



REVIEW ARTICLE



HOW TO TEACH ENGLISH TO THE STUDENTS OF RURAL BACKGROUND?

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of technology raised the importance of the English language as it is the language which is spoken by the most of the people in the world. It plays a significant role in many sectors including medicine, engineering and education, etc. The burgeoning demand of English turned English learning as a passion and also fashion to many Indian citizens. Many teaching methodologies are adopted by teachers to make English language learning easy. But no methodology has gained complete success in imparting English to the students of rural background. To teach foreign language to the students has become a challenging task for the teachers of India, especially the teachers of rural background.

In the present scenario, most of the teachers are giving importance only to the Task Based approach, completely neglecting grammar i.e traditional approach. Even if the teachers try to teach grammar, students show less attention on grammar. But without grammar, there is no possibility of good communication. This article shows how the students can be given Task Based Lessons without neglecting grammar and vocabulary.

Key words: approaches, task based grammar lessons, learn vocabulary through pictures, activities that raise accuracy and fluency levels

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INTRODUCTION

Communication is a two way process which we use from birth. We use communication to establish linkages and to develop effective relationship with one another. It is an interdisciplinary method as it involves the sender, the transmitter and the receiver. There are myriad ways to communicate with others but the basic way to approach others is language. Language plays a vital role in the means of communication.

India is a multi- lingual country. To communicate with one to another, people of India need link language. Hindi is our national language but it doesn't serve the need of the citizen as it is confined to the precincts of India. The rapid growth of technology demands a language which is approachable to all the citizens of the world. This rapidly increasing necessity compelled people to use English as a link language. It plays a vital role in many sectors including business , medicine, engineering and education etc. Particularly, developing

countries sensed English as a drive to efficiency and success and also to prove themselves as an international power.

Recognizing its importance, Parliament declared English as an official language in India. Millions of people in India are trying to get mastery over English and they are insisting their children to communicate in English. It has become a compulsory language at all levels. Students are being trained from level- 1 to level-4 in English medium schools. The burgeoning demand for English has elevated demand for appropriate teaching methodology in the class rooms. But unfortunately, students are lagging in communication skills, inspite of constant training. The industrial sector is looking for the students who have sufficient employability and team work skills and also believes the students having efficiency in the English language and soft skills are suitable for their companies. But IT industry often attributes that students of this generation lack these skills. This is more to do with the students from small towns and rural areas. Consequently, it has been the subject of long debate 'how to achieve success in teaching the English language, specifically to the students of rural background?'

II: Three approaches in English language teaching:

The process of English language learning has undergone many changes. Many decisions are framed regarding the content of the course at the school level, intermediate level and also at graduate level. Jack C. Richards in his writing 'Communicative language teaching today' has divided language teaching into three phrases:

1. Traditional approach
2. Classic communicative approach
3. Current communicative approach.

Traditional approach:

It evolved in 1960's. According to this approach, language is practiced through direct instructions, repetitive practice and drilling of sentences based on grammatical patterns. Techniques employed in this process are memorization of dialogues, questions, substitutions skills and various forms of speaking and writing skills. The teacher plays a significant role in this approach. She/he instructs the students listen and repeat the dialogue until they get it thoroughly. She selects the key structures, phrases from the dialogues and gives repetitive drills. Much attention is paid to accurate pronunciation and accurate mastery of grammar. While the process is in practice, the teacher observes students syntax, fluency, intonation, grammar and pronunciation.

Classic Communicative Language Teaching:

A new approach evolved in between the years 1970 -1980. It was a reaction to traditional language teaching approach. The promoters of this approach argue that the usage of language logically at an appropriate situation is much essential than the grammatical competence. While traditional approaches, emphasis on the point that grammatical competence is needed to produce grammatically correct sentences in speaking and writing, CCLT concentrates on the point, knowledge and skills are essential to use grammar and other aspects of language for different purposes in myriad situations. This new approach developed a new revolution in teaching methodology. It compelled the language teachers and institutions around the world to rethink their teaching methods, syllabuses and classroom materials. It instructed the teachers to recognize the purpose of the learner for which the learner wishes to acquire the communicative competence. On understanding the target of the learner, provide some activities connected to the target.

Current Communicative Language Teaching:

A new approach evolved in the year 1990's and continued to the present. This approach has provided an opportunity for a learner to engage himself in various activities with his peer group in his class room, so that he could negotiate meaning, could correct misunderstanding and work to avoid communication breakdowns. It creates an environment where the involvement of a teacher becomes less and activity of a student increases. This type of classroom activities in language enhances student's accuracy and fluency. Class Room Activities that focused on mastering fluency would reflect on the use of language, in achieving communication and to link language in context. It gives an opportunity to practice language out of context; it provides a chance to work on language activities and also to bring control over the language.

The above are the three approaches which provide opportunity for the teacher to use various tasks in the classroom to raise their level of fluency. It is not correct to reject the traditional approach and at the same time it is not good to ignore the other approaches. Three approaches are very helpful for the learners if they are used at the right time and at the right place. A teacher should keep his/her attention to make the student come boldly and express his feeling/thoughts before the audience openly. More than half of the success is achieved, if a teacher can make a student speak boldly.

III: Task Based Learning:

Task based learning can be defined as a language learning through instructional process in the classroom rather than explaining the traditional syllabus. The followers of this methodology argue that the grammatical and communicative competence of a learner can be developed constantly engaging learners in the classroom activities. Most of the language teachers are adopting this task based learning as it encourages the learner to maneuver his skills. But the doubt arises in our mind when we question ourselves how far the task oriented lessons helpful for the learners without the basic knowledge of grammar. Learners from the rural areas enter into the intermediate and thereby graduates with little knowledge of grammar in English. Their education is based on the instructions given in mother tongue. If such students are given the task to speak, they fail to attempt the task and they never come forward to take part in the session. They become passive listeners and thereby inactive listeners. In such initial stages, the traditional approach meets the demand. Though it looks old and rigid, one can follow it easily.

In the ancient days, to teach Vedas, Gurus used to chant the slokas and the students reiterate it. The continuous rendition helps the students to memorize the sentences and use it in their real life situations.

Though the system of education changed, the methods did not lose its importance. Our traditional method helps the students to learn easily. So, the teacher should not leave the methods which were shown by the ancient pundits, but apply those methods adopting the new techniques.

Generally, students show less interest on grammar. They escape from grammar classes. If the grammar is designed as the task based grammar classes, it will create interest among the students and they will learn to apply the rules of grammar in their daily communication. To create such interest, teacher should design different levels which can turn general grammar classes into task oriented grammar classes.

Example:

Level -1

Design a chart on simple present tense, which provides an opportunity for the students to repeat the sentences with similar examples. Once the handouts/chart distributed to the students, with minimum guidance from teachers, students can repeat similar examples on the chart. This gives him good practice of using the sentences with nouns and subject pronouns.

Affirmative Sentence	Question Tag	Negative Sentence	Question Tag	Interrogative Sentences
He is active	Isn't he?	He isn't active	Is he?	Is he active? When is he active? Why is he active?
You are an engineer				
		We aren't sick		
				Are they alert?
I am late				
They play every day				
		We don't quarrel often		

				Why/when do you think a lot?
I get up early				
Salma watches TV				
		Rajesh doesn't take dinner on Saturday.		
				Do students wear uniform?

Level- 2

Quiz on Simple Present Tense:

This task oriented grammar class strengthens Students grammatical competence and also the team spirit. Divide the students into groups. Each group is given a separate name for identification. Questions for the quiz are based on level -1. Before the quiz starts, the teacher has to announce the rules and the time limit for each question. The Group has to answer the question within the time given or else question will be passed to other group. This questionnaire increases grammatical competence as well as time management ability. As it is in the form of the game/ quiz, students show much interest to participate.

- Catch / fish
- Try / fry
- Visit / relatives
- Season / curry
- Water / boil / high temperature
- Children / sulk / parents
- Mahesh / drive / car
- She / pick / fight
- My brother / buy/ books often
- They / laugh / loudly

Level - 3

Similarly, in the next session, assign the students the topics which are related to the simple present. Restrict the student to use only simple present. The teacher should not stop the student in the middle while he is performing the task. To correct him at the end selecting the sentences which he used while using the language.

(The topic is on the newspaper).

We get newspaper daily. My father reads political news. My mother likes to read the recipe column in the newspaper. She does experiments on all the house members by preparing new dishes written in a newspaper. I concentrate on sports. My brother shows interest on sports column. Daily, he cuts different pictures of cricketers and sticks them to his bedroom wall. My sister covers Cinema news and program columns covered in newspaper and discusses about it in her leisure hours. I choose editorial column. I read articles written by eminent persons. I underline the words which I find difficult to understand and I try to practice it in my daily sentences. Finally, my grandmother takes that newspaper. She reads articles related to Bhakti and shares her knowledge to neighbors.

It is easy to design similar tasks on the remaining Tenses. These tasks excel students' grammatical skills as well as communication skills. Next, provide a conversational situation to the student where he can use minimum two Tenses in their conversation. Divide the students into two Groups. Select one student from each group to take part in conversation. Instruct the remaining students to listen carefully and award marks based on

different parameters like body language, subject, use of the Tenses they learnt and the expressions they used during the conversations. As they do the conversations with their sparring mates, they can easily correct their mistakes during their conversation.

Level – 4 Role Play:

Conversation:

Raju: Ravi, how are you?

Ravi: What a surprise to see you|

Raju: What are you doing here in Bangalore?

Ravi: I live here.

Raju: When did I see you last? Let me remember. It was I think in 1994; I saw you 1994 at the convocation in Madras?

Ravi: It was the pleasant moment in my life.

Raju: Ya- I too remember it clearly. To celebrate that happiest moment we went to picture. What have you been doing all these years?

Ravi: well, for some time I worked at TCS and then I shifted to Infosys.

Raju: When did you get married?

Ravi: Two years ago, I got married.

Raju: so you are married now| congratulations

Ravi: Thank you. Shall we meet tomorrow at the Lion's club?

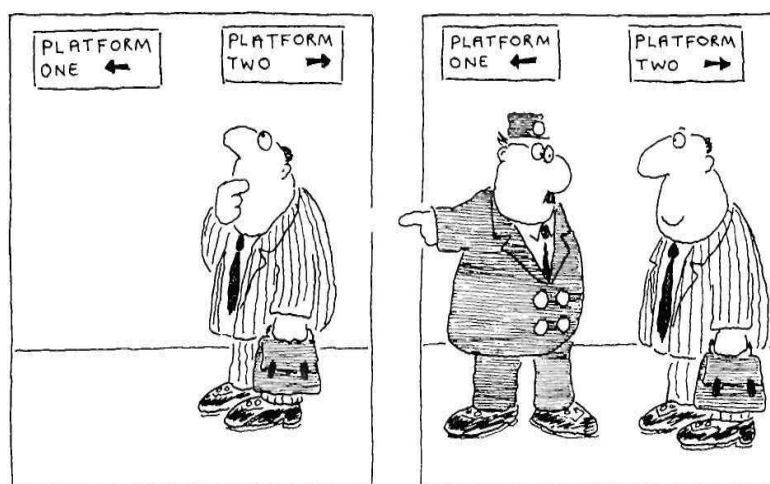
Raju: Sure, it's a pleasure. Thank you.

His potentiality over language increases with meaningful interactions and comprehensible ongoing communication, he does in the group. But he/she can speak with complete stability only when he is groomed on vocabulary. It is not less than a Hercules task, to tutelage a student on Vocabulary. No individual can memorize all synonyms or antonyms or any other part of vocabulary by mere reading. He has to read the word according to the situations. So, the teacher should use impeccable techniques to make the students learn vocabulary easily.

The next level task helps the student to learn vocabulary and formation of sentences with the help of pictures.

As the student learns words through pictures, he never forgets the words.

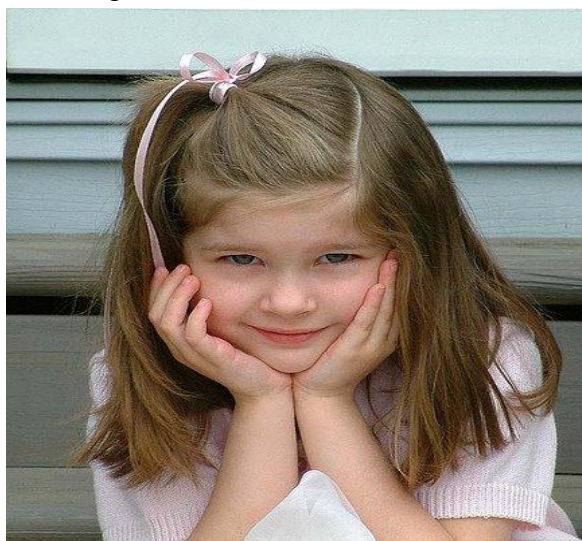
Task – 5



- Where is the man?
- What do you think he wants to do?
- With whom he is talking?
- What is the phrasal verb one can use for this conversation?

Example:2

Use picture to understand the meaning of the word.



Word: Swash Buckler

Meaning: A very cute and nice girl.

Some other tasks to enhance students' fluency levels are:

Task to increase fluency level:

- Describing the objects
- Narrating a small story.
- Presentations on various current aspects.
- Recipe.
- Information gathering and sharing information
- Information transformation activities.
- Just a minute.
- Floor crossing.
- Tongue Twisters.

Accuracy tasks:

- Activity on exact pronunciation of words.
- Pronunciation rules.
- Syllable.
- Word stress.
- Intonation.

Conclusion: The objective of assigning these various activities to the students is to bring out their talents and to ascend their fluency over language. The teacher should maintain a balance of fluency and accuracy activities and should use accuracy activities to support fluency activities. By designing the activities according to the capability of the students, teachers can achieve success in increasing the communication ability of the students.

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