

LEARNING STRATEGIES TO MASTER ENGLISH FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION THROUGH ACTIVE LEARNING METHOD

Article Particulars: Received: 19.03.2018 Accepted: 04.04.2018 Published: 28.04.2018

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Abstract

English is one of the most beneficial languages for us to communicate next to our mother tongue. It can even be said to be the easiest link language. Other language are important as well, but not for the same reasons as English is important. It is the only language that truly links the whole world together in terms of education, Health, Technology and Commerce. If not for English, the whole world may not be as united as it is today. The other languages are nevertheless important for their unique values and culture. English can be used as a language for communication in any part of the world. Non - native speakers of English around the world actually outnumber the native speakers. Though these people might not have the same accent as others, the language at least will be understandable. There are various reasons for the importance of English Language. When a person travels to another part of the world either for the sake of business or even as a tourist, the languages may differ. In these conditions, English is the language that helps people to deal with the situation. It is like a universal language. In countries like India, where the land is so vast with people of various cultures live, the languages of each part of the country also differ. Moreover India was in the clutches of the British Colonies for many years during which English language had percolated into our life. Under the circumstances, English can be the only link as people in each place will not be able to learn all the other languages to communicate with the people. English bridges this gap and connects the people. The presence of English as a universal language assumes importance in the fact that more and more people leave their countries not only for the sake of business and pleasure, but also for studying. Education has expounded the role of English as people who go to another country to study can only have English as their medium of study. This is because the individual will not be able to learn a subject in the local language alone. This paper reinforces the fact that learning English language is very important in the current scenario. The strategies to master English for Effective communication.

Introduction

English is one of the most important languages in the world with regard to interpersonal communication. It can even be said to be the easiest link language. Other languages are important as well, but not for the same reasons. English is important because it links the whole world together. If not for English, the whole world may not be as it is today. The other languages may be important for their local values and culture. English can be used as a language in any part of the world. This is because at least a few people in each locality would know the language. Though these people might not have the same accent as others, the language at least will be understandable. There are various reasons for the importance of English Language. When a person travels to another part of the world, English is the language that helps people in getting connected to deal with the situations. It is like a Universal Language.

In countries like India, where the land is so vast with people of various cultures live, the languages of each part of the country also differ. After Independence there was rethinking on the place of English. The constitution of India adopted in 1950 gave a lease of 15 years to English as the official language of the country (A.L. Kohli, 1997, Pg8-9) Under the circumstances, English can be the only link as people in each place will not be able to learn all the other languages to

communicate with the people. English bridges this gap and connects the people. The presence of English as a universal language assumes importance in the fact that more and more people leave their countries not only for the sake of business and pleasure, but also for studying. Education has expanded the role of English as people who go to another country to study can only have English as their medium of study. This is because the individual will not be able to learn a subject in the local language of the country. This again reinforces the fact that English language is very important. All correspondences between offices in different countries are in English. This linking factor also tells of the importance of English language. In spite of the growth of Internet in various languages, English is the mainstay of the Internet users. This is the language in which most of the information and websites are available. It is very difficult to translate each and every relevant webpage into the language of various countries.

With Internet becoming very important in e-commerce and also in education, English language is bound to grow. Thus the importance of English as a language is emphasized. The future of English as a language is very secure. In this era of consolidation and trying to unify various aspects of life, it will not be long before English can be made as a single language of the world like the single currency and the union of various nations.

The Role of English in India

Ever since India became independent, there has always existed opposition for English in India. Following the Official Languages Act of 1967, English joined Hindi as an 'additional' language. Subsequently, this policy of accommodation has been consolidated as the 'three language formula', combining use of Hindi, English as a 'link' language, and one regional language. The use of English in India is significantly great. It has recently been estimated, for example, that roughly one-fifth of Indian newspapers (accounting for well over one-fifth of circulation) and one third of all books published in India are in English. Besides Hindi, English is the only genuinely pan-Indian language available for use in broadcasting by All India Radio and in the rapidly developing field of television. Moreover, a considerable amount of creative writing in English has established major cultural claims for the language in the sub-continent, quite independently of further contact with the West.

Perhaps the most striking indication of the continuing role of English, though, is simply the scale of its everyday use: approximately 3% of all Indian are English-using bilinguals, giving the language currency on a par with, say, Malayalam (4% of population) or Kannada (4% of population). And even this percentage only gains its full impact when projected as an actual number of speakers: 3% of the Indian population means about 20 million people (the equivalent of about one third of British English speakers, and one-tenth the number of speakers of English in the United States). The ever-growing need for good communication skills in English has created a huge demand for English teaching around the world. Millions of people today want to improve their command of English or to ensure that their children achieve a good command of English. And opportunities to learn English are provided in many different ways such as through formal instruction, travel, and study abroad, as well as through the media and the internet.

The world-wide demand for English has created an enormous demand for quality language teaching and materials and resources related to it. Learners set themselves demanding goals. They want to be able to master English to a high level of accuracy and fluency. Employers too insist that their employees have good English language skills, and fluency in English is a pre-requisite for success and advancement in many fields of employment in today's world. In India also, the demand for an appropriate and apt teaching methodology is very strong.

English in Education

The Salient features of English in Education are as follows though English is made a part of the curriculum:

- Most of the times, the English lessons are taught in the regional language.

- Vocabulary is taught in the form of isolated words. Grammar pertaining to the lesson is explained at the end of the lesson.
- Syntax and semantics are directly or indirectly tested through exercises.
- The lesson content in the form of prose, poetry or fiction is given.
- Little or no attention is given to pronunciation.

So, the strategies closely associated for learning English can be tried as follows:

- Translation of a Literary Passage (Translating in to target language(English) from regional language).
- Reading Comprehension Questions (Finding information in a passage, making inferences and relating to personal experience).
- Antonyms/Synonyms (Finding antonyms and synonyms for words or sets of words used in the lesson)
- Cognates (Learning spelling/sound patterns that correspond between L 1 and the target language).
- Deductive Application of Rule (Understanding grammar rules and their exceptions, then applying them to new examples).
- Fill-in-the-blanks (Filling in gaps in sentences with new words or items of a particular grammar type).
- Memorization (Memorizing vocabulary lists, grammatical rules and grammatical paradigms).
- Use Words in Sentences (Students frame sentences to illustrate that they know the meaning and use of new words).
- Composition (Students write about a topic using the target language here English).

Strategies to Master English for Communication

Once it was argued that learners learn a language through the process of communicating in it, and that communication that is meaningful to the learner provides a better opportunity for learning than through a grammar-based approach. In order to train the learners to communicate in English effectively, let us

- Make real communication in different situations the focus of language learning.
- Provide opportunities for learners to experiment and try out what they know to communicate in English.
- Be tolerant of learners' errors as they indicate that the learner is building up his or her communicative competence.
- Provide opportunities for learners to develop both fluency and accuracy.
- Link the different skills such as Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing together, since they usually occur together in the real world.
- Motivate students to discover grammar rules In applying these principles in the classroom, new classroom techniques and activities are required. Therefore new roles for teachers and learners have been created in the classroom. Instead of making use of activities that demanded accurate repetition and memorization of sentences and grammatical patterns, activities that require learners to negotiate meaning and to interact meaningfully are required. Fluency is natural language use occurring when a speaker engages in meaningful interaction and maintains comprehensible and ongoing communication despite limitations in his or her communicative competence. Fluency is developed by creating classroom activities in which students must negotiate meaning, use communication breakdowns. Fluency practice can be contrasted with accuracy practice, which focuses on creating correct examples of language use.

Differences between activities that focus on fluency and those that focus on accuracy can be summarized as follows:

Activities focusing on fluency

- Reflect natural use of language.
- Focus on spontaneity communication.
- Require meaningful use of language.
- Require the use of communication strategies.
- Produce language utterances that may not be predictable.
- Seek to link language use to context.
- Activities focusing on accuracy.
- Reflect classroom use of language with teacher or follow students.
- Focus on the formation of correct examples of language.
- Practice language out of context.
- Practice small samples of language.
- Do not require meaningful communication lest fluency should be difficult.
- Choice of language is controlled.

Strategies through Active Learning of English for Communication

1. To teach communication skills through interactive way (spoken skills and written skills on relevant topics. Examples: (i) Role play between a Teacher and a student about Final Examination. (ii) Dialogue between friends about a current news. (iii) Imaginary interview with a National Leader through Role Play. (iv) Practice writing on Expansion of proverbs. (v) Story writing on a preferred theme.
2. Active Learning can be used in the English Classroom in an interesting manner through debates, quiz, group discussion, role play and so on.
3. Teaching through Active Learning is more effective than traditional method of teaching English to develop communication skills in English. What the students need to know is more important for effective communication.
4. Teaching the skills of speaking and writing in English by interactive way enables the students to learn communication skills more effectively.
5. Teaching communication skills involving the learners enables the average and below average students to narrow down the gap between them and above average students in developing communication skills.
6. Training the learners on Tongue twisters will keep them active to say in union and to learn the right pronunciation and modulation.
7. Voice drill on similar sounding words using vowels and consonants done regularly for a few minutes will help the learners to shed their creativity.
8. Interested students may be trained for the conduct of functions in schools or Colleges comparing welcome address, Vote of thanks and Reporting to the Press.
9. Active Learning helps the learners to get rid of stage fright or audience fright in a public function like school day/College Day, Annual Sports Day, Cultural Day and so on.
10. Above all, Active Learning helps in building Confidence and courage to communicate within the learners groups and with strangers.

Conclusion

Practice is more important than theory. Constant practice inside the classroom and outside the classroom is quite necessary. To sum up, the Active Learning of teaching English makes the learners acquire a fluent command of the linguistic system. The learners are capable of using acceptable language which is acceptable. They acquire greater grammatical accuracy. Moreover, the learners

are encouraged to take into account of the social context in which interaction takes place and thereby they are trained in social interaction activities.

In fine, different strategies are to be devised periodically by the teachers according to the level of their students. Current topics, burning issues, and general topics could be chosen to make the classes lively. Communication becomes effective only when both the speaker and the listener have the similar wavelength need, purpose and time.

Internet comes handy now-a-days to learn effective communication. Both audio and video recordings are seen when we Google our desired topic or seen through the YouTube. Thus learners have to be engaged actively for meaningful and effective communication.

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