

My reflections on English Medium Instruction



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Synopsis

This article is about presently hotly debated issue in public schools' medium of instruction, that is to say, English medium. The writer has tried to reach at the bottom of its practice and tries to explore its relevancy in public schools. In course of writing this article, the writer has consulted with many English teachers, sat and discussed with the trainee teachers who are using English medium in their schools. This paper has revisited some literatures as well. Finally, it concludes with the notion that English medium is not difficult as our teachers are perceiving it. We can teach and make classroom live by using English medium if we utilize some basic classroom language first.

Introduction

School education is the very important for the learners. It is the foundation for the further higher study. We, everybody believes on the fact that "if our learners have strong foundation in the schooling time, then automatically they will be good in their further higher education". Therefore, we concerned bodies should be aware of this fact and deliver the schooling skill and knowledge accordingly. Presently, we are confronting with one great problem in our public schools that is to say medium of instruction.

Medium is the way to express something, i.e. that is to say, feelings, ideas, opinions, experiences, knowledge, skill and so on from one place to another or from sender to receiver. There can be many mediums which we can use while expressing or delivering something. To be particularized, we are concerned with language teaching and learning. It is, therefore, what we should understand here is the medium of language instruction or teaching in language teaching. More specifically, what we should understand is this English medium will be used not only for English subject teaching but also teaching other subjects like mathematics, science, social studies, and so on. Today, time has shifted its wind or climate and demanded to use English as a medium of instruction not only in government/public schools from beginning grades but also in global arena. In the case of Nepalese context, there are many more reasons behind the adoption of this language as a medium of instruction in our classes. Some of the reasons which I found can be encapsulated in the following points:

- ❖ Today's time is globalization. In the era of globalization, using English is no more in option.
- ❖ English language is the need and call of the day. It is taught, learnt and spoken in each corner of the world.
- ❖ Today's contemporary society's expectation from the schools is also to produce the students as eloquent speakers in English.
- ❖ Today's parents and guardians are becoming such where there is English medium instruction; they will send their children there.
- ❖ Today's parents' understanding regarding quality education is "where there is conducive English environment, there will be quality".
- ❖ It is necessitated to start this medium of instruction in order to increase the number of students in schools, especially in junior levels.

Voices of the experience

The above mentioned reasons are some of the reasons to mention here. This has created a kind of problem which is very serious. This means a dire situation has been created in the schools. I mean to say this here is that our students are actually becoming deprived from getting quality education. Due to English medium classes, students have not developed required standards in language learning. Neither they got opportunities to learn in their mother tongues nor do they get ample exposures and opportunities to practice in schools. As a result, what has become is administration; school principal; teachers and other concerned bodies are in the position of dilemma. Whether this way of delivering education will be effective or trouble creating in schools. Everybody and everywhere in public schools, there is anxiety about this kind of present scenario. Now, in this kind of scenario, we could be done in order to improve the existing situation. This will be another dire question to we people like school bodies, District Education [DEO], and Education Training Centre [ETC]. This has been the time to search better and feasible solution for this kind of dire problem and questions.

Reasons behind problem

As we know that everything has something new to offer which will be beneficial to us. This is also true fact that everything will possess its weaknesses. Now, our concern here is with English medium instruction. Most of the teachers have experienced it very tough to handle. They themselves have realized that they cannot give enough exposures to the students in subject matter which they can in Nepali medium. Some of the teachers are frequently saying that we are ready to leave the profession if government manages some of incentive provisions. In this kind of scene, what I have realized is that in this physical world nothing is impossible except the word 'change'. The word 'Change' we cannot change but other thing we can change. This depends on our efforts, labor, passion, and tolerance power. We have not realized that teaching profession is always tentative and incomplete and requires regular updating, Richards and Farrell (2005). If we update ourselves according to time, then this kind of serious problem

never appears in teaching field. We can enjoy and can create live environment in the classroom, Day (1999). We can use many teaching resources which are really helpful to create live and respectful environment inside and outside the classroom. The following discussion will be about how we can create live and respectful learning environment inside the English medium classroom.

Some ways to facilitate needy teachers

The first and foremost thing to be remembered in English medium instruction is the facilitation/survival/ classroom language. Our teachers should be able to use some classroom language which is frequently used with the students. Some of them can be:

Language of taking attendance

Firstly, greeting:

- ❖ Good morning/good afternoon class
- ❖ Good morning/good afternoon everybody
- ❖ Good morning/good afternoon all
- ❖ Good morning/afternoon my dear children
- ❖ How are you all?
- ❖ All are fine?
- ❖ How are you all feeling?
- ❖ Everybody is fine?

Secondly, taking attendance:

- ❖ Now, I am going to take your attendance.
- ❖ Please, be silent!
- ❖ Do not make noise. Everybody, listen your roll number carefully. I don't repeat it again.
- ❖ Why are you making noise? I am taking your attendance.
- ❖ Everybody listen carefully your roll number.
- ❖ Roll number one/two/three/four/five.....
- ❖ Where is roll n. two? Is he or she absent today?
- ❖ Where is roll number six? What are you doing there?
- ❖ Where is Ram/Shyam/Gita? Why don't you speak?

Thirdly, making confirmation

- ❖ Any one is absent today?
- ❖ Who are absent today?
- ❖ How many students are absent today?
- ❖ Why you were absent yesterday?
- ❖ Thank you class.

Language of checking homework

Making aware about homework:

- ❖ I want to see your homework.
- ❖ Where is your homework?
- ❖ Everybody, open your copy.
- ❖ Everybody, be ready to show your homework.
- ❖ I am going to check your homework.
- ❖ Please, keep your homework on the table

Using class Monitor to collect homework:

- ❖ Who is today's class Monitor?
- ❖ Class Monitor, did you collect everybody's homework.
- ❖ Everybody has done your homework?
- ❖ Have you all done your homework?
- ❖ You all have done your homework?

Making confirmation about students' homework:

- ❖ Why didn't you do your homework?
- ❖ Were you absent yesterday?
- ❖ What was your problem?
- ❖ Did you find that homework difficult?
- ❖ Where didn't you understand yesterday homework?
- ❖ Should I say that again?
- ❖ Should I teach that lesson again?
- ❖ Please raise your hands, who have not done yesterday homework?
- ❖ Why didn't do your homework?
- ❖ Did you feel any difficulty in yesterday homework?
- ❖ Where didn't you understand yesterday?

Language of arranging students' seats

- ❖ Please Ram, you come here and have a seat.
- ❖ Have you followed the rotation system?
- ❖ You last bench boys/girls, come in the first bench.
- ❖ Please, arrange the desks and benches with some gap in between two desks and benches.
- ❖ Please, maintain gap between two desks and benches. I have to move here and there.
- ❖ You Ram go back and Shyam come front.
- ❖ Please, boys in one side and girls another side.
- ❖ Keep the windows open!
- ❖ Bring the benches little bit front.
- ❖ Put the benches little bit back.
- ❖ Keep the benches straight.

Language of introducing the lesson

- ❖ Has everybody brought book?
- ❖ Please, everybody open your book.
- ❖ My dear students today we are going to learn conversation/introducing people.....
- ❖ Today, we are going to discuss about family/society/village/town/.....
- ❖ Do you know what we are going to discuss about.....?
- ❖ Could you please open your book, page number 10/11/12/13/14/15?
- ❖ I want to know what you know about this chapter.
- ❖ In this lesson we need to discuss about.....
- ❖ My dear students today we will know.....

Language of controlling class

- ❖ Please, be silent!
- ❖ Please, keep quite!
- ❖ I have requested you all to be silent. Otherwise, you won't listen me.
- ❖ If you make noise, we can't complete the course in time.
- ❖ My dear students please don't make noise.
- ❖ Ram, stop doing that.
- ❖ Please, do not fight with friends.
- ❖ Ram, why are you making noise?
- ❖ Giving gentle tap and requesting not to make noise.
- ❖ If you make noise, it disturbs to other classes. So, be silent!

Asking questions to make students silent

- ❖ Ram/Shyam/Sita, what are we discussing?
- ❖ Can you say Rita what we are studying?
- ❖ Please, last benchers could you say what we are talking?
- ❖ Can you all say what we are doing?

What to say while giving things to others

- ❖ Here you are.
- ❖ There you are.
- ❖ Help yourself.
- ❖ Yes, you can take it.
- ❖ Yes, take it easily.
- ❖ It's for you.
- ❖ May I give this to you?
- ❖ May I help you?
- ❖ How can I help you?
- ❖ This is for you.

Setting homework

- ❖ Do the exercise number two from textbook.
- ❖ Come with your neat and clean homework. Ok
- ❖ Please, do the page numbers 2/3/4/5/ as your homework.

- ❖ Write any ten sentences about your village/society/town/family.
- ❖ I want you do the any five sentences about present tense and five sentences about past tense.

How to inquire about someone/something?

- ❖ Who is missing?
- ❖ Who isn't here?
- ❖ Who was absent?
- ❖ Who wasn't presented yesterday?
- ❖ Has anybody seentoday?
- ❖ Has anybody any idea about?
- ❖ Can anybody say about.....?

Similarly, there are many more other teaching resource materials that will help us to create English environment with great pleasurable and enjoyment. Some of those resources are attempted to mention in the following way:

- ❖ Songs
- ❖ Rhymes
- ❖ Games
- ❖ Stories
- ❖ Communicative activities
- ❖ Riddles
- ❖ Jokes
- ❖ Videos downloaded from internet

Conclusion

Concludingly, what we can say is that English medium instruction is not difficult in its nature. It should not be taken in such a way which creates anxiety and causes many sleepless nights worrying about the classroom environment. Teachers need to take it easily and should collaborate with other experienced teachers. They need to have habits of consulting Oxford Advance Learners' Dictionary, English newspaper, English movies, and BBC interview. They slowly improve their habits and this improvement will be the reflection on the part of students.