

RESEARCH ARTICLE

DESIGNING COMMUNITY LANGUAGE LEARNING METHOD BASED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES USING E-LEARNING RESOURCES TO TEACH LISTENING SKILLS AT THE TERTIARY LEVEL

Sujatha, P* and H. Thippu Sulthan

Department of English, Kongunadu Arts and Science College, Coimbatore- 641 029, Tamil Nadu, India.

ABSTRACT

In the current scenario, English plays an inevitable role in all the fields. The learners and teachers of this language understood the need of it and have taken certain steps to learn/teach language effectively using different methods to meet the needs of the society. Only recently, after the outlook of ELT scholars moved towards a blend of methods to suit the unique needs of a particular class and students during the post methods era, This paper is an attempt to design classroom activities based on CLL using E-learning materials to teach listening skills.

Keywords: Community language learning, E-learning, listening skills and classroom activities.

1. INTRODUCTION

The field of teaching is changing day by day. The new methods are used in the classroom to teach students. In olden days, teachers are given importance. Today, students are given importance. Curriculum, syllabus, teaching method, all are based on the needs of students. New ways of teaching are designed and experimented in the classroom to find out the best way to teaching. Technology is also used for developing the quality of education. This also includes teaching English. English Language Teaching also uses technology. They are called Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools. Computers, computer software, mobile phone, Apps, television, audio players all comes under ICT. After internet was introduced, teachers also use internet to teach English. This approach is called E-learning.(1)

This study aims to design classroom activities using e-learning tools that can be used to teach listening skills. The study also explores the chance of using Community Language Learning (CLL) for the very purpose. The hypothesis of the study is to find out if Community Language Learning (CLL) based classroom activities can be designed using e-learning materials to teach listening skills. We are well aware of approaches and methods of ELT, The Grammar- Translation Method, Direct Method, Audio- Lingual Method, The Situational Language Teaching, Communicative Language Teaching, Humanistic Approaches, Task-based Teaching(2) and so on so forth. In that line humanistic approach directly deals with soft skill of learners more over the method implement in this study CLL categories under this particular approach.

2. COMMUNITY LANGUAGE LEARNING METHOD AND IT SETUP

Humanistic method which focuses on the spoken aspect of learning languages is the Community Language learning (CLL) method. The CLL method was developed by Charles A. Curran, a professor of psychology at Loyola University in Chicago. Under this method, students work together to develop what aspects of a language they would like to learn. This method focuses on the functional aspect of language.

This method is much like counselling: the teacher or the knower helps the students to solve their problems by supporting and encouraging them. In a typical CLL class, a group of eight to twelve students sit in a circle around an audio recording device viz. a tape recorder. There is a general topic for discussion. A student who wishes to say something on the topic, words this to his teacher in his/her mother tongue. The teacher helps the student to express the idea in the target language while other students watch and observe. When the expression is considered, it is recorded. This is then repeated with other students. Then, the dialogue is transcribed on the blackboard and analysed. Other activities or done in the class based on the conversation.

3. DIGITAL, LISTENING SKILL AND COMMUNITY LANGUAGE LEARNING CLASSROOM

Technology and traditional language teaching methods of each course is unique and depends on the students. However, there are a few principles that should be applied to CLL classes: focus on fluency, accuracy, and learner empowerment. A CLL class has the following stages:

*Correspondence: Sujatha, P., Department of English, Kongunadu Arts and Science College, Coimbatore – 641 029, Tamil Nadu, India. E.mail: sujis4463@gmail.com

reflexion, recorded conversation, discussion, transcription, and language analysis.

CLL based activities that utilizes E-learning materials can be effective for the simple reason that they do not need external motivation for learning, they are capable of delivering multimedia content that can go a long way in exposing the students to authentic use of English. Community Language Learning is a humanistic method that holds a lot of promise in terms of adapting it in modern classroom situations.(3) This method has to be applied either of four skills classified in English language teaching(ELT), Hence this methodology was tested with all the skills and finalised with the learning skill(4) hence there are lot of attempt trailed over the skill of listening The study to move the focus towards the present or neo listening skill

3.1. E-learning

A learning framework is evaluation of formalized teaching however with the help of electronic devices is thought as E-learning. While instructing is often situated in or out of the classrooms, the use of computers and web makes it a real part of learning. E-learning will likewise be named as a system exchange of skills and data, and therefore the delivery of instruction is created to a considerable variety of receivers at the same or totally different circumstances.

However, with the fast technology innovation in learning it is currently grasped by the majority. The influence of computer and internet tools to cover the students and learning in e-learning platforms, computer, laptops, mobile phones and tablets these gadgets are plays vital role in classrooms learning. In this progress books are getting replaced by electronic educational materials like pen drives or CDs, Students discussion can also be shared via the Internet, which is accessible 24/7, anywhere, anytime.

4. DESIGNING CLASSROOM ACTIVITY BASED ON COMMUNITY LANGUAGE LEARNING METHOD

The task is concern Classroom activity is the final product that the students see in the class. All the preparation can be done by the teacher in the classroom activity. Hence, sufficient attention is required to design a classroom activity that gives effective results. A certain amount of computer literacy to the teacher is needed to use E-learning resources in classes. While designing activities, this factor supposed to be taken care.

4.1. Ten classroom Activities

The ten classroom activities that were developed as part of the Study work are designed by giving due consideration to all the design aspects that were discussed earlier and they also are aimed at reflecting all the key aspects of CLL.

The ten classroom activities are focused on developing listening skills to meet everyday listening tasks. They are designed for students who belong to the first year of Graduate studies. The activities are designed to accommodate forty students. The ten classroom activities are based on three basic classroom activities. The first four activities follow the 'Model 1' design, the next three activities follow the 'Model 2' design and the last three activities follow the 'Model 3' design. Blackboard and chock, books and work sheets, and computers with internet access and multimedia capability, and mobile phones with headsets are to be utilized in conducting the classroom activities. Each activity is of forty-five minutes in duration as the average class period is about one hour. Fifteen minutes of the class period was allotted for classroom management and other routine work such as handling attendance. The three basic design models are used in designing the ten activities and their highlights. This helps in throwing light on various design aspects that are unique to activities that are based on CLL.

The planning of the four activities has taken into account all the limitations and realities of their classroom. The average class period is about sixty minutes and therefore each classroom activity is designed to be completed in forty-five minutes or there about after having considered a time leave of fifteen minutes for routine classroom management tasks such as maintaining the attendance etc...

Each activity is divided into three stages viz. preparation, instruction, and procedure. The time allotment for the preparation is not included in the duration of the activity as fifteen minutes of the class is already allocated for classroom routines and arrangement. The instructional phase is given three minutes of the activity time in which the teacher is expected give the instructions for performing the activity. The instructions should be clear and if needed shall be given in the first language.

The procedure of the activity is divided into ten steps which are initiation, encouragement, translation and correction, recording, monitoring,

transcription, discussion, highlighting, confession & reflection, and conclusion.

4.1.1. Model 1

'Model 1' design is suitable for the initial part of the course. It divides the class into large groups yet all the groups work towards a common goal of listening to an audio clipping. Large groups allow a certain amount of comfort level to students to accommodate to the new environment. The purpose of the four activities based on the 'Model 1' design is very basic. These activities are designed to initiate the students to overcome their difficulties in listening to English.

4.1.2. Model 2

The next batch of activities 5, 6, and 7 are based on 'Model 2' design the purpose of the first four activities are to bring the students out of their inhibition towards listening in English, the purpose of these three activities is to indulge them in simple questioning and answering. As questioning and answering forms the basic structure of any conversation, the aims at helping students acquire these language aspects. Keeping the CLL spirit, topics of discussions of these activities will be determined by the students when they participate in the activities. Though the purpose of activities is to develop questioning and answering skills, the activities will be taken by the students in groups.

The three activities based on 'Model 2' design, The focus of the activities is to make students listen more. The class as a whole discusses the topic of the listening exercise. The teacher follows this discussion with highlighting of key language elements.

4.1.3. Model 3

The 'Model 3' design divides the class into the smallest groups i.e. pairs of students in order to make every student attempt to listen to English. However, the students are not isolated. Four groups of two, i.e. eight students still sit together in a pool and each pair has an opportunity to listen to an audio sample and develop their listening skills.

The topic of the classroom activity would be long speeches and therefore, the question setter will ask five questions to the student who is playing the role of the answer giver. The answer giver will answer the five questions. Students will either ask questions or give answers. They all will utter the sentences and record them. However, the entire activity will take place with the background of congeniality and no demand.

4.2. Advantages of Community language learning

This design encourages the individual student to contribute more to the group work, this design creates a very similar environment to that of the 'Model 1' design.

Therefore, students feel the same secured and friendly atmosphere in 'Model 2' design as well. These activities are not much different when it comes to the level of proficiency expected from the students. These three activities are the logical progression from the first four activities. The performance expected is of basic listening skills with the ability to frame questions and answers. Therefore the three activities do not put much demand on the students in terms of their proficiency. However, as mentioned earlier, these students possess all the knowledge and competence required to indulge in casual conversations. Hence, the effort is focused on breaking their inhibitions of listening and speaking in English.

The three activities based on 'Model 2' design provides a practice ground for students to practice what they have learnt in the previous four activities, these three activities will also become different in content and language use. The three activities will also focus on some of the favourite topics of students like cinema and memes.

The last three activities also focus on helping students to acquire basic listening skills that would help them in participating in conversations. The purpose of these activities is to involve groups of students into more intense listening sessions comprising questions and answers based on audio clippings played in mobile devices and listened by individual students. These three activities are logical progressions of the previous seven activities. These activities also provide the same secure anxiety free environment to the students in order to interact with fellow students as a community and indulge in the learning process of English.

The purpose of the three activities based on the 'Model 3' design is to involve students in longer listening practices as well as in interactions. However, the students are expected to engage in the basic form of conversation. These activities reflect one of the key features of CLL – learning in an anxiety free, secure and motivating environment.

The study undertaken is considered to be significant in terms of the contribution it might make to the field of inclusive English Language

Teaching. By exploring and discussing the ways to design a classroom activity based on e-learning platform. ESL students can learn listening skills to listen and watch audio and video files effectively would go a long way in helping those students to have a command over English as used in the computers and mobile access information on the internet

5. E-LEARNING MATERIALS

The materials used in completing these activities will carry special significance as they are E-learning materials. All the advantages of using such materials can be utilized in delivering the activities. Features such as flexibility in content, improvisation of content as required by CLL methodology, motivational environment, etc. can be incorporated to make the activities effective. E-learning resources from six sources namely, Randal, ELLLO, English Central, TED Talks, YouTube, and English Listening App can be used in the activities.

The teacher can use his/her fullest discretion in deciding the type of material to be used that is available from these sources. Or, the teacher can even allow students to choose the materials on the spot if they have technical resources to provide faster internet connectivity that can provide instant playing of audio clippings. The classroom activities can be extended further with the course of the students' discussion supported by additional materials that can be searched and accessed over the internet. E-learning materials offer the flexibility, that CLL activities require to not only capture the students' attention, but also to provide a friendly atmosphere for pressure-free learning.

The resources available are updated frequently and therefore the content would be current in nature. This can further allow the students to update themselves in terms of current affairs. CLL activities are primarily student-centered and student-driven.(5) Therefore, it would be improper to confine the designs to a particular type of content. This is the reason why there are no specific resource mentioned here. Perhaps an implementation of the classroom activities can provide such details, which is beyond the scope of the present study.

Appendix A

Classroom Activity Model 1

Name of the Activity : Listening Activity [n]

General Objective : Developing listening Skills

Methodology Adopted : Community Language Learning

Duration of the Activity : 45 min

No. of participants 40

Class structure : 8 groups of 5 members each

Teaching aids & materials : Computers with internet access and multimedia capability, blackboard an chalk, paper and pen

Other skills focused : Writing and Speaking

Preparation [5 minutes before the activity begins]

The class is to be divided into 8 groups of 5 members each through any selection method such as lot system, calling numbers and grouping multiples of numbers etc. if preferred, the teacher can have mixed groups with boys and girls present in each group or s/he can make a all boys and all girls groups. Each group is to sit in a semicircle with members facing the computer, and should be able to observe the blackboard. Each student can have paper and pen at his/her disposal. The teacher is to have access to the blackboard, computers, and all groups.

Instructions

(to be given to the students at the beginning of the activity and it may be in first language, Tamil)

We are going to listen to an audio clipping from the internet [from any of the five web sites]. You are to listen carefully. Each group has to come up with one questions related to the content of the video. The group can discuss among themselves what question to ask. Once you decide, you have to call me and give me the question in either English or Tamil. I will translate the question or correct it to make it a proper sentence in English. one of the group members should write the question on the board. Once each group comes up with their question, we will listen to the entire audio clipping once again. Each group then will write the answers on a paper. Answers can then be discussed with other groups. Additional information on the content of the audio clipping can be exchanged. You can come up with your ideas in Tamil and I will help you translate them into English.

Step 1 – Initiation

The teacher can ask leading questions related to the content of the clipping.

Step 2 – encouraging & supporting

Students who are willing to come up with questions can be supported or encouraged by the group applauding him/her.

Step 3 – Translation

Teacher shall translate or correct the sentence that a group has come up with in an encouraging tone. (fault-finding tone or that which expresses disappointment should be avoided)

Step 4– recording

Each sentence is to be recorded by one of the students in each group on the blackboard.

Step 5 - - monitoring

The teacher should monitor what's going on in each group and pay extra attention to the groups that do not contribute to the activity.

Step 6 – Transcription

The teacher should observe the board as the students write their questions, and rectify the errors if any.

Step 7 – discussion

The teacher should encourage each group to talk about the audio clipping among themselves by reading the questions.

Step 8 – highlighting

The teacher should help students take notice of important language aspects such as word order or a particular expression in order to help them retain for future use.

Step 9 – confession and reflection

The teacher should encourage students to come up with their own ideas individually and also allow them to express their experience and feedback on the listening activity. The teacher should not corner single students and pressurized them.

Step 10 – conclusion

The teacher should conclude the activity by appreciating students' participation in an encouraging tone and should create a secured and congenial atmosphere in the class for future activities.

Time allotment

Instructions	- 3 min
Step 1, 2, & 3	- 8 min
Steps 4 & 5	- 8 min

Steps 6 & 7 - 8 min

Step 8 - 8 min

Step 9 - 8 min

Step 10 - 2 min

Appendix B

Classroom Activity Model 2

Name of the Activity : Listening Activity [n]

General Objective : Improving Listening Skills

Methodology Adopted : Community Language Learning

Duration of the Activity : 45 min

No. of participants 40

Class structure : 10 groups of 4 members in each group

Teaching aids & materials : Computer with internet access and multimedia capability, blackboard and chalk, paper and pen

Other Language Skills : Speaking, and Writing

Preparation [five minutes]

The class is to be divided into 10 groups of 4 members each through any selection method such as lot system, calling numbers and grouping multiples of numbers etc. if preferred, the teacher can have mixed groups with boys and girls present in each group or s/he can make a all boys and all girls groups. Two groups are to sit – one group facing the other and should have visual access to the computer screen, teacher, and other groups. Each student can have paper and pen at his/her disposal. The teacher is to have access to the computer, and all groups.

Instructions

(to be given to the students at the beginning of the activity and it may be in first language, Tamil)

We are going to listen to an audio clipping from the internet [from any one of the five web sites]. Of the two groups that are facing each other, each group will come up with a question and the other group has to come up with an answer for the question. The group can discuss among themselves what to say or ask about the clipping. Once all the pairs of groups complete their questions and answers, they should present the questions to the entire class and allow them to answer the question. The question session can be followed by discussions on the content of the audio clipping.

Step 1 – Initiation

The teacher can ask leading questions related to the content of the clipping.

Step 2 – encouraging & supporting

Students who are willing to come up with questions can be supported or encouraged by the group applauding him/her.

Step 3 – Translation

Teacher shall translate or correct the sentence that a group has come up with in an encouraging tone. (fault-finding tone or that which expresses disappointment should be avoided)

Step 4– recording

Each question and answer is to be recorded by one of the students in each group on a paper.

Step 5 - - monitoring

The teacher should monitor what's going on in each group and pay extra attention to the groups that do not contribute to the activity.

Step 6 – Transcription

The teacher should observe the papers as the students write their questions, and rectify the errors if any.

Step 7 – discussion

The teacher should encourage each group to talk about the audio clipping among themselves by reading the questions.

Step 8 – highlighting

The teacher should help students take notice of important language aspects such as word order or a particular expression in order to help them retain for future use.

Step 9 – confession and reflection

The teacher should encourage students to come up with their own ideas individually and also allow them to express their experience and feedback on the listening activity. The teacher should not corner single students and pressurized them.

Step 10 – conclusion

The teacher should conclude the activity by appreciating students' participation in an encouraging tone and should create a secured and congenial atmosphere in the class for future activities.

Time allotment

Instructions - 3 min

Step 1, 2, & 3 - 8 min

Steps 4 & 5 - 8 min

Steps 6 & 7 - 8 min

Step 8 - 8 min

Step 9 - 8 min

Step 10 - 2 min

Appendix C

Classroom Activity Model 3

Name of the Activity : Listening Activity [n]

General Objective : improving listening Skills

Methodology Adopted : Community Language Learning

Duration of the Activity : 45 min

No. of participants 40

Class structure : 20 two-member groups

Teaching aids & materials : Mobile phones with internet access and multimedia capability, paper and pen

Other skills focused : Speaking and writing

Preparation

The class is to be divided into 20 groups of 2 members each through any selection method such as lot system, calling numbers and grouping multiples of numbers etc. if preferred, the teacher can have mixed groups with boys and girls present in each group or s/he can make a all boys and all girls groups. Each pair is to sit facing each other. One pair should have the access of one mobile phone with a headset. The students can have access to paper and pen.

Instructions

(to be given to the students at the beginning of the activity and it may be in first language, Tamil)

We are going to have a listening activity [Audio clipping from one of the five web sites is to be played]. Each pair will have to listen to one audio clipping. One student in the pair should listen to the audio and prepare five questions and hand the question paper to the other student. The second students should then listen to the audio and answer the five questions. The pair then should discuss the question and answers. They can repeat the activity

by changing the roles: the student who answered the questions earlier can become the question setter. They then should report to the teacher about their listening activity.

Step 1 – Initiation

The teacher can help the pairs decide who is to perform which role if the members are unable to decide.

Step 2 – encouraging & supporting

The teacher can always have encouraging words for students who lack in confidence or who hesitate to open up.

Step 3 – Translation

Teacher shall translate or correct the sentence that a pair has come up with in an encouraging tone. (fault-finding tone or that which expresses disappointment should be avoided)

Step 4– recording

Each listening session should have five questions and answers which are to be written on a paper.

Step 5 – monitoring

The teacher should monitor what's going on in each group and pay extra attention to the groups that do not develop their questions and answers.

Step 6 – Transcription

The teacher should check the transcriptions of the listening sessions.

Step 7 – discussion & Presentation

The teacher should allow the pairs to discuss the content of the audio clipping.

Step 8 – highlighting

The teacher should help students take notice of important language aspects such as word order or a particular expression in order to help them retain for future use.

Step 9 – confession and reflection

The teacher should encourage students to come up with their own ideas individually and also allow them to express their experience and feedback on the conversation. The teacher should not corner single students and pressurise them.

Step 10 – conclusion

The teacher should conclude the activity by appreciating students' participation in an encouraging tone and should create a secured and congenial atmosphere in the class for future activities.

Time allotment

Instructions	- 3 min
Step 1, 2, & 3	- 8 min
Steps 4 & 5	- 8 min
Steps 6 & 7	- 8 min
Step 8	- 8 min
Step 9	- 8 min
Step 10	- 2 min.

6. CONCLUSION

The purpose of using E-learning materials in CLL-based activities is that it can preserve the flexibility required for the successful execution of these activities. The primary objective of CLL is to create a pressure-free environment where students enjoy the learning process. Using E-learning materials, they offer flexibility, can deliver learning activities that are in vogue with CLL methodology and its spirit.

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