



English as a tool to communicate in Multilingual Society: A Study

Dr. K S S Ratna Prasad

Associate Professor, Department of English, SR&BGNR Govt. College (A), Khammam, Telangana State.

To Cite this Article

Dr. K S S Ratna Prasad. English as a tool to communicate in Multilingual Society: A Study. International Journal for Modern Trends in Science and Technology 2022, 8(11), pp. 199-202. <https://doi.org/10.46501/IJMTST0811034>

Article Info

Received: 24 October 2022; Accepted: 18 November 2022; Published: 29 November 2022.

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on development of English education in Telangana with particular reference to the teaching of English at school level. The focus of four skills i.e. LSRW and how they are given priority in the curriculum designed for their study. To have a thorough understanding on it, the author feels it is not out of context to discuss a few points of English learning and teaching at various levels and its importance. The entire world has become a village with the advent of computer and internet. People go from one place to other place, frequently, for many purposes. This facilitates to know about the cultures of other countries. All the people are not privileged to enjoy this facility. A second language is necessary to interact or communicate with multilingual people one can come across. English is the tool through which we can learn many things that are existing in the world.

KEYWORDS: English, communication, LSRW Skills, multilingual society

INTRODUCTION

The objectives of teaching English has two main aspects, namely, language aspects like words, sentences, pronunciation, spelling and grammar and the other aspect being literature aspect which include words, sentences, expressing ideas, feelings and experiences. In India, English is taught as a second language. There is a slight difference between English as a foreign language and English as a second language. A foreign language is learnt, mainly to know the culture and the living style of people of another nation, whereas, a second language is learnt, mainly to use the target language in the society. That way, English has to be taught in India, as a second language.

To put it simply, the teachers of English should prepare their students to use English globally. It means, they have to provide a proper platform for their students to use English language in any day- to- day situation. English has become inevitable in the school curriculum.

It enjoys all positions like I language, II language and III language. English is the medium of instruction in all the English medium schools. Thus, English is the first language in these schools. In other schools English is taught as a second language. In non-Hindi north Indian states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Odiya, their regional language is the first language, Hindi is the second language and English is the third language. As English enjoys all the three positions in the academic field, there will not be anybody who completes his studies in India not acquainted with English.

There are many reasons for which the learners learn English as a second language. The various rationales for learning English are listed below.

- Learn the culture of different countries by direct experience
- The nuances of other cultures that include festivals and family functions

- Learning the fashion and the life style from the films of other countries
- Knowledge about the working of the language
- Communicating with family members
- Communicating with friends
- Participating in exchanging cultural and sports events
- Learning English facilitates to travel and study in other countries

There have been many methods and approaches to teach English as a second language. Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method and Situational Approach also could not sufficiently promote learning English as a second language. Then there was a shift in approach to teaching of English which emphasized developing communication skills in English. It was the criticism that was leveled against structural linguistic theory by American linguist Noam Chomsky that paved way to focus in language teaching on communicative proficiency rather than on mere mastery of structures. The very purpose of language learning is to communicate. Teaching communication skills attempts to communicate are encouraged from the very beginning. Linguistic system in the target language is learned best through the process of struggling to communicate. But, by all means, communicative competence is the desired goal. The very aim of teachers in developing communication skills in students is to help them in any way to work that motivates them to work with the languages. Fluency and acceptable language is the main goal and accuracy is judged contextually. Students are expected to communicate with their peer group in English. And, for this, it is mandatory to acquire proficiency in use of all language skills viz. Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.

Listening is the very basic and important skill of all language skills. One can say, LSRW skills when learners refer language skills. The order in the LSRW is not randomly fixed, but scientifically proved. Any language that is learnt in this order, that language is learnt properly. The Learners are good in our mother tongue, because we start learning our mother tongue the scientific order of learning. In the case of learning English as a second language most of our even degree holders miserably fail, because our approach to learning English is not the one that is tried and tested, that is LSRW. In lower classes our teachers introduce English straightaway from writing. Thus, following reverse method of learning a language. So, it is necessary for the learners to start learning English primarily through listening. Teachers of English should formulate activities

that can develop the learners' listening skills. Three main kinds of listening materials that can be used for teaching listening

- authentic listening materials
- recorded listening materials
- live-listening materials

Authentic Materials for Listening Class Authentic listening materials are recorded live. The language that is used, not rehearsed. It is not aimed at any specified level of the learners. So, it is difficult for the beginners. Examples for authentic listening materials are, cricket commentary, announcement at the railway station, etc. Recorded Listening Materials Unlike Authentic Listening Materials, Recorded Listening Materials have been prepared with specific aim and for specific set of learners. These listening materials are supported by worksheets. The students have to solve the worksheets on listening script. For example, in CBSE - course A Interactive in English is supported by two audio cassettes. These types of cassettes or CDs are called Recorded Listening Materials. Live Listening Materials Here, the teacher himself may be speaking the piece. As the teacher himself asking the piece, he can approach to the listening activity with keeping the level of the students in his mind. So, the students may not have any difficulty over the content and the style of the speaker. The teacher has to possess pronouncing skills with right kind of voice modulation and proper intonation. If he is not blessed with good pronunciation and other pre-requisites, it is better for him and his students, not to take up Live Listening Material on his own. It would be an improper boldness on the part of the teacher which he should avoid. Moreover, it would lead the students to acquire wrong pronunciation. No learning is better than wrong learning. Selective Listening Auditory approach is the best approach to learn a foreign language. But the process is not as easy as it seems. The beginners will be in utter confusion on what aspect of the language to be concentrated upon. Our ears are not properly educated to listen and understand a foreign language. We are very comfortable with the textbooks only. Relying totally on the textbook to the acquisition of a foreign language generally adults in imperfect command of the language. Approach to language learning should be shifted from 'eye' to 'ear' as language is essentially a motor-auditory phenomenon. Selective Listening' is one of the techniques that will promote auditory sensitiveness and assimilative capacity.

All the four language skills reinforce each other. English should be learnt as a Second Language. As all the

reference books are in English and if learners want to develop in Science and Technology and other branches of emerging importance, learning English has become a paramount objective. Aesthetic sense plays a major role in leading a meaningful and enjoyable life. Literature is the main source that can satisfy our aesthetic demands. English has a rich literature. So, English literature should be learnt, as it is the ultimate objective of learning any language. Literature cannot be appreciated without the language proficiency. L.A. Hill said,

“A student cannot appreciate the distinctive qualities of the poetical style of a foreign language unless he has a thorough grounding in the everyday language. Other main objective of teaching English is to make the learners to have to ability to translate from mother tongue to English, vice versa as a special skill. Translation would come in handy in classroom situations, such as, in giving the meaning of words which have exact translation equivalent in both the languages. Appreciating the poem is another objective. Poetry will develop a favourable attitude towards the language. Besides, reading aloud and memorizing of such poetry will improve pupils pronunciation and enable them to recall an idiomatic phrase or a sentence when needed”.

TEACHING THE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

There have been many methods and approaches to teach English as a second language. Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method and Situational Approach also could not sufficiently promote learning English as a second language. Then there was a shift in approach to teaching of English which emphasized developing communication skills in English. It was the criticism that was leveled against structural linguistic theory by American linguist Noam Chomsky that paved way to focus in language teaching on communicative proficiency rather than on mere mastery of structures. The very purpose of language learning is to communicate. Teaching communication skills attempts to communicate are encouraged from the very beginning. Linguistic system in the target language is learned best through the process of struggling to communicate. But, by all means, communicative competence is the desired goal. The very aim of teachers in developing communication skills in students is to help them in any way to work that motivates them to work with the languages. Fluency and acceptable language is the main goal and accuracy is judged contextually. Students are expected to communicate with their peer group in English. And, for this, it is mandatory to acquire

proficiency in use of all language skills viz. Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.

SPEAKING SKILLS ACTIVITIES:

Activity 1: Role Play:

Students should be chosen to play some role, may be between two or three. Familiar roles should be chosen to practice oral skill. It is because while concentrating on developing the language skill, they should not hunt for ideas. The roles may be, a police and a thief, a passenger and a conductor, a doctor and a patient, etc. The teacher should necessarily give the situation on which they will have to play their roles. For example, if the students have to play the role of a doctor and a patient, then the teacher has to give the problem of the patient. Suppose, the patient is, scared of undergoing a surgery, then the role play should focus on this aspect where the doctor has to advice the patient with the zero risk involved in a surgery with much sophisticated machines used for surgery

Activity 2: Debate

Debate is one of the exercises that involves all the students in the class and it is the main means of developing oral skill. Now, let us see how to conduct a debate for a class of 39 students. First, a suitable topic should be chosen. Date for conducting the debate has to be fixed. Then, the appointment of office bearers for conducting the debate also should be finalised. A debate chairman, a debate secretary and a time keeper to be appointed from among the students. Remaining 36 students should be divided into six balanced groups. Three groups are assigned 'for the topic' and other three groups 'against the topic'. And in each group, a leader should be chosen, who will initiate the discussion in his group. A secretary for the group also be chosen, who is entrusted with the work of drafting the points discussed in the group. A speaker for the group also be chosen, who will present their group's discussion to the entire class. An artist of group will draw some picture in support of their point of argument. On the fixed date of the debate the Chairman invites some judges (teachers who free at that particular period) and initiates the debate. The Debate Secretary gives 4e rules and regulations' of the debate. Speakers are called to present their group's point of view. At the end, the result will be declared.

Activity: 3- Seminar

Seminar is the other means through which oral proficiency can be attained. The topic of the Seminar may be the choice of the presenter. If teacher gives, the topic should be given in line with the level of the students. A creative teacher does not encourage his students to just read out a write up. Seminars should be interesting. The

presenter should carry out this activity in interactive mode.

Activity:4- Group Discussion

Participating in a group discussion is the need of the hour for the job seekers. This necessity of the students can be effectively exploited as a motivator to develop oral skill. Group Discussion requires a quick perception on the topic. The other pre-requisites of group discussion are language fluency and rationally unyielding to the arguments of others. Cooperative Learning is getting momentum now-a-days. Group Discussion may be a tool for cooperative learning.

Activity 5: Pair Work

Pair work is another technique that develops oral skill. The students will be set in pairs. A task is given to them. They have to discuss and complete the task in pairs. The English teacher can even request the class teacher to make seating arrange that will facilitate pair work.

Activity 6: Narrating Stories

Students may be asked to tell some stories to develop oral skill. Story telling is an interesting enterprise for the students. Without much conscious effort, the students will develop their oral skill. Language Games: Language Games motivate the learners to learn English. Games can be used to develop all the four skills, the main being speech skill. The teachers should have exposure to conduct games to improve the language of his students. They have to create a right kind of atmosphere to carry out the language games activities.

Activity 7: Narrating Incidents

Students can be asked to narrate some incidents that they witnessed. As the incident is very much alive in their memory, while narrating incidents they enhance their ability in speech skill in English. The teacher has to supply the word if the student requires any. Moreover, the teacher has to correct the student if he uses any wrong word or expression. But he has to ensure that he does not interrupt quite often which will make the student to lose interest and may pay a dishevelled approach towards narrating incidents.

CONCLUSION:

Therefore, whenever the students want to express something in the second language, they have to keep the habits of the first language in check in order to produce the new sounds and structures. Human being is always comfortable with easy going. They have become accustomed to the sounds of his mother tongue, is not able to produce the distinctive sounds of the second language. They are confused in syntactic structures also. Their conscious attempt at arranging words into syntactic patterns results in literal translation, and when

the patterning in the two languages differs, they produce ungrammatical structures.

Conflict of interest statement

Authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

- [1] Hedge, T., "Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom", Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- [2] 2. M. Ashraf Rizvi. Effective Technical Communication. Tata McGraw -Hill third Reprint 2006
- [3] 3. Harmer, J., "The Practice of English Language Teaching", (6th Edition), New York: Longman Group, 1983.
- [4] 4. Ur, P., "A Course in Language Teaching", Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998.