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The Impact of Teaching English Language from Communicative Perspective: A Case Study of Universities and Schools in Yemen

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Abstract- It is a well-known fact that English is an international language and assumes great significance in various fields all over the world. Realizing this fact, the number of universities and schools in Yemen introduced English in their syllabus as a compulsory subject, and many students have been attempting to develop their ability to speak fluently in English with others.

Apart from this, Yemeni parents have also realized the importance of the English language for learning Science, Technology, and developing their business in the present world. Hence, they are encouraging and insisting on their children to learn the English Language and acquiring mastery over it. However, most of the students in Yemen pay scant attention towards it. Hence, they are not able to talk or express themselves in the English language. Many factors are responsible for this state of affairs. One of the main reasons is that in Yemen teachers are teaching the English as a foreign language. Besides, the students do not have sufficient opportunities to practice English either in the classroom or outside. Consequently, the result of ELT in Yemen is far from our expectations.

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The Impact of Teaching English Language from Communicative Perspective: A Case Study of Universities and Schools in Yemen

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Apart from this, Yemeni parents have also realized the importance of the English language for learning Science, Technology, and developing their business in the present world. Hence, they are encouraging and insisting on their children to learn the English Language and acquiring mastery over it. However, most of the students in Yemen pay scant attention towards it. Hence, they are not able to talk or express themselves in the English language. Many factors are responsible for this state of affairs. One of the main reasons is that in Yemen teachers are teaching the English as a foreign language. Besides, the students do not have sufficient opportunities to practice English either in the classroom or outside. Consequently, the result of ELT in Yemen is far from our expectations.

The teachers can also be held responsible for this. They focus on two skills, listening and speaking while turning Nelson's eye towards other skills. Moreover, the curriculum of universities or schools in Yemen focuses on reading and writing skills and paying a good deal of attention to grammar. Keeping all these in view, in this paper, I have attempted to point out the importance of aural-oral skills in teaching and learning English as a foreign language in Yemen from a communicative perspective.

I. Introduction

There is no exaggeration to say that the English language has recognized as a global language. Hence, in most of the countries, it is used as a medium of communication. Crystal has described it as: "The world's first truly global language."

To understand the significance of the role of Communicative language teaching (CLT), it is essential to explain the meaning of it. By and large, today the contemporary approach to language teaching is communicative language teaching.

As far as the definition of Communicative language teaching is concerned, the term Communicative language teaching has many connotations, and it has been interpreted differently by different persons.

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While giving simile Nunan refers to Communicative language teaching like a family of various approaches in which all members live together harmoniously. Despite all the differences and disagreements among them, no one is willing to give up the family.

While explaining Communicative language teaching, Harmer has emphasized Communicative competence rather than grammar. He says that while using Communicative language teaching, the teachers asked the learners to use various language forms in different contexts and situations such as making a hotel reservations, purchasing airline tickets, ordering at a restaurant, booking tickets for movie, etc. In this way, the learners are made to communicate in the form of role-players and imitate others. Thus, in the entire process of learning fluency is given more importance than accuracy.

The knowledge of English is essential in any field of education and research. Besides, to keep contact, i.e., economic, cultural, commercial, and political all over the world, knowledge of English is necessary. Realizing the importance of the English language, politicians, scientists, scholars, technocrats, and educators use it as a medium of communication. Apart from this, the English language plays an important role for the internet and so on.

As far as Yemen is concerned, English is taught as a foreign language in schools and universities in general and prescribed as a compulsory subject in the curriculum.

Teaching English starts in the first year of the preparatory school (VII Grade) and continues up to secondary school and further in the universities. In addition to this, the colleges of medicine, science, and engineering use the English language as the main instrument of learning. While referring to language situation in Yemen, Hillenbrand points out that Arabic is the language of government, the media, religious observance, and education in Yemen. Nonetheless, in the faculties of medicine, science, and architecture at the University of Sana'a, English is the medium of teaching. The English is main foreign language taught in schools and universities.

After the unification of Yemen in 1990 as the Republic of Yemen, economic and political conditions

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have undergone change, and the English language has assumed great significance. Thus, the use of the English language has increased in day to day life in modern Yemen. Educated or semi-educated persons have begun to communicate in English with others, especially foreigners. They are feeling proud while using some words in English. Hillenbrand remarks that since unification, English is slowly assuming importance as a second language in Yemen. Besides, among the non-Arab groups (from the UK, German, the USA, Pakistan, the Philippines, Malaysia, and other Countries) working in Yemen, English is the lingua france. Similarly, after the Revolution of 26th September 1962, Yemen has lunched the formal education system. (Abdulmalik and Chapman)

II. Aims and Objectives

The objectives of learning and teaching the English language as a foreign language in a communicative Perspective are to develop fluent English speaking among the students and create confidence in them. For this a suitable atmosphere is necessary so that the students can attempt to find out new words, phrases, and construct sentences to communicate with others. For this purpose, it is essential to lay stress on skills than systems and adopt learner-centered lessons.

III. Problems and Obstacles

There is no doubt that the purpose of the teaching English language from a communicative perspective is to use it as a medium of communication. However, many difficulties and obstacles come in the way of learning/teaching the English language, which adversely affect the learners. For instance, the teachers are not competent, overcrowded classes, lack of teaching aids, and teachers' proficiency in English and their limited experience with communicative language teaching. In addition to this, some teachers are not able to implement a communicative approach in the classroom properly, especially in the big size of the class. All these may lead to the failure of communicative language teaching in EFL.

Hence, it can be said that a communicative method is difficult to implement the communicative approach successfully so long as we are not aware of these problems and find out the possible remedies which may help both teachers and learners to overcome these problems.

IV. Suggestions

In this regard, I have made a humble attempt to make some suggestions `which, if implemented, are likely to improve the state of teaching and learning of English language at the schools, colleges, and universities in Yemen. They are as follows:

To improve teaching and to learn English as a foreign language from a communicative perspective, there should be an adequate number of students in the class, which would facilitate the communication of the students with their teachers and others.

The universities and schools in Yemen should design the curriculum in such a way that it focuses on listening and speaking exercises.

The topics in the curriculum should be such that the students should realize their usefulness and may help them to develop their speaking skills.

In this connection, the role of teachers also assumes significance. If they follow English language teaching from a communicative perspective, it will help the students to speak fluent English. It is necessary to train the teachers to teach the English language from a communicative perspective. Besides, the students should be motivated to read and write not for class assignments only but for enhancing their ability to communicate to speak English fluently.

The universities and schools should organize seminars, conferences, and workshops about the history of education, customs, and tourism in Yemen to create interest and enlist the participation of the people. The universities and schools should try to contact other universities and organize seminars and conferences and finalize topics for discussion in consultation with each other.

V. Conclusions

The above facts bring us to certain conclusions. English teaching and learning from the communicative perspective is likely to help the students to make the distinction between the sounds of English, the stress, intonation and other aspects of spoken English especially while talking to the native speaker.

Since speaking and listening are undoubtedly very useful skills for learning the language; hence, exercises in the classes which focus on speaking and listening would improve the ability of students to speak fluent English.

Lastly, it becomes obvious that despite the various policies adopted by the Department of Education and financial assistance, the progress in English learning in schools, colleges, and universities in Yemen has not made much headway due to socio-economic and political conditions.

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