



COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN ENGLISH: SOME STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT:

Language learning is a consequence of direct instruction about the regulations of the language wherein the students are conscious of learning the new language. . Learners could easily pick up spoken English with right exposure and constant touch; but, however much the learners are in the practice of reading and being in touch constantly, writing cannot be acquired automatically..” It is noted that writing is not a natural activity. All people have to be taught to write. Like speech, writing needs constant practice and unlike speech it needs more organisation of thought. This paper proposes a few strategies to improve communication skills in English, especially for professionals.

Keywords: English, Communication Skills, LSRW

INTRODUCTION:

The necessity of education is to stimulate the creativity within the learner, prepare the individual learners, capable of engaging in the responsibilities of day-to-day life and meet communication needs with confidence. The term “language acquisition” is used for the development where language skills are attained because of common and largely random coverage to language: the term “language learning” is acquiring a structured form through teaching. Language itself may be said to be a development of habits; and, to build up a second language is to construct and lay down new practises. It has been observed that learners pick up those linguistic aspects that are alike to their mother tongue in a relatively simpler manner than those aspects that are different. It has been observed that acquisition is an internal process through which the student gains

a feeling for what is exact and what is incorrect. Conversely, language learning is a consequence of direct instruction about the regulations of the language wherein the students are conscious of learning the new language.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN ENGLISH:

It is said that learning to write and speak fluently and expressively is the most complex among the four abilities for most language learners in spite of whether the language in question is a first, second or a foreign language. Learners could easily pick up spoken English with right exposure and constant touch; but, however much the learners are in the practice of reading and being in touch constantly, writing cannot be acquired automatically. That is the reason Francis Bacon terms it as an “exact activity.” It is noted that writing is not a natural activity. All people have to be taught to write. Like speech, writing needs constant practice and unlike speech it needs more organisation of thought.

It is further pointed out that writing is one of the difficult cognitive processes in which a writer has to showcase control of a variety of variables at the same time. For instance, at the sentence level he or she needs to demonstrate control of not only content, vocabulary and usage but also sentence structure, spelling, punctuation and format. Besides forming a sentence, the writer needs to work towards structuring as well as integrating information into paragraphs and texts with cohesion and coherence.

The English language syllabus at the various levels, including at UG and PG, is loaded with prose pieces, poetry, novels, plays and a lot of grammar. The learners as well as the instructors are under the supposition that English language is a subject to be learnt without comprehending the reality that it is a skill to be continuously practised.

According to the principle of syllabus design, the instructor decides on his/her objectives, sketches out the curriculum and prepares the materials, employs a suitable methodology to instruct them and lastly formulate a test that makes sure that learning has taken place. In the present English Language Teaching situation, the instructors teach only what will be tested in the final

examination-nothing additional, nothing less and it is just for the reason that the system is result intended and not learning-focused. It may be said that if the examination structure is modified everything will be altered. It is a known fact that regardless of the customised curriculum, improved texts, improvement of instructing methodologies, although the in-service guidance and English language teaching education and the suggestions of different committees and research studies the L2 teaching remains unchanged. And the linguistic skill of the learners also remains unchanged.

Educationists and syllabus designers are trying hard to produce an advantageous transformation in the result of L2 teaching. However, it is observed to be reasonable. The Education Commission of 1966 said that for a triumphant achievement of the primary-degree course a learner should acquire an adequate control over English language, be capable of expressing himself/herself in it with practical ease; comprehend speeches and lectures in it and benefit himself/herself from its literature. Nevertheless, our learners do not possess the above-mentioned abilities to the desired level.

L2 is imparted as a subject and not as a skill. The syllabus designers, instructors and learners have to become conscious of this reality and take necessary actions to instruct all the four abilities (LSRW) of L2. It may be pointed out that there is a disparity involving the syllabus and the definite requirements of the learners. Subsequently, it is a known fact that the education system is examination oriented; hence both instructors and learners intend only at the examination result. And as the examination does not test the reading, listening and speaking abilities in the English language, both learners and instructors do not want to contribute their time on what the exams do not necessitate. However, the viva-voce exam, to assess spoken English language ability of the learners, is carried out ceremonially.

It is obvious that the skills, Listening and Speaking are reciprocally linked and as Listening is, neglected learners fail to obtain the Speaking skill. The mode of teaching and interaction are not firmly in the English language. Frequently instructors pursue translation and lecture techniques as the learners do not comprehend the lectures in English language. As English language is

taught not through the target language, the occasion to pay attention to the language is being deprived of. The instructors for lack of time and knowledge are found not utilising advanced technologies – teaching gadgets and media – and innovative methods of teaching in the age of information technology. Inadequate cooperation on the side of the students prompts instructors to pursue the age-old techniques in the classroom.

It has been observed that most of the learners always continue to be inactive observers. Therefore, the students get no chance to articulate their feelings and thoughts and become inadequate in proposing to develop their language abilities. The classroom level courses, lectures and group activities are not imparted to the learners. Hence, the students get no chance to utilise and acquire a second language. It has been observed that most of the learners decline to converse in L2 when options are offered for worry of perpetrating errors. It has been observed that learners neglect L2 studies, due to the notion that it does not assist in enhancing their marks in their main subjects.

By keeping the above issues in background, this study would like to present the following proposals. It may be suggested that the universities should organise their own ESL course books based on the principles of the course. The resources in the course book must result in the achievement of the principles. The course book must emphasise on the language skills and it should basically instruct these skills. As English language is the mother tongue of the global village, hence, all the four skills (LSRW) should be instructed to the learners, viz., prescribing course books, audio-video lessons, e-learning and interational CDs should be allocated for learners for practising listening and speaking.

The English language teaching course meant for learners of various disciplines should comprise the instructing of oral communication as an essential element of the syllabus. The skills, Listening and Speaking should be tutored and assessed. The evaluation method for L2 teaching should be modified. The subject oriented and memory-based testing method should be discontinued. As English language is a skill course, the testing method should evaluate all the four major skills of the language. Hence, practical evaluation should be made a must to evaluate the language skills of the learners.

The examination should assess the linguistic capability and communicative proficiency of each learner. The skill, Speaking, proficiency must be assessed in terms of confidence, articulation, precision, repertoire of vocabulary, series of grammatical understanding. The exam must be carried out on a one-to-one framework for about 15-20 minutes to have a thorough appraisal of the strength and discrepancies of each learner in spoken English. A comprehensive comment on the examination presentation must be given to each learner to empower him/her to progress.

The mode of testing followed in entrance exams, viz., IELTS (International English Language Testing System) and TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and National Test of Proficiency on Spoken English managed by ELTAI (The English Language Teachers' Association of India) can be altered and implemented. The skill, Listening can be assessed by playing a pre-recorded hearing unit of the local speakers and the learners have to respond orally. The answers of the students can be recorded and sent for assessment. Speaking, may be said, is the most essential skill. An evaluation of spoken English is an exceptionally significant exam to be incorporated to gauge the speaking aptitude of the learners. Speech exercises like reporting, proposing, convincing, and giving and supporting a view must be integrated in the exam. The answers of the learners must be recorded employing a microphone and the documented tapes must be sent for assessment.

An assessment on the skill, Reading must in addition be incorporated in the examination. Reading comprehension of the learners can be evaluated by giving small passages. For the reading assessment, passages from novels, books, journals and magazines may be provided and learners can be suggested to write their responses on the paper. Exercises like writing personal or official letters, filling up of an application form, filling demand draft, cheques, critical appreciation of a poem or prose piece can be incorporated. If schools and colleges have Language Labs, the assessment may effortlessly be undertaken. Initiatives must be undertaken to organise the material for the assessment.

A lot of work has already been carried out on teaching oral communication skills, particularly for professionals and L2 learners. Scholars from various

nationalities have produced extensive scholarship that provide the language teachers with several activities that may be employed in an effective way to assist learners in the learning process. Frederick Klippel's *Keep Talking*—a key work on communicative activities—comes as handy and useful for language teaching. In imparting effective spoken communication, the principles given by Brown in his book *Teaching by Principles* could be used.

CONCLUSION:

Learners often continue to be inactive observers. Therefore, the students get no chance to articulate their feelings and thoughts and become inadequate in proposing to develop their language abilities. The classroom level courses, lectures and group activities are not imparted to the learners. Hence, the students get no chance to utilise and acquire a second language. For overall development of the language skills in English, attention needs to be paid right from course level to assessment level.

(Note: This study is part of the research work carried out as part of doctoral dissertation by the researcher)

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