



Role of Learners' Autonomy And Technology in English Language Teaching

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ABSTRACT:- Learners' autonomy is a conscious effort on the part of the learner. The learner has to develop a precise idea of the purpose of his learning. He has to evaluate the progress of his learning intermittently. Unless the learners accept responsibility and commitment towards their learning, autonomy will have no meaning. In autonomous learning, the learner attributes his own meaning to whatever he has studied. An awareness of language, peculiar style and accountability are to be developed by the learner. Technology has revolutionized the entire teaching learning curriculum. Though obsolete, many traditional technologies are still relevant. The current perfection achieved in the field of education is because of the innovations in technology. This paper focuses on how learners' autonomy can effectively be implemented in English language classroom, especially at the entry level in college curriculum and also explores the application of technology in classroom for effective learning.

Keywords:- Autonomy, infrastructure, supported autonomy, relational autonomy, lethargy, psychology.

I. INTRODUCTION

Learners' autonomy coupled with the aid of technology has produced a great impact on modern teaching arena. The teacher is the focal point of attention in language education and learners' autonomy has paved the way for language learning. Now a days, technological innovations have been harnessed to suit the requirements of classroom or teaching methodologies. In order to generate the new ideas/ techniques for solving or finding out solutions to excruciating problems, students have to be motivated. Primarily, the responsibility and task of a good teacher is to create situations in which students can perform and achieve their best. Physical environment of learning needs to be conducive to the mental development of the students psychologically since learners' satisfaction is a prominent factor in learning. Autonomy enunciates the capacity of a person to take suitable decision on an issue or problem in a more or less independent way.

II. LANGUAGE

Language is the means by which one's emotions or feelings are expressed. It is a means or tool of communication. The ability of human beings to acquire and adopt the complex communication systems are achieved through language. Linguistics is the study of language with a scientific orientation. It has been a debatable question whether words can represent one's experience. Ancient Greek philosophers believed that language arose from emotions. As viewed by philosopher Kant: "Language had come out of a logical sequence of thought". Some modern philosophers even believed that philosophy is the study of language.

The distinction between language and dialect is arbitrary. Writing braille or whistling is the examples of encoding a language into a secondary media. Languages depend on Semiosis which are signs to assign meanings. Human language completely depends on conventions imposed by society and learning. The origin of language can be traced to the primitive cave dwellers in the course of human evolution. Linguists believe that the structure of language evolved to serve social and communicative function. The acquisition of language occurs through social interaction in childhood. Usually, children speak fluently when they attain the age of three. Language is a part and parcel of human culture.

III. ROLE OF ELT IN INDIA

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There exist a lot of insufficiencies and inadequacies as far as teaching in schools as well as colleges in India are concerned. In spite of the technological improvements, proper educational strategies and devices including apt teacher - education system are still inadequate. This has been primarily because English is a foreign language, seldom spoken by the people in the streets. The four skills of teaching-listening, speaking, reading and writing have to be developed and implemented effectively in classrooms. English education has to be imparted among the students in such a way as to arouse genuine interest in them.

Infrastructural facilities need to be utilized to the full. The existing lethargy among the students in classrooms shall be diminished to a considerable extent if the teachers are able to impart adequate interest in them. Besides, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate methodology of teaching, lack of adequate instructional materials hamper teaching. In order to improve the quality of English education, proper training to teachers is a vital point. Teachers have the prerogative of selecting or modifying teaching curriculum as they could easily understand the psychology of students.

IV. AUTONOMY

The word 'autonomy' is derived from Latin, 'auto' means 'self' and 'nomos' means 'law'. It is a precept that can be traced in moral, political, and bio-ethical philosophy. It is the capacity of a person to take an independent decision. Autonomy is defined as the capacity of a person to take his or her own decision without any external influence. It forms the basis for determining one's moral philosophy and accountability. It was Kant who put forwarded the philosophical theory of autonomy. Autonomy may also imply 'self government. 'To quote the words of April Chamberlain, "Education is involving due to the impact of the internet. We cannot teach our students in the same manner in which we were taught. Change is necessary to engage students not in the curriculum we are responsible for teaching; but in school period."

In the sociology of knowledge, autonomy was created and developed with science and technological studies. In 'Reflexive autonomy', diverse themes are translated or reflected by the persons involved. Autonomy is a key concept that has a tremendous impact on different philosophical area. Moral philosophy refers to dedicating to moral law. According to Kant, morality encompasses autonomy. Autonomy is the ability to obey a categorical command independent of a personal desire or interest. The concept of autonomy in metaphysics is free will, fatalism, and agency.

There are 'relational autonomy' and 'supported autonomy'. The Relational autonomy suggests that an individual is defined through his relationship with others. In peculiar circumstances, the autonomy of the person has to be compromised for a brief period so that his autonomy will be preserved in the future. The supported autonomy refers to a concept which describes a peculiar circumstance pertaining to mental health. In linguistics, an autonomous language is one which is fully independent of other languages, maintaining standard dictionaries, grammar etc. In the case of 'social psychology', autonomy implies a characteristic of personality which gives emphasis on personal achievement and a preference for loneliness or keeping aloof from social circles.

V. LEARNERS' AUTONOMY

The term was first used by Henri Holec in 1981. He is considered to be the father of learners' autonomy. It is considered as a personal human characteristic. It can be a political entity or an educational indulgence. Learning autonomy has called for a sweeping change in practices in conventional language classroom and paved the way for originating language learning centers in the world. While defining learners' autonomy, the point is whether it is considered as a means to an end or as an end itself.

Autonomy entails empowerment of students. It means shifting focus from teaching to learning. It imparts utmost influence to the learners. It necessitates peer support and co-operation. Autonomy calls for cent percent differentiation. It can be practiced with student logbooks. The role of the teacher in promoting autonomy is very significant. The use of technology can lead students outside the classroom and the students can easily bring the outside world into the classroom.

The prominent features connected with autonomous learning are critical for students of high school. The system now prevalent in United States is of a ladder system of advancement achieved entirely through academics. As the students go higher up the ladder, they feel the need for greater learners' autonomy. Recent researches reveal that students equipped with autonomous learning have great chances of success in high school as well as at college level. Such students are seen performing much better than their counterparts having scholarly achievements. An instrument is now available for the adolescent learner, which will assess the eligibility of learner autonomy among students.

There are many roads to learning. People adopt various styles and talents of learning in colleges. Students who perform well in practical aspects may not perform well in theory. Students should be imparted adequate opportunities to depict their talents. They have to be motivated to learn new ways. The main

responsibility for betterment of the quality of education lies with teachers and students. The educational authorities are bounden to help for this.

Classroom - Centered Assessment (CCA) highlights the primary attention of teachers and students on improving learning through observation. Students need necessary feedback to improve their learning. Students also need to learn how to assess their own learning. Students can be autonomous and self-directed. The teachers ought to be facilitators for students. The participants are allowed to assume responsibility for presentation and group leadership. Theories and concepts are explained to them along with the value of experience in learning.

VI. TECHNOLOGY

The word, Technology, is derived from the Greek Word 'techne', which means skill or art and 'logia' means procuring tools. The term "technology" became prevalent along with the Second Industrial Revolution. The word was not commonly used in English language before the onset of the 20th century and used to mean study of arts. According to Bill Gates: "Technology is just a tool. In terms of getting the kids working together and motivating them, the teacher is most important."

In most of the European languages including German, there exists a clear-cut difference between 'technik' and 'technology', which is evidently lacking in English. The dawn of Renaissance contributed to several technological innovations, including invention of printing press. The technology has brought about sweeping changes in the life style of human beings.

The Renaissance brought about the beginning of a new era of technological innovations. The invention of wonderful drugs like sulpha drugs, the antibiotics like penicillin, the perfection achieved in the field of surgery and the successful transplantation of human organs are some of the milestones in technological innovations, motivated by 'Renaissance'. The technologies help human beings to cope with their environment, especially physical environment successfully. Scientific advancements in the present century is because of the high technological improvements and innovations. The discovery of 'wheel', undoubtedly, is the milestone towards the advancement and civilization of man. The physical impediments of communication have been drastically changed along with the onset of printing press, telephone and internet. Instant communication with any person on earth has become a reality. The implementation of different forms of technologies has brought in several impacts on the society along with some ethical questions. Perhaps, impediments in finding suitable remedies to the ethical questions from the darker aspects of technological innovations. Mortality rate has been drastically reduced and increased production in agriculture is because of technological improvements. There exist good as well as bad aspects for the technological innovations. A sweeping change in the entire educational curriculum in the present scenario is, undoubtedly, because of the tremendous progress in educational technology. While applying multimedia technology to English teaching, there are some bottlenecks to overcome. As the role of the teacher is primarily confined to the use of simple tools, they lose their predominant role in teaching.

VII. CONCLUSION

The teaching practices in the universities and colleges still continue to be the same as in the forties, which is really a sorrow state of affairs. The methodologies adopted in the teaching learning process have to impart emphasis on learning and developing analytical and conceptual abilities rather than on memorization and reproduction. The National Policy on Education has aptly emphasized that higher education provides people with an opportunity to reflect on the critical, social, economic, cultural, moral and spiritual issues facing humanity. Developing talents being the prime objective of higher education, is sure to contribute to national development through dissemination of specialized knowledge and spirit. Technological approaches in the field of higher education are to realize its objectives through suitable methods and techniques. Recent researches on the area of learners' autonomy reveal that the students equipped with autonomous learning have greater chances of success and self sufficiency to a greater extent. The Students themselves feel the need for more autonomy while climbing the rungs of higher education. The very concept of Distance Education is to impart learners' autonomy among the students.

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