

Why does the English language fail in Indian classrooms?

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B.Vasanthakumar

*Assistant Professor, PG & Research Department of English
Pachaiyappa's College, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India*

Abstract

This paper intends to mitigate the struggles of language learners through the natural learning process. The first part explains language as a system and how it eases the learning for the early language learners; it also presents the different study of what happens when the natural order is reversed. Further, it elaborates how the shorts comings of the academic pattern and classroom setup add to the miseries of the learners. Finally, it suggests specific strategies to impart useful language to second language learners.

Keywords: Language Proficiency, Second Language Teacher, Teaching Methods, First Language Learners, Target Language Learners, LSRW Skills.

Language is a system with critical components called LSRW (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) these components work in a predefined sequence, for instance; the early or first years of the child spend in listening to the primary language. The next two or probably three years are spending honing the speaking skill. As soon as the child enters school, he or she starts learning, reading and writing. This lays a solid foundation for the child's language skills. As a result, the child is proficient in its first language. Whereas the child advances to learn a foreign language, the natural order is reversed. As a consequence, the child fails to comprehend the target language.

The second language learners, however, reverse the system of LSRW. The moment one who decides to learn a language will focus more on reading and writing rather than listening and speaking. This leaves a wide gap between the child's first language and second language efficiency. Hence a second language teacher should consciously try to follow the natural system of LSRW to make the students to learn the target language more naturally and effectively. In Indian classrooms, the second language is taught in the reverse order students are prepared to practice reading and writing. They are never made to practice listening and speaking. This process of learning a second language is flawed in itself. This method of teaching leads the students more effective in reading and writing to some extent. Even the exam of the students is based purely on his or her writing skills. If one follows the natural order, there are more chances for the students to acquire the language whereas the reversal of the order results in learning of the word. Poetry, according to most linguists and experts, communication should be received rather than learned, if the best results are to be expected. This is why immersion technique is found more effective than any other method in second language acquisition, as it encourages imitation of the target language.

Among the four components of the language system, there are two input and two output components. However, in Indian classrooms, the second language is taught through one input component (Reading), which, to some extent, improves the students' writing skills. This leaves the very foundation of learning (Listening and Speaking) unattended. The moment a teacher thinks of commencing the learning process with reading and writing, the learners' failure begins. In short, a learner of such classes fails even before he learns his first syllable. To bring the best output from the students, the teachers' emphasis should be more on the natural way of learning, which advocates strict adherence to the chain of LSRW.

A second language teacher should follow specific strategies which naturally enhance the language efficiency among the learners — for instance; making the students understand the substantial amount of vocabularies needed to learn, to impart grammar skills without dealing with excessive technicalities and instructing the second language learners to realize the differences in the sound systems of native and foreign language. In India, there are no solid materials for listening skill provided in language classes to learn the target language. It is often found to be inadequate, especially at the school level. Since this input is missing at the early stages of writing, the resulting output gets affected. To medicate this situation, each classroom must be equipped with material for listening skill and audio-visual aids. Once such an environment is established, the teacher should give the learners complete freedom to listen and imitate the target language. The extent of freedom can go to even such levels where the teacher does not interfere to correct the mistake

in the first few weeks because, in language learning, fluency gains more importance over accuracy. While giving the two inputs listening and reading, it would be even better if the material is left unprescribed. The learner should be left to choose what he or she wants to listen and to read. Language learning should be the byproduct of enjoyable activity and not the event itself.

Conclusion

It is recommended that the natural order discussed above is followed in word and spirit. The process of language learning will be more productive and the results more apparent. This paper suggests the second language learners follow the above-recommended strategies. The present researcher believes that the remedial measures given above would set a clear road map for the learners as well as the teachers in the pursuit of second language learning and teaching.

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Author Details

Dr.B.Vasanthakumar, Assistant Professor, PG & Research Department of English, Pachaiyappa's College, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India.

Email Id: vasanthlect@gmail.com