



Language Laboratory and English Language Learning

KEYWORDS

Coronary Ostia, Aortic valve. Annulus, Commissural line

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ABSTRACT *Language is a means of communication which includes sending and receiving of messages. The students from various backgrounds feel rather difficult to learn and acquire proficiency in English. The good communication skills i.e. in English language particularly have become essential these days. Therefore, English language learning has become must for those who aspire to advance their careers. In fact, learning language is not the same as learning any other subject. It cannot be confined only for writing in the examinations; it is certainly more than that. Language is a social phenomenon. It has a social relevance. The four basic language skills viz. listening, speaking, reading, writing are needed to be practiced. Communication involves one's ability to listen carefully in order to grasp the message and to give proper response. The language laboratory can play a very important in the language learning process. Being a technological device, it facilitates the students to learn a language with essential proficiency for communication.*

Introduction:

In recent years language laboratories have spread widely and rapidly. They are installed in many educational institutions. Our success of teaching is dependent on our understanding of learning. The language lab can play a significant role in the learning of the foreign language i.e. English in a happy atmosphere and in a successful way. The Computer Assisted Language Laboratory (CALL) motivates the students' learning attitude and provides an interactive learning. The language lab applications provide an effective way to learn the English language. The use of computerized language lab certainly enhances the quality of language proficiency.

Language Laboratory:

A language laboratory is an audio-visual computerized device used for learning the foreign language. Probably, it was the University of Grenoble where the first language lab was installed. Initially, it was in the form of reel and cassettes. But these days it is assisted with computers and other multimedia. It is a technological source in imparting language skills. The language labs are developed on the methodology of basic language skills viz. LSRW.

Nature of the Language Lab:

As its name suggests, the language laboratory is a place of experiments. By experimenting with our students, teachers can find out, whether something works or not. In language lab each student has his own computer with earphones. With the help of microphone, this is attached to the earphone; he can record his own voice. He can play back his recording to check his mistakes and compare with a model version. Each learner can work for long time and at his own pace. Most importantly in language lab each learner can receive individual attention from the teacher which generally not possible in a classroom. The learner is made to repeat or learn by heart certain selected words, phrases, sentences and conversations. He is also given a variety of structural drills and role-playing exercises which encourage him to demonstrate what he is learning.

Forms of practice:

The laboratory is considered primarily as a practicing device. The learner's comprehension of spoken language can also be developed in the laboratory and his control over new material rehearsed in simulated dialogues. Listening, drilling, comprehension, production and problem exercises are the forms of practice.

1. Listening:

It is the prior and essential skill required for comprehension.

If we want to give the learner the opportunity of learning on his own, as the language lab enables us to do. We should give him a great deal of simple and interesting material to listen to. Listening and repetition help remembering, though it does not ensure understanding. In the past the laboratory has been used mainly as a means of getting the learner to talk. It neglected the skills of listening. In the lab the learner can listen a variety of voices and accents. He can listen to what people actually say in situation. He can choose the material which suits his own interest and level of comprehension.

Listening Library:

A library of listening materials for the use in the lab will definitely serve the following purposes:

1. It will create an interest among the learners about the language.
2. It will certainly develop his power of understanding and give him a sense of confidence.
3. It will provide an opportunity of learning to him with interest.

2. Drills:

The drills are supposed to train the learner to talk by helping him to master the basic structural pattern of the language. Meaningful drills and meaningless drills both can be used for structural or pronunciation practice. Meaningless drills are already well-established in the classroom and in the language lab. They are usually called 'structural drills'.

a) Meaningless drills: Such kind of drills are generally used for the teaching any new language to the students. Suppose we want to teach the perfect tense in English. We want the learner to be able to produce utterances such as:

I have already seen it.
I have already done it.
I have already made it.

The simplest way to get him produce such utterances is to make him repeat them after the teacher. But once he repeats the 1st example as a model, there is no need to give him each succeeding example in full. We can prompt him to produce further examples. E.g.

Prompt Response

i) I have already read it. I have already read it.
Seen I have already seen it.
Done I have already done it.
Made I have already made it.

In language laboratory the prompts are generally recorded in advance.

b) Meaningful drills: It is said that a language without meaning is like a chicken without its head. Meaningful drills are useful for those who know the basics of the language. Suppose we were to put a picture as a prompt. Such drills require the substitution of new verbs and nouns. The successful completion of a drill depends on the student already possessing an adequate knowledge of meaning relationships in the language.

3. Comprehension exercises:

Comprehension exercises themselves have two major purposes.

- i) The student is intended to understand a text.
- ii) The student is made to show that he has understood.

The main object of the comprehension exercises is to make the students to select the most appropriate interpretation of something he has heard. The prompt of a comprehension exercises may be any spoken text, from a single sentence to a long passage, in prose or in verse.

Answering questions, taking notes, summarizing, writing the passage i.e. dictation etc. can be the various types of comprehension exercises.

4. Production Exercises:

Such exercises help the students to apply the rules whatever he learnt. The purpose of it is to get a continuous linguistic response from the learner. It may take the form of a rhyme or a poem, a passage or a conversation. Following are some of types of Production Exercises:

a) Repetition: Repetition is a re-creative exercise rather than a creative one. The things can be repeated and rehearsed in the language lab are rhymes, conversations etc. It can serve as a means of familiarization of foreign language to non-native speakers.

b) Reading aloud: It could be considered as unfashionable in modern language teaching, In fact reading aloud is an effective and certainly a specialized skill. The language lab is an ideal place in which loud reading can be practiced.

c) Role-playing: It requires more from the students than repetition or reading aloud. He has to assume a role in conversation and to participate in it accordingly whatever the role is undertaken. The learner's side of the conversation can be prompted in the language lab. The modern versions of the role play and situational conversations can be recorded for the students.

5) Problem exercises:

Drills and other exercises help the students to use and extend what they have already learnt. Problem exercises are aimed at accommodation at getting the students to formulate new rules.

CONCLUSION:

The language lab has been considered as a means of providing the speaking practice. But, in many parts of the world where English is learnt as a second language; the learner's primary contact with it is through the written word. The significance of the language lab has been much felt in the domain of communication. The ability to communicate effectively has become the prerequisite for anyone who wants to enter in a new profession. Language laboratory is a very helpful tool for practicing and assessing one's speech in any language. It given the students the opportunity to listen to the model pronunciation, repeat and record it. They are also able to listen to their performance and compare it with the model and do self assessment. It is a flexible device where students can learn as per their pace and interest and most importantly it does not require the teacher all the time.

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