

Management of English Language Teaching in Higher Education

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Abstract—A great deal of perceptible change has been taking place in the way our institutions of higher learning are being managed in India today. It is believed that managers, whose intuition proves to be accurate, often tend to be the most successful, and this is what makes them almost like entrepreneurs. A certain entrepreneurial spirit is what is expected and requires a degree of insight of the manager to be successful depending upon the situational and more importantly, the heterogeneity as well as the socio-cultural aspect. Teachers in Higher Education have to play multiple roles to make sure that the Learning-Teaching process becomes effective in the real sense of the term. This paper makes an effort to take a close look at that, especially in the context of the management of English language teaching in Higher Education and, therefore, focuses on the management of English language teaching in higher education by understanding target situation analyses at the socio-cultural level.

Keywords—Management, language teaching, English language teaching, higher education.

I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

THE Management of English Language Teaching in Higher Education has infrequently been the subject of serious research, though there are books on school organization, educational management etc. We have in mind works like Curzon [1], *Teaching in Further Education: An Outline of Principles and Practice*, wherein Part Four is devoted to the “Management of Teaching-Learning Process”; and White et al. [5], *Management in English Language Teaching* which is devoted to a discussion of the way in which management is to be found in the process of teaching and learning English. It can easily be noticed on reading through these books that while the former deals with management of English language teaching with English language specified as object, goal etc., the latter with management in English language teaching that is inclusive with relation to space, place, time, state, circumstances, manner, quality, substance, a class, a whole etc. Our concern here is with the management of English language teaching in higher education, and this requires us to answer for ourselves three important questions in particular, which are: (1) What is management? (b) How does it apply to English language teaching? (c) What are the main concerns in the management of English language teaching? We shall attempt to answer each of these questions in the following sections.

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II. MANAGEMENT

The term *management* is derived from the Latin root *manus* with *mano* meaning hand, and the French root *manège*, a reference to the art of training horses and horsemanship. Learning horse riding requires a trainee to use the services of a trainer, who is an accomplished horseman. The trainer teaches the trainee to first get used to the horse he or she wishes to ride, learn to control the horse while he or she is still on the ground by mastering the art of using the reins. Once that is achieved, he or she is encouraged to mount on the horseback using the stirrup, saddle, harness, and muzzle properly, and control the horse using the reins firmly along with a whip and heels to make the horse move or stop as per his or her will.

A similar, though not the same, principle applies when a person has to manage other persons with a major difference being that this situation involves human beings in the form of the manager and the people who he or she is expected to manage, so as to make them do the work for which they have been appointed in an organisation. Immediately upon recruitment, they are given a hands-on training as apprentices for a definite period of time so that they learn how to do the work that is expected of them, and then they are inducted into the workforce by the organisation. The managers *manage* or conduct or direct affairs, or help carry on business, by functioning in ways that would enable them to succeed in handling matters. It is in this sense that *management* is the act, art, or manner of managing, or handling, controlling, directing etc.; or being careful, or giving tactful treatment, and the skill in managing or executive ability.

Ivancevich and Gibson [4] define ‘management’ as “the *process* undertaken by *one or more persons* to *coordinate* the *activities* of other persons to *achieve results not attainable by any one person acting alone*” (added italics). Three words in this definition need close scrutiny: *Process*, *activities*, and *coordination*; maybe, not in that order though.

A. Process

The word ‘process’ generally means a standard, succeeding altering of observable fact or a general phenomenon and its seamless transition to another. A process is thus a reference to the manner of doing something using a particular method involving a number of steps or operations. A process leads to change as it apparently happens when a ‘filament of platinum is introduced into a chamber containing oxygen and sulphur dioxide’ to form ‘sulphurous acid’ to borrow an analogy from Eliot [2]. Our focus is not on the filament of platinum acting as a catalyst; rather it is on the process itself that yields sulphurous acid – a change due to the chemical reaction.

Change is thus the outcome of a process and its failure indicates the fact that there might be something wrong with the steps involved in the methodology that was used.

The aim of the process is to achieve results. However, results are dependent on the aims and objectives of the enterprise of which this process is a part. This is a process in which results cannot be obtained single-handedly but requires effort put in by many hands working together. There are individual differences that one must contend with: differences in terms of ideology, values, work ethics, abilities, perceptions, style of working etc., and these differences have to be resolved so as to find a solution acceptable to one and all.

B. Activities

Activities are involved in a process, like the one of mixing oxygen and sulphur dioxide together as a part of the steps leading to the production of sulphurous acid. 'Activity' can be defined as something that stands for a particularly human relation to the world outside. It is basically a process in the course of which man replicates or reproduces and ingeniously transforms nature. Human beings establish their relations with the twin worlds of knowledge and experience through their activities, and are the subject of the activity initiated and the phenomenon its object. Focusing on the above mentioned view on the subject, we find that reproduction and creative transformation are the products of the process. In reproducing nature, human beings make, form, or bring it into existence again or anew in some way, and this is tied to creative transformation, which is the process of changing the form or outward appearance, the condition, the nature, the function, or the character of something to another of a similar kind demonstrating inventiveness.

Management involves planning, organising, coordinating, directing, leading, controlling, evaluating, and providing feedback.

Managing the job: Knowledge and skills of management techniques

Planning and decision-making (objective setting, prioritising)

Performance management (setting standards, evaluating outputs and services, appraising performance, managing budgets)

Information handling (information technology, communication systems and methods, decision making)

Managing projects

Designing jobs (work and resource allocation)

Negotiating employee relations (industrial relations, employment law)

Selecting and assessing staff

Marketing

Interacting with the environment

Crafting strategy

Taking a long-term view

Creating and promoting an organisational profile

Pursuing a customer/market orientation

Providing quality of service
Being opportunistic and identifying market niches
Locating organisation's position
Influencing and negotiating
Handling conflict, uncertainty, complexity and change

Working with others

Guiding
Directing
Enabling

Developing the organisation

Implementing changes and managing uncertainty
Analysing strategically
Having financial acumen
Valuing differences
Promoting equality of opportunity
Confronting harassment
Organisation design and versatility (challenging inertia; working towards goals; recognising culture; effecting policies, practices and procedures; encouraging cooperation)

Knowing the self

Applying values
Thinking
Using personal power
Managing self

Guiding

Setting and sharing goals
Monitoring
Managing parameters
Owning responsibility
Coaching
Collaborating

Directing

Motivating
Providing direction and leading
Instructing and training
Delegating
Disciplining
Giving and receiving feedback
Handling conflict
Initiating change

Enabling

Listening
Encouraging risk taking and change
Mentoring
Developing
Challenging
Facilitating
Counselling
Trusting
Valuing others
Accepting different ways
Dealing with conflict

Managing self

Organising self
 Developing professional and personal skills
 Balancing work
 Leisure and family
 Being flexible
 Planning personal space
 Being resourceful and resilient

Applying Values

Evaluating beliefs
 Clarifying goals
 Maintaining ethics
 Challenging prejudice
 Appreciating different ways

Thinking

Vision (strategic thinking)
 Thinking broadly
 Reflecting
 Assimilating
 Reframing and redefining problems (lateral thinking)
 Innovating and catalysing (creative thinking)
 Logical thinking

Using personal power

Taking responsibility for own use of power
 Using interpersonal skills
 Caring
 Confronting problems
 Taking risks and experimenting
 Affirming self

C. Coordination

Activities need to be structured and coordinated to produce effective results. Coordination entails the process of bringing something into proper order or relation by adjusting its various parts so as to ensure harmony and, in so doing, make for efficient and effective control.

Corporatised institutions of higher learning involve people operating at various levels, quite harmoniously in a neat hierarchical chain toward the attainment of the objectives of the institutions that they have been appointed to serve. Rightly so, because the Supreme Court of India ruling by a 4-3 majority in 1978 held that both *Education* and the *University* are an industry within the scope of Section 2 (j) of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 (AIR 1978). Mr Justices Iyer, Bhagwati, Desai, and Beg (the then CJI), who wrote the majority judgement, drew upon the nature of activity by laying emphasis on the employer-employee relations to be *the decisive test*. The learned judges noted that (1) an organisation, even if it thrives on philanthropy, does not cease to be a trade or business; (2) educational institutions and research institutes cannot be exempt from the scope of Section 2 (j) of the Industrial Disputes Act 1947, even if they thrive on philanthropy because their making no profit or not having the intention of making profit does not come under the legal definition of trade or business; (3) education being a part of

the wealth of a nation, education services are industrial because education is the nidus of industrialisation and is itself an industry; and (4) the true test of the predominant nature of activity in education being a service to the community, the university is an industry because it is instrumental in serving this purpose. We would like to spend some space here to examine the argument in the majority judgment.

For those uninitiated to the Indian laws, the original Section 2 (j) in the original *Industrial Disputes Act, 1947*, 'industry' as a word refers to any commercial venture, deal, corporate responsibility, manufacture or calling of employers and consists of any profession, facility, employment, craft, or industrial occupation or a occupation of any worker in general.

Teaching is not just a profession, but a calling because, as it is rightly said, teachers are born, not made. Section 2 (j) in the original *Industrial Disputes Act, 1947* was amended in 1982 after this Supreme Court judgement, and has certain changes, wherein 'industry' as a term refers to any methodical and organized activity carried on by co-operation between an employer and employee for the production, supply or distribution of goods or services with a vision to suit human requirements or desires (source: All India Reporter (1978)) [6].

A philanthropic orientation in case of an organisation does not necessarily prevent the law from considering it as a trade or business. Whereas the word *trade* is taken to mean a source of earning one's livelihood; or skilled work, as distinguished from unskilled work, or from a profession or business; or craft, the *business*, which is in a dyadic relationship with trade, involves the buying and selling of commodities and services and connotes a profit motive. Notwithstanding the fact that educational institutions and research institutes are founded on philanthropy, they cannot be exempted from the scope of Section 2 (j) of the Industrial Disputes Act 1947.

The learned judges held that education is the nidus of industrialisation. The word *nidus* is seen as making a reference to a nest, a breeding place, especially a place where *spores* or *seeds germinate*. A *spore*, as any good English lexicon would tell us, is any small organism or cell that can develop into a new individual.

Occupation basically means an activity in which one devotes one's time. *Commerce* and *trade* together consign to the sharing or replacement of commodities, particularly as this involves their transport, though the former generally implies this activity on a large scale between cities, countries, etc. *Industry* chiefly is in relation to the large-scale production of commodities. In their existing convention, words like trade, occupation, work, or line of business have become synonymous and almost are used with the same amount of emphasis.

Miskell [3] discusses a variety of questions such as why people choose to study management. He responds by suggesting that it may be due (1) a genuine intellectual interest or curiosity about management, or (b) the need to learn more about particular management theories or management ideas, or even, (c) the desire to learn to become a more effective manager themselves. The second question he asks is: what

makes a good manager? He brings into discussions attributes like skills, knowledge of how the organisation works, ability to solve problems, innovation etc., celebrating the idea of change with the observation that, “If you never change, there’s no progress, no development.”

Moving to a discussion on good managers, he says that they are the ones with a perspective, and widest knowledge. Management, he avers, should be done by the best managers, not just by people who worked their way up through a company and know their organisation and the profession of management. Managers need to set goals and objectives, the right level of targets or goals achievable by their organisation, such that these are not only challenging, realistic and attainable, but also allow them to achieve the right balance. This requires them to have some kind of plan and strategy.

Elaborating on the subject of strategies, he says that strategies in themselves do not make much sense unless they are backed by actions that are decisive and enable the managers to make effective and meaningful decisions. However, the setting of goals, devising of strategies, and making of decisions are things that managers need to engage in quite a detached way. They have to engage with other organisations often and with other people working within the organisation. One of things that they need to be able to do this is to motivate people and then provide them leadership. A leader provides his or her charge with a clear sense of direction and sense of purpose about where they are going, why these changes are being made at all, why these plans are being put into effect, and how all this will benefit them personally in the long run. This requires them to take responsibility. A good leader or manager is not just somebody who takes credit when things work, but also somebody who holds their hand up and takes responsibility when things do not work. This is where some element of leadership responsibility is what makes a successful manager.

Plans are based on a strategic vision, a sense of judgement (balancing of pros and cons, and advantages and disadvantages so that they arrive at a good, balanced judgement), and they should demonstrate a decisiveness to be able to stick to their decisions. To be able to do this, they need to have organisational competence, knowledge of their organisation, the people under them, and good communicative ability.

III. CONCLUSION

Even so, *intuition* plays an important role in their vision, plans and strategies. For, they accumulate or gather all of the information that they require in order to make this decision. They study the information carefully, analyse all of this information, use a careful and rigorous and rational examination, and come up with the most reasonable and logical decision. The fact is that managers do not have complete access to full information when they are making decisions, which is why they have to depend on their intuition quite often. Research suggests that managers, whose instincts prove to be correct, often tend to be the most successful, and this is what makes them almost like entrepreneurs. This would

lead us to believe that a certain entrepreneurial spirit is what is expected, and a degree of intuition of the manager is required to be successful. Also, they have to be fair in order to be successful; it is when people feel that they are not being treated fairly that there are problems. Lastly, there are problems when managers behave in a way so as to give an impression that they are not concerned about issues of fairness. Managers perform the role of administrators and that of specialist trouble-shooters, and thus their management styles differ from person to person. Therefore, it can be said that Management of English Language Teaching in Higher Education in India requires target situation analysis to come up with better results insofar as teaching the English language in institutes of higher education is concerned.

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