

Assimilation of Four Skills in English For Second Language Learners

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Abstract: -

Implementing language is a skill. Simply knowing the basics does not guarantee that a person will use it effectively. Proficiency in language requires constant practice through effective communication. Hence, while teaching English a teacher has to amalgamate all the four skill that are Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing. While training students on English, real life integration needs to be trained very well from a language aspect.

Introduction: -

Integration of all the four skills becomes very imperative for second language learners as these skills are interdependent. Though one can learn to speak by modelling technique but listening and writing is an outcome of what a person read. An interaction is only useful when sending and receiving of the messages happen at the same time. Language teaching requires patience and constant hard work. Teaching becomes rewarding when the students acquire linguistic proficiency to make their communication effective. English has become one of the basic needs across the world whether it is relation to studying, travelling or working. Hence, one need to equip oneself on all the four skills.

Listening Skills:

Teaching listening to second language learners is strenuous task as there are multiple factors which influence this skill. Honing this skill is very important for making the students to be independent learners. One of the largest factors which hinder listening is an unease which the students encounter while proceeding through a listening exercise when in between they are unable to understand a part of conversation. This leads to irritation as the entire flow of the conversation is affected. The situation becomes more challenging when the students start admitting that they cannot understand English.

Practicing Listening Skills in Classroom:

Listening requires constant practice and while making the students to sharpen this skill one has to take small steps. In order to build the zeal for listening a teacher should ask the students to either watch a short English movie or listen to a song. Making the students practice too much for listening can be monotonous. Hence, as a teacher you need to take care of the duration for what the listening needs to be practiced. A good practice would be to make them listen for five to ten minutes at least four to five times a week for desired results.

Its very important for the teacher to observe the students while the listening process is going on and accordingly categorize the students into multiple categories. This will present a true picture in front of the teacher to understand their listening competencies.

A glimpse of multiple categories is mentioned below in the table

Responses of students towards listening	Explanation
Reactive	Listening only to the surface and lacking depth
Intensive	Focussing on certain specific components of conversation
Responsive	Triggering an instantaneous response
Selective	Examining the content for specific information
Extensive	Developing a top down approach
Interactive	Interacting with the students of above-mentioned categories and

While making the students to practice for listening while designing the lesson it should comprise of pre-listening, while listening and post listening components.

Before-listening: In this we need to build an excitement factor in students by motivating them and pre informing the context of conversation so that mentally the students are prepared. The teacher may also announce a reward criterion for all the correct entries they will be receiving when the listening activity will be continued.

During-Listening: For effective development of listening skills the students should be made to listen at least three to four times. The listening techniques that needs to be adopted are bottom up and top down. While in bottom up technique we move from sound to word to grammar to final message that needs to be delivered. In Top down technique the listener deduces a conclusion basis the prior information. In this the teacher can also train certain strategies to the student e.g. looking for the keyword, gauging meaning, understanding the non-verbal cues to encourage student about how to listen in a second language.

After-listening: Upon completion of the listening task the teacher can discuss the student's response and prior knowledge of the vocabulary used in the conversation. They can also share the new things they have come across during the listening comprehension. In order to boost the confidence of the student and to motivate them rewarding the active participants will be a source of inspiration for other listeners.

Speaking Skills:

Speaking plays one of the pivotal role in second language learning in which the communication happens through verbal and non-verbal components. While training the students for speaking the ultimate goal which the teacher needs to keep in mind is a clear and comprehensive pronunciation. We need to understand that the second language learners come from varied cultures. Hence, expecting an accent free language is non-realistic. Rather the focus of a teacher has to be on clear pronunciation.

Practicing Speaking Skills in Classroom:

While training the students on speaking its always advisable that the teachers should go for Communicative Language teaching and collaborative learning. This

may be achieved when a collaborative activity is designed by putting the students in real life situation. The activities which may help in achieving this goal can be simulation, role play, storytelling, interviews, picture narration, etc.

There are many factors that will influence speaking e.g. mother tongue influence, age, exposure etc.

Basis the type of responses received while speaking it can be categorized into the categories mentioned in the table: -

Speaking Responses of students	Explanation
Imitative	Listening and orally repeating
Intensive	To exercise a particular phonological or grammatical pattern
Responsive	Giving a short response to question asked
Transactional	A dialogue to exchange specific information
Interpersonal	To initiate social interactions
Extensive	A monologue where a student delivers a short speech

The teacher needs to ensure that while training the students on speaking they need to be trained well on grammar basics along with tone, voice quality, intonation, stress and rate of speech.

Reading Skills:

Reading is defined as a receptive skill in which the student combines the information listed in the text with their own knowledge and understanding. The derivative helps them achieve a meaningful answer in understanding the text. In order to ensure smooth understanding of the text there are various techniques adopted while reading e.g. Top-down and bottom-up

Top down: This is done basis previous knowledge base that the student possesses to understand the reading test. Hence, even if the individual words are not understood still the reader can comprehend the text.

Bottom-up: In this the reader starts from words to sound to grammar to the final meaning of the text.

Keeping the above techniques in focus a reader may use various strategies listed below: -

Skimming: In this the reader quickly runs across the text to get the main idea. For effective skimming one should pay attention to first sentence of the paragraph and look for phrases or group of words.

Scanning: In this you run across the text looking for a specific information.

Extensive Reading: This is type of reading which people do it for pleasure to get a general understanding.

Intensive Reading: It is normally practiced on short texts to get desired information.

Practicing Reading Skills in Classroom:

While teaching reading to second language learners the following strategies may be adopted

Before-reading: Before the student starts with the reading things that needs to be practiced for effective reading should include cross checking the title, any pictures or charts on the book to build an overview, cross check the index and then try and deduce the main idea.

During-reading: While reading visualization should be conducted through the group of words that the student come across. Also, the student should reread to draw inferences basis what the conclusion can be drawn.

After-reading: Once the reading is completed the students should summarize, reflect and ask question to check the comprehension of the text. This helps in deep diving of the text leading to deeper understanding.

Writing Skills:

Writing is a skill which require both physical and mental work. Before even a student pens down the thought the writer needs to imagine, organize, write and then edit. One of the basic factors that needs to be taken care while writing is that the message should be clear. In other words, it needs to be understood by the reader in the same manner what the writer wanted to communicate.

The strategies which may be adopted while writing is: -

Free Writing- The benefit of this is that it encourages the students to list down all the thoughts coming in their mind without even worrying about it. The greatest advantage is that in this the correction is carried about by the teachers which relieves them about the tension of correcting themselves.

Revised Writing- In this the student writes, revise and then finally edit the content.

Practicing Writing Skills in Classroom:

Before-writing: This stage involves the collation of ideas through extensive reading, skimming or scanning, practicing research, brainstorming and finally writing.

During-writing: While writing on a topic firstly the student needs to choose a topic and then finally may practice any of the above writing strategy.

After-writing: This involves revision which may be practiced through peer editing/teacher's feedback/proof reading/reading aloud.

Conclusion:

Hence, training second language learners on all the four skills are essential as they are interwoven. But the teacher should also keep in mind the cultural issues, political issues and gender issues while designing any activity for the students.