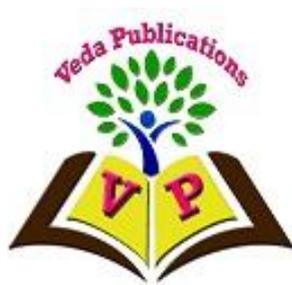


**COMMUNICATIVE APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE TEACHING**

Dr.K.Jaya Raju

*(Head, Department of English, S.G.K Government Degree College, Vinukonda.)***ABSTRACT**

In this paper the researcher examines and considers the future for learners and teachers of English and in particular the importance of maintaining the integrity of the subject of English in a changing world and the potential impact of Technology on English pedagogy. This paper deals in details with methods of enhancing learning in English with ICT tools, and also with the logistical and secretarial implications of easy (and sometimes not so easy) access to ICT in schools. Teaching English language is not an easy task. To learn any language we need to know the rules of the language (Grammar) properly. Some children grow up in a social environment where more than one language is used and are able to acquire a second language in circumstances similar to those of first language acquisition. Those fortunate individuals are bilingual. However, most of us are not exposed to a second language until much later and, like David Sedaris, Our ability to use a second language, even after years of study, rarely matches ability in our first language. There is something of an enigma in this, since there is apparently no other system of 'knowledge' that we can learn better at two or three years of age than at thirteen or thirty. A number of reasons have been suggested to account for this enigma, and a number of different approaches have been proposed to help learners become as effective communicating in a second language (L2) as they are in their first language (L1).

**Keywords:** *Knowledge- ICT Tools- First Language Acquisition*



## SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Since English is a foreign language it is very challenging task to the teacher to make students follow and understand the new language. A distinction is sometimes made between learning in a 'foreign language' setting (learning a language that is not generally spoken in the surrounding community) and a 'second language' setting (learning a language that is spoken in the surrounding community). That is, Japanese students in an English class in Japan are learning English as a foreign language (EFL) and, if those same students were in English class in the USA, they would be learning English as a second language (ESL). In either case, they are simply trying to learn another language, so the expression second language learning is used more generally to describe both situations.

## ACQUISITION AND LEARNING

Moreover, significant distinction is made between acquisition and learning. The term acquisition is used to refer to the gradual development of ability in a language by using it naturally in communicate situations with others who know the language. The term learning, however, applies to a more conscious process of accumulating knowledge of the features, such as vocabulary and grammar, of a language, typically in an institutional setting. (Mathematics, for example, is learned, not acquired).

The teacher has an important role in teaching English through literature. Activities associated with learning have traditionally been used in language teaching in schools and have a tendency, when successful, to result in more knowledge 'about' the language (as demonstrated in tests) than fluency in actually using the language (as demonstrated in social interaction). Activities associated with acquisition are those experienced by the young child and, by analogy, those who 'pickup' a second language from long periods spent in interaction, constantly using the language, with native speakers of the language. Those individuals whose L2 exposure is primarily a learning type of experience tend not to develop the same kind of general proficiency as those who have had more of an acquisition type of experience. There are some kinds of learning techniques, which serve different purposes and require

different resources to implement in teaching speaking.

English teachers have always had to, and no doubt always will, balance the old with the new, the classic forms with the emerging forms, the standard and proper with the subversive and challenging. Working within this set of dichotomies, English teachers are well placed to foster traditional skills and highlight the literary gems of the past, although it is likely that few new teachers at the beginning of the twenty-first century would posit themselves merely, or even mainly, as exponents of the Cultural Heritage model. Equally, it is to be hoped that few of us see ourselves solely as deliverers of basic skills, preparing pupils for entry into the world of work. Indeed, if this were the main function of English teaching, we should be spending a lot more time trying to predict the kinds of technological and social change that might shape the working lives of pupils currently in our care. Most English teachers probably occupy the middle ground, recognising the importance of offering students the opportunity to experience and access the literary greats, as well as the more functional nature of our subject and the contribution it makes in creating a skilled, literate work force of the future. Many of us also want to use our subject to facilitate personal development and engagement among our students, to encourage students as participants in, and creators of, culture as opposed to merely inheritors of someone else's (Goodwyn, 2000:6). If we add to that the tradition of critical analysis of literature and other texts, and thereby the world they present and represent, we have a broad and fairly enduring definition of English teaching.

However, we live in a constantly modifying world, one in which the rate of change is faster and more visible than ever before. English teachers, somewhat battle-weary perhaps, but nevertheless energetic and passionate, are used to change and will no doubt continue to develop, evolve and adapt, whatever challenges come their way in the current century and beyond.

## THE SUBJECT OF ENGLISH

Language learning is also a development process. English is a difficult subject to define, which only makes it more controversial when we try to do



so. It is the only one of the core National Curriculum subjects without an obvious discipline to support and inform it. An amalgam of more and less traditional studies, the term 'English' on an academic curriculum includes the study of literature, linguistics, literacy, social science, language, media and grammar. At different stages of education, from reception year to postgraduate level, these and other aspects are given varying degrees of prominence. Perhaps this is why it is a subject whose integrity is under constant attack.

The language experts predict the future with any certainty, it is even more important that we maintain our defences against these front-line assaults from a range of sources: the basic skills brigade; the pressure to raise literacy levels at all costs; the testing agenda; the persistence of those who hold up the cannon as all that is worthy of study; the advance of technology which is changing the very nature of reading, writing and talk; the curriculum writers who are mostly middle-aged non-teachers who inevitably hark back to their own school days for inspiration and decide what's important.

Most English teachers have their own gut instinct about what English teaching is. Defining their subject, they might refer to the importance of promoting critical consumption of the world, of fostering a love of language and the written word, of creating literate and questioning citizens or of nurturing the appreciation of literature. At the heart of all these priorities - and the National Curriculum demands that we engage in them all - lies communication: the ability and process of conveying and appreciating meaning in different forms, for different audiences and for different purposes. Have developed in recent times and how they might realistically evolve in the near future. One of the difficulties of predicting such developments is that schools around Britain may currently find themselves at any of the points described here, very loosely, as 'past', 'present' and 'future'. National attempts to move schools on and to widen access to technology, such as the creation of the National Grid for Learning, have been partially successful, yet the variation of provision is wide. To a great extent, the progress of schools in making full and exploitative use of technology depends on the vision, energy and

determination of their staff. Some things never change!

Here, it is important to consider the ways in which a typical English classroom might change in the foreseeable future. The rate of change in last 20 or so years has been extreme and, visiting any school today, it is to be hoped that you will notice huge differences between what you find there and your memories of your own English Classroom. And the rate of change will only accelerate. In a 1997 survey of trainee teachers' experience of and attitudes to IT, less than 4 per cent had made 'considerable use' of computers in their own school experiences (Goodwyn et al., 1997:6). We can be sure, at least, that the vast majority of school leavers today will have been exposed to a range of ICT experiences, even under the mantle of the English curriculum, from preparing a Power Point presentation to contributing to the school website or taking part in a video conference.

Of course, one of the most significant obstacles to change and development in schools is that their infrastructure is very inflexible. Many schools have been designed and built in piecemeal fashion, over decades and even centuries, with financial corner-cutting and in a culture in which the learning environment is paid little heed. Even new schools are not necessarily designed or constructed with a teacher on hand. Frustratingly, pupil numbers dictate funding, but only in retrospect; an over-populated school will be seen as a sign of success, yet such schools are often desperate for more accommodation.

#### **SPACE AND FURNITURE**

The room would be two to three times the size of an average classroom in a typical school, with enough PCs or laptops for each individual use, as well as sufficient space for a range of seating arrangements - individual desks, grouped tables for collaborative work, a horseshoe for presentations. Pupil desks and chairs would be flexible in height and angle to provide for the smallest to the tallest of students, and for comfortable positioning for different tasks, as well as being free of graffiti and nubs of hardening chewing-gum. They would be easily moved to facilitate collaborative pair or group work, or to clear a space for a drama activity. Chairs



would also be padded and supportive of good posture. There would be sufficient shelving for a classroom library of fiction and reference books, together with adequate secure cupboard space for a wide range of gadgets. In a teacher's area, a comfortably sized and lockable desk would be complemented by an area of soft seating for small group interactions, pastoral interventions and assessment feedback.

### RESOURCES AND EQUIPMENT

In addition to the full set of individual computers, we might expect to find a digital camera, recording and editing equipment, a music/audio system with headsets, a TV with DVD/Video Player, a telephone, an interactive whiteboard and projector, and on OHP. A set of basic drama tools (some props and pieces of costume, a sponge ball, a set of beanbags) would also be available. Paper in a range of sizes, lined, plain and coloured, is a prerequisite, as well as a full range of stationary items – hole – punches, staplers, sticky tape, Blu Tac, rulers pens, pencils, and so on.

### PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The classroom would light and airy, but with the capacity for total blackout to facilitate drama and media work. Display boards would cover all walls and be properly maintained, providing sample work to inspire students as well as practical information, advice and reminders about English skills. Carpet to limit the noise of students and teacher moving around the room, fresh paint on the walls and a comfortable working temperature would enhance the teaching and learning atmosphere.

Some of these requirements may not seem excessive. Indeed, in a few years many of them will seem passe as the classroom experience evolves to incorporate new generations of technological advance. Yet head teachers, governing bodies and local authorities do not have the resources to create even one of these classrooms, let alone a suite of them. And, despite scarcity of equipment, poor quality furniture, shoddy and uninspiring décor, and when even the departmental hole-punch is a jealously guarded tool, excellent English lessons are being taught every day. Many English teachers succeed in creating a pleasant and welcoming learning environment against all the odds, deploying

their organisational and presentational skills to great effect. Perhaps more than anything the future of English – i.e. its integrity, its diversity, its ability to evolve and assimilate – depends on the enthusiasm, passion and imagination of its teachers. And we can at least depend on those.

### FURTHER READING

- [1]. Bloom, Lynn Z. (ed.) et al. (2003) *Composition Studies in the Millennium: Rereading the Past, Rewriting the Future*, Southern Illinois Press, Carbondale, IL.
- [2]. Hodges, Cliff G. with Moss, John and Shreeve, Ann (2000) 'The Future of English', *English in Education*, 34 (1), Spring.
- [3]. Popcorn, Faith and Hanft, Adam (2002) *Dictionary of the Future: The Words, Terms and Trends That Define the Way We'll live, Work and Talk*, Hyperion, New York.