

Teaching of Oral Communication Skills using Multimedia Technology

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Abstract:

Technology plays a very supportive role in enhancing student's communication skills. Student's can enhance both their written and oral communication skills using technology under the sound guidance of their teachers. Proficiency in oral communication is increasingly required both in academic and professional settings. For this reason, an increasing number of courses, taught in both public and private institutions, are addressing oral communication skills. With globalization, the number of opportunities for interactions in English has increased and so has the need to learn strategies for successful oral communication in English. Speaking is used to engage in conversations, transmit information, express opinions, and contribute to discussions.

The paper highlights the necessity and use of multimedia technology in an effective manner to enhance the teaching of oral communication skill. Oral presentation skill is significant for the students as it not only help them in academic but also in their professional life after formal education. The current instructional scenario in our higher educational institutes is still replete with traditional way of teaching which trained the students in reading and writing while listening and speaking skills are neglected and ignored. Thus, the teachers and students need to make integrated efforts for development of oral communication skills using modern technologies.

In the present scenario multimedia is universally regarded as an essential tool in the field of teaching and research. Recently, new developments and increasing affordability of multimedia technologies have provided teachers an opportunity to teach students how to improve oral communication skills. Multimedia broadly covers the set of activities that facilitates capturing, storage, processing, transmission and display of information by electronic means.

Introduction

Communication skills include the mix of verbal, interpersonal and physical strategies needed to interact confidently and effectively with a range of audiences. A skilful communicator draws on a number of different means (eg., graphical, visual, statistical, audio-visual and technological) to get the point across.

Technology plays a very supportive role in enhancing student's communication skills. Student's can enhance both their written and oral communication skills using technology under the sound guidance of their teachers. Proficiency in oral communication is increasingly required both in academic and professional settings. For this reason, an increasing number of courses, taught in both public and private institutions, are addressing oral communication skills. With globalization, the number of opportunities for interactions in English has increased and so has the need to learn strategies for successful oral communication in English. Oral communication is an essential aspect of social interaction. Being able to communicate well is not only an important skill in itself, but also contributes significantly to the success of a person's personal and professional life. Speaking is used to engage in conversations, transmit information, express opinions, and contribute to discussions.

Effective oral communication skills help students to:

- . improve their academic performance;
- . increase their employment options,
- . enhance their subsequent professional competence; and
- . improve their personal effectiveness.

Employers value good communication skills because:

- . staff needs to interact effectively and productively in, and on behalf of the organization;
- . listening to and conveying information accurately is crucial;
- . giving instructions and explanations clearly is essential; and
- . engaging in constructive debate and contributing to meetings and committees is fundamental to the success of the organization.

In our country, majority of the students are from rural areas or of non -English background. They do possess intelligence necessary for getting admission for higher education and good job but they lag behind in the English communication competence. So, during academics and career they face a lot of problems. For this lack, neither the students nor the curricula, rather the methodologies or pedagogical strategies and our educational set up including syllabus completion compulsion, overcrowded class and examination system are ultimately responsible. The current instructional scenario in our higher educational institutes is still replete with traditional way of teaching which trained the students mostly in reading and writing while

listening and speaking skills are neglected and ignored which are very important particularly for oral communication proficiency. It's not mean that traditional manners are totally bad or damaging the students. In fact, till date they are proving to be useful also. However, there are further many more opportunities for students to gain more confidence so they have to walk into the world of multimedia technology. In the present scenario multimedia is universally regarded as an essential tool in the field of teaching and research.

Today, thanks to advances in technology, teaching oral communication can benefit greatly from the availability of a variety of forms of support. Multimedia texts are now easy to find in the form of video and audio files on the Internet. Inexpensive, easily accessible and user-friendly technology can provide stimulating material, suitable to present authentic and varied communicative situations, for use in the classroom or at home.

In teaching and learning of communication skills in English, we have a lot to choose from the multimedia resources / tools such as: print text, films, audio and videos, internet, electronic dictionary, Email, Blogs and Power Point presentations etc, using various electronic devices such as Audio Cassettes, CDs / DVD's or VCD's, radio, TV, computers, mobiles, I-Pad, LCD projectors and various audio – video input output devices etc. Multimedia tools are utilized for the uplift of modern styles; it satisfies both visual and auditory senses and provides opportunity for interacting with diverse texts that give students a solid background. This also helps students to get involved and learn according to their interests, it has been tested effectively and is widely accepted for teaching English in modern world.

Communication skill is an indispensable skill to become successful in 21st century. A good communication skill is quality of a well-educated person. Technology also plays very supportive role in enhancing student's communication skills Student's can improve both their written and oral communication skill using technology under the sound guidance of their teachers.

Multimedia tools and methodologies

In order to teach and stimulate the learning of oral communication, a variety of audio – visual aids and different methodologies are used, as follows:

Audio – visual aids

Audio – visual aids are effective tool to impart good education. These aids are divided as video, audio and audio –visual aids –video refers as seeing, audio refers hearing and audio – visual refers to both. These aids are CD/ DVD players, tape-recorder, e-book, graphics, pictures, charts, bulletin board, film strip slides, overhead / LCD projector, computer, smart mobile phones, radio, TV, video camera and microphone etc. and are used to create requisite interest and motivate the students to learn language. Teachers can take help of any of these instructional

aides in different ways in teaching of English and communication skills more competently and successfully.

Language lab

Software's are available to develop all the four skills of language i.e. writing, reading, listening, and speaking. Listening tends to play a fundamental role in the acquisition of oral communication skill among the learners (Smidt & Hegelheimer, 2004). Language laboratory has following facilities to enhance learner's communication skills: online tutorials, recorded talks of experts and native speakers, lectures by eminent persons and English sound track movies, documentaries and news etc., computer LCD, soft skills teaching software, quizzes, tests, interactive teaching tips, building vocabulary power, group discussion etc. Through computers the students can play them and practice of talking again and again with their own interest and can try to improve their listening and speaking skills.

Speech recognition software

This software can evaluates and provides scores of grammar, pronunciation, comprehension and provided with the correct forms, for examples if a student mispronounces a word, the learning tool can immediately spot it and help correct it. This device can be a very useful device for distance learners because they don't have a teacher who corrects their speech and this device can help improving their speaking skills.

Social Networking

Various social networking sites include Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, WhatsApp etc. Most social sites have group creation facilities which learners can use to set up outside class discussion environment. There are other sites also through which learners can be encouraged to make a video of their presentation and learners can use sharing sites to find and exchange resources with other learners.

Mobiles

Revolutionary communicative modern gadget, the mobile is the heart, blood and soul of modern times are considered as miniature computers because of its additional facilities like texting, gaming, email and recording and its utility in teaching English for example teaching grammar points, downloading vocabulary lessons, recording lectures and dictionary etc.

Audio Tape/Podcast

The tape player or podcasts are the easiest way for students to listen to a variety of speakers on a variety of topics in a variety of genres – dialogues, interviews, lectures, stories, songs, and poems (Aiden, 2006). Pod casting is the integration of audio files where we can feed (upload or download) our own materials and play it inside and outside of the classroom. Students use i-pods to hear their favorite music files. In the same way they have their education in the form of

entertainment. Podcasts enables students and teachers to share information with anyone at anytime. An absent student can download the podcast of recorded lesson and is able to access the missed lectures. They could also access lectures of experts which may not otherwise be available because of geographical distance and other reasons.

Videotape/Digital Movies/Digital Storytelling

The human body contributes significantly to conveying important information about the speaker i.e. show nonverbal behaviours. Videotape is a step up from audiotape. First of all, playing pre-recorded tapes provides the audiovisual information that helps students observe, understand, and imitate oral communication i.e. speed of speech, intonation and volume, from language expressions and sentence structure to lip shape, facial expressions, gestures, hand movements, and distance between speakers, not to mention other cultural, behavioural, and sociological aspects of language. Secondly, by the use of the video camera and microphone, students can see their performances and self-critique, see non-fluencies, nonverbal behaviours etc. They can track their improvements, see their good performances and be proud of them.

Debate, discussions and presentations are other ways by which teachers can actually help their students to enhance their oral communication skills. By encouraging your students to participate in debate and discussion on various subjects in the classroom or the seminars, they can actually sharpen their student's oral communication skills.

To conclude, all these multimedia tools help the students to improve their communication skills. This technology gives learners a chance to engage in group or self-directed actions, opportunities for self-paced interactions, privacy, and a safe environment in which errors get corrected and specific feedback is given. Feedback by a machine offers additional value by its ability to track mistakes and link the student immediately to exercises that focus on specific errors. It can be a useful and indeed extremely effective way to raise students' awareness of English communication skills, and that an incorporated multimedia communicative approach along with traditional class teaching works well for teaching oral communication. To communicate successfully, the speaker needs to be aware that there are several elements of oral communication which can and should be used. It is true that one of the ultimate goals of multimedia language teaching is to promote students' motivation and learning interest. The process of English communication learning will be more student-centred. Therefore, it promises that the teaching quality will be improved and students' applied English communication can be effectively cultivated, meaning that students' communicative competence will be further developed.

We believe that this process can fully improve students' ideation and sensible language skills, which is helpful and useful to ensure and fulfil an effective result of teaching and learning.

Oral communication skills such as eye contact, body language, style, understanding the audience, adapting to the audience, active and spontaneous listening, using formulas, convention and communication strategies as is appropriate in different linguistic situations and social interactions are as important to communication as language itself and should be incorporated in curriculum focusing on spoken language. In fact, the complexity involved in oral communication requires a teaching method that includes all the elements that contribute to the meaning of the message. Oral communication fulfils a number of general and discipline-specific instructive functions, and successful communication skills are in demand both in the private and the professional sphere. While becoming an outstanding speaker, students can improve their oral communication skills by the use of multimedia resources.

Work Cited

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