

LEARNING SECOND LANGUAGE THROUGH RESOURCEFUL PRACTICES - AN ATTEMPT

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English Language Teaching education trend has recently been gaining in significance in education systems throughout the world. English Language Teaching (ELT) has tremendously changed over the last one decade. Language teaching in the twentieth century underwent numerous changes and innovation. In the past ten years the crucial factors have combined to affect current perspectives on the teaching of English: (A) The decline of methods, (B) A growing emphasis on both bottom-up and top-down skills, (C) The creation of new knowledge about English and, (D) Integrated and contextualized teaching of multiple language skills.

Generally every type of language teaching has its own technologies to maintain it. Language teachers who followed the grammar-translation method (GTM) (in which the teacher explained grammatical rules and students performed translations) relied on one of the most omnipresent technologies in U.S. education, the blackboard a perfect vehicle for the one-way transmission of information that method implied. The blackboard was later supplemented by the overhead projector, another excellent medium for the teacher-dominated classroom, as well as by early computer software programs which provided what were known as "drill-and-practice" grammatical exercises.

On another side, the audio-tape was the perfect medium for the audio-lingual method (in which students were believed to learn best through constant repetition in the target language). University provided the lab facility, where students would perform the repetition drills. Late 1970s, the audio-lingual method fell into disregard, at least in part owing to poor results achieved from expensive language laboratories. Whether in the lab or in the classroom, repetitive drills which focused only on language form and ignored communicative meaning achieved poor results.

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The 1980s and 1990s have seen a full-scale shift in the direction of communicative language teaching, with an emphasis on student engagement with authentic, meaningful, contextualized discourse. Within this general communicative trend, we can note two distinct perspectives, both of which have their implications in terms of how to integrate technology into the classroom.

Computers and language teaching have been walked hand to hand for a long time and contributed as teaching tools in the classroom. Computers and technology are still a source of uncertainties and anxiety for many teachers everywhere in the world despite the latest advances applicable to language teaching such as specialized websites, blogs, wikis, language teaching methodology, journals, and so.

Communication skills constitute several core elements such as the fluency in the English language and the fundamentals of visual communication. The range of employment for aspirants is being expanded in the twenty-first century. In such prevailing situations, students are expected to possess multiple skills to communicate perfectly in different situations. They are required to think creatively and critically and demonstrate both interpersonal and team skills. There is a desperate need to possess a set of soft skills demanded by recruiters. Since professional and result oriented companies always seek for the employees who can communicate influentially and efficiently. Communication skills are cited as the most important decisive factor in choosing the executives. A lack of sufficient communication skills serves only to be disqualified in the placement interviews.

To cater these skills many theories have been proposed by the linguists. Communicative Technique in language teaching starts from a theory of languages as communication. According to Hymes, the goal of language teaching is to develop communicative competence. His theory of communicative competence is a definition of what a speaker needs to know in order to communicatively competent in the society.

Student' role:

It is felt necessary to discuss the role of a student within CLT technique. According to Breen and Candlin, the learner's role within CLT is: The role of a student is a representative – between the self, the learning process and the object of learning. The suggestion for the student is that he should contribute as much as he gains and thereby learn in an independent way. Thus, CLT methodologists' attributes success and failure as an accomplishment and responsibility achieved and acknowledged mutually.

Teacher's Role:

It is equally essential to discuss the role of teachers in the Communicative Language Teaching Technique, who thereby, assume several roles. Breen and Candlin describe teacher's role in the following terms: The teacher has two main roles --- the first is to facilitate the communication process between all the participation in the classroom and between these participants and the various activities and texts. The second role is to act as an independent participant within the learning – teaching group.

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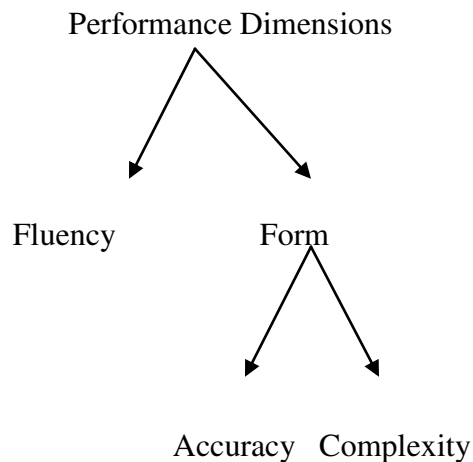
Thus, Communicative Language Teaching technique is considered the best as an approach rather than a method. It refers to a set of principles that reflect a communicative view of language learning that can be used to support a wide variety of classroom procedures like according to Richards.J.C.

- Learners learn a language through using it to communicate
- Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities.
- Fluency is an important dimension of communication.
- Communication involves the integration of skills.
- Learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error.

CLT technique adopts a learner-centered approach and experience-based view and allows the learners to articulate their future language needs. The specific language needs of the learners eventually form the base for CLT material design.

Dimensions of Language Performance:

In today’s classroom a lot of authentic listening and reading material being used and far fewer contrived texts designed to illustrate grammatical form or present items of vocabulary and with no attempt to communicate a meaningful message to the listener or reader. Perhaps the most enduring legacy of the communicative approach is that it has allowed teachers to incorporate motivating and purposeful communicative activities and principles into their teaching.



Communicative Activities:

The present study attempts to present a few activities helpful to improve the communication skills of learners.

Activity	Description	Presentation

<p>Communicating Time</p>	<p>The amount of time we spend communicating with others is presented in this activity.</p>	<p>Ask participants how much time they think they actually spend communicating with others.</p>
<p>Communication is the Key</p>	<p>This activity consists of an interactive discussion about the importance of communications in the workplace</p>	<p>Challenge participants to thoroughly explain how better communications would not be necessary to correct the situation or problem.</p>

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Vocabulary Acquisition

The words students know and the strategies they have available to learn new words are critical to success in school and in life. The Vocabulary for Achievement series, grades three through twelve, is a carefully crafted set of work texts providing direct instruction on this crucial topic. In addition to teaching word meanings directly, the program gives strategies to help students become independent word learners. Vocabulary for Achievement is designed to be consistent with the best-informed, most recent research.

An investigation of the research literature suggests that vocabulary is best learned by a combination of direct and indirect instruction.

Direct Instruction:

In direct instruction, words are explicitly taught to students. It has been demonstrated that the direct and intensive instruction of words positively affects vocabulary according to Beck & McKeown (789). Mezynski significantly amplifies a student’s knowledge base of word meanings. (792). Stahl & Fairbanks says that this is because the sequence uses well-crafted lessons to teach carefully chosen words (78). In addition, students learn much vocabulary through reading (National Reading Panel: 2000). This type of vocabulary increase is due to incidental, or indirect instruction. As students read extensively, they both obtain new word meanings and deepen the meanings of words that are only partially known (Nagy & Scott: 2000).

An extensive body of research indicates that students acquire vocabulary through Incidental Learning- exposure to and interaction with increasingly complex and rich oral language and by encountering lots of new words in text, either in the course of their own reading or by being read to.

Incidental Word Learning:

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Incidental vocabulary learning refers to learning vocabulary without any intent to learn it. In other words the primary objective of the learners is to either comprehend a passage or delivering a speech. (Schmidt: 1994)

Incidental learning has been defined differently by scholars in the field. For instance, Schmidt (1994) presented three definitions as follows:

1. Learning without the intent to learn.
2. The learning of one stimulus aspect while paying attention to another stimulus aspect ... incidental learning is learning of one thing (...) when the learner's primary objective is to do something else.
3. The learning of formal features through a focus of attention on semantic features (11-26).

It is said that incidental learning can be achieved through extensive reading. It requires opportunities to be provided for extensive reading and writing outside the classrooms.

However, incidental vocabulary learning through reading often may not benefit the L2 beginner learners because they lack vocabulary knowledge to comprehend the text. In other words, extensive reading and listening are useful to more proficient and advanced learners. (Nation: 2001)

Huckin and Coady (1999) mention the following advantages of incidental vocabulary learning:

- It is contextualized, giving the learner a rich sense of word use and meaning.
- It is pedagogically efficient in that it yields two activities at the same time: vocabulary acquisition and reading.
- It is more learner-based, in that it is the learner who selects the reading materials.
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Explicit Instruction

It involves diagnosing the words learners need to know, present words for the first time, elaborating word knowledge and developing fluency with known words. It deals with identifying specific vocabulary acquisition targets for learners. It varies according to different proficiency levels of various learners and can be successfully used with the elementary and intermediate learners. The teacher plays a major role in designing a special vocabulary list.

Integrated Approach

Grammar and discourse are viewed as separate entities for many years. The introduction of Communicative language teaching era revealed that a disconnected approach makes language teaching unnatural. Hence, an integrated approach is advocated for effective Language Learning. Lexis, grammar and discourse are well connected and given equal and appropriate importance without prioritizing one and dismissing the other.

Independent Strategy Development

The learners are given opportunities for inferring meanings from the given text. It is assumed to be a very complex and difficult strategy as learners are expected to know 19 words out of every 20 words. In addition, learners are required to know the background of the text in order to guess the correct meaning. It is proved initially, guessing words from the context is time consuming and therefore it is more likely to work for more proficient learners than elementary

learners. Once the learners decide that a word is worth guessing, they might pursue a five step method as below:

- Find out the part of speech of the unknown word
- Look at the immediate context and simplify it if necessary
- Look at the wider context. This involves examining the clause with the known word and its relationship to the surrounding clauses and sentences.
- Guess the meaning of the unknown word
- Check that the guess is correct

Other well known independent strategies like using dictionaries, maintaining vocabulary notebooks, prefixes, roots and suffixes and so on are also a part of independent strategy development.

Microteaching Strategies

This technique was propagated by Dwight Allen in the year 1963 at Stanford University, California. Later, it spread to the developed countries like USA and UK. It was introduced by D.D.Tiwari at Government Central Pedagogical Institute, Allahabad in 1967 (69). According to Sharma, Micro Teaching is a technique which allows teachers to apply clearly defined skills through carefully prepared lesson in a planned series of five to ten minutes encounters with a small group of students. The following are some of the characteristics of Micro-Teaching Skills:

- It is a training technique.
- Time, content and class size are taken in a minimized form.
- One skill is practiced at a time.
- Students' participation is focused.
- Immediate feedback.
- Maximum transfer (70).

The study observes certain steps that are involved in Microteaching as follows:

1. **Defining the skill:** A particular skill is defined in terms of teaching behaviour to provide knowledge and awareness.
2. **Demonstration of the skill:** The selected skill is demonstrated.
3. **Lesson plans:** A short lesson is planned under the guidance of supervisor.
4. **Instructions:** The planned lesson is instructed to a small group of 5 to 10 students for about 5 to 6 minutes.
5. **Discussion:** The students are allowed to discuss to provide feedback.
6. **Re-planning:** The students are encouraged to practice keeping in view the points of discussion.
7. **Re-teaching:** The re-planned lesson is re--taught to another group small group of students of the same class for the same duration to practice the skill.
8. **Re-discussion:** The students are allowed to discuss again through some suggestions and encouragement towards their performance.
9. **Repeating the cycle:** The cycle of same steps is repeated till the desired level of skill is achieved (70).

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Research on Microteaching has revealed that several skills can be taught through this technique akin to Questioning skill, Explaining skill, Illustration skill and stimulus variation skill. The present study intends to review the importance of these skills elaborately.

Questioning Skill

In fact, questioning is an integral skill of a good lesson exciting mental activity. According to Socrates, the teacher should present the subject matter in such a way that the learner recognizes the truth and identifies himself/herself with it. Moreover, questions are fundamental to the concept of learning (71).

Multi-Skill Approach

Usually, language learning at technical colleges' level has been based on:

- a. The study of selected literary texts.
- b. Lectures on these texts.
- c. Dictating notes to the students on the expected questions (96).

Thus, the traditional methodology of learning language obviously has lacked the following framework according to Kripa Gautam:

- A reliable taxonomy of objectives.
 - A detailed analysis of the means through which these specified objectives are achieved.
 - An operational plan for achieving these objectives by following certain strategies.
- (61)

The language learning is a form of activity wherein, one learns a language through several activities. The students learn to speak by speaking, and to write by writing because there is no short-cut to learning. The more students are made to practice speaking and writing activities, the better chances of their acquiring the language. They should be provided plenty of opportunities to practice what they learn. Such practice should enable the students to use language independently and efficiently in real situations they come across later in life.

The role of teacher should be an initiator, a supporter, co-coordinator, and guide for language learning activity on part of the student. Recently, Central Institute of English & Foreign Language (CIEFL) now renamed as English & Foreign Languages University after attaining the status of university has advocated Multi-Skill Approach (60)

Lexical Approach in Second Language Acquisition

Lexical knowledge is now acknowledged to be central to communicative competence and the acquisition and development of a second language. According to Schmitt, “. . . whereas the grammar of a language is largely in place by the time a child is 10 years old . . . , vocabulary continues to be learned throughout one's lifetime” (4).

Therefore, the foundation for vocabulary development and writing at later levels is done through reading extensively with comprehension and interest.

The debate on “instructed” and “incidental” vocabulary acquisition suggests that the very large vocabulary required of a high-school student for academic purposes is not acquired in an all-or-none, “taught” manner, but built up gradually and incrementally through reading (cf. Krashen

1989; Schmitt 2000). When language is adequately taught in the early years, he/she can naturally build up these higher-order skills independently, with some guidance from the classroom.

Research has also proved that greater gains accumulate when language instruction moves away from the traditional approach of learning definitions of words (the dictionary approach) to an enriched approach, which encourages associations with other words and contexts (the encyclopedia approach).

Students must be exposed to a whole range of genres ranging from various perspectives of equity and harmony given that a quantum of independent reading is expected. Sensitization to language as a vehicle of gendering can also be initiated for those groups where teacher and student competencies permit this an ideal area for an across-the-curriculum exploration of language use.

Traditionally, prose, fiction, and poetry are the sources of language-learning materials. While there is a trend for inclusion of a wider range of more contemporary and authentic texts accessible and culturally appropriate pieces of literature continue to play a pivotal role; most children think of the English class as a place in which to read stories. The use of language to develop the imagination is a major aim of later language study.

Simultaneously, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approach can be adopted where necessary and feasible. It serves as pioneer of specializations to be followed in the study of language at the undergraduate level.

The learners' introduction to writing is through such authentic tasks as letter writing for people in their locality who need a scribe and letter writing to other children or to others in society who volunteer to correspond with the child. Emphasis is laid on study skills such as note-making, note-taking, reference skills, spoken and written communication skills as well as public speaking, interviewing, and debating, rather than on writing essays on well-worn topics. Exposure may be attempted to well-known speeches, and the structure of arguments in the form of Group Discussions is analyzed.

Syntax can be introduced after basic linguistic competence is acquired, as a means of reflecting on academic language and an intellectually interesting activity in its own right. Some grammar is in any case necessary for the ability to meaningfully make use of dictionary entries, as learner-dictionaries now incorporate a fair amount of "grammar" and usage as notes and in their coding.

Recently, the lexical approach to second language teaching has received interest as an alternative to grammar-based approaches. It concentrates on developing learners' ability with lexis, or words and word grouping. It is based on the idea that an important part of language acquisition is the ability to comprehend and produce lexical phrases as unanalyzed wholes, or "chunks," and that these chunks become the raw data by which learners perceive patterns of language traditionally thought of as grammar (109).

In this approach, the instruction is focused on relatively fixed expressions that occur frequently in spoken language. This process provides an overview of the methodological foundations underlying the lexical approach and the pedagogical implications suggested by them.

Activities used to widen learners' knowledge of lexical chains include the following:

- Intensive and extensive listening and reading in the target language.
- First and second language comparisons and translation—carried out chunk-for-chunk, rather than word-for-word—aimed at raising language awareness.

- Repetition and recycling of activities, such as summarizing a text orally one day and again a few days later to keep words and expressions that have been learned active.
- Guessing the meaning of vocabulary items from context.
- Noticing and recording language patterns and collocations.
- Working with dictionaries and other reference tools.
- Working with language corpuses created by the teacher for use in the classroom or accessible on the Internet—such as the research word partnerships, preposition usage, style, and so on.

Error Analysis:

Savielle opines that Error Analysis (EA) includes an internal focus on learners' creative ability to build up vocabulary. It is based on the description and analysis of actual errors of learners in Second language (37).

Silent Way:

The Silent Way method is devised by Caleb Gattegno (1972). It is based on the hypothesis that the teacher should be silent as much as possible in the classroom and the learner should be encouraged to produce as much language as possible.

Acculturate Approach:

There may be more native speakers of other countries such as Chinese, Spanish or Hindi, but it is English they speak when they talk across cultures, and English they teach their children to help them become citizens of an increasingly intertwined world.

At telephone call centers around the world, the emblem of a globalized workplace, the language spoken is, naturally, English. On the radio, pop music carries the sounds of English to almost every corner of the earth. In some places English has invaded the workplace along with the global economy. Some Swedish companies, for example, use English within the workplace, even though they are in Sweden, because so much of their business is done, through the Internet and other communications, with the outside world. (Mydans Seth: 2007)

Vocabulary Practices

In their school days, students learn English through grammar and English literature. For engineering students, English is a necessary tool for getting into a good job and for a cosmopolitan business and technical outlook. So, the aim of the subject English in engineering sector is to encourage the learners to involve in learning the target language and to acquire proficiency in technical communication. Some students, out of personal interest and motivation, or even perhaps because of their family backgrounds where English may be used for interpersonal interactions, learn vocabulary through extensive reading. But many students depend on the teachers for the development of vocabulary.

Therefore, Vocabulary is a basic component of language proficiency which provides the basis for learners' performance in other skills, such as speaking, reading, listening and writing.

The study has found that the learners may be motivated to enhance their vocabulary through embracing certain language learning strategies. They are as follows:

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1. Newspaper Worksheet

Newspaper articles are a great source of building the learners' vocabulary. These articles can be used to introduce vocabulary related to a particular topic from a newspaper. It helps the students get motivated towards reading newspaper in their leisure. Advanced learners may even create innovative ideas in developing their vocabulary.

2. Headline Vocabulary Cards

This worksheet is suitable for pair work. It can be used for introducing or training headline vocabulary such as:

- Pairs are formed for this activity.
- A set of cards are given to each pair.
- Incomplete tables are printed on the cards. They have to complete them.
- Students complete the tables individually with headline vocabulary matching the appropriate headline word and its meaning given in the box.
- After the students complete the table they are allowed to check the correct answers in pairs.

affect badly promise help connection discussions request attempt support jewels tense-situation restraint limit clever activity painful experience investigation fire manager director mystery			
Word	Newspaper	Meaning	Word
	Aid		Key
	Axe		Link
	Back		Move
	Bar		Ordeal
	Bid		Oust
	Blast		Plea
	Blaze		Pledge
	Boost		Ploy
	Boss		Poll

3. Graphic Organizers

Graphic Organizers are used to visually depict relationships among concepts or words. The students should decide on a key concept to be explored. They brainstorm and offer as many words or phrases as possible related to the concept. They generate a list of words or phrases. They should categorize words and place them in a graphic arrangement in the form of tree diagram, clusters. They share maps among groups.

3. Word Map

A word map is a visual organizer that promotes the enhancement of vocabulary. Graphic representation stimulates students to think about terms or concepts in several ways.

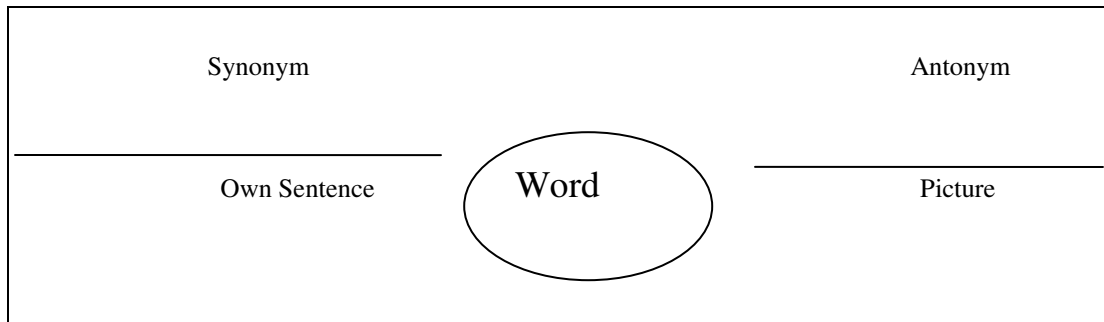
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Generally word maps engage them in developing a definition, synonyms, antonyms and a picture for a given vocabulary word or concept. The word maps are useful for helping students:

- Develop their understanding of a word.
- Think about new terms or concepts in several ways by seeking responses to queries such as “What is it?” ; “What are some examples?”

Guidelines to use Word Maps:

- Vocabulary word and the map should be introduced to the students.
- Instructions on the usage of map by placing the target word in the box should be provided.
- Students should be prompted to suggest words or phrases to fill in the gaps.
- Students should be encouraged to use synonyms, antonyms, and a picture to help illustrate the new target word or concept.
- Model how to write a definition using the information on the word map.



Word Prediction

Students should be allowed to preview the lesson or a passage and select a few vocabulary words. These words should be listed in order and students are instructed to write a paragraph predicting the theme of the lesson or passage using all the selected words in the paragraph.

The paragraphs written by all the students should be redistributed after explaining the lesson. Then the students should use the same words and write a summary of the paragraph.

The following worksheets display how the words are supposed to be predicted by the students. It is left to the imagination of the students to predict what happens next as per the picture portrays. Such an activity raises the curiosity of the students. They surely try to guess plenty of probable actions that may take place looking at the pictures. Moreover, visual graphics invoke interest among them.

It improves the vocabulary knowledge of the students. Unconsciously, they start using words and sentences that befits the context. Though elementary, such an activity really is helpful in improving their vocabulary.

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Name _____

Date _____ Grade _____

Make a prediction about the pictures. Write your predictions on the lines.



1. Look at the picture. Predict what will happen next.

Look at the picture. Predict what will happen next.





Look at the picture. Predict what will happen next.

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Name _____

Date _____ Grade _____

Make a prediction about the pictures. Write your predictions on the lines.



← 1. Look at the picture. Predict what will happen next.

Look at the picture. Predict what will happen next. →



← Look at the picture. Predict what will happen next.

Source: Worksheet Library: 2012

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