



FOSTERING PEACE EDUCATION THROUGH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

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ABSTRACT:

Peace education is the current need of the society. Day by day peace education is gaining popularity in every sphere of education. This paper throws light on various strategies that can be employed to promote peace in a language learning classroom. Development of feeling for peace-making among language learners can be accomplished by employing several strategies that will help to differentiate between intolerance, anarchy etc. on the one hand and peace on the other. Simultaneously such strategies will increase language proficiency among language learners. These strategies will also grow a feeling of empathy which in turn will lead to maintain communal harmony in the classroom as well as in the society.

KEYWORDS:

PEACE, PEACE EDUCATION, STRATEGIES.

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Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.

(“The Second Coming” by W.B. Yeats)

INTRODUCTION

The world is replete with conflicts. With the passage of time, our society is changing everyday. Thoughts of human beings are also undergoing changes. Intolerance, violence, anarchy-----all these are gnawing the society. Lack of communal harmony is the burning problem in today’s society. Under such circumstances peace is the only need in the society. Peaceful thoughts, behaviours can reunite everything and also expel the darkness of the society. Peace education is the process through which values can be acquired and promoted to develop one’s skills, attitude and knowledge to live in the society harmoniously.

TEACHING METHODS:

In the language learning classroom, there are several methods that can be followed to inculcate peace education along with value education among the students. The primary as well as the chief objective behind teaching peace education in language classroom should be instilling the necessity of peace in the present time and also encouraging peaceful co-existence in the society. However, some of the effective methods to foster peace education in the language classroom are as follows:

- i) Co-operative Learning.
- ii) Story-telling.
- iii) Group Discussion.

iv) Brain-storming.

v) Role Play.

vi) Peer-group Tutoring.

vii) Showing Movies.

viii) Introducing Quotations on Peace.

ix) Thematic Analysis of Poems or Songs.

x) Dialogues.

i) **Co-operative Learning:** According to S.K. Mangal, the term ‘Co-operative Learning’ can be defined as:

“....a learning process or strategy in which the students get opportunities to learn by themselves in a group in a cooperative or non-cooperative environment by forming a number of teams, each consisting of a small number of students of different levels of ability for the understanding of a subject. They share all information among themselves and help each other for having the required knowledge, understanding and application of one or the other aspects of the content material, or course units included in their syllabus.” (Mangal, 2017)

However, in this method the teaching-learning process is shifted from being teacher-centered to student-centered. It focuses upon social learning by emphasizing the fact that learning can be accomplished in social atmosphere. Through this strategy peace education can be promoted among the learners of the language classroom with the proper initiative of the teachers.

ii) **Story-telling:** Story-telling is an age-old tradition used to transmit any message or providing entertainment. In

the ancient days when there was no scope for printing, at that time dictation, story-telling etc. were the only medium of maintaining communication with others. Even great educators used to impart their teachings to common people through story-telling. In the language learning classroom story-telling is a very fruitful method for inculcating concepts on peace among students. It is very effective for exchanging ideas about various cultures and practices. In the language learning classroom teachers narrate various stories on peace to represent the importance of peace in the society. Simultaneously the students should be encouraged to share stories on peace with the peer groups. As a result, there will be an exchange of ideas and knowledge on peace among teachers and students, and students will also be able to develop their communication and cognitive skills through the process of narrating and understanding the essence of stories. However, as for example, stories from the Bible, especially parables (i.e. simple stories containing moral or spiritual lesson and also message of peace, as told by Jesus in the Gospels) can be chosen for narrating in the language learning classroom.

iii) **Group Discussion:** In a language learning classroom, 'Group Discussion' is a very important tool for teaching peace education. Through group discussion, participants can share their own ideas, can develop their thinking ability and can also enrich themselves with the thoughts shared by others. For example, in order to teach peace education in a Communicative English classroom, the learners can be divided into several groups for discussing various aspects related to peace. Several topics can be divided among them for discussion like:

- a) Definition of peace.
- b) Concept of peace with respect to family, society, nation etc.
- c) How peace can be catered in the society.
- d) How peace contributes to communal harmony of the society.

Besides, discussion of quotations of famous peace workers can influence the students in the classroom. They can gain ideas on the ideology of Indian thinkers like Gandhi, Vivekananda, Tagore and others as well as on that of the Western thinkers.

iv) **Brain-storming:** Brainstorming is one of the effective ways to inculcate peace education. It can be defined as:

"A means of generating ideas, often by a group of people, whereby immediate responses are written down and collected uncritically and without editing so as not to impede the creative process. These can then be explored and considered at more leisure in order to identify what is useful. It can be used as a method for teaching and supporting learning, either when learners are working in small groups and recording their own ideas; or when a teacher is working with a larger group, encouraging all to contribute ideas, and writing them on a board or flip chart." (Wallace, 2015)

However, brainstorming is an effective way to generate

new ideas on specific topics and it further helps to seek best ways for peace-making. This method becomes effective when the group contains 8-12 students. Usually brainstorming session needs a supervisor, a place for conducting the event and equipment to record the ideas, such as a piece of paper. Teachers can take the initiative, employing various brainstorming activities for language teaching in order to develop new ideas on restoring peace among the learners and also to shun concepts related to intolerance, violence etc. Brainstorming consists of three steps which are as follows:

- a) **Identifying Problem:** The problem is usually defined in this phase.
- b) **Consolidation Phase:** A specific topic is developed by combining various ideas.
- c) **Assessment Phase:** The causes, impacts, solution to the problem are analyzed.

v) **Role Play:** *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* defines the word 'role play' as

"an exercise in which you pretend to be in a particular situation, especially to help you learn a language or deal with problems." (Bullon, 2004)

Oxford Dictionary defines the term as *"a learning activity in which you behave in the way somebody else would behave in a particular situation."* (Hornby, 2005)

This method helps a learner to develop a feeling for a situation. This strategy creates interaction among students. It also smoothen interaction between students and teachers inside and outside the classroom. This process helps learners to introspect themselves and to explore their perceptions for values, attitudes etc. It develops problem-solving skills among students. It also develops an empathetic feeling for others. In a language learning classroom peace education can be rendered among the students through role-playing. A number of peace heroes are there like Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa, Dalai Lama, and Malala Yosufzai whose contributions in the field of catering peace-related concepts can be chosen for role playing in language classroom. Learners, through such method, can develop both language proficiency and feeling of peace.

vi) **Peer-group Tutoring:** Peer-group tutoring is another useful method in which students participate to share their ideas, knowledge, experiences, feelings etc. among themselves. In this method the classroom is divided into small groups. A competent student with the assistance of minimal training and teacher's guidance helps other less competent student at the same grade level to learn a simple skill or basic concept. Employing this strategy in a language learning classroom, peace education can be spread. Through peer tutoring the contributions of peace makers like Gandhi, Dalai Lama, Ravi Shankar, Martin Luther King and many others can be discussed.

vii) **Showing Movies:** Movies can help to develop one's thinking ability by analyzing themes, conversation, scenes etc. In a language learning classroom showing movies to

the learners is a very effective method to teach a new language. Thus selecting movies based on the themes regarding the inculcation of peace to avoid the atmosphere of violence, jealousy, narrow-minded thoughts etc. in a language classroom, serving both the purposes --- teaching and learning the language as well as gathering knowledge regarding peace.

viii) **Introducing Quotations on Peace:** Introducing quotations on peace and providing explanation for them is an active method to promote peace education through language teaching. Such peace-related quotations will render learners a power to develop peaceful thoughts which will further help to come out of the spell of violence, aggression, jealousy and to maintain a harmonious co-existence in the society. Some of the quotations on peace may be mentioned below:

- a) "Peace cannot be kept by force; it can be achieved by understanding." ---*Albert Einstein*
- b) "Peace is liberty in tranquillity." ---*Marcus Tullius Cicero*
- c) "You will find peace not by trying to escape your problems, but by confronting them courageously. You will find peace not in denial, but in victory." ---*J. Donald Walters*
- d) "Peace begins with a smile" ---- Mother Teresa
- e) "The day the power of love overrules the love of power, the world will know peace."
— Mahatma Gandhi

ix) **Thematic Analysis of Poems or Songs:** In a language learning classroom discussion on the thematic analysis of poems or songs is an integral part. This strategy enriches one's thinking ability and power of expression. So selection of poems and songs that are concerned with peace related issues and peace-making themes. This will exert influence in the minds of the language learners. From such analysis of poems learners will be able to comprehend how peace can be sustained in the society. One such poem that can be mentioned here is "The Peaceful Shepherd":

*If heaven were to do again,
And on the pasture bars,
I leaned to line the figures in
Between the dotted stars,
I should be tempted to forget,
I fear, the Crown of Rule,
The Scales of Trade, the Cross of Faith,
As hardly worth renewal.
For these have governed in our lives,
And see how men have warred.*

*The Cross, the Crown, the Scales may all
As well have been the Sword.*

----- Robert Frost

In this poem the poet criticizes royalty, religion and economics by representing a peaceful shepherd who, if given the chance to rebuild the world, would do it his way.

x) **Dialogues:** Practising dialogues in the language learning classroom serves twofold purposes --- firstly, it increases fluency in speaking as well as confidence and secondly, the power to express oneself in a newly learnt language. So conversing on peace related issues will also serve the same purposes as it will develop a learner's speaking power and then it will generate ideas on the necessity of peace in the present-day society and how it can be sustained everywhere for peaceful co-existence.

CONCLUSION:

Such strategies are indispensable to the development of the feeling for peace and also for peace transaction among the language learners. The language teachers have to take the initiatives to inspire the language learners to develop their attitudes and interests towards promoting and maintaining peace, which will lead to build a peaceful society in which a peaceful co-existence will be sustained.

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