Sense and Sensibility

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This paper entitled “Sense and Sensibility” attempts to throw light on the necessity to understand the importance of the five senses in the process of teaching and learning and how the understanding could be useful in developing the language skills. Of course we the English teachers have been yoking the burden of developing the communication skills of the Engineering students for many years. Even after hundreds and hundreds of lecture hours are allotted specifically for improving the communication skills, we still face students feeling shy to open their mouth. Who else to be blamed?

A better understanding of the senses and their role can help the teacher and student to improve their teaching and learning ability respectively.

What is a Sense?

A sense is a physiological capacity of organisms that provides data for perception. The senses and their operation, classification, and theory are overlapping topics studied by a variety of fields, most notably neuroscience, cognitive psychology (or cognitive science), and philosophy of perception. The nervous system has a specific sensory system or organ, dedicated to each sense.

1.1 The Five Sensory Organs

The Five Sensory Organs

Sight.

The eye is the organ of vision. The best camera available in the world, which has unlimited focal length. Whatever I see passes through it to be processed in the brain. Of all the five senses the only sense which we can much rely upon. The images that I see get stored in the brain. The most important thing is as and when I require the stored images, I can get it from the brain. Even I can get back an image which I have stored in my brain during my childhood days. Thus the eyes are the wonderful input devices.

Hearing.

The ear is the organ of hearing. Like the eyes, the ears also take information in the form of sounds to the brain. This information taken to the brain can elicit different kind of reactions. For example, listening to music, listening to someone scolding, listening to someone expressing their love to you, listening to a NEWS channel, all these activities’ would bring different kinds of reactions.

Taste.

The receptors for taste, called taste buds, are situated chiefly in the tongue, but they are also located in the roof of the mouth and near the pharynx. They are able to detect four basic tastes: salty, sweet, bitter, and sour. The sense of taste functions in coordination with the sense of smell. The number of taste buds varies substantially from individual to individual, but greater numbers increase sensitivity.

Smell.

The nose is the organ responsible for the sense of smell. The cavity of the nose is lined with mucous membranes that have smell receptors connected to the olfactory nerve. The smell receptors are sensitive to seven types of sensations that can be characterized as camphor, musk, flower, mint, ether, acrid, or putrid. The sense of smell is sometimes temporarily lost when a person has a cold.
**Touch.**

The sense of touch is distributed throughout the body. Nerve endings in the skin and other parts of the body transmit sensations to the brain. Some parts of the body have a larger number of nerve endings and, therefore, are more sensitive. Four kinds of touch sensations can be identified: cold, heat, contact, and pain. The sense of touch can be used in the context of language learning in the beginning. For example a child can be given a model of fruits, vegetables, vehicles etc, by touching and sensing them, they can keep it in memory. Also when children are making the models of A, B, C…..Z, the sense of touching can help them to keep the shapes of the alphabets in their memory.

All these five senses act as the input devices, which carries data to be processed in the brain. Once the data is processed the result will be expressed through words we speak or through our actions or activities. Once the interlinking of all the five senses with the brain is to be focused. I would like to stress here that if a lecturer delivers a lecture on the concept like ‘The Importance of English’, all the students will not be interested and attentive. Here only the sense of hearing alone pleased and hence the student gets bored and less interested. Imagine that a lecturer plays a video which clearly portrays the importance of English, delivers a lecture using the Power Point Presentation and then makes the students to listen to a podcast about the importance of English; definitely there will be a slight change in the interest level of the students.

**The Importance of the five senses in the context of language learning**

When I eat my tongue get pleased, when I watch a movie my eyes get pleased, when I smell a flower my nose gets pleased, when I listen music my ears get pleased, when I touch a feather my body get pleased. By and large I am pleased by anyone of these five senses through various physical activities. When you consider the occasions at which the senses derive pleasure, one thing would be clear that one or two senses only get involved in an activity.

There is one occasion during which all the five senses involved derive pleasure that is sex. During the act of sex all the five senses in our human body gets pleased. This is the only activity for the human body wherein all the five senses meet together to bring on the culmination of pleasure.

The human generation sustains because of sexual reproduction. Without sex, life will not sustain in the world. On the whole one thing is clear that the union of all the pleasures derived through five sensory organs make the act of sex interesting, passionate and the elixir of life.

If that is the case what makes learning a new language interesting. Let us analyse what are the senses involved in the process of learning. Imagine that a professor gives a lecture. There is only one sense organ which is mainly and actively involved in the process and that is Ear. What about the remaining senses they are not actually involved in the process. Will the students be more interested in listening to a professor’s lecture? This would be a million dollar question. What could possibly have done to make the teaching – learning environment an interesting one?

It is really difficult to keep the students active and much interested in the topic we teach. A student can not listen to a lecture for more than fifteen minutes. If that is the case what is happening in the classroom lecture. Only the lecturer will waste his time and energy in elucidating the topic. What should be done to make the students interested in the topic? Let us analyze what are all the senses used by the students when they listen to a lecture. As you all know that the only skill used in the process of listening to a lecture is the hearing sensation. My point of discussion is only one thing that is incorporate as many senses as possible in order to keep the students interested in what we teach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense</th>
<th>Organ</th>
<th>Job</th>
<th>Role played in language learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sight</td>
<td>Eyes</td>
<td>Detect color and light</td>
<td>Helps to differentiate alphabets, helps to keep concepts in mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td>Ears</td>
<td>Detect</td>
<td>Helps to learn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Smell | Nose | Detects scents | Helps to learn different fragrances
--- | --- | --- | ---
Taste | Tongue | Detects tastes: sweet, salty, sour and bitter | Helps to learn certain vocabulary related to food.
Touch | Skin | Detects pain, pressure, heat and cold | Activity based learning in which child learns letters, words etc

### 1.2 Table of Senses and their Role

**Improving Communication Skills through Five Senses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Receptive</th>
<th>Productive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral</td>
<td>Listening (45%) (Ears)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written</td>
<td>Reading (15%) (Eyes)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Communication Skills is the process of transmission of messages from one person to another. It is a continuous process in which all the four language skills are involved. The four language skills are as follows

i) Listening Skills
ii) Speaking Skills
iii) Reading Skills
iv) Writing Skills

The aforementioned language skills are developed through the four sensory organs. It is mandatory to develop all the four language skills in order to develop the communication skills. The communication skills can be developed using the following senses. Hence, it is the role of the teacher to present the topic of discussion in such a way to please two or three senses, so that the interest level and the language skills of the students can be improved.

The following table shows the different language skills and the senses used to develop it

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Language Skills</th>
<th>Sensory Organs Involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Listening Skills</td>
<td>Ears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Speaking Skills</td>
<td>Tongue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Reading Skills</td>
<td>Eyes &amp; Tongue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Writing Skills</td>
<td>Eyes and Hands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1.3 Table of Skills and senses

In the challenge of improving the communication skills of the college students, delivering of lecture alone cannot make it possible. A teacher needs to implement modern technologies in the process of developing the language skills. Also he or she should make it a point to please two or three senses in the process.

The following table shows the percentage of language skills required to develop the communication skills and it also shows the organs involved to develop the skills.

### 1.4 Table of percentage of Communication Skills

**Activity Based Learning that Involves Senses**

Activity based training should be given to the students to develop the communication skills. For example, Newspaper reading is an activity through which we can understand the linking of two or three senses in the process improving communication skills.

**Newspaper Reading**

This is one of the best activities which can be used to improve the communication skills of the
students. Let a student read a newspaper and the others listen to him. The trainer will correct the pronunciation of the student. There are two skills and two senses involved in this activity. When the student reads, reading skill is developed. When the other students listen to him, the listening skill is improved. This activity involves the combination of two sensory organs such as the tongue and the ears.

**Conclusion**

Hence if we try to combine two or three senses in the context of language teaching we can definitely make the students to get involved. The basic knowledge of the senses, the sensory organs, and their role in developing the language skills will help a teacher to improve the communication skills of the students. To please the senses we need to take the help of the technology. By technology I mean the utilization of the YouTube videos, Podcasts, Short films, Movies, Mimes etc. Sensible understanding of the Senses and their interlinking of technology can pave way for the development of the communication skills.

**References:**


Wikipedia