



RESEARCH PAPER

The Role of SAARRD Application for EFL Learning in Pakistani Schools

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ABSTRACT

The primary intent of this research is to investigate the role of communicative language technique SAARRD for teaching English as a Foreign Language. The research is focused on the implementation of these tools to make English a familiar mode of communication for students who have not been associated to it in their cultural or social paradigms. It employs the case study of Pakistani students who have been subjected to learn English as a language and as a mode of education. The main objective of this study is to understand the hostility that English language makes students feel and their reluctance to incorporate it as a mode of communication in their daily lives. This research demonstrates that the application of SAARRD (Security, Aggression, Attention, Reflection, Retention and Discrimination) also helps the teachers understand the psychological behavior of the learners and aid in the development of more effective methods of teaching.

KEYWORDS

SAARD, Communicative Language Learning, English Language Teaching, Communication, Interactive Classrooms

Introduction

Counseling-Learning/Community Language Learning has been one of the most significant facets of English Language Teaching in the countries where English language is taught to the students as a foreign or second language. With the advent of globalization, English language became a more significant means of communication that was supposed to converge the whole world into a global village. However, human beings and the worldly paradigms are not as simple as imagined by scientific minds. There exist thousands of languages all over the world spoken by billions of people, the languages that thrive on culture, traditions and folk tales. The nomination of a global official language has put the non-English speakers ill at ease to learn English to walk along the developed world. There have been techniques designed to aid these non-English in learning the language. Some of the techniques have been fruitful in schools for the teachers and learners but English has been an alien language for the beginners and it seems quite difficult for the learners to associate with the language owing to the cultural barrier between the language and them. One of the techniques proposed by Charles Curran who is a prominent name in the field of language learning and linguistics, is known as SAARRD. In Counseling-Learning/Community Language Learning, this acronym represents the six elements necessary for non-defensive learning: S = Security; A = Aggression (students are given the opportunity to assert themselves); A = Attention (students' attention is focused); R = Reflection; R = Retention (integration of the new material takes place within the whole self); D = Discrimination (sorting out the differences among target language forms). La

Forge emphasizes the importance of interaction as "Language is people; language is persons in contact; language is persons in response" (La, 1983).

This research aims to understand the significance of SAARRD implementation in Pakistani classrooms where English is treated as Second Language but a vast majority of students and learners find it laborious to incorporate the language in their communication. Pakistani students and learners feel alien to English language and its usage since the grammatical principles and sentence structures are quite different in their native language from those in English language. There are no practice avenues and paradigms for the students to incorporate the language in their daily life. The primary intent of this research is to offer a framework for the teachers and learners to procure a cooperative environment in English language classrooms. This paper also attempts to underline the gross root problems in the implementation of traditional patterns of language learning.

Literature Review

There has been scarcity of research in the areas related to language, learning techniques when it comes to the countries where native speakers are not familiar with English language, or English language is not in daily use. Only a few countries have had this research and attempted to figure out the problems to implement accurate techniques in language learning. One of them is Japan. In Japan, in a research study conducted with low- intermediate students learning Japanese as a foreign language, Akai implemented the CLL method with analytic and synthetic learners during two periods of *experience* and *reflection*. The research indicated that keeping the balance between the learner-centered environment and a teacher-centered environment provides learning opportunities by addressing diverse learning style modalities (Akai, 2011).

In her study, Ariza used CLL techniques with students who were plagued by social and psycholinguistic hindrances, as a means to create feelings of comfort and thereby lower their anxiety toward foreign language learning. Although the learners were initially unapproachable, reluctant and resistant toward learning English, the teacher, as an understanding and empathetic counselor, was able to break the impenetrable barriers that threatened students' capability of learning a foreign language (Ariza, 2002).

"Despite the fact that the CLL method has some drawbacks, it can be beneficial for foreign language learners if applied properly. It is widely admitted that regardless of the type of method used, a professionally competent foreign language teacher should be able to adapt and analyze it in accordance with the materials and options available to meet the learners' and the institution's needs. To conclude, it is the responsibility of the teacher to discern what is best for students" (Ariza, 2002).

La Forge (1983) stresses upon the importance of interaction as "Language is people; language is persons in contact; language is persons in response" (La, p. 9).

In above mentioned references to researches, it is evident that not much attention has been granted to English language learning with regards to Pakistani learners even though Pakistan is one of the biggest English speaking nation alongside the USA and England.

Material and Methods

The purpose of this research is to explore the hindrances regarding the implementation and incorporation of English language in daily life in Pakistani students. This article also examines the application of SAARRD framework proposed by Curran in Pakistani classrooms to make them more interactive and beneficial for both the students and the teachers.

The research methodology opted for this research is qualitative method since no facts and figures have been documented. Critical discourse method of qualitative analysis has been applied to understand the problems and the suggestions catered to the questions raised in this research. This critical discourse method will aid to analyze the problems shared by the stakeholders of the techniques and language learning.

Results and Discussion

The theoretical framework applied in this research is community language learning proposed by Charles Curran and his companions. According to Curran (1972), "learning is a unified, personal and social experience, and the learner is not someone learning in isolation and in competition with others". His application of psychological counseling techniques to learning is named as Counseling-Learning that was largely inspired by Carl Roger's humanistic psychology; Community Language Learning represents the use of Counseling-Learning theory to teach languages. While studying with adults, Curran found out that older learners often feel threatened in a new and unfamiliar learning situation and fear to appear unintelligent/dumb. Curran proposed the application of SAARRD to avoid that threatened attitude and create a friendly environment in the classroom. One of the most significant features of this pattern is the solution for reducing anxiety and overcoming of learning barriers that learners might have at the initial stages of the learning process since Curran's approach was regarding the reduction of fear factor among the learners. It is deemed that in doing so, the learners can more easily learn the target language. It is relevant as Pakistani students feel the alienation with English and hence need to develop a psychological bond with it. The stages of learning in CLL identified by Charles Curran are as follows: "(1) Students don't know the target language and are completely dependent on the teacher. (2) With the aid of the teacher, students begin to use the new language. (3) Students use language independently and confidently, understand better, and may even begin to resist intervention by the teacher. (4) Students are able to express themselves more elaborately, although they may be aware of gaps in their knowledge. (5) Students are able to continue their learning without assistance" (Curran). This theoretical framework offers the treatment of the problems and hurdles by dealing with these five important problems elaborated on by Curran with regards to Pakistani students who learn English as a foreign/second language.

Language is mode of communication as well as carrying along the thought process. Language barrier exists when thought process does not directly connect with the communicating language. Human beings tend to opt for the language that associates with their culture, surroundings and thought process. This association with the language does not allow any other language to substitute itself with the native one. Thus, the learners of second or foreign language find it arduous to switch languages because their thought process lags in adapting the new language. The subconscious and the unconscious are not very much familiar with the new language and hence, it is quite difficult for the learner to connect the wavelengths of the conscious with the subconscious and unconscious part of his brain. A classroom is created for a learner to provide him/her the space to develop the

culture, tradition and thought processes in accordance with the new language. There are several characters that play a key role in the formation of such a subculture for the learner; a teacher, student and his fellow classmates. The teacher's initial role is significantly that of a counselor. This means that the teacher recognizes how threatening a new learning situation can be for adult learners, so he skillfully understands and supports his students in their struggle to master the target language. Initially, the learners are very dependent upon the teacher. It is recognized, however, that as the learners continue to study, they become increasingly independent. According to Curran, there are six elements necessary for non-defensive learning. These elements were observed when the students were asked to listen to the Human Computer and attempt to match their pronunciation to the computer's (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

Effective teachers not only have a deep base of content knowledge, but also possess the "pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) required to effectively help students learn specific subject matter. PCK is the understanding of how to make a subject area accessible to others, including both a range of pedagogical strategies and an understanding of learners' needs and misconceptions" (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987). Teachers or counselors who have expertise in a specific subset of courses, designs course for social studies, for instance, or student development and learning theory, the prospect of developing the understandings, practices, and dispositions outlined earlier is daunting. "The understandings alone include first and second language acquisition, the ways in which first language abilities can support second language development, cultural knowledge and its use as an affordance to learning, and the linguistic demands of specific disciplines' texts and pedagogies for local students. Given the appropriate background, social studies methods instructors could address these points with much more precision and nuance than instructors of diversity courses are typically able to offer. The content of diversity courses typically spans all content areas, and the instructors of these courses possess expertise in linguistic and/or cultural diversity, but not necessarily in content-specific domains" (Levine et al., 2016). "Extra-curricular activities are another way for language students to tap into local community resources. These could include, for example, a visit to a local museum, eating out at an English restaurant, or watching an English film during an international film festival. These activities would then provide suitable topics for subsequent conversation sessions in English and expand the students' understanding of the languages available to them in their multicultural society" (Henry & MacIntyre, 2023).

The journal entries are summative reflections of the students. "In the first (pre-reflective) entry, students summarize (in their native language) their attitudes toward learning English and the community project, as well as their goals and expectations for the course. They also provide a writing sample in English to serve as a baseline. In their final (post-reflective) journal entry, students are asked to look back on their initial remarks and assess both their English language development and their attitudes toward learning English and community engagement, reflecting on changes or growth as evidenced by their reflections throughout the semester. This summation is the basis for an oral presentation in which they share their reflections in groups. Each weekly journal entry includes a purpose statement, grammar hints, and specific topics that students should address. In journal two, as students begin to plan their service experience, they write about their likes and interests, using basic, present tense language skills they acquired in beginning English, and also use the preterit tense to discuss any arrangements they may have made. The encounters between the teacher and students are intended to provide a platform to exchange meaning, linguistically and culturally, and so the topics chosen should be ones the participants feel confident and comfortable talking about" (Cordella &

Huang, 2016). "In these journals, students continue to talk about their experiences in the past tense, as they have begun their project at this point. However, they also begin to incorporate their beliefs, doubts and preferences using the subjunctive, use predicting strategies to express their expectations, and include their initial subjective impressions about the community experience. Specifically, in journal four, they express what they hope to accomplish during their volunteer hours, what they fear, what they believe the experience will be like, and what their preferences might be in terms of the anticipated experience. The journal assignments involve more reflection about themselves as well as their existing understanding of the English cultures in the context of the local community. In the next journal, students reflect on personal details they would like to share with community partners, and also identify stereotypes they have heard about the English. They compare the subjunctive and indicative moods to reflect on whether they believe or doubt these stereotypes. It should be noted that this is a particularly challenging assignment for students, as they are reticent to admit to knowing or discussing any stereotypes, presumably because they don't want to be identified as holding these views themselves. Extensive class discussion prior to this assignment helps "allow" students to express these views as observations of society, without guilt or shame. As students learn structures which allow them to fully express hypothetical scenarios, they are instructed to reflect on what they might do as community leaders or, alternatively, as marginalized members of society. In journals, students are increasingly guided to assess potential challenges faced by the English community, drawing on discussions with community partners and reflecting on their own observations in previous assignments. They are also guided to make observations about their own life experiences, and to make comparisons and connections between communities. Grammatical structures are also increasingly integrated where the students express their hypothetical scenarios, future plans, past experiences and present tense situations in the same assignment" (Purdy, 2018). The students must be normalized by certain assurances including "Don't be afraid of making mistakes", "it is okay if you ignore grammar and just speak", or if some freshman come to you, you must say like, "Please join us" and there must be shifting roles' practices where you curate stories by shifting the roles you enact with the students. Extra-curricular activities are another way for language students to tap into local community resources. These could include, for example, a visit to a local museum, eating out at an English restaurant, or watching an English film during an international film festival. These activities would then provide suitable topics for subsequent conversation sessions in English and expand the students' understanding of the languages available to them in their multicultural society.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Pakistani students who are familiarized during their formative years with English Language must not fail to formulate sentences and their thought process with the second language if they are prone to practices and their counselors are trained to aid them. The students must be provided with the facilities to adopt non-defensive learning with the help of six elements technique including sense of security in classrooms; students are given the opportunity to assert themselves; students' attention is focused and the class is interactive for them to contribute; they must reflect to what they learn, what they achieve and what they observe and think about everything around them openly; a paradigm designed for integration of the new material takes place within the whole self help them sorting out the differences among target language forms.

Recommendations

While considering the analysis and the conclusion of this research, accommodation of students' insecurities and hesitation to boost their confidence to learn English language and to adopt it in their conversation more conveniently is necessary. For that matter, there must be training for the teachers and the counselors, the exams must be practice oriented. The encounters between the teacher and students are intended to provide a platform to exchange meaning, linguistically and culturally, and so the topics chosen should be ones the participants feel confident and comfortable talking about. Simple questions about hobbies or food can be a good starting point for students to test and apply conversation strategies, while at a later, more advanced stage, abstract topics can be introduced as stimuli for developing a discussion and expressing opinions. The family can also be a suitable introductory topic, but this occasionally involves uncomfortable personal information, and the older participant needs to be prepared to activate an empathic topic shift in such circumstances. The topics chosen should also, of course, link to the requirements of the school curriculum.

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