

Communication Skills



COMMUNICATION SKILLS



Every language is mainly to serve the purpose of communication. A person has something in mind and he wants to communicate it to others. It is possible if he knows spoken language. The receiver of information should also know the language specially its listening and speaking. Only then its communication will take place. Verbal communication is possible when both the parties – giver and the receiver are physically present near each other. Reading and writing skills are needed for communication purpose when both the parties are at some distance. The chief function of language teaching is communication. One who can communicate well, is said to have learned the language well. On the other hand, a person howsoever qualified he may be, if he can't communicate properly, he is not a master of the language. Let us, therefore, emphasise on this part of language learning.

Basic Assumptions

The basic assumptions of a person good at different skills are :

- (i) Efficiency in aural oral aspect of the language.
- (ii) Good in Mechanics of reading and writing.
- (iii) Correct language habits.
- (iv) Command over active vocabulary.
- (v) Good at structures.

Communicative Functions of a Language

Communicative function of a language plays an important role. A person who cannot communicate is not good at language. The deaf & the dumb are able to communicate through gestures. A person having the knowledge of language needs vocabulary and structures for the

purpose of communication. He needs functional grammar and thus he succeeds in passing on the information or his feelings to others.

Just mastery over vocabulary and structures is not sufficient. One would be able to use them to communicate meanings in real situations. A person visiting some foreign country should be able to communicate. Then only he succeeds there and is able to live well there. He must possess the communicative ability.

Structural aspect of language is important at its own place and its functional aspect is important in its own way. That does not mean that functional aspect is more important than the structural aspect. In fact, the structural aspect is the basis and that is what gives the language its existence and on the basis of the existence, the language functions.

A few questions crop up

For the development of communicative skills should a person study literature? Should a person study linguistics? Should a person study modern grammar? Should a person study language for the sake of language? No. Language should be learnt mainly for communication purposes. Functional effectiveness of the language is important.

PRE-REQUISITES OF COMMUNICATIVE SKILL

1. **Linguistic Competence.** The learner of the language should have linguistic competence. Then only he can make use of the language as per his needs and requirements.

2. **Different forms of linguistics.** The learner of the language should understand the different forms of linguistics. Then naturally he can pick up the right one and use it at the appropriate moment.

3. **Develop skills and strategies for using the language.** The language learner should develop all the skills required for learning the language. He should also have training of different strategies which could be applied for using the language in different situations.

4. **Social Setting is important.** For speaking the language effectively, social setting plays a very important role. The speaker should use the language suitable to the requirements of the audience. Then only he is said to have used the language rightly. Suppose the teacher is con-

shared with the students or a student. He can communicate one thing in the following different ways :

- (i) Please help me.
- (ii) Could you please help me ?
- (iii) Would you mind helping me ?
- (iv) Could I trouble you to help me ?

All the above said four ways are linguistic forms where different structures have been used. The first way of communication is more suitable when the teacher is concerned with his students. The same structure cannot be put to use if the situation is between the inspector and the peon. Social situation is important. The user of the language should keep some strategy in mind and then he succeeds in communicating properly.

- (a) In the communicative function of the language, the way of speaking also matters a lot. What we say is important but equally important is how do we say that. In a word, all the syllables of it are not equally stressed.

By a shift of stress from one syllable to another, its meanings are changed. A few examples are :

NOUNS

'Practice
'Insult
'Progress
'Rebel

VERBS

Pra'ctice
In'sult
Pro'gress
Re'bel

The above said words have the same spellings but the way we speak them determine the meanings. Naturally, here the communication will be based on our way of speaking.

- (1) In case of a sentence, all the words contained in it are not stressed. The difference in stress changes the meanings of the utterance. Let us take up a single example to illustrate the point. The sentence 'RAJESH IS MY ENGLISH TEACHER' can be spoken in different ways by shifting the stress. In each way, it conveys a different meaning. e.g.

- (i) 'Rajesh is my English teacher. (only Rajesh, not some one else)

- (ii) Rajesh 'is my English teacher. (Why do you deny it ?)
- (iii) Rajesh is 'my English teacher. (mine, not your's)
- (iv) Rajesh is my 'English teacher. (teacher of English, not of Maths, or History)
- (v) Rajesh is my English 'teacher. (Nothing else than teacher)

(2) While communicating through spoken language, pause, wrong use of pause, lack of pause makes big differences in meanings. For example,

Keep sticking/its praise/its wings/a nice man

Keeps ticking/it sprays/it swings/an ice man

The place where the pause occurs is the only feature of spoken English which can make the difference between the pairs clear.

Advantages

The following are the advantages of being good at communication skills :

1. The person who succeeds in communicating his ideas, thoughts and feelings to others is happy, becomes confident, feels encouraged, is able to impress others through his personality. Everyone says he can communicate well.
2. The user of the language feels satisfied because he succeeds in communicating to others.
3. He wins the confidence of the social gathering or group where he has used the language successfully.
4. It is more practical type of learning the language.
5. It is situational, meaningful, motivating others and is self-rewarding.

In the teaching learning of a language, communication skills play unique role. The teachers as well as the learners should realise their true value and keeping that in mind, all efforts should be made to acquire them right earnestly while aiming at learning the language. Once the habit of right communication is formed, the learner comes out a good speaker and an accurate conveyor of his thoughts.

LIST OF QUESTIONS

Section A (Essay Type Questions)

1. 'Communication skills form the basis of learning good language.' Discuss by giving your own views.
2. What are the basic assumptions of communicative skills? Justify their importance in language learning.
3. What are the pre-requisites of communicative skills? Discuss briefly.

Section B (Short Answer Type Questions)

4. Write briefly on :
 - (a) Correct language habits
 - (b) Communicative Function of the language.
 5. Write a note on communication skills.
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