Puppets: A good Language Teacher-Part-I

Ms. Padmini Rangarajan

Educational Puppeteer, Founder & Director of Sphoorthi Theatre for Educational Puppetry,
Art & Craft-STEPARC1-8-522/7, Chikkadpally, Hyderabad-500020
www.sphoorthitheatre.com, sphoorthitheatre@gmail.com
+919866081172, +919849255462

Learning English through puppets is learning through our own buddy than a teacher. Here, Puppets shares the difficulty of learning the language.

Introduction:

The moment one mentions or talks about the 'puppets', it is obvious to recall Preschool and Kindergarten children. As it is a myth that Puppets are only for Primary and Kindergarten children. It is the fact that, puppets are loved by all age group, it is the presentation and subject that matters. No doubt that the tiny-tots love puppets, but puppets can play role beyond mere entertainers. In fact they are very good language teacher.

Any language teacher can use puppets can make the language learning effective, as every learning has to be meaningful. The initial learning enthusiasm fades as the children grow from one stage to another be it about a language or a subject. This is at times ignored both by parents and teachers. Here where every teacher has to analysis problem and find out methods to solve it. If an observation is thrown- a normal child is happy learning alphabets, two-letter words, three letter, simple sentences, and to some extend meaning and so on in the initial stage. When the intensive increases, the errors increases, disinterest increases, the language or the subject appears like dreadful mountain, aversion towards the language develops, it then gets converted into hate, learning is no more enjoyable, and all the fun is lost. Slowly the child ignores the language or the subject and starts scoring low. During the process the child marks the impression that 'X' language or

subject is hard or tough and the child cannot learn. Who decides it? Of course the child, but who are to be held responsible for making a child decide or say so? We- the teachers and parents.

Well, somebody rightly said that 'teaching is an art', not all the teachers are blessed with good teaching skills. There are more teachers by default into this profession than by virtue and passion for it. So, Puppets play the role of rescuer here. By using puppets, teachers can make their students learn better.

Before we start to teach language, we need to convince ourselves and others too about the need and importance of language in our daily life. It is just not learning for learning sake, but to know the logical conscience behind it.

Reasons and importance of language learning

o   Learning a language **prepares** the learner for learning.
o   Learning language/s gives **confidence** to the learner and helps in **paying attention**.
o   Language learning advances better **essay-writing ability** in learner.
o   This encourages students in the development of **cognitive skills**.
o   Language learning exercises and worksheets helps in the development of the **skills of analysis and evaluation.**
o   Language learning also promotes **group working** and **relationship building**, **innovative thoughts, approaches and problem-solving and decision-making.**
o   Language learning facilitates students to **communicate** well, share experiences, and **aids in academic needs.**

Language learning be it regional or mother tongue or English or any other language per se, it indoctrinates **study skills**: knowing the meaning and pronunciation helps listening and reading, evaluating and interpreting information.

For instance, learning English through puppets is learning through our own buddy than a teacher. Here, Puppets shares the difficulty of learning the language, put forth the mistakes made frequently, discuss about likes and dislikes of the language, reasons too. These exploration through puppets which represents the whole class of learners instigates, promotes other learners to join discuss. This sort of exercises definitely helps the teachers in identifying the lacuna of the teaching skill and the subject itself.

The first hurdle is faced when grammar of the language is introduced. The more the deep one explores into the language more difficult it sounds and more confusion too. That's the good thing about the grammarians who have already dived into the language ocean and has segregated and systematized these aspects of the language. We as a teachers and parents have to make our students understand these simple parts of the speech without confusion. Grammar is something like to be taught or learnt correctly as the sentence formation, sentence structure and language

rules and language usage depends upon it. This can be done easily with the help of the puppets. It's like teacher and puppets exchanging their roles and playing it.

One can have as many puppets made out of thrash or best out of waste or even can assign this as a task under a learning skills. For this basic home has to be done before jumping into this exploratory class. Break the English lessons that need to be taught into smaller units and write corresponding activity related to the lesson.

Parts of Speech Puppets

Make puppets to represent the parts of speech. For instance in English the main parts of the speech of a sentence is: *Subject—Object— Predicate*. Make equal number of puppets representing the main parts of the speech. Explain the inter connectivity of parts of the speech and absence of one or so would affect the sentence and make it meaningless. If these three main parts of the speeches are clear, other grammatical hurdles can be handled easily. Again, make similar division of sentences when teaching other languages like Tamil, Hindi, Kannada or so. To add further meaning to it go deep into the subject and introduce Nouns, Pronouns and so on. Have the kids use the puppets to read the sentences and show how the parts of speech have to work together.

Conclusion:

This is a start process and not an end by itself. This simple exercise shall help us to be more creativity and innovative .Being with kids gathering the feeling the form of feedback shall helps to look in to the gaps and errors.