

A Critical Approach to English Material Development and Language Planning in Iran

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ABSTRACT

While teaching and learning English as an international language is flourishing throughout the world, it seems that this process has encountered breakdowns in Iran. Despite the fact that there is a strong relationship between age and language learning, this has escaped notice in practice in our country. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate two serious problems facing students at junior and senior high schools: their low degree of learning English and the gradual descent of their learning in the course of time. To do so, we have calculated the means of English scores of 1500 students who participated in national entrance examinations and were admitted to one of the technical institutes in our country in four consecutive years. The result of the study verifies the above hypotheses to a great extent. To dissect the problems, we have analysed some parts of English textbooks, especially vocabulary, grammar and dialogues and accordingly their shortcomings have been elaborated on. Moreover, testing procedures and the amount of time allocated to teach English have been criticized. Based upon the results of the study, some applicable implications will be brought into prominence.

Keywords: Material development, language planning, cooperative principle (CP), politeness principle (PP), speech acts, critical period.

1. INTRODUCTION

Studying the educational systems of different countries, we realise that a host of time, budget and energy is spent on syllabus design and material development every year. Since education is comprised of various specific courses, each one calls for experts in that field to determine the learners needs and how to meet them via appropriate procedures. Taking into account the exigency of education, in general,