

Use of Newspapers in Teaching English at the Undergraduate Level: Some Possibilities of ELT Classroom

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Abstract

Newspapers are very crucial medium of information for the commonest of the common person of any society. They are available on very minimum prize and hence can be available with everyone. As they contain current knowledge, happenings and the global goings-on, they are also helpful to the field of education. They are helpful to the ELT field too. In fact, they play a very crucial role in teaching of English at various stages of education. They are used at various levels as per the need and the level of students. They are the cheapest reading material. This paper is an attempt to throw some light on how newspapers can be useful in teaching of English at undergraduate level.

Keywords: Newspapers, ELT, daily happening, vocabulary, discourse techniques, style and creative writing, editorial content, newspaper reports, advertising, syllabi, reading habits, cartoons.

Introduction

Newspapers generally content daily happenings, scientific invention, historical events, entertainment, stories of human interest, political happenings, trade and economic matters, editorials, sports, shopping etc. It means they just provide a panoramic view of human life and society.

The newspapers can be helpful in the language classroom in variety of ways and to teach variety of content right from the alphabets, to sentence structure, vocabulary, grammar, discourse techniques, style and creative writing. Moreover, newspapers are helpful for students, teachers, policy makers and syllabus designers, etc. Though, newspapers are helpful in the classroom, we do not find extensive use of newspapers in the classroom. In fact, they are used in limited sense and at certain levels only. Why this is happening? Why are they not be used in large scale. Importance of Newspapers in ELT Classroom:

The students can be motivated by the use of newspapers in the classroom by the teachers. The newspapers provide interesting and relevant information and facts. ELT teachers may use the newspapers in variety of ways. First, they can be used to develop language competencies including language skills, vocabulary, grammar; secondly newspapers can be used to focus on the aspects of the society and its culture and thirdly to stimulate discussion of the issues raised by the articles. There are different uses according to the structure of the newspapers. It has been

observed that different parts of the newspaper serve different purposes to different types of readers throughout all these years from the beginning of the newspapers.

Newspaper Structure and Its Use in the Classroom

The newspaper is made up of two basic parts-editorial content and advertising. The editorial content refers to anything which is not advertising. The editor is responsible for all editorial publications. The editorial content includes two main categories fact and opinion. The factual reporting of events fills the news columns and opinion of the newspaper and its readers go on to the editorial page.

The Newspaper contains following types of writing:

- News writing,
- Newspaper reports
- Page three gossips
- Editorials,
- Feature stories,
- Columns,
- Features
- Sports stories

The newspapers provide information on science, movies, sports, business, life style, politics, literature etc. They also give great exposure to language and the content of various fields. Moreover they are very accessible easily with minimum prize and can be used in the classroom to develop students non-verbal and verbal communication , language skills, observation skills, vocabulary, grammar, critical thinking and reporting skill etc.

Benefits of the Use of Newspapers in the Language Classroom

Newspapers can function as supplementary material to the existing syllabi. It is believed that students learn language on account of enough exposure of target language. Therefore, newspapers can be used in variety of ways for English language teaching. Following are some of the ways through which newspapers can be used the classroom for teaching and learning of English language:

i) **Newspapers contain current and interesting information:**

As the newspapers contain current and updated information of life, it would be very useful information to use in the classroom. Day-today news, newspaper reports, travel stories, page three issues etc. can create interest among students. When teacher uses this kind of newspaper writing in the classroom, it would prove very helpful to students to learn the language. Moreover it creates interest among students for language learning.

ii) **Developing Reading Habits:**

A piece of newspaper writing can create interest among the students that further may lead to form their English language reading habits. The teacher may select the material from the students' interest from the newspapers. Thus, students skimming and scanning can be developed.

iii) **Pictures, photographs and Cartoons:**

Newspapers contain pictures, photos and cartoons. Those can be used in the classroom as language materials. On account of visual effect they can be very useful for language learning. Students' narrative skills can be developed through pictures, photos and cartoons from the newspapers. They may be used for teaching them narrative skills by the help of picture stories, photos and cartoons.

iv) **Newspapers of the different languages:**

Some degree of use of mother tongue is desirable for language learning. Therefore, the newspaper writings of the regional language can be used in ELT classroom, which can create good atmosphere in the classroom. Thus, even regional language newspaper writings can be helpful in teaching of English through newspapers.

v) **Advertisements in the Newspapers and English Language Teaching:**

Advertisements in the newspaper are also used for language learning. The structure, the language and the content are specifically prepared to attract and grab the attention of the readers. This can be disused in language point of view in the language classroom. Especially consumer advertisements are interesting and meaningful. Their purpose is to influence and attract readers for purchasing. Therefore they are written in specialized manner. We do not find this in the ordinary syllabus. So this kind of writing of advertisement can be used for language learning in variety of ways.

Conclusion

Thus, newspapers are the natural source of language learning material. If they are used properly and with emphasis on certain elements then they could be very live and natural source of material for language learning. It can be used for teaching various elements of English language right from the alphabets, to sentence structure, vocabulary, grammar, discourse techniques, style and creative writing.

References

<http://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/reading-skillpractice/train-timetable>



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