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BEHAVIOURISM AND COGNITIVISM IN TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND
LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this paper is to discuss and analysis the role of psychology in teaching of English as a second language. Language teaching and learning is a Psychological process. There are different schools of psychology which play a vital role in second language teaching. But the researcher focused mainly on the 'Behaviouristic School' and 'Cognitivist School' to identify their impact in English language teaching. According to 'Behaviouristic Approach', teachers have to promote 'habit formation' in language teaching. But in case of applying 'Cognitivist Approach' they can achieve their targets in language teaching by focusing mainly on 'mental ability'. It is also found that there are some good points and bad points in both these theories for language teaching-learning processes. So, it is highly recommended that the teachers need to adopt "Eclecticism" to make strategies for second language teaching by considering both the psychological schools as the concept of 'habit formation' and 'mental ability' will work properly in coordination only for the sake language learning.

Keywords: Behaviourism, Cognitivism, Teaching of English, Second Language, Lingua-Franca.

INTRODUCTION

In the recent global scenario, it is clear cut that English is a 'Key Language' throughout the world. It plays a vital role in every sphere of life as a 'Lingua-Franca', 'Knowledge Bank' and 'Employment Passport' etc. Every language is a medium of communication to understand the culture of the respective human society. In this techno-age, the purpose of English language is not only to understand a particular society but to serve the people as a passport to live in the 'Global Village'. So, the status of English is something different from others. If English is so important to live in the modern era, then it should be learnt by all those whose mother tongue is not English. In this way, the Indians have to learn English as a second language. Linguists, psychologists and philosophers have developed different methods, approaches and techniques to teach English as a second language. Like Linguistic and Philosophy, Psychology has also played a significant role to evolve appropriate methods and techniques for effective language teaching. *Psychology helps the teacher to make use of appropriate methods and techniques to produce maximum learning with minimum effort (Mundhra, S. C, 2007)*. Two main theories of language teaching are the behaviouristic theory and cognitivist theory. In behaviourism, there is no sound idea to teach a first language but the ideas of behaviourism are very much

applicable to teach a second language other than a mother tongue. On the other hand, the Cognitive school claims that their concepts and ideas are applicable and fruitful for teaching any language whether it is mother tongue/first language or a second language.

DISCUSSION

The roles of these two Schools of Psychology in Teaching of English as a second language are found as under:

I) Behaviorism and English Language Teaching:-Behaviourism was originated with the work of an American Psychologist, J. B Watson. He was of the view that psychology is not related with the mind or mental activity but it would be concerned with behaviour or physical activity. According to behaviouristic theory of learning, second language acquisition is an unconscious and automatic process. Behaviourists believe that a language can be learnt through habit formation. The popular behaviouristic theories and their applications for language teaching can be noted as under:

Pavlov's Classical Conditioning and Language Teaching:-Pavlov is known for his experiments with salivating dogs. He trained dogs to salivate at the sound of a bell. His theory declares that if animals can learn condition or can be conditioned, children also can be conditioned. Every teacher should believe that the students will learn the appropriate things but it will take time. This theory stresses on the concept that learning is a habit formation and is based on the principle of association and substitution. The applications of this theory in language teaching are found as follows:

- By applying this theory, teachers can remove fear and anxiety among the students to create a suitable environment for language learning.
- Many things of the school-subjects are learnt more adequately through this process. Reading, writing, spelling or habits are learnt more effectively through the process of conditioning. *Direct method of teaching English is just a process of conditioning (Anand, S. 2012).*
- The love for learning English language can be created through conditioning. For example; the English teacher distributes toffees to the students before starting the class. In this way, the habit of learning a language can be made stronger.
- The techniques of using teaching learning materials like dolls, pictures and flash cards etc. for language learning and concept formation are based on conditioning. For example; a picture of a dog is presented before the class and the teacher speaks out the word. In this way, the child comes to recognize birds, animals, flowers and fruits etc. by their names on the basis of concept formation.
- The technique of drill and practice can strengthen the habit of language learning. For example; some experts believe that the best way to improve reading is to have students read more and more. In other words, we can say practice or repetition can make one perfect in reading.

Watson's Behaviourism and Language Teaching:-The Behaviouristic School of Psychology was established in 1913 with the publication of Watson's article "The Behaviourist Manifesto". In his opinion, the analysis of behaviours and reactions was the only valid method to get insight in the human's actions. His behaviourism rejected the studying of consciousness. He stressed that Psychology should not be considered as the science of "mind". Instead, he was of the view that Psychology should focus on the "behaviour" of the individual. Watson was deeply influenced by Pavlov's Classical Conditioning. He took Pavlov's findings to another level. He was still in favour of classical conditioning, but one step ahead of Pavlov that is "learning is observable or measurable and not cognitive". He gave the "Nurture v/s Nature Theory" to classical conditioning. The implications of his theory in language teaching can be stated as follows:

- Watson was of the view that "Nature" is inborn and it cannot be changed, but "Nurture" on the other hand is the environment in which an organism grows and develops. Dr. C.J. Dubash says, "Many famous studies done on twins when twins were born they were separated. Twins means the more or less has the same genetic makeup but when they are separated and put them under two different environments for grow, in years or over time it was shown that the twins develop differently. The one that have the better environment was far better than the one had the not so good environment while growing up". So, teachers have to understand that the nurturing of students mostly happens within the four walls of classrooms and they should try to provide better environment for language learning.

- According to this theory, language learning happens effectively at the early age of children. So, more focus should be given on the language classes at nursery or primary level.
- In Indian government schools, the language classes of secondary level are focused mostly as compared to the nursery or primary level, due to which majority of the Indian students are not so good in English language. If the students will get better nurturing at the early age to teach English language, the scenario of English language in India may change.

Skinner's Operant Conditioning and Language Teaching:-The Operant Conditioning Theory was developed in 1937. Skinner called this theory as Operant Conditioning because it is based on certain operations or actions which an organism has to carry out. Operant Conditioning is a kind of learning process whereby a response is made more frequent by the means of reinforcement. For example; a child looks after his/her little brother and his/her mother praises him/her and the child again looks after or a student writes better and the teacher gives him/her a good remark and the student again tries to write in a best way. The implications of this theory in language teaching are as under:

- The popular language teaching approach i.e. "The Audio-Lingual Approach" which is also known as Army-Method or New –Key is based on Skinner's behaviourism. The main focus of this method is to learn a second language by establishing habits as a result of reinforcement or reward.
- The technique of reinforcement or reward is very effective in language learning also. For example; the learner will get a "Good", if he/she writes one correct sentence about him/herself, he/she will get a "V. Good" on writing two correct sentences and in the same way, he/she will get an "Excellent" on writing more than two correct sentences. In this way, the habit of listening, speaking, reading and writing can be made stronger.
- Complex Concepts of language can be taught through successive approximation i.e. step by step. But every successful step of the child must be rewarded. For example; a child reads some monosyllabic words, his/her teacher nods his/her head; then the child reads some disyllabic words, the teacher gives a smile and when the child reads some trisyllabic words, the teacher writes 'well done' for the child on the board.
- Language teachers should encourage students for every bit of positive behaviours at least till the arousing of complete curiosity to learn English.

Bandera's Behaviourism and Language Teaching:- Some say Bandera was a behaviourist and others believe that he was a Cognitivist. But the fact was that he was playing a bridge role between these two psychological schools. He was of the view that both learning habit and mental ability are equally important for a sound learning process. Behaviourism deals with learning behaviours. But according to Bandera, behaviours can be learnt through observation and modelling. This theory is also applicable in language teaching in the following way:

- Bandera is of the view that children copy the behaviours of adults. They observe that their English teacher is speaking in English and they too try to speak in the same way. They also try to copy their principal or teacher's reading and writing style, pronunciation and body language etc. So, as per this theory, the language teacher should at least be good at reading, writing and speaking.
- Within the schools, all the teachers should be role models for the students in every field especially in behaviour and language. Nowadays in India, schools are giving the name of "English Medium Schools" and the teachers or other staff members are using different languages within the same school campus which is psychologically unacceptable to learn a particular and target language like English. These attitudes of teachers create an unsuitable environment for English language learning in an English medium school. In such schools, there will be a question in every student's mind that my school is an English medium school but everyone speaks different languages in the school, why?

II) Cognitivism and English Language Teaching:-Cognitivism was emerged as a reaction to Behaviorism. Cognitivists opposed to behaviourists because they felt that behaviourists ignored the role of thinking in learning. The Cognitive Psychology was born in the late 1950s as a dominant learning theory and its impact was seen in language learning in 1970s. According to Cognitive theory of learning, second language acquisition

is a conscious and thinking process. In other words, one can say that language learning is a mental activity. The well-known cognitive theories and their applications in teaching language are as follows:

Maria Montessori's Cognitive Psychology and Language Teaching:-The name Montessori is very familiar in the world because the Montessori Method of "Early Childhood Education" is attributed to her works. She was a cognitive psychologist and did two major things:

- She taught difficult children to read at a normal level at a psychiatric clinic at the University of Rome. Teachers normally teach reading in two ways; I) The teacher reads a sentence or a part of it and the entire class repeat it in a chorus and this process goes on till the completion of the paragraph or the page. II) Have students read a sentence at a time in succession. But at her clinic, Montessori's method of teaching was different from these two. She involved the students with the text through questions, through predictions, through anticipations and moving the students at their pace. If she was succeeded to teach reading to her "difficult children" by applying this method then in case of normal students, the teachers will definitely be successful to teach reading through the same method. According to cognitive psychology, if the teachers want young people to be reading, they will have to be involved in reading. In other words, this success story of Montessori gives the idea that students will learn to read by actively being engaged in the reading process.
- In 1906, she was asked to start a progressive school for blind children in Italy and the name of the school was kept as "Casa Dei Bambini" or "Children's House". She again became successful to teach blind children by actively involving them in the learning process. These were blind children and they were never been to schools, but she did her job nicely. She uses active learning and brought the real world to the blind area classrooms. No doubt, active learning is an excellent approach in teaching learning process in general and language learning in particular. So, teachers need to think the using of this one in the actual classroom situations.

Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory and Language Teaching:-He worked on the relation between language development and its functional use and mental development of the child (Parthiban, 2015). He divided the cognitive development of a child into four stages i.e. Sensorimotor (birth-02 years), Pre-Operational (02-07 years), Concrete-Operational (07-11 years) and Formal-Operational (12-adulthood). For the completion of the cognitive development process of an individual, all these stages are mandatory. The applications of his theory in language teaching are found as under:

- During the Sensorimotor stage, the child uses his five senses and his/her increasing motor skills to explore the environment. He/she begins to use language to imitate and represent the environment. At this stage the child is egocentric and he/she learns either by the means of assimilation (to incorporate new ideas into an existing concept) or by accommodation (to develop new concept by adapting the old one). From this concept of Piaget, a language teacher must understand the fact that at the initial stage he/she do all those things that the child wants because of his/her egocentric nature. The teacher also needs to present the resemble objects before the child to assimilate or accommodate language learning at nursery or pre-nursery stage.
- During the Pre-operational stage, the child's memory and imagination develops more. He/she usually asks questions to the teachers and it is the responsibility of the teachers to response them comfortably. At this stage, much egocentric thinking also occurs that is why teachers have to fulfil his/her demands and they have to create a suitable situation as per the child's wishes. At this stage, he/she can speak and print word. He/she can speak words and write words. So, the language teachers need to speak new words and write new words to boost their vocabulary.
- During the Concrete-operational stage, the child is no more egocentric but he/she can understand the views of other people also. Now he can think about real concrete things. He/she begins to understand cause and effect. So, it is the right time for a language teacher to begin to teach simple grammar.
- During the Formal-operational stage, the child is able to use logic and abstract thinking. He/she asks questions on previously accepted thoughts, ideas and values. Now the teacher can give reasons why it is this and why it is that? He/she can clear the language complexities to his/her students by giving reasons. May be a language student will ask "Why should I learn grammar?, Why should I have to

read Shakespeare's biography?, Why I need more vocabularies?, Why poetry is reading aloud and why prose is not?" Piaget's Schema theory tells the teachers not to repeat all those things which were already known to the child but instead they have to build on their prior knowledge. For example; If a teacher has to write the answers of some given questions at the end of an English play, he/she should not repeat the events of that play by him/herself but instead he/she should ask the students what was happened?, why was happened? And how was happened? etc.

Vygotsky's Cognitive Development Theories and Language Teaching: Vygotsky gave "The Socio-Cultural Development Theory" and "The Zone of Proximal Development Theory". As per his Socio-Cultural theory, learning or cognitive development is a social process in which the environment plays a very important role. In short, we can say that "Guided Learning" and "Social Learning" are the two main ideas of this psychologist. The applicability of his theories on language teaching can be seen as under:

- According to Vygotsky, a child lives in a particular culture and he/she belongs to a particular society. So, while teaching-learning process, teachers do not need to change their culture but they need to achieve their teaching-learning targets with the help of their own culture. The child can be a part of a wider society by keeping his own cultural norms and values. This theory talks about what children bring from their own environment. In this way, this theory is very much applicable in the Indian society to teach a language or some other discipline. Every child learns his mother tongue as per his surroundings' culture and environment. So, one can learn a second language also just as the mother tongue by creating a suitable environment.
- A major point in this theory is interactions with others and in case of language; interaction is a big tool to make a teaching-learning process successful. An English teacher can use cooperative learning techniques for teaching to promote group-work which promotes maximum social interactions among the students. One of the new methods for language teaching is "Community Language Learning" in which learning takes place through cooperation and collaboration in a community of learners is almost based on Vygotsky's psychology. *Classroom interaction is seen as a concrete factor that contributes significantly to all aspects of the student's development and in particular language development (Mukalel, J. C, 1998).*
- In English classes, complex learning like reading and writing etc. should be taught through "Guided Participation" which is a terminology in Vygotsky's theory. The teacher should share the "Thinking Load" between him/her and the students. He/she should not tell them the full answers by him/herself but he/she needs to give hints and clues only to the students to firm "Discovery Learning". The language teachers should play the role of an assistant or helper to the students. The students should get help, guidance, clues and only structure and not the correct answer which take them through the process of achieving the correct answer and this is known as "Scaffolding" or "Hawaza" in the investigator's mother tongue. For example; If a language student asks a question to the teacher, he/she should not tell him/her the right answer directly but instead he/she needs to say, "Recall, think, we read this last week, why don't you go back and have a look at your notes, open your book and why don't you look at that particular page etc". In regard of scaffolding, "I do, we do and you do approach" is very much applicable.
- Vygotsky's another theory "The Zone of Proximal Development Theory" literally means the best and progressive areas of learning. It really refers to the distance between "where the learner is" and "where he could be with the help of teachers". What the child can do on his own only and what he could do if somebody helps or guides and this distance is known as "The Zone of Proximal Development". This theory advises a language teacher to help the students to promote their previous language skills. Teachers need to provide the actual guidance to activate their students to learn language in a better way day by day by accepting their help and assistance. This theory also tells us that every learner will learn a second language, but some will learn soon and some will later. Because the learning level of all the students may not be same. So, the scaffolding should be arranged differently for different students. It is the duty of a teacher to know how much scaffolding or help to

give a student and what kind of scaffolding is needed for a student. If he/she is succeeding to do so in language teaching, he can achieve his aims and objectives of teaching.

- According to Vygotsky, cognition and language are closely intertwined. Thinking and language go together, everyone thinks in some language or in words and don't think abstractly. So, English language teachers should promote the concept of thinking in English to develop the same language.

Bruner's Cognitivism and Language Teaching:-Bruner too was a cognitive psychologist and he stated that cognitive growth involves interaction between basic human capabilities and culturally invented technologies. His ideas were also applicable in teaching of English as a second language:

- *Bruner described Cognitivism as the process of thinking that occurs in interaction in social environment and also influences the development of technology. This invented technology not only consists of concrete but also abstract technology (Dina, et.al, 2013).* In this connection, Bruner agreed with Vygotsky's concept of social cognitivism that language serves to mediate between environmental stimuli and individual response. So, this theory also indicates the importance of interaction in social group for language learning.
- His focus was not only in concept, categories and problem solving but also in the ability to invent technology. So, here using of teaching-learning materials for language teaching is also emphasized. He is also of the view that children can learn language step by step.

CONCLUSION

English plays an important role in every sphere of life as a 'Lingua-Franca', 'Knowledge Bank', 'Official Language' and 'Employment Passport' etc. Every language is a medium of communication to understand the culture of the respective human society but the purpose of English language is not only to understand a particular society because it serves the people as a passport to live in the 'Global Village' as well. So, the Indians also have to learn English as a second language. Linguists, psychologists and philosophers have developed different methods, approaches, techniques and strategies to teach English as a second language. But in this paper, the investigator has focused on two schools of psychology viz; "Behaviourism" and "Cognitivism" and their contributions for teaching a second language and explained how these schools are helpful to frame strategies for language teaching. In behaviourism, there is no sound idea to teach a first language but the ideas of behaviourism are very much applicable to teach a second language other than a mother tongue. On the other hand, the Cognitive school claims that their concepts and ideas are applicable and fruitful for teaching any language whether it is mother tongue/first language or a second language.

A Behaviouristic Theory of learning sees language learning as an unconscious and automatic process. By taking ideas from behaviourism, the second language teaching strategies which a teacher can use in his/her classroom are Pavlov's 'learning through conditioning' and 'drill & practice', Watson's 'nurturing', Skinner's 'reinforcement' and 'successive approximation' and Bandura's 'observation & modelling' etc. All these strategies promote the concept of 'habit formation' for language teaching. The role of a behaviourist teacher is 'to provide stimulus' to achieve the aims and objectives of language teaching-learning process. Language teaching methods and approaches which are mostly based on behaviourist ideas are "Direct Method", "Audio-Lingual Method" and "Bilingual Method" etc.

In contrary to Behaviourism, a Cognitive Theory of learning sees second language acquisition as a conscious and reasoned thinking process, involving the deliberate use of learning strategies. The language learning strategies according to cognitive school are Montessori's 'active learning', Piaget's 'hierarchical learning', Vygotsky's 'social learning', 'classroom interactions', 'guided participation' and 'scaffolding' and Bruner's 'interaction & technology' etc. Learning strategies are special ways of processing information that enhance comprehension, learning or retention of information. The strategies of cognitive psychologists ensure the 'mental ability' for language learning. According to this theory, the role of a cognitive teacher is 'to prepare environment' for making his/her teaching-learning process successful. Many language teaching methods, approaches and techniques like "Community Language Teaching", "Communicative Language Teaching", "Dr. West's Method" and "Structural-situational Method" etc. are mostly based on cognitive strategies.

Briefly speaking, both the discussed theories are equally important for learning process as the concept of 'habit formation' and 'mental ability' will work properly in coordination only for the sake language learning. So, it is highly recommended that the teachers need to adopt "Eclecticism" to make strategies for second language teaching by considering both the psychological schools.

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