

Advancing Dynamic Proficiency Skills into Teaching English as a Second Language in Indian Setting

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Abstract

This research article entitled "Advancing Dynamic Proficiency Skills in Teaching English as a Second Language in Indian Setting" is devoted to deliberate the uniqueness of Communication Skills in English for special as well as secondary purpose. It is in short about refining the speaking skill in English as a second language in India. In the course of its deliberation it would point out the central insights of the topic, and would elucidate the outcomes of the research. Some recommendations will also be stated in this article. Teaching and learning English, in addition to the vernacular language, is highly essential for communicative purposes so as to cope with the ever increasing regional, national and the global demands for communication skills in English. In India, English is the official language, and is used for the purposes of education, employment and for wider communication within and among the states as well for traveling to foreign countries. To cope up with the national and global demand, innumerable efforts have been made to the Indian educational system to enhance the learners English speaking skills.

Keywords: ESL classes, Communicative approach, Active skills, Passive skills, Challenges, Teacher's role

Introduction

This modern world, which is governed by LPGs i.e., Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation has become a global village. In this village English the Lingua Franca (Prodromou 2010) of the world has become the predominant medium of communication in all the spheres, both in national and international contexts. In consequence the demand for using English for governing and everyday purpose has become a necessity in almost all the countries of the global village. In order to cope up with the ever increasing demands for English Communication Skills at the local, national and global level, the Teaching and learning English, as a Second language, has become highly crucial for the purposes of Communication (Ellis 2003).

English as Second Language in India

In India, English is not considered as a foreign language as it used for the purposes of governance, academic and career advancement and also for traveling abroad since the start of the British Empire (Roy 2004). In India various cross sections like Bureaucracy, Academia, Industry and various other Cultural organisations have been actively involved with the Indian educational system to aid in boosting the learners' English performance so as to cope with the spiralling demand at the local and international level for the workforce with Good Communication Skills in English (James 1911).

The advancement of teaching and learning of English is progressive and sometimes slow involves a chain of challenges to encounter. This progression consists of the expansion of a number of skills, which can be grouped under productive and receptive skills. Reading and Listening are receptive skills, which let learners to comprehend contents, textbooks, and other documents. While speaking and Writing are Productive Skills that let learners to accomplish presentations through oral and written medium. (Richards 2002). This Research paper entitled “Advancing Dynamic Proficiency Skills into Teaching English as a Second Language in Indian Setting” would explore all these four skills and would suggest ways to advance dynamic fluency.

Objectives of the Study

Taking into account the collective experiences and viewpoints of many learners and teachers of English as Second Language one finds most complications and difficulties in the practice of teaching and learning productive skills (Murray, & Christison 2010). Conversely various means, methodologies and practices have been invented in order to make the process of teaching and learning productive skills easier mutually for the teachers as well as the learners.

In considering the features mentioned above feature this research study would try to ascertain ideal practices for teaching productive skills taking into account those practiced around the globe as well as in India. This study would also seek to answer few queries associated with the execution of those techniques in India. The Researcher is confident that by answering certain critical questions would help in finding ways to exploit modern and contemporary techniques available in India in an effective manner. The Researcher is confident that by answering certain critical questions would help in finding ways to exploit modern and contemporary techniques available in India in an effective manner.

Language Skills in Communicative Approach

This study is based on Communicative Approach, which underlines the four basic skills of learning any language: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. The usage of English for education in primary, secondary, and higher education involves

the imparting of the four essential language skills with equal importance given to each of these four skills. No skill can be left out as each of these skills are significant. In communication and more so in communicative English each of these four skill demand equal importance (Jerry 1979).

The ever increasing need for the English usage around the world is the result of the role of English as the Lingua Franca of the global village. It is this significance of English as the world language which has given priority to outlining intensive and effective techniques to teach these fundamental skills. In India even though English is taught from the Kinder Garden level suitable prominence has not been given to learners to further their speaking and writing skills. In spite of the fact that speaking and writing being the two most common means of communication, education planners in India at the primary, secondary and higher secondary levels offer a smaller amount prominence to these skills and hence students are unable to successfully communicate in English in their day today life (Mewadev & Morve 2020).

Due to this current situation in imparting productive skills this paper would pay great attention to this particular category of language skills: Speaking and Writing. In general the field of Communicative English as observed earlier has two distinct groups of skills which are recognized and mastered in the framework of scholastic process characterized by teaching and learning. The Reading and Listening skills belong to the group of Receptive Skills, these skills are otherwise known as Passive Skills. In the list of the processes of learning a language, these two skills appear as the primary skills, which ought to be comprehended and understood first and foremost. (Anna & Sonia 2014).

This very much so because the language learners ought to start their language mastery through the processes of observing, reading and accumulating language experience. These language skills which are passive in nature do not enable students to actively produce anything. These may help in gaining the knowledge of the language in a passive manner and only later in the course of time they would start producing their specific monologues, dialogues. In contrast to the passive skills are the Speaking and Writing Skills which are described as Active Skills.

The process described for passive skills is also done with these skills as well. In order to 'produce' any outcome of those skills more energy is required. All said these two types of language skills form the fundamental part of language learning process in whatever the stage of its development may be. The Research paper would now move onto to describe various strategies relating to how these skills are imparted and would further present effective examples of successful undertakings during the learning of English as a second language which is often abbreviated as ESL.

The Purview of the Study

In any nation a 'second' language has innumerable social functions within the community one resides in and where it is learnt this would hold true for ESL (English as Second language) context, on the other hand any 'foreign' language is learnt predominantly for communication outside one's community, which would hold true for English as Foreign Language (EFL) context (Gibbons 2006). The purview of this Research Paper is to pay more attention to the process of learning than actual classroom teaching. There are innumerable features that impact the ultimate result and success of learning a foreign or second language. Observing the prospective new users of English in order to find out the reasons why some of them are highly successful than the other learners would lead us to great insights into the learning of English as Second and Foreign language (Burns 2009).

The concluding paragraphs of this article would delineate the fundamental features of learning English as a foreign language i.e., EFL context but for now it would concentrate more on ESL in the Indian context. The Researcher's own experience in teaching English as a Second language in India for the students at the under graduation level would also be underlined to substantiate the articles' findings and observations.

Productive Skills: Description and Basic Features

At the start of one's foray into learning of English as a Second Language he or she is certainly exposed to both productive as well as receptive categories of language learning skills without even his conscious

knowledge. As stated before, the productive skills which are also called active skills actually stand for the diffusion of information that any user of a language produces in spoken as well as written form (Birch 2008). The existence and successful learning of Productive skills depends much on the great support of receptive skills. Listening and Reading which comes under passive knowledge represents a catalyst to the effective implementation of active structures of grammar and passive imbibing of vocabulary lists which are heard and repeated in the ESL learning environment (Hinkel 2003).

This background of theoretical application is common to any language that human being study. This fundamental understanding of the concept proves the fact that both active versus passive skills are inseparable and that the existence of one is a must for the existence of the other. In the context of foreign language learning, the skill that first comes is the passive receptive skills which is closely trailed by productive ones which offer practical application of the passive skills that are learnt. In the course of learning English as a Second Language, if one lacks any one of the skills then the ultimate outcome would be incomplete. Hence most of the active users of any foreign language commonly understand that speaking and writing are in a kind of give-and-take relationship. Indubitably, a certain amount of accuracy need to be treasured in the structures of grammar, vocabulary and its' proper use, when implementing both kinds of active skills.

Activity based ESL Learning

In the present scenario of ESL teaching in India, the ESL practitioners rather than employing Language Learning activities which would emphasise accuracy are instead focusing on activities that encourage communicative competence through innumerable communicative activities ((Bérešová 2017). The indispensable part of effective teaching and learning experience is undeniably created by the classroom situation and atmosphere. Ultimately these classroom experiences are extremely cherished by the learners of English. A great variety of activities related to Speaking and Writing is administered by innovative English language teachers, who do not like their learners to get uninterested in the process

of English learning. In order to have an effective teaching purpose, the English teachers should not only prepare lesson plans but also should have a detailed syllabus for the course and term, which ought to be created earlier, before the onset of the classes.

The well experienced English language teachers are aware of the fact that responses of the students towards needs analysis forms usher in prized pieces of materials for building up the core of the course plan for the English Language Curriculum (Poulson 1998). The subject matter of such a curriculum plan must take account of some overall activities and also should contain a set of custom-built exercises that answers the need of distinct groups of learners with particular set objectives. The paper would look at various aspects the handpicked activities later. It is well known fact that if anyone desires to be proficient in a language one ought to become highly competent communicatively. It only authenticates the viewpoint that accuracy of language is necessary but it may not be the most crucial characteristics of speaking related activities.

Key Guidelines for Effective ESL Classes

In order to formulate the English lessons efficiently a comprehensive range of assorted language activities should be included in the lesson plan (Fisher 2008). The speaking related exercises and activities ought to be structured from least difficult ones to the utmost most difficult ones. The structures of grammar and elements of vocabulary should be combined so as to suit the content which can even cater to the less identical group of language course participants and it should also guide them in the direction of the identical or parallel outcomes. The years of teaching experience and keen observation which happens in long-term would usher in a long catalogue of exercises and language activities that one may use to practice productive skills successfully.

In the context of learning English as Second Language the Speaking skills manifest itself to be the definite goals of the learning process. There are very many best-loved exercises and language activities that are framed up to be user friendly even for the language learners who are the beginners' stage. In

order prove that active skills of speaking and writing are in interdependent relationship one could initiate with writing or recapitulating a list of words which are linked with a stipulated topic and writing and concurrent use of phrases that one uses every day in very brief person to person dialogue exchanges, situation based role-plays, telephonic conversations and picture games in the ESL classrooms.

In the initial stage of English language learning in the ESL context students have a good time by maintaining personal diaries and some would engage in picture labelling exercises with underlying descriptions, or sometimes filling in word blobs in comics with phrases that one would be using everyday (Wright 2016). In the course of language learning when one reaches the final stage the students must be made familiar with more specially designed vocabulary and hitherto suggested exercises and language activities can be reinstated with enhanced levels of language tasks.

In relation to certain factors which would outweigh the final fallout of the language teaching in the ESL context, the following exercises and language activities can be handed down to the language learners. Enhanced and elaborate conversational role-plays which would lay emphasis on appropriate structures of grammar and drawn-out vocabulary register of precise topics, real-life situations and issues at the national and international levels in the form of written tasks and perhaps summarising orally the plot of a film which the student has seen recently, or the summary of a book or a story which he or she has recently heard. In the similar manner there are innumerable ways to increase English learners' awareness of suitable phraseology and accuracy of grammar. In all these English language learning in ESL context one must not forget the important and necessary aspect of evaluation by the English teacher whose feedback is detrimental to the process of language learning (Farr 2011).

In the traditional language classroom setting the ESL teacher assess his or her language learners through grades or through verbal assessments. The feedback by the teacher encompasses benchmarks such as application of grammatical knowledge, the language content, clarity of thought, originality of the idea, customization and organization of writing

or speech and the overall delivery and the fact check as to whether the objectives of the language activities are followed or not (Ttagari & Jayanti 2016).

The structures of grammar and elements of vocabulary should be combined so as to suit the content which can even cater to the less identical group of language course participants and it should also guide them in the direction of the identical or parallel outcomes. The teaching experience and long-term observation bring us a long register of activities and exercises in order to practice productive skills effectively. A typical mechanism to gather some material of this sort for language teaching activities and exercise materials is to come out with a sheet for evaluation. After a language instructor administers sheets for self- evaluation to his or her students, they are game for an engrossing outcome which would be reveal interesting results.

The English language teacher would even come upon to begin with stunning assessments from his or her students when they compare his or her and the grading of the students. There are dynamic and cutting-edge trends that turn out to become very sought-after with young and intermediate learners besides the customary English language learning activities that were discussed earlier which reinforced mastery of productive skills. All the language activities and exercises discussed are not popular with everyone but nevertheless a few of them seem to be picking up their audience.

Making the Most if Information Technology

In this hi-tech world with the expansion of the global net and Internet services, innumerable mobile and smartphone applications, a number of advanced methods are available to cater to the learning of productive skills. These ultra-modern IT enabled language activities are becoming greatly valued and regularly used (Cummins 2007). The modern day advancement in science and Information Technology, the Internet, blogs, Social Networking platforms like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, My Space etc., provide the language learners with potentials. These possibilities offered by the techno world is gaining marks for their reliability and suitability. They do a lot of help to run-through the advancement of productive skills (Vettorel 2014).

The points at issue with the language aids of the modern technologies is that one is faced with lots of questions regarding the accuracy and adequacy grammar, the correctness of the vocabulary used, as the layout and design of these communication tools which are utilised without any supervision. The modern day language learners in India do reinforce the modern language learning applications and websites and they do appreciate the idea of grappling with the internet discussion forums; several language learning clubs and engage in real-life conversations with natives discussing contemporary issues.

Integrating Linguistic Science into ESL

The next point of argument of this article would take into account the typology of language as a kind of theoretical background to analyse English language learning in the ESL context. Greenberg defines Language typology as a field of linguistics that deals with the linguistic features of different languages, through the close examination of the structure and form. This branch of Linguistics deals with structures and sub-structures of languages and explores their diversity. This has been further classified into various other disciplines such as Qualitative Typology, Quantitative Typology and Theoretical Typology (Greenberg 1974). Altogether it offers a morphological grouping of a synthetic language which would be based on greater percentage of morphemes per word.

Based on the above introduction to the theory of language in general one can easily understand with evidence that English as a Second language is a difficult language to master. English as an inflective language possesses a set of nouns, pronouns and the various forms of adjectives which are produced by using the process of declension and English has also a set of different forms of verb, which are produced with the help of conjugation. English which is part of Indo-European languages exclusively entitled Germanic languages has a significant language features which would bring about a free world order. In the course of its' historical growth English has evolved into the classification of analytic languages where word order has become highly crucial and significant (Clackson 2007).

Challenges that Students Face in ESL Classes

Having discussed the use of Linguistics in ESL classes the paper now moves on to some of the key challenges faced by Indian students in ESL classes. To begin with, the parts of speech of English language does not assume numerable endings, the standard SVO sentence pattern formula for the English word order is very stringent and does not allow any meddling with it and hence the English language learners in India at the initial level, with heavy influence of their vernacular tongues find learning English as a highly complex and an uphill task (Llurda 2005).

The English language learners in India under ESL context find the presence of three grammatical genders in English, i.e. the masculine which has got added classifications as animate and inanimate nouns, feminine and neuter makes the Indian learners of English a little bit confused and thus it makes the language learning process a little more complicated.

The observations made above are not to intimidate the English language learners with a discouraging tone rather it is to make it clear the challenges that are ahead in one's language learning journey. The portrayal of these difficulties that one may encounter during the process of English language learning should not deter rather it should attract language learners to experiment with the fairly flexible word order in construction of English sentences.

The phonological system of English also has a very small degree of vowels and consonants with a limited diacritic signs. Moreover the rules of English pronunciation remain invariable and the exceptions given to the pronunciation of certain words is also limited. The attitude of English language learners towards speaking skills remain greatly positive too. In India the students who learn English as their Second language vouch that the commencement of language course is absolutely encouraging but the tempo seems to be lagging during the gradual progress.

In India with its' multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi lingual background of students form a heterogeneous group of English learners. The students thus come from various linguistically divided states belonging to diverse cultural environments, often their mother tongues dissimilar and their period of

stay for the purpose of leaning English ranges from a few months to two to three years. Not only these linguistic and cultural developments but also the personality trait of individual language learners do influence the process of learning English as a second language.

One positive thing amidst these differences is that there are very many other facts which unite the English language learners in ESL classes across the world (Bell 2004). The various reasons for this can be the following: Being accommodated in a shared academic space, cohabiting in the short term under the natural environment, partaking in related interests and uncertainties, and above all else the united and common goal of learning the English language. Earlier to the starting of the English teaching and learning process in the ESL context, the mixed group should be made aware of approximately the operative ways of the ESL Classroom and the learners should also be motivated and encouraged in their efforts at mastering English.

The Role of Teachers in ESL Classes

The ESL teacher should be aware of the mother tongues of his or her students and should utilise the opportunities to reinforce the similarities and the differences the learners vernacular and the English language. This process of showing the similarities and dissimilarities between the vernacular and English would be greatly appreciated by the ESL students as these explanations would help greatly to eradicate further misunderstandings and interferences of mother tongue. The English language teacher must create a natural and comfortable atmosphere and constantly stimulate their students to actively participate in the process of English learning.

On the whole, the students of ESL classes would be highly grateful for various other activities provided by the English teachers that aids communication with practice in grammar and genuine feedback by the English teachers. The ESL learners should also be encouraged to showcase even the little knowledge they have gained either individually or in a kind of pair work supervised by the English teacher and also in discussion groups with greater support particularly at the initial stage of English language learning. The English teachers must be careful to tailor the group

discussions so as to make it relevant to the language learners and these should be in line with the learners' objectives catering to their education level and the learners' emotional as well as social needs.

The students in India in the ESL context become skilled in English language as they are culturally independent and explore English in the new environ they automatically begin construction of sentences in English as they already have adequate exposure to English grammar and also working level knowledge of English in general and everyday situations. The ESL teacher should prepare themes for conversations and discussions from wide range of topics such as matters related to the family, pets, the school and college environment, talking about various favourites, hobbies, films, music, plans for the future in various elementary, intermediate and advanced levels. One could also include topics such as weather, academic life, job, pastime etc., When it comes to administering writing activities which would back up active skills, there are a lot of exercises like writing emails and replying to emails, giving practice to fill in basic forms, coming out with a write up on the family history and maintaining a diary to record various stages of one's own learning etc.,

The English language teachers should keep this fact in their mind that students should not be discouraged in any phase of English learning process as there are successful as well as unsuccessful students in the area of productive skills. The English language teachers should always be on the hunt for more effective language exercises and activities so as to meet the English language learners' needs and should be helpful in activating students' productive skills, which must be the sole objective of an English language teacher. He or she should be a facilitator, guide and mentor to the students (Ekbatani 2011).

Conclusion

This Research paper has thus established that productive skills cannot occur totally independent of the receptive skills. The Passive skills of language learning especially English in ESL context characterize a crucial part of language skills especially some of the categories of productive skills. Both active and passive skills share certain kinds

of language exercises and activities which belong merely to each other. In this modern era of Science and Information Technology there are innumerable advanced and dynamic ways to exercise one's active skills. Most of them could be accepted for the active utilisation by the language learners.

Thus ESL students in India experience difficulty in few areas such as proper nouns, endings of the adjectives, and situational verbs, word transformations that occur in prefixes and suffixes etc., in spite of all these surmounting difficulties there is a silver lining that is if an English learner in ESL context overcomes a the initial teething problems such as slower progress, slack of eagerness and involvement, his or her English language learning would become whole and successful. In almost all cases, an English language learner under ESL context in India would become highly driven by the contiguous cultural and natural English language learning environment positively motivated by his or her English Language teacher.

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