CHAPTER IV

Effective English Language Teaching Skills

I. Skills of LSRW: Various Strategies and Approaches
   - Listening skills
   - Speaking skills
   - Reading skills
   - Writing skills

II. Teaching skills and Pedagogies
    Viewpoints to Strengthen Teaching Strategies

III. Tools to improve Learners’ Language Proficiency
ere are various approaches to listening. These are Appreciative (to relax and enjoy the listening experience), Emphatic (to support and understand the emotions of the speaker), Discerning (to gather complete and accurate information), Comprehensive (understanding a message or information and remembering it for future use), Interpretive listening (detecting inferred meaning), short-term listening (receiving, processing, and recalling limited amounts of information over short time periods), and Evaluative (to critique information and make decisions).

We all listen with a natural or preferred style. Therefore it is necessary to identify this preferred listening style and to develop an appreciation for other approaches that may be more effective in other situations. With this knowledge, one can develop more effective communication strategies for a variety of environments.

Listening skills are essential for learning since they enable learners to acquire insights and information, and to achieve success in communicating with others. And to communicate effectively, the speaker needs to adjust language used to the audience and purpose. Life within and outside school and college affords many listening opportunities, but many students fail to seize them because they let their minds wander or they may concentrate on what they want to say themselves rather than on what a speaker is saying.

What kind of learner strategies can improve English language listening comprehension and how can English teachers best train learners
are text characteristics (variation in a listening passage/text or associated visual support); interlocutor characteristics (variation in the speaker's personal characteristics); task characteristics (variation in the purpose for listening and associated responses); and process characteristics (variation in the listener's cognitive activities and in the nature of the interaction between speaker and listener).

Process is the most challenging for the English teachers as it consists of internal operations and behaviours and hence is not easy to measure. Process refers to how listeners interpret input in terms of what they know, and identify what they do not know. It also refers to the way in which listeners use different kinds of signals to interpret what is said.

Teachers need to identify the strategy used by the learners while listening.

Top down strategy is when the listeners instead of depending entirely on the received message use their knowledge of the world, situations, context and roles of human interaction (tone of the speaker) to focus on meaning. Bottom-up strategy is when they use their knowledge of words, syntax, and grammar to work on form or vice versa, and when and how these two interact (i.e. when and how does parallel processing take place).1

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Brown and Palinscar in (Joan Rubin’s article p. 214) suggest three levels of strategy training:

...blind (where learners do an exercise requiring use of a strategy but the strategy is not identified, nor is it labeled or its value discussed); informed (where learners are given a name for the strategy and told why it is useful); and controlled (where learners are provided opportunities to compare and evaluate their use of different strategies).^2

Students’ listening skills may be enhanced and tested by asking them questions about what they have heard. They may be given practice in note-taking and could be asked questions about the facts and inferences that may be made from their notes. They can be taught to recognize the difference between the main points and incidental or less relevant ideas and information.

Learners can also benefit from practice in recognizing the purpose of presentations and other information they hear. It can be useful if they are taught to set goals for what they want to learn from a presentation and to monitor how well they accomplish their goals. Learners can be taught to listen selectively for specific kinds of information, such as the main purpose, the themes, the details and any implications. They can even be tested for their ability to identify the essential information in the presence of irrelevant material and distractions, as is the case in much of adult life.

English teachers can give their learners a regular practice of sub-skills of listening such as note-taking, predicting, extracting specific and detailed information, guessing meaning from context, and getting the gist; phonetics; aural authentic listening materials such as interviews, movies, songs, lectures, TV shows and news broadcasts of different accents of English.

"Failure to communicate effectively is at the root of many social ills and misfortunes, from war to missed career opportunities; from industrial strife to broken relationships" says Manser.\(^3\)

Speaking has always been one of the most difficult skills for learners to develop because it requires them to produce the language spontaneously or without enough time to construct the appropriate and correct utterances. Teachers of English language have recognized that traditional pedagogy, emphasizing the acquisition of grammar and vocabulary rather than communicative competence, does not meet the requirements of English learning in an era of integration and globalization. The increasing demand to teach learners a working command of English to satisfy various communicative needs in their life, has led EL teachers feel an urge to learn the newest and best methods of teaching speaking skills.

The study has witnessed low level of speaking skills in the students of professional colleges. Nevertheless, speaking is similarly necessary and important as other language skills for the students of professional colleges

after their graduation. This is really an alarming problem that requires thorough care.

To speak English fluently, automatically and effortlessly is the dream of many English learners. Due to a lack of English exposure most learners do not have sufficient opportunity to improve their oral proficiency in English. The language regularities and its systematization enable the language to be learnable, at the same time, also cause the learner inevitably to make errors. Now, it becomes English teachers’ responsibility correcting them unceasingly. These errors may be caused by the interference of L1, an incomplete knowledge of the target language, the complexity of the target language, fossilization or because the correct form or use of the target language is not part of a speaker’s competence.

Language teachers usually hold the most authority to correct learners’ errors, especially regarding the fact that learners value and expect teachers’ feedback on their work.

In dealing with classroom interaction, the English teachers face the controversial matters of how to treat their learners’ spoken errors (that is ignoring vs. correcting an error, immediate vs. delayed correction). To most language teachers, correcting students’ speaking errors is one of the most frustrating tasks because it has more potential for subjectivity due to individual variables such as background knowledge, pronunciation, and spontaneity as influential parts.4

Therefore, error correction should be made appropriately; lest, it will discourage the learners from practicing the language.

However, considering the individual variables such as contexts, pronunciation, vocabulary, and spontaneity as influential parts in speaking, error correction in speaking is highly challenging and possibly perplexing. There are many factors to be carefully considered such as learners’ level, which errors to be corrected, when, and how to correct. To reiterate, it is emphasized that errors are inevitable in language learning; thus, appropriate and sensible error correction method is needed.

Before focusing on error correction methods it is also crucial to be aware of different types of spoken errors. These errors can be categorized as Phonological errors which refer to the wrong ways of pronouncing a single word, of using word stress, sentence intonation and other phonological matters such as linking, elision, and assimilation; Lexical errors that refer to the wrong ways of using words in their forms, meaning, context and word collocation and Grammatical errors or systematic errors which refer to the wrong ways of using tenses and different syntactic structures.

In dealing with spoken errors in classroom, English teachers need to poise a balance between accuracy oriented activities and fluency oriented activities. Activities which focus on accuracy try to get students to say something correctly (correct grammar, correct word form). As Rao says:

Activities which focus on fluency try to get students to communicate successfully, even if they make some errors or mistakes. This leads to the consideration of the relationship
between linguistic competence and communicative competence. While the former refers to the spontaneous, flexible, and correct manipulation of the language system, the latter involves principles of appropriateness and a readiness on the part of the learner to use relevant strategies in coping with certain language situations.\textsuperscript{5}

Linguistic competence, then, is the basis of communicative competence. Without linguistic competence, there is no communicative competence.

In language learning, how far learners can deal with error correction also depends on their level of proficiency and previous knowledge. Therefore, it is a must for teachers to know learners’ level and previous knowledge to avoid discouragement on the learners’ side. Learning is a journey undertaken by learners; thus, teachers should build up a sense of togetherness in speaking class.

Although teacher’s assessment of errors may vary, the types of errors to be corrected depend on the purpose of the course itself; in other words, what is being required or being taught to the learners. When these conditions are not met, the teachers turn to their individual judgment of learners’ performance in class.

In addition “The goal of language learning and teaching highlights the pedagogical decision to correct only what is being taught and to give teachers direction about what information is lacking”.

On one hand, a ‘small’ error needs to be highlighted if can bring negative impacts when keeps occurring. And on the other hand, correcting too many errors can discourage the learners but ignoring their errors will lead to fossilization. Therefore, attitude toward error correction is another factor to determine the success of error correction.

Teachers can adopt a common sense approach to learners’ errors. This approach is student-centered and provides students with lots of opportunities to speak in class. It is minimally disruptive to both the flow of the lesson and student motivation. In such classrooms, teachers can decide the form of communication in the class such as question-answer, brief interview, dialogue, group work, so forth and could listen quietly to the presentations of the learners and make a note of the errors. They need not point them out on the scene. After all the representations, they could divide these into different category such as pronunciation, morphology, semantics, syntax, so forth and then describe the errors. This not only alerts the learner that an error has been identified and is about to be treated, but also describes where the problem is occurring, (e.g.: syntax, morphology, semantics, phonology) and what the problem involves (e.g.: incorrect production of a phoneme, misuse of verb, incorrect word order, etc.).

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approach avoids both the monotony and stress of intense audio-lingual classrooms, and is less artificial and yields results as good as or better than traditional error correction.

Every learner will give different reactions to the feedback given by teachers. During the study it was found that majority of the learners preferred to be corrected right away after they made the mistakes. If the learners have a positive attitude toward the learning process, they will not be discouraged by a lot of corrections given by the teacher.

As discussed above teachers should investigate the learners’ learning profile. Such as an introductory session before beginning the class, will help both teachers and learners to negotiate and determine the most suitable method to deal with the learners’ errors. This will also give the learners the opportunity to see for themselves if they could cope with the selected correction method. It is important to make the learners comfortable with the error correction method used in class.

Teachers can also encourage their learners to keep an error correction notebook to monitor their errors and review the corrections made. Teachers should give positive feedback and acknowledge their learners’ progress in English speaking.

Teachers must provide chances for their learners to communicate as well. This way they can secure the involvement of all learners and their maximum participation too. It provides the learners a platform for interaction in various real life situations. As Wilga Rivers also declares:
We cannot wait until the students have a sure grasp of all the structures of the language before giving him practice in communication. If he is to do more than glibly reel off mechanical sequences he must be trained continually in using these sequences to generate new utterances in a sequential context.7

As spoken statements are very dependent on culture, situation and context, they should be understood or interpreted within the context they are spoken. Using videos (e.g. TV programmes on technical subjects, companies or product presentations) or sequences from films may give the students knowledge and examples of how language usage is culturally and contextually conditioned. TV-programmes and films in English with no translations or dubbing of what is spoken may be challenging, but is rewarding. The sequences may need to be played several times during which students should be asked to take notes in English and present briefs either in pairs or in front of class. Cultural aspects may be subject for discussions in class.

Teachers ask students to practice reading out loud in pairs focusing on fluency. This activity can be applied to texts, but should also be applied to reading symbols, equations and formulae used in mathematics, physics and chemistry.

Activities that aim at developing oral skills can be based on written material at an early stage in the language course, and later combined with

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comprehension of oral communication. As Olav Talberg discusses:

Alternating between developing written and oral skills is efficient for language learning purposes as the two skills areas mutually affect each other. Students may be given an authentic text to study, but instead of asking the teacher for information with regard to vocabulary, sentence construction, use of paragraphs and general layout, they may first ask their classmates for information in English before they address the teacher for help. They may then be asked to talk about the text (e.g. its background or purpose). This oral activity may be followed up with various types of writing activity such as write a summary or a similar text based on background information given by the teacher.\(^8\)

In language teaching and learning, both accuracy and fluency are equally important. Depending on the classroom objectives and tasks, there may be more focus on accuracy than fluency or vice versa. Teachers who adapt to CLT put much effort in creating a student-centered environment, but this does not mean that the class is unstructured. Forms of classroom activities such as group discussions, role playing, simulations, problem-solving activities, public speaking and real-life-interactions should be used to provide as much practice as possible for students to develop communicative competence while practicing linguistic competence.

Practicing oral presentation in these ways can lessen students' anxieties while, at the same time, helping them to learn the subject matter of the lesson. Frequent classroom presentations and discussions enable teachers to diagnose and remedy problems. English teachers need to teach learners to adapt their speech to specific situations. As Trudy Wallace in his research says:

Learners need to know how speakers differ from one another and how particular circumstances call for different forms of speech. They can learn how speaking styles affect listeners. Thus, the rate at which they speak, the volume and the precision of pronunciation may differ substantially from one situation to another.9

In order to develop learners' speaking strategies and to motivate their self-study activities, Trudy Wallace adds:

It is useful for students to know that speech should differ in formality, such as when speaking to a judge, a teacher, a parent or a playmate. They may also benefit from learning about the differences among various dialects.10

For a better teaching-learning process teachers should create a more dynamic learning environment. They should also encourage their learners

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to write down the feedback or suggestion the teachers give to keep the level of motivation high.

These teaching strategies can boost learners' confidence and they can better their performance and improve their motivation in speaking skills. To train students to speak bravely is of great importance. Meanwhile to help them to discover, correct, and seldom commit errors is much more important.

Reading is a complex cognitive activity. Reading fluency is ability to read connected text rapidly, effortlessly and automatically. The problem of getting through a vast amount of reading materials is relevant to a great majority of students. They often regard reading as a key strategy and use it as a source of new vocabulary and as a model of correct grammar and usage to be applied across language modes (reading, writing, listening, speaking). Reading is also considered valuable because the reader has more control over the language input than is the case when listening; when much of the control is with the speaker. When the Education Commission (discussed in chapter one) designated English as a library language, it was underscoring the necessity for promoting the reading skills among the college students since the textbooks and reference works in many disciplines in our universities are mostly in English.

As struggling readers typically lack confidence in reading, the issue of teaching how to read efficiently is of great importance for English teachers. It is also important for them to help their learners set goals that are specific and challenging but achievable. The English teachers at the college level are responsible to train their students to read faster and better
in English to perform better in their opted subjects like engineering, management, computer application etc.

The reader should have an understanding about his purpose of reading. Before reading a book, an article or a journal so forth he must be clear about the information he desires from it. He must be aware about the level of comprehension he needs for that information, how much of that information should be retained and for how long, and also how he will use the information obtained.

It has been discovered from the analysis of the survey, most of the English teachers teaching in professional colleges in Indore, have adapted to the lecture-teaching method (Table 36: Lecture approach to English language teaching). It has also been observed that students during such lessons are relatively passive listeners, taking notes, reading handouts, occasionally checking dictionaries and underlining key points. They are reluctant to answer questions even when asked directly, and never volunteer questions or answers (Table 30: The Significance of the English class).

On the other hand, during the interactive lessons (in the few cases where English teachers practice interactive teaching strategies), students become much more animated, freely contributing ideas within their groups, and volunteer answers to the teacher’s questions and others asked questions. As Galina Kavaliauskiene says:

The development of receptive reading can be promoted by two approaches – extensive and intensive reading practice. Extensive reading is known to develop word recognition and
general language proficiency, while intensive reading deals with detailed comprehension and teaching reading strategies.\textsuperscript{11}

A basic reading teaching strategy employs an intensive and structured reading approach based on both direct instruction and mastery learning. The critical elements of a reading instruction plan focus on specific teaching strategies identified by rigorous experimental research as important to improving the reading fluency necessary for effective comprehension.

The teaching of reading skills presents some difficulties to English teachers. Length of words and sentences in written texts is one of the key difficulties – longer sentences and longer words are more difficult to understand. This phenomenon is known as the FOG index $F$, which is defined as $F = 0.4A(A + L)$, here $A$ is the average length of sentences in a text, and $L$ is the number of long words per 100 words. High value of $F$ hinders learners' comprehension in reading.

Authenticity of reading materials presents another difficulty especially to ESP learners because no concessions are made to foreign learners who encounter non-simplified content.\textsuperscript{12} Authentic materials can be extremely de-motivating for students. Negative expectations of reading are often due to previous unsuccessful experiences.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{11} Kavaliauskiene Galina, Research into Reading -Writing Connections in English for Specific Purposes (Lithuania, Law University of Lithuania) 3.
\textsuperscript{12} J. Harmer, The Practice of English Language Teaching (Longman: 2001) 205.
\textsuperscript{13} J. Harmer, 208.
There are various ways of addressing the problem of language difficulty. Skimming, scanning and critical reading (which involves evaluation of the information presented) are useful first stages (discussed in Additional Notes). The most common are pre-teaching difficult or unfamiliar vocabulary, encouraging learners to read extensively, to train learners in intensive reading, inferring, summarizing, checking and monitoring one’s comprehension, connecting information from different parts of the text, evaluating and fault-finding and to teach reading strategies. Above these three teaching strategies:

...vocabulary instruction, error correction, and repeated readings, have been shown to improve students’ word recognition skills and reading fluency necessary for effective reading comprehension.14

“In comprehension, deducing the meaning of vocabulary from the context and from the structure of the actual word is the most important method of learning new vocabulary”.15

The vocabulary instruction teaching strategy helps students to (a) develop and apply vocabulary knowledge, (b) connect new vocabulary to existing knowledge and experience,

(c) understand text, and (d) develop better use of strategies to figure out new vocabulary independently. Effective vocabulary instruction provides both definitional and contextual information about the meaning of new words. It also involves students in the active learning of new words and offers multiple exposures to meaningful information about words and related words.\textsuperscript{16}

Errors or mistakes are to be expected during the process of learning. ‘Errors are visible proof that learning is taking place’.\textsuperscript{17} If errors are studied systematically, they can provide significant insights into how a language is actually learned. Studying students’ errors of usage has immediate practical application for language teachers. Errors provide feedback; they tell the teachers something about the efficacy of their teaching. According to Ancker, making mistakes or errors is a natural process of learning and must be considered as part of cognition.\textsuperscript{18}


And systematically analyzing errors made by language learners makes it possible to determine areas that need reinforcement in teaching.

Hoffman and Clements, who studied the nature and quality of teacher feedback on learners’ error correction on oral reading tasks, recommended that:

Teachers, when providing feedback, should (a) ignore miscues that do not change the text’s meaning; (b) include an element of delay before responding to meaning-change miscues so as to give the reader an opportunity to self-monitor and self-correct performance; and (c) begin with a focus on meaning construction.19

The speed and accuracy with which a learner reads text orally is reading fluency. Though fluency is a critical component of language teaching, it is often overlooked by the English teachers and learners as well. These teachers must note that:

...because the ability to obtain meaning from print depends so strongly on the development of word recognition accuracy and reading fluency, both the latter should be regularly assessed in the classroom, permitting timely and effective instructional response when difficulty or delay is apparent.20


The best known oral reading method for developing fluency is the method of repeated readings.\textsuperscript{21} In this method, the reader practices reading a short text passage until he reaches a predetermined level of fluency. The surveyed English teachers also reported that repetition in reading skills show that three or four repeated readings of the same passage lead to positive gains in fluency and comprehension of the passage; the effects diminish as the number of readings exceeds four trials. More number of readings will definitely result in higher reading fluency which significantly is better than a single reading.

This practice of repetition may be time consuming for teachers and it would also be difficult for them to keep a record. Alberto and Troutman in their study suggest that:

Teachers must motivate their learners to monitor their progress through the use of self-recording. Self-recorded data provide both student and teacher with concrete feedback regarding behavior and help to identify reinforces for effective reading. Self-recording is used to monitor initial progress in reading, and it appears to be effective in maintaining behavior changes resulting from teacher-oriented strategies.\textsuperscript{22}


Writing is the art of communicating thoughts to the mind through the eye and it is the great invention of the world. This world-wide belief is even truer today. When it comes to writing, we can not leave anything to chance because it can reflect negatively on our readers’ perception of us.

A student spends up to 12 years in the education system prior to entering college or university. Unfortunately, many use the English language in a way that does not reflect their education level. It has been observed during conducting the language proficiency skills test that almost all first-year students lack at least one component of the basic writing skills necessary for success at college or university (Table 46: Error Analysis of the written essays).

Therefore it becomes essential to know what is important in written communication. Accuracy, clarity, spelling, punctuation and grammar, conciseness and visual appeal are the components of written communication.

Cohen et al. describe learners’ three approaches to second-language (L2) writing. The first approach is to write directly in L2; the second is to use mental translation or think about ideas and concepts in the first language (L1) and then translate them into L2; and the third approach is to write a draft in L1 and then translate the draft into L2. Writing directly in L2 seems to be quite a difficult task for low proficiency learners. The second approach of initially using L1 may be of greater help for some L2 writers than initially using L2 when writing a particular topic. But many learners of English as a Second Language (ESL) do not follow Cohen et
al.'s first two approaches to writing; instead, they follow the third approach (writing everything down in L1 and then translating into L2).\(^{23}\)

As writing skill is a predictor of academic success and a basic requirement for participation in civic life and in the global economy, poor writing proficiency should be recognized as an intrinsic part of literacy crisis.

An English teacher should not consider unreasonable to spend more time on developing writing skills than on the other three skills. As Olav Talberg says:

> The advantage with writing activities is that they give the students time to reflect and check what they are writing so as to be able to correct it. Writing is also an activity that supports the development of oral skills. Writing exercises—and preferably short ones—should be given frequently and should be on relevant technological subjects (e.g. brief summaries of research articles, newspaper articles, technical reports, minutes of meetings, product presentations). Process-oriented collaborative writing where students work in groups of 3–4 students will activate students as much as possible and allow them to learn from each other.\(^{24}\)

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Writing is the final product of several separate acts (note-taking, identifying a central idea, outlining, drafting and editing) that are challenging to learn simultaneously. Students often engage in more than one or two of these activities at once. But the more detailed an outline, the easier is the writing. It is difficult to start writing a report, for example, without a central idea and notes to support it. With practice and proper guidance of the teachers students can frequently find that they can finish faster by writing a first draft quickly and then editing and revising this draft.

Teachers may not only conduct skilful lessons but also stimulate all students to become better writers, and identify talented writers for special encouragement and lessons. They can point out the written errors of their learners and provide them constructive feedback. The common mistakes that ESL writers often make are run-on sentences, sentence fragments, comma splices, tenses, and missing words so forth. How to write numbers, what should and shouldn’t be capitalized, when to use ‘a’ or ‘an,’ and having the subject and verb agree in numbers are few other mistakes. And unfortunately, they can interfere with audience’s understanding of a clause, a sentence or a whole section of written paper. Therefore, they are highly noticeable. This is particularly true in academic and business writing, where learners are expected to have a strong command of sentence structure. And English teachers are often held accountable for the lack of satisfactory standards demonstrated by students.

Considering these factors, it is imperative for English teachers to know the causes of these errors and the reasons behind their continued
occurrence year after year with different groups of students. In this way, light can be shed on the areas to which they should devote special care and emphasis in their teaching and provide feedback to students in order to overcome, or to avoid these predicted difficulties. As Race states, “Feedback is important in just about all learning contexts.”

It is crucial for teachers to adopt the most suitable error correction method such as coded feedback, direct correction and reformulation (details in end notes) weighing the advantages/ disadvantages/ effectiveness of the methods.

In the same regard, the teachers should also see that the process of getting aware of one’s own mistakes should start in the English language class, with the teacher as a source of information or as an organizer of activities meant to sensitize students as to the most frequent mistakes they make; however, the concern for self-improvement should continue autonomously, after the course, with a permanent interest of the person in identifying and correcting their errors by means of various sources, such as dictionaries, books of grammar, tests, Internet materials and so on.

While discussing the level of acceptability of errors realistically it would be apt to mention the influence of e-mail writing and chat rooms, where ‘correctness’ is simply disregarded, if not treated with contempt. It is not before these users of the language come across a formal situation requiring a high standard of oral or written communication that their speaking or writing skills are attentively (critically?!) analyzed. As Brians emphasizes:

Many businesses consider standard English usage a prime requirement for employment in responsible positions. So, if a person has no access to standard English and applies for an executive position by saying "I heared t'other day you done got some jobs open!" chances are good they will be directed to try farther down the corporate hierarchy. That is one important reason why everyone deserves to know what sorts of usage variations may cause them trouble.26

Students should be trained to build up writing skills emphasizing the organization, coherence, and cohesion and such sub-skills as summarizing, outlining, and paraphrasing at paragraph level. The use of spelling and punctuation conventions as well as non-alphabetic symbol use should be practiced as well.

English teachers must avoid giving long lectures or talks in class. Instead, allow the students to explore material and inquire or seek information with respect to the problems they have. If the students are working with documents (e.g. a user manual) written in their native language, they may be asked to render – not to translate – the contents of documents in English. This activity gives the students a bit more freedom to paraphrase than a ‘word-by-word’ translation. As a follow-up, they may be asked to use the rendered text to write a similar document as the original one in the English language using the appropriate writing conventions. The final stage may be to study, collect and apply relevant

vocabulary from similar documents written by native English speakers in their own document. This series of activities will make the students focus on the language used by native English speakers and the context and purpose of their own document.

One of the difficulties that many English teachers consistently discussed during the research survey at professional colleges in Indore is that students lack the basic language skills (LSRW) needed to grasp college-level content. It is observed that students of these colleges are not able to develop adequate English language skills for professional employment before the time they graduate. It would be a great disservice to these students if the teachers themselves are deficient to facilitate their ongoing academic English literary development in the professional colleges.

This survey in Indore has identified the daunting challenges faced by the English language teachers regarding English language learners. These are: communicating with students about academic, social, and personal issues; encouraging and motivating them; and addressing the individual and diverse needs of English-language learners in both academic skills and English-language acquisition.

In response to these challenges, the English teachers need to develop innovative teaching strategies based on multiple research studies that identify effective methods for language-focused instruction and for developing English-language learners' content knowledge, use of the academic language associated with particular subject area and basic
terpersonal communication skills in English. Teachers can use these strategies to identify good teaching skills that help them plan lessons that are accessible to a range of students.

Before discussing strategies it is obvious to mention that English teachers in professional colleges are expected to deal with technical English rather than general English. It is usually the case that the students are from many different levels and when it comes to the English language knowledge, there are often situations where students are studying thorough English at the university level for the first time, since they come from indi/regional medium schools. Therefore, it is necessary to cover all the basic grammar units and language skills before proceeding to English for specific Academic Purposes. This will often include having to work with students primarily on their listening and reading skills, and slowly moving towards what is often much more difficult and frightening for them that is, speaking and writing. Raising the proficiency of language use, and sometimes even creating it, will, thus, lead to more specific aspects of the English language necessary for their academic studies and future careers.

ESP is not different in kind from any other form of language teaching, in that it should be based in the first instance on principles of effective and efficient learning. Though the content of learning may vary there is no reason to suppose that the processes of learning should be any different for the ESP learner than for the General English learner…

The manner in which a teacher views the students and the task of teaching subtly permeates all of a teacher's plans. Experienced language teachers know that individual learners have distinct sets of personality characteristics which determine their talents, abilities, and preferences in language learning: some learners are quick, some are thoughtful, some love to work independently, others require explanations, guidance, and constant attention from the teacher. That's why we must use the most effective teaching methods and aids at our disposal. Below are some strategies to help teacher's teaching.

1. Teaching materials: Articles on science and technology published in English books, magazines and newspapers can be used as teaching materials. These non simplified (authentic) articles are different from those of the test-oriented textbooks or course books.

   Technical articles have no plots, which would bore the students. Besides, this is a selective course, and the students are from different majors, such as Automotive Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Chemical Engineering etc. (in case of Engineering students). When selecting the materials, teachers can try to choose the subject-related, practical ones which would arouse the interest of the students and meet their needs and avoid using long, dull and highly specialized texts. It may be more appropriate to look for texts that are more interesting in order to generate the motivation needed to learn English.²⁸

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2. **Vocabulary:** Through this strategy teachers introduce new concepts through essential academic terms. They connect student-accessible synonyms or concepts to this essential vocabulary; support students to distinguish word meanings, and their uses for subject-specific tasks and prerequisite language skills.

   English teachers teaching technical English must know that ESP is not a matter of teaching “specialized varieties” of English. The fact that language is used for a specific purpose does not imply that it is a special form of language, different in kind from other forms.²⁹

General English (GE) is the basis of Technical English. If the GE level is poor, the students can not go further in ESP. GE and ESP are closely related, and there is no special grammar structure for ESP. Hutchinson and Waters point out that even the differences in vocabulary are far less significant than might be expected. There are four types of vocabulary: structural (e.g. are, this, however), general (e.g. pen, come, rabbit, road, cause), sub-technical (machine, engine, valve, fluid); and technical (auricle, schistosome, fissure).

3. **Guided instruction:** This strategy allows the teachers to structure multiple opportunities to promote peer-to-peer interactions and student-centered discussions. Teachers clarify expectations, outcomes, and procedures related to tasks for flexible group activities.

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4. **Metacognition**: Through this strategy teachers model and explicitly teach thinking skills (*metacognition*) crucial to learning new concepts rather than having students simply memorize information. Teachers teach students processes for metacognition that is, pre-reading and pre-writing skills, word analysis, and methods to monitor their reading comprehension. They also teach and model ways for students to describe their thinking processes verbally and in writing. "Research shows that metacognition is a critical skill for learning a second language and a skill used by highly proficient readers of any language".30

5. **Explicit instruction**: Direct teaching of concepts, academic language, and reading comprehension strategies needed to complete classroom tasks is *explicit instruction*. In this strategy teachers connect overarching ideas (whole), and then examine components or processes (part), culminating with students’ own applications or synthesis of ideas (new whole). They explicitly teach academic language and reading skills needed to complete subject-specific tasks such as analyze, interpret, classify, compare, synthesize, persuade, solve and so forth.

6. **Multimedia**: The next strategy is the use of modeling, graphic organizers, learning meaningful events in natural contexts and audio/visuals that is the use of language laboratory. The use of a variety of visual aids, including pictures, diagrams, and charts, helps

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English Language Learners. They easily recognize essential information and its relationship to supporting ideas. Visuals make both the language and the content more accessible to students.

7. **Interdisciplinary collaboration:** Interdisciplinary collaboration usually refers to some form of work between or among people from two or more subjects within the same or across institutions. As English language teaching at tertiary level is also closely hooked with subject contents, it is unrealistic to detach language from content or to teach the language in isolation. In interdisciplinary collaboration, the English teacher collects information of what students are studying (other than English subject) and their needs. The subject discourse definitely helps the English language teachers to develop the study materials and also they take the initiative to gather information from subject teachers, and both sides are involved in more direct working at a later stage. Thus:

> the cooperation or collaboration between English language teachers and other subject teachers is useful in respect of course design, material development, teaching, assessment and even understanding of the learning and teaching culture at students’ particular departments.\(^{31}\)

8. **Error correction:** The process of getting aware of one's own mistakes should start in the English language class, with the teacher

as a source of information or as an organizer of activities meant to sensitize students as to the most frequent mistakes they make; however, the concern for self-improvement should continue autonomously, after the course, with a permanent interest of the person in identifying and correcting their errors by means of various sources, such as dictionaries, books of grammar, tests, Internet materials and so on.

"Errors are integral part of language learning and not evidence of failure to learn".\(^{32}\) Error correction is a response either to the content of what a student has produced (written) or to the form of the utterance (spoken). With this strategy teachers take pedagogic decision in employing the most beneficial error correction methods. Before producing a written piece of work the learners need feedback and comments from teachers to facilitate them to compose an essay with minimal errors as well as maximum accuracy and clarity; hence, written feedback is quite essential. It is crucial for teachers to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of correction methods (coded feedback, direct correction and reformulation etc.) according to the learners’ real situation. (details of methods are further discussed in end notes)

9. Technical jargon: English language teachers in engineering or technology colleges need not only a better and intensive acquaintance with the processes for the formation of technical terms but should also know how to use these processes integrated into

their teaching of English as well. Technical English is not part of the learner's general cognitive development. It is associated with conscious learning of a variety of subjects in school and with the acquisition and learning of mother tongue. Thus Mother tongue becomes a major gateway to the concept of technical language. This inevitable situation challenges the English language teacher, to devise ways and strategies to help their students overcome the influence of mother tongue and focus on newer concepts and the jargon attached to such concepts. The strategies such as *Affixation* (Prefixing/suffixing – e.g. Degenerate, Generation) *Compounding* (e.g. Firewall, Fire-tube-boiler), *Acronyms* (e.g. RADAR – Radio Detection And Ranging), *Portmanteau* (e.g. Redox - Reduction Oxidation, Modem - Modular Demodulator) and *Clipping* (e.g. Cell -Cellphone) are involved in the formation of technical jargon. (In Additional Notes)

Teachers can select appropriate jargon from currently ongoing lessons and discuss language aspects of such jargon. Historical background to the structure and use of selected jargon may be presented to inculcate in students sensitivity to the terms they use. Other strategies can be description of the structural processes involved, spelling needs to be dealt with; and placement of words within the limits and extension of their original meaning.

10. **Internet resources:** The Internet has made deep inroads in the field of education. With this strategy English teachers realize the potential role of Internet resources as a means of developing communication
skills in an interactive way. By using the Internet and the World Wide Web (WWW), under the supervision of teachers,

...students can have almost instantaneous access to a range of foreign experiences in their target language. The computer then serves as a gateway to the virtual foreign world where 'real people' are using real language in 'real context'.

WWW as medium is a valuable tool for language learning. Advantages of the Internet over other media and instructional tools are numerous. The easily accessible and varied resources of the World Wide Web have enormous potential for supporting the language learning curriculum.

11. **Authentic assessments:** With this strategy, teachers use a variety of activities to check students' understanding, acknowledging that students learning a second language need a variety of ways to demonstrate their understanding of concepts that are not wholly reliant on advanced language skills. Teachers from time to time check the students' ability to use simple English words or sentences to explain some technical terms or words they have learned. They also evaluate their teaching strategies to see if they are making a difference, and if not, change them.

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As an overall teaching strategy, the teachers should create the conditions that will elicit the behavior that they want from their class or an individual student. If the teachers respect their students for their potential, have patience, and learn something new every year, the students do not have to listen to the same stuff. The students then enjoy learning.

The most successful teachers of English have identifiable pedagogical and cultural skills and knowledge including the ability to communicate effectively with students. They also have extensive skills in teaching the mechanics of language and how it is used in different contexts and for different purposes. The quality and extent of teacher preparation is therefore critical; although teachers cannot be assigned either all the credit or all the blame for student achievement, they play a central role in students’ education.

The function of teacher is to make educational adjustments so as facilitate learning and to create successful class environment. Concepts and terminology used in English language teaching for describing form and meaning in language and language use, language used by the teachers and learners, language selected for teaching programmes, reference materials for language awareness, learner development and motivation, evaluating and selecting resources and teaching materials, using supplementing adapting and creating materials, effective use of teaching aids, technical support and self-access materials, identifying learner needs, monitoring
learner's progress and giving feedback, evaluating teaching and learning are all important components to improve students' language proficiency.

The state-of-art teaching of English language, based on the communication method emphasizes the teaching of English through English. But in regard of Indian classrooms, the idea of abandoning the native tongue is too stressful to many students, especially those who need a sense of security in the experience of learning a foreign language, in this case English. At the same time excessive use of mother tongue hampers the English language proficiency of the students. The failure of grammar-translation method led to the idea that "all use of mother-tongue in the language classroom should be avoided".

This chapter calls for the critical awareness and engagement of English language teachers and learners in exploring the tools such as use of mother tongue/first language/L1, translation, information and communications technologies, task-oriented teaching so forth that shape the English language classroom teaching and learning.

As discussed in previous chapters, communicative language teaching approach focuses on the primary importance of English language (L2) input and L2 interaction in L2 learning. But this offers English language teachers the opportunity to grapple with the 'problem' of L1. The L1 and the L2 coexist collaboratively in the learner. In the same context Cook says, "L2 learners should be viewed as multicompetent language users rather than as deficient L2 users when compared to native speakers."  


English language teachers since almost three decades have been in a general agreement that the target language must be used as much as possible in the English language classroom. Generally, the primary source of target language input is the English teacher himself and is therefore responsible for maximizing its use in the classroom. Moreover, an English teacher's ability to conduct the entire class in the target language is also the measure of his success.

During interaction with the English teachers teaching in the professional colleges in Indore, it was found that majority of them did not deny the utility of using L1 in the classroom. They thought it facilitated the L2 acquisition. But a sense of disagreement was witnessed on the questions such as when and how much to use L1?

However, a minority of the surveyed English teachers believed that English teachers and English learners must stick to the use of English in the classroom. Their notion was that acquisition is better than learning. Several well-known approaches to FL teaching stress the importance of using the L2, L3 and implicitly suggest that using the L1 may be detrimental to the acquisition process.

Mother tongue has potentially both positive and negative consequences: it may serve social and cognitive functions. The English teachers claimed that students working in groups do not have to speak English all the time. Use of mother tongue relates to learner identity. Negative impact of mother tongue use is that too much reliance on the L1 may undermine the interaction in English. Although nearly exclusive use of the L2 in L2 teaching has been an unspoken rule, there is no research to support the requirement for L2 use 100% of the time.
Regardless, whether a language is acquired in immersion or in a classroom setting, the first language and target language (and L3 etc.) are related in one or the other way. The two (or more) languages interact collaboratively in understanding and speaking both languages. As Cook argued that the L1 may serve a useful purpose in FL teaching, particularly in task-based learning approaches “Through the L1, they (students) may explain the task to each other, negotiate roles they are going to take, or check their understanding or production of language against their peers”.36

Brooks and Donato incidentally found that metatalk (language talk to reflect on language use) in the L1 was productive in sustaining verbal interaction.37 Swain and Lapkin found that “The L1 was a “mediational tool fully available to [learners], to regulate their own behaviour, to focus attention on specific L2 structures, and to generate and assess alternatives”.38

This was in support of Brooks, Donato, and McGlone who in a study on cooperative learning and small group observed that communication problems were often resolved when the learners reverted to the L1.\(^{39}\)

The surveyed students of professional colleges in Indore city also confirmed that they preferred the use of L1 in the L2 classroom speech by the English teachers. This facilitated them to achieve learning goals. Levine in his study on classroom language concluded that:

...denying a role to the L1 is futile and that learners should play an active role in managing the use of the L1 and the L2 to create bilingual norms that are typical of multilingual environments outside the classroom.\(^{40}\)

According to Brooks and Donato L1 use “...is a normal psycholinguistic process that facilitates L2 production and allows the learners both to initiate and sustain verbal interaction with one another”.\(^{41}\)

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These students also mentioned that they use L1 for purposes such as to clarify vocabulary and meaning, to discuss grammar points, to interpret the concepts and to manage many kinds of classroom tasks. A recent study by Centeno-Cortés and Jiménez also supports the importance of the L1 during problem solving tasks. These researchers concluded that “...private verbal thinking plays a crucial role in the case of L2 speakers engaged in problem-solving, and therefore it should be recognized as very important in the process of learning.”⁴²

Therefore, all learners need a support of mother tongue in English classes, but the amount of the native language needed depends on students’ proficiency in English.

Researchers’ emphasize on the use of mother tongue as a resource for the promotion of language learning has also revived the role of translation in language learning. As Ross says, “Translation develops three qualities essential to all language learning: accuracy, clarity, and flexibility”.⁴³ Therefore, the use translation can serve as a tool for improving language skills.

The need for some translation in language learning was usually supported by many English teachers of Professional colleges in Indore. But


some teachers argued that foreign language learning needs as much exposure to the L2 as possible during precious classroom time, and any usage of the L1 or translation is a waste of time.

In the past, most methods in L2 language pedagogy dictated that L1 should be prohibited in the classroom. Communicative approaches to language learning in the 1970s and 1980s considered the use of the L1 as undesirable. However, recently the attitude to mother tongue and translation in language classes has undergone a positive change.

The use of translation for English language teaching also becomes useful as Translation is sometimes referred to as the fifth language skill alongside the other four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Translation holds a special importance at an intermediate and advanced level: in the advanced or final stage of language teaching, translation from L1 to L2 and L2 to L1 is recognized as the fifth skill and the most important social skill since it promotes communication and understanding between strangers.44

The surveyed English teachers reported that generally students of professional colleges (however good they may be) at comprehending authentic reading or listening materials, the majority keep mentally translating from L2 into L1 and vice versa. This fact makes teachers of English languages aware of the importance of translation in language classrooms.

The web log devoted to some plenary sessions of the IATEFL Conference, Aberdeen, 18-20 April 2007, summarizes the major ideas presented by a well known British linguist G. Cook.

The most important statement was the fact that English teachers tend to take a monolingual approach thus neglecting the importance of translation in the process of teaching English. The ESL classroom cannot follow the motto "One nation, one people, one language", a somewhat overrated statement since it implies that a classroom is a state. Quite contrary to that, the L1, i.e. the mother tongue of the students, should by all means be acknowledged. The importance is highlighted even more by the fact that the students’ culture is part of their language and by neglecting their language, the teacher, in a monolingual classroom, neglects their culture which leads to the danger of neglecting their identity as well.

What is more, there is no valid database that could confirm the standpoint that the monolingual approach in teaching is the best one.45

He further adds in the support of using mother tongue:

The disregard of the students’ mother tongue can in fact demotivate the students and be counterproductive. Therefore, there is neither a scientific nor a pedagogic reason to exclude

L1 from the teaching process. There are probably more reasons, utilitarian and political, to make the use of L1 quite valuable in the process of teaching English. The former reason implies that the students would be motivated to think more about appropriate equivalents in their own languages and the latter one, of course, emphasizes the importance of cultural diversities and tolerance among nations.46

English teachers are aware of the fact that information and communications technologies play a vital role in today's educational settings. However, the question of how to adapt it into different learning environments still remains a concern. There is a widespread expectation that these technologies will change the nature of instruction and provide the learners with cognitively challenging, attractive materials. Through the use of computer, Internet, multimedia and so forth, learners can engage in individualized instruction where they can investigate and learn concepts and content to meet their specific needs.

It is widely believed that because students are highly motivated through rich, interesting and engaging learning experiences, their understanding of the subject is enhanced. Thus students cannot help but pay attention to information that is presented in dynamic and memorable ways.

The majority of surveyed English teachers agreed that the opportunities for students to learn English as a second language using

computers are very wide, and the use of L2 can be increased if authentic *computer-based activities* are incorporated in the language teaching.

Several benefits for students related to the general use of technology include improved motivation, self-concept and mastery of basic skills, increased student centered learning and engagement in the learning process.\(^{47}\)

As technology adoption for language teaching and learning continues to grow, studies confirm that learners often display improved thinking skills, recall and active language processing.\(^{48}\)

However, many findings have also concluded that:

Letting the students use computers in the classroom without any concrete activities that relate to language learning and without any understanding of the conditions of using computers in the classroom may hinder the total utilization of them.\(^{49}\)


The use of computers can be beneficial only if executed appropriately.

Computers, like other teaching tools would not promise to bring any benefit to students unless the practical use of computer in a particular context is explored in detail and implemented accordingly.50

The teaching of English language in professional colleges is aimed at the use of language in given real-life situations rather teaching language skills separately. By using computer as tools in the classroom the level of English proficiency among students can increase as it is an alternative to the traditional way of learning. But one of the main factors that teachers need to address when implementing new approaches to teaching and learning is the teacher’s awareness. It is crucial for teachers to be aware of learning potential that students may gain during doing computer-based activities.

Computers in language learning can be used as a tutor, an exploratory environment, a tool and a communication medium so forth. Thus it is also important for English teachers to understand different categories of computer usage before they incorporate computers in their lessons. In addition, Computer-based activities should be integrated in the lessons by taking the students’ specific needs into account. As Becker also stressed that teachers should focus on multiple-contexts for learning activities

instead of single contexts and that this is simpler to achieve by integrating computer use in the classroom.\textsuperscript{51}

The use of computers also emphasizes on students' attitude from being totally dependent to being independent or autonomous learners. The computer-based activities engage students in a class environment which is student-centered rather than teacher-centered. Well-planned activities to use English interactively encourage students to gain desired learning outcomes.

The varied pedagogical use of computers in different contexts and different situations can complement the various activities performed by the students. Computers can be used as presentation tools by teachers for instructional purposes, data/information transmission, assessment etc. and by students to accomplish writing activities such as using word processing, PowerPoint presentation and creative layout of the tasks; and also for the purpose of data storage and data analysis so forth.

Computer can be used as an exploratory device. Students can explore and discover their learning. They can perform computer-based activities to explore the Internet for searching information for the purpose of collecting new information to complete their tasks during group/pair work. They can search reading materials for the purpose of discovering new information or knowledge related to their learning purposes. Information gathered from the Internet can also be used to prepare them for their group work presentation or project work.

English teachers can use Computers as tutorial aids that is when computers are "used directly to teach students by providing information, demonstration, and practice opportunity". Here computer is used as a practice-learning device to achieve the three language skills; reading, writing and listening. As for reading practice students can be provided with a text to read wherein they also get opportunities to practice their listening, to learn new words, to learn making short notes, identify topic sentences and supporting sentences from the reading text.

Computers function as means of communication thereby connecting teachers and students with the outer world and among themselves as well. The function of computers as means of communication categorized by Means includes e-mail, computer conferences, computer-collaborative learning system (CCLS) system, and the Internet.

English teachers can incorporate authentic computer based activities especially in language lab sessions and thus can increase opportunity for students to use target language.

Involving the students in collaborative learning online, for example collaborating in a project in which the discussion is done via chat room, email or messenger board, would give the students a good learning experience in an authentic situation. In this situation,


53 B. Means, 452.
students have the benefit to use English as a tool to communicate meaningfully with someone online.\footnote{Y. Yuan, “The Use of Chat Rooms in an ESL Setting,” Computers and Composition 20.2 (2003): 202.}

Howsoever, the use of ICT for effective English language teaching demands for English teachers need to be guided on how to integrate computer use into their lessons and instructed regarding what learning software to use to achieve the best results. A lack of useful guidelines will slow the process of successfully promoting computer use in the professional institutions.