

CHAPTER 4

CURRICULUM OF LANGUAGE SCHOOL

Curriculum plays a pivotal role in teaching and learning a language. It helps to give a pathway to teachers and learners to follow. It is a guide which gives directions and instructions for planning the language course in schools. “Curriculum development focuses on determining what knowledge, skills, and values students learn in schools, what experience should be provided to bring about intended learning outcomes, and how teaching and learning in schools or educational system can be planned, measured, and evaluated” (Richards, 2003: 2).

This chapter will discuss the courses and different factors related to the language courses, such as: needs analysis, syllabus, assessment, materials, and teaching methodologies.

4.1 Courses offered

This school will initially offer three English language courses by considering the learner’s needs and in future it will offer different kinds of other language courses.

. Those courses are:

1. Business English
2. General English

3. English for Academic Purposes

First of all I plan to design a syllabus and offer English for Business by considering the needs of the learners in Hyderabad Sindh. The two other courses will also follow the same manner as the Business English course.

4.2 Business English

This course will offer business communicative skills for those who are going to join BBA (Bachelors in Business Administration) or MBA (Masters in Business Administration) in Hyderabad province of Sindh. The purpose of this course is to raise their English proficiency in business settings as well as to prepare them for successful communication in their future studies and profession. This course will also help the professional people who are working in business fields but have not or less knowledge of business field and want to improve their communicative skills in business settings. This course helps them to learn different business terms (vocabulary), business presentations, business related conversation and business letters.

4.2.1 Goals

By the end of the course learners should be able to familiarize themselves with business terminology and write competently in English. For example, they should be capable of writing appropriate business letters, their class assignments, e-mails as well as a good resume; they will also be able to communicate in business contexts and also will be able to give presentations. They will have the ability to understand

intermediate business articles and newspapers, understanding and conducting general business conversations as well as maintaining relationships with the target community.

4.2.2 Objectives

The objectives for each skill are as follows

listening:

To take telephone messages and conversations in business settings.

To understand relevant business news reports.

To understand business presentations and lectures in classrooms.

Speaking:

To communicate effectively with native and non-native speakers in job interviews as well as business settings.

To respond effectively to telephone messages and job interviews.

To be able to give presentations.

Reading:

To understand a variety of texts, such as business related books, reports, documents and newspaper articles.

Writing:

To write business related class assignments, resumes and business related letters and e-mails.

4.2.3 Course details and outline for the whole course

The course takes place through one semester of time, duration of 2 months and a total length is 80 hours (2 hours/day, 5 days/week). Group sizes will be twenty to thirty students, which is normal in Pakistani culture to join schools in large groups like this. The 'target learners' are intermediate, 12th grade pass students who are going to join university.

The course covers four areas of teaching: Listening, writing, speaking and reading.

Speaking: introductions; presentations; job interview; using the telephone; conversations.

Writing: class assignments; resume; job application letters; business letters; e-mails; notes; memos.

Listening: lectures; telephone messages; conversations with business contacts; business news.

Reading: business related materials; books; business documents; newspaper articles.

Considering the CLT approach authentic material will be used more frequently because authentic materials are supplement to all language courses in CLT. Although they may find the vocabulary unfamiliar in these materials but main purpose is to aware them with the unfamiliar words in business context which will be useful for them.

4.2.4 Needs Analysis

Lee cited in (2004) "Needs analysis is a useful tool to understand student's needs and to help the implementation of educational policies" (Munby 1978, R. Richterich & J-L. Chancerel 1980, Van Els et. al. 1984). Needs analysis for this language school will be an important factor which will help to better understand the learners' needs. For different courses learners' needs would be different and in some cases learner's needs are easy to determine, such as: English for business course I am already well aware of the particular group of learners and their specific needs for taking this course and here it will be easy to find out their over all needs. Richards says "In many cases, learners' language needs may be relatively easy to determine, particularly if learners need to learn a language for very specific purpose, for example, employment in fields such as tourism, nursing, or the hotel industry" (2003:53).

"Need analysis may take place prior to, during, or after a language program. Much of the literature on needs analysis is based on the assumption that is part of the planning that takes place as part of the development of a course" (Richards.2003: 54). To find learners' needs I will use a questionnaire. The use of questionnaires is one of the most common research methods and it can gather large amount of information. Richards also says that questionnaires can produce a large amount of information about many different issues such as communication difficulties, preferred learning styles, preferred classroom activities, attitudes and beliefs (2001).

In this particular research context, questionnaires are initially used to elicit information about learners' and what they want to learn in this business English course before the university semester commences.

4.2.5 Assessment

Assessment will be in three stages:

1. Placement test:
2. Ongoing assessment
3. Final exam

Placement Test:

This test will help us to understand student's appropriate level. Before getting into class they will have to sit in a placement test that will have a written and oral form where the teacher can understand the student's best level and then assigned them to an appropriate class level. I will try to make this test reliable, so students and parents can rely that the test is fair and justifiable for them.

Ongoing Assessment:

This assessment will be during the whole semester and students will be given different small tasks, such as individual and group presentations, short reading and writing tests and short conversation tasks. I also have planned to introduce a more recent feature of ELT and that is peer assessment and for that I will try to train the learners. The reason to bring this assessment because of the large number of students, and business students should be mature enough to do such an assessment. This peer assessment will help them to build motivation and autonomy. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) also states that peer assessment is greatly effective as a learning aid which is beneficial in large classes because teachers are frequently burdened with grading assignments.

Final exam:

This exam will be at the end of the semester with the purpose of measuring what our students have learned from the course. Though I have not seen this kind of exam in the language schools in Thailand, Pakistani people believe it is necessary to have this kind of exam and student's parents want to know their children's progress. It is also necessary to have a final exam because then the students can join the appropriate next level of English or if they are going to leave the school then the exam will determine the level of English that will show on their certificate of completion. The objectives of final exam are to help students to see how they have improved and what they still need to work on or in which language skills they are weak.

4.3 General English

This English for general purposes course will teach English for different uses for daily life. Different people need English suitable for their individual lives and for different uses in different contexts and environments. English for general purposes will offer different tasks, such as: using internet, general conversation and daily common life listening and speaking.

This course's main aim is to improve student's communicative abilities. This course will have the course description so students can understand about the course and can choose it.

4.4 English for Academic Purpose

This course is specially designed for the learners who just completed their college level and are going to join university for their Bachelors degree, and for this they are going to have to take a university entrance exam for the degree they will be

studying for. This course will prepare them for, academic writing, listening lectures, conversation with teachers and friends and reading academic materials. Though in this course learner's needs are well known and are mostly similar but I will give them questionnaire to find out about the learners interests and it will help me in designing and prioritizing their classrooms tasks.

4.5 The materials and books

Books and different teaching materials are the helping tools for the learners and for the teachers. This school will use commercial materials which are easily available in the market, so students can easily get them. The focus will be most on authentic materials because mostly Pakistani published books do not provide the target language context and that is why I will use magazines, newspapers, television news of native language countries to teach different language course, so that students will have the opportunity to learn and use the language through real context. Mostly Pakistani books are published by Pakistani publishers or if books from international publishers' then Pakistani publishers make changes in them to suite Pakistani learners, changing names and settings. These methods do not work so well in learning the language. And also international books are quite costly to buy, so I will try to teach students through different resources.

There will be one room called Self access centre (SAC), which will provide all the resources including books, internet, audio and video resources, grammar exercises and vocabulary practice tools and video resources related with different topics.

4.6 Methodology and teaching style

Teaching methodology refers to the procedure and practice which we use for teaching a language. It is a planned and systematic effort of the teacher for establishing sequence in the various parts of the teaching. Method plays an important role in the teaching of language. Nunan says (1991) that methodology is the way which shows how to teach. There are several methods available in teaching English as a second or foreign language, however in Pakistan a predominant method which is called a Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is used for English teaching in all the government schools and colleges. Rehman states that “lessons are taught through rote learning in crammed classes where the teacher is authoritative and, indeed, very intimidating” (2004:8).

Grammar translation is a way of studying a language that approaches the language first through detailed analysis of its rules of grammar, followed by application of this knowledge to the task of translating English sentences and text into Urdu and from Urdu into English. “Grammar is taught deductively through presentation and study of its rules which are later practiced through Urdu-to-English and English-to-Urdu translations or via fill in the blanks exercises. As a result, students learn all the grammatical rules of the languages but not the language” (Faiq. 2005:1).

Communicative teaching helps students to learn the language rule and also helps students to be able to use the language. “One of the most characteristic features of communicative language teaching is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language, combining these into a more fully communicative views” (Littlewood.1994: 1). This school will teach through the

communicative language teaching approach and will use the communicative syllabus. “Communicative syllabuses can cater for the needs of the learners and so it is strongly recommended that communicative syllabuses should be introduced for teaching English in the country as these syllabuses pay due attention to all the language skills and can prepare students to use the language for communicative purposes” (Hafeez. 2004:31). Teachers will be train and restricted to use communicative methodology to teach English because our main aim for the learners is to teach them in a setting which is not already present in this area. The main focus will be on communicative teaching methodology, so all the teachers require to be aware of using this methodology and also aware of using different technology tools for teaching. The main features of CLT classroom will start from the classroom setting where students will sit in U-shape and not in rows and columns the reason behind this setting is this that students can see each other and can see their teachers and can talk easily with each others. The courses will include all 4 language skills including vocabulary, phonology, and grammar in context. They will have different kinds of tasks and activities which will give them opportunity to use the language.