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Language Lab and It's Role to Increase Students Employability

Prof. Rajendra Mahajan
Assistant Professor
Atharva College of Engineering,
Malad

Dr. Ritu Sharma
Associate Professor
Atharva College of Engineering,
Malad

*Abstract-*Today's educational climate is increasingly diverse. Students from various cultures feel hard to learn English and its proficiency. The thirst of English language learning needs some solution. The language lab plays a key role to learn the foreign language in a comfortable atmosphere. With a view to ensure global competencies in our students, the colleges have established a digital language lab to help the students to develop and refine their communicative skills in English. The language lab enables individual and group study under the guidance of the instructor. Opportunities for spontaneous as well as directed communication in the target language are provided in the lab. Authentic audio/ visual materials in digital format are used for the purpose. Internet resources for language learning are also utilized for language practice. This paper focuses on the various features of the language laboratory and its importance to increase the students' employability.

Key words: Language lab, communicative Skills, assessment

I. INTRODUCTION

Communication is an important facet in life. Human beings have a compulsive urge to communicate with each other. Effective communication centers round the usage of words, speed of delivery of words, pitch modulation and body language. Even though the majority of tasks performed by the engineering students are of technical in nature their success to a great extent depends on the effectiveness with which they communicate with each other. The four skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening have to be trained. Being able to communicate well is the most important factor when seeking a placement in a company or institution. Communication involves one's ability to listen carefully so as to grasp the meaning and to respond in turn with apt words and clarity of pronunciation.

The language lab is a technological break for imparting skills in English. The language lab offers an exclusive result oriented and efficient to enrich the English language learning process. Language labs are designed to provide the learners with a strong platform for practical training in the language. A good language lab skillfully and efficiently develops the language skills of the learners. Language labs also provide scope for using language through games and practice exercises to polish concepts learnt during classroom sessions. The digital language lab motivates student's learning attitude, providing an interactive learning environment.

The essence for having a language lab is being broadly recognized by the English language academia. Schools and colleges across the country are opening up to the idea of establishing language labs for the future benefit of their learners.

II. WHAT IS A LANGUAGE LAB?

Language laboratory is an audio-visual installation used in modern teaching methods to learn the foreign languages. Modern language labs are known by many names, digital language lab, multimedia language lab, language media center and multimedia learning center etc. The function of a language lab is to involve students to actively contribute in language learning exercises and get more practice than otherwise possible in a traditional classroom environment. The multimedia based language lab helps to gain knowledge and enhance the language proficiency by sharing the course .The language lab is created on the methodology of LSRW skills. The Language Lab emphasizes on the construction and practice of sounds of language and familiarizes the students with the use of English in everyday situations and contexts

Modern language labs in general offer the Text, images, audio and video can easily be integrated; teachers can alter materials to fit their requirements, Learners can record their own voice and play back the recordings, interact with each other and the teacher, and store results.
Teachers can intervene and control the learners' computers via the teacher's console, track of learners' work, etc. Self-access for independent learning which includes access to resources outside class.

Common components in a modern language lab:
- Teacher has well established computer system with appropriate language software for conducting language exercises
- Teacher and students wear headsets that avoid noise and disturbances
- Students have a media player/recorder for listening to audio and recording speech
- Teacher and student positions are connected via LAN (local area network), in some cases also via separate audio cabling
- A server computer or a separate storage device is often used to store lesson materials in a digital format

III. OBJECTIVES AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LANGUAGE LABORATORY

The language laboratory exists to help one to use technology successfully to communicate. It is not just for learning a single language, but can be used for teaching a number of languages efficiently. To acquire a sensibility for the sounds and rhythm of a language, one has to listen to the best samples of a spoken. This is precisely the function of the language laboratory.

Language laboratory enables the students to a variety of self-instructional, learner-friendly modes of language learning. It helps the students nurture the habit of reading passages from the computer monitor, thus providing them with the required facility to face computer-based competitive exams such GRE, TOEFL, GMAT etc. The use of language laboratory also enables them to learn better pronunciation through stress on word accent, intonation, and rhythm. It is helpful to train them to use language effectively to face interviews, group discussions, and public speaking.

Language laboratory is a tool designed for teaching any language. It helps the students into greater use of the computer in resume, c.v. preparation, report writing, format-making etc. It helps one to have control on paralanguages like to learn pronunciation, accent, stress and all other aspects of the phonetics of a language. Effective and useful communicative training programmes, discussion sessions for the general public, private and corporate sectors, junior and senior level officers can be given through the lab. Web-content creation, the setting up of in-house news magazines, corporate publicity and identity, and teaching materials can be generated through the language laboratory. General documentation, software documentation and all forms of technical documentation can be completed. Experts and intellectuals can utilize the laboratory for creating and editing scientific and technical materials for teaching language. The language laboratory enables one to perform courses for various groups of people like students, faculties, businesspeople, etc. Online courses and paperless examinations can be conducted through the language laboratory.

IV. ADVANTAGES AND BENEFITS OF LANGUAGE LAB

- Clarity: The direct sound transmission gives step by step direction from the teacher to the heads of the students with crystal clear clarity.
- Software catch attention: The Lab software is more attention absorbing for the students, where they are engaged with individual systems.
- Comprehensive and analytical: The Lab increases the pace of comprehension as students coaching are purely based on the level of study.
- Multiple idea: The Lab enable us to regulates the language through the different thoughts and ideas created in the mind of the students.
- Effective learning: The lab provides to learn the foreign language practice in a focused setting that removes the

feelings of self-consciousness.
- Emphasis on various experience: By using text, audio and video can easily be integrated with actuality in everyday situations.
- Group Guidance : It is easy to guide the groups by monitoring each student independently without disturbing the others students.
- Self evaluation process: the students can do a periodical self evaluation to calculate the progress as well as evaluate his/her language with that of the professional.
- freedom of learning: access to resources beyond the timetable encourages independent learning.
- caretaker for learners: It care takes the learners to become accomplished at the language that they are learning.
- Reduce or remove the fear: The automated learning environment removes one's fear and creates a happy learning condition. Learn the need: The lab satisfy the need of the learner that is learning the language skills in an effective way.
- Helpful for interaction: The students can record their own voice and play back the recordings, interact with the each other and the teacher, and store the results.

V. KINDS OF LANGUAGE LABORATORY

The language labs of renowned institution are equipped with the most advanced and the sophisticated technologies that inspire the student to work harder in the lab. Technically, a language laboratory is an instructional technology tool consisting of a source unit that can disseminate audio materials to any number of students at individual seats or carrels. Depending on the number of the student's intake, the authorities of the institution has arranged few more innovative products.

Language labs can be categorized with different levels.

Conventional Laboratory
This is the primitive form of the language laboratory. The conventional lab has a tape recorder and a few audio cassettes of the target language to teach the learners. The teacher plays the tape and the learners listen to it and learn the pronunciation. As it is used in a normal classroom setup, it is prone to distractions and this type of laboratory is no longer common.

Lingua Phone Laboratory
This is again a conventional type of lab, with a little modernization. Learners are given a headset to listen to the audiocassettes being played. Here distractions are minimized and a certain amount of clarity in listening is possible.

Computer Assisted Language Laboratory
Computer Assisted Language Laboratory uses the computer to teach language. The language course materials are already fed into the computer and are displayed according to the features available in the system. Nowadays, there are also laboratories with computers with a connection to the Internet. These are called Web Assisted Language

Multimedia Hi-Tech Language Laboratory
There is a lot of software available on the market that can be used in the multimedia language laboratory

VI. LANGUAGE LAB OF ATHARVA COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Atharva College of Engineering installed Orell digital language laboratory in 2014. Faculty members got the training of the use of the major function of language lab. During the last three years study of the placement report of Atharva College of Engineering, it is obvious that there is a statistically significant correlation between the constant use of language lab activities and assessment .One cannot ignore the importance of language lab in increasing the achievements and proficiency in different exams by students those who have attended language lab sessions on regular basis.

The third year students of Atharva College of Engineering were divided into several groups and introduced to the language lab. These groups were scheduled to use language lab on weekly basis. The groups were gone through the different levels of training.
The students were given training in the areas of-
- Conversational English
- Vocabulary building
- Language skills
- Pronunciation
- Techniques to improve listening, speaking , reading and writing
- Soft skills and Interpersonal skills
- Role Plays
- Business communication
- Group discussion
- Pre-placement training
- Corporate readiness
- Formal and informal situation
- Resume preparation
- E-mail writing
- PPT Preparation and presentation
- Decision making skills
- Interview preparations and Mock interviews

There has been frequent assessment and evaluation process done by faculty members after the sessions. That helps a lot to the students to crack different exams and interview to reach the ladder of success.

Following table highlights the progress and success of Atharva students in last three years in different exams.

Table 1. Performance of Atharva Students in last three years in different exams.

SR. NO	EXAMS	QUALIFIED STUDENTS IN 2013-2014	QUALIFIED STUDENTS IN 2014-2015	QUALIFIED STUDENTS IN 2015-2016
1	GATE	3	15	22
2	GRE	2	7	8
3	TOEFL	8	10	15
4	GMAT	3	12	17

Following Chart highlights the progress and success of Atharva students in last four years in campus placement.
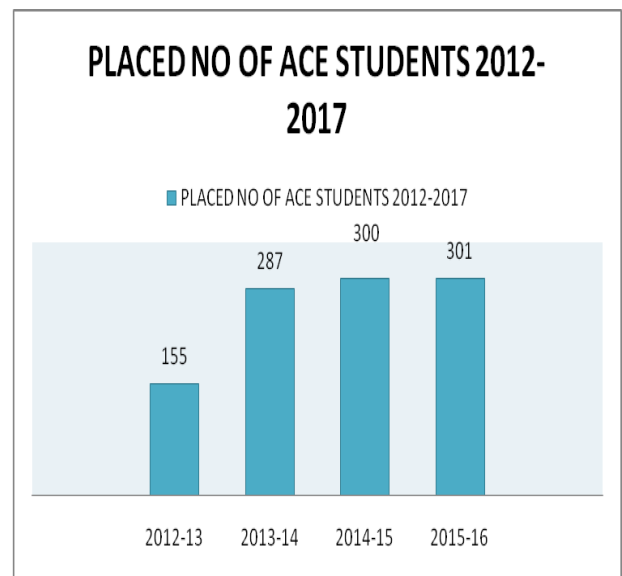

Fig. 1. Results

VII. CONCLUSION

The language lab is the solution and need of the hour to learn the skills of language. The quality of the language proficiency will be more when they learn it from the multimedia, digital and computerized Language Lab. There is always scope for improvement and advancement in any field and for any subject. It is high time that our teaching methods have to undergo a change. Unless the new technology is adopted in language teaching, we cannot impart language skills in our learners at the rate of growing competition. According to my view, these are a few of the whole lot of techniques those can be used to improve language skills and employability through technology in the present generation.

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