibha Vidiyalaya, MCD schools of Delhi reveals that English language proficiency of Assistant teachers teaching in the sampled schools of MCD is "abysmally low" as most of the teachers teaching English subject themselves can't converse in the language fluently and have no confidence in teaching English and also as "ONE TEACHER ALL SUBJECT "teaching in these schools.

### RATIONALE

The rationale for this study will give broader insight of our Inservice Programmes more specific for these teachers who are teaching English language these schools and other schools of Delhi. Results of this study will reflect on analysis data collection through different modes e.g classroom observation, data notes from field face to face communication /interviews with Students of class I, II and III and twenty eight teachers and administrators, and portfolios /artifacts /class book /workbooks and T\_L material of the selected 4 NPV MCD Schools of Delhi. The theoretical framework for this study have been draws from NCF 2005.

### OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To study Teachers' levels of spoken English and the implications.
- To study Students' aspirations with regard to English language skills.
- To study the different Pedagogies/ Strategies are used by the teachers of these schools by the English language Teachers.

- To study the teachers' confidence in teaching English language classroom.
- To study how teachers' create opportunities for the students for creating T-L environment in the English Language classroom.

### **Sample of the Study**

Four Nagar Nigam Pratibha Vidyalaya MCD schools of Delhi, teachers teaching Classes I,II,III only ( 28 teachers and Administrators)

### **Schools & Classes Observed**

1. NNPV ,Jwala Heri , 2. NNPV ,A-2 Paschim Vihar , 3. NNPV,Jhilmil Colony and 4. NNPV Anand Vihar

### **METHODOLOGY**

The Data for this study was collected through classroom observation, face to face interviews with students, teachers and Principal of the school some digital photo and artifacts i.e lesson plan and worksheets and students work were also collected from the teachers). The researchers spent all day in the selected schools for few weeks, during the school hours. Each day was very well planned to complete the interviews and classroom observation during classroom teaching.. Every day minimum 4 class were observed and four face to face interview sessions was conducted. Field notes for observations provided descriptive data and recording of the teachers' exact words, as well as dialogue between teacher and students during the face to face interviews. The Interviews followed a semi-structured format was conversation but was focused on the research questions.

### **Observation During Classroom**

- Observed current teaching methodologies.
- Recorded different types of spoken interaction in classroom.
- Looked at resources used in class.
- Assessed the language levels of the teachers and students.
- Observed classroom size and number of students in a class.

During Focus groups discussions with teachers (Through questionnaire and informal discussion)

- Uncover existing beliefs and attitudes and teachers self-assess their language skills. Knowing areas where they need interventions.
- Knowing teachers' 'actual' language levels through interaction (by semi-controlled and freely speaking tasks).
- Knowing and understanding the different resources are available to teachers in the school and restrictions in using these resources. (Through informal discussion).

During Focus groups discussion with students (Through questionnaire and informal discussion).:

- Understanding learning process from the students' point of view.

- Understanding students' aspirations related to spoken and written English language skills while leaving school.
- Knowing students' self assess of their English language Skills/abilities.
- Knowing students' 'actual' language levels by interacting through semi-controlled speaking tasks according to their class level.
- To understand different T-L strategies group and pair work, task based activities and team work help students for spoken English among the students.

Visits to the Schools to assess:

- Classroom size and resources and acoustics available in the schools.

### OBSERVATIONS LESSON OBSERVATION-CLASS I

The Teacher spoke only Key- words in English, Eg.

1. 'Kaun si shape hai'
2. 'Triangle dikhao'
3. 'Count kar ke dikhao'

Students were given different shaped blocks. They knew how to use blocks and how to keep them back. They were asked to make shapes with triangles, squares etc.

Questions were asked in Hindi .Students answered in Hindi. They translated words to English, only when asked to do so.

Pronunciation and Grammar skills of the teacher were good.

Enthusiastic participation by the students but the students spoke only in Hindi if we were to discount the words which were prompted by the teacher.

Text books were not used at all.

### LESSON OBSERVED: CLASS I

The class observed was being held in the school hall. Two other classes were going on in the same hall due to paucity of space. The building needs repair; hence three classes have been adjusted.

The teacher was preparing the result sheets of the examination which were held a few days ago. She began revision of the previous work done.

Three classes were sharing the same room and the same black board.

Revision of previous concepts. The teacher began by saying;

1. Animal name- without listening to the students she asked for
2. Fruit name and before two students could answer she asked for the
3. Class teachers name along with
4. The Principal's name followed by the
5. Address of the school.

## LESSON OBSERVATION-CLASS II

Teacher was quite defensive to start with. She refused to take an English class. She informed us that she her class had been changed into an English medium 5 months into the session last year. Her class would not be able to speak in English. She wanted to continue with her Math's class.

Although '15 oranges' was written on the board, the teacher read the word herself .No effort was made to ask or elicit the word from the students.

Interesting thing to note was that when students enthusiastically shouted out the numbers in English, the teacher continued to repeat the same in Hindi.

Students did not know the numerical '46' in English. Counting seems to be done only till twenty. The teacher asked students to open their copies and note down the questions from the board in their Math copy but did not check whether students were copying the work down. Observers could see that apart from approximately 5-6 frontbenchers no student was paying any attention. No follow-up of instructions.

Apart from the words given below there was absolutely no use of English in a class of 45 minutes.

1. Don't talk.
2. Go back.
3. Come here.
4. Oranges.
5. Pencils.
6. Apples.

No text book used. Blackboard not used effectively. Sums put up on board but no space for carry over left. Teacher then blamed student for not doing the sum properly.

## LESSON OBSERVATION-CLASS III

The teacher did a revision of previous concepts.

Body parts and Numbers were asked from the class even though the observers had specifically asked to see an English class.

Instructions were given to speak in 'English 'in Hindi. All instructions were bilingual at the most and quite unfortunately were not very clear to the students as they behaved in a rather confused manner.

Grammatical proficiency of the teacher was questionable. Some examples are;

1. This is our ears.
2. This is our teeth.
3. What is your school name?

No teaching aids used. No textbook /blackboard /copies etc. used.

Improper pronunciation used. For eg.

1. Loin for lion.
2. Tavel for table.
3. Cheer for chair

Unnecessary Translations were done of words like 'sit down' and 'stand up'

All answers were accepted in chorus even 'what is your name?'

No students were corrected. The teacher was extremely happy with her class. Then she elicited the names of the colour of their uniform, leaves, sky and the Indian Flag both in Hindi and English.

Throughout the class some students were sleeping/doing other work.

### ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

- One of its findings is that these English teachers find the NCERT books recommended for their schools "tough".
- "We found out that the English teachers can't speak in that language. During our interviews with the teachers, only some of them managed to carry on an entire discussion in English. But there were quite a few who answered our questionnaire using low level English. We observed classroom lessons and noticed that the language was generally restricted to words and routine expressions such as 'Keep quiet!' and 'Open your books!' with a lot of code switching and code mixing.
- "Teachers are also largely unaware of the different strategies /pedagogy of teaching English . They do not seem to know how a second language is learnt and taught in a formal instructed-language situation. There are number of instances where the English language class looks like a Hindi language class," she added.
- English as a language has been introduced in Delhi, the government schools starting from Class I onward. Commenting on the English teachers' attitude towards students, we observed: "They often blame the children for not learning the language. Their approach towards the disadvantaged learner is negative and vitiates the situation further. They seem to think that without home support children cannot learn a language. Since the children coming come from poor backgrounds and mostly are first generation learners and have no exposure to English outside school, teachers believe that these children's cannot speak English language and their language learning ability itself is poor."

### SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Attitude to actually teach English should be ingrained
- One period of English should be held daily
- English should be used in other subjects wherever possible
- Teacher should increase English speaking time
- Teachers do not pick up sentences to translate. They translate words and phrases and hence never use sentences.
- Teachers should start using simple sentences
- A minimum Level Learning Programme may be provided to them for a clear idea of the general English syllabus, they need to cover.
- Secondly, they are not able to exploit the text books and are not comfortably utilizing the same for the linguistic growth of the learners.

- Teachers have no forum wherein they can interact with their counterparts in other schools and share the day to day problems as well as solutions. They need a common platform to discuss and interact.
- Teachers try to relate their teaching more on general Language Teaching and developing Listening and speaking skills and they want more training in the same area. They want to get ideas to use text book for the same purpose and need more activity based training for the same.

## CONCLUSION

The resultant behavior of the learners is an outcome of the efforts of teachers which vary from person to person. In one class students were able to answer almost all the questions asked in English whereas in the other class students were excited, but found difficulty in understanding the questions so they wanted us to translate the same in mother tongue.

Computer Lab was operational in one school but not in the other one, so the teacher could not use the computers for teaching of English.

An NGO had launched a programme on teaching of English and had live radio show on the language. Students responded very positively and teachers also felt quite motivated and felt that they got several ideas from the show and such activities should be initiated by SCERT also.

There was a consensus in teachers' views regarding training programme. All the teachers interviewed stressed on the need of a training programme to address their queries and problems in teaching English. According to the teachers their students were first generation learners. They belonged to the poor strata of the society and were devoid of any exposure and support for learning the language at their homes. These children have special needs to be addressed. At Class I level they didn't even know how to write alphabets, therefore a need was felt for a training on effective methodology for inculcating interest and teaching alphabets to such students. It was also learnt that the text books do not relate to their pace of learning. The text books in no way cater to the needs of these children. Moreover there is no correlation between Examination pattern and the text books. The Question paper contained only general Qs which have no connection with the textbooks.

The teachers were also keen to attend a training programme on few specific areas like teaching of basic concepts of grammar through activities, phonetics, developing speaking skills and recent innovative methods of teaching English language.

As already mentioned the teachers are completely disillusioned with the text books, which they think do not cater to the needs of their students. They struggle hard to make the text books interesting for their students whose levels don't match. They need support material like workbooks, worksheets, relevant activities, teaching aids for the existing syllabus. Teachers also stressed upon the need of weekly syllabus so as to guide them of specific areas to be covered in given time frame. They need support to exploit their textbooks to make them more suitable to the students. Reference material (readily available) is also required by the teachers.

Some teachers have already been in the practice of doing activities of speaking skills with their students after the intervention of an NGO. Mobile recordings, computer labs and Radio

programmes had been used to improve their listening and speaking skills, thereby improvement in comprehension level of the students.

Teachers felt that workshops during summer vacations would be more effective.

There was no consensus in the use of translation method for teaching English to the students. Those who were in favour gave the justification of moving from known to lesser known language. But few others felt that translation method defeated the purpose as by this only the colloquial language gets strengthened. They do sometimes translate but not word by word. Inclusion of real life situations definitely helps is what was told by teachers and they emphasized the need of activities pertaining to real life situations. They were eager to learn such activities which would link the language with the physical world and enhance their vocabulary.

Teachers appreciated the idea of having a forum; may be cluster wise or zone wise, so as to discuss their problems pertaining to English language teaching.

#### **Teachers Self-Assessment Schedule**

- As per the self assessment done by the teachers they are confident in giving instructions in the class, asking learners questions in English and giving feed back in English.
- Teachers in their self assessment questionnaires marked that they are also quite confident in creating opportunities for students to speak in English and doing pair work group work in the class. But ironically this was not seen in the class observation.
- The only aspect where teachers are not so confident was adapting text books for generating speaking activities and in some cases their own knowledge of grammar.
- In the self assessment schedule most of the teachers marked their confidence in taking an English class as being excellent. However in reality they themselves never spoke in English in the class or outside while the observers were asking questions. Questions had to be translated to Hindi for most of them.