

An Advanced Model for English Teaching: Focusing on the Primary-Students

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Abstract As cognition develops in infancy, early childhood is appropriate to initiate language learning. In this paper, we explore the paradoxical condition in second-language acquisition faced by pre-primary classes of State Government schools in Kerala, India. The paper focuses on the first Standard English textbook of the current curriculum in order to find the drawbacks in textbook content and methods of teaching. We develop a more flexible and productive model for the students with the assistance of new trends and concepts in teaching. The paper also analyses the teacher's role in the 21st-century language learning and probe into the psychological phases of language acquisition in the toddlerhood, especially in contemporary classrooms

Keywords: English teaching; government schools; second language teaching sample; English as second language; second language acquisition

(Dutta and Bala)In this paper, the emphasis is on second language acquisition through a profound study of first Standard Kerala SCERT English textbook in comparison with NCERT textbook in India. One of the problems lies in the approach of English teaching and learning in the primary classrooms of government schools in Asian countries like India. Moreover, these students face difficulty in higher classes as a result of improper foundation and inappropriate learning in early classes. The regular method of teaching is insufficient and unadaptable for the pre-primary and primary students. Hence a strategic model of a unit for the first-grade students of government schools with several suggestions for the improvisation in teaching methodology is provided.

I. INTRODUCTION

Language acquisition is a natural process that evolves rapidly within a first few months of a child's birth. There are several basic theories formed about the language acquisition which include behaviorism, nativism, and interactionism. These were later altered to advanced studies and highly effective approaches. However, all these perspectives have proved that there is a complex blend of socio-cultural and biological influences and a distinct style in acquiring language for every child. A child gradually grasps the first language (mother-tongue) from the environment through different means. Brain pays attention to every utterance and sounds heard around during the sensitive period (between 3 and 7 months). "Imaging studies indicate that people who learn a second language early in life activate the same brain region when using either language. But people learning a second language later than age 11 seem to use different regions for each language." (Biopsychology 188) No child learns a language if he/she is not aptly exposed to it in early years; Thus, formal education of the second language before age 11 can provide a suitable base for the children inside the classroom. "India is a multilingual country with numerous languages and dialects. There are 1,652 languages/dialects belonging to five different language families in this country. There are 22 scheduled languages mentioned in the 8th schedule of the Constitution. 1 Over 87 languages are used in the print media and 71 languages are used in the audio media. However, only 47 languages are used as the media of instruction in schools and English is one of them. English has been accorded the status of associate official language at the national level."

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II. OBJECTIVES

The main objectives include:

1. To compare and evaluate Kerala SCERT English First standard textbook with that of NCERT textbook
2. To observe the methodology of teaching in both classrooms with the current syllabus.
3. To analyze the quality of teachers and importance of LSRW learning.
4. To make suggestions to develop a new method of teaching based on findings.
5. The research is divided into 1) assessment of the textbooks, 2) problems of teaching, 3) analysis and results 4) suggestions for improvement. Under the Interactionist theory of language acquisition, we scrutinize the regular approach of teachers with the aids so provided by the government in accordance with the psychological aspects of younger children.

III. MAIN FINDINGS:

The main findings through textbook analysis, classroom observations and teaching methods are summarized below as three subdivisions:

1. Textbook Analysis

1. Scert textbooks of primary classes focus less on listening and speaking skills which doesn't familiarize the language.
2. Textbooks lays their principles in reading and writing, short stories and poetry which is not captivating without activities to do.
3. English textbooks are not just for understanding alphabets, but it can assist in developing other soft skills.



2. Classroom Observations

1. Libraries aren't sufficiently equipped with lower class books of stories, poetry and activities.
2. Students did not get opportunity to learn language and practical usage of the language outside classroom is unobserved.
3. Participation and interaction of student-teacher in the class is less.
4. Teacher's focus on reading and writing, lacks communication and exchange of ideas by students inside the classroom.
5. In primary classrooms, reading is observed- individual reading, chorus reading and repeating. But this doesn't really appreciate speaking skills.

IV. TEACHING METHODS

1. Minimum qualification of teachers(B.Ed./TTC) do not really provide hands-on-experience in teaching English language for toddlers.
2. For teachers, practical knowledge is weak over theory knowledge.
3. Special training programs as supplementary add-ons are not implemented to upskill primary school teachers.
4. Though these in-service training remain confined to lectures and theories rather than active participation to learn.
5. Though English is medium of instruction in the English language classes, teachers often resort to native or regional language and teach just the lessons.

V. ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN INDIA

English language entered India through East India Company since 1800, Christian missionaries began schools and nurseries for teaching their language and culture. "Macaulay's minutes on education dated 2nd Feb 1835 – approved by the then Governor General of India, William Bentick on March 7, 1835 – became the cornerstone of British India educational policy. English became a language of the affluent in the Indian sub-continent, as a result of this policy. The bureaucracy opened opportunities for those knowing English. It established itself as the language of the elite, intelligentsia and educated middle class." (Dutta and Bala 1) After Independence, numerous states adopted English for scientific research and academic purposes. As the increasing usage of English nowadays in daily life results in the revival of English teaching in primary classes. This is due to the following reasons: urbanization, development of information technology and social media, changes in jobs sector, tourism, outsourcing, popularity of films and TV, globalization, growth of middle-class sector and so on. This resulted in the increased pressure of admission to high-paid English medium schools. English language rather than being a fancy language it turned out to be a language of employment opportunities and global identity. Privatization of educational institutions has made admissions more intricate than before. English got an important and promising place in everyone's life. This made state governments to introduce English subject in Education policies. There are many policies that progressed

elementary education: SarvaSiksha Abhiyan (2001), The National Knowledge Commission (2007), The Right to Education Act (2009). Teaching of English as a subject builds a gap which can be filled in the proper teaching of English, just not as a subject but also as a medium of instruction in the classrooms from early childhood. "The National Curriculum Framework-2005 (NCF 2005) lays stress on the use of child's mother tongue as a medium of learning at the primary level. At the same time Teaching of English in an appropriate manner to enable the child to acquire sufficient proficiency in the language has also been given due importance in the NCF-2005. As per the National Curriculum Framework- 2005 at the initial stages, English may be one of the languages for learning activities that create the child's awareness of the world." (Dutta and Bala 5) In Kerala, "English education was deep-rooted in Kerala since the first half of nineteenth century. In 1917, Her Majesty Rani Parvathi Bai issued a proclamation that education is the responsibility of the state. This was a turning point in the educational history of Kerala. The adoption of KER in 1959 paved the way for Universal Education in Kerala. During the colonial period, medium of instruction in most of the schools was English especially in schools started by Missionaries". (N.Sureshkumar 35)

Common issues of Kerala SCERT Students:

1. Socio-cultural and economic condition
2. Lack of pre-school training
3. Insufficient parent support
4. Lack of English – speaking ambience outside the classroom
5. Over loaded with textbook contents
6. Teacher-centered, no individual attention or care.

VI. ASSESSMENT OF THE SCERT ENGLISH TEXTBOOK

Kerala schools are mainly divided into three boards, State board, CBSE board, and ICSE board. Each board has distinct curriculum, CBSE- Central Board Secondary Education includes much more standard and improvised syllabus in lower classes. These schools include Kendriya Vidyalayas and other affiliated private institutions. Recently, there are international schools with IGCSE curriculum with high-paid fees like in ICSE board schools. ICSE, Indian Certificate of Secondary Education formed and run by 'Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE)' - "This Indian Council was set up on the grounds that a board was required to administer the examinations being conducted in India by the University of Cambridge and to optimally tailor them according to the nation's need. The future education policies were prepared under the aegis of the Cambridge varsity." (Wikipedia) And an average parent cannot send their children to these high-paid schools, hence, it's significant to standardize the teaching concepts and syllabi to accommodate students from lower classes. In Kerala, "Out of the 55 lakhs students in the school system, only less than 5% of the students are in English medium school. This is a minority comparing to the total number of students in the mainstream." (Sureshkumar 38)



Government schools really give less importance to English teaching in the early classes, thus, do not provide sufficient learning environment for the children. Teachers would not effectively deliver the idea within the 30-40 minutes spent in textbook-teaching. "Kerala curriculum framework introduced English in first standard itself due to several reasons such as pressure from the part of private schools and other related issues. Government could come up with timely policies like DPEP, SLAP etc., for making students proficient in English language transaction as much as to keep pace with celebrated skills of private schools at higher studies." (Ahamed 2)The overall assessment of current SCERT English textbook of the first standard proves that the entire textbook is prepared and applied communicative ELT approach. Historically when we evaluate, there are infinite reformations in the textbooks but still there lacks a suitable framework in the syllabus. The communicative ELT is interactive in one phase but it has several limitations. Contrary to the textbooks of both NCERT and ICSE textbooks in India, it doesn't meet the standard of the latter syllabuses. The four basic skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing (LSRW) is not trained consecutively. As the toddlers are easily distracted, the text doesn't reach them and if the teacher doesn't use it precisely, the entire text will be a burden to them. The first unit of the book, "Two Ants" began with a cartoon image of ants and the story goes in linear with the pictures. It directly adds the long tale with illustrations, without any activities but just some interactive questions. Picturization attracts the younger minds but doesn't excite them for a long span. In contrast, CBSE English textbook initiates activity-based teaching; the first unit "A Happy Child" is a short poem followed by interesting tasks such as "new words", "let's read", "match the following" and so on. It distinctly focused on continuous actions for children and is highly effective with proper interaction and implementation in the classroom. The other striking feature includes the recreational activities of drawing, learning alphabets, and even numbers in the English classroom. Here the children teach themselves every aspect of language. Though SCERT textbook has interactive questions at the end of every page these questions may only tire the children and results in losing their hyperactive interest in learning. Basically, communication is significant in language acquisition, if the children don't get opportunities to experience and learn English, they can't grow. "Children who are in a second-language learning situation have to be sufficiently motivated to start learning a new language" (Tabors 81). Their social and communicative skills boost them in learning, sanguine corrections, and continuous motivation through constant exposure to the language cultivate the potential skills of the children. English is often taught with a set of grammar rules in the schools which in turn used as a mark of assessment, but these norms never really aids the children to improve in understanding the language. It is often assumed in India that pre-primary classes in *Anganwadis* and nurseries teach children the basics of English language but these learning doesn't fix a strong ground to imbibe long passages at 5-6 ages. This pre-primary course will not be a topic-based or skill-based; here the children are often moulded to be a communicator rather

than a learner. The nursery teachers speak in "child-directed speech (CDS), a form of communication made up of short sentences with high-pitched, exaggerated expression, clear pronunciation, and distinct pauses between speech segments, and repetition of new words in various contexts." (Child Development 123) There are *Anganwadis* that teach English alphabets, however most of the day-care centres in Kerala nurture and develop the activity knowledge and communicative skills in the mother tongue. So from 3-5 years, these children never accurately grasp English from nurseries. Hence when they finally emerge capacities in learning, these long passages in the initial units discomfort them. Problems of Teaching SCERT in Classrooms: As we analyse the first-grade SCERT textbook, it's visible that children will be exhausted soon unless the teacher is adapted to pleasant and patient communicative actions with the children. Interactive questions in the textbook actually change the role of the teacher in it. The activities are teacher-centred, teacher though has to find a proper communicative environment and organize and coordinate the classroom for communication. There were many theories that contributed to the development of SLA in psychology. Constructivist school of thought initiated the study of the interactionism in second language acquisition, through which the importance of interaction in the environment enhances the learner's ability to adapt the innate instinct of acquisition. The teacher is the chief monitor and facilitator for the learners. "In Vygotsky's perspective, context-dependent and social interaction are primary in language acquisition. He claims that meaning is socially constructed and emerges out of the learner interactions with his/her environment" (Sarem and Shirzadi, 64). As American psychologist James. J. Jenkins put forth, Language, essentially, is an auditory product; when one takes away the auditory side of language and is forced to present it in the visual domain, the innate process that makes language acquisition so speedy and impressive performance operates poorly. Language 'through the eye' means to demonstrate little power to activate the language-learning mechanisms and to initiate the necessary system-building activities. (Anoussamy 87) The productive pedagogical methods are required because of the complexity of teaching these younger children. Properly trained teachers are essential for the full benefit of the teaching English. Teachers training courses must include a detailed comprehension of psychological and cognitive development of these infants. This can familiarize the collaborative ideas in teaching effectively motivating them. Moreover, the mechanical learning kills the creativity and interactive skills. "Research suggests that while teaching young learners we need to: use simple, stimulating and achievable activities within children's abilities, teach through oral and listening activities with minimal writing, and use L1 when needed". (Shankar and Gunashekar 83) So, the teacher must follow a framework of teaching in the ELT class. Next, the problem lies in the material designers and editors who must, however, try to alter the syllabus and develop much more advanced methodologies in the apt time. They can bring new activities with technological aids and form



several meaningful acts for the children. Interaction through oral plays and discussions brings out the sole purpose of learning language unconsciously.

VII. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Conversation is not just a medium of practice; it is also the means by which learning takes place. Also through Face to teacher, so in-trained teachers can guide the students to understand the language through smaller words and

face conversations with the teachers and peer groups in between the games and activities helps them enrich themselves with the skills. As English as a second language initiative in the early classes when the infants can only communicate with non-verbal actions, the teacher can use the second language in the class to help them use English for verbal communication. The interaction begins with the new sample lesson-plan is student-oriented where teacher ushers them to experiment with English and learn with

Teaching Model Sample of English for Class One	
Name of the Lesson:	How Beautiful the World is
Class:	One
Teaching Objectives:	a) To enhance listening b) Orientation through activities c) Vocabulary comprehension d) Cognitive skill development
Duration:	30 minutes
Introductory Activities:	Teachers could initiate the class with the major concepts in the poem with a clear indication of colors. A long with an introduction to the body parts through images and visuals. Students can engage in the pre-reading exercises and stimulating classroom with props and objects.

Sample Lesson: A Poem
How Beautiful the World is

How beautiful the world is,
 How blue the sky above,
 How green the grass in the morning dew,
 How musical the dove.

Eyes to see the colors bright,
 Ears for the music of delight,
 Nose to smell the fragrant rose,

Skin to feel the breeze that blows.

How beautiful the world is,
 How blue the sky above,
 God is there in all creation
 Flowing forth in light and love.

After initial reading, teachers should engage students with acts and plays.

sentences. Eventually, the students can use the word in the class for communication through which the teachers can correct the mistakes with proper words, later the grammar part. According to psychological studies of memory, it's noted that "repeated passage of identical or similar information along a particular, established pathway of neurons reinforces the specific set of connections, giving them the ability to re-create the image" (Pandya 25) So the

appropriate error-correction throughout the period. It's learning through tasks to provide them grow their potentials in critical reasoning and fostering creativity.

Advantages of the new model

- a) Building up vocabulary
- b) Fostering creativity



- c) Communicative skills through interaction
- d) Student-centered teaching
- e) Development of skills: 1) cognitive skills, 2) fine motor skills, 3) listening and speaking skills

Distribution of skill development with the above sample:



Developing reading and writing skills: Reading books in the classroom by the teachers to kids and reading picture with words or story reading to develop reading habits is insufficient. 'Reading' was misinterpreted as 'speaking' as teachers think reading a poem or story to the kids is teaching the language. Teaching of new words, even understanding the structure of the sentence needs planning and comprehension. So that usage of these word cards, big books and interactive learning is not a part of teaching. The base structure of English is as follows: 1. Alphabets, 2. Words, 3. Grammar, 4. Sentences and phrases. So, every base concept is important as the others. Teachers must regularly build up the base properly. Writing skill teaching also take the above structure into consideration and following must be trained: 1. Letter writing 2. Letter size and speed of writing. Teachers can teach regularly, initially from scribbles, drawing, lettering and basic strokes in order to understand the letters and eventually words, through continuous practice. Developing Listening and speaking skills: In most classes, students are being silent, teachers do all the talking. Thus, it becomes teacher-centred. So only through interactions and group activities like reading aloud, singing rhymes and songs, story-telling, role play, recitation, dialogues and short conversations helps to build confidence in both listening and speaking skills. Only around 30% teachers believe the significance of these skills, all 80% focus on English teaching as learning to write and even read. "Competence in the grammatical system of a language alone is not sufficient for effective use of the language for communication, oral as well as written. To develop oral communicative skills in English, one should- 1. Acquire an acceptable pronunciation with proper word stress, pitch, intonation, etc., 2. Learn certain set patterns in English generally used in different day to day contexts of life, i.e., learning conversational English. 3. Descriptive competency - 4. Dictations - True/False types" (Chandrika Mohan 55)

VIII. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Teachers Role: The 21st century ELT involves not only reading and teaching alphabets, but it must be an integrated syllabus of several other activities. Thus, primary class teachers must have the skills to deal with these younger minds. "In first grade, teaching that includes phonics boosts reading achievement scores, especially for children from lower SES backgrounds at risk for reading difficulties". (Berk 292) So, the combination of learning to letter and sounds helps them to decipher those words eventually. And then this skill becomes automatic in the brain and working memory develops itself to improvise with learning a huge number of words. Teachers have fallen into "The Textbook Trap, instead of treating the textbook as a tool, the teachers and students were entirely dependent on the books, they adhere only to the written word and printed instructions. The teachers do not move beyond the textbooks" (Dutta and Bala). To cater EFL in early childhood, teachers should take steps that entertain and occupy them. Learning of grammar rules is unnecessary for daily life, so prioritize the listening and speaking phases of language learning. Teachers should focus more on speaking through appropriate communication and interaction in the classroom. This would help the children rectify their mistakes through oral activities.

LEARNING AIDS			
VISUAL AIDS	AUDIO AIDS	VISUAL-AUDIO AIDS	ACTIVITIES
Pictures, flash cards, charts, maps, posters, diagrams, posters	Recordings, radio, tape recorder, playlists	Videos, cartoons and television programs, Movies, projectors, internet assistance like YouTube and other	Art and Games, role-plays, dancing and action-songs, and drawing.

Strategies Role: Textbooks directly doesn't meet the ultimate learning purpose in the primary classes. Children from underprivileged class require a static methodology and teaching content to motivate them to progress from early years. As we examined the first-grade textbook of a different syllabus, SCERT follows a moderate medium in its units. Therefore, culturespecific texts should be developed with new advanced and creative techniques.

1. Art and Games

Through playing, the dynamic younger ones learn



quickly so as their motor skills are builds. At the age of 5-6, a child is self-sufficient to understand and perceive his environmental challenges. Thus, teachers can use language games like riddles, tongue twisters, Pictionary and many interesting online games are available. It's a fun and sporty way of instruction. Rather than taking the units of the textbook, start playing with children to teach.

2. Songs and rhymes

It's witnessed that toddlers learn to mother tongue through listening to the bedtime lullabies and stories, so the rhymes can influence children in the language acquisition. These rhymes help them learn pronunciation and even the words. As the NCERT textbook starts with a short poem followed by various activities can up-skill the kids. Watching cartoons, documentaries, and videos with musical composition

3. Pictures

Cognitive advances make the children realize the pictures, so teaching through pictures and symbols reaches them effectively. Drawing, sketching, and coloring actively aids them progress. Children live in this 21st century is filled with infinite symbols written and images in English everywhere from the products used in the home to the visuals on television, mobile phones, and magazines. So, this non-verbal communicative coaching activates their brain to nurture the fine motor skills.

4. Role play and drama

Tasks like role play expand the usage of language through inter-communication. Through dialogues and actions stimulate kids to evolve in education. It unfolds the creativity and imagination through various characters and events. Narration through gestures and physical performance receive a complete response from children.

Peer interaction along with adept execution in the English simultaneously entertains and teaches. Classroom Examination pattern: The educational assessment is through

1. Oral valuation: dialogue delivery, storytelling, self-introduction, singing rhymes
2. Written valuation: coloring and matching the picture with the word, alphabets and numbers, spelling test.

Teachers can really use various activities and assessments according to the pattern of behaviour of every student. Beyond texts and examination, it aims at pleasurable understanding and learning language. Teachers should be aware of the personality of each student in order to promote learning.

IX. CONCLUSION

As a result of revision process initiated by the state government in 2013, the currently available curriculum of SCERT is modified with the publication of "Teachers Text English: Standard I." in 2014 by Department of Education, Government of Kerala. The book centrally guides the teachers with the model of training in specific areas of skills. But according to the current problems, the methods used in those textbooks are not enough for teaching because they more focused on contextualization and teacher-centred with

uneven distribution of detailed syllabus. Without proper use of these factors in texts, the second language acquisition is not fulfilled. The overall overview of the current status of SCERT, they introduced revised curriculum and textbooks in 2007 which is purely based on the Kerala curriculum framework. The main critical aspect of this current curriculum of SCERT is that there are no follow-ups from the previous stage or first phase of second language acquisition (English alphabets learning in pre-school). Ultimately the aim of this research paper is to develop and find the real ineffective methods of teaching and a syllabus module to solve the issues. Therefore, we form a concise model of a lesson to plan, proceed and execute with its sample methods and so forth benefits in the primary classes.

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