

TEACHING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS AND THEIR USES

Dr.PUTLA ANANDA RAO

Lecturer in English, The Bapatla College of Arts and Sciences, Bapatla-522101,

Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh. Email:anandarao2001@gmail.com

Abstract

English Language has played a vital role in all the stages of India's freedom movement, formation and evolution into a nation of unique identity. This article discusses the English Language Teaching situation in India in a historical perspective, tracing its history since the days of the British rule in the country. It is important for students of ELT to be aware of when and how English came to India and how the developments ELT situation in India. Only with this information can a student understand better what is happening in English classrooms in India.

A successful method of ELT is the one that works best in a classroom. Specialists talk about various methods that have been found successful in classes at various times. Methods keep changing under the influence of new thinking in the field of ELT, initiated by the changes in the society that uses English. The society referred to here is the learners' society or the native speakers' society.

Keywords: Structure, Translation, Approach, Education, Method, Contribution, Principles, Practice, Psychology, Skinner, Commonwealth, Aspiration, Activity.

1. Language skills and their uses

Language is a tool for communication and human beings use it for receiving and sending information among themselves. Communication can be oral or written; oral communication involves listening and speaking and written communication involves reading and writing. These skills can also be grouped differently: reading and listening are receptive skills as they are used in receiving information and speaking and writing are productive skills as they are useful for producing and conveying information. The following table will make the grouping clear:

		Language Skills and their Uses	
		ORAL	WRITTEN
RECEPTIVE		LISTENING	READING
PRODUCTIVE		SPEAKING	WRITING

2. The teaching of listening skills

Listening is an important skill but unfortunately teachers tend to neglect this skill in English classes, mostly because they assume that this skill will develop automatically when the learners hear English spoken in the classes. It is not true because when we speak in the class our learners hear us most of the time, and if we want to develop their listening

skills, we have to use activities that promote these skills. Listening is different from hearing as it involves understanding. We hear whenever our ears are open and functional; we hear the bell, we hear the car and motorcycles etc, whether we like them or not but we listen to something when we are interested in it and listening is complete only when we understand what we listen.

3. The Teaching of speaking skills

The development of speaking skills is not paid enough attention in most of the English classes, either because the teacher does not feel confident to do it or learners do not feel the need for the skills. In most of the classes, it is the teacher that speaks most of the class time and the learners hardly get opportunities to speak; if they speak, it is often repeating what the teacher says. In English classes, learners should be given opportunities to speak, because speaking skills can be developed only through engaging the learners in the act of speaking.

4. Teaching Procedure

Speaking activities should not occupy the entire class time; ten minutes in a period may be spent in a day or activities like debates can be organized once a

month. The teacher should listen to the learners when they speak and correct their errors tactfully after the activity is over. Though speaking is an important activity, the teacher should not force learners to speak, especially in the beginning classes, when they are not ready to speak; productive skills take longer time to emerge unlike receptive skills in young learners, according to many researchers.

5. The Teaching of Reading Skills

Reading is the most favoured and most practiced skill in English classes. Reading should be followed by checking the learners' understanding of comprehension. In the last Unit we discussed how we could exploit prose texts in order to develop reading skills in our learners. In addition, the teacher can use specific activities for developing reading, using materials that are authentic (from real life).

6. The Teaching of Writing Skills

Writing skills are practiced in English classes; in fact, they are the only skills, which are paid attention to in classes but most of the time learners' writing is copying from the blackboard or textbook. In schools where there are prescribed workbooks, learners write in them, most often the teacher dictates the answers. Learners' writing will improve only if the teacher helps them to write on their own, after preparing them to write. Writing involves motor skills such as handwriting and cognitive skills such as arranging ideas; both these should be paid attention to. Handwriting can be developed through regular practice with the teacher's attention to the size and shape of the letters and spacing between words etc. Learners can be encouraged to use good copybooks for this purpose.

7. Teaching Procedure

In the beginning classes, there should be more copy writing in order to train the learners' hands in writing English; this is more useful for learners whose mother tongue is Arabic, whose writing system is far different from that of English. Gradually activities such as the one suggested above can be used. The teacher should slowly withdraw his help but should be available for consultation. Correction of learners' writing is an important part of the teacher's work. The next unit is devoted to the discussion of remedial work following learners' writing.

REFERENCES

1. Byrne.D.1978. *Materials for interaction*. Modern English Publications.
2. Grilled, F. 1981. *Developing Reading skills*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3. Balasubramanian, T.1981. *A Textbook of English Phonetics for Indian students*. Madras. Macmillan India.
4. Dr.M.N.K.BOSE, A Text book of English Language Teaching (ELT) for Indian students.
5. Richards, J. (eds) 1978. *Understanding Second and Foreign Language Learning: Issues and Approaches*. Rowley, Mass.
6. Bose, M.N.K.1997, *Language Teacher Education-Problems and Practices*. Madras: NCBH Ltd.
7. Carroll, B. 1980. *Testing Communicative Performance – An interim study*. Oxford; Oxford University Press.
8. Howatt, A.P.R.1984. *A History of English language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
9. Krashen, S.D. 1981. *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
10. Stern, H.H.1983. *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.