

The Essential of English Language learning context for Engineering graduates

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Abstract: - The aim this paper is to make the students speak in English without any hesitation. Particularly, the slow learners at the engineering college level are not trained to get to the placements. The needy of English language skills emerged for engineering graduates to meet the global arena. But in the present scenario, they lacked in the communication skills due to the lack of practice, lack of structural grammar usage and the mother tongue influence which plays a vital role as an obstacle in the communication. The AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education) also felt the importance of English in Technical education and has designed the English syllabus for engineering students to enhance the four skills (LSRW) in English. The main objective is, to develop the four skills and to enhance students' performance at placement interviews, Group Discussions, technical paper presentation etc. The view of the expert bodies throws light on the changing paradigms of English in the curriculum of schools and colleges. The University Education Commission (1948) stressed the need to learn English to keep in touch with the stream of knowledge.

Index Terms: Communication skills, grammar, presentation skills.

INTRODUCTION

English language is an essential for engineering students to communicate effectively. It is a medium through which an individual expresses his / her thoughts and ideas. In present scenario English has become the medium of communication nationally as well as internationally. F.G French observes that it is only through this language that we have, "distilled essence of modern knowledge in all the fields of human activity. Anyone who knows English can keep in touch with the whole world without leaving his /her house." Indian education allows engineering colleges, deemed technical universities and self financing engineering colleges top cater to the technical need of the world. English language is predominantly establishing its supremacy in the field of education. The structure of English language is very different from that of Indian languages.

There are, in general, four language skills, each based upon the modality of emphasis. These are the Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing skills. Generally speaking, it is emphasized that we first teach listening, then speaking, then reading and writing. However, in real life situations of language communication, these skills are interdependent in many ways, even though they can be taught independently to some extent.

The Teaching of Listening

According to Vandergrift (1999), listening comprehension is a complex process in which listeners play an active role in discriminating between sounds, understanding vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpreting intonation and stress, and finally, making use of all the skills mentioned above, interpreting the utterance within the socio - cultural context.

Brown (2006) suggests that systematically presenting (1) listening for main ideas, (2) listening for details, and (3) listening and making inferences helps students develop a sense of why they listen and which skill to use to listen better. He also asserts that like reading lessons, in a typical listening lesson there are "pre" activities, "while" activities, and "post" activities interest.

Brown (2006) suggests that a pre -listening task should consist of two parts. Students should be provided with an opportunity to learn new vocabulary or sentence structures used in the listening material and a chance to activate their prior knowledge. Some suggested pre - listening activities are listed as follows.

Pre - listening activities

- Looking at a list of items before listening.
- Reading the text before listening.
- Reading through comprehension checks, questions or completion activities.
- Predicting/speculating — useful with high achievers.
- Previewing new words. (Less than 10 words)
- Using advance organizers - pictures, charts, films or comprehension questions.
- 7. Give a clear and definite purpose for listening each time.

(A) Listen for main ideas.

(B) Listen for details.

(C) Listen and make inferences.

While-listening Activities

While-listening activities are usually designed to help learners develop the skill of eliciting messages from spoken language. Here are some suggested while-listening activities.

- Cloze exercises.
- Dictation. (picture dictation, partial dictation, dictogloss)
- Taking notes.
- Filling gaps with missing words.
- Sequencing pictures.
- Identifying numbers or letters.
- Carrying out actions.
- Arranging items in patterns.
- Completing grids, forms and charts.
- True-false or multiple choice questions.

Post-listening Activities

Post-listening activities can be used to check comprehension. The comprehension check is either related to pre-listening activities, such as predicting, or extends the topic and helps students remember new vocabulary. The following are some suggested activities for the post-listening phase.

- Group/Pair discussion.
- Paired reading.
- Summary writing.
- Shadowing.
- Role play.
- Comprehension checks.

Speaking

The training commission (1964 – 66) acknowledged English is a "window on the world" and library dialect, which implies that perusing, is the most essential aptitude at higher phases of learning. Speaking skill is mandatory for engineering student to meet the global wide opportunities.

- Reading a novel / course material and make them t6o speak about the main ideas.
- Video clippings/ a short film and oral presentation.
- Facing interviews
- Group discussions
- Viva vice
- Role play activity

Reading

The education commission (1964 – 66) accepted English's a "window on the world" and library language which means that reading is the most important skill at higher stages of learning. Francis Bacon, quotes that "Reading maketh a wise man conference a ready man and study a perfect man." We can classify reading into three kinds: extensive reading, intensive reading, and oral reading. Extensive reading is used—to refer to the teaching of reading through reading.

Skimming skills:

- Identifying a theme or central idea
- Identifying main ideas
- Identifying organizational patterns of writing

Scanning skills:

- Locating specific information
- Be clear with your purpose.
- Use the index / heading / bold type etc; to find information.
- Aim at 100 percent accuracy.

Intensive reading skills:

Intensive reading is used to refer to the actual teaching of reading skills in an instructional setting. Students are exposed to a variety of materials and asked to perform activities such as answering comprehension questions on the passage read.

- Reading for details
- Critically reading a text to :
- Distinguish fact from opinion,
- Identifying and evaluate a writer's attitude, ad
- Understand the author's intention.
- Drawing inferences and conclusions

Extensive reading

Intensive reading is instruction-based and forms the core of teaching reading in the TESOL classroom. Oral reading does attract much attention from many TESOL teachers, but it is—an integral part of the teaching of reading, especially in EFL contexts.

- Students read a lot, quickly, and often.
- The material is easy for the students' level.
- The student chooses what to read.
- Students read for pleasure and information.
- Reading is individual and silent.
- The teacher acts as a role model.

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The assessment criteria of communication skills

S.NO	Interaction	Professional Vocabulary	Language Quality	Fluency	Pronunciation
(1) Excellent	Can present ideas articulately and persuasively in a complex discussion.	Has a very good command of professional vocabulary , allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocution	Can consistently maintain a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot.	Can express himself/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly.	Mastery of sound system of English is obvious. Accurate pronunciation and intonation in most instance.
(2) Very good	Can successfully present and justify ideas in a formal discussion turn – taking handle appropriately	Has a good command of professional vocabulary, allowing gaps to be generally overcome with circumlocution.	Can maintain a good degree of grammatical accuracy; occasional errors do not impede communication. Large correct use of idiomatic expressions and collocations.	Fluent and spontaneous, but occasionally needs to search for expressions or compromise on saying exactly what he/she wants to express.	Pronunciation and intonation generally accurate errors do not cause misunderstanding.
(3) Good	Keeps up the discussions and can justify an opinion. Responds and interacts adequately with other speakers.	Has adequate vocabulary to express himself /herself on matters connected to his /her field.	Can communicate with reasonable accuracy and can correct mistakes if they have led to misunderstanding.	Can produce stretches of language with a fairly eve tempo. Although can be hesitant as he/she searches for expressions, there are few noticeably long pauses.	Some inaccuracy in pronunciation and intonation. Problems with voiced / voiceless consonants, for example.
(4) Satisfactory	Has some difficulty keeping up with the discussion and arguing an opinion. Limited turn – taking and use of communication strategies.	Limited professional vocabulary.	Communication generally successful though limited in terms of accuracy. Some unresolved misunderstanding.	Generally acceptable tempo, but often hesitant as he/she searches for expressions. Some noticeable pauses.	Frequent inaccuracy in pronunciation and intonation. Mother tongue interference apparent.
(5) Poor	Has marked difficult in keeping up with the discussion and contributes occasionally.	Basic professional vocabulary only.	Communication characterized by frequent inaccuracies and misunderstanding.	Frequent hesitations and pauses, can produce only short stretches of language at best.	Key words regularly mispronounced, strong mother tongue influence.

Teaching of English Grammar and Methods of teaching grammar

The word, grammar is borrowed from 'Latin' and the concept of grammar became firmly established fact in olden days of learning English in India and other parts of the world. Grammar may termed as descriptive science which describes the structure of sentences, function of words and their relation to one another at a particular period and of a particular group of people. It is a body of certain rules and regulations of the language. "Gordan defined grammar as a body of empirical rules which explain and regulate the structure of the sentences."

Meaning and Scope of Grammar— Dr. Sweet has defined grammar as "the practical analysis of a language, its anatomy." It deals with the function of words in a sentence. It explains the structural details of a sentence. It is concerned with the general rules of syntax or sentence construction, i.e., the order of words, agreement of the subject and the verb, sequence of tenses etc. These rules throw light on the language structure and facilitate correct language learning.

According to Dr. West "Grammar is not a code of rules; it is like etiquette and table manners, a statement of convention: it summarizes what is done by cultured people, and like etiquette, it in a state of constant changes". There are two kinds of grammar- prescriptive (formal) and descriptive (informal) grammar. The first is a set of rules and the other describes the functions of the language. One cannot speak English fluently by creaming grammatical rules.

Types of grammar:

Grammar is of two types, depending on the Traditional and Modern view of teaching/ learning grammar. They are: 1. Formal grammar and 2. Functional grammar.

Formal grammar

It is also known as prescriptive grammar as it prescribes the grammar rules of language. It is a traditional type of grammar. It is theoretical grammar pertaining to rules, definitions, and inflexions of words ect. By learning such a grammar, the learner will be acquiring the ability to describe the language and its forms but not to use the language fluently.

Functional grammar

It is also known as 'incidental grammar', as it is studied whenever a need arises while teaching materials in English. This type of grammar is learnt by the student quite unconsciously while learning the language situationally. The student s learn to use the functional; grammar in acquiring

the ability to use grammatically correct language with respect to the acceptable form of words, pattern or phrases, sentences, sounds, stress, intonation rhythm ect.

Methods or approaches

There are two approaches of teaching grammar which are used as two different methods while teaching grammar in class rooms. They are: 1. Deductive method and 2. Inductive method.

1. Deductive method

This is the method of teaching formal grammar. It involves teaching of rule followed by an example the pupil will apply the rules learnt to the sentences while expressing in language E.g.: Rama is writing

The above example, he identifies noun, Rama and the verb, writing.

2. Inductive method

This the method used to teach functional grammar, as in structural, situational and communication approaches of teaching language. It is intended to teach grammar of a living language naturally. "C.C. Fries and A.S Horn by developed functional materials to teach this grammar in the form of structures and sentence patterns.

In fact, the rule is induced by a number of similar examples in the process of teaching the pattern. For example, the teacher presents sentences as follow with 'write' –'sing.'

E.g.: 1. I write a letter	–	I sing a song
2. We write a letter	–	we sing a song
3. He writes a letter	–	He sings a song

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