

Strategies for Developing Speaking Skills of Technical Students

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Abstract:

A graduate from a technical institute with effective communication skills becomes an employee in any organization. On the other hand, an engineering graduate without communicative ability is remains an unemployed, despite his or her successful completion of the course. To enhance the communicative competency of the engineering students especially speaking skill of the students, this paper aims at implementing strategies applied in an academic milieu. Creation of a conducive academic setting will pave way for implementation, acquisition and accomplishment of the target of the teacher and the learners. Teacher's role is of paramount importance in developing the speaking skill of the learners who are deprived of oral communication at school level besides the learners' curiosity, support and involvement in achieving the target. The task-based strategies are applied in the classroom. They are applied from micro level to macro level, adopting both the general and the technical contexts. The provision of domain words by the teacher will facilitate the learners.

Introduction:

Students who get admission in Engineering institutions in Tamil Nadu hail from diverse educational backgrounds and the mixed ability group of students have common hurdles and constraints for communication especially oral communication. At the outset, after their

admission to engineering course with a view to overcoming the communicative constraints of the learners, certain feasible methodologies adoptable in a classroom situation can be applied to enhance their speaking skill.

Methodology to teach at Micro Level:

a) Picture or portrait b) Video c) Script d) Game

Picture is given to a pair of students and they are asked to detail

and describe it without naming the picture to the other pair of students who are responsible to identify the name of the picture. Similarly, the other pair of students is given different picture and they have to describe it to their counterpart. The language focus is on **simple definition or description**

1.Model pictorial description or definition

Pair-A: It is a machine, mother of all tools, used to do a lot of operations on it, specifically to turn a work piece or job

Pair-B: It is a lathe machine.

Pair-A: You are absolutely correct.

Pair-B: It is an electronic device, used to communication, it converts the signals analog to digital and vice-versa

Pair-A: It is a MODEM.

Pair-B: You are absolutely correct

Pair- C: It is a personality, belongs to India, an architect of missile, popularly called “ People’s President of India.”

Pair-D: Dr. A.P.J.Abdulkalam, Honourable former President of India

Pair-C: You are absolutely right

Video is displayed without audio at the outset and the students are asked to watch the video and try to guess the communicative function based on the gesture and body language of the conversant and then verify the students responses with the video of complete form i.e with audio or sounds. This technique may familiarize the learners to the nonverbal communication. Similarly, a mime is applied for the purpose where a pair of students is given an assumed situation and asked to mime accordingly and the other pair of students should identify the sense of the mime.

2. Model display of video for self introduction:

C-1: Hello, Good morning. I am Daniel Jones from Oxford University. I would like to meet Professor Peter in the department of English.

C-2: Oh, Yes. He is in the conference at the moment. Would you wait for some time in his cabin please? By the by, I am James, associate professor of English.

C-1: Nice to meet you sir. Shall we move to conference Hall?

3. Model display of video for introduction of others to peers:

P-1: Hello, Mr, Daniel, pleased to meet you. How was your travel to this place?

C-1: Very comfortable. Thanks.

P-1: I am very glad to introduce you to my colleagues.

He is Daniel Jones, Professor of Phonetics from Oxford University.

C-2: Nice to meet you sir, I've just met you in the professor cabin.

C-3: Pleasure to you sir, I am Lawrence, associate professors of the dept.

At the conference Hall:

P-1: May I have the privilege to introduce our chief guest of this occasion?. Mr. Denial Jones, Professor of Phonetics from Oxford University. He is a renowned scholar and expert in phonetics in English. His “Introduction to English Sounds” is a mirror of his scholarship in Phonetics.

Script is given with hints. Based on the script, the students are asked to play the role assigned to them. Besides, simulation talk video is played. The students are asked to interact with the simulation speakers. To apply this technique, we need an LCD projector, a screen and headphone attached with a microphone. Communication laboratory is a conducive one for application of the strategy.

4. Model script with hints for self-introduction:

S-1: Hello, Good morning, I am _____ from America.

S-2: Pleased to _____ you, I am _____ from India

S-1: Which state of India are you from?

S-2: I am from _____. Which part of America are you from?

S-1: I am from _____

S-2: Good to _____

S-1: Bye, _____ you again

5. Model simulation video talk:

S-1: Hello, Good morning, how are you?

S-2: _____

S-1: I am Peter from England. Where are you from?

S-2: _____

S-1: What are you doing?

S-2: _____

S-1: Oh! My sister is an engineer. Do you like your job?

S-2: _____

S-1: Are you married?

S-2: _____

S-1: How old are you?

S-2: _____

S-1: What are you doing for fun?

S-2: _____

S-1: Bye, see you later

Methodology to teach at Macro Level:

Interview, group discussion, sports commentary, and film review or criticisms are macro level strategies used to enhance the oral communication skills of the learners. Interview skills are essential for the learners to get a job. Most of the companies use job interview for recruiting suitable persons for their industries. It becomes a scale for assessment of personality of the fresh candidate for the recruitment. Now-a- days, job interview is conducted online also. Online interview helps the recruiting companies to select the suitable persons in abroad based on the profile of the persons. Group discussion, a form of group communication is used to assess the personality traits- capability of team work, i.e., the ability to work in a team, a troubleshooter or troublemaker, an introvert or an extravert- Based on these traits, the suitable persons are selected. Sports commentary enhances the oral fluency of the learners, besides the familiarity of the game

rules and regulations. Film review or criticism helps the learners develop creative and critical thinking.

Conclusion:

Thus the first set or generation of learners or learners from rural background form the mass of Engineering colleges and communication is a big barrier for those who come from rural or village background. This paper has analyzed their difficulties at the entry level and offered suggestions using common methodologies to overcome that fear or inhibition.

References:

Jack C Richards and Theodor Rogers. **Approaches and Methods in English Language Teaching**. Macmillan, New Delhi: 2000. Print.