

ABL IMPLICATIONS IN THE AREA OF TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN OR SECOND LANGUAGE

Mr. NAJMUDEEN. K.K, Dr. M. POONKODI

PhD Scholar, English, Karunya University, Coimbatore

Asst. Professor (S.G), Karunya University, Coimbatore

The aim of this paper is to examine and evaluate the effectiveness of ABL method compared with the existing or traditional methods of English language teaching in higher secondary schools in Kerala and to substantiate that ABL method brings a revolutionary attitudinal modification in the level of perception in students than any other methods of learning and acquiring language proficiency. The study continues to establish that the ABL method results in more students' activities and lesser teacher domination in the class room and there by the monopoly of teacher is totally wiped out and the students are empowered.

During the period of colonial regime and thereafter, especially in the early decades of self rule Indian Schools and Colleges adopted different systems of imparting instruction in general and in the matter of English language teaching in particular. During the earlier phase, the purpose of English teaching was to make a section of the native elite fluent in the ruler's language to translate to vernaculars the orders and wants of the ruling class to make the native understand the ruler's intentions and orders. So, the English educated class of native mastered the foreign tongue in the Grammar-translation method. English grammar was taught in detail and Wren and Martin Grammar Book beginning with the study of parts of speech was considered as the Bible of English language teaching.

In the years following Independence, Educationist and language experts introduced novel methods in teaching. New principles and findings by psychologists and philosophers produced new objectives for education and acquisition of knowledge. New approaches to language learning were experimented. The Indian Society transformed into a Free Society from that of a slave and subject country. The direct method of teaching English, the situational method replaced the old Grammar translation method. These methods were also subjected to review. It was observed that all the above methods of teaching were predominantly teacher oriented and to a large extent the students remained passive. Teacher centered lecture methods made the learners mere observers and they were subjected to follow the instructors' manner and mannerisms. Learning and development of the student is a process of application of all sense organs. Partial use of sense organs say ear, eye or tongue do not make the child's full fledged growth. Teachers were under a stressful and a strenuous obligation to cast off traditional 'chalk and talk' method of teaching and introduce innovative ideas that are learner centered into the class room.

According to observers, the ABL method has created a visible improvement in children's learning and mental development. The ABL method is first designed and tested by the Rishi Valley School in Andhra Pradesh in the 90's. Later it has been successfully implemented in Tamil Nadu with several Indian states, including Karnataka, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh emulating it. Educationists are optimistic that the ABL system will

provide quality education to children of various schools, while the undereducated children from poor backgrounds can also be introduced to and initiated in the system as well.

Vernacular is the medium for Instruction in higher secondary classes. Higher secondary is a turning point of every student's life. Earlier, in colleges, higher secondary students faced a lot of difficulties and problems in learning English. In colleges, they are deciding their career and future. During the time of interview and placement, they are facing a lot of difficulties in English and get through from opportunities.

The Intention of the study is analyzing the problems and challenges face by higher secondary students in learning process especially in English. So we should focus on higher secondary students and the implementation of Activity Based Learning in higher secondary level and such kind of activities will be beneficial for them. They can enhance their vocabulary and improve their grammatical knowledge through learning English. In order to exist the sufficient knowledge of the students, they can overcome all learning difficulties in college level and face the interview and placement boldly. After completing the college course they can manage the professional challenges in country and global.

Language learning through ABL is learner centered addressing to the needs of multi level learning, integrating various skills of language in the most natural way. It ensures the spontaneous construction of a variety of oral and written discourses such as conversation, description, letter, diary, poem, narrative, report, debate, speech, etc. It provides learners with the opportunity to acquire new knowledge from authentic and real life experiences and develop versatile skills along with communicative skills

The goal of Activity Based Learning is for learners' mental models that allow for 'higher-order' performance such as applied problem solving and transfer of information and skills. New information and communication technologies make it possible to develop and deliver multimedia learning objects for Activity Based Learning. In teaching a second language (English), the goal is instrumental or communicative. In the present context, an English language learner uses English for purposes of communication in his/her day-to-day life. Let us now look into teaching and learning of Vocabulary through ABL method.

With millions of words in the English language, teaching vocabulary seem to be a very daunting and a tedious task to a student learning English as a secondary language. Our students don't need to produce every word they learn unlike a native speaker yet to have interlink with the world and to succeed in their professional careers today they are under compulsion to enrich themselves with vocabulary and acquire fluency in English.

There are lots of ways for teaching and learning vocabulary -

Illustration (using visual signs and pictures):

This is very useful to attract the attention of the visual learners and enable them concentrate on words. It has its limits though, not all items can be visually represented either through technical media or manually drawn.

Eg: To teach a poem on nature and words related to nature beautiful pictures of scenery can be collected from magazines or down loaded from websites and displayed. Looking at the pictures the students shall be asked to describe the beauty of the scene; make reference to the season; name the objects of nature; enlist the advantages and disadvantages of nature;

To teach Wordsworth's "The Solitary Reaper", the following pictures can be used effectively not only to enrich the students with vocabulary but also to enhance their conversational skill through discourse practice.



PIC-1



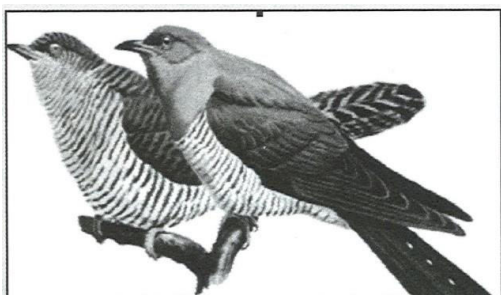
PIC-2



PIC-3



PIC-4



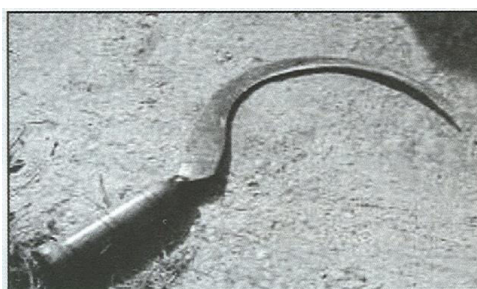
PIC-5



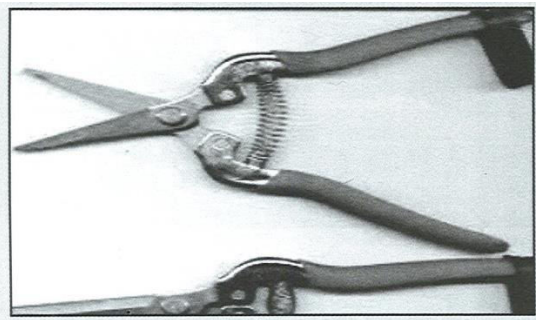
PIC-6



PIC-7



PIC-8



PIC-9



PIC-10

Activities:**1. Match the following with pictures given**

Valley
Oasis
Nightingale
Cuckoo
Sickle

2. Explore the words you find in the poetry

C	A	S	D	F	G	J	H	N	Y	M	N
U	D	R	E	F	H	V	A	L	L	E	Y
K	V	B	N	M	S	Z	O	Q	W	T	Y
C	H	A	N	T	I	H	O	U	S	E	A
O	A	S	I	S	C	E	G	S	S	L	M
O	U	S	S	N	K	B	A	T	T	L	E
P	N	A	O	O	L	R	W	R	I	D	E
L	T	L	Z	N	E	I	E	A	L	D	T
I	E	A	X	E		D	S	I	L	E	E
M	A	I	D	E	N	E	O	N	O	A	C
J	Q	D	C	A	N	S	M	S	U	R	G

3. Dialogue

Make two or three pairs to have a conversation looking at the picture 1 above. The conversation may go on like this.

A: Do you see the picture there?

B: Yes, I could see it.

A: Can you tell me what is the picture all about?

B: I am sure it is picture of a woman working in the field?

A: Can you correlate the picture with anything else?

B: Why not? I am reminded of the poetry written by Wordsworth "The Solitary Reaper."

A: Yes. You are right.

B: Now let me ask you something about the poetry.

A: Oh; Yes. Go ahead.

B: What is the solitary woman doing in the field?

A: She is reaping and singing.

B: What does she further do all alone in the field?

A: She cuts and binds the grain while singing a melancholy song.

B: What does the poet intend to do?

A: The Poet wonders whether to stop and listen to the song of the lady or to gently pass without disturbing her

B: How does the Poet appreciate the voice of the solitary woman?

A: The poet say that the lady's voice is enchanting and thrilling than the nightingale and the cuckoo birds.

B: Can you say which one is nightingale and the other one a cuckoo bird looking at these picture?

A: Do you see this picture? A fertile place amidst desert?

B: Yes. There is a vast stretch of sand and there is a pool in between.

A; This is what is called as Oasis.

B: Oh! Great. I am sure "Shady haunt" in the poem refers to it.

The conversation can be continued with more than one pair even without the teachers' explanation of the poetry. Students are empowered here to perceive and comprehend themselves. Now teacher can intervene and ask the students to narrate their personal experience of walking alone and ask certain questions like

- What do you do when you are very sad? Aren't there many ways of forgetting our sorrows?
- Don't some people go away from the scene of their sadness, for example on a journey?
- **Mime:**
This lends itself particularly well to action verbs and it can be fun and memorable. Egs. From the poetry: Cutting; binding; singing; tarrying; etc
- Synonyms / Antonyms / Gradable Items:
Using the words, a student already knows can be effective for getting meaning across.

Antonyms

Valley x hill

Motionless x movement

Shady x sunny

Synonyms (using specific clues answers could be derived)

Desert – wasteland (Clue: A title of T.S.Eliot's poem)

Haunt – hang around in (Clue: through Miming)

Strain – song (Clue: to refer to nightingale and cuckoo in the next stanza)

Further other meanings of Strain could be explained

In Spanish strain means childIn English it also refers to tension

Melancholy - sad

- **Definition:**

Make sure that it is clear (check in a learner dictionary before the lesson if you are not confident).

For words like valley, melancholy, strain, solitary, sickle etc

- **Translation:**

Enable them to translate in Malayalam sense to sense.

Remember that, not every word has a direct translation.

- **Context:**

Think of a clear context when the word is used and either describe it to the students or give them example sentences to clarify meaning further.

Language Games: -

The following are some examples of language games.

Analogy Games, Antonym Games, Compound Word Games, Contradiction Games, Foreign Language Games, Homophone Games, Idiom Games, Parts of Speech Games, Root Words Games, Spelling Games and Syllable Games.

To discuss the implications the Activity Based Learning provides a learner friendly educational aids to foster self-learning and allows a learner to study according to his / her aptitude and skill. Further

- Students' proficiency in English language will be enhanced.
- Students will develop creativity and communicative skills
- Teacher centered approach will be transformed into learner centered.
- Rote learning will be totally discouraged
- Students' multi level learning will be effectively addressed
- Students' sense of confidence will be raised in every step of achievement.
- Students will be empowered in class room
- Teachers' burden will be reduced
- Team spirit will be inculcated
- Evaluation of every student will be performed judiciously

- Teacher will become a facilitator

One can examine the ABL method through the following points:

- **Clarity of Lessons:**
The learning ladders provide structure as they are planned in a systematic way. The child knows what must be done next. Each unit of information as process is broken up in such a way that clarity of lesson's content is ensured.
- **Class Room Environment:**
The body language of the children shows their enthusiasm. The closing of the physical and psychological distance between teacher and child reflex a very satisfactory feature of the system.
- **Children's involvement in process:**
During the several hours of observation, one rarely came across a child who was not pursuing an academic task or a related task. Watching the children move in to the classes after Assembly was heartening sight.
- **The teacher's role:**
The teacher has to learn the entire ABL system and work effectively with it. An egalitarian attitude may require some un- learning and re-learning for teachers, but when they see it has part of the new culture of education, they are quick to accept it and practice it.
- **Scope for Creativity:**
As we noticed there are some blank slots in all ladders, for the teacher to fill up. This gives him/her opportunity for bringing in new materials as for including a locally relevant theme. Clearly, there is here recognition that knowledge is not a pre-determined set of facts.

Conclusion: -

Practice plays an important role in language learning, as it strengthens the learners' natural language acquisition process. Learning materials should provide ample practice for learners in performing functions in the target language such as describing, comparing and contrasting and to develop an awareness of the use of language. Active participation in class room activities and an awareness of the need for exposure and practice in developing communicative skills motivate learners and involve them more and more in the language learning task.

It is believed that if class room participants work together as partners while tackling problem- solving questions, they interact with each other and benefit from collaborative thinking. They also get practice in cooperative endeavour. The methodology, activity based, process oriented and child centered approach, operates in the constructive paradigm which would be helpful for the learners to construct language, appropriate to various communicative contexts. The method strikes a balance between the linguistic autonomy of the learner on the one hand, which is largely innate and the social interaction on the other, which takes care of the functional aspects of the language. Interaction is identified as the key stone of the whole

learning process. Interaction at this level is in three dimensions i.e., learner - teacher, learner-learner and learner-material.

The three tier interaction is more conducive to the development of the learner at the psychological and cognitive level.

Reference: -

1. Richards and Rodgers - Approaches & Methods in language teaching CUP (Cambridge University Press).
2. Ur – Grammar Practice Activities.
3. Ur and Wright – Five Minute Activities.
4. Austin JL – How to do things with Words Oxford University Press London.
5. Education quarterly NCERT, New Delhi.
6. Secondary School Teacher, CBSE, Delhi.
7. Bharatiya Vidya (Research Journal) – Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Choupathy, Mumbai.
8. Bhasha Bi-monthly Controller of – Publication, Govt of India, Civil Lines, Delhi. 54
9. Social Scientist, New Delhi. 1
10. English Today Magazine – Cambridge University
11. The source book of Higher Secondary education, SCERT, Kerala.
12. Vijnhana Kairali – Kerala Institute of Languages.
13. Effective Design Principles for Activity Based Learning – Churchill, Daniel – National Institute of Education, Singapore.