RESEARCH ARTICLE

STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES OF LSRW SKILLS IN ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

It is natural that the demand for communication is high in this ever-changing world. Language plays a crucial role in communication and English is no doubt the foremost and most important tool of communication all over the world. Students in India are exposed to their language studies right from their primary level. English is taught only as a second language in India and there is a great difference between the city-bred children and the rural children in adapting to English language. The city-bred children are exposed to a lot of methods of learning English with ample facilities and special training in schools to improve their Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing skills which are the basic skills for learning any language whereas rural students have only limited exposure to learn English.

The main objective of this research paper is to acquire a satisfactory understanding in terms of bringing about improvements in the LSRW skills of students. It is essential for the educators to put into operation, the teaching-learning methods and instructional strategies in such a manner that would impart not only sufficient information in terms of academic concepts, but also in terms of LSRW skills. One needs to pay attention on a continuous basis in bringing about progressions in these skills. Developments in these skills would help in enriching the overall quality of lives of the individuals.

Keywords: *Listening, Reading, Skills, Speaking, Students, Writing.*

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Acquisition of any language skills is one of the major components of social skills which are learned through the education system. Hence, the education system was designed to provide a platform to the learners to acquire more and more language skills adequately and properly to have minimum levels of mastery over the fundamental language skills like, Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW) along with their social application in general purposes as well as creative purposes It is necessary to come out from this mechanical rote learning process as the real world demands something else beyond the learning acquired by the students in the present educational system.

OBJECTIVES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ENGLISH AT SECONDARY LEVEL

Linguistics never differentiates between lower level and higher level objectives. It thinks all its four objectives viz- Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW) are to be realized at both the levels. To these linguistic objectives, literature adds two more viz- Creativity and Appreciation. These two objectives are purely higher level. Linguistic and literary objectives are inter- linked with each other. Thus along with the attainment of basic proficiencies the development of abstract thoughts, creativity and appreciation must be the objectives of teaching English at secondary level. At the close of school career an average pupil should be able to:

i. Understand and follow talks in English on general topics within the prescribed vocabulary and sentence structures.
ii. Talk freely within the range of language items and express suitably.
iii. Read books and similar other material written in simplified English as per the structures and vocabulary, and to follow easy books with detailed notes. This material should within their group.
iv. Write correctly in English on familiar topics fit to be expressed within the range of the prescribed vocabulary and sentence structures.
v. Write creatively and independently on general topics.
vi. Create wider reading interest.
vii. Speak in a given situation (production skill) (fluency & accuracy in speaking & writing)
viii. Develop study skill / reference skill.
ix. Achieve greater proficiency.

Students generally learn these four skills in the following order:

Listening: When people are learning a new language they first hear it spoken.

Speaking: Eventually, they try to repeat what they hear.

Reading: Later, they see the spoken language depicted symbolically in print.

Writing: Finally, they reproduce these symbols on paper.

 (Source: Teaching Adults, An ESOL Resource Book, Developed by ProLiteracy America)

LISTENING SKILL

Listening is an important skill and must be learnt and taught carefully. Unlike hearing, listening is always purposeful. Jane Willis writes, "Listening is receptive rather than productive, but it is an equally important skill. Listening involves the formation of proper auditory images of phonemic components such as the use of vowel and consonant sounds, stress, accent, pitch, pause, juncture, intonation and the rhythm of language.

TYPES OF LISTENING

a. Intensive Listening

Intensive listening aims at detailed comprehension of meaning and linguistic exercises. Here the teacher makes use of the types of questions are : Comprehension questions involving Factual questions., Inferential questions,. Personal questions. Summary questions (students are asked to listen to a passage and summarize what they have heard). Logical questions.

b. Extensive Listening

According to Peter Hubbard et.al, "With extensive listening, the students do not reinforce or practice a grammar point which is linked to the rest of the course work. Extensive listening exercises are those where a student is primarily concerned with following a story, or finding something out from the passage he is listening to. The process of listening involves three phases. While the speaker speaks, the listener is usually engaged in:

- **Receiving:** In this phase, the listener receives the message from the speaker and then attendsto what is said.

- **Understanding:** In this phase, the listener tries to understand what exactly the speaker says.

- **Responding:** In this phase, the listener retains and recalls what the speaker says and respondsor does not respond.

TYPES OF LISTENING STRATEGIES

Listening strategies can be classified depending on how the listener processes the listening input they are:

Top down strategies

Top down strategies are listener – based. In the top – down strategies, the listener is engaged in: Listening to the main idea, Predicting, Drawing inferences, Summarizing

Bottom – up strategies

Bottom – up strategies are text – based. The listener depends on the language in the message he has hear. In the bottom – up strategies the listener is engaged in: Listening for specific details ,Recognizing cognates(linguistic words), Recognizing word – order pattern.

STUDENTS LISTENING ACTIVITIES

In a listening exercise, the class can / should: Take notes , Draw pictures etc., Talk in reply, Discuss for or against the topic, Complete a flow – chart, Say 'True or False', Continue the dialogue, Fill in a table, Write, Think, Select (a, b or c), Discriminate (e.g., ship or sheep), Place in correct order (e.g., pictures or pieces of information).

1. **Dictation** has been used in language learning for several hundred years, and methodologists have often made pedagogical claims for its value.

2. **Following A Route** : It is an activity for listening practice that enables students to develop listening comprehension in English. The teacher prepares a big picture chart of a place / village / town or city. The picture will include the landmarks such as a post office, railway station, airport, supermarket, park, multi – storied building, university, pond,

etc.

3. **Listening to A Telephone Call:** Speaking on the phone is not a face – to – face conversation. Real conversation takes place face – to – face. In real conversation, both the speaker and the listener can look at each other while speaking. While listening to the phone call, the listener solely relies on the language being spoken, because the speaker is at a distance. In the classroom: The practice by students in telephonic conversation can improve their speaking and listening skills. Telephonic conversation practices can be frequently given to students in class.

4. **Listening to Commentaries:** A commentary is a spoken description of an event, given while the event is happening, especially on television or radio. The audio commentary is given on radio. The video commentary is heard and seen on the T.V Commentaries are short, first-person stories that clearly express an individual's opinion or world view and why it matters to the outside world.

5. **Listening to Instructions:** Listening to instructions listening task in which the teacher gives a set of instructions to a student and the student carries out he instructions correctly. By doing this exercise or practice, the listener demonstrates his listening comprehension. Listening to instructions and responding to them correctly enable the students to become successful listeners or learners in class. In the classroom: In this practice, the teacher usually gives some instructions orally. For these instructions, the student gives his responses physically. Some simple verbal instructions :

Laugh loudly., Look up., Show me your photo.,Open your mouth., Shut your eyes.,Cry like a crow., Stand near the window., Close the doors.

6. **Jigsaw listening:** Jigsaw is a puzzle in which a picture is cut up into many pieces and a person has to succeed in fitting the pieces together correctly. Jigsaw is a strategy that emphasizes cooperative learning by providing students an opportunity to actively help each other build comprehension. Use this technique to assign students to reading groups composed of varying skill levels. Each group member is responsible for becoming an "expert" on one section of the assigned material and then "teaching" it to the other members of the team.

DEVELOPING LISTENING SKILLS

Monitoring each student's participation within the groups provides teachers with information about how much the students already know about the topic. This allows teachers to tailor instruction accordingly. Effective language instructors to show students how they can adjust their listening behavior to deal with a variety of situations, types of input, and listening purposes. They help students develop a set of listening strategies and match appropriate strategies to each listening situation Listening strategies are techniques or activities that contribute directly to the comprehension and recall of listening input. Listening strategies can be classified by how the listener processes the input.

Top-down strategies are listener based; the listener taps into background knowledge of the topic, the situation or context, the type of text,

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and the language. This background knowledge activates a set of expectations that help the listener to interpret what is heard and anticipate what will come next. Top- down strategies include: listening for the main idea, predicting, drawing inferences, summarizing.

Bottom-up strategies are text based; the listener relies on the language in the message, that is, the combination of sounds, words, and grammar that creates meaning. Bottom-up strategies include listening for specific details, recognizing cognates, recognizing word-order patterns

The listening skill can be developed in students in three ways.

1. Through dialogues

2. Through cassette – recorder

3. Through guessing.

SPEAKING SKILL

Speaking is a productive skill. It is only through speaking that we get many things done for us. Speaking means communicating. In real life situations we can't live without speaking. When we talk of the four basic language skills such as LSRW, we don't want to say that we learn these skills one by one. In fact it is not so. The truth is we listen and speak. We read and write. Listening and speaking go hand in hand and reading and writing go together. For instance, when a teacher is teaching something in the class, the class is listening. Speaking involves the articulation of all the components referred to above and development of communicative competence at the productive level.

DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILL:

a. Pupils should speak the language in meaningful situations.

b. There should be sufficient repetition and variety to facilitate habit formation without creating boredom in the class.

c. Correction should be selective and should mainly be based on drilling in the correct form. Persistent crucial errors should be dealt with in a separate remedial lesson.

d. Speaking activities should be properly graded to suit the level of the pupils.

e. The ultimate aim of all oral drills is to enable the pupils to make a free choice in an actual communication situation. Therefore, once the pupils have mastered a structure, they should practice it in situations where their attention is focused on the thread of meaning rather than on the structure.

The practice in speaking may be started by the teacher with dialogues. For such a practice dialogues on simple, contextualized situations may be tried between pair of students. In this the teacher should play the role of a guide and must not curb the freedom of expression.

STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES FOR EVELOPING SPEAKING SKILL:

Various strategies and techniques can be made use of keeping in view the level and needs of the learners. Some of the things the teacher can use in the classroom are as follows:

1. Asking questions to the learners on the topics of their interest.

2. Asking the learners to say the model dialogue.

3. Asking the class to converse with each

other.

4. Making use of 'Information – gap activities'.

5. Using role – play, simulation, dramatization, communication games, guessing games, etc.

6. Using 'substitution table', discrimination exercises, substitution drills, conversation drills, pictures – cues, indirect questions, correction techniques, etc.   Using pair work and group work techniques.

DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILLS

Speaking means conveying the message through the words of mouth. This skill is also called 'Oral Skill' or 'Communicative Skill'. The students need intensive practice. Speaking practice is usually done in pair & group work.

Types of Class Activities: Language experts have organized oral skills into four distinctive types.

1. Drills or Linguistically Structured Activities

2. Performance Activities.

3. Participation Activities

4. Observation Activities

1. **Drills or Linguistically Structured Activities**

Teacher provide a particular structure and the Students practice it by repeating it.

2. **Performance Activities**: Students prepare himself beforehand and delivers a message to aGroup. E.g. Student's Speech

3. Participation Activities: Students participates in some communicative activity in a "naturalSetting". E.g. Discussions on some topics.

4. **Observation Activities:** Students observe something, writes a brief summary and present hisfinding to the class. Eg: Discussions, Role Play, Gap Activities, Short Speeches etc.

Some Most Commonly Used activities

Short Speeches• students may be given some easy topics• Prepare them in verbal or written form• Come to stage or deliver a lecture or speech for given time frame before the class

An interview or self introduction is an activity of this kind. One person has some information which the other person does not have.

Gap Activity: It is a form of a Dialogue. This activity will remove the student's hesitation. In this way information gap is filled. Through Gap Activity, Students may be asked to play different roles using role play and drama.

Improving oral fluency: Students will work in pairs to practice telephone scenarios. Then the students practice the conversation for the class. The class can then discuss the different scenarios.

1.) Class Discussion: Ask the students about telephone calls that they currently make. Brainstorm and make a list of various telephone tasks such as making an appointment, calling a friend, etc.

2.) Go over any vocabulary that the class may need to learn or review.

3.) Divide the class into pairs. Give each pair a set of Telephone Conversation Scenario Cards.

4.) Together the partners will practice the conversation based on the information on their cards. If possible, spread out the chairs so that there is some space between pairs. For each pair, arrange the chairs back to back so that they can't see each other when they talk.

5.) Circulate among the pairs and listen to their role plays. Provide any suggestions or help where needed.

6.) If the students in your class feel comfortable, ask them to practice their role plays again in front of the whole class.

7.) After each scenario, ask the class about the conversation. Let students ask questions or add comments to the conversation. Use this time to point out any details that are relevant for each scenario, such as cultural norms, common phrases to use, leaving messages, differences in talking to a supervisor versus a friend, etc.

8.) For review, pass out the Scenario Cards again, but make sure each pair has a different scenario from their first practice. Now they have the opportunity to apply what they have just learned from the class discussion. Circulate and listen to the role plays.

A famous Quote says that : *Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man and writing an exact man – Fransis Bacon*.

READING SKILL

Reading is an essential part of language teaching at every level. Learning to read is a language skill but this is very difficult to learn. According to traditional approach, the purpose of reading is to understand the meaning of words, grammar and sentence.

Purposes of reading

- To gain information to verify existing knowledge.
- To critique a writer's idea or writing style for enjoyment.
- To enhance knowledge for the language being read.

Here, the reader selects textbooks according to his purpose of reading.

Reading is an interactive process which goes on between the reader and the text resulting in comprehension.

A reader's knowledge, skills, and strategies include:

- Linguistic competence.
- Discourse competence.
- Sociolinguistic competence.
- Strategic competence.

TYPES OF READING
Reading Aloud

We start teaching reading to the students by teaching them reading aloud first. The teacher reads out certain sentences from the flash cards or the blackboard and the students speak after him. For this purpose it is important that the teacher's own reading is really a model one.

SILENT READING

The advantages of silent reading are: It keeps the whole class busy at the same time. In reading aloud whereas one student is busy in reading the lesson, the others are passive listeners. Whereas the chief purpose of reading

aloud is to improve the pronunciation of the learner, the chief purpose of silent reading is to enable him to read with comprehension and speed.

Comparison of Skimming and Scanning

Skimming is a reading strategy used for developing reading skill. By using skimmingstrategy, students quickly survey the text to get main idea.

Scanning is similar to skimming, a reading skill used for developing reading. By using scanning skills, Students make quick survey of the text "to find specific information".

Intensive reading involves students in reading detail with specific learning aims and tasks. Itis to learn the content of the subject. The learners read any information with concentration.

Extensive reading is reading for pleasure and gaining extra knowledge. For example, readingthe story and reading books in library.

Reading for perception and comprehension

Reading for perception involves recognition of words and sentences and also their meanings. Reading for perception can be developed by Phonics instruction, fluency instruction and vocabulary instruction.

Reading for comprehension

It involves grasping the main concept of the passage. First students perceive the words and use their higher level mental skills to find the meaning. Comprehension is a reason for good reading. It can be developed by explicit instruction, cooperative instruction and by helping the readers to use strategy flexibility.

WRITING SKILL

Writing is one of the important skills to be developed in a language. Students learn to write wordsand sentences after knowing how to read them. Writing skill is an effective tool of communication. It helps students develop imaginative andcritical thinking abilities.

MECHANICS OF WRITING

Mechanics of writing include: Knowing how to make strokes with proper hand movement. Knowing how to make letters of the right shape and size. Knowing how to have the right spacing between (i) letters, (ii) words and (iii) lines. Knowing how to use capital letters and marks of punctuation correctly. Knowing how to have a fluent hand movement from left to right. Writing is more permanent than speaking and requires more careful organization.

The vision skills that we need to understand, analyse, and interpret what we see are calledvisual perception.

Syntax

Syntax refers to the study of the rules that govern the ways in which words combine to form phrases, clauses and sentences. Syntax is one of the major components of grammar.

Organization

When students write a topic or text, they should organize their ideas logically into proper paragraphs.

Grammar

When students write a text, they should write it with correct sentences choosing

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correct words and following the rules of English grammar.

1. Content purpose

Good writing has a clearly defined purpose.

2. Relevance

The ideas or themes in a piece of writing should be relevant to the audience or readers

Writing skills: A good writing involves four important skills:

1. **Mechanical skills:** Mechanical skills refer to the ability to use punctuation, spelling, capitalization, etc correctly.

2. **Grammatical skills:** These skills refer to the ability to write English in grammatically correct sentences choosing appropriate words.

3. **Judgment skills:** Judgment skills refer to the ability to write in an appropriate manner for a particular purpose with a particular audience in mind, together with an ability to select, organize and order relevant information.

4. **Discourse skills:** There are two types of discourse skills. One is conversational and another is textual. The textual discourse refers to understand and write different types of texts such as narratives, prose texts, expository texts, persuasive texts, descriptions and others.

Development of Handwriting: The following are some suggestions to improve the handwriting of the students:

1. Great attention needs to be paid to handwriting right from the beginning.

Correct habits of writing should be cultivated in the students at the early stage.

1. Students should sit in the proper posture.

2. Students should use calligraphy. Note-books. They will thus have practice in writing whatever material is traced out in the note – books.

3. For written work during the first three years of English, students should use four-lined exercise books. Such exercise books. Such exercise books will provide them practice in writing letters of uniform size.

4. The teacher should point out to the students the direction of movement in the formation of various letters.

CONCLUSION

In India, English plays a major role as the most important foreign language. In the educational fields, English is the compulsory foreign language for all the students from upper primary school level-Standard V up to the higher secondary level-Standard XII. The English Curriculum aims to cultivate two linguistic abilities: an ability to give access to the society and culture and an ability to use English to communicate effectively grammatically and appropriately. The strategies for developing listening skills are, acquisition of language, listening to ideas and suggestions, promoting teamwork, effective decision making processes, counseling and guidance, achievement of academic goals, accomplishing job targets, participation in social, cultural, economic and political activities, management of household responsibilities and communicating with

family members. Strategies to promote speaking skills are, content, correcting errors, conversation strategies, politeness and decorum, teacher intervention, interaction, formation of communicative learning environment, discussions, interviews, and confidence. Strategies for improving reading skills are, improving existing knowledge, preparing speeches and presentations, implementation of research projects, language support, memorizing, generating awareness, relevant reading materials, developing concentration, introduction of activities and generating awareness regarding norms, values and principles. In order to ensure that students are able to sufficiently acquire an understanding of these skills, it is essential on the part of the instructors to generate awareness regarding these strategies and put into practice the tasks and activities that would render an indispensable contribution in augmenting student learning.

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