

THE ROLE OF NEWSPAPERS IN THE ENHANCEMENT OF LANGUAGE SKILLS

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Abstract

In the period of globalization where humanity has witnessed enormous development in the field of technology. In this advancement English has become an international commodity and has made the world a 'global village' by giving it a global language for communication. With worldwide advents, trends have been changed and consequently new challenges have to be addressed with new language teaching techniques which can expediently be used in English language teaching with the most suitable, reliable and homely examples of real-life situation. Newspapers and magazines are the most widely usage of the media and they expand the curriculum with infinite data to use as authentic materials to learn the English language. This paper focuses on mainly the role of newspapers and magazines to teach English in the ESL/EFL classrooms.

Key words: newspapers, international commodity, flexibility, up-to-date knowledge authentic materials, global language, cost-effective, disciplines in teaching.

INTRODUCTION

Newspapers are regarded as a great source of learning a language and encompass lots of interesting and cutting-edge articles on the topics of news, features, sports, education, social, business and cultural sections, which in turn, provide variety to learners. Real-life events not only arouse the interest of learners but unconsciously aid in playing the role of silent language teacher. These realistic events arouse students' curiosity and they not only provide knowledge, but also afford a practical way of indulging students in learning language. With the help of language, people can share information and communicate with each other as well express their ideas.

The flexibility of the newspaper has long made it an attractive instructional tool for classroom teachers. Educators have used the news- paper as a motivational device to develop basic skills and to promote learning in various subject areas. Additionally, some instructors (especially those in language arts, EFL, and social studies) have integrated the study of the newspaper into their courses.

For English language learners, developing vocabulary is an imperative of the language learning process. Having a good repertoire of vocabulary knowledge is necessary to understand any form of text (Akhter, Kausar and Faisal, 2020). And the newspaper serves as an important resource in this endeavor. Even, majority of the mostly known linguo-skill exams` questions are being taken from newspapers.

In a high-tech world, which is largely driven by technology to improve teaching and learning, post COVID-19, newspapers offer traditional English language teaching and learning materials. However, the newspaper stands tall among the plethora of motivational material to improve language skills such as reading, writing and developing vocabulary and improving spelling, as it can be easily adapted to suit the individual levels of students. Thus, it could be said that newspapers can definitely supplement the traditional lectures (Ali and Devi, 2013). Most textbooks used in the English language classroom contain activities that do not conform to the true nature of communicative teaching (Nwoke A., 1987)

and most textbooks are unsuitable, inadequate or expensive (National Policy on Education, 1981). The reason to choose the English newspaper as an instrument in the teaching of English is two-fold: the newspaper is a cost-effective, easily accessible, friendly on the wallet textbook that provides the reader with up-to-date knowledge on a vast array of topics, whilst being a language developer which is a simple thesaurus that unconsciously advances the reader's vocabulary base, in various and many cases.

Using newspapers in the educational sphere provides real life situations of effectively acquiring and using English as a communicative tool (Education World, 2011) in addition to improving vocabulary skills, increasing knowledge and making learning more interactive and fun (Tafida and Dalhatu, 2014). The use of newspapers is encouraged as an educational tool both to complement and supplement traditional classroom texts and resource materials.

The Importance of the Newspaper in the Language Classroom

Having long incorporated classroom discussion in teaching is the main aspect of successful teachers. This technique, with its potential to build oral communication and critical thinking skills, works particularly well with newspapers, which constitute a reservoir of springboards to exchange views of people. English newspaper will not only motivate the learner but also gradually eliminate the fear that the learner has for the English language.

The newspaper's greatest appeal for many educators lies in its ability to improve reading skills. Researchers have clearly indicated that skillful and reflective use of the newspaper can stimulate a desire to read. One study of a nine-week program that experimented with the newspaper as a learning device reported significant gains in word recognition and in comprehension (Stetson, Elton, 1977). Another study with sixth graders using the newspaper on a daily basis concluded that students exposed to the daily newspaper in the classroom out-performed those who pursued course work in the usual manner (Wilson, 1966). One factor that precipitated the study was the revelation that a very small percent of the average and below-average students at the school had a newspaper in their home, but almost all of the families of the above-average students regularly received a newspaper.

Education World (2011) has enunciated ten broad reasons as to why newspapers are effective classroom teaching tools.

1. They are a medium that students of all ability levels can be read.
2. They deal with what's happening here and now, providing motivation for reading and discussion.
3. They make learning fun
4. They are extremely flexible and adaptable to all curriculum areas and grade levels.
5. They bridge the gap between the classroom and the 'real' world.
6. They build good reading habits that will last a lifetime.
7. They can be cut, marked, clipped, pasted, filed and recycled.
8. They give everyone something to read news, sports, weather, etc.
9. They are a cost-effective way to educate.
10. They contain practical vocabulary and the best models for clear and concise writing.

In recent years classroom interaction has become the main subject of study. Research on this teaching method has shown that it to be an excellent device in stimulating a desire to learn. Studies have related classroom interaction to leadership style and have demonstrated that successful classroom climates, in which students participate in discussions, are related to student achievement. Educators who respect students' feelings and ideas and encourage their responses have auditory that promote learning. Other studied researches have positively correlated critical thinking and cognitive growth with teachers' questions particularly with higher-level interrogatories.

Newspapers mostly considered practice-based material in teaching. One of the priorities of this material is its correspondence for all level learners. When it comes to the comparison with other materials like textbooks or level-based books, the language used in the textbooks is considered a standard one and there is no possibility to change the text until the completion of the time duration of the course, whereas the language used in the newspapers is not a permanent one, they can be changeable from day to day as newspapers are published daily. Moreover, the language used in the newspapers is also vary from day-to-day. It gives the chance for the teachers to select the applicable material useful for their teaching. A point, which they should take is the needs and interests of the learners as well as consideration to engage them in the ESL/EFL classroom activities. Newspapers make the learners to participate in the classroom activities with more interest and enthusiasm, the ESL/EFL learners learn the language skills perfectly with higher motivation and finish the tasks more successfully. Therefore, according to the interests and needs of the learners, teachers of English language should make use of the daily newspapers in order to design apposite materials in classrooms for the sake of teaching and learning a fruitful one.

The teachers of English can improve the language skills of the second or foreign learners by adopting material from the available English newspapers and perform various activities. This kind of activities really enhances the learners', reporting skills, reading skills of skimming at the same time, enrich their vocabulary base. The learners can develop critical thinking skills as well as speaking skills. Furthermore, the teachers can also show the learners a picture of a famous person or an incident that has happened and ask them to say something about it. Via taking the latest and burning topics from the newspapers and ask the learners to prepare a short summary of the news in three or four sentences so that it really improves the learners' reading as well as writing skills. In addition, via organized group work activities pupils can learn or improve how to socialize, and concentrate on a particular topic and answer the questions by reading the article thoroughly. Below given some sample questions and activities that might be used in auditory:

Activity During the first-class period, let the students handle the newspaper. On the second-class day, ask the students to read or skim only those topics that interest them and then list the topics.

Questions to ask

1. What first attracts you to something in the newspaper? Habit? Headlines? Photographs?
2. Do you feel familiar enough with the paper to know which sections you prefer?
3. Are there other items in the newspaper that might interest you if ~ you have more time?
4. Do you look at advertising? Why do you read an ad?

The newspaper headline, concentrating on the main idea of an article, may serve as an excellent focal point for a lesson with slower students.

Activity I

1. Create a newspaper of articles and photographs, but without headlines. Make multiple choices for distribution to the class.
2. Have the students write headlines for the articles.
3. Through the blackboard or transparency, share the students' head- lines and use them as topics for discussion.

With younger children, newspaper photographs, illustrations, cartoons, and comics present many opportunities for various creative activities. Examples of their use follow:

1. They can be used for coloring.
2. They can be pasted on colored paper and used as flash cards to tell a story.
3. Pasteups can be perforated and strung together to make a comic or picture show.
4. Many newspapers contain puzzles, articles, and activities specifically designed for the young

learners, for example, the mini pages.

Furthermore, in the area of arithmetic also newspaper offers young students have countless opportunities. A sense for numbers may be developed by having students "count pages, columns on a page, articles on a page and headlines on a page." The large numbers used in advertisements are well suited for use by younger children. They can also cut out numbers from the newspaper to match numbers on a sheet provided by the teacher.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be noted that well organized and systematic teaching can make a tremendous difference.

Since newspapers provides most recent information and the language used in them is out of the ordinary that of the language used in the textbooks, the teachers of English should make use of the appropriate material in order to motivate and attract the ESL/EFL learners. For that reason, teachers should adopt materials form the available English newspapers according to the needs, desires as well as interests of the learners so that the learners will pay more attention on the subject and participate in the classroom activities with higher motivation. Thus, the teachers as well as the learners of the language should make use of the resources from newspapers and magazines to make their teaching and learning more productive. With some imagination and effort, the newspaper will successfully serve many disciplines in teaching. The more students read, the better they can understand the world around them and the culture in it, and they are able to develop their vocabulary. The importance of English newspapers in the learning process of the English language takes pride of place, as reading newspapers on a daily basis can help students to improve their language skills and general knowledge.

RESOURCES

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