

INTEGRATED APPROACH - A TOOL TO ENHANCE ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS

By

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ABSTRACT

Learning English language is important as mother tongue in the case of second language learners because of its wider opportunities in one's professional and academic areas. Getting command in English language needs special practice and training in the case of second language learners where they are exposed continuously to their mother tongue. To enhance language skills, learners need to give equal priority to learn four language skills which are productive skills and receptive skills like speaking and writing respectively reading and listening. It is not possible to practice these skills in isolation. Learning a language is interlinked with both, getting command in these four language skills, vocabulary, and grammar. Apart from the above, it is also interlinked with other factors like exposure, societal status, economic, and cultural background of the learner. In the four language skills, speaking is the premier medium in the process of human communication. Most of the communication either face to face or telephonic conversation takes place through speaking. The aim of this paper is to enhance English Speaking Skills through Integrated Approach.

Keywords: Integrated Approach, Speaking Skills, Economic and Cultural Background, Face to Face Communication, Telephonic Conversation.

INTRODUCTION

Communication is the basic feature in living beings, especially in the case of human beings to fulfill needs in their lives. Using language makes a difference from human communication pattern to other communication. Human communication starts with practicing and imitating sounds through listening and speaking. So, any language can be practiced using four language skills, such as Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. The learning process depends on one skill to another. No skill is practiced individually. Getting proficiency in one skill may not help the learner to get command in a language. The process of learning a language depends on active skills like listening and speaking skills and later it extends by using passive skills like reading and writing. Of late, two more additional skills have come into the practice, these are grammar and vocabulary. Those skills are also treated as a language skills.

1. The Importance of English Language

English language plays a vital role in the Global scenario. People may not extend their opportunities in any field without using English language as it is the global language. Integration of different cultures, ideologies, and languages in the process of globalization, creates a need of the moment to learn a global language for second or foreign language learners. In the case of second language learners, it is somewhat difficult to get command in English unless they take it as a part of their lives. The person who gets proficiency in English language can prove themselves in their every walk of life in exhibiting additional skills like life skills, convincing skills, or managerial skills. At this juncture, English language occupies a major role not only in professional life, but also in day to day life, where technology becomes a part and parcel of life. For example, booking a ticket online,

presenting information on the ticket, bills at textile showrooms or stores which generate bills using computers, product information booklets, and many. Most of the academic information is available in English language. Selection of the words might differ from subject to subject, such as medicine, technology, law, social studies, and other areas. But the majority of the information is presented in English language.

2. Importance of English in Professional Courses

English language plays a role not only in the above situations, but also in professional life. It is the place where it is required to manage, convince, and share information to others. That is only possible when they are good at communication in English because professional place is the common place where the people come to work from different places, cultures, and social backgrounds. Thus, speakers of mother tongue may not help to communicate in case of English as a second language speaker. So, organizations are giving priority to hire the candidate who are good at English language skills. Communication skills in English have become one of the main criterions in a recruitment process.

3. Speaking Skills

Speaking skill is one of the active and productive skills. It is a primary skill while communicating with others. Getting a command on the other three skills helps the learner to get knowledge and share ideas through oral communication (Khan & Ali, 2010). The impact of other things include influence of the mother tongue, support from others, suitable environment, previous knowledge of the candidate, and many. These factors also occupy a major role in speaking activities (Qureshi, 2007). For example, the speaker wants to share or speak something. A speaker should know the information that is only possible through other skills like reading, listening, and writing. Unless a teacher cannot create a suitable environment to the learners, they may not build their confidence in speaking.

In the words of Harmer (2007), English Language has become the main language in global world by the end of twentieth century as it is spoken by millions of people of non-native background around the world.

Given below are the identified problems on the side of the learners while practicing speaking skills:

- Hesitate to share their ideas
- Lack of knowledge
- Influence of mother tongue
- Lack of exposure
- Lack of practice
- Making errors while translating ideas
- Fear of making mistakes.

To avoid the above identified problems, Integrated approach has been selected to strengthen the knowledge of the student (British Council, n.d). The process is implemented step-wise in the classroom using communicative and activity based method to build communication and language skills of the student.

4. Integrated Approach

Practicing language skills in isolation are not possible. It is always interlinked with one skill to another. For example, without listening to the question it is not possible to respond. Effective communication includes practicing all the four skills with the equal importance, and interlinking vocabulary and grammar along with the four language skills while learning a language (Idaryani & Tensol, 2013).

Much research is going on Integrated process. Harmer (2007) points out that receptive and productive skills are not possible to separate while teaching English. As four skills are integrated with each other, it is not possible to teach in isolation. An ideal teacher prefers activities with the integration of four skills like Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing.

4.1 Why Integrated Approach?

To enhance language skills, it is required to concentrate on the four language skills, grammar, and vocabulary. In the case of second language learners, it is very important to create a supportive environment for the learners to develop their language skills. Giving continuous exposure to their mother tongue is also one of the obstacles. To make him/her as a perfect user of the language, he/she should give a chance to himself or herself with continuous exposure to the target language. Another problem is

trying to learn language skills individually instead of integrating the skills.

Integrated approach is selected as a tool to overcome all the above problems and to give enough practice and make the student confident in building speaking skills. Through integrated approach, learners can get a chance to enhance knowledge in the selected area and assess themselves on how much they know and how much they need to learn. With this approach, learners can get a chance to enhance four language skills that help him/her to build confidence. Without having enough information, learners may struggle to involve in conversations or speaking activities.

Learning a second language is based on effective learning of the four skills, which are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Apart from the above, two more skills are also covered with this approach, those are grammar and vocabulary. This approach focuses on developing students' competency in English.

A teacher selects an Integrated Approach idea to teach a lesson or practice an activity, and it will help the students improve their knowledge in specific or selected concept along with English Language skills.

The following are the basic principles as (Source: <https://photos.state.gov/libraries/india/13974/PDFS/IntegratedLanguageTeachingPrinciples.pdf>) mentioned by Enright and McCloskey (1988).

- Language skills, such as Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing should be taught as a whole not isolate.
- Language skills are practically implemented to accomplish the work.
- Here, students can be exposed to language in an interesting way.
- Learners are exposed to social situations in the process of improving language skills. In this process, they can become a better user of the language skills.
- It creates a supportive environment for the students.

5. Approach-Method-Technique

These three terms are interlinked to execute action in the class. According to Edward Anthony's model, the

assumptions and beliefs about language teaching as Approach is when the theory is put into practice that is treated as method and the classroom procedures as techniques.

Methods and techniques are used together by the teacher in their teaching to provide practice to the students (Asher, 1982), whereas, approaches are different view points of teachers about language teaching that can be applied in the classrooms by using different techniques of language teaching (Yanto, 2014).

A teacher can create an authentic environment for learners by developing the four language skills through Integrated approach. It also extends the use of language for social situations (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; McKay, 2003; Wan, 1996). Knowledge on the selection of the method is very important because it is the base of teaching. In the words of Larsen-Freeman (2000), Methods are the important to select suitable techniques and principles according to the situation. There are many methods like Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method, Structural Approach, Oral Approach, Audio Lingual Method, Total Physical Response, Silent Way, Natural Approach, Task-Based Language Teaching, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and Activity based Teaching Method.

Some of the principles have been developed from the research on language teaching and a new model has been implemented known as Activity-Based Communicative Teaching and Learning (ABC model). The language skills, vocabulary, and grammar are integrated and organized using the following two (Limbu, 2012).

1. Activity-Based Teaching and Learning
2. Communicative Teaching and Learning

5.1 Activity Based and Communicative Teaching (ABC) Method (Integrated Approach)

According to Verghese (1989), activity based teaching helps to involve learners actively and implement as per the needs of the learners.

Just A Minute (JAM) activity has been selected to enhance the communicative ability of the learner. Integration of all the Language Skills, Grammar, and Vocabulary are done

to improve speaking abilities of the students. Improving speaking ability is not an easy task. Learners need to be exposed with knowledge of the particular concept, language structure, expressions and practice.

Woodrow Wilson said that "If I am to speak ten minutes, I need a week for preparation; if fifteen minutes, three days; if half an hour, two days; if an hour, I am ready now."

Speaking is just for a minute, but it requires hours and hours of preparation. Learners need enough words and knowledge to form a proper sentence. Unless the speaker has given enough practice to himself/herself, he/she may not perform well. Without having enough knowledge, the learner may not perform well. So, the learner needs pre practice to perform in any activity. It helps him/her to build confidence.

5.2 Just A Minute (JAM) Technique

Just A Minute (JAM) activity is used, which can be divided into three parts, first one is Pre Activity, during the Activity, and Post Activity.

5.2.1 Pre Activity

Announcing the topic in advance and asking them to make a research on the given topic. Ask the learner to read and collect points from various sources and note

down the points in their notes. In that way they familiarize vocabulary, knowing means to the difficult terms, required knowledge on the topic. This process builds their confidence level.

5.2.2 During the Activity

Introducing basic relevant vocabulary and grammar rules through quiz for a little time. This process makes them tension free and also helps as a brainstorming activity. It is starting task by providing short and clear instructions. This activity requests the learners to listen others carefully. It helps them to earn new points, if they miss any.

5.2.3 Post Activity

It is the time for assessment from three views. One is teachers, second is peers, and the third is self assessment. Giving constructive feedback is the responsibility of the teacher to motivate the learners. Self analysis helps them to identify their own pitfalls in activity. This process helps them to improve their forthcoming performances. The above process creates a supportive suitable environment to the learner to perform better. It encourages them to involve in further speaking activities. It helps the learners to reduce the impact of their mother tongue by knowing information directly in English.

Stage	Role of Teacher	Role of the Student	Remarks
1	Conducting diagnostic test (oral or written) to assess the individual student knowledge	Identifying ones' strengths and areas of development	Feedback on each session need to be written
2	Share the importance of the activity and procedure	Attentive listening	
3	Clarification of the doubts with an example	It is the stage to overcome phobias or hesitation or free from fear	
4	Provide the list of Topics in advance	Selection of the topic to build their knowledge and confidence	
5	Check the comprehension level of the individual student	Sincere preparation and desire to build their knowledge	
6	Learning Strategies	Receiving tips and try to implement in preparation (Eg: Clue words or using SPELT method for preparation)	
7	Execution of supportive activity. Team or pair activity to share their knowledge on the selected topic	Free from the stage fear and help to build confidence to share their knowledge	
8	Encourage the students for activity on the stage	Presenting their ideas	
9	Monitoring the students during the activity	Listening to the others and active involvement in the activity.	
10	Constructive feedback and help the students to analyze ones strengths and areas of improvement. (Suggetions to improve their performance)	Self analysis	

Table 1. Role of Teacher and Student in the Classroom

Detail presentation of activity helps to plan and execute the approach in the classroom and also helps to realize the individual role and interlink all the six language skills to enhance competency, confidence, communication, and language skills of the student (Table 1).

Conclusion

Implementing any activity through integrated approach gives expected results, but it requires proper planning, implementation, post analysis, and practicing according to the learners' performance. Small size classrooms would help the teacher to get attention on every learner rather than in large size classrooms. Also time management and classroom management are very important factors to conduct any activity. Conducting activities once in a while may give a little progress. So, conducting in a frequent time gives effective change. Apart from academic activities, a teacher can plan as a part of extra curricular activities to give new experiences to the learners.

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