

Classroom Management in Rural English Classrooms

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Abstract

The effective teaching of English in rural classrooms is mainly possible through classroom management as the class comprises heterogeneous, non-English speaking, irregular and first generation learners with varied proficiency levels. The classroom management creates positive learning ambience to make the learners feel at ease, reducing fear and inhibition amidst rural setting. The teacher has to keep on changing his or her role based on the situation or context. At times, the teacher must act as a planner, informer, manager, monitor, involver, parent/friend, diagnostician or resource person. The roles change at different stages of teaching. Before the lesson-teachers are Planners and Diagnosticians; during the lesson, informers, managers, monitors, resources and after the lesson, diagnosticians and planners. Feedback can be obtained through formal or informal assessments in the form of grades, marks, comments, suggestions. Peer feedback can give a positive effect on classroom dynamics and can help to train learners in skills they need to garner as autonomous and student-centric.

Strategies of a classroom management include providing student friendly atmosphere, bilingual usage through simple rules, task based activities, use of locally available resources and the real life situations. Teacher's challenges consist of motivating the learners to learn target language culture, boosting self confidence, thrusting self autonomy, presenting the language in bits, encouraging and praising the weak learners also, asking the learners to meet some first language speakers of English, citing live examples of learners who became successful in learning English and reached their destinations, exposure to audios and videos of English speakers, focus on form to acquire language, experimenting the language with interaction. Reasons for errors of the learners should also be considered as the major barriers. Firstly the interference/transfer influence of the learner's first language on the second language and the second being the developmental error which unconsciously works out and organizes the language. Overgeneralization is the wrong use of verb forms and using in a wrong form. Further inter-language learners own version of second language-learning styles.

Key words: strategies, interference, developmental error, inter-language.

Introduction:

This paper attempts to show how best classroom management is required to teach English well in rural English classrooms. Obviously, the students hail from rural background without any interest to learn English. Since their schooling, they have been tuned to study and listen to English in their mother tongue rather than English being taught only in English. It sounds odd for them when we start teaching English in English language. So, it is mandatory for us to understand them, the factors that hamper their interest, besides knowing their difficulty in learning English. In this context, the management of English classroom is a major factor. The class comprises heterogeneous, non-English speaking, irregular, and First Generation learners. The teacher has to play many roles in the process of classroom management. Firstly, the teacher needs to know the background of the students, reason for their irregularity as a parent and assure them success as a friend. This is possible through obtaining friendly feedback from the students and the parents. Some say that they were taught English in their mother tongue, some others conform their difficulty to learn English. Some say that they learned important questions and cleared their exams. Some express their phobia to learn English. The traditional way of teaching will not work here. Thanks to the Commissionerate of Collegiate Education, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, for training the English teachers in English Language Fellowship in different spells, for better understanding of rural students and teaching them English with the help of task based activities. The conduct of Diagnostic Test is more desirable as it helps in assessing the student knowledge levels with which the teacher can formulate the strategies for teaching.

The teacher's role in rural colleges is both a challenge and responsibility. They act as a bridge between students and English language. There is a need to motivate, instill confidence, create congenial ambience, narrate successful stories, quote live examples, and explain practical value of English for higher education, employment and communication. The rural students must be exposed to real life situations and classroom interactions. There are many methods as of teaching. But the three most important ones such as Grammar Translation method, Direct Method and Communicative Language Teaching method have greater relevance. Students study grammar and learn a list of vocabulary and can grasp some words in the lesson. When they learn rules of grammar, then they can read and write English. But this method is not useful in everyday life.

The second is the Direct Method which emphasizes on Audio lingual method and Audio visual method. This method improves language skills such as Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. Students improve their language by imitating the teacher and repeating the same after the teacher. The drawback in this method is the teacher cannot teach in this method completely. Advanced learners get bored with it. The third is the Communicative Language Teaching wherein the students are exposed to language. The teacher can set different task based activities, both inside and outside the classroom. Students are asked to use the language irrespective of their mistakes. The teacher is at liberty to conduct the real based situations for inspiring the learners. The task motivates the learners and the real materials like everyday newspapers are set as examples. Thus a lot of English is brought to the class from outside without the help of the teacher.

The Presentation Practice Production (PPP) Frame work provides an opportunity to the learners to learn new language and improve their LSRW skills. In Presentation phase the teacher successfully makes the learners understand the new vocabulary, spelling, framing of new language structures etc. done in the class. The teacher stresses on fluency. In practice phase, the learners carry out many task based activities and learn new language. It is like drilling of direct method. It sounds to be mechanical but physically new language be learnt easily. It is a controlled practice. In Production Phase learners will be able to use functional language that makes them survive outside the classroom.

Of the 4 language skills, reading and listening are receptive. Reading can be pre-reading, while reading and post reading. Activities like Brainstorming, Discussion, Pre-teaching, Questioning and Finding difficult words, come under pre reading. Reading for specific purpose, comprehension questions, jumbled sentences, true/false come under while reading activities. Retell, rewrite, discussion are the post reading activities. The stages of speaking and writing are revising language, practise drilling and doing pair work and group work. In pair work or group work, any short and easy activity can be done in the class. More of STT and less of TTT can make the learners learn the language. Thus the teacher can do classroom management in rural English classrooms following the tips mentioned above equating rural learners on par with urban learners equipping them with fluency, accuracy and appropriacy.

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SP Publications

International Journal Of English and Studies (IJOES)
An International Peer-Reviewed and Refereed Journal; **Impact Factor:8.337(SJIF)**
ISSN: 2581-8333|Volume 8, SpecialIssue-1;2026
