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Significance of Language Laboratory and Its implications in Indian Classrooms

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Abstract

Language laboratory is an essentiality in today's language classrooms. As teachers and teacher educators, we should always focus on enhancing the LSRW Skills of students. In this paper we are trying to unveil the importance of usage of language labs in our Language teaching ,along with highlighting how pertinent is the role of teachers in guiding students for effective Language Learning. The paper also throws light on the challenges faced by teachers and students in the teaching-learning process of language through language laboratories.

Keywords: Language Laboratory, English language skills, Teacher, Student

Introduction

For a good and reflective communication, there has to be proficiency in the English language. This proficiency is not easy and is not acquired in a day. There has to be constant practice and urge to learn English language comprehensively. For motivating students, a teacher or trainer should have some interesting propositions for the students to keep their interest permanent and on –going. English language acquisition and learning is becoming important for Indian students today, owing to their great demand in the world.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

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But the question arises that whether the English language can be taught through lectures only? Whether we can generate interest among students to permanently motivate them to learn English? Whether we actually train students in English language or mere provide translation and some sort of skills to acquire? Whether we integrate new methods and techniques to actually train them?

All these questions need to be answered in the context that we as teachers and teacher educators should generate interests among students towards English language learning by understanding the dynamics of English language but practically and skillfully. The four core skills of English language, i.e., Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing have to be continuously practiced. This can only be done when we integrate technology in English language learning. This can best be done through Language Labs, which are gaining importance in India over a period of time.

The language laboratory plays an important role in the language learning process.

Features of the English Language laboratory are given below:

- It is mainly for enhancing the four skills of English language accurately.
- It is designed for teaching English language skillfully and comprehensively.
- It encourages students to get correct pronunciation, accent, intonation, pitch and stress.
- It is essential in today's competitive world.
- The language laboratory enables students as well as faculty to experiment and analyze language.

The Significance and Relevance of the English Language Laboratory

Everyone in today's world is acquainted with the fact that any language cannot be taught until and unless it is practically trained. For this reason, language labs are very relevant in today's classrooms where a student has many subjects to study, along with identifying the innate importance of each subject. There are interview sessions for the students, competitions within and inter schools etc., i.e., a whole lot of activities for them to shine, but what is essentially required is good communication skill. This is possible if a student is allowed to practically concentrate and learn that language.

Languages cannot be rote-memorized with certain rules but they need to be gradually acquired and imbibed in the personality of the child. For all this English language labs are very important where a student gets practice sessions, can experiment with the usage of the language, self-learn and self-analyze, record his/her pronunciation and self-introspect. So there is enormous scope for the child to actually acquire the language at his/her own speed, which is not really possible in the traditional classroom.

The Need for a Language Laboratory in the Educational Institution

- It is essential as a learner has to have a good command of the language i.e clarity and accuracy.(D. David Wilson & Dr. V. Thayalan 2007)
- It gives confidence to the learner.
- It equips students with understanding the essentialities of English language.

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- It continuously generates interest among students to learn the language.
- It does not discourage students to understand the language.
- It facilitates the students as well as teachers to understand the concepts of the language in the actual sense, otherwise there is focus on rote-memorization
- It provides a strong platform to practically get trained in the language.
- Language laboratory's importance lies in its skillful developing the language skills of students along with assessing their speed of learning.
- Students get acquainted to the many pronunciation styles that are essential in everyday usage of language in today's competitive world.

The language laboratory includes online material like software, language games etc., in the English language. Hence, the language laboratory is an essentiality in today's educational Institutions.

Challenges Faced by a Language Teacher and Students in the Indian Classrooms

- In many instances, proper facilities are not provided by the Institutions.
- Language teachers are not properly trained as there is a dearth of 'train- the-trainer' programs.
- Teachers are not competent enough in aspects of phonetics.
- There is sometimes lack of coordination in terms of speed, comprehending information and providing remedial, among teachers and students while conducting training sessions to students.
- As there is a large group of students that needs to be catered to by the teacher at the same time, it becomes difficult for him/her to provide remedial guidance to the individual student.
- Mostly the teaching focuses on lecture than infusing techniques to be used in language labs; therefore, very limited time is devoted to the actual training of the four language skills: LSRW.
- The speed of perfection in acquiring the speaking skill of the English language is sometimes slow, as there are individual differences among language students.
- There is a fear of being ridiculed by the classmates, so mostly the learner prefers to remain silent.
- Since most students are not comfortable with the English language, they hesitate to participate and self reflect on their own learning of language.
- Moreover, many students do not use computers in their learning, therefore it becomes difficult for a teacher to continuously motivate them to learn and practice simultaneously the language skills.
- Students lose interest as there is less scope of practicing at home.

Suggestions to enhance teaching of English through language laboratory:

- A teacher should possess good linguistic competence through accuracy in Grammar and phonetic competence through proficiency in pronunciation. (www.articlesbase.com)
- She/He should try to develop competence by making the students understand the dynamics of language.
- The teacher should keep a control over the students by constantly guiding and supervising them when they are analyzing and thus self- acquiring the language. (www.articlesbase.com)

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

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- The teacher should continuously motivate and coordinate with students for efficiently acquiring the language. This is to say that the presence of the teacher should be felt in the lab.
- The teacher should clear the doubts of the students as and when they occur in the language labs.
- The teacher should communicate the importance of language labs for the students and make it sure that students understand the time allotted in the language lab is well utilized.
- The main perspective of a language teacher is to ensure the acquisition of English language by the learner and motivate the students to continuously upgrade their language skills, to make the learning permanent.
- The supplementary material to be used in any of the session in the lab should be well placed for the students.

Conclusion

Many language teachers are adapted to the traditional teaching methods but it is high time that our teaching methodologies and techniques should be changed and modified. Unless we as teachers welcome these new technologies in English language teaching, we cannot impart language skills to our learners to match their excellence with the rate of growing competition in the world today. According to us, these are a few of the whole lot of strategies which can be used to improve language skills through technology in the present generation.

It will be more effective if technology is introduced from the elementary level at the school level. Therefore, language lab serves as an effective tool for language enhancement, but there are some challenges that teachers as well as learners pose in implementing language skills effectively that have been discussed earlier.

It is true that students in India need to communicate well in English as there is lot of scope for them on the world stage. Academicians and language experts assume that exposing students to the authentic English language labs, would meet this need to make the learners proficient in the language. There should also be the inclusion of various methods and techniques that are required to be used in the language labs, to enable students to integrate skills into their acquisition of English language .

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Language in India www.languageinindia.com

12 : 11 November 2012

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Significance of Language Laboratory and Its implications in
Indian Classrooms

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