English Language Learning in Engineering Colleges

N.J Rajput

[1] *Lecturer, Dept. of Applied Science, Padm. Dr. V. B. Kolte College of Engineering, Maharashtra, India*

ABSTRACT

In the school days students learn English through grammar and English literature. For engineering students, English is necessary for getting a good job and for business and technical outlook. So, the aim of the subject English in engineering field is to encourage the students to participate in learning the target language and to acquire proficiency in technical communication. Some students, out of personal interest or even perhaps because of their family backgrounds where English is used for interpersonal interactions, learn vocabulary through extensive reading. But many students depend on the teachers for the development of vocabulary. The present paper is about the features of vocabulary. It also presents the general and competency-based objectives of curriculum. It reviews the English course books and the process of evaluation of the four language skills.

Keyword: - Grammar, Vocabulary, Technical Communication.

1. INTRODUCTION

For those who seek to use English for specific purposes, it is necessary to learn about 1500 to 2000 additional words related to the field of engineering. When students want to learn the meaning of a word, they refer sources like dictionaries, Thesauruses and other word books. Though they refer these books, they are not sure of the usage of the word until they learn to use it. Slow learners, unless they do take their own effort to learn, are caught in a difficulty when they do exercises like reading comprehension, essay writing, etc. It is noticed that students realize the need for good use of vocabulary when they are stumped for the right word to use.

Further, to develop their basic vocabulary for effective reading, speaking and writing, it was decided to teach them three words a day. Therefore, Students learn vocabulary directly through explicit instruction.

2. OBJECTIVES OF CURRICULUM

The curriculum in English includes the objectives of teaching, methods of instruction, textbooks, learning materials, guidance and counseling, the pupils' involvement in literary and cultural activities, their participation in seminars and conferences and evaluation. The principles to be adopted in preparing curriculum are:

- o Meet the changing needs of the learners follow certain objectives
- o The subject matter should be in tune with the learning environment of the students
- o Train the students both academically and professionally
- o Evaluation pattern should be outlined

As verbal communication is being given the most importance in the rapidly changing world scenario, it involves the preparation of relevant domain subject areas to be imparted. This is possible by researching and thereby designing effective functioning of English language.

The majority of the prospective employers are in interested in hiring employees with good communication skills, so the English classroom methodology should be tailored to develop the verbal competency of the students. English language is the link language of the world. Its sanctity should be protected. It can be done only

when the English curriculum is so designed to protect the glory of the language. The activities are to be contextualized and should present language in natural situations.

Students should be sensitized to the subtlety of words. The cognitive and affective abilities of the learners ought to be activated by stimulating them to make more use of their imagination. Innovative, need-based exercises, vocabulary and correspondence should be a part of English curriculum.

The personal attributes to be groomed are: Adaptability, Commitment, Enthusiasm, Stress Management, Integrity, Sense of Humor, Self- Motivation, Reliability, Self-esteem and Personal Presentation.

3. ENGLISH COURSE BOOKS

The characteristics of a good English course form the basis of a language course. It is treated as means to the end by developing the language abilities of the students. Generally, an ideal course book provides:

- Content relevant to the needs of the learners
- Instruction in the use of tools of language namely **vocabulary** and structures to suit the level of the learners
- Appropriate linguistic substance that can easily assimilated
- Facility to identify the structures of sentences which the learners may use to frame similar sentences
- Guidance and support to the teachers in designing the classroom activities and in developing language skills among the learners.

4. EVALUATION PROCESS

The examination is universally felt to be the single or main obstacle to curriculum reform. Language evaluation may not be limited to "achievement" with respect to particular syllabi, but must be reoriented to measurement of language proficiency. The present study discusses some ways of conducting ongoing evaluation of language proficiency.

The study proposes ongoing, continuous, or formative evaluation contrast with ground realities and problems reported by teachers, suggesting that ongoing evaluation can become meaningful only when teachers and learners both take responsibility for their own progress, rather than performing to external benchmarks real or imaginary; immediate or ultimate.

To implement this process, it is necessary that teachers and learners must be able to recognize the "occurrence of learning", a mental growth as imperceptible as physical growth. For an instance, the absurdity of a nutritional programme excluding crash diets or miracle growth foods. A deep understanding of the learning process, which is individual and self-regulatory, is essential to develop students' language learning and proficiency. It is assumed that all evaluation should ultimately aim at self-evaluation if learners are to be able to exercise choices for learning and become "lifelong learners.

It is how one evaluates that decides whether a student wants to be evaluated. While even the most child-centered methods of evaluation are anxiety provoking for some, there is no question that a system of evaluation must be put in place. It is thus a question of both how and how much that matters. Learners participate in evaluations with more comfort when the experience is not always a failure and the outcomes can be seen as a legitimate and appropriate way toward the next step in learning. Unfortunately, for most students the immediate roleplayed by current evaluation methods within the learning process is not clear.

Continuous evaluation has to facilitate and guide teaching by determining the learner's current stage of development or attainment, in order to identify his/her "zone of proximal development". Therefore, learning attainments are results of language opportunities. The present study lists out a few pointers to that help in attainment.

Typically, learner control of language is reflected in longer mean length of utterance; sustained language input is reflected in such a growth in output through visuals. In contrast, students from rigidly taught classrooms remain inarticulate, or produce single words, mostly nouns, in response to such pictures. Thus, teachers can get an intrinsic sense of language growth in the child with such a task, administered at three or four-month intervals.

5. SPEAKING

In Mother tongue(s) learning, speech progresses from a one-word, mostly nouns, stage to the production of multi-word sentences with verbs, auxiliaries, determiners, adjectives, and prepositions, perhaps through a two-word stage. Some research at CIEFL it is suggested that second- language learner-speech progresses through similar stages.

Evaluation can be done:

- In the form of an entry in a portfolio that is maintained for each child ("portfolio assessment")
- Recorded in teacher and/or learner diaries. Learners can be encouraged to maintain private, frank diaries of their learning experiences, in a language they know, to monitor their own progress.

6. READING

Reading programmes such as English 400 have a built-in assessment, with cards arranged in graded levels of difficulty for monitoring progress. They need standardization for evaluation.

o As students generally are more proficient in decoding, they read faster words per minute with fewer mistakes. There may be some who progress from the mere spelling out of the letters of a word, to spelling and sounding out the word, using spelling out as a "word attack" skill for new words.

o Scanning a text such as a list, a telephone directory, an advertisement can be used for information. Reading for given information. Reading for inference Extended reading.

7. LISTENING AND WRITING

The testing of writing and listening can similarly be broken up into sub-skills. This sort of testing can be complemented by integrated language tests (beginning with the cloze test, for example). A sub- skills approach to evaluation reflects the teachers' intuitions that particular students may have particular strengths; extroverted, articulate speakers may not be very interested in or good at an introverted, private activity like reading. The teacher can identify areas of strength as well as areas where help is needed.

8. SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

Generally, in evaluating a language it is "proficiency" rather than "achievement" that is needed to be tested. Because the ability to use the language appropriately in new contexts can be tested through:

- Reading age-appropriate material o Listening to and understanding age-appropriate material
- Conversing on age-appropriate topics Writing on age-appropriate topics Control
- over receptive vocabulary Control over expressive vocabulary

Thus, National benchmarks for language proficiency need to be evolved by first gathering reliable descriptive data in all these respects from representative all-India samples. Such benchmarking of national norms or averages is well known as a precursor to the adoption of support initiatives where necessary in the social sciences and education. It also balances the curricular freedom provided during the learning process, with the standardization of evaluation that certification ultimately requires.

The benchmarking leads to a set of National English Language Tests, a bank of tests that learners and teachers can use for self-evaluation by opting to take them. These tests should allow for a much finer measure of proficiency than a broad overall grade or score It is a robust teacher intuition that not all learners are equally at home in all the four skills; thus, good speakers may not be good writers, as there may be a trade-off between "accuracy" and "fluency" in the learning process. Neither are all skills equally important for all professions.

Scores that reflect differential learner aptitudes and strengths enhance employment potential, and have a wash back effect on the curriculum. Importantly, a set of National English Language Tests serve to counter the current problem of Second Language acquisition.

On the whole, standardized national benchmarks for language skills those culminate in a set of National English Language Tests for various levels would:

▪ Allow individual students to get a sense of where they stand, their strengths and weaknesses, and how to progress.

▪ Balance freedom of learning with standardization of assessment.

▪ Presented and on how the learner processes that information. Weinstein and Mayer (1986) state, "The

use of particular learning strategies during learning can affect the encoding process, which in turn effect the learning outcome and performance". Crystal (1997) also says.

- "Students can benefit from being taught to 'learnhow to learn' foreign languages".
- Chamot (1990) is of the opinion that "Training students to use particular learning strategies improves their language performance". Some observational studies of successful second language learners by Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, and Todesco (1978) reveal that successful second language learners employ active learning strategies in order to learn more effectively.
- According to Cook, good language learners find a learning style that suits them, involve themselves in language learning process, and develop an awareness of language both as a system and as communication. They do not treat language solely as communication or as academic knowledge, but as both.
- Language learning is complete only when one has mastered all the four language skills. Hence, there is a need for more controlled research on second language learning strategies especially when language acquisition is viewed as a cognitive skill.

9. CONCLUSIONS

- Thus, language problems are:
- Is there a demand of English for the professional students?
- Does such type of language is covered in the curricula?
- How far does the English course aimed at college level cover the needs of the student who desires to use the language to acquire further technical knowledge?
- Thus, the answers to these questions have immediate repercussions on teaching method and on the organization of the courses. The study aims to find if such a course in technical English is necessary for the budding engineers prior to the commencement of their vocation. Further, it focuses on devising such a course that fulfills the demand of the professionals. Ultimately it thrives to explore the existence of a general technical vocabulary.

10. REFERENCES

[1]. Chamot, Anna Uhl. Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge: 1990.

[2]. Cook, Vivian. Universal Grammar and Second Language Acquisition Chapman and Hall Inc, New York: 1991.

[3]. Crystal, David (Ed). Cambridge Encyclopedia of Second Language Education. Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom: 1997-375.

[4]. Naiman, N., Frohlich, M., Stern, H.H. and Todesco, A. The Good Language Learner. Research in Education Series 7.Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Press, Toronto: 1978.

[5]. Saville-Troike, M. (1984). What really matters in second language learning for academic achievement? "TESOL Quarterly, (18)"2.

[6]. Weinstein, C. and Mayer, R. The Teaching of Learning Strategies. In M. C. Wittrock (ed.), Handbook of Research on Teaching (3rd Ed.). Macmillan, New York: 1986.