

Importance of ‘Test’ In Teaching-Learning Process of Second Language: A Case Study of Lakhimpur District of Assam

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Abstract

English is taught and learnt in Assam as Second language(L2). Therefore methods applied in teaching –learning of this language is different from first language(L1). Language is a learning phenomenon. It can not be inherited. So it is necessary to create appropriate environment of spoken, read and written. But such environment is not available in Assam. So the scholars are unable to show their competence. To create an appropriate environment the role of testing is very important. Testing is necessary to know the progress of the learner. It is a way of ensuring that learning has taken place. To make teaching learning process interesting testing is very essential. Without test or examine we can not acquire a proper knowledge of where the learner was, how far she or he has got, how far he or she can go. Therefore, testing is inextricably linked with teaching learning process.

Keywords: Second language, inception, environment, inextricably.

INTRODUCTION:

The first language(L1) is learnt informally by everybody. There is no need of classroom, text book or a teacher for the learning L1. This learning is natural and spontaneous. All the children learn the L1 successfully whereas they fail most often to learn L2. Because second language learning is an artificial process as well as environment contributes significantly. It is said that the richer the environment in the classroom, the greater is the chance of acquiring the knowledge of second language. But inspite of all the theories, practices and the like, we are not able till to date to find a satisfactory result in teaching learning of second language. So, this is very important to discuss about the drawbacks which are responsible for this situation. We have

to find out the remedies to improve the situation. To display all these, the role of testing is indispensable.

OBJECTIVES :

This study is an attempt to create an appropriate environment of teaching learning process of second language in Lakhimpur district of Assam with following objectives.

1. To assess the importance of testing in second language teaching.
2. To find out the problems and prospects in English language teaching.
3. To provide a basis for further exploration of English language teaching and discovery of possible causes for repairing the scholar's process of effective learning.

METHODOLOGY :

The present study is descriptive in nature and based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from fieldwork and interviewing method for analysis. Secondary data were collected from written reports of the experienced teachers of various institutions of Lakhimpur District.

DISCUSSION OF THE TOPIC :

The English language teaching in the schools of Assam is nearly 175 years old and the same at the college level is nearly a century old. The post graduate studies in English which is over 80 years old now, was initially not very successful and till now even the performance of the students is not satisfactory. The language acquisition capacity of the Assamese students is perhaps, inferior in comparison to students of other Indian provinces. Because of the communication disadvantages, the people of this province were not exposed to the world of sophistication for a long time. Even because of the poor performance of the students in English, the post graduate department of English at cotton college was abolished in 1933. For this poor performance, it would be imprudent to hold the students solely responsible. The English teaching community of the state are insufficient in both number and their competence. From the earliest time, the English language teaching is continuing here amidst complexity of mother tongue interference. That is, the English teacher who hails from other states, have not create a sufficient environment. Their mother tongue is different from our students. For the sake of precision we have examined the English teaching community of colleges of Lakhimpur district. 50% English teachers from other states are still working in these colleges. In school level also English language teaching is very poor. The following are some of the reasons which have been

responsible for the decline of standard in English language teaching and English language learning in Assam, specially in Lakhimpur District.

1. Lack of a clear cut policy.
2. Little understanding of aims.
3. The incompetent teacher.
4. The defective method.
5. Sub standard text books.
6. Inadequate materials facilities.
7. Defective examination system.
8. Large classes.
9. Reduction in the number of periods.
10. Lack of supervision.

In all the educational institutions of Assam, specially in Lakhimpur district bilingual method of teaching English is followed. The four skills of language learning are not properly trained. The skills LSRW are required to be practiced havily and the learners' competence is to be tested regularly in order to measure the level of their acquisition.

In second language learning 'Test' is of utmost important. Without test or examination, teaching learning is useless. Test provides perfection in learning. Through test both the teacher and learner can assess their performance. Recurrent tests provide solid foundation to a learners' learning. But as it found from the fieldwork the tests are not so frequent. They are not also properly designed to help the learners practically. If the performance of the learners' is not satisfactory, it is supposed that there is not proper motivation through teaching and tests, which has resulted in poor show.

We can not separate teaching and testing. It is related to each other. Testing is necessary to know the progress of learner. It is a way of ensuring that learning has taken place. Every teacher has to prepare test to measure the achievement of his or her pupils and the success of his or her teachings. In this way a test is a diagnostic measure which indicates what the pupils have not achieved. The test may be formal or informal but it should be carefully prepared. Testing has three objectives-

- (i) It aims at evaluating the students performance from time to time so that appropriate remedial steps can be taken to bring him up to the expected standard.
- (ii) It enables the teacher to know in time whether or not the course objectives are being fulfilled.
- (iii) It enables the students to know his or her own achievement or non achievement.

Testing is very important in the process of evaluation. Test and examination are overlapped in their meaning. The term testing is used as a broad sense here. It means any structured way to measure language ability. If teaching and learning are to go on efficiently, the achievement of students needs to be constantly measured. That is to say a good deal of time and attention should be devoted to the assessment of the progress made by the students.

In the institutions of Lakhimpur District, the examination system is not properly practiced. Even the teachers are not properly trained. Only half yearly and annual examinations are being conducted. The educational boards, councils and even the universities have accentuated the final examination without emphasizing on the internal tests. As a result the performance of the students is not satisfactory as a whole. Nowadays some importance are given to the internal assessment in the educational institutions, but this is not up to the mark.

FINDINGS:

1. Monitoring the tests is not perfect and reliable in the institutions of Lakhimpur district.
2. In the existing system not providing correct information to the students and not correcting their notes or writings. No innovation and renovation in the methods of examinations.
3. Lack of inspiration for the students, teachers, administrations in the existing system. Nobody is worried for the perfection in the system of second language learning and teaching.
4. The teachers have become self centred and profiteering. They are remaining busy in doing private tuitions.
5. In private institutions where the teachers are underpaid, they are usually of low standard and not potential enough to teach.

SUGGESTIONS:

1. Frequency of test should be increased. Unit tests should be made intensive and regular. Every lesson should be followed by several tests, both written or oral.
2. Tests should be designed to test the memory, skill and sincerity of the students. They have to appear of and no exception should allowed. If all students do not success, the next lesson should not be started or should not be allowed promotion to the next higher class.
3. The teacher should be aware of the standard, update information and the teaching skills.
4. The parents should be strict and encourage their children to perform the best in the examination and compel them to learn the lesson perfectly.
5. Heads of the institutions and administrators should give more time to conduct the examination perfectly.

CONCLUSION:

In most of our institutions bilingual method is used. Though this method is useful in some cases, Direct method is really useful for second language teaching. Through the direct method, the four skills(LSRW) must be practiced. In some selected institutions of Lakhimpur district, it has been observed that continuous comprehensive tests have not been happening. Though some improvement have come up in the recent years, no radical change has taken place. For radical transition to effect improvement, reformation and revolution is required. The setup is lacking in leadership, creation of awareness, promotion of leadership, strict administration not compromising with quality, strict realization for promotion and improvement of the standard 'TEST' in teaching learning process of second language. So, this is the right time to take necessary steps to create a convenient environment through which present situation can be changed.

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