

TEACHING INTEGRATED SKILLS

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Abstract: *In EFL contexts, the integrated-skills approach—which includes speaking, listening, reading, and writing—has gained popularity because it is thought to be a successful method for helping students become more proficient communicators and capable of using the language to access social, professional, academic, and vocational opportunities. The integrated skills approach presents all language skills in connection with one another, in contrast to the traditional segregated language skills approach that presented each language skill separately. This allows learners to acquire the language they are learning and also use it naturally for communication. To give readers a clearer knowledge of how the integrated skills approach is used in EFL situations, this article summarizes recent research and concepts in the field.*

Keywords: *educational, fluency, accuracy, task-based, content-based, integrated-skills approach.*

INTRODUCTION

Language skills development is a crucial aspect of second language acquisition. Traditionally, language skills have been taught in isolation, with separate lessons for listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, research has shown that integrating these skills can lead to more authentic and effective language use. Teaching integrated skills involves designing activities and tasks that require learners

to use multiple skills simultaneously. This article explores the advantages of teaching integrated skills and provides insights from famous scientists in the field.

MAIN PART

An integrative approach is the approach of teaching language skills simultaneously. This means the four macro skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) are taught concurrently. Richards, Platt, and Weber (1988: 144) define it as “integrated language skills teaching approach is “the teaching of the language skills of reading writing, listening, and speaking in conjunction with each other as when a lesson involves activities that relate listening and speaking to reading and writing.” According to Afnan. (2014), integrating language teaching approach is vital technique for effective language learning.

Integrated language skills teaching approach is a whole language approach. That is, if a lesson deals with reading skills, then, it will also deal with listening, speaking, and writing skills. It emphasizes on communication purpose in addition to academic success (Hungyo and Kijai 2009 as cited in Elena and Lorena 2011). The four English language skills can be taught integratively in the actual classroom situation via integrative approach. For example, by practicing conversational skills the learner can focus not only on speaking but also listening, in order to reply and ask appropriate follow-up questions. All language skills are considered and to be essential components to develop the communicative competence of students, the skills should be taught together via interactive language teaching approach. Thus, the approach advocates integration of all language skills in actual classroom situation (Crystal, 2003). In other words, integrated language skill teaching approach is the natural way of learning a language. In real life communication, language skills are rarely used in isolation; it is a rare situation where one of the four skills occurs alone. For example, to engage in a conversation, one needs to be able to speak and comprehend at the same time, in terms of integration skill Oxford (2001) introduces the concept of tapestry, it is woven from different strands including the teacher, learner, setting, and relevant languages besides four skills. She believed that absence

of such threads may lead to a discrete, segregated skills-like in a real tapestry parallel threads not touching, supporting, or interacting with each other. Additionally she argue that in integrative language skill teaching includes associated or related skills such as knowledge of vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation, syntax, meaning, and usage. According to her, this forms an integrated language teaching approach.

In effective lessons language teachers must be integrate language skills simultaneously in order to make language learning as realistic as possible which is a requisite in communication. Often one skill will reinforce another; we learn to speak, for example, in part by modeling what we hear, and we learn to write by examining what we can read (Brown, 2001).

There are two types of integrated language skills teaching: task-based language learning and content-based language learning. An alternative, though, would be to employ a hybrid of the two kinds.

Content-based language learning

Content-based language instruction is probably the most frequently used mode of language skills integration. In this mode, students practice language skills while engaging with activities focusing on subjects such as education, physics, culture or science. In other words, all the language skills are practiced in a highly integrated, communicative manner while the students are studying the contents of certain subjects. The main objective is to develop students' communicative competence in the target language, and the secondary goal is students' mastery of content knowledge of the subjects being learned. In Communicative Language Teaching method, the term 'content' refers to two things: the functions or the communicative purposes for which students use the target language (e.g., making introduction, invitation, greeting, interviewing, etc.) and the use of subject matters for second/foreign language teaching purposes (Hauptmann, 1988; Celce-Murica, 1991; Cunningsworth, 1995). In contentbased language teaching, a topic or a theme of the subject matter is employed as a basic building block to unify language skills. In other

words, language skills are interwoven around the common topic/theme being learned (Brown, 2001; Robson, 2002)

Task-based Language learning

In task-based language learning, students participate in communicative tasks in the target language. Communicative tasks are activities which can stand alone as fundamental units and require comprehending, producing, manipulating, or interacting in authentic language while attention is principally paid to meaning rather than form. To let the students develop their language skills, they are assigned to work in pair or group to solve a problem, complete a task, or create a product. For instances, students collaborate to criticize a poem, analyze a short story, enact scenes from a play, etc. While doing the tasks, they should communicate in the target language. In such a context, the tasks function to help unify two or more language skills together to facilitate meaningful communication. In addition, these tasks also serve as a 'glue' to relate the language skills to learners' background, goal, culture, and linguistic competence.

CONCLUSION

Communicative competence and the ability to use English to gain access to social, vocational, educational, or professional opportunities has been the most essential objectives of English learning due to the use of English as the major lingua franca and the main medium disseminating information and knowledge worldwide. To achieve the goal in EFL contexts, implementing integrated language skills instruction seems to be the best option. Different from the traditional segregated language skills approach which presented a language skill in isolation from the others skills, integrated language skills presents all language skills in conjunction with each other so that the learners do not only knows the language they are learning but also are able to use it natural communication

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