

## Imparting English Communication Skills - A New Perspective

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### Abstract

It is saddening to note that nine long years of the study of English, five years in high school, two years in junior college and three years in Degree College has miserably failed to render the students competent enough to express themselves in English either orally or through writing. It means that something is wrong with how English is taught in schools and colleges in the country. The sight of a spoken English institute in the vicinity of the college speaks volumes for the imminent need to revamp the system of dealing with English teaching lest the student should cut a sorry figure in competitive examination as well as in his discharge of duties later. Through my vast experience as a teacher of English at different levels, I have found, by experience and experiment, a new methodology to be adopted by English teachers to make the students good communicators. They are equipping the students with sound grammatical knowledge, sensitizing them to all the words necessary for their interaction with others daily to day-to-day life and how they should be used grammatically and sensibly. The paper aims to easily illustrate these methods keeping in mind the poor English background of the students, the majority of whom hail from rural areas though they may study in urban colleges.

**Keywords:** Gloomy Picture, Misery, Vicinity, Eminence, Revamp, Competition, Virtue, Sensitization

It is the common knowledge of well-informed people that a candidate in a competitive examination of written mode is judged by his writing while a candidate in an oral examination is judged by his speaking. So, “a command over spoken and written language is imperative for a candidate to be successful in a competitive examination leading to his selection for a job”<sup>1</sup>. Since almost all the oral and written examinations are conducted in India to select applicants for jobs, whether government or private, it is highly essential for students to acquire authority over the English language. When a candidate with a poor ability to express himself in English cannot think of being selected in India, his idea of going abroad for a job with his lack of ability in English is beyond question. So, let us now turn to a discussion of the ways and means of imparting communication skills in English side by side with the teaching of his subjects of study in his school or college.

It is widely acknowledged that around ten long years of exposure to the study of English as a second language besides the study of all the other subjects of his study in English medium has miserably failed to render the students competent enough to face competitive examinations. It means that the way English is being taught in educational institutions is not helpful to the students in acquiring sufficient grip over the language. The cases of graduates and post-graduates failing to get jobs despite their first-rate intelligence and merit in their education and their failure to keep their jobs intact, owing to their poor knowledge of English are countless in almost all the states of the country.

All the above facts point to the conclusion that a new methodology has to be adopted in the educational field to make the students fit into the situation dominated by fluency in English. It is in this context that the role of the English teacher assumes vital importance. The following ways are to be followed by the teacher in the class in this direction. They are equipping the students with the rudiments of English grammar in the first instance. “A basic knowledge of English vocabulary with synonyms, antonyms and different parts of speech has to be taught to the students in the second instance”<sup>2</sup>. In the next stage, the student should be taught how to use words in sentences with the help of the basic knowledge of grammar and vocabulary that are at his disposal. Afterwards, he has to be guided as to how he should write lengthy drafts and give

lectures in English. It is to be understood that rigorous practice in written and spoken English further enhances the English ability of the student. Let us discuss the above methods in detail.

In the first place, students should be sensitized to the basics of grammar such as are discussed below:

1. **Helping Verbs:** There are twenty-four helping verbs in English; is, am, are, was, were, do, does, did, have, has, had, will, shall, can, may, would, should, could, must, ought, dare, need, used. The last four of the helping verbs can be safely and conveniently ignored as their role in English both at the colloquial level and the advanced level is little. On account of the paucity of time and space, as is characteristic of a paper of this dimension, only a few of the helping verbs are discussed here:

Is, am, are, was, and were are the most important helping verbs. They are used mainly as linkers.

Example. The profession of Madhu is teaching. His qualities are honesty, goodness, and punctuality. When we describe him, we simply cannot say like this: Madhu a teacher. He honest, good and punctual. Unless we use the helping verbs is, the sentence will not be correct. So, we should say, Madhu is a teacher. He is honest, good and punctual. However, it should be noted that in the above sentences “is” plays the role of a main verb, though it is a helping verb in most cases. In the same manner, all the helping verbs play a crucial role in English usage.

Another important element of English communication is knowledge of subject and predicate. A mastery of this component facilitates easy communication. Subject and predicate are the two indispensable parts of the language. Without these two no sentence can be written.

Example:

1. The boy runs fast.
2. My sister got a job.
3. He is the CM of Andhra Pradesh.

In all these sentences the first parts, the boy, my sister, and ‘he’ denote the subject in the sentences, the remaining parts: run, fast, got a job, and the CM of A.P stand as

predicates. The most important part of the predicate is the verb. A thorough exercise in this aspect makes the use of English easy.

“Articles and prepositions play no less important a role in forming English sentences”<sup>3</sup>. A good acquaintance with these two aspects instils confidence in the speaker and writer of the language.

Articles in English are ‘a, an, and the’. Improper use of them makes the language not only wrong but sometimes unclear to the listener or the reader. For Example, there is a lot of difference between I saw a doctor and I saw the doctor. The first sentence says that the speaker saw a person who is a doctor while the second one says that the speaker saw his personal doctor.

Prepositions: Next comes the role of prepositions. Communication experts in English observe that one of the most difficult aspects of grammar is “prepositions”. A wrong use of prepositions creates a bad impression about the communicator in the mind of the listener. As an example, the following two sentences may be taken:

1. I do not agree with your idea.
2. I do not agree to your idea.

When the question of agreeing or disagreeing with a person is to be mentioned, the preposition ‘with’ should be used. If it is about an idea, the preposition ‘to’ should be used. So, the correct expressions are I don’t agree with you and I don’t agree with your idea.

The last and most important aspect in the list of the basics of grammar that have been enlisted in the preceding part of the paper is tenses. “It is observed by great English speakers and writers that tenses are the fulcrum around which the English language revolves”<sup>4</sup>. So, if tenses are learned, half the language is mastered. To be proficient in this branch of grammar, a student should be thorough with the forms of strong verbs which are around 180 in English. Strong verbs, also called irregular verbs, form other tenses in various ways while weak verbs form other tenses with the addition of ‘ed’ at the end. Almost all grammar books contain a list of all the

strong verbs with their tenses. As an example, let us find out the tenses or forms of a few strong verbs as follows:

	Present	Past	Past Participle
1.	Go	Went	Gone
2.	Run	Ran	Run
3.	Sit	Sat	Sat
4.	Beat	Beat	Beaten
5.	Cut	Cut	Cut
6.	Put	Put	Put

To make the point clear let us find out the forms of weak verbs which are around 6000 in English.

	Present	Past	Past Participle
1.	Work	Worked	Worked
2.	Ask	Asked	Asked
3.	Play	Played	Played
4.	Join	Joined	Joined
5.	Miss	Missed	Missed

After being acquainted with the forms of strong and weak verbs, a student should study tenses and their uses in sentences in a detailed fashion. Tenses in English are three: 1. Present Tense 2. Past Tense and 3. Future Tense. Each of these tenses is subdivided into four: Indefinite, Continuous, Perfect and Perfect Continuous. So, in total there are 12 tenses known as:

1. Present Indefinite Tense
2. Present Continuous Tense
3. Present Perfect Tense
4. Present Perfect Tense
5. Past Indefinite Tense

6. Past Continuous Tense
7. Past Perfect Tense
8. Past Perfect Continuous Tense
9. Future Indefinite Tense
10. Future Continuous Tense
11. Future Perfect Tense and
12. Future Perfect Continuous Tense

Besides these tenses, there are three tenses called conditional tenses, a knowledge of which is of paramount importance in writing and speaking English. They are ‘open condition’, ‘imaginary or improbable condition’ and ‘unfulfilled condition’. On account of the limitation of the volume of a paper of this nature, it is not possible nor is it proper to discuss all these tenses, and the writer is leaving this aspect here.

To conclude it may be mentioned that if any person whether he has completed his education or still pursuing education makes sincere efforts to learn English with the help of all the hints discussed in the paper, he will acquire sufficient competence in the written and spoken modes of English language which will keep him successful both in oral and written examinations leading to various jobs and later in his interaction with his colleagues as well as superiors. In the ultimate analysis, it has to be underlined that it is command over English only that decides whether one can be successful or otherwise in the world which runs on the rails of English.

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