

RESEARCH ARTICLE**Strategies To Teach Language Skills for Enhancing Communicative Competence of First Generation Second Language Learners in Rural**

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Abstract

The objective of learning any language is to communicate effectively and no communication is possible if one doesn't get an opportunity to communicate. Communication is essential in the ever-changing innovative world. Language plays a vital role in communication and English is a prominent language which is a tool for communication all over the world. Everyone should strive hard to enhance good communication skills which gain good career opportunities. In India, students are exposed to their language studies right from their primary level. Since English is taught as a second language in India, there is a great difference between the city students and the rural students in acquiring English language. The city students are exposed to a lot of innovative technologies with ample facilities and special trainings in colleges to enhance their Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing skills which are the basic skills for learning any language while rural students have only limited exposure to learn English. Language learning is a skill which can be successful only with continuous practice, and constant exposure to the target language. By adopting the strategies in language teaching for first generation rural students, the communication skills can be developed to face the upcoming challenges of the day in the innovative world. Language is one of the significant elements which helps in communication activities. Learners have to utilize different types of English language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing for their proficiency and communication. Learning English is the best thing through which one can improve one's life. Though officially English is an assistant language, it is the most important language of India. There are certain skills that must be acquired and mastered over in order to make use of a language. These skills are considered as linguistics skills which can be developed through a lot of practice. The rural students have to face many obstacles in developing better communicative competence. This research article focuses on the effective strategies which can be employed in teaching English to rural students for their enhancement.

Keywords: Communication, rural students, challenges, innovation, language, strategies, teaching LSRW skills.

RESEARCH ARTICLE**Introduction**

In India, 70 percent of the students are from rural background and most of them are the first-generation learners who lack guidance of English language from their parents and others. The rural students don't have the chance to get special training to improve their Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing skills which are the basic skills for learning any language. The training in government colleges which are situated in rural background provided is purely theoretical and bookish and English is taught only in the exam point of view. Hence, even after three years of learning English as their major subject, they hesitate to communicate in English. It is very important that the rural students should be highly motivated by saying the importance of English right from their school. Teachers who teach English in rural areas should be committed and have an honest approach to equip the skills of the learners. Most of the parents are illiterate and so they are not able to guide their children as educated parents do. Hence, the performance of the students lacks parental supervision and guidance which is essential for education. As language learning is a slow and continuous process, errors are inevitable. Without errors no true learning process is possible in the beginning stage. Students should be told that they need not worry while making mistakes as everybody, even native speakers make mistakes. Hence, it is possible to make the rural background first generation learners to enrich their language skills with suitable strategies and the continuous encouragement. The present paper elaborates the learning strategies of English language. Learning a second language is in effect learning the four skills namely, Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Listening and reading may be termed as passive or receptive or recognition skills while speaking and writing skills are termed as active or productive skills. Teaching and learning of a skill are a matter of practice. A good teacher will concentrate on imparting the four skills as language learning is skill oriented.

In learning a language, the ability or skill in using the language is said that you are "to teach the language and not about the language". Learners have to acquire the four skills for developing better communicative competence. They are,

- i) Listening
- ii) Speaking
- iii) Reading
- iv) Writing

Listening

There are two important factors which decide the listening skill. They are interest and usefulness. One listens to anything in which he is interested and to that which he finds useful. So if the teaching of English is made interesting and purposeful the teacher will be successful. There are three phases of listening. They are i) the initial phase ii) the middle phase iii) the final phase. In the initial phase the learner develops the skill of listening to various sounds and differentiates them. Speech sounds and instructions are to be taught in this phase. In this stage the skill of learning reaches the top. Rapid speeches and commentaries are understood. Indian students suffer from many weaknesses which hamper their ability to listen. They are exposed to inadequate range of words and phrases. Their ability to retain attention is poor. They are not able to follow the foreign pronunciation. If the speech is delivered fast, they are not able to understand. The background noise troubles them often and they are not able to adjust to it.

RESEARCH ARTICLE**Remedial measures for better listening**

The listening skill of the learners can be developed by the following ways. They may be insisted to develop their vocabulary skill. Periodically dictations may be given in the classroom. Listening to broadcasts and commentaries is very much helpful. Students should learn correct pronunciation for each word. The teacher must adjust his pace of speech to the standard of the student and gradually speed up. Teacher should use specially prepared recordings for improving the listening skill of students.

In the learning of language practice in listening is the basis of everything. It is the first and foremost principle of language learning. Without it the whole foundation of language learning will be defective and weak.

Speaking

Speaking is an important skill which must be cultivated by all those who want to learn English as a first or second language or foreign language. Many go to spoken English classes for the purpose of learning but fail to acquire the skill. The main objectives of teaching speaking are many; they are, enabling the students to speak correctly and properly. Helping them in using the words and phrases they have already learnt. Making them speak fluently and accurately. To help them get mastery of English stress and intonation. Moreover, making them expert in asking questions as well as answering the questions makes them master of vocabulary and sentence structures. There are many barriers to make a student an effective speaker. Lack of exposure may be cited as the major barrier. Most of the students are not exposed to English speaking situations. There is not much of opportunity to speak English as many communicate in their mother tongue. In order to make the students effective speakers of English, the following steps can be taken:

- i) Many students, who know English well, cannot speak it fluently because of their shyness. Hence, psychological barriers like shyness, hesitation, nervousness, fear, frustration etc. should be removed.
- ii) Proper drill must be given to those learners who have picked up wrong or strong regional pronunciation habits. They must be drilled to remove such defects.
- iii) Thinking in English should be encouraged and adequate exposure and opportunities to listening and speaking of good English must be given to students.
- iv) Physical barriers like stammering and poor hearing must be looked into as early as possible.
- v) Grammatical patterns, structures and vocabulary must be mastered along with speech practice.

While giving practice in speaking, the learners may be given dialogues. Dialogues on simple, contextualized situations may be tried between pairs of students. The teacher should control and guide the students without curbing their freedom of expression. This will give the students enough opportunities to practise certain phonological, grammatical and lexical items. Good practice of dialogues makes the students confident in the use of language.

Reading

Reading is a decoding process. It is a process of looking at written symbols and translating it into a sound. Reading consists of symbol, sound and sense. It involves physical, intellectual and emotional reaction. The main objectives of teaching reading are, to enable the students to read English with accuracy, fluency, and with correct pronunciation. Enable them to enjoy reading with

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better understanding and help them use the ideas gained from reading to other situations

Types of Reading:

There are two kinds of reading skills, the soft skill of reading aloud and reading silently. Loud reading is primarily an oral matter; it is closer to pronunciation than to comprehension. Only a few people are expected to read aloud, as a matter of daily routine: newsreaders, actors etc.

Silent Reading

The greatest amount of reading is done silently. It makes a survey of materials to be studied and to look through indexes etc. Skims the content and familiarises oneself with the material and its thought content. It also helps study the materials in depth. It makes the readers study the language in which the material is written from a literary or linguistic point of view. Apart from all above, silent reading saves the energy of the readers.

Loud Reading

Reading aloud sharpens the ears of the readers so that they are able to detect authentic dialogues and flowing narrative. It also helps improve their diction and expression, which they will then transfer into their speaking voice and writing voice. Reading aloud improves our visual memory and ability to see images in our mind.

Thus, reading is an important skill which everyday student should master, without which their study becomes weak. It is important for those who study English as a second language, as they try to learn English as a library language.

Writing

Writing is putting speech in the form of letters. It is also collection and organization of ideas and experiences. The pupil must first master the mechanics of writing and then he has to learn put ideas and opinions in the form of paragraphs. Punctuation, spelling, Writing is always done with a purpose and usually for communicating with others. The first type of tasks can be writing based on the text. Pupils are given completion or supply type of exercises based on the text. Then they answer short comprehension questions.

Oral practice before writing work is very important. First, all necessary ideas are given by the students along with the essential words connected with the topic. Then they are arranged in the form of an outline. The learners should be encouraged to consult the dictionary while doing self-correction.

English is considered as elixir of life to the students who come from of rural background and who are unable to use a “link language” in English classrooms. English is a daily needed tool in the academic field of students. Further, English is not merely to develop in learner’s ability to use grammar accuracy but to deliver something in regular conversations. In most of the educational institutions where English is medium of instruction the learners should aware of the basic concepts in English. In academic level, students required to deal with class lectures of faculty members, lab instructions, lab reports, experimental records and even the assessment tests. Internet in the modern scenario provides ample of chances and information to learn communicative enhancements. After the completion of degree program, students forced to interact among co-workers and fellow staff members at work place from all over the world. Therefore, communicative competence plays a prominent role in the academic life of students.

Strategies For Teaching Communication Skills

A student has to possess a variety of experiences in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Teaching communication skills through the activities like Videos, Audios, Oral

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presentation, Extempore speech, Self-Introduction, Reading Comprehension, Picture reading, Newspaper reading, Movie clips, free writing, grammar worksheets, games, role play, substitution drills, speed reading, story-telling etc. will definitely make the learners efficient in communication.

Videos

The English teachers can show videos to the students which are available on the internet and also from DVD. Students can easily understand the concepts from these visuals. Teachers can help the students in pronunciation and intonation (raising and falling tones). Students may also be guided to rewrite the sentence which they saw in the video. The teachers indirectly can help the students to acquiring communication skills.

Audios

As listening play a vital role in language learning, it is very essential to play the audio tapes to the students. It enables them to repeat the sentence structures, words, and pronunciation. The audios from English Foreign Language University (EFLU) and websites like www.agengaweb.com will be definitely helpful to the first-generation learners in listening. If the listening skill is acquired by the second language learners, they will become easy for them.

Oral Presentation

The language teachers can help the learners in acquiring vocabulary by writing a number of words on the board and make them find out the meaning and related words. Simple topics can be given to the students as oral presentation based on the vocabulary lists. This type presentation makes the learners to be more comfortable and will surely help them speak on topic for few minutes. It indirectly makes the students get rid of learners' stage fear and gain confidence in speaking skills.

Reading Comprehension

To develop the reading skill of the learners, work sheets on comprehension can be given. The teachers can help the students by explaining inductive reading, pre-reading, post-reading and Close reading with which the learners get a clear picture of reading comprehension. Comprehend means understanding multiple choice questions, true or false, fill ups and open-ended questions will surely help the student for creative and critical thinking.

Reading Newspaper

Reading newspaper plays an important role in language learning classes to acquire LSRW skills. A student may be given a task to read his/her favourite passage, a language teacher can help him in pronunciations, sentence structures and verb patterns. Any one of the students may be asked to summarise the passage in five sentences of their own. Then the students are suggested to learn at least 5 to 10 unfamiliar words with their meanings and contextual usage in sentence construction every day. This practice will unconsciously make the learners to listen, write, and speak and also increasing the reading speed.

Games

In the digital word, students are keen and interested in playing games which may give them happiness and satisfaction. The language teachers can initiate the students to play games in order to develop LSRW skills. Grammar, basic concepts of English and sentence structure can be taught through games.

Role play

To develop the language proficiency among rural students, they can be given different roles like doctor- patient, teacher-student, interviewer – interviewee. The dialogues will surely make

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them experts in making questions and answers by using their cognition skill. The role play will definitely make the learners to think as a character and deliver the dialogues according to the manner of the character. Substitution drills, speed reading, storytelling, and picture writing help the students to understand the English language. These activities help the students to practice listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Conclusion

English is considered as elixir of life to the students who come from of rural background and who are unable to use a “link language” in English classrooms. English is a daily needed tool in the academic field of students. Further, English is not merely to develop in learner’s ability to use grammar accuracy but to deliver something in regular conversations. In most of the educational institutions where English is medium of instruction the learners should aware of the basic concepts in English. In academic level, students required to deal with class lectures of faculty members, lab instructions, lab reports, experimental records and even the assessment tests. Internet in the modern scenario provides ample of chances and information to learn communicative enhancements. After the completion of degree program, students forced to interact among co-workers and fellow staff members at work place from all over the world. Therefore, communicative competence plays a prominent role in the academic life of students.

The above strategies will definitely develop the LSRW skills among rural students. Students should be instructed not to worry for making mistakes. The teacher should not always try to correct every error which may make the learner upset or discourage. Frequent interruptions to correct the sentences will destroy self-confidence of the learners. It is the role of the teacher to create a suitable climate in which the students can fearlessly exercise the language and acquire communicative competence. English teachers who teach rural students need to be very patient and systematic. This is a real challenge of the language teachers but they have to do it wholeheartedly to develop their communicative skills. Utilising the appropriate strategies and continuous practice will definitely help the rural background learners in acquiring language skills.

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