

CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES OF ENHANCING COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF THE LEARNERS IN ESL CLASSROOMS

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Abstract

Communication is the primary mode of transferring information between two or more people. Communication skill is meant for imparting and exchanging information using certain language skills such as speaking, writing, or using some other medium. As English is the global language, the craze for the English language has resulted in the commercialization of teaching English in countries like India, where there is a need for a common 'link language' amidst a wide range of regional languages. The influence of the English language in every field creates the importance of teaching English as a second language an indispensable one nowadays. The main objective of English language teaching is to develop mastery of the language among the learners that is to acquire the four key language skills that is in the order of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. In recent days, most of the schools follow the order as Writing, Reading, Speaking and Listening, that is from the difficulty level to the easy one to make sure that the students score good marks because they consider English as a subject not as a language. In India, the traditional method of teaching English in the language classroom has not been changed for ages and so the importance and goal of teaching English as a second language remain untested and questionable. Thus, the article analyses diverse methods and offers innovative ideas to solve the problems faced by the students in order to cultivate communication skills among the learners.

Keywords: English Language Teaching, Traditional Method, Link Language, Communication Skill, Innovative Ideas.

Introduction

Language is a tool for communication which is one of the most significant aspects of the life of all human beings. Language can be described as verbal, physical, biologically innate, and a basic form of communication. Language and communication serve as the founding stone for any culture and society. Language is considered a system for communicating with the help of words and the combination of different words to explicit inner feelings, to understand complicated thoughts, to fulfill the desire, as well as to establish rules and maintain the culture. It is intertwined with the thought and understanding of an individual on both the personal and broader societal levels.

Teaching English as a Second Language

Learning a language is the product of formal instruction and is a conscious and organized process to learn about the language. The English language is spoken by many people all over the world. The English language is used to have a link between different countries and states. It is also considered the international language which links the whole world together. It serves as a good communicator among different people. The influence of the English language in every field creates the importance of teaching English. The second language is learned rather than acquired. The second language or target language can be acquired only by the learning process. The second language acquisition describes the process of understanding, speaking and writing another language fluently.

Teaching the English language becomes a challenging task for the teachers nowadays. The students have to be motivated to learn English and schools have to develop a curriculum based upon the students' interests. The main objective of teaching English language is to become an effective mastery of language that is to acquire the four language skills but in recent days most of the schools follow the order as Writing, Reading, Speaking and Listening, that is from the difficulty level to the easy one. So the students feel that English is one of the difficult subjects rather than a language. It is a greater task for the students and teachers to learn and teach English as it is a foreign language.

Traditional Methods of Teaching

In the traditional method of teaching, teachers are projected to be the superior authority as they serve as the primary cause and source for the transportation of knowledge, qualities, and aptitudes. The teacher plays a main role in most of the traditional methods. Some of the traditional methods are as follows.

The Grammar Translation Method

Grammar Translation Method encourages comparisons among the learners' mother tongue and the second language. Success is determined by the way of translating matters from one language to another. It is one of the oldest methods and is still practiced all over the world. The Method aims to teach the target language through the native language. Structures and vocabularies are taught rather than their relevance and interest. The most widely used method of teaching English in Indian classrooms is the Grammar-Translation Method in which mother tongue and grammar are given more importance. Teacher plays a traditional role in the classroom. Emphasis is on grammatical accuracy. Teachers are to correct any errors that the students make. Thus teacher takes the superior role while the learners are mere passive listeners and learn what the teacher knows which eventually leads to less communication among the students.

The Direct Method

The Direct Method is described most importantly by the constant utilization of the target language as a method for guidance in the learning environment and by the evasion of the usage and influence of native language in the classroom setting by making use of interpretation as a method. The Grammar-Translation Method already found to be inadequate and ineffective in developing communicative competence in the learners. In direct method, the target language is taught without any interference of the mother tongue. This is a natural way of learning a language. This method seeks to establish a direct bond between English words or sentences and their meaning. The teacher allows the interaction but there is little domination from the teacher side. The students commonly converse in the target language. In a wide sense, any strategy which does not utilize the students' native language is considered a direct method.

The Reading Method

Reading methods plays a major role in institutions which focuses on developing the reading skills of the learners. Reading in the second language is viewed as the most valuable and straightforward expertise in the language learning process. The point of this technique is to generate interest among the learners regarding reading. Brooks mentioned the reading method as 'New Key', whereas Smith refers to it as the 'practical abilities system'. The significant component of the reading method in language learning is oriented to explicit purposes and it forms the foundation for being an effective reader. Its primary aim was to prepare speakers in numerous languages within a limited time.

The Audio-Lingual Method

In the 1950's, it was predominantly recognized as the aural-oral method. This method tried to illustrate the truth that a language teaching method can be based on scientific disciplines the students become an imitator of the teacher's model and follow their instructions. The interaction among the students is possible when they take part in the learning process. Audio-lingualism significantly impacted language instruction in numerous parts of the world. Linguistics is considered one of the major factors that influenced audio-lingualism and aids in the advancement of this method. Audio Lingual Method widens the horizon of language learning to diverse learners. Certain features of the audio-lingual method are the utilization of discourse as the central method for exhibiting the language, accentuation on constant training and the utilization of language research centre.

The Bilingual Method

The Bilingual Method is unquestionably an improvement over the Grammar Translation Method. In this method, the use of the mother tongue is controlled and limited in such a way that only difficult words are translated and explained in the native language. The bilingual method aims to develop the second language spontaneously within an integrated lesson-cycle. The Grammar Translation Method gives a lot of linguistic guidelines without giving any accentuation on the existing circumstances. It gives little regard for the communication part of the language. The Direct technique utilizes new ideas and explains these ideas to the learners through the first language. Afterwards, the Direct Method anticipates that the learners should comprehend the ideas without the assistance/ influence of the native language. This constrains the learners to a 'psychological interpretation' to comprehend the target language. In any case, the Bilingual Method attempts to clarify and understand the 'circumstance' and 'idea' which the Direct Method and Grammar Translation Method fails to accomplish.

Innovative Teaching Methods to Enhance Communication Skills

Traditional strategies are depicted as they are instructor oriented in a talking style and are rigid. Exercises are typically instructed by the educator presenting abilities utilizing a slate joined by a verbal clarification or talk. Traditional educating system is worried about being the implementer of the learning process rather than playing the role of a tutor and as a consequence, these traditional norms eventually gain supremacy and authority over the profession of a teacher. The instructor assumes a high job and the learners adhere to the guidance of the educator. As the quality of education relies upon the well-trained teachers as well as their techniques, innovating teaching methods serves as the primary qualification for being an effective teacher. The progressions of recent approaches have altered language learning ways to its foundation; mainly it is being adhered to different techniques. To offer new teaching techniques, Language teaching methods need to examine the quality and shortcomings of the language. In this paper, an endeavour is made to assess the strategies that have been employed in various parts of the world.

In recent days, teachers of English have to play a role quite different from what they were playing in the past. The traditional method of teaching does not bring much communicative competence to the student which is very essential. The recurrent paradigm shifts in teaching a second language make the teachers adopt new methods for the proficiency of the students. Thus, modern methods are developed to meet the communicative ability. Some of the modern methods are as follows.

The Silent Method

The silent method of teaching and learning a second language is originated by Caleb Gattegno in the year 1960s that make extensive use of silence as a teaching method. In this method, the teacher is as silent as possible and monitors the effort of his students and encourages them to take an active role in learning a language. The teacher presents the structural pattern of the target language and the grammar is learned inductively by the learners. The teachers remain silent to focus students' attention, make them respond and correct their errors. The teachers are active even though they are silent. In this method, some teaching materials are used to acquire the target language, and also the teacher respects the space offered for the learners. In such a way, the interaction among the students is encouraged by the teacher's silence.

Educating through Discussions

Conversations are the most helpful methods for acquiring the language. At the point when an infant learns its first language, it is by listening to the discussions that happen around the child. The child is never trained and taught the language however the child is able to percept the significance and learns it consequently to utilize it in everyday life. Nobody ever shows the child the characters of the language or how to make sentences or the syntax of that language. The discussions alone show the child that how communication occurs. Henceforth conversations play a significant piece in teaching a second language.

Learning through Games

Learning through games is an extremely innovative strategy for instructing. Learners and kids commonly like games and need to play them to an ever-increasing extent. Traditional strategies direct a language learner only to know about a language not to learn a language and these age-old norms constantly avoids and isolates games, however, the reality states that the learners are

more keen on learning through playing which kindles their thought process instead of mugging up things. The most suggested method to solve this issue is through the merging or collaboration of these two viewpoints.

Competitions

In most occasions, competitions like discussions and debates additionally help the learners a great deal in a language learning process of an individual for better acquisition of a language as the contest encourages discussions and conversations among the language learners through competitions. It constrains a learner to utilize their most ideal development of words to support and validate one's ideas. This is a significant instrument in helping them become familiar with the language. Likewise, these competitions offer them with a huge opportunity for personal advancement.

Online Learning

Online learning is one of the quickest emerging areas. There are a large number of English online classes that offer training for a range of fundamental language aptitudes. A blog is an individual or expert diary much of the time refreshed for open utilization. These websites empower transferring and connecting the records for learners. Blogging becomes open and intelligent when members accept numerous jobs. Thus, it provides an opportunity for learners to speak with their educators and companions who are far away. By making use of various gadgets it kindles the interest among the language learners to improve, create, convey, trade writings, picture, sound, and video contents according to the necessity.

Desuggestopedia

Desuggestopedia is an instructing technique created by the Bulgarian psychotherapist Dr. Georgi Lozenov. Desuggestopedia is instructive utilization of suggestion. It encourages students to defeat the feeling that they cannot be fruitful and expel their psychological obstructions from learning. Desuggestopedia has been known as a pseudoscience. It emphatically relies upon the trust that learners create a strategy by just accepting that it works. The language is viewed as important in the process of communication. Desuggestopedia is a framework for freedom from the fundamental negative idea concerning the challenges during the time spent on learning.

Conclusion

Over the world, information technology is drastically changing the way learners and staffs learn and work. Innovation is additionally changing the study hall experience, for example, tablets, computers, movies, and other multimedia devices that enable one to compose notes legitimately onto the screen. The role of the instructor is to relate to the age-old techniques and thought that academic standards. It is vital to comprehend the present patterns and evaluative techniques for English Language Teaching. The teachers accept that the core target of teaching is passing on the information and knowledge to the learners. Any technique utilizing new-age devices or transforming the current ordinary chalk-talk strategy is imaginative if they, at last, serve the accomplishment of core objective educating. As a whole, there is no right method for everyone. Each method has its strengths and weakness, and there is no such perfect method that is suitable for all contexts.

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