CHALLENGES OF ENGINEERING STUDENT TO LEARN ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LABORATORY

CH. SRAVANTHI *

School of Sciences, H & Sc (English), SR University, Telangana, India.
*Corresponding Author Email: sravanthichetharasi@gmail.com

NALLALA. HIMA VARSHINI

School of Sciences, H & Sc (English), SR University, Telangana, India. Email: n.himavarshini@gmail.com

Abstract

Language plays an important role for the purpose of communication. English language is known as international language and global means of inter-community communication. Developing of English language communication skills in students specially for engineering students resides in English language laboratory. Language lab provides opportunities to the students to communicate with the fellow students to overcome their struggles of learning language. The principle of English language lab is teacher-monitored system which is always in connection to the number of students who are with the zeal to learn the English language effectively. This paper mainly focuses on the learning process of the students in comparison to regular classroom, how language labs help students to improve their listening and communication skills, activities and presentations in the language laboratory will help students to improve their pronunciation skills, and these modern technology-based activities show any impact on student language learning. English language lab can be called by too many names multimedia language centre, multimedia language lab, language media centre, digital language lab. This paper also explains about the benefits of language lab. Based on the research it is found that students are with positive response. As Language lab creates a comfortable and confident learning atmosphere to the students. Implementing modern technology- based activities in lab helps students to shift from traditional class environment to modern one.

Keywords: International Language, Language Lab, Digital Language Lab, Language Media Centre.

INTRODUCTION

English language is considered as international mode of communication and it is accepted as the language of employment and opportunities for the engineering students in the present scenario. For the developing of English language skills for students, language laboratory plays a major role. English Language laboratories are mainly used in colleges and universities. These language laboratories are referred with many names, they are English language acquisition labs, English proficiency lab, language skills lab, target language acquisition centre, laboratory for language study, technology and language centre, interactive language learning centre, computerized language learning centre, culture and world media centre, multimedia and open access language centre. Most of students practice language in the classroom environment because they find fellow students to communicate. People used to learn English in the past because they wanted to gain knowledge in English literature, but now people learn English language to communicate in the target language" (Rao and velagala2016). Teachers can manage many activities in the lab which includes self -introduction, phonetic sounds, role -play, dialogue writing, debate, group discussion, describing person, place, thing and event, functional English etc. These activities will create enthusiastic learning environment to

the students and build confidence in them. English language lab also helps students who were unable to perform in front of their classmates due to lack of confidence. English language lab also enhances the practical knowledge of the students and provide a scope for independent learning. Mainly for engineering students whose mother tongue is not English language, learning the English language plays an important role not only for the academic purpose but also for the career development. For mastering English language students should deal with tutorials, English lectures, seminars, labs which are conducted by many university professors. A student with good language competence knows how, where, and when to use language efficiently." Joan and Mabel proved that stud ents achieve better in language learning when they learnt in a language laboratory than in the classroom environment "(Joan2016). Language laboratory provides pleasant learning atmosphere. Language laboratory is an effective device in English language teaching based on audio or audio-visual installation. Students are sure to be empowered with the required communicative competence to face the challenges of the world. All over the world English language laboratories are called with different names conventional language laboratory are used to teach target language by using tape recorders and audio cassettes, multimedia language laboratory runs based on different types of software available in market, computer assisted language laboratory based on the features available already material is fed in computer which is very useful to the teachers in teaching English language. This laboratory also helps teachers in particular aspects such as pronunciation, sounds, videos and animation. Lingua phone laboratory and smart language laboratory.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Language laboratory provides students confidence, individuality, interactions, relaxation, exposure to authentic learning and feedback. Language laboratory environment is best suitable for improving speaking and listening skills and it doesn't go well with reading and writing skills. "A well-balanced approach will create language laboratory a perfect strategy in the long- term success of the language learning process" (chandradasa and jayawardane 2018; cosmas 2020). Teachers can manage many activities in laboratory which includes dialogue-writing, monologue, group discussion, role play etc. These activities create learning environment among students without distraction. Mainly for engineering students whose first language is not English language, but mastering English language is more important for academic purpose these days and also for better opportunities in   their career development. For mastering English language students should attend tutorials, English lectures, labs, projects, and follow up papers and articles published by many universities. Students who are with good language competence knows how to use language, where and when to use language efficiently to gain n number of opportunities for their growth. Language laboratory provides pleasant learning atmosphere. The students are sure to be empowered with required communicative competence to face the challenges of the world. Language lab is an effective device in modern language teaching based on audio or audio-visual installation in the year 1908. The university of Grenoble has started first English language lab. The principle of language laboratory is teacher-monitored system connected to no of students both

provided with headset with microphone. The content that is used in language lab is self-authored or free. Students can listen to the pronunciation, native speaker lessons, see video clippings and read the text. Students can repeat the content or the lesson assigned by teacher by record and replay. Continuous repetition of the content or lesson gives fluency. They are able to access their performance and can pay attention to all aspects such as accent, stress, and pronunciation. The key point of teaching in language lab is participation of all the students to their listening and speaking skills with technology support (Ermawati and umar 2020; Khalil and Ibnian 2020). Language lab is not limited to a set of machine and equipment in a room physically, but it is rather than digital technologies that enables learning experiences (kampushan 2013).

Objectives of the Study

- The research aims to identify the following:

- Does the Language labs help the learner to make learning process easy when compared to classroom.

- Does the Language labs useful to improve language skills and communication skills.

- Does practical activities show any effectiveness on their language improvement and pronunciation.

- Does language labs has major impact in improving listening skills.

- Does students get distracted with modern technology- based activities.

Purpose of the Study

The topic of English language learning in language laboratory has emerged as one of the central issues. The main purpose of language laboratory is to learn target language and to develop communication skills. Communication is the only source for the expression of emotions among people and for the exchange of information. English is the international means of communication which is essential for man's development and social interactions internationally. Language learning is enthusiastic when students are taught in a different and new innovative environment Since most educational institutions have now implemented technology-based classrooms to improve the English language learning among learners to enhance learning outcomes, the English language learning method expects students to rely on updated learning aids as such the teacher entirely relay the information with accounts for positive results.

English language laboratory techniques rely on simple learning methods, but the purpose of learning and basic needs in the process of teaching is teacher-centered and students as a recipient. In English laboratory, the students can easily understand the content by displaying images through implementation of technological teaching methods which inhere countless motives that increases the acquisition of English language skills. In the English language learning process both the teachers and student's dedication are very important. Language learning is successful only when both teachers and student's efforts are included. Teaching aids are included in English language laboratories but they are

not complete solution for language learning, teaching aids are supporting and helpful tools for language learning. Practice is the only thing which help students to learn language proficiently.an expert is needed to handle English language lab even though it is believed that lab is meant for self-learning.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Warschaucer and healay (1998) assert that it is more appropriate to call the language labs as integrative computer assisted language learning (CALL) environment after 1990s, however, walker and white (2013) gives us the new term technology enhanced language learning (TELL) since computers are not only components for language labs: tablets, Kinect games, software programmes are also in spotlight. Several studies shows that language lab has a positive effect on language learning achievements for the students.

Russel.N.Cambell (1967) in his article entitled "the language laboratory and pronunciation teaching, published in the "Journal of English language teaching", expressed that the teaching of modern languages has become a responsible task. Language labs are one of the modern innovation techniques being followed to practice speech sounds and learn right pronunciation as Richards (4) asserts that sensibility towards sounds and rhythm of foreign languages can only be obtained through the best sample of spoken language and this is the foundation of language labs function.

(Brown, 2004) Language is considered as complex content, the learner requires the commitment in their life for learning a particular language. The most important factors that are required for a learner to learn the target language are advance knowledge, learning style, self-learning, attitudes, personality and self-motivational skills etc.

Bordbar(2010) study explains about the factors and reasons of implementing technology in language teaching. He also explained about the attitude, practical knowledge, leaning experience of the teachers and the way of content delivery based on the computer knowledge. The study result explores that teachers hold positive attitude in handling technology in the classrooms and labs with good technological competence and technology experience skills.

Shyamlee (2012, p. 155) investigated the use of integrating multi-media technology in language lab for teaching language skills. The study results that implementing technology in language lab improves student learning, motivate student's attention since it is practical processes of language learning with the help of technological tools. Shyamlee suggested the integrating technology in classrooms and language lab, shows its positive impact on the learning process enhances the efficacy of the teacher role.

Advantages of Language Lab

Language lab is an efficient tool for assessing one's speech in English language. Students have access to various audio-visual materials in language lab. Advantages of language lab are practical, independent learning, quick learning.

Practical knowledge is important for language learning, four language skills are acquired

with the help of language lab they are: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Lab provides scope to learn English language in a focused setting that always focus on improve self-study. It also helps in interaction with teachers. Students can record their own voice, interact with each other and store the results. Language lab helps students to get interacted with the teachers and classmates. Teachers have a scope of addressing students individually or all learners together in the same manner students will also have the scope to communicate with teachers individually to clarify their doubts and to ask questions related to language. Target language is learnt based on the intra-class communication approach. English language labs will provide opportunities for each any every student in the lab to learn language with the help of instructor. Irrespective of seating position students will have equal attention in the lab activities and seek teacher's attention. Language lab is the main place where students learn stress accent, rhythm, pronunciation and intonation and all basics of language learning especially phonetics. Students can improve their pronunciation by recording their own voice, assess them and secure it. They have assessments for their activities participation and periodical evaluation, students have a facility to listen to audio files and cross check their fluency and effectiveness of their speaking skills. Headphones or microphones are provided to each and every student that creates a better learning environment for their speaking practice without confusion and hesitation. Language laboratory always relay on paperless examination completely activity-based mode. English language laboratory always encourages students for independent learning, because students have access to all resources related language learning.

Practical

Practical knowledge is important for language learning, four language skills are acquired with the help of language lab they are: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Lab provides scope to learn English language in a focused setting that always focus on improve self-study. It also helps in interaction with teachers. Students can record their own voice, interact with each other and store the results. Language laboratory always stay in Favor of students with practical knowledge. Students are provided with a platform to perform many activities like group discussion, presentation, personal interview, role plays, personal interviews and debates. This language activities will enhance students thinking ability, creativity and intellectual skills.

Independent Learning

Students will have the freedom of access beyond the timetable, which encourages students to learn language independently. Students can do periodically self- evaluation to calculate their progress in language learning with that of the professional. The main concept of designing English Language Laboratory is to improve student's communication skills in the English language. It is also proven that with the help of English language laboratory students can also focus on the aspects of the phonetics of a language, such as pronunciation, intonation, accent, stress, etc. independent learning is possible when the presence of teaching and learning facilities along with infrastructure that supports smooth learning of language with the help of activities in the language

laboratories. With the help of multimedia student s have automatic access for mastering lessons

Quick Learning

A language lab also facilitates quick learning compared to usual classroom setting because labs include, a progressive model of teaching and instinctively teacher the concepts by using audio, video, audio-video aids. Students can easily get connected with actuality in daily life situations. This lab learning environment remove one feature of expression and create a healthy and comfortable learning condition. English language laboratory provide scope for learners to organize workshops, seminars and dubbing etc. participants can quickly learn language based on active participation in laboratory activities.

Disadvantages

Language lab can be quite expensive.

It requires a lot of resources and materials for establishing in educational institutions, maintenance, constant upgrade, unorganized.

The problem related to teacher proficiency in handling lab tools and need to be in advance for setting their lessons accordingly.

Insufficient collection of accommodation of materials.

Attitude of teacher and students towards language lab.

Student problems like lack of vocabulary, language skills, student interest toward learning language aspects.

METHODOLOGY

This research reports based on interview and observation conducted with 120 number of students in SR University with 2ⁿᵈ year engineering students, who are provided with language lab facilities. These students are taught by well experienced teachers and students, got the opportunities to utilize the language lab in their first year. In responds to the research questions, quantitative research method is in work. Lab observation and interview responses are elaborated in the clear and descriptive way. In this interview the researcher provided an opportunity for the students to add comprehensive details on their feedback.

RESULT

Language lab has been provided an opportunity to the students to enhance their learning of English by emphasizing the exposure of the target language. As in SR University language labs are currently four in number. Many tasks are performed by the students in the language lab which makes students to feel confident and comfortable in learning English in the English language lab. Even there are few students who feel less confident in learning language. They are motivated by teachers in language lab for better

improvement, which enhances their learning ability to overcome the obstacles that they are facing in learning a language. Apart from many advantages that is agreed of language lab based on the interview and observation, there are few challenges faced by students in language lab. Based on the research questions how the language lab helps students to make learning process easier when compared to classroom. Close-ended questionnaire supplied to the students of 2nd year from SR University with respective departments like electronic engineering, computer science engineering, electrical engineering and mechanical engineering. Most respondents emphasize that language lab is completely associated with student performance of the activities and language lab is student-centred. The time period is flexible and opportunity is provided for each and every student for participation. Each and every student will get time for interaction with teacher and other students. When it comes to classroom which is mostly teacher centred and the role of students is passive, only the major role played by students is listening and not all the students are well involved in every activity in the classroom. Language lab helps in improving listening skills based on the study it is proved that integrating technology in teaching will avoid students from distraction at the same time there is more scope to concentrate on the content and perform the activities well based on teacher's instructions.

Based on my research question does Language lab is useful to improve language skills as well as communication skills among students, the response was maximum positive from students stating that activities that includes in curriculum such as watch and speak, describing person, place, events and things, free talk and group discussion. All these activities help the students to speak confidently and describe about certain things without any hesitation or fear. This kind of activities conducted in the labs are creating an environment of language learning to the students and also make the students to overcome fear while speaking with group of people. Language lab has major impact on listening skills and on effectiveness of their pronunciation. They are involved in listening activities with the help of CDs and audio, video recordings of the native speakers. This helped students to improve their level of pronunciation. Phonetics which is concept included in their syllabus helps them to pronounce the different sounds and identify the sounds. Phonetic transcription made the students to pronounce the words accurately based on their sound symbols. Implementing modern technology in language learning helps students to show more attention towards learning language with new techniques.

CONCLUSION

Based on the responses received from the students, we can draw conclusion about the challenges of English language lab are positive. Language lab creates a comfortable and confident learning atmosphere to the students. Implementing modern technology- based activities in lab helps students to shift from traditional class environment to modern one. Language lab is important in assessing one's speech, it is raising the motivation and overcome the fear of speaking English language. Students feel that language labs are beneficial in their language studies and also improve four skills of language. The result is similar to Dunkels data, which states that Dunkel (2001) found that students feel

comfortable and good when the task is modern and useful. According to Mozgoyovs study (2012) shows that implementation of newly developed software programs like work bricks was successfully used and welcomes for creating a language lab for language construction.

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