



BOOSTING RURAL VERNACULAR LEARNERS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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ABSTRACT

A lot of strategies are being formed and reformed from time to time to make teaching and learning of English effective and fruitful but one or the other way, these strategies fail to put forth expected outcome from the vernacular learners. English is taught as a second language to the vernacular learners in acquisition poor environment with limited exposure to the language and they have to face a lot of difficulties in acquiring English language competency. They do not get congenial atmosphere at schools and colleges to meet with the goals of learning English. At the very initial stage, when it is expected to motivate such kind of learners to acquire the language skills, it is imbibed in their tender minds that English, being an alien language, is too difficult to learn. In such disappointing situation motivation plays a pivotal role to boost the confidence of the discouraged learners. Our paper aims at studying and analyzing the various ways in which motivation can prove to be one of the best stimulants in acquiring and enhancing English language skills.

Key Words: motivation, vernacular learners, acquisition poor environment

INTRODUCTION

In the present era of globalization and commercialization learning English is indispensable for both rural and urban students. Urban students learn in acquisition rich environment and pick up the target language easily. They watch English programmes on TV, have access to internet, read English magazines and newspapers which provide them exposure to the language but our rural students remain deprived of such facilities. As a result they have to make a lot of efforts to acquire proficiency in this alien language. In spite of having immense potential, they fail to compete in life and career with their urban counterparts.

Rural learners have to face a lot of problems in acquiring English language skills such as:

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- **Lack of supportive environment and exposure to the target language:**
Environment plays a crucial role in learning any language be it a native language or any foreign language. Language can be learnt fast and easily if it is spoken by the people in community and by the members of the family. Family and social background play a crucial role in the process of learning a language. In rural areas the students speak Marathi at home. Their parents, friends, and relatives also communicate in Marathi. They do not get opportunity to listen to English language. Even in schools and colleges their medium of instruction is Marathi. There also they do not get appropriate environment for learning. Even the teachers in such rural areas are not proficient in English and teach English in their regional language. In acquisition rich environment students learn fast as they get enough exposure to the target language. Students who hail from rural areas lack such environment hence, in spite of putting all their efforts they fail to gain proficiency in English language.
- **Fear Factor:** Due to the fear inculcated in the young minds the rural learners do not even dare to read, write and speak English with confidence which ultimately leads to frustration and nervousness. They have fear that they might go wrong and will be laughed at. In order to remove this fear and make them equally competent with their urban counterparts, Govt. has taken appreciable initiatives by introducing English from the very first standard. Moreover, the text books are properly designed to meet with the goals of learning English language but the question is whether the text books are properly taught? Whether the various activities in the text books, that aim at enhancing language skills, are conducted in the classrooms of rural domain? And if not what are the reasons? Such questions need attention.
- **Absence of techno friendly classrooms:** Technology has opened up new vistas in teaching and learning English. Teaching based on the use of technology has a positive and long lasting effect on the learners. Technology makes lessons easy to understand, interesting and enjoyable. But unfortunately, the classrooms in rural areas are devoid of technological tools like computers, projector, OHP etc. Such tools if used in teaching English will certainly help in generating interest among the rural learners for learning English.

Language is not a subject but a skill which can be mastered through constant practice and continuous exposure. Whenever one talks of learning a language one should focus on the four basic language skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. No doubt, due to limitations in rural areas it becomes a herculean task to motivate rural learners to learn English but by making the best use of available resources the teacher can create interest among such deprived learners.



Available resources and their use:

Radio, TV, Tape recorder and mobile phones

In this era of advanced technology radio is now out of date but it can prove to be a blessing for the rural students. This device is made available to all schools by the government with a purpose to enhance language skills of the students. It is a good source to develop listening skills of the students. Teachers should inculcate in students the habit of listening to live news on AIR every morning at 8;15 am. This regular listening of news will help the learners to get themselves acquainted with proper sound and pronunciation and this definitely will sharpen their listening ability. They should be motivated to continue listening even if they are not able to understand the entire news. Teachers can give the students some writing task after listening to the news. Task such as ‘summarize the news in your own words’ or ‘write few lines about the news you liked most’ etc. can be given to the students for writing practice. The recorded audio can also be played on tape recorders or mobiles. Teachers can make worksheets based on the recorded audio beforehand and circulate them among the students before playing the audio. After listening to the audio the students will fill the worksheets. Worksheets may include some objective questions like multiple choice questions, fill in the blanks, match the column etc.

T. V. offers a number of opportunities to young rural learners to learn English. It can be used to generate interest and make teaching more effective and fruitful. Teachers should select such TV programmes which are interactive in nature and based on everyday activities. Teachers should motivate the students to watch cartoon shows, English News Channels, National Geography etc. Teacher can show short video clips in the class. Before playing the video in the class the teacher can give them certain tasks like select 10 new words while you watch the video, try to pronounce the words as shown in the video, find out the sentences of same pattern etc. After the task is over they can be asked some questions and their responses can be elicited. A group of students may be asked to discuss among themselves and write a small paragraph about the video they watched. Another group of students may be asked to narrate the entire video.

Teaching English through advertisements:

Advertisements have undeniable impact. They grab the attention of the viewers at once. Students remember the punch lines, tag lines or slogans very easily which can be used to teach various sentence patterns. For example:

- What an idea sirji!- Idea Mobile

Students can be asked to frame same type of sentences like what a beautiful sight!, what a man he is!, What a film! What an interesting movie! etc.

- Let's make things better. – Philips

Sentences beginning with let us such as 'let's enjoy the party' 'let's join the course' 'let's celebrate' 'let's move' can be easily taught with the help of this advertisement.

- Express yourself. - Airtel
Believe in the best – BPL
Taste the Thunder – Thums up

Imperative sentences like 'brush your teeth everyday', 'Keep your bag clean' 'Do it yourself' 'Bring your text book tomorrow' etc. can be framed.

- I love you Rasna. – Rasna
Boost is the secret of our energy – Boost
An idea can change your life – Idea

Statements can be taught with the help of above slogans.

- Kya aap close up karte hai? – Close up
(Do you use close up?)

Kya apke paste me namak hai – Colgate
(Is there salt in your toothpaste?)

Hungry kya? – Domino's Pizza
(Are you hungry?)

English translation of the above advertisements are very helpful to teach verbal questions.

Pair/Group Activities:

If the learners do not learn by the way the teachers teach, the teacher should teach them in their ways. For the vernacular learners the basic hindrance in the process of acquiring language competency is, no doubt, the deep rooted fear in them. So in order to wipe out this fear, teachers should involve them in pair or group activities. Pair/ group activities render effective role in uprooting their fear and making them comfortable which is very much essential. There is no doubt what one can not learn individually, can learn in groups easily. In pair or in group, learners feel free to communicate with one another. They forget their fear

and easily get mixed up with the group members. This enhances not only the language skills but also various essential life skills. During these activities teachers must monitor and motivate.

1. **Situational Conversations:** The class can be divided into groups and every group can be given one situation related to their day-to-day life like birthdays and other celebrations, their favourite movies etc.. The students will discuss among themselves and make conversations on the given situation. During this activity the teacher must motivate the learners to converse in English without caring for mistakes.
2. **Picture Description:** Students often feel more attracted towards images and photographs. We can show them some pictures in the class and tell them to write some sentences based on the picture. To create competitive environment, the class can be divided into groups and the group that comes up with the maximum number of correct sentences can be awarded with points or we can also give some gifts to motivate the group members. These incentives generate more enthusiasm in them.
3. **Learning by Fun:** The world of Bollywood captures the attention of the viewers. This captivating world can be brought into the classroom to make teaching learning process interesting and lively. Movies have always been a topic of interest for the students. They are familiar with the title of many movies. The familiar titles of the movies can be used to teach different grammar items. For example 'The Burning Train' (Burning – adjective, Train – Noun) 3 idiots (3 – adjective, idiots – Noun), in 'Dirty Picture' (Dirty- adjective and Picture- noun) ' Beautiful Mind' (Beautiful- adjective, mind- noun)'Refugee'- Noun 'Bombay'- Proper Noun etc. This can be conducted as a pair or group activity.

Bollywood songs can also be used in the classroom to teach grammar. There is a famous song from the old film 'Julie' which can be used to teach present, past and future time.

My heart is beating (present continuous tense)/ keeps on repeating (present indefinite tense)/ I am waiting for you (present continuous tense)/ my love encloses a plot of roses (present indefinite tense)/ and when shall be then our next meeting (future time)/ that time is fleeting, time is fleeting, time is fleeting (present continuous tense)

Interrogative structure can be better explained with the help of this song 'Why did you break my heart'/?/ why did we fall in love?/?/ why did you go away, away, away ?

Conclusion:

Motivation alone can work as the best stimulant in the process of learning any alien language. We can not underestimate the learning abilities of the rural learners. They have immense potential but due to the absence of positive learning promoting environment they, in one or

the other way, lag behind their urban counterparts. In such a disappointing situation, not only the students, but also the teachers, teaching in rural areas also need motivation to teach English in an enjoyable and stress free environment. Teachers teaching in such areas should design the interesting language activities considering the needs of the rural learners and try their best to equip the skills of the students. He should play the role of a facilitator by using available resources. Besides, the government and the private bodies running schools and colleges in the rural areas must extend their helping hands by providing them the same facilities that the urban language teachers avail. Then only we can hope for the expected outcome from the rural vernacular learners.

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