PUPIL ABILITIES AND THEIR NEEDS ANALYSIS IN VIEW OF PAKISTANI SETTINGS

Hina Mujeeb Ahsan
University of Sargodha
PAKISTAN.
neena_619@yahoo.com

Sundus Gohar
University of Sargodha
PAKISTAN.
sndsghr447@gmail.com

Hafiz Ahmed Bilal
Department of English, University
of Sargodha, PAKISTAN.
ahmadbilal.uos@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper aims at demonstrating the current educational conditions of Pakistan, particularly concerning the government schooling system and the application of GTM, which renders students less productive and creative in their area of interest. This paper also aims at projecting the fact that every student has different needs, and in order to device a successful way of learning, it must not be overlooked the fact that these very needs should be taken into consideration so that learning native and target language must not be considered a hurdle. In Pakistan, there is a need of carrying out a productive way, whereby the process of both teaching and learning could be made effective. The subject domain under which this research is being carried out is Applied Linguistics, as the paper requires the knowledge, skill and application of language learning process as a whole. Applied Linguistics in this case helps us determine the thought, and puts it into action, as to what is the actual purpose of language and how it must be taught and inculcated into the learners' mind.

Keywords: Applied Linguistics, language learning, teaching, target language

INTRODUCTION

To teach a target language, or for that matter, to make someone communicate with the help of target language is an efficient yet demanding field of any institute, in order to make its learners more experienced in language and its usage.

We need to realize the fact that language learning is not an overnight concept. Language is like a complex crumpled ball of threads, and in order to simplify things one has to separate each thread and analyze its patterns. Therefore, it is a step-by-step procedure.

"A synthetic language learning strategy is one in which the different parts of language are taught separately and step-by-step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of the parts until the whole structure of language has built up." (Wilkins, 1976, p 2)

There are certain methods employed in order to teach the second language or native language for grammar for any perspective. Many techniques have been adopted by different countries around the world, according to their resources. In the United States, or other advanced countries, the methodologies adopted are way too advanced and equally efficient to ensure the fact that the reading or any such activities that dwell in the way of second language acquisition are resolved to the maximum extent. The universally known methods, for example the Grammar Translation Method (G.T.M.), Suggestopedia, Total Physical Response (T.P.R.), Audio-lingual Method, Communicative Approach, Direct Method and many others have been employed to ensure this very fact that students around the globe are provided an easy way of grasping the concepts on their native as well as target language.

Out of all these methods, a few are under practice in Pakistan and to a greater extent, some well-known and highly advanced universities and institutions, with the aid of well-equipped multi-media class rooms, have been able to generate the facilities along with the practicality of these methods on a grand scale.

WHAT IS NEEDS ANALYSIS?

"Needs analysis has a vital role in the process of designing and carrying out any language course whether it is for English for Specific Purpose (ESP), or general English course."(Songhori, 2008, p 2.)

According to what has been projected in the above said statements, it may be justifiable in proclaiming that needs analysis aims at the analysis of "individual" requirements. It helps in numerous ways by helping the course designers to set the particular syllabuses in a way, which makes them design things according to the mindsets of the learners.

In most of the countries, needs analysis is the basis of syllabus design and consequently language learning. Needs analysis is based on syllabus as well as needs of students. Syllabus and teaching techniques are formed and improved based on needs analysis.

Needs analysis actually fulfills students' learning needs along with their desires and wishes. It also plays a major part in fulfilling the expectations of parents, family and teachers. Though needs analysis is formal, extensive and a time consuming procedure, yet this fact cannot be overlooked that it provides an insight as to how any course should be designed according to the requirements of a learner. Due to needs analysis, we may be able to incorporate things in students properly.

The information that is retained through needs analysis would help in defining our goals. These goals may help teacher how to teach and what to teach. Through needs analysis we actually lay the foundation of education.

An Overview of Needs Analysis and Factors Determining It in Pakistani Settings

In Pakistan needs analysis is, to some an extent, neglected. If one really wants to incorporate things in students, one has to work on needs analysis first.

Features of Needs Analysis

Background of a learner

One of the basic steps of evaluation of the needs is that the learning techniques and the learner are both to be well observed by the teacher. Not only will it help in the modification of themes as to how should be a learner approached by the teacher. These minute observations will later be of a greater importance particularly at a stage when the experimentation of the teacher would begin.

Needs of a boy belonging from Punjab are different from that of Baluchistan, and similarly, needs of a boy from Lahore will be different from that of Sargodha. This is so because in both cases, different social set-ups intervenes the demand of learning.

"Learners also vary widely in the degree of mastery of structures that they attain." (Yalden, 1987, p 15.)

Thus, by analyzing their needs, one may be able to propound a syllabus or course which does not forgets to keep those things as a check, and should not neglect these social boundaries because it may lead to either the utter failure of the course or entire collapse of the learners' concepts.

Competence

Level of competence, of course, matters a lot while carefully planning the course, and this again employs the expertise of needs analysis because with its help, many problems are solvable.

After knowing about the background of the learner, competence is the next hurdle. Every individual is born with a natural level of acquiring things and to reproduce them. This level needs to be assessed differently in students, as it varies in them. In course designing, this factor if omitted, can lead to utter lack of response from learners' side. It needs to be re-assessed until it becomes what is acceptable universally.

In Pakistan, every province , stretching to its respective cities, have got learners who vary in their level of competence and authorities who design the course and its contents must have experts who are working as helpers to support and make things easier for the learners to grasp.

Medium

Our basic focus should be to figure out whether the real hurdle in the path of learning is knowledge or the language. All the concepts introduced must be on the initial stage of learning because if the medium of language of a school is abruptly converted from some native to English language it will render the students in an utterly collapsed situation. Needs analysis demands that difference between the language and knowledge must be kept in mind because it has to help the students to learn more efficiently, provided that the things are made easy for them.

Culture

Culture plays a significant role in the needs analysis. Requirements of every culture vary, they are not different. Needs analysis conducted in Punjab would never fulfill the needs of Baluchistan and vice versa.

Culture stands well above in all the other techniques required for the analysis of all the kinds of researches. It demonstrates how a society grows and from its growth what are the kinds of nourishing elements, which are essential for its development.

As far as needs analysis is concerned, we may consider culture an important element for its study. In Pakistan, however, things are and have been always the same as far as the change in syllabus is concerned. In our culture we are void of all the sorts of transitional changes, which are taking place in the world outside. This is due to the fact that here change in syllabus is, perhaps, not welcomed. Since society does not show the tendency to enhance their thinking and explore new ways to approach towards syllabus contents, our country is lagging behind.

PUPIL ABILITIES INTENSIFICATION METHOD (P.A.I.M.)

Introduction and Objectives

Many a schools in Pakistan are either void of efficient teachers, or likewise competent students. Due to this very factor, the learners and the current educational system are fond of the GTM. This tradition is currently being followed in government schools and so is it being exercised in the institution, which was the center of this research, Government Comprehensive Girls High School, Sargodha, Pakistan.

In this particular research a new method is navigated, however, keeping in mind the usual trends of teaching the target language here in Pakistan as well as the trends of inculcating the concepts to students here in the above specified school. Digging further into the said matter, let this fact be also acknowledged that there are certain institutions which have revolted against the GTM, as they believe that the core of teaching the second language is by means of adopting certain other methods which are more reliable, advanced and beneficial both in giving the concepts to students as well as evaluating their mind. Following is the set patterns which these government schools take up:

"The roles are very traditional. The teacher is the authority in the class room. The students do as he says so can learn what he knows." (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, p 10)

This research aims upon devising a new method, as well as keeping in view the necessitated factors which are applicable and used instead of GTM for the betterment of students so that they are being well informed of the language they are to deal with.

With the use of certain techniques adopted, the motive was to observe the way of learning used in the classes. When observations, which will further be listed below, were collected from our method and of those adopted by the school teachers were compared they appeared to be completely different. Since the paper is referring to language teaching or for that matter the second language acquisition, the teacher has his or her way of incorporating the concepts. The focus, as mentioned above, was to deviate from the usual hold of strictness and adopt friendly and open behavior so that the students would be able to overcome the possible hesitations which act as a hurdle in their way of acquiring concepts about language. More over the use of native tongue was also observed, since the students themselves, when forced to speak in English were unable to open their minds. When this limitation of answering the teacher in English was relaxed a little, they immediately responded to the right idea.

The use of white board along with the charts, already displayed, was also a part of analysis. It not only helped in judging the students but also, on the other hand, enhanced their capacity to approach it and perform some tasks regarding the grammatical activities of the second language. Punctuality is also an important factor regarding the profession of teaching, which was not followed by majority of the teachers there. Focus was upon the fact that punctuality on the part of teacher enables the student to mentally prepare them that a lesson is about to begin and this factor further helps them to grasp the concepts more effectively. Perception level of students differ from one another, so it was made possible to the best level to analyze each and every student by means of creative writing and in accordance to that, we taught them a few more concepts about grammar of the target language.

Techniques Adopted

In this particular research analysis certain techniques and methodologies were applied while conducting this practical test. Firstly, the permission as well as the assurance of full cooperation on the part of selected school was necessary which they did provide to their best possible extensions of rules and regulations. Secondly, judging the concepts of grammar was the area of focus and, in addition to this, the application of language learning methods was also observed. Use of music or tape recorder was not taken into consideration due to the shortage of time and the school's regulations. Thirdly, a new way of teaching the target language was devised and that proved to be more helpful and convenient than the one with which they were actually being taught. Finally, there was a deviation from the usual show of strictness and the pressure, which normally grasps the learners at first.

The Experience

On the first day, a positive yet confused response from students' side was received but with the aid of certain techniques and the knowledge of all the teaching methods applicable in a classroom, the observations were started. During the teaching time, it was noticed that GTM method was practiced there. Having known the outcome of GTM, a different method was adopted and that was by teaching those students in a friendly manner, free of any kind of mental stress. The very first observation made was that the students were treated like vermin there. They were not allowed to have their say in any matter, plus they were also not prohibited to speak out of turn.

In general, the environment given to them for the purpose of research was all in all void of any stern barriers. Relaxation of rules was deliberate and change in behavior was noticed. On the first day, certain ways adopted by teachers, already employed there in order to teach English, were asked. Furthermore, it was observed that majority of the students were not familiar to the grammatical rules. They were asked about the nature of certain sentences on the board and were interrogated if there was anything wrong with them, they failed to point out the odd at first, till one of them did, but that too was on a guess basis. It all depends upon the teacher. The students afterwards sensed that the pretended teachers were not being "conventionally" harsh to them; they immediately started to work up along quite well. They were, gradually though, able to participate in the class and even if they gave wrong answers, they were encouraged of the fact that at least they participated. By this, it was inferred that their moral boosted. The first day, their abilities were noticed and observed. Creative writing was then made a part of that lesson. Upon checking their creative writing one thing was sure and evident too- the children had the concept of using second language but along with it they also used their native language. Still, this was not discouraged because the goal was to observe them.

The next day, a change was noticed in their written tests, and in comparison to that of the first day, these were way better. The second day of observations was considerably more efficient. Again, the class activity was deliberately made a little difficult. They were asked to define certain grammatical terms of English. It was more of a test. This time a completely different outlook was presented. A few of the students, those with weak grasp on the L2, used L1 to express their views. Thus, over all, skills were used in a way that the students would not be confused by the way of teaching. The use of L2 was there but L1 was also occupied a major chunk of classroom discourse. The students, from the two days creativity, did somehow show improvement.

www.journals.savap.org.pk
678

ANALYSIS

Observations	*Inferences*
1. Students rose and greeted. 2. Teacher observes their class while they open their books. 3. Students had no knowledge of grammar of the target language. 4. Creative writing was conducted which had a use of native language too. 5. Errors were also made but the teacher corrected without pointing out that student. 6. Teacher encourages one student; the others participate with more energy. 7. On day two, more enthusiasm is observed on the part of students. 8. They were less afraid on being questioned. 9. The next day they came up with more ideas and shared them with the teacher. 10. The teacher conducted a conceptualization test based on grammatical rules.	1. Obedience on the part of students encourages teachers to feel welcomed. 2. Charts were there, the furniture was highly uncomfortable. Students were not comfortably seated. 3. Since they are an outcome of GTM, they may recognize the grammatical concepts, but they may not be able to reproduce it. 4. They failed to reproduce creative writing on day one, as it was totally in L2. 5. Errors are, to some an extent, tolerated. 6. Element of encouragement is there. This may also be taken as a positive reinforcement on the behalf of whole class. 7. Students were more confident this time, now that they had developed some relation with the teacher. 8. They had now gained courage to actively participate. 9. Teacher made the environment of the class favorable. 10. Still the use of L1 was there but they did grasp the grammatical concepts in L2

Drawing out Possible Conclusions

Influence of a teacher matters a lot. If students sense that the teacher is fully cooperative, they themselves would be taking an equal interest. Stern and strict environment prevents language learning. Creative ability was tested and they, according to their individual perception level, deciphered their sentences. They were very hesitant in answering the teacher using the target language, but with the help of native language, they overcame their hesitation. They participated fully on the next day of observation and even used the target language to express their views.

ROLE OF NEEDS ANALYSIS IN P.A.I.M

When a child is of the age ranging from 3 to 7 years, that is the most active stage to learn the concepts of his age and they do retain these all in their memory. Psyche of every student is different and mostly economic factors determine it. Contents of a good syllabus should be made in a way that they are easily comprehendible for the learners so that things may internalize in their brain smoothly. Needs analysis determines the check and balance of learners and their needs, their limitations, their boundaries, etc. everything is governed by it. It must be mentioned here that there are certain goals and objectives for every kind of "analysis". Needs analysis broadens the boundaries that goals of each and every learner vary, and they must be considered before steps are evolved in order to formulate theories on the content and method of course designing. Actual purpose of needs analysis is to fulfill the requirements of human beings, not on the basis of mere hypothesis but on the basis of true needs.

While designing any course or syllabus, things should be taken up from the grass-root level. It should not be otherwise because if, for instance, a teacher starts to explain about the respiratory system, without giving or setting the basis of what actually a human body's structure is, how would the learner be able to catch a thread of all that?

Pakistani institutions, even after the lapse of 64 years of independence, are still unable to meet the standers of what the outer world holds and demands. The sole reason is that the books are not up-to-date. We have been reading what our parents have read, the same contents. The elite schools, however, have introduced books and course content of Oxford University or that of other foreign academics and students who can afford them are the ones who latter on take away the big chunk of opportunities.

The authorities should, therefore, join heads in making the syllabus requirements meeting the up-to-date one and by doing so, should train the teachers as to how should be the syllabus be taught.

Objectives of P.A.I.M

The Pupil Ability Intensification Method then aims at the fact that when a soft or a patient instructor is asked to teach L2, the students act under his or her influence and they want to prove it to him that they are equally participating. This is because they are encouraged at every step.

P.A.I.M. also encourages that students write, learn, and participate well, plus the tension that grips them at being questioned first, must be eradicated so that there is no hurdle in the process of second language acquisition. Due to a patient teacher, they have a chance to share their own views and the teacher would not discourage the students if he is using right or wrong tenses of grammar, he will ignore it for the time being, but will correct it in a way that the child would not feel that he has been pointed at. In teaching any language, the teacher and the student together can make everything very easy but it is made possible only when there is a full collaboration from both the learner and the learnt. A combination of good understanding class and a patient instructor of second language tend to enhance the creative abilities of the respective students.

CONCLUSION

In Pakistan, there are certain lapses in the educational system which needs the focus of not only the government employees but also that of the researchers' and scholars' to point out the flaws in order to improve the standards.

The method introduced above, aimed at the betterment of the current government schooling system. In comparison to this all, a common Pakistani citizen would go for the private educational system for the fact that the latter is far advanced in their approach. They have introduced new ways of learning; the teachers are way to cooperative than those in the government institutes. People question these days as to why the government schools are in shambles. But for this they need to see the fact that it is due to the negligence of the authorities governing them. Furthermore, needs of pupil are not looked after properly. Since GTM is employed, needs and say of students is not given any particular importance. This is the reason that over the course of years, there is no particular development observed in their teaching patterns.

The combination of needs analysis and this method aims at the fact that priority of needs analysis is to address the common needs of the students as it foresees the root cause which lies in the process of learning as a whole. The teacher, however must be must be there to address the particular needs of the learners in order to make them eminent towards acquiring their targets, as a teacher is, and should be, more of a psychologist. These factors if negated in the cultivation of a better nation would bring harm to the generations, upon whom our future rests. Therefore, needs analysis makes certain calculations of the requirements that are needed for the pedagogical development of the learners.

This self-devised method is created for the very reason that the students may not be pressurized by the teacher while teaching them the concepts of target language. Their abilities must not be underestimated as they need a comfortable and relaxed environment to incorporate and to generate something fruitful ideas out of those teachings. Every student should be given the free use of the choice of the language in which he wishes to express his ideas, be it native or the target language. Later on, it is the job of the instructor to enhance his vocabulary and fulfill his or her students' other shortcomings. Furthermore, in the way of the of target language learning, the method used by the majority of institution in Pakistan is GTM, due to this very reason it has rendered students less productive. Their productiveness can be measured by placing them in a comfortable, collaborative and helpful environment.

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