

STIMULATED LEARNING OF SECOND LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

Second Language Acquisition is an uphill task for the learners of L2 in India. It is the Lingua Franca for communication, be it business, education, or management. The economic and technical growth of the country is opening new vistas for young academics and it is imperative that the language usage is promoted. It is hoped that the teachers of English, who are getting involved with development of LSRW skills will find the paper useful. It is necessary to tailor the teaching method according to the diverse needs and styles of the learners. The method should be interesting and challenging enough to keep the learners involved and motivated thereby making an ordinary classroom full of students with diverse needs a scintillating place to learn and imbibe thus raising the students' confidence level so that they use the language in their real-life situations as well. The paper examines the idea of using music in classrooms to develop language competency to gain confidence by a student in an English speaking society in India to a point where s/he wants to learn the language to blend with an existing culture or use it for academics or understand the situation in which s/he finds herself/himself.

Keywords: *Cultural facts, Competence, ELT, Intercultural communication skills, Language learning*

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning a second language is commonplace in today's world. Some of the dual language knowledge comes from family or society. Children and youngsters who grow up in a family that uses dual language for communication or a bi- or multilingual society and in most other cases as in India, language usage comes from an instructional setting especially in urban areas. It is found that second language for many is an uphill task and many individuals have difficulty in becoming proficient in second language or even what is the best pedagogical approach that should be followed to achieve remarkable success.

Second Language Acquisition is multifaceted and interdisciplinary. This knowledge leads us to understand the complexity of L2. The many factors involved in L2 learning such as linguistic, psychological, sociological are best viewed in combination focussing only on one aspect and quite unlikely to move us towards our goal of understanding why and when language learning is successful and when and why it is not. Though language learning and language teaching are two separate disciplines yet each has its own history and paths leading to common ground.

Learning is dynamic, social and communicative in nature. The goal of a teacher should focus on developing learner's communicative competence and emphasize learners' cognitive capacity in learning process.

II. APPROACH

Interaction hypothesis according to Michael Long states that an input which is clearly understood and L2 development stemmed from the conversational modification that took place when native and non -native

speakers worked to resolve a communication difficulty. However, these modifications referred to as interactional adjustment for making meaning were not the only means of achieving message comprehensibility. Long suggested that these modifications were necessary to promote comprehensible input leading to L2 acquisition.

However, Swain (1985, 1995) opines that while comprehensible input was necessary for L2 acquisition to occur it was far from sufficient. She suggested that if learners do not have regular opportunities to speak or write the language leading to an output, their production skills in speaking and writing would lag behind their comprehension skills which involved listening and reading. This observation served as the starting point for Swain's Output Hypothesis. This speculates that producing an output plays a decisive role in the development of the L2 as it gives the learners the opportunity to mechanise the production of language. It forces the learners to focus on the structure of the language and finally, it draws the learners' attention to gaps in their inter-language. Swain suggests that second language learners need to be pushed to produce output. Later, this was summed as Interaction Hypothesis.

Intercultural competence involves both cultural and non-verbal communicative factor. The learner understands the target language community and has cross cultural awareness along with the non-verbal signs such as body language, use of space, touch or silence. To the L2 learner, this differentiates the target culture from his own culture.

Listening and speaking skills play crucial roles in language acquisition and in the development of learners. Listening is important to understand speech and speaking is communicating through speech. Both skills are extremely important for academic and business success along with human relations.

It is imperative to lay emphasis on listening in early stage of Second Language Acquisition because listening is an active and conscious process and important for second language learners to construct meaning. In *Teaching ESL* Rost has been quoted suggesting that second language listeners engage in following processes while listening:

- a. Estimating the sense of lexical inferences
- b. Constructional propositional meaning
- c. Assigning a "conceptual meaning" in the discourse
- d. Assigning underlying links in the discourse
- e. Assuming a plausible intention for the speakers' utterances.

Listening comprehension is a function of the listener's basic information-processing ability and level of cognitive complexity. Earlier it was a passive skill. Collection of prior knowledge and experience also help in listening. Real life listening does not occur in vacuum and it is rich in social context.

Speaking allows individuals to express themselves concisely, coherently and in a manner that is appropriate to all occasions and audiences. This helps in interpersonal and public communication. The listening and speaking skills form a basis for developing skills in reading and writing.

To make a classroom stimulated, in place of method we need to use the term pedagogy. Former implies a static set of procedures; the latter suggests the vibrant interplay between the learner and the instructor and the instructional material during the process of teaching and learning. The two pedagogical concepts that have

acquired attention are task-based learning and focus-on-form instructions. The task-based language teaching and challenges in application of brain research to teaching are current examples of pedagogy.

Bygate defines a task as an activity which requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective. It is a form of communicative language teaching where stress is laid on learners' receiving meaningful input. This can help in reducing rote learning or grammar drills wherein context related language is not used.

III. APPLICATIONS

Music is a universal concept. It has its roots and presence in each and every culture and country since eons. Plato has said "Music is what penetrates most deeply into the recesses of the soul." Music has been used in academics in ESL/ELL classrooms because songs from English speaking countries are principal cultural facts with a massive variety of youth oriented songs in the target language which are most suitable for practical integration of literacy skills and accepted by youth in college and universities. Language teaching and learning is primarily developing intercultural communication competence. Therefore, music can be used as a resource for teaching students a language with which they are either unfamiliar or which they find difficult to acquire. Language teaching with the help of audio clips can also relate to a culture. By introducing music as a part of learning, students are exposed to a long lasting memory tool that they can rely in future too.

The melody, the rhythm, repetition of words and familiarity in word meaning brings enthusiasm in class room to learn something new. A song with a catchy tune can have them humming and later substituting the words can be a source of creative writing and understanding. Learners acquire language when they obtain lucid ideas and understand what they read or hear. This means that the process is based on what they hear & comprehend and not what they speak. But comprehensible input alone is insufficient. Many a times the teacher would be asked to play a particular song and that can relate to the understanding and need of the students to be understood and motivated to learn a language, which in turn provides an identity to a person. No doubt words in English are pronounced in a way which is differently pronounced in English songs. The stress also changes. However, language learning is more than vocabulary or sentence construction or grammar alone. It is a set of skills.

The first activity undertaken was a Gap-Fill exercises using an old visual of Elvis Presley's video, making the students sing along exuberantly. It was a simple song but the batch of 25 students had difficulty in grasping the words. The video was played twice. The Gaps that were filled by students helped them to arrive at a conclusion about the sentiments displayed in the song.

The second activity was based on motivation where the singer urges the people to move forward in life despite all rigours. The students were divided into smaller groups of 5-6 students per group. Each group listened to the complete song twice and drew inferences of each paragraph depending upon their perception. Later, they had to construct a story which motivated them to complete a task which they had found difficult initially and relate to the words in the song where they identified themselves.

In the third activity, students listened to Micheal Jackson's "We are the World" and discussed many issues which the song relates to. This enabled the students to put forth their views forward on many topics which in current affairs could be burgeoning issues.

IV. CONCLUSION

Tasks and less controlled practice activities give more opportunity than controlled activities for learners to practice, communicate, interact and develop fluency. One of the major benefits of this approach is that it is learner-centered unlike other traditional approaches

It is necessary to tailor the teaching method according to the diverse needs and styles of the learners. The method should be interesting and challenging enough to keep the learners involved and motivated thereby making an ordinary classroom full of students with diverse needs a scintillating place to learn and imbibe raising the students' confidence level so that they use the language in their real-life situations as well.

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