THE ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILLS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY IN FIRST YEAR ENGINEERING COLLEGE STUDENTS

G. Menaka[i]
Dr., Associate Professor,
Department of English,
PSG College of Technology,
Coimbatore-641 004, India

Abstract:

This paper aims attempt the development of speaking skills in through technology in first year Engineering students. Teacher education refers to the policies and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with knowledge, attitudes, behaviors' and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school and wider community. Speaking is described in applied linguistics. It covers linguistic description of spoken language, speaking as interaction, and speaking as a social and situation-based activity. In fact, speaking is an integral part of one's life. When people hear someone speak, they pay attention to what the speaker sounds like almost automatically. On the basis of what they hear, they make some tentative and possibly subconscious judgements about the speaker's personality, attitudes, and so on. By using speed and pausing, and variations in pitch, volume and information, they also create a texture for their talk that supports and enhances what they are saying.

Keywords: foreign language, teaching methods, second language learners, language games

1. Introduction

This article brings out the characteristic feature of educational technology and its impact on teaching and speaking. It is natural for students to get tired after listening for a particular period of time. But machines would not get tired. This article throws light on the emerging need of smart classroom. The use of power point and white board are capturing the attention of the students in the classroom.

---

[i] Correspondence: email menakaereno@gmail.com

1.1 Videos Tapes

Scenes from popular English films can be screened first without any running script on the screen. Then the students are asked to identify the words, script etc., Again the scene will be repeated with the scripts on the screen. This kind of telecasting videotapes with and without script makes the students to get familiar with the pronunciation, accent and word usage of English with interest. This method will make the students to repeat it again in their homes voluntarily.

1.2 Communication Labs

Software's are available to develop LSRW skills. By incorporating suitable software through computers, the students will play it again and again with interest and try to improve their LSRW skills, which are most essential in this modernized world.

Listening skills make one to understand what another person speaks. Speaking skill is essential to convey the desire and idea of a person in the right way to the other. Reading skill is important to interpret what is given in the text. Writing is used to express our thoughts. The usage of headphones in the lab makes the students to have interest over the subject and induces them to repeat again and again instead of feeling bored. The communication lab provides freedom to the students, so that the students need not depend on the teachers to enhance their skills. The students can have their own pace of learning and they can structure the learning process according to their needs. New software can be added and the students can view the technical developments instantly.

1.3 Video Conferencing

Videoconferencing is the method in which one person can access to the speeches of other persons in some other parts of the world. It is the live relay of a programme, which is mostly used to view the lecture of a professor who resides in a foreign country. In short it is very helpful for the students to understand what is going on in this world and to hear the speech of the top most personalities in a lively manner. The most notable point in video conferencing is that the students can post questions immediately and get their answers at once.

1.4 Video Library

Video Libraries are most essential in our fast and modernized world. This is helpful for those students who miss some interesting sessions. In this process, the teaching of the faculty will be recorded and made available to the students. The students can view the tapes in their leisure hours. The advantage in this method is that students can replay it when there is a necessity.

1.5 Blogging

The Internet provides immense opportunities to the learners of English. The words 'web' and 'log' are combined to form the portmanteau word "Blog". The blog allows

the viewers to post their queries and comments. The blog is especially useful for first time users as it is easier for them to become members. The learners can become the members of a particular blogging community. In some blogs, the viewers can put videos and MP3. Spoken word entries can be made in blogs, which are audio friendly. This audio blogging may be linked to other blogs. Basically a blog is an online journal because the student's thoughts, ideas and opinions can be entered.

Blogging can be used for instructing the candidates when the teacher is off campus. The teacher can post his article or the instruction to the students, where the students are allowed to post their comments and queries. The teacher can answer the question through his blog. Blogging seems to be widely in use.

2. Methodology

The teach ability of strategies for learning oral communication skills to less successful learners is a contentious issue in language learning research (Dornyel, 1995). According to Cohen, Weaver, and Li (1995) there have been "*relatively few studies investigating the benefits of providing second language learners with formal training in the applications of strategies for speaking*" (3-4).

The effect of strategy instruction on speaking ability was investigated by O'Malley and Chamot (1990). High school students studying English for speakers of other languages were divided into three groups. The first group was taught metacognitive, cognitive, and social/affective strategies. The second group was taught cognitive and social/affective strategies. The third group (the control group) did not receive strategy instruction. Audiotaped pre-rest and post-test speaking tasks were rated by two judges on a five-point scale that examined delivery, accuracy, and organization. The results indicated that the group that was taught all three strategies outperformed the other two. The group that was taught two strategies came next and the third group, the control group, which did not receive strategy instruction, was rated the lowest.

Another investigation which studied the effect of strategy instruction on improving speaking ability was conducted by Dadour and Robbins (1996). A College English speaking course in Egypt conducted explicit strategy instruction. Experimental groups received strategy instruction, and control groups did not. Oral proficiency tests incorporating role-plays were conducted as pre-test and post-test. The results indicated that the experimental groups outperformed the control groups on the oral proficiency test, and that the experimental group also utilized more language learning strategies.

Thus, based on these studies, there is evidence to suggest that strategy instruction can improve performance in oral skills. However, the number of empirical studies is still limited. In order to accumulate useful information regarding how good language learners develop oral skills, ongoing research studies are essential.

Although interest in oral communication is alive and active, it is not a novel focus. In fact, the development of speaking skills in a target language has long been a

central issue in the minds of learners, teachers, and researchers. The linguistic studies around the turn of the twentieth century (Sweet, 1899) were linked to the development of oral skills. This emphasis on speaking rather than writing was also stressed in audiolingualism (Fries, 1945), in input-based instruction (Krashen and Terrel, 1983), and in interaction-based (Long, 1983) or output-based theories (Swain, 1985). In the communicative approach (Widdowson, 1978; Brumfit and Johnson, 1979; Littlewood, 1981), the development of oral skills is no doubt the focal point of language instruction (Lazaraton, 2001). The development of oral skills has always been a paramount importance, since *"a large percentage of the world's language learners study English in order to develop proficiency in speaking"* (Richards and Renandya, 2002: 201).

However, developing oral skills in a second language is not an easy task. When the learner is not in the target language environment, it is likely that learning to speak that language will be especially difficult, since learners have minimum exposure to the target language and culture, which is crucial to understanding sociolinguistic traits (such as genre and speech styles), paralinguistic traits (such as pitch, stress, and intonation), nonlinguistic traits (such as gestures and body language) and cultural assumptions in verbal interaction (Shumin, 2002).

Studies conducted in China, Japan, and the USA indicate that good language learners use a variety of strategies to develop speaking ability. Those who develop good oral skills appear to be frequent strategy users regardless of culture and learning context. Huang and van Naerssen (1987) investigated tertiary level students of English in China. Subjects were given an oral test and a learning strategy questionnaire that included formal practice (such as listening to and doing pattern drills, listening in order to improve pronunciation, memorizing and reciting texts, imitation, re-telling stories, reading aloud, and reading in order to learn vocabulary items or grammatical structures which can be used when speaking); functional practice (such as using language for communication, thinking or talking to oneself, and using listening or reading to provide models for speaking); and monitoring (such as paying attention to the use of linguistic forms and modifying language responses). The results indicated that the high performers on the oral test used more functional practice than the middle and low performers.

A series of investigations of "expert" second language speakers in Japan was conducted by Takeuchi (2003). He asked 18 expert English speakers including simultaneous interpreters, professors, and diplomats about their learning experiences in the course of language development. Common responses were; practising phonological aspects in the beginning stage; memorizing formulaic expressions and illustrative sentences with pattern practice in the beginning and early intermediate stages; listening practice using dictation, reading aloud repeatedly, utilizing context and multimedia in building oral vocabulary in the beginning and intermediate stages; engaging in intensive, periodical, and continuous self-study in the late beginning to intermediate stages; trying to find opportunities to speak English including naturalistic

communication with native speakers, self-talk, and simulated conversation practice with peers in the intermediate stage.

3. Results and Discussions

Varela (1999) investigated the effect of grouping, selective attention, cooperation, note-taking, self-assessment, and self-talk on the development of oral presentation skills in sixth, seventh and, eighth grade classes of English for speakers of other languages in the USA. Forty-one students were divided into the experimental group with strategy-instruction and the control group without it. Videotaped pre-test and post-test oral presentations were rated on organization, clarity, vocabulary choice, eye contact, volume, and pace. Strategy use was investigated by means of interviews. The results indicated that the experimental group improved their oral presentations significantly more than the control group. The experimental group also reported an increase in strategy use and there was correlation between strategy use and presentation performance.

These three studies indicate that good language learners frequently use a variety of strategies to develop speaking ability. However, despite the wide interest in strategy use and the development of oral skills, there are very few lists of strategies for developing speaking skills in the literature, although two lists labeled strategies for speaking do exist. The first list by Rubin and Thompson (1994) addresses nine potential problems that arise during speaking tasks, including pronunciation problems, dealing with recurring mistakes, managing correction, creating practice opportunities, accuracy issues, communication breakdowns, conversation difficulties, comprehensibility, and rules of interaction. The second speaking strategy list was developed by Weaver, Alcaya, Lybeck, and Mougel (1994). This list includes strategies to be used before conversation, during conversation, and after conversation. However, it is noted from the earlier studies on strategies that it is one of the key decisions in task design which is what the speakers will be asked to do with language. In an early study on the nature of talk, Brown and Yule (1983) made distinctions between four different types of informational talk; description, instruction, storytelling, and opinion expressing/justification. Their main point was that each of the types follows its own routines of organizing information for easy comprehension, and with practice learners can improve their control of these routines and thus increase their language use skills.

4. Conclusion

This paper thus students find these new methods of speaking skills in learning second language to be amazing and Technology can take the place of the teacher completely in a classroom-learning situation. The modern tools are in addition to the inputs given by the teachers in the classrooms. The magic is real in that it helps the students to enhance their language learning in a fruitful way. There is less research on the effects of speech

rate on second-language comprehension. Stanley noted that the thing that gave listeners most difficulty when listening to everyday speech was "*quite simply, those areas which were spoken most rapidly*" (1978: 287). He adds that "*when speech was faster, language learners constantly failed to perceive individual phonemes and, hence, words with which they were already familiar*" (1978: 289). Griffiths (1992) looked at the effects of three different speech rates (127,188,250 wpm) on the comprehension of second-language speakers and concluded that comprehension was significantly better at the slowest speech rate and worse at the higher rates.

References

1. Damir, Rakesh. (2010). "The Use of Technology in Teaching Language". *Proceedings of the 5th International and 41st Annual ELTAI Conference. 5-7 August, 2010. Learning to Learn: Way to Language Mastery*. Ed. Jayashree Prabhakar, Anna Adarsh College for Women.

2. Heinze, & Procter. (2010), 'The Significance of the Reflective Practicioner in Blended Learning'. *International Journal of Mobile and Blended Learning* (IJMBL). Vol.2.

3. Lata, Pushp & Sanjay Kumar. (2010). "Technology Enabled Teaching of Professional Communication Courses: Problems and Perspectives". *The Journal of English Language Teaching [India].* Vol. 48/3, 29-34.

4. Sokolik, Maggie. (2001). "Computers in Language Learning". *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*. Ed. Murcia, Marianne Celce. United States: Heinle & Heinle, 477.

5. Sankar. G "*English Language Teaching is an Assessment and Natural Approaches to the language learners with Theory and Practice*" International Journal of English Literature and culture, Vol 2 Issue 9 (2014) P 211-213.Print.

6. Sankar. G "*Language learning and Language acquisition; What do the Learners Prefer?*". International Journal of Research and Engineering, 2016 Vol 3 Issue 8,(2016) P 47-48.Print.

7. Sankar. G "*Learning English for Employability*". Arts and Social Sciences Journal, Vol 2 Issue 7(2016) P 34-35.Print.

8. Sankar. G "*English Language as a Panacea*". Language in India.Vol 16, Issue 5 (2016) P-23-25.Print.

9. Sankar. G "*Discriminatory policy among the undergraduate students towards racism and white privilege in America*". Educational Research and Reviews. Vol 9, Issue 19.(2014) P-744-745.Print.

10. Sankar. G. "*A Comparative Study on Language Teaching Approaches and Cognitive Processes: A Paradigm Shift for Language Learners and Speakers*". International Journal of English Literature and culture, Vol 2 Issue 9 (2014) P 131-133.Print.

11. Sankar. G. "*Discriminatory Policy among the Undergraduate Students To The Nature And Scope To The Guide For College Teaching Approach*". International Journal of Scientific Research and Management Studies.Vol 1.Issue 3. (2014) P-101-103.

12. Vijayalakshmi S., (2009) "Podcasting: An Effective Tool foe Language Learning". *Teaching English as a Second Language.* Ed. Vyas, Manish & Patel Yogesh. New Delhi: PHI Publication, New Delhi, 2009.

13. Indumathi, M.R. (2010) "New Trends in Exploring the Unexplored in ELT-A Study". *Proceedings of the fifth National Conference, March 24-25, 2010. Enhancement and Excellence in English for Employability and Empowerment*. Ed. Anbazhagan, K. SRM University: Department of English and Foreign Languages 102.