
Innovative Practices in Teaching English Communication Skills for Engineering Students Using CA-AVR Methodology

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Abstract:

Speaking is one of the most important communication skills to be developed and enhanced as means of effective communication in engineering students. To enhance these skills, the question of how to increase communicative competence is very important and need to be worked out. Indian students are not able to communicate in English fluently for many reasons. In this study, a new method using dramatic monologue and radio drama introduced to overcome these problems. The present study is devoted to the research of the issue of speaking English Communication skills of engineering students in India. It is an alternative to existing conventional methods and to enhance the speaking skills of engineering students using CA-AVR methodology. The results have revealed that the students have improved the effective ways of English communication skills by developing a good rapport. The aim of the study is to overcome the reasons of unwillingness to communicate in English language and the ways to overcome the language barrier.

Keywords: CA-AVR Methodology, Communication Skills, Conversation Methods, Dramatic Monologue and Radio Drama.

Introduction

To teach communication skills, the most commonly used simulation is Role-play. The purpose of this technique is to prepare learners to take on the 'role of others' is a role-play. These methods can be enhanced by techniques like warm-ups, role-creation, doubling, and role reversal that are not widely used in medical teaching. This is to develop an insight into thoughts, feelings and unspoken attitudes which often determine the behavior of others. It will enhance communication skills through the participation of learners. A hypothetical teaching session was developed where an instructor applies these techniques in teaching medical students. Here the method involves; how to break bad news using SPIKES i.e. Setting, Perception, Invitation, Knowledge, Emotions, Summary and Strategy. This will track contemporary adult learning theory through a case-based, learner-centered, experiential approach to selecting challenging scenarios in giving bad news. This is achieved by attending to underlying emotions and it reflects to anchor new learning process [1].

Background Study

As a means of effective communication, speaking is one of the most important skills to be developed. For Elementary Level Teaching, the question of how to increase communicative competence was the most crucial challenge. Worldwide, in a short period of time English has substituted other languages and became one of the leading ways of communication. The modern world of media and mass communication besides Internet demands sound knowledge of spoken English. It is found that most of the Russian students are not able to communicate in English fluently. The issue of speaking skills of students in Russia and to the existing methods of enhancing speaking skills of elementary level students is emphasized in a study. It is also related to the ways to overcome the language barrier and discovering the reasons of unwillingness to communicate [2].

An examination of oral communication education in Alabama, USA, has identified four critical concerns. Firstly, college students are not getting enough oral communication education in their curriculum. Secondly, Oral communication education is included as module in another discipline or a course. Thirdly, when an oral communication course is included, that course tends to be narrow. Fourth, there is an increase in the number of college faculty who teaches oral communication courses and do not have a graduate degree in concerned subject. Solutions to each factors and suggestions are provided about how decision-making bodies like departments of education, accrediting agencies, National Communication Association etc. The essential role of oral communication and solutions for oral communication education in Alabama is studied. These concerns may be indicative of similar issues affecting oral communication. These were performed at regional level, nationally and international levels [3].

To improve students' communication skills through peer learning method for subject of GMJT3124 Regional Development Group B is studied. Most of the students are unwilling because they felt difficulty to understand and communicate in English language. They are unable to compete at international level because of communication problems in English and cannot reach the levels required by the employers. If this issue persists, a fresh graduate from local university will face difficult to obtain a job. This proved that students are more comfortable to communicate in their own mother tongue. The results of a two-way Anova Statistical test

(Anova) show that there are statistically significant differences between dependent -Student's Communication Skills and independent variables -Student's Group, Feeling and Support. It has shown that the students like to improve their communication skills [4].

The teacher takes help of audio-visual aids to convey some concepts more effectively and successfully to students. These aids can serve best in teaching of English language. The achievement of some instructional objective and appropriate use has improved the effectiveness of teaching aid that implies its relevance to the teaching point directly. F.W. Noel said that "Good instruction is the foundation of any educational program. Audio-visual training aids are a component part of that foundation". Therefore English teacher should know about various A.V aids that he/she can use in teaching English successfully [5].

The use of audio-visual resources in Colleges of Education in Benue State, College of Education, Katsina-Ala was studied. It was based on achieving; to evaluate how the library meets the needs of the teachers in supply of audio-visual materials. The types and quality of audio-visual materials are available in the college. The frequency of use & inhibitions and the remedies are taken by librarian in promoting an awareness of audio-visual resources in the library. Two sets of questionnaires were given to lecturers and staff by the researcher and observation made in college besides to administer the questionnaire and data was collected. The collected data was organized and analyzed using non-parametric statistical techniques. Percentages and frequencies were prepared and analyzed. It was concluded that the College collection of audio-visual materials is fairly less. The lecturers rarely use audio-visual resources in teaching in the college. The chalkboard is being used by the teachers and they lack supporting infrastructures, non-availability and human factors are obstacles to the use audio-visual aids. The awareness of available audio-visual resources provided by the librarian is not attractive [6].

Teachers have to choose different teaching aids to enhance learning to acquire knowledge, skills & attitude whereas students have various styles of learning. In Obstetrics of medical subject, the students have to master the skill of demonstrating the normal mechanism of labor by using the dummy pelvis and fetal skull. In a study the role of video demonstration along with conventional teaching method was evaluated. Students were introduced with additional teaching learning media and had clear understanding with long lasting effect. In Obstetrics, adopting innovative

approaches could bring revolutions in medical education [7].

The use of video as A.V material as a warm-up activity in aviation English course at high school level was studied. It is a qualitative study in which the focus group interview and data collection procedure was done. The participants of focus group are four instructors teaching Aviation English. It is for 10th graders from 2005 to 2006 academic year in a state high school. There comes set of challenges in the stages of selection, preparation and demonstration. The analysis of the data collected using focus group interview says that the challenges encountered in the use of video are concluded to arise from curriculum design. The technical constraints and video selection were also considered [8].

To explore the teachers' opinions on the use of visual aids for e.g., pictures, animation videos, projectors and films as a motivational tool in enhancing students' attention in reading literary texts, a study was conducted. The closed ended questionnaire was used to collect the required data and the targeted populations are teachers and students of the public and private educational institutions of District Dera Ghazi Khan. The primary data was used for gathering information and collected data is analyzed through SPSS software. The data was represented in the percentage distribution of pie, line, and bar graphs and the majority of the teachers & students had positive perceptions of the use of visual aids [9].

Audio visual aids are important that are used in classrooms to encourage teaching learning process. It is to make interesting and are the best tool for making teaching effective and in dissemination of knowledge. Technical devices have greater impact and dynamic informative system in education system. To analyze the effectiveness of audio visual aids in teaching learning process at university level in a study two questionnaires was designed. The questionnaire was given to 150 students and 50 teachers of the Islamia University in Bahawalpur. Mean score was calculated and data was analyzed by using standard deviation and Z test. It was found that the respondents viewed that A.V aids play important role in teaching learning process to be effective and provided knowledge in depth. It brings change in class room environment and motivated teachers and students. On the basis of findings of study it is suggested that the teachers may be trained for using A.V aids, university may provide proper facilities according to level and interest of students and training may be provided to student for

proper use of A.V aids [10]. Similar study conducted by preparing the questionnaire and was administered to 300 students and 100 teachers of the University of Kashmir and carried out for A.V aid [11].

The impact of audio-visual resources in enabling students to develop understanding of social aspects of sustainable product design was studied through collaborative learning and learning through discovery. Three audio-visual workshops were developed to introduce students to the wider social aspects of sustainability by building on literature concerning the learning preferences of 'Net Generation' learners. The workshops were delivered in five universities in Britain and Ireland among undergraduate and postgraduate students. This encouraged students to reflect upon the impact of their practice. The workshops proved popular and were successful to grasp the complexity of the social aspects of sustainable design and creative problem solving through an exploration of design thinking solutions. They were designed in a group-based environment to foster the preferences of Net Generation learners [12].

Education is a lifelong process either intentional or unintentional obtained from experiences. Experience is the deposit of knowledge or skill that results from direct participation in the events or activities. The newly developed step learning experiences model which comprises seventeen different learning experiences listed based on their abstract-concrete continuum was studied. In this step model, it can be chosen by the teachers wisely for their teaching-learning process by considering the content, environment, level of students, difficulty level of the content and objectives to be achieved [13].

A study conducted on teachers' perceptions on the use of visual aids for e.g., animation videos, pictures, films and projectors as a motivational tool in enhancing students' interest in reading literary texts. 52 English teachers from seven national secondary schools in Kapit, Sarawak, Malaysia were selected and five of the respondents were also randomly selected for the interview. The data says that the use of visual aids enable the teachers to engage their students closely with the literary texts This helps to generate students' creative and critical thinking skills though teachers had positive attitudes towards the use of visual aids. The study says that it will be more interesting and precise if it includes students' perceptions as well [14].

Suggestions for Improving Communication Skills

To build up effective communication skills, engineering students should:

- Communicate using digital media and environments to support personal and group learning
- Share information efficiently and effectively using appropriate digital media and environments
- Communicate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively to different audiences using various media and formats

Basic communication skills are at the core of every organization. It is crucial that we, as teachers, help students build this vital set of 21st century skills. Everything depends on our ability to be creative and to use modern teaching methods. The following is a suggested list of such activities:

- Speaking aloud
- Students listen to classmates thoughts and respond
- Conversation between two students-Subject discussions in English
- Oral diary; oral weekly report
- Oral book report
- Storytelling
- Dramatic monologues
- Radio drama

We can choose any methods in ELT because all of them help to develop speaking skills. It is possible to use them in integration or separately to get positive results. As it was mentioned, there given the significant role of speaking. Bailey (2005) and Goh (2007) proposed methods to enhance the development of speaking. They have adopted syllabus design, types of tasks and materials, principles of teaching and speaking assessment. In general, to improve the speaking ability of students the following steps should be taken:

- To place more emphasis on the quality of study books at the basic level
- To give enough time to speaking and phonetic drill to the students
- There will be No scolding to students but rather providing a friendly environment
- To use practical and applicable strategies by the teachers while speaking in English most of the time
- To develop boldness and confidence in students to ask questions of their teachers
- No overcrowded classes
- There should be awards and motivation given to the students

- Encouragement in listening to English news channels and to keep up-to-date and constantly retrain teachers
- Arrange various activities and balance in the courses with respect to literature and language

CA-AVR Methodology

In Computer Aided Audio Visual Methodology all the activities performed by each student is recorded and maintained as student’s portfolio. This portfolio is updated every three months and shown to the students and their respective subject faculty. This is to assess their performance from the beginning, middle and at the end of the semester. This data collection describes the student's background, culture and educational outcomes. It helps to evaluate each of the definitions and data sources in terms of its usefulness. This will improve the learning outcomes over the time. In this AVR method, the faculty listens to the audio and understands the problems of the students. It is a micro level analysis that involves fundamentals and the faculty motivates the students by introducing some activities (Fig 1).

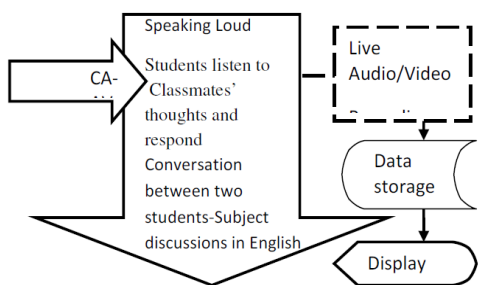


Fig. 1. Application of CA-AVR Methodology

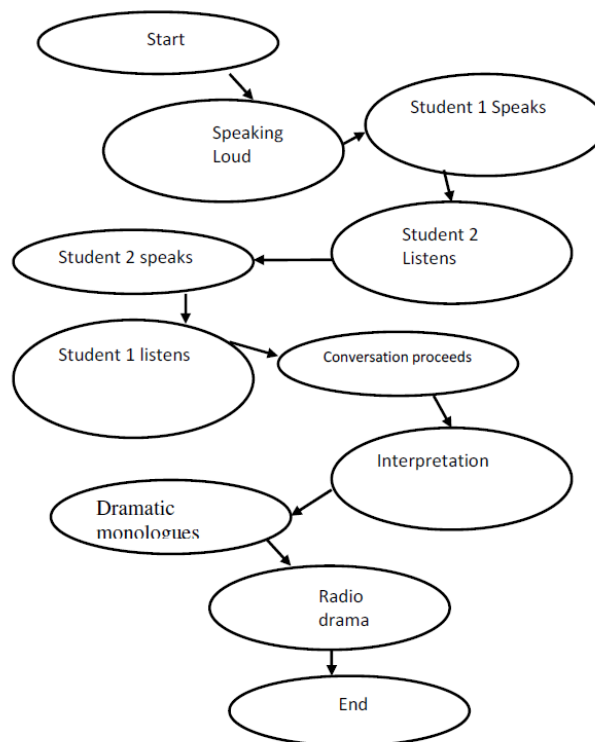


Fig 2 : Methodology using dramatic monologues and radio drama

Steps:

1. **Start:** Two students are selected randomly from a Group (Fig 2).
2. **Speaking Loud :** The Two students are informed to speak loudly by introducing one another
3. **Student 1 Speaks:** The first student speaks as per the prepared material or script
4. **Student 2 Listens :** The second student is informed to listen and interpret
5. **Student 2 Speaks:** Now the second student speaks as per the prepared material or a script.
6. **Student 1 Listens :** The first student listens and informed to interpret the second student script
7. **Conversation Proceeds:** Now the conversation proceeds between the two students as an effective communication process in English
8. **Interpretation :** The students have to interpret their dialogues and the instructor too perform the interpretation
9. **Dramatic Monologues:** A script is given to each of the student and informed to present it in a dramatic monologue. This will enhance the effective communication with different signs and facial expressions.
10. **Radio drama:** A story or act is given and informed to present it as if talking on a radio to the two students. This will improve the communication in English with rapport.
11. **End**

Conclusion

English Conversation Skills are important for engineering students both in studies and career. These skills should be acquired within four years of engineering education. With the advent of micro-level analysis, the data of the student can be collected and analyzed through CA-AVR methodology. A unique method of English conversation is implemented in this paper where the student effective communication is made using Dramatic monologue and Radio drama. It further helps the faculty to gauge the student's level of performance at his/her learning stages. This method would be applied to various levels of students and obtain satisfactory result.

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