

English Language Teaching With Techniques and Communication Skills

Pinke*

VPO – Titoli, Rohtak (HR)

Abstract – It is this idea of planning that lies at the core of the present study. Teaching a language is a serious business and must be conducted carefully. Language is essentially a skill. It is not a content subject like Physics, Economics, and Statistics etc., which aim at imparting information and fill the human mind with knowledge. A skill may be called an ability to do something well which can be acquired only through practice. Language is a complex skill, involving four primary aspects, such as, listening, speaking, reading and writing. The arts have a profound ability to enrich the lives they touch and can be an invaluable tool for teachers at all levels to enhance instruction for English Language Learners. English Language Learners (ELLs) in New York State enter our public schools facing the multiple challenges of learning English, mastering academic content, bridging distances between the home country and their new home, and negotiating new cultural and social contexts. By integrating the arts and art making into English language teaching and learning, students will develop and deepen their understanding of their own and others' human experience. In combination with reading, writing, speaking and listening, the arts can open doors for high levels of analysis and also challenge students to explore themselves and their surroundings, and thus find avenues for sophisticated comprehension and communication. The arts convey what it means to be human, challenge the intellect and provide rich experiences in analysis, exploration, reflection, observation, imagination, experimentation, and communication.

Keywords: English Language, Teaching, Techniques, Communication Skills, Planning.

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INTRODUCTION

Language has always been considered as a powerful tool that has the potential to control human behaviour and thus maintain social and political authority. The power of language develops in tune with its use as a medium of administration, education, trade and international relations. Thus, its power extends beyond communication to administration, politics, economics, and social relations. The power grows in vigour language is used as a “vehicle of cultural or educational enlightenment and other activities of social empowerment”. Such activities can often alienate individuals from their own culture in the process of civilization and distance the educated elite from native cultures. There are bilingual communities where people use different languages to perform different functions. In our country, the preference for English education has grown over the years on account of the opportunities it has been offering us in various activities. English is now quite extensively used for a variety of purposes, particularly in the academic, business and administrative interactions. Thus, it has gained a special status amidst the bilingual phenomenon in which it has nearly eclipsed

the vernacular languages in important areas of interaction.

The most important reason for the growth of English is “the historical role of England as a colonial power”. Political power naturally attributed power to the language of administration; hence, English has become a symbol of political power in our country. English has become the language of the legal system, higher education, pan-regional administrative network, science and technology, trade and commerce, either because the indigenous languages were not equipped to perform these roles or because the use of English was considered prestigious and powerful. Gradually English developed into a major tool for acquiring knowledge in the humanities and sciences. It now represents modernization and development and, as a link language, it has been used for inter and international communication over the years. The English language has now penetrated deeply into our society, and this has resulted in its extensive teaching and learning. It has supported research and other academic activities in higher education, and assisted national development by way of its use in education,

administration, business, trade and commerce. The knowledge of it boosts the employability and functional efficiency of the individuals. Hence its teaching needs to be made more effective keeping in view the role English will continue to play in academic pursuits, business, administration, and above all, in national development. This is where the strategies employed in teaching and learning English in the classroom come to the focal point. It is, therefore, necessary to look into the processes of instructional communication activities in the classroom to understand why they generally fail in their intent.

THE TEACHER AND THE LEARNER:

Our educational system is failing to meet the real needs of our society. Our schools generally constitute the most traditional, conservative, rigid, bureaucratic institution of our time. We, as teachers, have to create a genuinely humane climate in which we have to initiate a process where a young person can find him/herself respected, can make responsible choices, can experience the excitement of learning, can lay the basis for living as an effective, concerned citizen, well informed, competent in knowledge and skills and confident of facing the future. The ultimate aim of education – of all attempts at teaching – is to make the learners capable of doing things on their own. They need to be able to cope with the unpredictable. We as teachers must enable them to do so, and the training we impart should allow them to learn on their own, when the prop of the teacher is withdrawn. Although training the learners to learn by themselves is not a new concept, there has been a revival of interest in helping learners to take on more responsibility for their own learning.

LEARNING-TEACHING STRATEGIES:

The training which learners should receive should prepare them to direct the course of their own learning, that is, it should take them from their states of varying degrees of dependence to the state of the greatest of independence or autonomy which is possible in a given set of circumstances. If this is to occur, then the learner must acquire a number of relevant learning techniques or strategies. Learners strategies refer to language learning behaviors that learners actually engage into learn and regulate the learning of English (as a second language in this case).

- Co-operative learning
- Puzzling out things
- Self and peer correction
- Choice of activities

- Trouble-shooting sessions
- Confidence sessions
- Using pupil teachers
- Extensive language activities outside the classroom

Co-Operative Learning

- Pair work
- Group work
- Role play

Pair Work

- Provides a lot of oral practice
- Gives learners a chance to work independently
- Prepares learners for group work
- Provides an opportunity to talk face-to-face, which reflects real life situations

Group Work

- Pair and group work differ in:
- Time set
- Nature of the group work
- Type of activity

Role Play

- Students play imaginary characters in given situations
- It brings a wide variety of language experiences into the classroom
- It gives an opportunity to use language as used in real life situations
- It helps better self-expression (as it is full of fun and enjoyment)

E-LEARNING AND THE ROLE OF THE ENGLISH TEACHER:

The objective in any language classroom is to get the learners to learn the target language and use it, which is done best when they are involved actively in the learning process. This in turn means that

their interest must be sustained in classroom activity. A teacher who has a repertoire of techniques to teach different skills/sub-skills is more likely to succeed in this objective than one who has limited number of techniques at command. Another important point to be remembered is that having a repertoire of techniques is by itself no guarantee of success; one must know when to use which technique. In other words, judgments of a teacher should be fine-tuned to the needs of that particular class/group of learners. For example, drilling is a technique which can be used effectively at the practice or familiarization stage of a lesson, but not for a communicative activity which demands deployment of the learner's own language.

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION:

A language is a means of communication. What we feel or what we know, we have to convey the same to others. In order to convey we know or we feel, we need a tool. That tool is language. There are many languages in the world. One among them is English. The language English has been spread to various countries by the British people in the form of colonization. English language not only belongs to English people but to the people all over the world. English is considered as a secondary passport. If you know English well, you can go to any part of the world. Thus English is essential in every walk of life. Language is only one of the codes we use to express our ideas. Languages continually change; their statistics are "non-stationary." Not only do they change continually with history, as social conditions in general alter, but they may show a difference, at any particular time, as environmental conditions differ. The relationship between the whole structure of a language (grammatical formalism) and the outside world associations (its semantic functioning) is extremely complicated; it is essentially empirical and above all, varies between different languages.

The word "communication" has become popular. It is used currently to label relationship problems between labor and management, among countries, among people generally. Some uses of the communication label refer to a different way of viewing these problems; others merely change the name of the same. The international aspect of both government and industry has become communication-oriented. Aristotle defined the study of rhetoric [communication] as the search for "all the available means of persuasion." He discussed other purpose that a speaker might have; nevertheless, he clearly implied that the prime goal of communication was persuasion, an attempt to sway other men to the speaker's point of view. This view of communicative purpose remained popular until late in the eighteenth century, although emphasis switched from the methods of persuasion to what constituted the "good man" in the speaking situation. In the seventeenth century a school of thought known as faculty psychology was developed. Faculty psychology

made a clear distinction between the soul and the mind, attributing separate faculties to each. By late in the eighteenth century, the concepts of faculty psychology had invaded rhetoric. The mind-soul dualism was interpreted as a basis for two independent purposes for communication. One purpose was intellectual or cognitive in nature; the other was emotional. One appealed to the mind, and the other to the soul. By this theory, one purpose of communication was informative - an appeal to the mind. A second was persuasive - an appeal to the soul, the emotions. We should employ at least four criteria for our definition of purpose. Communication purpose must be specified in such a way that it is:

1. Not logically contradictory or inconsistent with itself;
2. Behavior-centered; that is, expressed in terms of human behaviors;
3. Specific enough for us to be able to relate it to actual communication behavior;
4. Consistent with the ways in which people to communicate.

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IN LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS:

Language, which has been considered man's most remarkable achievement, is so much a part of our lives, like the air we breathe, that very often we take it for granted and as often are not aware of its characteristic features. There are many things about language that are still a mystery and will probably remain so. Language has form which consists of a combination of distinctive sounds or phonemes. Linguistic forms are either bound or free. Language does not operate in a vacuum. It is an integral part of culture, and like culture, it is learned behaviour. Language is at the very core of culture itself.

Linguistics and Language Teaching: The need for the linguistics oriented teaching was greatly felt during the Second World War. The Allied forces while thrusting forward in the occupied areas found that the armed forces required a basic knowledge of the language of those areas in order to have a verbal access to the population that came across. Robert Lado (1964) had been of the view that "linguists insisted on the imitation and memorization of basic conversational sentences as spoken by native speakers. They also provided the distinctive element of intonation, pronunciation, morphology and syntax, the powerful idea of pattern practice was developed". Repetition of selected patterns and structures assumed an important role in the gradation of lessons. In order to make the learning process simpler, it required to know the similarities and dissimilarities between

the mother tongue and the target language. Charles Fried (1945) had detailed the significance of contrastive analysis as far back as 1945 regarding the teaching materials. "The most effective materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner". The learner finds certain areas of target language easy and other areas very difficult to learn. The latter is due to the absence of similar forms in his own tongue. It is the study of the differences which is most characteristic of the contribution of linguistics to a language teaching. This can be effectively achieved by the contrastive analysis of the mother tongue and target language structure.

Language Proficiency: Generally when the question of language teaching and communication are raised, one can immediately think about the knowledge of the structure of the language concerned and also proficiency in the four basic skills of the language. They are

1. Listening skill
2. Speaking skill
3. Reading skill
4. Writing skill

Among these four skills, both listening skill and reading skill are called as receptive skills or passive skills and the other two skills, namely speaking skill and writing skill are called as productive skills or active skills. It is very important to note that there is a close link between all the above skills. In other words, every skill in its own way is interconnected in order to achieve the overall objective of communication. Unless one has systematic exposure in receptive skills, he/she cannot be systematic in productive skill. Everything takes place and develops within the linguistic, cultural and social boundaries of the concerned society in which the particular language is spoken. It is the curriculum, syllabus; text book, teaching methodologies under the efficient functioning of the teacher in the class room, those students are shaped in different skills mentioned above.

TEACHING THE TECHNIQUES OF LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS:

Communication is the exchange of information or ideas between two or more people. It is the act of expressing thoughts in a manner that others understand. The development of language learning or teaching from form-based to a meaning-based approach, the move towards an eclectic approach from a rigid method, the shift from teacher-fronted to learner-centered classes, are all subsumed under the broad term COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH.

How a thing is done in class is a technique. A technique is 'implementation – that which actually takes place in a classroom. Listening and speaking are two important aspects of communication. Listening is the absorption of the meanings of the words and sentences by the brain. A closed mind is the biggest hindrance to effective listening. But it is also only one means to an end, and we judge a course communicative or otherwise not only in terms of how it is organized, but also in terms of its methodology.

Communicative Competence: It is the ability, not only to apply the grammatical rules of a language in order to form grammatically correct sentences, but also to know when and where to use these sentences – in other words, to use them appropriately. Many syllabuses have been developed under the label 'communicative approach', and each syllabus claims that it can achieve the aim of the approach, namely, that of communicative competence. All these syllabuses share certain common features:

- They are all based on a semantically organized syllabus, such as the notional syllabus.
- They teach the language needed in different situations, to express and understand different functions.
- They emphasize appropriacy of language use.
- They also teach the language required to perform different tasks (for example, solving puzzles and getting information)

Techniques used in the Communicative Approach: In communicative language teaching, information gap tasks are used. An information gap occurs in a situation where one person knows something which other people do not. Information gap tasks are introduced in the classroom using the following techniques:

Language games: According to Morrow (1981) language games are communicative when they are characterized by three features: information gap, choice and feedback.

Mind Engaging Tasks: Communicative activities are based on the implicit recognition that a learner learns best when his/her mind is on tasks to be done in the language rather than on language itself. Thus many problem-solving activities are a part of the communicative approach.

Retrieving Text Order: The technique involves the use of scrambled sentences and scrambled picture techniques. By doing these activities, learners

become aware of discourse features which are distinct from grammatical features. They become familiar with the use of cohesive devices ('and', 'or', 'nevertheless', etc.), anaphoric pronouns (the boy - he, the dog - it) and semantic clues (use of lexical items, topic, etc.) through these activities.

Group Work / Pair Work: Group work and pair work form an important part of any communicative activity, for peer interaction is an effective means of acquiring some language features which are not available in a formal teacher-fronted class.

Techniques of Teaching English: How a thing is done in class is a technique. A technique is 'implementation – that which actually takes place in a classroom. It is a particular trick, stratagem or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective' (Anthony 1972). Techniques are closely related to methods and approaches. Another important point to be remembered is that having a repertoire of techniques is by itself no guarantee of success; one must know when to use which technique. Language has been divided into four main skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing (LSRW). Each skill has been further divided into sub-skills.

CONCLUSION:

The arts have a profound ability to enrich the lives they touch and can be an invaluable tool for teachers at all levels to enhance instruction for English Language Learners. English Language Learners (ELLs) in New York State enter our public schools facing the multiple challenges of learning English, mastering academic content, bridging distances between the home country and their new home, and negotiating new cultural and social contexts. By integrating the arts and art making into English language teaching and learning, students will develop and deepen their understanding of their own and others' human experience. In combination with reading, writing, speaking and listening, the arts can open doors for high levels of analysis and also challenge students to explore themselves and their surroundings, and thus find avenues for sophisticated comprehension and communication. The arts convey what it means to be human, challenge the intellect and provide rich experiences in analysis, exploration, reflection, observation, imagination, experimentation, and communication. Elementary teachers will also benefit from collaborative networks focused on subject matter disciplines, especially in the upper elementary grades where the content demands of teaching and learning have increased beyond the traditional comfort and confidence level of many teachers, especially in elementary science and mathematics. Growing communities of science and mathematics educators will be needed to increase access to robust learning in these disciplines. To offer ELLs access beyond basic skills in these fields, capacity

development for teachers of ELLs needs to include content and pedagogy, as well as language development.

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Corresponding Author**Pinke***

VPO – Titoli, Rohtak (HR)

E-Mail – pinkisunilbeniwal@gmail.com