

CONCEPT MAPPING: AN INNOVATIVE INSTRUMENT FOR TEACHING - LEARNING

Anujkumar J. Dabhi¹, Dr. Alkaben J. Macwan²

¹-Research Scholar, Department of Education, SPU

²- Associate Professor, Department of Education, SPU

ABSTRACT

In India, we have many regional languages. NEP-2020 discussed various ways of language teaching, such as learning through activity and active participation of learners in the learning process. English is being castoff frequently in India. Because of the influence of mother tongue, the students find difficulties in learning English as language. In most of the parts of India, English is being taught as a subject and not as a language. As a result, the concepts of English language are given least importance and hence students cannot produce effective English language and even cannot use English effectively in their day-to-day life. So, the teachers need to shift their pedagogy of teaching English as a language and not as a subject. Here, it is tried out to change mindset of teachers how English language concepts can be comprehended by the learners effectively. As concept mapping is used to teach concepts in different subjects effectively, it should be used in teaching English language as well. Many researchers and scholars experimented it in various disciplines and proved its effectiveness. So, here is the way of using concept mapping in teaching concepts of English language.

Key words: *concept mapping, English, grammar, teaching*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Language plays an important role in our life as a human being use language for communication and through it, we progress in all fields. Without a language, it is quite impossible for social and cultural upgradation. Latin and Greek were considered an ancient language and most of the ancient literature was available in those two languages. It is believed that those ancient languages had roots of modern language learning. With a passage of time, we found multiple languages across the globe. It is believed that we have more than six hundred languages used for communication. In India, we have 22 official languages. So, it is quite seen that how important language learning is for us.

English language is considered an international language as most of the countries around the globe use English as their official language and most of the official communication is done in English language. Even in India, we consider English as an official language. All of the letters and official papers are available in English. Though we have multiple regional languages in India, we use Hindi and English as common language for communication. Moreover, even in competitive exams taken in India have good weightage of English as approximately twenty percent marks of total marks are form English language and literature. Afterall, if we move abroad for any purpose, English is the only way to communicate in that particular state. So, learning English language is more important for us as India moving forward to become superpower in coming days.

2.0 HISTORY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN INDIA

English is taught in India since pre-independence era. Britishers used to teach English to the natives as they needed slaves for their office works and hence, they produced the learners as they work like clerks for them. They only taught as much language as they needed to learn for their work and not much more. This was the only teaching of English as language. But after the independence, we continued the same process and at the end in late seventies, we found the wrongdoings as Kothari Commission brought in light. As Kothari Commission (1966) [4] rightly mentioned, "It intended to promote a language of Southern states in Hindi speaking states. It intended to promote Hindi, English and regional language in non-Hindi speaking states." Then after English is being taught properly in India. But still we did not have proper method of teaching English as it was not our mother tongue. We used to teach English as they were using it. After almost two decades, we

started teaching English as a language. Twentieth century witnessed great advancement in science and technology and hence English is given true importance as Indians need to communicate at the global platforms.

As a result, English is regarded as a major foreign language in India. As the world becomes more globalised, there is a growing sense of English as a global language. The field of English language teaching is expanding in India on a daily basis as a result of good and dedicated researchers who have contributed something to English language teaching and a number of linguistics who have made a mark in the field of applied linguistics.

3.0 VARIOUS METHODS, APPROACHES AND TECHNIQUES USED FOR TEACHING ENGLISH

From the very ancient time, there are many ways of teaching and learning of language. But the actual tradition of language teaching was started in late twentieth century in language classrooms. Here we see various milestones in the development of such tradition. The very first method was known as Classical Method or Grammar Translation Method. It was back in seventeen and late eighteen centuries when used in learning Latin and Greek language, the focus was only on learning grammar rules and vocabulary by the learners. The learners were instructed to translate the language in target language. Mother tongue was given equal importance as used in the classroom. Then the era came when it was required to remove influence of mother tongue and Direct Method came into existence. In direct method, no use of mother tongue was applied. The focus was only on learning target language. So, translation from one language to another was restricted in the classroom. Students were instructed to use the target language in the classroom. Then after, the outbreak of World War II made a need of using and understanding target language used by foreigners. There came Audio-lingual method used in teaching and learning of foreign language. This focused on speaking skill of the learners and pronunciation of the language was given importance. Students learn language by listening the language and then produce the language by spontaneously speaking it. Then in modern time, various approaches and techniques use by teachers in language classroom such as Communicative approach, Functional approach, Total Physical Response, Activity based Language Teaching (ALT), Task-based Language Teaching (TBL) and Communicative Language Teaching.

Although it is believed that no method or approach is perfect to use in every classroom because children in every class have different level of knowledge and expertise over language. So, it is depended upon the teacher what way of teaching is required for any particular classroom. Accordingly, the teacher needs to adopt the method or approach in the classroom.

4.0 A STEP FORWARD IN GRAMMAR TEACHING

There are various ways of language teaching adopted by teachers in different time periods. After more than half century of teaching and learning of English language, still we find difficulties in producing effective language users in India. Students use incorrect sentence structure and making mistakes in producing accurate language. These happens because of lack of knowledge about concept and conceptual knowledge of the language. Even they don't know the connections and relationships between various concepts. So, before teaching the whole language to the students, we must teach the learners the concepts of the language and their interconnections which will help them in producing effective language on their own. The knowledge of the concepts and their relationship will automatically enrich their knowledge of the language and its constructions. This will make them effective producers of the language and stimulates them to be effective users of the language.

5.0 CONCEPT MAPPING

Concept Mapping was invented in USA by Prof. Joseph Novak who was working at Cornell University. He is an American educationalist and professor. Prof. Novak and his team worked on developing conceptual knowledge of science students and found that students felt difficulties in learning science concept. Then they found a way of teaching science concept through concept mapping. So, concept mapping was started as a tool for developing knowledge of Concept of science. With a passage of time, this technique was started being used in all other subjects to teach the concepts of the subjects.

5.1 Definitions of Concept Map:

Novak, J. and Gowin, D. (1984) [5] defined concept maps as,
 "A concept map would be just two concepts connected by linking word to form a proposition."

“A Concept map is a schematic device for representing a set of Concept Mapping embedded in a framework of proposition.”

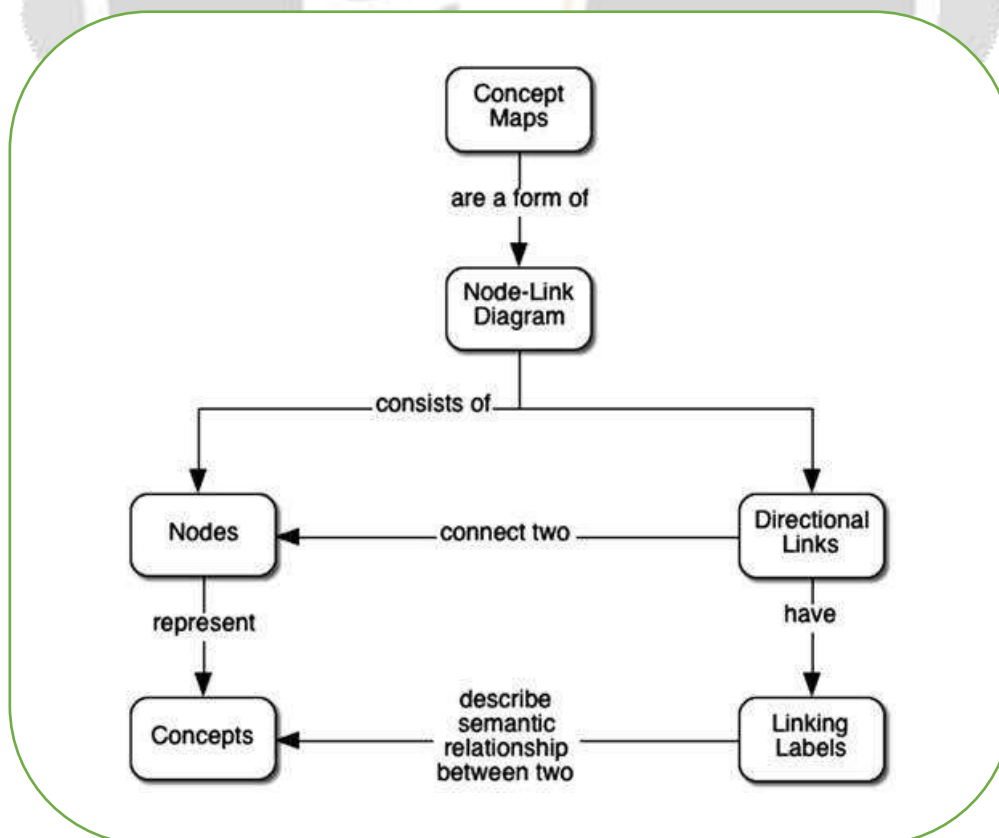
Concept map is framed by two parts connecting each other. Concept maps are constituted by two main features: graphical structure and content. As Aguiar J. G. and Correia, P. R. M. (2017) [1] discussed in their paper entitled, ‘From representing to modelling knowledge: proposing a two-step training for excellence in concept mapping’, The structure is related to the visual aspects (Buhmann & Kinsbury, 2015) [2], such as location and number of concepts and propositions, hierarchical arrangement of concepts, legibility and propositional flow, the presence of cross-links and navigation visual cues. There are circles or boxes, commonly known as nodes in which the concept are places. These concepts are connected with each other by arrows with descriptions how they are linked. These words are known as linking words. The concept map is developed using the previous knowledge of the students and used as evaluation tool to check the knowledge of concepts students know. Chang et al. (2002) [3] quoted in the paper ‘The Effect of Concept Mapping to enhance Text Comprehension and Summarization’, concept map improves knowledge structuring and information encoding when summarizing texts. There are various kinds of concept maps but in language learning we mostly use hierarchical concept mapping as our language concepts are mostly developed on hierarchical manners.

6.0 CONSTRUCTION OF CONCEPT MAP

The first and most important in developing concept map is the focus question. Because the concept of any subject can be linked with many other concepts but it is depended upon the teacher or learner in which way, they need to develop in constructing concept map. After deciding the focus question follow the steps to construct the concept map as-

1. Put the first and most common concept at the top of the map.
2. List out the concepts related to the concept.
3. Bifurcate the concepts into two parts, general concepts and intermediate concepts from the list.
4. Find out how the concepts are connected to each other.
5. Start connecting concepts in hierarchical manner with the relation to each other.
6. Write down the linking words between the concepts to indicate the relationship between the concepts.

6.1 Example of Concept Map:



7.0 BENEFITS OF CONCEPT MAP

There are various benefits of concept maps as,

- help in understanding relationship between the concepts.
- develop cognitive stigma of the students.
- help in remembering information
- easy to use.
- customizable.
- useful in a variety of setting.
- reduce the stress
- help in understanding complex topics.
- used as learning tool as well as evaluation tool.
- Pair work and group work can be given to develop ZPD of the learners.
- fun to use.

8.0 ROLE OF TEACHER

The role of the teacher using concept maps in an English language learning classroom must be sensitive and teacher should know it. For that, these points should keep in mind while using concept maps in language learning classroom.

- The teacher must have good knowledge of the subject and must have mastery over the content.
- The teacher must have knowledge of constructing concept map properly.
- The teacher must have listed out concepts related to the concept he is going to teach.
- The teacher should develop the model concept map before entering the classroom for the situations in which he or she can produce the map when learners would be unable to construct on their own.
- The teacher must know that he is just a facilitator or guide. He should not dictate the class.
- Learner-centric classroom should be advisable. The teacher should only maintain the appropriate learning environment in the classroom.
- Group work and pair works can be assigned so that they can help each other in constructing the map. It will motivate them to learn.
- Creativity of the learners should be admired and the teacher should encourage the learners to construct concept map.
- Let the learners learn language and enjoy through construction of concept map.

9.0 ROLE OF LEARNERS

- Learners should actively participate in classroom learning.
- They should work in groups and pairs for developing concept maps.
- They should try to establish the relationship between the concepts.
- They should help each other in learning process as to develop ZPD.
- They should try to construct their own concept map.
- They should maintain their attention while the classmates are constructing their concept map and learn from it.
- They should concentrate in the class while development of concept map and participate in the process.



10.0 CONCLUSION

In nutshell, every phase of learning language requires change in methods and techniques. It must be appropriate according to the situation and class. The teacher must know the condition of his classroom and accordingly he should lead the class in language learning. Recent time requires change in technique of language learning and it is teacher's duty to apply appropriate technique in his classroom for language learning. As learners in today's world face difficulties in knowing concepts correctly and use them in their language production and day to day conversations. Hence, Concept mapping would help the learners to learn the concepts of language and construction of concept map would develop the cognition and creativity in the learners. Truly, concept mapping would change the way of language learning in coming days.

11.0 REFERENCES

- [1] Aguiar, J. G. & Correia, P. R. M. (2017). *From representing to modelling knowledge: Proposing a two-step training for excellence in concept mapping*. Knowledge & E-Learning, 9(3), p. 366-379.
- [2] Buhmann, S. Y. & Kingsbury, M. (2015). *A standardised, holistic framework for concept-map analysis combining topological attribution and global morphologies*. Knowledge Management & E-learning, 7(1), p.20-35
- [3] Chang, K. E., Sung, Y. T. & Chen, I. D. (2002). *The Effect of Concept Mapping to enhance Text Comprehension and Summarization*. The Journal of Experimental Education, Sept. 2002, Volume 71, p. 5-23.
- [4] Kothari Commission (1966). *Education and National Development: Report of the Education Commission 1964-66*, Government of India, Ministry of Education, New Delhi.
- [5] Novak, J. D. and Gowin, D. W. (1984). *Learning How to Learn*. New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 15.

BIOGRAPHIES

	<p>Anujkumar Johnbhai Dabhi is a registered Ph. D. Scholar of the Department of Education, Sardar Patel University. He holds a degree of M.A.(ELT), M.Ed. from SPU. He received gold medals in B.Ed. & M.Ed. from SPU. He also qualified GSET exam. Recently working as a higher secondary teacher in government school.</p> <p>Anujdabhi90@gmail.com</p>
	<p>Dr. Alkaben J. Macwan is an Associate Professor in P. G. Department of Education, Sardar Patel University. She had a vast experience, almost 17 years, as a teacher educator in M. B. Patel B.Ed. College, SPU. She is bestowed many prestigious awards. She is a recognized guide for Ph. D. in Education as well as ELT.</p> <p>Amacwan10@gmail.com</p>