ENGLISH IS A BIG TASK TO NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS

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Abstract

English is seen as a 'Subject' rather than a 'language' that can be used for communication and understanding. Language is essentially a skill. It is not a subject like mathematics, science, commerce etc. which aims at importing information and knowledge. Therefore, teaching as well as learning English language requires double the effort.

Introduction

English as a language has great reach and influence and taught all over the world. Mastering English is very important, because we have entered globalization era, where many foreigners come to our country for business, politics and so on. Hence, the role of English teacher to teach English to the non-native speakers is important in the current scenario.

The way English learners are instructed depends on their level of English proficiency and the programs provided in their school or district. In some programs, instructions are taught in both English and their native language. In other programs, instructions are only in English, but in a manner that is comprehensible to the students.

English as a Second or Foreign Language

Speaking fluent English is difficult if you didn't grow up with it. It is a combination of different languages and dialects that English speakers from different regions can have trouble understanding one another. It is difficult enough trying to strengthen the language skills of students who have spoken English all their lives. Some of the students may be able to read and write in their own language, but many cannot. The teachers probably know much about how to address the needs of the students. They may not be sure at all if direct instruction in English grammar will be helpful to them.

The rich vocabulary in English seems to be very difficult for people learning English as a second language. There can be many synonyms for a particular word, but they are rarely precise synonyms. There are all kinds of subtle nuances behind the selection of a synonym. Even regional usages can be confusing.

English is also rich in metaphors, idioms and figurative language. These non-literal expressions would confuse the beginner. The conventions for capitalization differ from language to language. For example, German capitalizes all nouns; nationalities are not capitalized in Spanish, Romanian, Russian, or Portuguese. Not all languages capitalize days of the week or months of the year. Hindi and Arabic don't use any capital letters at all.

Non-Native Speakers in the English Classroom

Undoubtedly, students who are non-native speakers of English face constraints and difficulties. This difficulty occurs not only when the student has learned to read or write in another language but also as the result of absorbing ways of talking and thinking that are organized differently in other cultures.

The second-language student may have difficulty adjusting to the rhetorical patterns of composition that English teachers take for granted. They have much less common ground in terms of sentence structure, word order, formation of plurals, and the sounds themselves. For most of our students from Asia, their native languages have very few English equivalents. To train them the teacher should follow some new teaching methods.

Role of the Teacher to Teach English Language

- Ask the student to write about any topic. Depending on the student's age and mastery of English, the student can write about those sentence structures that she or he finds difficult. The student can write in English or in the native language or in both. Ask the student to explain whether the mistakes are caused by the influence of the native language or by a misunderstanding of an English pattern.
- Don't succumb to the attitude that just because an English language learner is making more or different errors compared to native speakers.
- Keep the explanations brief and simple.
- Illustrate with clear, unambiguous examples.
- Use visuals, but explain them verbally.
- Speak in short sentences and use active voice instead of passive voice.
- Include definitions of unfamiliar terms within the sentences.
- Avoid using terms such as substandard, wrong, broken English, illiterate and other critical terms.
- To help all students learn more about languages, point out similar and Latin roots. This will also help them to learn and remember new words.
- Talk about words borrowed from other languages.
- Help the students find words in English borrowed from their languages: Example: bazaar, cafe, mantra, safari etc.
- Invite a student with a different language background to speak about his or her own language.

Conclusion

One of the goals of education should make every student bi-dialectical. What this means is that everyone should have two language varieties, the informal, more private speech they use with family and friends, and the public, formal language of the business world and formal occasions. For non-native speakers, their private speech at home is an entirely different

language from public English, and so their challenge in mastering two sets of language skills is more complex than it is for native English speakers.

For teachers, this goal makes their task more complex as well. On the one hand, it is present upon us as educators to help our students communicate in a way that will not put them at risk of being thought ignorant or unsophisticated when they travel from place to place or from level to level in the professional world. On the other hand, nothing is more personal to our students and to us, than our language and the language of our family, loved ones, ethnic group, and community. So this is a sensitive area. It is imperative that we feel and show a genuine respect for other languages and language dialects and for the difficult process of learning English as a new language. We suppress language variety at our peril, as our suppression feeds a sense of alienation from education and public discourse, the last thing any educator wants.

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