Language Laboratory: A Colossal Apparatus for Catapulting English Skills: An Empirical Study

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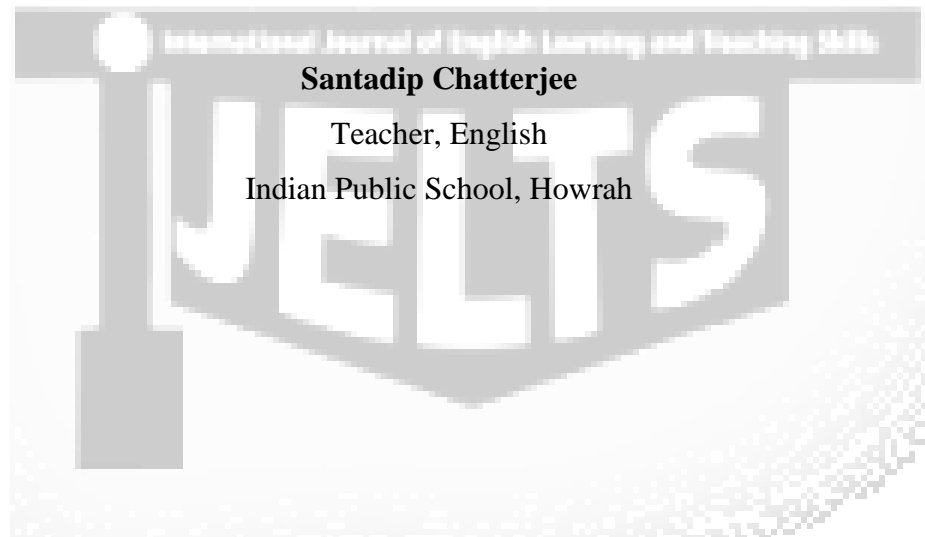
Abstract

To call a spade a spade, language laboratory is one of the important tools to hone the four basic skills 'Listening', 'Speaking', 'Reading', 'Writing' (LSRW) of English language. The audio-visual mechanism of a language laboratory along with software's play a pivotal role to develop the skills of the language learners. Language laboratories are not only paramount for the pupils those who are pursuing engineering courses but also for the common learners of English language. To talk turkey to come out with triumphant in the job market, business world, the necessity of effective and professional communication in English is at the crest. This paper enlightens the effectiveness of language laboratory, and its application by the language trainers to enhance the skills of the learners of English language for effective communication in the professional field. This paper also zeroes in on the modern tools used in a language laboratory, kinds of language laboratories, amenities of a language laboratory, and the usages of virtual language laboratories for the language learners those who are pursuing language courses through distance mode of education and the future of the language laboratory for developing the basic skills of English language. The methodologies of language laboratory have been emerging continuously and the new trends, tools of the modern language laboratories shall help the learners to be proficient in terms of grammar, kinesics, vocalics, haptics, proxemics, business communication and technical writing along with the four basic skills of English language to a tee.

Keywords: Language, laboratory, skill, communication

I. Introduction

The emergence of Language laboratory has made English learning much more effective and professional with the guidance of the pedagogues. The modern language laboratories facilitate English learning in a structured system through its electronic and mechanical equipment's that are arranged and designed to make English-language learning more effective and enjoyable. To enhance the four basic skills 'Listening', 'Speaking', 'Reading' and 'Writing'; the importance of technical learning is paramount. Naturally in the language laboratories, the learners used to practice different activities according to their requirements. At the ab-initio of the usages of language laboratories, the tape-based systems, reels, cassettes were used to train the learners. With the passage of time, there has been an emergence in the systems of language laboratory, these days language laboratories consist multimedia systems, software's that make the English teaching-learning process effective, technical and professional as an outcome. Language laboratories are made based on the methodologies that are effective to hone the four basic skills of English language along with the sub-skills of English language.

II. **Types of Language Laboratory**

There are different types of language laboratories that are used to teach English language. Over the years, the language laboratories have been developed in terms of its functions, procedures, features and system. The different types of language laboratories are- Conventional Laboratory, Lingua Phone Laboratory, Web Assisted Language Laboratory (WALL), Multimedia Hi-Tech Language Laboratory, Digital Language Laboratory, Virtual Language Laboratory. Conventional Language Laboratory is the first version of language laboratory that was used earlier. The equipment's that were used in this type of language laboratory are tape recorder, audio cassettes. The second type of language laboratory is Lingua Phone Laboratory that was a modified version of the Conventional Language Laboratory. The usages of the headsets started through this type of language laboratory. Both of these two types of language laboratories naturally focused on the listening skill of language learning. The other types of language laboratories that are used in this twenty-first century are Web Assisted Language Laboratory (WALL), Multimedia Hi-Tech Language Laboratory and Digital Language Laboratory or Virtual Language Laboratory. Web Assisted Language Laboratory is extremely important to teach English according to demands of the modern world, through this language laboratory the trainers shall provide course materials according to the requirement of their learners. Multimedia Hi-Tech Language Laboratory and Digital or Virtual Language Laboratory are the ultra-modern system of language laboratory to teach the leaners proficiently.

III. **Principles, procedures, goals, advantages of Language Laboratory**

The principles of using Language Laboratory are multifarious. The first principle of using a language laboratory is to make the learners proficient in terms of learning and applying English language in different contexts. Naturally, a language laboratory deals with a trainer-cantered system connected to a number of learners containing a learner control device along with a headset and microphone. In the modern language lab, softwares are installed in the computers through which the trainers can teach the learners the techniques of effective listening, speaking, reading and writing. Professional and technical practice is extremely essential to hone the four basic skills of English language, a language laboratory is therefore the best place to practice listening, speaking, reading and writing in English. The language trainers make the best possible usages of the language laboratories to train the learners. To provide this practice is the fundamental principle of the language laboratory.

There are several goals of using language laboratories, the first one is to make the learners proficient in purposeful listening, active listening, critical listening, comprehensive listening and empathetic listening through systematic and guided practice sessions in the language laboratories. In these practice sessions of listening, the learners are taught how to comprehend and paraphrase the matter the learners listen, apart from that the learners are also taught how to understand the accents of the speaker, or the accent used in an audio clip they listen. The other factors that are focused to enhance the listening skill of the learners

through language laboratories are the techniques to understand and interpret messages, the speaking speed or the rate of the speech, tone, emotions, clarity of the speaker they listen. The listening speed of the learners can also be honed by doing different listening exercises in the language laboratories. The learners can hone their listening speed, rate or capacity up to 400-450 words a minute which is indeed a good capacity of listening. Practicing listening in the language laboratories enhances the skill of note-taking as well. The trainers can train the learners the techniques of using purposeful non-verbal signals needed in some situations to respond the speaker during their speech sans interrupting them. The second goal of using language laboratories is to develop the effective speaking of the learners. To hone the effective oral communication skill, the learners should have a basic understanding level of the sound system of the English language. The trainers can use the different audio-visual materials in the language laboratories to make their learners understand the different sounds of English language like oral sound, nasal sound, voiced, unvoiced, vowels, diphthongs, pure vowels, consonants sound with suitable examples. Apart from these areas, the trainers shall use language laboratories to teach the learners the rules of pronunciation, accent, sentence stress, intonation, word stress, sentence rhythm through examples and demonstration. The other important aspects that can be learned by practicing different activities through the tools used in language laboratories to make oral communication effective and professional as an outcome are the different vocal cues like the quality of voice, volume, voice modulation, pace or rate, pitch, articulation, pauses etc. The third goal of using language laboratories is to train the learners regarding the techniques of reading, understanding the non-verbal signals for good comprehension, punctuation, inference, structures of an ideal text and paragraph and the techniques of summarizing. The trainers can use the different inbuilt materials from the softwares installed in the computers of language laboratories to make their learners practice and understand the techniques, skills required for effective reading. The fourth and final goal of using the language laboratories is to develop the skill of effective writing which is one of the most common mediums of communication in any profession. Language trainers can show and share samples, styles of effective writing, templates according to the needs of the learners to help them to learn the styles of effective and technical writing based on contexts galore. Learners can also learn the application of the right words, idioms, phrases in the right contexts along with the proper usages of grammar and sentence construction by practicing different activities, exercises through language laboratories. Language trainers can also use language laboratories to train the learners regarding the proper techniques required for proofreading and formatting and the art of condensation that are paramount for sensible, effective and technical writing.

There are wads of advantages or amenities of using language laboratories to train learners. These advantages are multifarious in nature, Naturally In a language laboratory, learners can practice aloud simultaneously and individually as well with the guidance of their trainers. Language trainers used to zero in on individual learners' performance sans interrupting the work of the group. In terms of honing speaking skill, language laboratories

can be used by the language trainers as a medium to share authentic, consistent, untiring models of speeches, audios for practicing through imitation and drill. Another significant advantage of language laboratories is the usages of headphones while the training session that provides a sense of isolation. Using headphones in language laboratories intimate contact with the language, equal clarity of sound to all students, and facilitates complete concentration. Recordings of the voices of the native speakers with different accents, pronunciations can also be shared with the language learners through language laboratories in a flash that help them to learn different accents and pronunciation properly with the guidance of their trainers. The language laboratory facilitates testing of each student for listening comprehension. It has generally been impracticable for the unaided teacher to test this skill. The language laboratory facilitates testing of the speaking ability of each student in a class. It has generally been impracticable for the unaided teacher to test this skill. Some teachers, for reasons beyond their control, do not themselves have sufficient preparation in understanding and speaking the foreign language. The language laboratory provides these teachers with an opportunity to improve their own proficiency. The language laboratory makes it possible to divide a class into teacher-directed and machine-directed groups. Certain facilities of language-laboratories can enhance the student's potential for evaluating their own performances. Modern language-laboratories can facilitate specially-designed instructional materials along with technical facilities for self-improvement.

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is one of the important tools of Language Laboratory. English language trainers naturally use the softwares that are installed in the computers to train the language learners in terms of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, technical report writing, listening skills, speaking skill, reading skill and writing skill. Language laboratories are extremely useful for the language learners to hone clarity, creativity, confidence in terms of articulating their thoughts, views through communication. Language laboratories can be used to develop the soft skills, personality, verbal communication and non-verbal communication skills of the learners through different activities and softwares.

To be above board, language laboratories along with its tools, features are the best apparatus to teach the four basic skills of English language to a tee. Oral presentation skills, Group Discussion skills, skills required for JAM, extempore, Public Speaking, reading skills can also be honed through the tools of language laboratories with the proper guidance of the English Language Trainers. Interactive Communication Skills Laboratory can also be used by the language trainers to train their learners to communicate effectively based on the needs of different situations. To hone the skills required for effective and technical communication in the fields workplace communication, Telephonic communication, business communication, professional communication, inter or intra personal communication, day-to-day communication; learning, practicing English through language laboratories with the guidance of the language trainers are the best possible ways to come out triumphant.

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