

## Role of Language Laboratory in Second/Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

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CHAPTER

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### Introduction:

The history of the Language Laboratory is not very old. It originated in the USA but rapidly gained ground in the UK in the 1960s. It has formulated some important teaching techniques in a few countries, including India, especially in teaching foreign languages. Essentially language laboratory is a device that promotes self-learning. Here the learner can hear the language spoken from recorded tapes, and then they practice speaking in the same manner. The language laboratory mainly concentrates on listening (comprehension) and speaking, leaving reading and writing skills to be developed later. When speaking, it tries to develop correct pronunciation, intonation and accent. It also aims to develop an ability to use the words, idioms and phrases in the language in the correct way. Lastly, it helps communicate the learner's ideas effectively in the language. A small group of learners is taken in Language Lab. Batch. It enables a group of 20 learners to use the same material at a time.

### Role of Language Laboratory in Developing Language Skills

A language laboratory is aware of individual differences in language aptitude worldwide; IQ is not an important factor in this difference. Language Laboratory recognizes this difference, so its approach is essentially individualistic. Much time is allotted for oral and auditory experiences in Language Laboratory. It allows students to hear the language spoken by a native speaker and to practice speaking in the language among themselves. A language laboratory is a well-designed and carefully-produced pattern of drills. In this way, it relieves the teacher of endless repetition of the same patterns.

Language laboratories are valuable as they offer students a structured eLearning environment successfully and reliably. A language laboratory is a kind of educational technology that facilitates the teacher's role in creating a more attractive learning environment in the classroom. Language laboratory becomes an alternative of language books and can offer their students more practice hours and up-to-date exercises as books.

## **Types of Language Laboratory**

Generally, Language Labs are of five types as follows:

LEVEL I: A type (Audio System)

LEVEL II: AA type (Audio-Active System)

LEVEL III: AAC type (Audio-Active Comparative System)

LEVEL IV: AACC type (Audio-Active Comparative with controls System)

LEVEL V: AACI type (Audio Active Computer-based interactive System)

### **LEVEL I: A type (Audio System):**

At this level, the teachers and the students are well-equipped with a tape recorder, audio cassette and a microphone to teach students. The teacher played tape recorder, and students listened and learned the pronunciation of the words. However, this level has only one-way communication and no opportunity for feedback.

### **LEVEL II: AA type (Audio-Active System):**

Here in this level, students can not only listen to audio programs or messages transmitted by a teacher but also can record or listen to the teacher's oral response through tape/cassette/ microphone recorded in the teacher's control. This level is two-way communication.

### **LEVEL III: AAC type (Audio-Active Comparative System):**

Level III provides advanced technology compared to LEVEL II AA type (Audio-Active System). 2 track cassette tape recorder is given to every student and can be controlled through remote from the teachers' console if necessary. Materials can be achieved directly from the teacher-instructor or programs sent to them from the teacher's cassette recorder and pre-recorded nonerasable tapes inserted into a tape recorder. Students can control the cassette recorder and re-record it as many times as they wish in a continuous format.

### **LEVEL IV: AACC type (Audio-Active Comparative with controls System):**

Level IV provides adequate teacher and student control function for full-scale inter-communication. A teacher can check all students' prosperity at once by raising questions or conducting an examination. Here students can control the tape or cassette recorder by playing, pause rewind, and fast-forwarding as per teachers' instruction or their prudence. They can obey and record delivered messages or responses per their needs in a particular situation. Students may be self-employed or can follow teachers' instructions. AACC system enables students to learn at their own pace.

### **LEVEL V: AACI type (Audio Active Computer-based interactive System):**

Here the computer is used to teach the student. The Level V AACI system illustrates a computer-based interactive language system. The course material is already brought up into

the computer and presented to the students. A full range of software formats, such as audio CD, Audio Cassette, CD-ROM, AV cassette etc., is provided. In this level of language lab, an internet connection is accessed. The teacher can easily evaluate how AV channels help the students through program material/instruction.

### **A language lab is practical**

A new language cannot be learned just by studying the theory, which does not guarantee a successful language-learning experience. Practice in Language labs is entertaining and interactive to acquire the four main language skills: LSRW, i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students learn more comprehensively through a language lab.

### **Self-learning:**

The students are encouraged to self-study and progress in self-guided but structured and progressive training to achieve the goals and objectives set by the school or educational institution.

### **Complimentary:**

Language labs allow students to reinforce material learned in class by putting them through interactive practices with group members.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Language Lab helps the teachers monitor each student's progress and receive reports of strengths and weaknesses. It helps the teacher to adapt the classroom activities better.

### **Students learn much faster in the language lab**

Practice leads to success! The same phrase applies to language learning. The interactive courses of language lab help students learn very quicker than in the old regular classroom setting mode. This progressive model promotes natural learning. Here the learners intuitively learn the different concepts of language. Language lab motivates students to achieve higher levels of language retention and progress.

### **The teacher takes on a more important role in the language lab**

We are scared that technology may replace the role of the teacher and that the teachers' need will become obsolete in this Edu world. The language lab has broken this myth because it provides supplementary materials that facilitate and compete with the instructor's role. The teacher need not waste time explaining everything and can focus on the important parts of the course. The structure of the language lab courses focuses on interactive resources, which not only facilitate the work teacher puts in when preparing lessons but also allows them to prepare the materials in less time with a greater volume. In this course, student information is collected, and instantaneous reports of the lesson's progress against objectives are provided. The teacher can use this information to guide the direction of the class.

### **Use more resources and varied activities than in a traditional classroom**

Language labs help students to practice any foreign or second language with much wider exposure. A variety of activities and exercises are designed on the computer. Learning occurs within a structured framework, in the formal context and in an attractive way that motivates the student in the language learning environment and promotes language use. Here the students watch videos and practice their pronunciation through a speech recognizer, in this way, they learn new vocabulary and many more things.

### **Language labs allow for diversity in the classroom**

Language laboratories provide interactive courses, and teachers are attentive to the students because, for different schools, students' levels are different, and language labs are made to meet students' individual needs. But, on the other hand, teachers can monitor the class and evaluate from time to time as per course objectives and major difficulties of the student and can reinforce the class accordingly.

### **Labs foster communication in the classroom**

Language labs also lead in communicating among student-teacher as well as student-Students with activities and exercises essential to verbal communication and comprehending the language. The Language lab includes tools for creating groups for communication, hosting conversations via chat, promoting messages on the board, and accessing a community of students by uniting those studying the same language in a group.

### **Language labs are an intuitive tool for both the student and the teacher**

Professional Technical skills are not needed in this language learning method for use in the classroom, the teacher only requires basic computer skills, and students will welcome the added technology they are already so adept with.

### **Language labs optimize computing resources**

Higher education institutions have classrooms with computers there for students to complete school work or study other subjects. A sufficient number of faculty computer labs and office computers for administrative work are also available. Language labs easily recycle resources an academic institute already has and adapt them to the language course.

As a whole, language labs are considered to be very comprehensive as well as a cost-effective tool for every educational institution to monetize their language training and also develop student's skills for effective language learning, especially in second/foreign language, with the help of the latest technology and educational content. Language Lab provides the solution for designing a structured academic curriculum with the aim of establishing an educational center with an international vocation audience that seeks the highest quality in teaching-learning skills in foreign/second language learning.

### **Advantages of Language Labs.**

Language lab. Provides practice in a harmonious way in four language learning skills, i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing. Through the lab, students can learn extensively.

- Language lab removes inhibition in speaking in public and fills the heart with the joy of learning.
- Language Lab helps to develop speaking skills in average learners.
- Learners develop and practice linguistics and rhetorical skills in Language Lab. through a n exchange of information.
- Very quickly, language lab speeds up comprehensively. As a result, even low-grade and average students can learn a foreign language easily.
- Students can learn according to their time and pace and can record their voices.

### **Disadvantages of Language Lab.**

- Some types of knowledge cannot be verified by experimentation. As a consequence, language lab has limited applicability.
- In a language lab, more than 20 students cannot be accommodated.
- It needs high-quality teachers to control the whole process.
- The teacher cannot arrange separate equipment and other material for individual students due to a lack of resources.
- Sometimes language lab behaves mechanically due to a lack of human resources.
- When too many students want to attend, the responses are disorganized and ineffective, as the teachers listen to the students randomly.

### **Conclusion**

The language laboratory is a very effective tool for teaching and learning speaking and listening skill. It helps practice and assess one's speech in any language. It helps to allow the student to listen to the model pronunciation. They can rewind/repeat and record the same. They also can listen to their performance and compare it with the model / recorded one. In this way, they do self-assessments. Since the language laboratory allows every learner of any language freedom to learn according to their own pace, it is flexible as it does not require a teacher's presence all the time. At the same time, teachers can assist individuals as well as collectively. The language laboratory allows each participant their privacy to speak and listen.

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