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09

METHODS OF TEACHING LANGUAGE SKILLS IN ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

This paper endeavours to scrutinize the teaching Language skills in English. The purpose of learning a language is to enable students to communicate in language. Language skills are learned more effectively in classroom or anywhere, if the items or picture of the particular object to be presented in a spoken form before they are seen in a written form. The four main skills are Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing.

In addition to mastery of sounds, words and structure, the mastery of skills is also required. This paper focal on the four skills, it can be classified as respective and productive skills. Listening and reading fall under the category of receptive skills. While listening we understand the spoken language and we understand the written language while reading. Speaking and writing are productive skills, while learning these productive skills.

METHODS OF TEACHING LANGUAGE SKILLS IN ENGLISH

This paper attempts to examine the teaching language skills in English. Language is a tool for communication and human beings use it for receiving and sending information among themselves. Communication can be oral or written, oral communication in-

volves listening and speaking and written communication involves reading and writing. These skills can be grouped differently: reading and listening are receptive skills as they used in receiving information and speaking and writing are productive skills as they are useful for producing and conveying information. Language is very important means of communication. It is human creation and it is most useful for human being to solve multi problem in their communication. Everyone wanted to share their feeling and emotion to others. Language is the special gift for the human being through man shares his information to each other. There are four skills in English Language one is the receptive and another is the productive skill. In receptive skills, it includes two skills listening and reading skills and in productive skills, one is speaking and writing. Successful communication involves interesting the necessary skills; in addition, we use non-linguistics features such as gestures and sounds while communicating language.

1) The Teaching of Listening Skills:

Listening is an important skill but unfortunately, teachers tend to neglect this skill in English classes. We found that teacher ponder over that listening skills, they assume that the skill of listening will develop automatically. When the learners hear English spoken in the classes. It is not true when we speak in the class our learners hears us most of the time, and if we want to develop their listening skills, we have to use activities that promote these skills.

Listening is different from hearing as it involves understanding. We hear whenever our ears are open and functional: we hear the bell; we hear the car and motorcycle. Whether we like them or not but we listen to something when we are interested in it and listening is complete only when we understand what we listen. So listening skills have to be developed with the help of certain tasks. Lis-

tening should be accompanied by some activity through which students can demonstrate their comprehension and experience the pleasure of success.

I have mentioned some method of listening skill in English.

- Make it a point to expose the student to a 'good' model because the students are required to produce or generate the language.
- Learner should bear in mind that listening is an importance like speaking.
- Make listening activities interesting and informative.
- Listeners must recognize that phonic substance the sound patterns in bounded segments related to phrase structure.
- Listen and complete the story: Learner should listen to a part of a story from the teacher or from a cassette and complete it individually or in groups.
- Understanding intonation patterns and interpreting attitudinal meaning through variation of tone.
- Teacher should give more importance to training listening skill and learners must become more aware of their own listening skill.
- The teacher can read to the class a short passage or dialogue and ask questions on it. The choice of the passage is important, the passages should be simple, interesting, challenging and within the learner' experience. The teacher's reading should be clear, slow, and expressive so that learners get the meaning of the passage without much difficulty.

2) The Teaching of Speaking Skill:

Speech is primary; the primary function of language is for interaction and communication. We speak when we want to express our ideas, opinion, and desires and to establish social relationship and friendship. In our spoken communication we use 'transactional language' or 'interactional language'. The transactional language contains information. It is also for conveying a message as interac-

tional language. The developments of speaking skills are not paid enough attention in most of the English classes, because the teacher does not feel confident and competence to do it or learners do not feel the need for the skills. In most of time classes or school or college, we have found that the teacher that only speaks and the learner hardly gets opportunities to speak in front of the audience or class or school; if they speak, it is often repeating what the teacher says.

In English spoken classes or school, learners should have given opportunities to speak, because speaking skills can be developed only through engaging the learners in the act of speaking and interacting only. Most of the time we ponder over the classes' teacher tends to neglect the speaking skill that has to use by learner. The teacher should give more opportunity to interact only in English language not mother tongue.

I have mentioned some activities to develop the speaking skills in learner.

- Role-play is a technique that can use to make the students use language and thereby develop spoken skills. It can offer enjoyment and a mental escape from classroom.

- Free role-play, in this type the guidance is oral and the students will have to develop their own scene. An advantage is that weaker students can restrict themselves to a few simple exchanges.

- Learner should be encouraged to talk about short story and take a part debate and discussion and teacher can help them with stimulating questions or clues.

- Learners are encouraged to converse on topics of interest in classes. Mock interviews can arrange once a while. Arranging mock parliament sessions is a common activity in many colleges these days.

- Speaking activities should not occupy the entire class time; ten minutes in a period

may be spent in a day or activities like debates can be organised once a month or week.

- The teacher should listen to the learners when they speak and correct their errors tactfully after the activity is over.

- Though speaking is an important activity, the teacher should not force learners to speak, especially in the beginning classes, when they are not ready to speak; productive skills take longer time emerges unlike receptive skills in young learners.

3) The Teaching of Reading Skills:

Reading is not as many still believe a passive activity in which readers just move their eyes over the printed page in linear order. It is interactive the reader brings his personal knowledge to the text in front of him. The interactivity is triangular between the reader the text and the message. The goal is specific to engage the thoughts, facts, and viewpoint, bias etc. The writer has to put together on the page in order to arrive at the best personal meaning. Reading is the most favoured and most practiced skills in English classes. Reading should be followed by checking the learners' understanding of comprehension. In addition, teacher can use specific activities for developing reading, using materials that are authentic.

I have mentioned some method for teaching Reading skills.

- The reader need not either seek or find in a text all or only what the writer has put into what the writer. In order to understand a text, each reader brings to it different types of knowledge to make meaning.

- The teacher's main task is to help make students' reading efficient and effective by intervening differently at different stages in its development.

- Equip the school library with plenty of books and journals or magazines at the appropriate levels. This will require the co-

operation from teachers belonging to all subjects and every department.

· Dictionary – based activities: pages from a good dictionary can be given to the learners and reading activities such as alphabetizing words or finding out abbreviation may be set.

4) The Teaching of Writing skills:

It is common knowledge that many of those who speak fluently and intelligibly. When the person use the language at job he or she fails when it comes to write for well-defined, job related or academic purpose. Written language can be very different from the language of speech. Frequently two may even differ in the purposes they serve; they clearly differ in the way language is organised to convey each purpose. Most occasion of speaking have a social purpose and in particular contexts. Writing skills are practiced in English classes; in fact, they are the skills, which are paid attention to classes but most of the time learners' writing is copying from the blackboard or textbook. In school where there are prescribed Workbooks, learner write in them, most often the teacher dictates the answers. Learners' writing will improve only if the teacher helps them to write on their own, after preparing them to write. Writing involves motor skills such as handwriting and cognitive skills such as arranging ideas: both should be paid attention. Handwriting can be developed through regular practice with the teacher's attention to the size and shape of the letters and spacing between words. Learners can be encouraged to use good copybooks for this purpose.

· Filling in forms such as money order form, telegram form, application form for bank account etc.

· Writing captions for the pictures cut out of magazines or newspapers.

· Writing letters to a newspaper and responses to other letters in the newspaper.

· Note taking and note making from reference books.

· Answering questions in writing, questions may be on the texts or topics of interest to the learners.

· Writing reviews of films or plays.

· Write some vocabulary games, which can be memories in the class room or free time.

· Make a practice of words for examples

Conclusions:

The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as "The whole body of words and of method of combination of words used by a nation, people or race; a tongue; which implies that a language can exist in spoken as well as written forms". Language is not a social phenomenon, it is a creation of man's social needs. Experience tells us that teaching a skill at the exclusion of other skills is impossible because language is an integrative activity and so it is wise to teach language skills integratively, more than one skill at a time. If you read carefully the activities suggested for developing the skills above, you will realise that some of them involve the use of more than one skills; this is inevitable. Language skills are very important for the learners those come from second language acquisition. Generally, we found the many classes have been neglecting the writing and speaking skills. Therefore, the learner gets some difficulties in their communication. Many classes have been still using the deductive method for teaching language skills but if we ponder over the language skills. It should be taught in inductive method.



PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

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David Crystal defines **communication** as “the transmission and reception of information/message between a source and a receiver using a signaling system.” In linguistic context the source and the receiver are of course human beings – the speaker and the listener- and the signaling system is the system of language. Communication is one of the most basic needs of human beings and an integral part of human life. In fact the very existence and evolution of human society has been possible because of communication through language. It is the process of conveying our thoughts, ideas, and feelings to others using verbal as well as nonverbal signals. We are constantly communicating with others for different purposes in our life.

Effective communication means the ability to express ourselves well, both verbally and non-verbally, in ways which are proper to our cultures and situations. This does not mean only being able to express our desires and opinions, but also our needs and fears. When something is effective, it produces desired or intended results. Effective communication therefore, is when whatever you intended to achieve, through information sharing is achieved. Effective communication results in co-operation whereas weak or faulty

communication leads to misunderstanding and failure to achieve the speaker/writer's objective. Apart from having the necessary professional skills, we need to be effective communicators to function well in today's world. To be effective communicators we need adequate language skills as also an understanding of the cultures, the attitudes and the problems of the people we deal with. Apart from grammatical competence, pragmatic competence is an ability of crucial importance for the success of any communication. It involves knowledge of language use beyond the level of grammar.

This paper focuses on the **pragmatic aspects of effective communication**. In normal communication everything is not said explicitly. Many things are left unsaid or just hinted at. An intelligent listener arrives at the intended meanings despite this silence or lack of explicitness. This is possible only if he has pragmatic competence in addition to linguistic/grammatical competence. In other words he needs knowledge of rules of grammar, situational appropriateness also the knowledge of things like presuppositions, implicatures, illocutionary force and indirect speech acts.

It was Noam Chomsky who first introduced the term **pragmatic competence** in his later writings. Pragmatic competence is the knowledge of how language is related to the situation in which it is used. Apart from knowing the structure of a language, we have to know how to use it. There is little point in knowing the structure of : Can you lift that box? if you can't decide whether the speaker wants to discover how strong you are (a question) or wants you to move the box (a request). The knowledge of language use is different from the knowledge of language itself; pragmatic competence is not just linguistic competence. The description of grammatical competence explains how the speaker knows that - Why are you making such a noise? -is a pos-

sible sentence of English, and that - *Why you are making such a noise? - is not. It is the province of pragmatic competence to explain whether the speaker who says: Why are you making such a noise? is requesting someone to stop, or is asking a genuine question out of curiosity, or is just muttering a comment in a quiet voice."

What is pragmatic competence? The concept of pragmatic competence is distinct from other types of competence. Briefly, we can say that linguistic competence refers to the knowledge of rules of grammar; communicative competence refers to the knowledge of rules of language use; strategic competence refers to the knowledge of communicative strategies while pragmatic competence refers to the knowledge of rules of speaker meaning.

Pragmatic competence can be defined as the ability to read between and beyond the lines and to infer the 'speaker meanings'. Good speakers often resort to hinting strategies and good listeners are adept at discovering the hidden agenda of the speakers. This ability to say one thing and mean another on the part of the speaker and the listener's ability to hear the unheard melodies and draw inferences is the pragmatic competence. Pragmatic competence is sometimes regarded as part of the communicative competence and sometimes as a separate ability.

Let us look at some common examples where we use our **pragmatic insights** to infer the 'real' meaning rather than the literal meaning of those utterances. 1. When we say "Good luck" we mean that I wish you good luck. 2. But when we say "Bad luck" we mean to say that "I regret your bad luck" because the politeness principle of pragmatics tells us that people generally express polite rather than impolite beliefs. 3. A: When is aunt Jane's birthday? B: Sometime in April. In this exchange we can easily guess that B's answer means that

he/she doesn't know exactly when. This is the inference that we arrive at because of the quality maxim of the Co-operative principle because we believe that B is being cooperative and truthful in his information. 4. Similarly the illocutionary force of an utterance like "It looks like rain" may be interpreted variously as – Let us not go out/ Let us postpone going out/ Let us take umbrellas or raincoats with us etc depending on the context.

What exactly is the **need to develop pragmatic competence** among our learners? The answer is simple. In Indian schools and colleges teaching of English is often equated with teaching of grammar and there is over-teaching of grammar at the cost all the other aspects of language. The teachers believe that their duty is to develop linguistic/grammatical competence and pragmatic competence will take care of itself. This is a serious lacuna in our ESL classes. Most of our learners sound un-English or non-native because they have never been taught the importance of pragmatic nuances in language use. Consequently their answers often violate the maxims of quantity and relation. (i.e. Their answers are unnecessarily lengthy and often irrelevant.) They are incapable of appreciating jokes/humour because they fail to see the presuppositions and implicatures behind it. His responses are clumsy or wrong because they can not identify the illocutionary force of the speaker. This is because pragmatics involves socio-cultural and discourse competencies which vary from culture to culture.

Lack of pragmatic competence can sometimes land us into serious trouble resulting in what is called 'pragmatic failure' or 'pragmatic errors' in the literature of the subject. **Pragmatic errors** can be classified into **two types** : 1. **Pragmalinguistic error**-is primarily linguistic. It refers to the errors primarily resulting from failure to use linguistic resources/choices and the pragmatic strategies needed