

Designing Communicative Needs Based Syllabus for EST Students to meet their demands of Professional Communication

**J. Al Muzzamil Fareen
KCT, Namakkal**

Abstract

This paper aims at investigating the factors for developing productive skills of the student and the ability to perform in both oral and written communicative functions. It aims at generating speaking and writing skills in terms of rhetoric and discourse with a flawless language and eloquent style. This paper is about designing a model communicative syllabus for technical students to develop and execute oral and written communication skills to pacify their industrial demands.

Introduction

The prime effort, expectation and contribution of academics and industry are to mentor the students with good English communication skills with a fair proportion of intensive subject knowledge, aptitude skills and good personality. The professional students need to develop English proficiency and the ability to execute it in personal and group communication activities in both oral and written forms. The EST students need to equip themselves with both verbal and non-verbal communication skills.

Conducting A Survey on Needs Based Analysis

The EST students are often seen tumbling in both speaking and writing in English. The industry, academy, core subject teachers, students and the English teaching fraternity themselves often found that the students ability to produce their own language to communicate in English is fairly unconvincing and quite unintelligible. The discontent of their language and style in terms of rhetoric devices and discourse elements are often seen to be missing and literally misleading. This raises enormous questions in the English classes-

- Where do the students actually lack in communication?
- Do the students lack in linguistic skills?

Designing Communicative Needs Based Syllabus for EST Students to meet their demands of Professional Communication

J. Al Muzzamil Fareen

- Do the students lack in interactive skills?
- Are they not good in exhibiting their soft skills?
- Do they lack strategic competence while communicating in English?
- Why the students are not able to produce a flawless sentence both in speaking and writing?

In light to answer these above mentioned queries, a research on communication needs analysis (Long, 2005) has been undertaken and a questionnaire survey was conducted with the HR Managers and engineers of both IT and Non – IT sectors of the industry. The survey was also put to the IV year engineering and technical students to seek their views and outlook in practical academic and industrial communication needs. Expounding the relation of both the data analysis of the questionnaire survey, a model ESP syllabus for V and VI semester for EST students has been designed and proposed to develop effective English communication skills to meet the needs and demands of the industry.

Designing a Model Syllabus

The integrated and interrelated components of the model ESP syllabus comprise the aspects of the three language models (Richards & Rodger, 2003) –

- structural
- functional and
- interactional use of language

and the five types of communication –

- intrapersonal communication
- interpersonal communication
- group communication
- mass communication and
- massline communication

Based on the models and types of language and communication, the proposed model syllabus aims at developing language and communication skills to meet the

communicative needs and language requirements of the industry (Munby, 1978; Nunan, 1988; Yalden, 1987).

The objective of the syllabus

The vision and goal of this proposed model syllabus is that the students should be able to originally productive and communicative in general, business, social, professional and technical contexts in both oral and written communication.

The objective of the syllabus is –

1. To practice productive skills in general, business, social, professional and technical situations.
2. To develop speaking and writing ability through the real performance of the students.
3. To facilitate students achieve language proficiency and communicative competency through continuous participative and performance tasks.

Salient features of the Model Syllabus

The proposed model ESP syllabus promotes in providing supplementary remedial teaching to the students with limited English proficiency (SLEP). The students need to be given adequate tasks to improve grammar and vocabulary. Grammatical appropriacy and word power should be gradually ingrained to practice framing sentences in both speaking and writing. The students need to understand the conjugation of verb and the subject and they need to discriminate grammatical categories with their functions. They should be made clear with the prevailing verb confusion and the use of tense and voice. They should be able to collect and acquire word power and should be able to distinctly use homonyms, homophones, scientific and technical terminology.

The students should aim at understanding the phonological aspects and use of language. They should be able to convincingly use the phonological units like stress, accent, style, rhythm, pause, tone, degree of delivery, turn taking, frequency of expressions and voice modulation. They should be given adequate practice to improve speaking skills. The

speaking abilities of the students will be genuinely improved when the students possess specific knowledge on the mechanics of speaking and writing. When the students execute speaking tasks, they need to reorient themselves with the aforesaid units of the mechanics of speaking. They need to practically understand where they need to take a pause, when they need to take a turn in speech and how they need to convince the listener. They need to understand the role of pragmatics in speaking, they should be able to distinctively use rhetorical and discourse elements for efficient oral communication.

The impact of integrated language skills in communication

The proposed model ESP syllabus is basically skills based syllabus integrated with the types of personal, group and mass communication and interrelating with the types of speaking and writing activities. The students should be engaged in interactional communication activities to improve speaking skills. Engaging the students in interpersonal communication activities like providing self introduction, small talk, extempore, conversation, chatting, interview and role play; group communication activities like conducting business meetings, group discussions, panel discussions, brain storming and problem solving; and mass communication activities like delivering lectures, public speaking, seminars, symposiums, conferences will make the students to participate and perform in the interactive tasks. The students will be able to execute oral tasks with sheer confidence and attempt to display fluency in both language and communication. Working in pairs, groups and acting as an audience to witness the activities will help the students to realize themselves about their level of participation and performance. The comments and the feedback provided by both the colleagues and faculties will make them to understand to perform better in subsequent oral tasks.

Teachers should train the students in the speaking activities like greeting and wishing one another, introducing and briefing oneself, presenting about oneself, revealing personal profile, presenting a short lecture, public speaking, presenting on any topic of interest, engaging in informal chatting with short dialogues, participating in mock interviews, performing a role play, presenting a business or technical paper, participating in business

Designing Communicative Needs Based Syllabus for EST Students to meet their demands of Professional Communication

J. Al Muzzamil Fareen

meetings with an agenda of scrutinizing business developments, thinking logically and critically on any business or technical issues, providing a solution to the problem will make the students to literally develop their professional and technical communication.

The students should be specifically given tasks to improve speech on discourse and rhetoric (Widdowson, 1983). They should be able to engage in narrative, descriptive, explanative and interrogative mode of language tasks. Narrating an ordeal or experience, describing a process or any graphical representations like graphs, diagrams, pictures and maps, providing an explanation on a given situation and analyzing a case through oral questionnaire will make the students to improve their communicative ability to engage in rhetorical discourse.

Speech on rhetoric and discourse should be trained through practicing to question variedly and to prepare questionnaires on any inquiries on any desirable subject, will improve interrogative skills to process arguments and to precede judgment on any issues. They should be able to frame questions like to put tag questions in conversations, yes/no type and wh' type for extracting inquiries in discussions.

Writing skills should be adequately improved by providing tasks in writing composition, letters and reports. They need to be given practice to write error-free sentences. They should be able to think and organize their ideas in a logical sequence and should use discourse markers for ascertaining coherence in their thought and writing. They should be able to write with good spelling and punctuation. They should also be given practice to identify and distinguish the international use of English language styles like MLA, APA and LSA.

Students should be able to practice both formal and informal letter writing to correspond on any official and administrative letters, business mails and report writing. They should be able to write official letters, memoranda, inter-office memo, circular, agenda, minutes and notices. They should be acquainted with the vivid practice of writing business letters

and e-mails. They should be able to understand the distinctive use of formalized informal mails, informal formalized mails, formal and informal mails. They should be given an adequate training on calling quotations, placing orders, complaining on any issues, appreciating on any services, asking for clarification and explanation on any new products, giving suggestions, instructions, directions, seeking recommendations and reference letters on any context. Letters of application with CV, writing personal and professional profile should be encouraged to practice.

Writing a proposal on any project, writing the layout of the project, writing project reports, industrial reports, and business reports should be often practiced to improve their project and research writing. Students should be assigned to engage in individual, pair or a group to undertake some mini projects and to do some field survey to improve their research skills and subsequently to put the report in writing. Research skills are highly scholastic and eventually it leads to impart high degree of speaking and writing ability to enhance professional and technical communication.

This proposed model syllabus attempts to improve the soft skills of the students by providing case studies of management, positive attitude, appreciable conduct and good behavior. The students are given to understand the importance of constructive communication and building healthy relationships in the business environment.

Trial of the Syllabus

The proposed model syllabus was put down to trial to the III year technical students. The students recognized the importance of speaking and writing skills to display efficient English language and communication skills. As the immediate needs and demands of the industry is to interact in both speaking and writing, the students showed genuine interest in displaying productive skills and performed the activities related to the types of personal and group communication. The students commit spelling and grammatical mistakes but eventually they are able to produce their own language effectively both in speaking and writing. As the supplementary activities of remedial grammar and

vocabulary, mechanics of speaking and writing are simultaneously taught and practiced, the students feel comfortable to improve grammar, vocabulary, phonology, language form and style to distinctively use in all the types of communication and in various communicative contexts and situations. They are able to interact in interpersonal and group communication tasks and are also able to individually present in oral presentations. The confident level of the students is quite impressive as they are slowly coming out from the grasp of communication apprehension elements.

Speaking fluently will affect very little to write effectively. It is a great challenge to the student to produce sentences without grammatical and spelling errors. In writing, appropriate grammar, vocabulary and spelling is predominant. Inappropriate and clumsy expressions are inadmissible in formal writings. The student needs to understand the form and style of writing.

Repetition in writing is not permitted in technical writing. Indirect expressions and covert writing is very implicit and it cannot be advisable to use in business writing. The students are given adequate practice in overt writing. They are able to write technically with utter clarity and precision. Direct and explicit writing will help the students to write better compositions in both formal and informal writing. Most of the students concentrated on the appropriate use of language and some students aimed at accuracy in terms of using structures in writing. They are given adequate practice to understand and comprehend passages and to interpret it in an appropriate way. They are also more exposed to listening and reading activities too. Receptive skills help the students to be more productive and comprehensive in terms of scholastic writing.

Conclusion

Learning, acquiring and practicing language to perform both in speaking and writing activities will enrich the students to be really productive and more communicative in any given situation. The reorientation of skill drill is manifested and hence the verbal skills of speaking and writing are genuinely understood and practiced. The students are made to engage in discourse and rhetorical activities to improve their ability to use varied

Designing Communicative Needs Based Syllabus for EST Students to meet their demands of Professional Communication

J. Al Muzzamil Fareen

language and style. The research and findings of this study could also be used to recognize the stand of professional demands of any mainstream industry.

References

1. Brumfit. C. (1984). 'Communicative Methodology in Language Teaching: The Roles of Fluency and Accuracy' Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
2. Hutchinson T. and Waters A. (1987), 'English for Specific Purposes, A Learning-Centered Approach' Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
3. Long M.H. (2005). 'Second Language Needs Analysis' Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
4. Munby, J. (1978). 'Communicative Syllabus Design' Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
5. Nunan. D. (1988). 'Syllabus Design' Oxford University Press, Oxford.
6. Richards, C. Jack and Theodore S. Rodger. (2003). Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
7. Widdowson. H.G. (1983). 'Learning Purpose and Learning Use' Oxford University Press, Oxford.
8. Yalden J. (1987). 'Principles of Course Design for Language Teaching' Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.