CHAPTER –I
INTRODUCTION

Contents

1.1  Introduction
1.2  The Importance of Learning English Language
1.3  Status of English in India
1.4  Importance of English as a window to the Modern world
1.5  Communication in English-Essential Requirement Today
1.6  Importance of English for Engineers
1.7  English for Communication
1.8  Skills in English Language Learning
1.9  The Role of Teacher in Developing Speaking Skills
1.10 Need for the Study
1.11 Significance of the study
1.12 Scope of the study
1.13 Statement of the Problem
1.14 Objectives of the study

1.15 Delimitation of the study

1.16 Operational Definition of the Key Terms

1.17 Outline of the Thesis

1.18 Conclusion
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

English is accepted as a universal language. There is no imminent danger to the English language or its global popularity. The language worldwide has an official status. The language, English unifies all who speaks it. The language appears to marginalize and in a number of cases, tends to threaten the place of living that normally is no part of the purview of a foreign language. On the whole, the aim of teaching English, as a second language is to encourage the learners to acquire the communication skills, for both academic and professional purposes and to make them master the language. In future, English will certainly become a major mode of communication.

i. Origin of Communication

The word “Communication” comes from the Latin word “communis” meaning “common”. Basically communication is divided into five stages, namely,

- Period until 3000 BC
- Period between 3000BC and 2000BC
- Period between 2000BC and 300 BC
- Period between 300 BC and 200 AD
- In the 1990s
During 1990s, computers made a remarkable growth in communication. There are various channels and routes of communication. Language is a powerful mode of communication. It is a medium through which an individual expresses his thoughts and ideas. Now-a-days English has become the medium of communication nationally as well as internationally. It has become a global language. On the whole, the aim of teaching English as a second language is to encourage learners to acquire the communication skills. In future, English will certainly become the best mode of communication.

1.2. The Importance of Learning English Language

Of all the languages in the world today, English deserves to be regarded as a world language. It is the first language of the U.K, the U.S, Australia and Canada. In addition, it is spoken and read by millions of Europeans, the Africans, the Chinese, the Indians, and the Japanese as a second language. It is the common means of communication between the peoples of different nations.

Randolph Quirk points out, “There are now something like 250 million people for whom English is the mother tongue or first language”. If we added to this the number of people who have a working knowledge of English as a second language (many Indians, Africans, Frenchmen, Russian etc) the figure becomes 350 millions. M.C. Chagla, High Court, once ruled that English was an Indian language and the Supreme Court upheld this judgment (Arun, 1984). The Sahitya Academy of India recognizes English as one of the Indian languages. If we look at the media, reveals that over 50% of world’s newspaper, over 50% of world’s scientific and technical periodicals and more than 60% of world’s radio stations use English as a medium of communication.
From the above facts it can be easily concluded that English is an international language in the sense that it helps in interlinking the people in other countries of the world. Because of rapid spread of Industrial development, science and technology, international trade and commerce and the close inter dependence of nations, English has become a world language. The whole world has accepted English language as the business or corporate medium of intellectual exchange for the following three reasons.

4. The commercial weight

5. The technical importance

6. Link Language (lingua franca)

1.3 Status of English in India

The role of English language in India before and after independence has undergone a number of changes. As N.Krishnaswamy and Lalitha Krishnaswamy point out in Teaching English: Approaches, and Methods of Techniques:

It may have happened so very quickly within a four years but it has happened – “English become an international commodity, like oil and the microchip! Without petrol and computers, the world will come to a halt; the English language made the world a ‘global village’ by giving it a global languages for communication” (p-3).

The passage mentioned above tells the pertinence of English language in the present scenario. Without a second thought we all need to accept English, a blessing which Indians received as a result of the colonial rule. In the age of Information Technology, Indians have an ‘English advantage’ (p-6) over many other countries. Today, apart from rulers, all countries are ruled by computers and the Internet. Work, education, governance, entertainment and communication have taken by computer. Since the global market needs the employees with communication skills, soft skills,
employability skills and Technical skills, “Indian with their knowledge of English are wanted all over the world”.

1.4 Importance of English as a window on modern world:

It is only with the help of the knowledge of English that we get information about the advancement taking place throughout the world. Emphasizing the importance of the knowledge of English, Radha Krishnan University education commission observed: It (English) is a language which is rich in literature-humanistic, scientific and technical. If under sentimental urges, we should give up English, we would cut ourselves off from the living stream of ever growing knowledge.

F.G. French observes that it is only through this language that we have, “distilled essence of modern knowledge in all the fields of human activity. Anyone who knows English can keep in touch with the whole world without leaving his own house”.

For bringing about revolutionary changes in various fields such as that of agriculture, medicine, industry, transport telecommunication etc. It is essential for us to be in touch with the outside world. It is only through English we can bring many scientific discoveries to our country.

English is very rich in scientific and technical spheres and so the knowledge of English is the only means of preventing our isolation form the world. Discarding English will amount to closing a window on the world of technology. We will lag hundreds of years and will never be able to catch up with the developed world. We cannot think of taking India into 21st century without capitalizing on English. The study of English will continue in our country for the progress of our country.
1.5 Communication in English – Essential Requirement Today

English is known, spoken and read by all educated people everywhere in the world. English has today become one of the major languages of the world. Children in different parts of the world speak this language in their school either as the mother tongue or as a foreign language. It is strongly felt that English is the only language that prevents isolation, it is the key to access the treasure of knowledge provides opportunities to students to get employment all over the world, and helps to have contact with Western science and technology. Hence, English occupies an important place in school curriculum. The National Policy of Education, 1986 and Revised 1992 recommended English as second language in Secondary Schools.

In the Annual Report 2011, UGC (University Grants Commission) has given priority to proficiency in English language. It regarded, English language proficiency as an essential quality for a globally competitive graduate. Hence, the UGC has started sponsoring courses in Functional English at the undergraduate level which includes components like Conversational English, Remedial Grammar, Advanced Writing Skills, introduction to broadcast media, entrepreneurship development, and career oriented skills.

The AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education) also felt the importance of English in Technical education and has designed the English syllabus for engineering students to enhance the four skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) in English. The main objective is, to develop the four skills and to enhance students’ performance at placement interviews, Group Discussions etc.
The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) defined English language proficiency as proficiency in using English language to ask questions, to understand teachers and reading materials, to test ideas and to challenge what is being asked. It stated that, the four language skills should contribute to students; proficiency.

Native speakers also need to learn English because being a native speaker is no guarantee for competence in communication. Hocking (1974) alongside many others believed that, the native speaker is error-free because she/he learns the language since infancy, she/he has an unquestionable proficiency and efficiency in it. This is the erroneous notion of a native speaker. But this is not infallible. Communication itself is far more latent than the words used in the process. This is because there is a large infrastructure of social and cultural elements that determine what must be said and how it must be said.

Moreover, from a purely grammatical point of view, even in native areas, poor and inefficient speakers are still found. Hence, any English language teaching attempt that is primarily based on native-speaker origins without solid English language teaching training is not a safe haven for error-free language transmission. English language teaching is not a natural element of native speakers but, a profession that requires due training and efficiency.

1.6. Importance of English for Engineers:

All over the world the demand for English as second language or foreign language is in its peak. Industrial revolution, tremendous growth of science and technology. Replacement of computer and AI (Artificial Intelligence) in the place of human beings and internet need more engineers to serve the world. Eventually it
needs engineers with a mixture of communication skills – obviously English and Technical skills. Section of Indian education allows engineering colleges, deemed technical universities and self financing engineering colleges top cater to the technical need of the world. English speaking engineers are placed remarkably in job markets. Non-English speaking engineers are not placed as per their profile and technical skills. Unfortunately, non-speaking English engineers occupied the major portion of engineering society. If language is not a barrier, they will also prove themselves. Emerged and emerging trends in computer and internet are English-focused. Engineers, English, computer and internet are inseparable. Hence Engineers without a compromise need to equip themselves in English.

1.7. English for Communication:

Language is a means of communication of thoughts and feelings. We can also communicate through cries, signs, and gestures. But these modes of communications called kenesics are totally different from human language. The human language is a signalling system which uses vocal sounds. It is based on man’s ability to speak. The written language is derived from the spoken language. The basis of language is speech which in turn means the production of meaningful sounds, according to a system. Man alone uses language for communication. In the words of Dwight Bolinger,” Language is species, specific. It is a uniquely human trait, shared by the cultures so diverse and by individuals physically and mentally to unlike one another”.

1.8. Skills In English Language Learning

There is always a quest for a better method of teaching English as a second language. Many approaches, new theories and taking the language to the non-native speakers have been formulated. They have also changed according to the demand and
new needs of the hour and the changing visions of the society. All the theories and approaches have been helping to design course materials, methodology and teaching tools for teaching English. There are four types of skills for a person to master a language namely, as enunciated by the LSRW technique. They are Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Listening and speaking skills are known as oracy, and reading skills are known as literacy, both oracy and literacy resulting from linguacy. The first two skills like listening and reading are used as the channels or receiving information and skills like speaking and writing are called productive skills.

i) Listening Skill:

Listening is the easiest skill. It means understanding the language while speaking. Listening becomes difficult owing to pronunciation. Any second language learner faces initial language difficulties. Even the most competent student will have some difficulty in understanding the variety of the accents which they will encounter. Through various exercises in listening comprehension by repeated practice and by question and answer method the skills may be improved.

Listening is generally considered the most important skill of all: the basis for the other three. Since it is an active process. It requires the involvement of complex procedures. It does not only consist of features such as stress, rhythm, intonation, it also involves background, general situational, language specific situational, and linguistic knowledge, all of which make it hard for the student to develop.

Listening can be roughly divided into two kinds namely extensive listening and intensive listening. Extensive listening aims to deal with all of these issues: pursue students’ practice without externally imposed time constraints, learning can be autonomous for individual learners, with the learner deciding goals, selecting
materials and strategies, and evaluating their own learning, according to their needs. Extensive listening aims at developing a top-down global understanding of spoken discourse and it can vary from listening to a conversation, to lengthy lectures. On the other hand, intensive listening aims at improving specific skills or answering predetermined question.

Listening is a prerequisite to other skills of language. Listening activity is not just listening to and grasping the speaker’s utterances, but recording them and then, repeating them also. It involves the process of comprehending the words, their meaning and making use of it in sentences of our own.

Listening involves the following:

- Receiving the sounds of a language in a systematic manner
- Constructing the sounds into words
- Giving meaning to the words and also giving meaning for new words which are received
- The ability to interpret and to comprehend the utterances of the speaker.

ii) Speaking Skill:

Listening is followed by speaking. The learner develops this skill by observation and repetition. More concentration should be given on pronunciation, intonation and stress. It is an act of creativity. In addition to knowing the language, the speaker must think of an idea he wishes to express. Here, the speaker must either initiate or must respond to the other speaker’s statement. Speaking activity involves:
• the consciousness of the grammatical, lexical and cultural features of the language
• the ability to speak error-free sentences
• awareness to speak situation-based conversation
• Speak the language correctly, with the right pronunciation
• Ability to present in a comprehensible way

### iii) Reading Skill:

To comprehend a written material is reading. Only through practice one can master the reading skill. During reading, interaction takes place with the text, the learner decodes it and constructs the meaning in the process. It is an important tool for the academic success. By this process, one can update one’s knowledge. To master this skill, one must have:

• the knowledge of the language
• the knowledge of the writing system
• the ability to recognize the phonemes
• the ability to interpret and comprehend the text

Students for whom English is a second language, often say that they do not like to read and they do not read for pleasure, they tend to respond to texts as non-readers. For them, reading is a passive activity and everything that can be said about a text lies in its print. They tend to know that they can, and in fact, should bring their own reflections to bear on the subject matter. Reading, for them involves the retrieval of information of words. They have limited experience while accessing their own
ideas or responding to someone else or They have little to say what is related to the subject of the text.

**iv) Writing Skill**

Of the four skills, writing is the most difficult one. Here, the learner must be aware of the letters and also to some extent be good at grammar. Writing is a process of conveying one’s thought through written symbols.

Writing skill includes:

- ability to shape the letters
- ability to convert the ideas using the written symbols
- ability to write without grammatical errors
- Ability to present and organize the thoughts in a readable manner.

All these four skills of language are the bases for communication. Therefore they form the base for the language proficiency and the ability to use the knowledge in different tasks.

To master the four skills to some extent, the learner must undertake the following activities:

- reading books in simple English
- conversing intelligibly in familiar situations of everyday life
- writing simple and correct English
- Comprehending English is necessary for taking up technical and professional courses.
1.9 The Role of Teacher in Developing Speaking Skill

The roles of the teacher can be categorized from several points of view, for example, according to the type of the activity, stage of the activity, or the interaction pattern selected for the particular activity.

Nunan and Lamb (1996) point out that the roles that the teachers adopt are dynamic, not static, and are subject to change according to the psychological factors brought by the participants. (Nunan, Lamb, 1996:134) In addition, Byrne (1991) compares the teacher to an actor claiming that the teacher ‘will have to play different roles at different times’ (p.13).

Byrne (1991) divides

The roles of the teacher according to the type of interaction activity distinguishing between fluency and accuracy activities. During fluency activities the teacher most frequently adopts the roles of stimulator, manager and consultant, reminding that the main reason for taking part in such activities is to get students to interact, set up the activities and to be available for help and advice if students need and ask for it. On the other hand, the roles that the teacher carries out during accuracy activities will primarily include the roles of conductor, organizer and monitor. (p. 13)

Teacher’s main task will therefore be to make sure that the students know what to practice, and that they practice effectively, together with organizing the activities and checking while students are performing. Based on the reflection of the students’ behaviour in the classroom. Nunan and Lamb (1996) grade the roles of the teacher from the most problematic, in terms of participants’ roles and behaviour. They include the roles of: controller, entertainer, disciplinarian, and a developer of a sense of independence and responsibility. The teacher continually establishing control, giving directions, threats and punishment, is labeled as ‘controller’. Still noisy but positive atmosphere, where the teacher introduces games and recreational activities,
or reading stories, shows the teacher as ‘entertainer’. The ‘disciplinarian’ establishes rules to be followed and is quick to notice any misbehaviour; while the teacher who spends time by teaching, not requiring a close supervision and in case of noise providing only a simple reminder effectively, Nunan and Lamb (1996) label the teacher as ‘developer of a sense of independence and responsibility’.

In relation to fluency speaking activities, Harmer (2001) mentions

Three basic roles that teachers take on including: prompter, participant, and feedback provider. While taking the role of a prompter, the teacher offers discrete suggestions or lets students struggle out of a difficult situation (when students get lost, cannot think of what to say next, lose fluency), which can stop the sense of frustration when coming to a ‘dead end’ of language ideas. A teacher acting as a participant prompts covertly, introduces new information to help the activity along, ensures continuing students’ engagement, and generally maintains a creative atmosphere. (p. 275-276).

Harmer warns that when acting as a participant, the teacher should be careful not to participate too much, thus dominating the speaking and drawing all the attention to him or herself. Finally, feedback provider, Harmer says, may inhibit students and take the communicativeness out of the activity by over-correction; therefore, the correction should be helpful and gentle getting students out of difficult misunderstanding and hesitations.

As regards the roles of the teacher, methodologists do not remain united in labeling the different roles that the teacher can take on when conducting activities focused on the development of speaking. There are several approaches to be taken when describing teacher’s roles, e.g. according to its type, stage, interaction pattern or even behaviour during activities as Nunan and Lamb present.
1.10 Need for the study

The basic ability every young man is expected to possess is the ability to express him clearly and effectively and the lack of it hampers his progress in academic subjects and in various walks of life. It has been observed that many people face problems in communication either in public or in private. This also affects their encoding skills; viz., listening and reading. Secondary school students are mostly unable to speak two sentences consecutively in the present situation.

English is gaining more and more prominence in the modern world consequent upon the fast increase in international trade and co-operation and globalization. It is the language of cross-cultural communication in the world. It offers world citizenship. English language is predominantly establishing its supremacy in the field of education. As such the duty of the teacher is very tiresome. But whether the teachers accept it giving due seriousness is a puzzling question. The structure of English language is very much different from that of Indian languages. These cause great difficulties in the smooth learning of the language and consequently affect the furtherance of studies of many students at higher level. They lose interest in their studies as they fail to comprehend the concepts and the different complex logical arguments presented in the language. Even though the student has good technical knowledge, he/she fumbles when asked to speak in English. This barrier prompted the researcher to undertake the study. Strategies would remove their constraints and make them think freely and express their ideas clearly.

Just as “necessity is the mother of invention”, today English has become a necessary tool and a powerful mode of communication. English, to the British is the native language; but to the Indians, it is a foreign language. One cannot expect every single individual to master the foreign language, which has now; become the medium
of communication at the national and the international levels. English has become a
global language and a universal mode of trans-communication of the message which
reaches to the people in an easy and effective manner.

Slow learners can understand English to some extent, but when it comes to
spoken forms of communication, they bungle and find it difficult. They struggle to
frame a few sentences in a coherent manner. The mistake here is not only in the
teaching process but also in the mental caliber of the students. The mental caliber
here denotes the understanding capacity of the students over the subject. The students
must not only speak in English but also start to think in English. Once one starts
thinking in English, then automatically one’s vocabulary will also start improving.
When an error is committed, it should be rectified then and there. Most of the students
find it difficult to speak in English in public because of shyness, nervousness and fear
psychosis. The reason is about the other people’s criticism and comments. The
students coming from the rural area shun away from using English language because
they feel in their heart of hearts, that English is a difficult subject. Moreover they are
not prepared to learn it by facing the usual and initial hardships and overcoming the
challenges. Such people do not speak freely, openly and confidently.

1.11 Significance of the Study:

To begin with, routines are the typical patterns in which speakers organize
what they have to communicate. There are two kinds of routines: Information
routines, and Interaction routines. The information routines include frequently
recurring types of information structures involved in, for example, stories,
descriptions, comparisons, or instructions. Bygate further divides information
routines, according to their function, into evaluative routines (explanations,
predictions, justifications, preferences, decisions), and expository routines (narration, descriptions, instructions).

The interaction routines, on the other hand, present the characteristic ways, in which interactions are organized dealing with the logical organization and order of the parts of conversation. Interaction routines can typically be observed in, for example, telephone conversations, interviews, or conversations at the party (Bygate 1987, 23-27).

The general notion among students is that speaking English is very difficult and tough. But it can be overcome. It needs a lot of practice. But with the help of strategies, teacher can attract and draw the attention of the students. These strategies will indeed kindle the students’ interest to learn more. It may also be interesting to learn new concepts and understand the unknown.

Students are not bound by any time-limit or constraints. They can learn with the guidance of a teacher. The study will be of great help to the so called slow learners. They can work at their own expediency. The students will gain knowledge in speaking English. They can face the situation successfully with English.

Generally, any language can become an essential tool for effective communication; particularly in professional colleges like Engineering, Medical and Agriculture where, the medium of instruction is English. Normally, lecture – cum-demonstration-discussion method is useful to teach subjects through English language. Thanks to the mushrooming of engineering colleges, nowadays even below average and educationally backward students could gain an entry into the professional course. They are weak in all subjects in general and English in particular. At this juncture, the students have to grasp the ideas and understand the subject matter as quickly as possible and to follow the lecture effectively. But rural students, who are
poor in English language, feel it very difficult to communicate with the others during the learning process. Therefore, the study is a needed one, particularly for the slow learners.

The government policy gives importance to English up to the higher secondary level only. At the tertiary level, English is taught only at the first year level. Even in the entrance examination, a test in English is not conducted. Naturally the students do not give much importance to or concentration on English. Only when they go to the final year or when they enter job market, the importance of the language is very much felt by them. At the same time, their inability to comprehend the skill of communication in English is exposed during the Interview or at the Group Discussion.

English is considered a world language. The Kothari Commission (1964-66) suggested that English be studied as a library language of Science and Technology. It is a valuable and a skill-based subject. First and foremost, one has to read the content and then, to analyse the errors found in the content committed by the slow learners. Slow learners here, imply that the students who take considerably more time to pick up the subject and also to understand them. Up to higher secondary, most of the students learn English by memorizing the Essay in English without understanding it. The examination point is taken into consideration instead of English being a source of acquiring the knowledge and communication.

The research could contribute in three directions. They are the leading role, the supporting role and the following role.

i. Leading role: The research could throw light on strategies which are not given importance in the existing curriculum. It could help the teachers, teacher educators and curriculum planners to include those
concepts and practice the approaches and methodologies adopted in this research.

ii. Supporting Role: The finding of the research could help the planners of educational curriculum to identify the areas and concepts wherein the learners’ knowledge is less or lacking. This will pave a way for supplementing materials in engineering field with the knowledge of the inadequacies of the students.

iii. Following Role: From the outcome of this investigation, it would also be possible to probe further, in case, any concepts are found difficult to acquire by the learners despite the varied approaches and methodologies followed. The outcome of this research will also throw much light on the attitude of the learners towards speaking English strategies.

1.12 Scope of the Study

This research is to make the students speak in English without any hesitation particularly, the slow learners at the engineering college level.

By observing the development of English in the Indian system of education, the Kothari Commission (1964-66’) observed or in fact, emphasized that the university graduates and teachers should be proficient in two languages, the regional language and English.

The view of the expert bodies throws light on the changing paradigms of English in the curriculum of schools and colleges. The University Education Commission (1948) stressed the need to learn English to keep in touch with the stream of knowledge. The Mudaliar Commission (1953) emphasized the adoption of
dynamic methods to teaching English and other subjects. The research throws light on how far the strategies of the investigator helps engineering college slow learners to throw on from their inhibitions and make them speak English fluently.

1.13 Statement of the Problem

It is indeed pathetic to notice that even though various efforts have been taken by the educationists for improving the state of affairs of English language teaching for the past few decades in India in general and Tamilnadu in particular, a sorry state of affairs is still found to exist in the achievements of English linguistic behaviour among the students of all levels. So it is necessary to unearth the real reasons behind the slow learners in English. It is assumed the students have hesitation to speak English. It is important to make them to shed on their hesitation. Strategies will have a positive attitude towards speaking English.

1.14 Objectives of the Study

The study intends to fulfill the following objectives:

1. Identify the slow learner in speaking English at the Engineering College level.

2. To find some strategies for developing their speaking skill

3. To create awareness among the students to speak situation based conversation

4. To apply the strategies to the slow learners to make the students speak language fluently

5. To Identify the effectiveness of the strategies
1.15 Delimitation of the Study

The study was delimited in the following aspects:

1. The investigator confined her study to Shanmugathan Engineering College, Arasampatti, Thirumayam, Pudukkottai District, Tamil nadu.

2. The study was conducted on the B.E. / B.TECH first year students in Shanmuganathan Engineering College, Arasampatti, Tamil nadu.

3. The study was conducted to the students of Computer Science Engineering, Information Technology, Mechanical Engineering and Automobile Engineering only.

4. The study was conducted in the Communication skills laboratory.

5. The investigator applied some innovative strategies for developing the speaking skill of the students.

6. These strategies were implemented for six months during the working hours only.

1.16 Operational Definition of the key terms

i) Effectiveness: ‘Effectiveness’ means efficacy to accomplish a purpose; producing the intended or expected result.


iii) Innovative: ‘Innovative’ means tend to use hitherto not used.

iv) Strategies: ‘ Strategies’ means a plan, method, or series of maneuvers or stratagems for obtaining a specific result:
v) Developing: ‘Developing’ means to unfold more fully or to bring out all that is potentially contained in, or to bring out from a latent to an active or a visible state.

vi) Speaking: Speaking is one type of output skills. The students, who learn English as a second language, use this to express their basic ideas or expression of a language. This is one of the skills where the student ought to be strong.

1.17 Outline of the Thesis

The thesis includes six chapters. Following this Introduction, Chapter Two reviews relevant literature and research that informed the present study. Subsequently, gaps in the previous work are considered and research questions are raised for study.

Chapter Three describes the conceptual framework of the research and deals with the strategies and their strategies.

Chapter Four deals with research methodology that comprises objectives, assumptions, hypotheses and research design. Further this chapter deals with preparation of multimedia package and its effective administration of the pretest, progressive test, posttest, retention test, pre-attitude scale and post-attitude scale.

Chapter Five is data analysis that deals with various statistical treatments which are carried out after the data collection.

The last and sixth chapter is about findings and conclusions drawn out of this study.
1.18 Conclusion

The present chapter has introduced the origin of communication, history of English language, skills of English language learning, need for the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study and delimitation. The next chapter deals with the review of related literature.