

Pedagogy of English

Unit 3-Teaching of English Prose

Learning objectives

After completion of the unit, student will be able to:

- Acquire the meaning of prose
- Define prose
- List out the objectives of teaching prose
- Discuss the steps involved in teaching of prose
- Explain the procedure of teaching prose

English is taught at different stages of school education. For this purpose structural readers have been introduced for upper primary classes and ungraded collections or proses and poetries, for the secondary and senior secondary classes. Along with it Supplementary Readers are also introduced for extensive reading by students. In the first three years, the aim of teaching English is to enable the child to build up the foundation of the foreign language through graded learning material and thereafter to make them efficient to read, ungraded texts at the secondary and higher secondary stages are introduced. For achieving the two aims: (1) literary aim, (2) subject matter aim. The teaching of prose should be intensive as well as extensive. Intensive study is mainly related to explanations, detailed information, appreciation and all those aspects that are considered essential for the development of aesthetic sense. Extensive study means gaining of knowledge.

Definition of Prose

According to Coleridge, 'Prose is words in their best order'. Poetry and prose are two different forms of literature. The nature, aims and methods of teaching prose are different from those of poetry. Prose appeals to the head. Prose is more sight than sound merely patterns on paper. There is no rhythm in prose. Prose is for mere information. Prose is for knowledge.

“Appreciation of prose involves comprehending the central experience, beauty and property of the phraseology, the allusions and the images in the presentation of the experiences.”

Teaching of prose includes two types of lessons:

- (a) Detailed prose lesson and**
- (b) Non-detailed prose lesson.**

(a)Detailed Prose Lessons: Detailed prose lessons are also called ‘intensive reading lesson’. In detailed reading the text-book is read thoroughly, word by word. In the language of Francis

Bacon, we can also say that the text-book is to be chewed and digested. Students are required to read it not only for comprehension but also for mastering the prescribed structures and vocabulary. In detailed prose lessons each and every difficult word, idiom or phrase is fully explained to the students so that they could grasp them firmly.

(b) Non-Detailed Prose Lessons: Non-detailed prose lessons aim at giving information and pleasure. The chief purpose is to give general comprehension and create taste for extensive reading. In these lessons the teachers need not explain the meaning of each and every word. Students grasp the meaning of new words according to the situation in which they are used : When a new word or a phrase is repeated twice or thrice, they develop the ability to infer its approximate meaning from the context. Since non-detailed lessons develop rapid reading habits, they are also called rapid-reading lessons.

Characteristics of Prose

The following are the main characteristics of prose:

- 1 Prose is words in their best descriptive order.
- 2 Prose consists of philosophical ideas, social problems, historical description of events, geographical concepts and economical conditions of the society.
- 3 Prose is most important aspect of literature. Thoughts on a topic, story, drama, novels, autobiography and biography, narration and explanation of concepts, theories and principles are major aspects of prose.
- 4 Prose is best means to preserve human knowledge experiences, imaginations and ideas and transmit to new generation.
- 5 Prose is used to develop the cognitive and affective of students.
- 6 Prose develops the language skills, reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- 7 Prose enriches the vocabulary of the students and develops the ability of explaining theme and to grasp the ideas of the writer.
- 8 The purpose of literature is best served by teaching prose.
- 9 Prose develops the expressional ability of the students.
- 10 Prose includes essays of various topics, novels, composition, biographies, play or drama, narrative prose, summaries, abstracts, rapid readings, etc.

Difference between Prose and Poetry:

The points of difference between prose and poetry and procedure of their teaching are as under:

- (1) Prose appeals to the intellect only. Poetry is more powerful form of expression. It affects the whole man, his senses, intellect and emotions.
- (2) Poetry is more of sound than sight. It appeals principally to ear than eye. Whereas prose is more sight than sound merely pattern on paper. Poetry, unlike prose, is not so

much read but sung. It is not so much seen but heard. The poet uses music for the expression of his ideas. What distinguishes poetry from prose is that in there is a peculiar rhythm that is not there in prose.

(3) Prose is for mere information, whereas poetry is for share delight. Poetry is a thing of beauty, beauty of language, beauty of thought, mood and feeling. Poetry is for appreciation. Prose is for knowledge.

Difference in the Objectives of Teaching Prose and poetry

The objectives of teaching poetry and quite different from those of teaching prose and are illustrated below:

(1) Language skills: Poetry is not to be taught for developing the language skills of the pupils. This purpose can be better served by teaching prose.

(2) Acquire nature speech rhythm: Teaching of poetry at the early stage is the aim to help the learner to acquire nature speech rhythms. The main aim of a prose lesson on the other hand, is to enrich the vocabulary, to explain the structure of sentences and to enable the student to grasp the ideas and arguments of the author.

(3) Impart pleasure to the students: The aim of teaching poetry is to impart pleasure to the students by making them understand the thoughts, contents and feelings conveyed in the poem. It is to educate the pupil's emotions and increase their power of imagination.

(4) Language practices: Unlike prose, poetry is not to be taught for language practice as this purpose can be better served by teaching prose.

(5) Natural speech rhythm: At an early state the aim of teaching of poetry aim is to help the learner to learn natural speech rhythm, whereas prose teaching to understand new words, vocabulary, meanings, structures and to grasp subject matter which cannot be recited in a rhythmical way.

Dave Singh writes: "The main aim in a prose lesson into enlarge the vocabulary, explain the structure of sentences, explain the grammatical constructions and to grasp the ideas and arguments of the author. In teaching poetry, the aim is mainly to enjoy the music, rhythm and rhyme of the verse the beauty and force of the phraseology, the witchcraft of the figures of speech and the emotions of the poet. Learning of words and phrases in incidental only"

Difference in teaching procedure of prose and poetry

Because of the differences in the nature and objectives of teaching prose and poetry, the procedure of teaching poetry differs from that of prose. The differences in teaching of prose and poetry are as under:

(1) Prose is designed to improve the vocabulary of the student and develop their sense of language, whereas poetry is taught to train their aesthetic sense

(2) Teaching a prose lesson the teacher concentrates on making the pupils grasp all language items such as vocabulary and structures. But while teaching a poem the teacher need not do it. He should aim at enabling the students have a general understanding and appreciation of the poem

3) Teaching a poem, the teacher must ensure that the students enjoy the poem. Unlike prose drilling the structures and teaching of grammar are irrelevant teaching a poem.

The main objectives of teaching poetry is to provide enjoyable experience of language. This means that the language of the poem is as important as the content. The poem should be taught in such a way that the students enjoy the beauty of language. The teacher should ask questions which concentrate their attention on the words of poem. However, we should not teach poetry like prose to increased vocabulary or enlarge the stock of knowledge or develop Expressional ability.

“A successful poetry lesson should leave the pupils with some insight into the delight or beauty that is portrayed.”

--- Max Eastman

Different kinds of subject Matter of Prose

The types of prose lesson are:

1 Essay: ‘Johnson’ defined it as “a loose sally of the mind, indigestion, piece, not a regular and orderly performance”.

2 Novel : The term originally meant a 'fresh story' but gradually came to signify a story in prose as distinguished form a story in verse, which continued to be called a romance “

3 Short Story: Short story is a comparatively recent development in English literature. It is not merely a greatly shortened.

4 Biography: The biography as an art form development comparatively recently.

5 Composition: It is an art of self expression. “It is called the expressive aspect of language “.

6 Play Or Drama: Drama presents fiction or fact in a form that could be acted before an audience.

General Objectives of Teaching Prose

The general objectives of teaching prose can be enumerated as follows.

- 1 To enable students to understand the passage and grasp its meaning.
2. To enable the pupils to read English passage loudly with correct pronunciation, stress, intonation, pause and articulation of voice
3. To enable them to understand the passage by silent reading.

4. To enrich their active and passive vocabularies.
5. To enable them to express ideas of the passage orally and in writing.
6. To enable them to enjoy reading and writing.
7. To enable them to get knowledge contained the lesson.
8. To develop their imaginative powers.
9. To prepare them for word citizenship.

Procedure of teaching Prose Lesson

There is a need of a preplanned lesson plan for teaching prose. Different scholars have suggested different types of lesson plans according to Herbertian Steps, there should be The following steps in the Lesson plan, mentioned further. These steps are strictly on 'Appreciationistic View' According to which "Learning is to link an old idea with a new idea". These steps should be followed after writing the managerial entries in Lesson plan as date, school, class, section, subject, topic etc.

1.Preparation: English is a foreign language and Indian students find it difficult. So, teachers should try to motivate students to study the lesson. Whatever they do to attract students to learn the lesson is called 'preparation of the lesson'. Under this the following steps are to be followed.

- a. Teaching Aids: The teacher should use the various teaching aids so that he can make the lesson interesting and enable students to understand the lesson with ease and enjoyment. But he should Be cautions of the fact that necessary and desirable materials is effective and helpful.
- b. Previous Knowledge: The teacher should know how much knowledge students already possess regarding the lesson, so that the teacher can give new knowledge by linking it to their past knowledge. In this way, he can get pupils connect the new and past experiences mentally and learn the matter.
- c. Introduction: The introduction has two prose:
 - a. To bring to past knowledge to consciousness
 - b. To attract students attention to the new subject.
- d. Statement of Aim: Psychologically the learner should have clear cut objective before him, so that he can strive to achieve that. Therefor, the teacher should state the aim.

2.Presentation (Learning Experiences)

This is the main part of the lesson. To present the lesson before pupils interestingly and efficiently, the teacher should teach the lesson in two or more units. If the lesson is very short, only one unit should be made. The following sub steps should be followed in both the units:

1. Model Reading: This model reading should be done by the teacher. Its purpose is to enable students to know the exact way of reading. So the teacher should try to read with correct pronunciation, intonation and stress. He should also be particular about

- pause, articulation and expression. Before doing model reading he should give instructions to students regarding postures, opening of the book and attention. While reading he should not absorb himself completely in the book. He should give some attention to students too. He should hold the book in his left hand.
2. Pronunciation Drill: Before the loud reading there should be pronunciation drill. The selection of words for the pronunciation drill should not be on the basis of meaning but the basis of the general pronunciation of students. Those words should be selected which are pronounced or can be pronounced wrongly by students. The words should be written on the blackboard one by one and get drilled. This drill can be done before or after the model reading by the teacher.
 3. Loud Reading or Intimation Reading: This reading should be done by students. Two or three students should be asked to read aloud. Other students should follow in their books. The following points should be kept in mind in this regard:
 1. The errors of pronunciation must be corrected at the end of reading.
 2. The students should be asked to keep the book one foot away from their eyes.
 3. They should hold the book in the left hand while the right hand should be kept free.
 4. All students should sit or stand in proper postures.
 4. Exposition and Explanation: The purpose of explanation and exposition are:
 1. To clear the meaning of difficult words phrases and idioms.
 2. To make the comprehension of passage easy.
 3. To pave way for intensive reading.

The teacher can employ the following methods for exposition of words;

- a. Direct Method: The meaning is taught by showing the object, picture or by some action.
- b. Translation method: In this method the meaning of words is told by translating it into mother tongue. This method is not much effective. It should only be used when the teacher is not in a position of using other methods.
- c. Usage method: In this method, the meaning is elicited by using words in sentences. The sentences should be such as to make the meaning clear.
- d. Similar word method: By giving words of similar meaning the meaning of words can be elicited.
- e. Contrasted word method: In this method words with contrast meaning are used.
- f. Derivation method: By telling how the word was formed or from where the word was derived, its meaning can be explained.
- g. Reference method: By telling the culture or social story or reference (if any). The meaning can be elicited.

5. Silent Reading

6. Comprehension Questions

7. Recapitulation

Learning exercise

1. Define the term prose teaching and differentiate with poetry teaching. Enumerate the objectives of prose teaching.
2. Enumerate different kinds of subject matter of pros and describe the procedure of prose teaching.
3. Enumerate the specific objectives of different kinds of subject matter of prose.
4. Describe the steps of teaching prose lesson. Enumerate its advantage and limitations.
5. Enumerate methods and techniques of prose teaching.