

Attitude of Teachers towards Teaching English through Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy

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ABSTRACT

English Language Education is a concept relating to the use of English in the teaching-learning process. It encompasses pedagogy of English Language Teaching (ELT); and the development of various skills relating to English language learning. When the teacher provides teaching-learning experiences to his pupils, his teaching may be termed as 'Discourse-Oriented Teaching' or 'Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy'. A discourse is a mode of communicating certain ideas meaningfully in a particular context. The present study is an attempt to explore the attitude of secondary school teachers towards teaching English through Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy. The researchers used a well prepared and standardized questionnaire as the tool for collection of data from a sample of 500 teachers (200 Headmasters and 300 School Assistants in English) selected from 200 secondary schools located in the three north coastal districts, viz., Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh using Stratified Random Sampling technique. The data were analyzed using Percentage Analysis. The profiles of teachers with a high positive attitude have been prepared. The preferences of teachers on components under different dimensions have been identified. The findings of the study revealed that teachers working in secondary schools have a high positive attitude towards teaching English through Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy with regard to the dimension, 'Language acquisition' (45.45%) followed by the other dimensions, 'The classroom processes' (44.44%); and 'The role of the Teacher

and the Learner' (42.86%). The study suggested the administration to organize a number of orientation programmes to the teachers on the use of Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy in teaching English for the benefit of the students of secondary schools.

Key words: Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy, attitude, secondary school teachers, teaching-learning process, English Language Education, Classroom processes

INTRODUCTION

Education is an effective means of social reconstruction. It is the process of facilitating learning. It helps in the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, morals, beliefs and habits necessary for the human living. It helps to develop good qualities among people and tries to draw out the best in them. It is the creation of a sound mind in a sound body. It is one of the most powerful instruments of social, economic and cultural transformation necessary for the realization of national goals. It helps to increase the productivity, achieve national and emotional integration and accelerate the process of modernization.

Curriculum and Pedagogy are two important aspects in the teaching learning process at secondary level. The curriculum should be transacted applying suitable pedagogy in secondary schools. The teachers follow various methods and techniques for teaching different school subjects. The emphasis in the teaching learning process has been shifted from teacher-centered education to child-centered learning. Now, the emphasis is on

‘Activity-Oriented Education’, wherein the children involve themselves in a good number of activities in the school; and have an exposure to ‘Experiential learning’. English Language Education is a concept relating to the use of English in the teaching-learning process. It encompasses pedagogy of English Language Teaching (ELT); and the development of various skills relating to English language learning. When the teacher provides teaching-learning experiences to his/her pupils, his/her teaching may be called ‘Discourse-Oriented Teaching’ or ‘Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy’ (Prasad, G., 2014).

CONCEPT OF ‘DISCOURSE-ORIENTED PEDAGOGY’

A discourse is a mode of communicating certain ideas meaningfully in a particular context. Generally, context plays vital role in language learning. No sentence conveys its full meaning in isolation. Hence the context is very important. The context will be a part of discourse mode. Therefore, discourse level of processing of learning experiences is necessary in language learning. This helps the learner to read the lines, between the lines and beyond the lines. Discourse level processing holds good to all basic language skills (Anandan, K.N., 2006).

A discourse encourages students to take practice in learning the four language skills, viz., listening, speaking, reading and writing in an integrated manner. It nurtures learners’ curiosity to learn the language in a more natural way; and supports co-operative and collaborative learning. It minimizes the gap between the good and poor performers of language. Classroom learning is encouraged through activities, wherein students involve themselves actively in understanding different tasks. In the process, the teacher remains a facilitator, guide and motivator; and encourages learners to become responsible and independent. He encourages learners to ask insightful questions, add or suggest a piece of information, develop arguments or ask a few questions to check comprehension. (Venkanna, K., 2017). A discourse can be a primary resource which can initiate the learner to use the language. The language teachers should bring about an awareness of discourses among their students; and thereby improve the communicative competence of the students.

In India, after the recommendations of National Curriculum Framework (NCF) - 2005, as a part of the curriculum renewal process, the new textbooks have been designed and introduced in the states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh at all

levels of school education. It has been argued that Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy and the introduction of a single English textbook would cater to the needs of the English language learners of both the English medium and Telugu medium schools. All the units of the new English textbook are theme-based in its pedagogy; and have been prepared following the guiding principles of National Curriculum Framework-2005, A.P. State Curriculum Framework-2011 and Right to Education Act-2009. The textbooks for secondary schools in the combined state of Andhra Pradesh have been prepared in such a manner that the language material provided therein is in the form of discourses. These discourses, when transacted properly by the teacher in the classroom, would certainly help the students learn English language easily and comfortably.

Need For The Present Investigation

The existing methods and techniques of teaching English provide a lacuna in the system, which grossly ignores the innate system of the child that helps him acquire a language. These methods are based on the behaviorist assumptions namely that the mind of the child is an empty vessel and everything comes from outside. It also emphasizes that language is learnt through imitation and repetition. Another conspicuous flaw in the present model is that it neglects discourse level transaction narrowing itself to the transmission of isolated language items. But Language acquisition is accomplished through acquiring structure consciousness. This can be brought about only through meaningful and need based linguistic discourses ensuring the recurrence of language items at the phonological, morphological and syntactic level, thus providing a continuum of language experience.

The investigators felt that the gap can be bridged through various discourses in the relevant contexts provided by the teachers in the English classroom. It is thought that the teachers of English should develop a kind of positive attitude towards teaching English through Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy. The investigators felt that the attitude of teachers towards teaching English through Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy play a significant role in transacting English language curriculum in secondary schools effectively and efficiently. The present investigation is an attempt in this direction.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the present study is to find out the attitude of secondary school teachers

towards teaching English through Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy.

The study also aims at finding out the influence of different dimensions of Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy, viz., Language acquisition, Role of the teacher and the learner; and the Classroom processes on the attitude of teachers towards teaching English through Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The following hypotheses have been formulated for the present investigation:

- (i) There is no significant difference in the attitude of secondary school teachers towards teaching English through Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy with regard to the dimension, 'Language acquisition'.
- (ii) There is no significant difference in the attitude of secondary school teachers towards teaching English through Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy with regard to the dimension, 'Role of the teacher and the learner'.
- (iii) There is no significant difference in the attitude of secondary school teachers towards teaching English through Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy with regard to the dimension, 'Classroom processes'.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is limited to find out the influence of three dimensions of teaching English through Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy, viz., Language acquisition, the Role of the teacher and the learner; and the Classroom processes on the attitude of teachers working in the secondary schools located in the three north coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh, viz., Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam.

METHODOLOGY

(a) **Sample:** The sample of the study consists of 500 teachers (200 Headmasters and 300 School Assistants in English) has been selected from 200 secondary schools located in Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam districts of Andhra Pradesh using Stratified Random Sampling technique.

(b) **Research Tool:** The researchers used a well prepared questionnaire consisting of 40 items as the tool of research for the present investigation. The tool was initially administered to 50 teachers (10 Headmasters and 40 School Assistants in English) under Pilot study. The measures of reliability, validity and objectivity of the tool have been calculated. Further, the researchers conducted

item analysis for the items included in the tool. Out of 40 items selected for the tool, the discriminating power of 34 items has been found positive and is found negative in respect of 6 items. The items whose discriminating power is negative have been removed; and the final tool consists of 34 items which are pool proof in all respects. The final tool has been administered to 500 teachers (200 Headmasters and 300 School Assistants in English) working in the Secondary Schools of the three north coastal districts, viz., Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh.

STATISTICAL INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The data collected has been analyzed using Percentage Analysis. The investigators thought it relevant to convert the obtained scores into percentages with a view to know the percentage of acceptances of the respondents on a particular item in relation to the other items included in the scale. A percentage frequency distribution is a display of data that specifies the percentage of observations that exist for each data point or grouping of data points. It is a very useful method of expressing the relative frequency of survey responses and other data. This application of using percentages is particularly important in analyzing or comparing the attitudes of individuals on a particular criterion in comparison with other criteria.

PROFILE OF HIGH ACCEPTANCES OF RESPONDENTS ON DIFFERENT ITEMS IN THE SCALE, DIMENSION-WISE

To know the high acceptances of all the subjects on different items included in the tool, the investigators have calculated the total score obtained from all the respondents in respect of each item under the four different dimensions, taking into consideration the score relating to 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree' for favorable (positively worded) statements and 'Disagree' and 'Strongly Disagree' for unfavorable (negatively worded) statements. The total score given by all the respondents for each item in the tool has been calculated; and then the total scores for all the 34 items have been converted into percentages. The higher percentage score indicates a higher level of attitude of teachers with regard to that particular component.

The high acceptances (total score of 80% and above) of respondents for different components of the dimensions included in the scale together with the percentages are provided in the table given below.

Table showing high acceptances (total score of 80% and above) in respect of all the subjects for different items included in the scale, dimension wise

S. No.	Dimensions of Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy	S. No. of item showing high acceptance	Total number of items showing high acceptances in the dimension	Percentage of high acceptances in the dimension
1	Language acquisition	1, 3, 6, 10, 11	5	45.45
2	The role of the Teacher and the Learner	13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 25	6	42.86
3	The classroom processes	27, 29, 30, 33	4	44.44
	TOTAL:		15	

From the above table, it is concluded that teachers working in secondary schools have a high positive attitude towards teaching English through Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy with regard to the dimension, ‘Language acquisition’ (45.45%) followed by the other dimensions, ‘The classroom processes’ (44.44%); and ‘The role of the Teacher and the Learner’ (42.86%).

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

On the basis of the analysis and interpretation of data, the researchers have arrived at the following findings and drawn the conclusions.

(i) Language acquisition

From the high score of acceptances (80% and above) given by the teachers with regard to teaching English through Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy on the dimension, ‘Language acquisition’ in respect of items 1, 3, 6, 10 and 11 of the scale, it is concluded that:

- (i) The Discourse Oriented Pedagogy (D.O.P.) is process oriented.
- (ii) D.O.P. is suitable for teaching English at secondary level.

(iii) D.O.P. would improve significantly the process of language acquisition.

(iv) D.O.P. helps students acquire English language through experiential learning.

(v) D.O.P. helps the learners in acquiring language in a natural way.

From the above findings, it is understood that the teachers are of the opinion that their students can easily acquire English language when they are taught English through Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy. The teachers felt that the pedagogy provides them ample opportunities to acquire language in a natural way through experiential learning.

(ii) The Role of the Teacher and the Learner

From the high score of acceptances (80% and above) given by the teachers with regard to teaching English through Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy on the dimension, ‘The role of the Teacher and the Learner’ in respect of items 13, 15, 17, 19, 21 and 25 of the scale, it is concluded:

- (i) D.O.P. avoids rote learning.

- (ii) Teachers need orientation through in-service training to become competent enough to implement D.O.P. in schools.
- (iii) D.O.P. is a very useful method of learning English language by the students.
- (iv) D.O.P. motivates the learners towards insightful learning.
- (v) D.O.P. helps to improve the performance of students in English language learning.
- (vi) The students acquire language skills quite unconsciously using D.O.P.

From the above findings, it is understood that teachers need orientation through in-service training to use Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy effectively in the classroom. This avoids rote learning on the part of the learners and helps them acquire language skills quite unconsciously and motivates them towards insightful learning.

(iii) The Classroom processes

From the high score of acceptances (80% and above) given by the teachers with regard to teaching English through Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy on the dimension, 'The classroom processes' in respect of items 27, 29, 30 and 33 of the scale, it is concluded that:

- (i) D.O.P. provides foundation for using language expressions for communication.
- (ii) D.O.P. gives chance for a wide range of activities in the classroom while teaching English.
- (iii) D.O.P. makes the English classroom alive and vibrant.
- (iv) D.O.P. creates collaborative learning atmosphere in the classroom.

From the above findings, it is understood that teaching English through Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy provides the students opportunity to participate in various activities through discourses for purpose of effective communication. Further, it helps them participate in collaborative learning. The teachers felt that Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy makes the English classroom alive and vibrant.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- (i) The study would help the teachers identify the difficulties faced by their students in secondary schools in learning English through Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy; and find out remedial measures to overcome the difficulties.
- (ii) The present study helps the teachers to bring about the necessary changes in the Pedagogy with regard to the implementation of Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy in teaching English.

- (iii) The study would certainly help the teachers to select suitable discourses for their students in developing different skills of English language learning.
- (iv) The study would help to enhance the participatory skills of students in the teaching-learning process.
- (v) The study would help the Academic Organizations like SCERTs, IASEs and the State Department of Education to take necessary steps for the effective implementation of Discourse-Oriented Pedagogy in schools.

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