



COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR STUDENTS FROM RURAL AREA

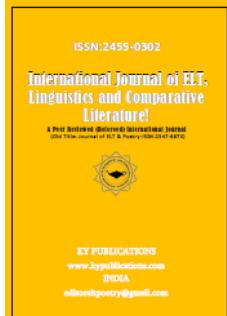
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ABSTRACT



Language is for communication. Learning a language means learning to communicate. India is a multilingual country. English is generally not a second but third language, and it is not an easy task to learn the language without the context for communication. The student from rural background lacks, the L2 communication skills needed for their career and development. A talented and enthusiastic teacher can, through activity based instructions paves the way for effective learning and nurture in them confidence and make their dream of communication in English a reality.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a means of communication; so meaning is more important than form or structure and learning a language means understanding and using it when the learner needs. Effective communication enhances every aspects of one's life and paves the way to success in both personal and professional life. Communication skills is the buzz word in today's education and job market, but many undergraduates from rural India struggle to communicate in English.

In spite of learning English from class III, students from rural area find it difficult to follow in the class, if they are taught only through English. This may be because they do not get proper guidance due to non-availability of trained teachers in rural areas. They learn grammar without knowing rules and learn by heart the question-answers in order to pass in their examinations. It should be understood that learning a language is something more than that.

The apprehension of communication in English

Despite their interest in learning English, the students have anxiety when it comes to communicating in English. It is surprising to see students who even proudly confess that they do not know their mother tongue properly, feel shy to admit their lack of English language skills. The students must understand that English is a language and they need to take sincere, conscious effort and interest to learn English. 'what will others think of me, if they come to know I do not know English?' or 'will others laugh at me if I say something incorrect?' or 'How will I face my classmates if the teacher discusses my mistakes and embarrasses me?' or 'will I ever be able to learn and talk English at all?' etc., these fears are common with many students from the rural areas.

The teacher must make them understand that anyone who attempts to learn a foreign or new language is likely to go through this phrase. The successful learners are the ones who come out of this fear and begin the process of learning. The students must understand that English is a foreign language and they need to make a sincere, conscious effort make a interest to learn English.

Students would be motivated and be able to overcome their fear when they are allowed to talk freely. The teacher must encourage the students to talk and need not interrupt to correct them immediately when



they commit mistakes. Developing communication skills is the main objective of an English language teacher. Once the students develop their language skills, they will come out of the communicative apprehension.

The age group of the learners:

When teaching the undergraduate students, the teacher should keep in mind, the attitude, aptitude and psychology of youth. While it is easy to correct the pronunciation, sentence constructions and spellings etc in a school student, it becomes a challenging task for the teachers to correct the students at the college level. The teacher has to work hard on making them unlearn certain things they have learnt wrong. It may take time, but it is not impossible. The teacher has to help them cope with these odds and make them learn English. There are also some advantages with the college level students. They have mental maturity, because of their age group and their understanding and grasping level will be much higher than that of small children. Another advantage is, they also know the importance of communication skills and their willingness to learn will make the teacher's job easy.

Listening is one of the best ways to learn a language. A good listener becomes a good conversationist too. The students should be made to listen to famous stories and interesting speeches. They can be encouraged to watch national geography channel and news reports on Television. The teacher should be a role model and inspire the students to talk correct English.

The teacher should encourage the students to converse in English in classes as the rural students may not have opportunity to speak in English outside the college. The teacher can give imaginary situations and make the students talk. The teacher should also help the students come out of certain mannerisms. The teacher has to give them confidence and help them weed out these unwanted mannerisms. The teacher should also insist on eye contact when they talk. The teacher should make it a point to appreciate the learners for even small things, when they get it right. The teacher can ask the students to read some short stories and discuss them in the class in order to inculcate reading habits.

Some interesting activities

The teaching-learning process becomes very effective and easy through activities. For improving vocabulary, activities like word game, context game, etc. can be introduced. Students should be made to learn the word, its meaning and usage. They can be made aware of root, suffix and prefix etc.

Word game

For example, a word like lack ends with the letter k and the next person should say a word starting with k.

Context game

Given a situation the students are made to give the words relevant to the context.

For instance, 'the railway station' will elicit words like 'booking, delay, arrival, departure, porter, luggage etc' from the students.

The teacher can lead the students to next level exercises.

Dumbcharades can be played to mime different words, personalities, names of novels & plays.

As a further step, the teacher can introduce the next level activity that will make the students speak for more than a minute. It can be completing a story or describing an event etc. The teacher can narrate a story or event and stop at an interesting point to continue it, according to their imagination. This game will enhance their speaking skill and bring out their creativity also.

Student can be made to watch news reports, national geography channels on Television and this can be followed by a group discussion. The teacher can give an imaginary situations and help the students practice expressions of greetings, gratitude, introductions and regrets. Tell the students an event or story at an interesting point and ask the students to continue. This will improve their creativity, listening comprehension and speaking skills. An incident or story can be narrated by the students.



Some for tips the teacher

The teachers at college level should be quite friendly and must build a healthy learner-teacher relationship. The teacher should be more of a facilitator rather than a stern traditional type of instructor. Encouragement is a great tonic for students at all levels. They will be eager to look for some kind of appreciation from the teacher and the teacher must never disappoint them.

Some tips to the teacher

- Make the class student Centered
- Give sincere appreciation
- Smile and encourage
- Be a good and patient listener
- Remember the student's name and address him by their first name.

Conclusion

The teacher can build a lot of activities into teaching the lesson. Activity based instruction pave the way for very effective learning. The students from rural background have realized the importance of communication skills for their career and development. Developing communication skills in English has a special place in the vision of every student from rural area and the teacher has to nurture and help them to make their dream, a reality.

References

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