



RESEARCH ARTICLE



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NOVEL WAYS TO DEVELOP SPEAKING SKILLS AMONG THE NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT



English is an international language and it is widely used for both oral and written communication purposes in all the fields worldwide. Therefore, there is a huge demand for learning English since it plays a dominant role in this digital era. Because of the internet and technological changes that take place all over the world, the whole world has become a small village where people can communicate easily with others. In order to achieve their aims, objectives and goals, people try to learn the English language and concentrate more on oral as well as written communication skills. Since English language learning needs to acquire all the four language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, the learners put more efforts to learn it. Moreover, oral communication is the only solution to maintain good relationships among all the business correspondence and develop the progress of the firms. As there is a huge demand for oral communication skills in the present employment world, almost all the learners pay more attention towards acquiring speaking skills and to establish themselves in the society. Therefore, the teachers of English should recognise the importance of speaking skills and teach these skills using the most available material. Also, they have to adopt several possible innovative teaching techniques, methods and approaches while teaching speaking skills in the English classrooms and concentrate more on the needs and interests of the learners since they are non-native speakers of English. This paper brings out the various possible techniques and approaches of teaching speaking skills to the non-native speakers of English.

Keywords: *Approaches; English Classrooms; Non-Native Speakers; Speaking Skills; Techniques.*

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INTRODUCTION

THE PLACE OF ENGLISH IN THE GLOBAL WORLD

English has become a global language and it occupies a prominent place in the present global world. English is widely used by all people around the world for various purposes. It is the only language that is spoken in all regions, states, countries and continents of the world. Research shows that more than 85% of the scientific research has been done in English. Moreover, most of the international communication in business and information technology is in English. Furthermore, English is the language widely used for the internet purposes and a majority of the websites is designed in English. It is the language that is spoken not only by the natives but also by the non-native speakers. There is no wonder to say that the number of non-native speakers of English who speak it is more than that of the native speakers. Among the estimated 7.5 billion world inhabitants, 20 percent of world population i.e. 1.5 billion people speak English. Nevertheless, most of these people are not the native speakers, but only around 360 million people speak English as their first language. Also, English is the most commonly studied language foreign language in the world. Most of the higher educational books are available in English and it is the language which is more useful to continue higher education in foreign countries. It is true that

one who speaks English well can visit any country of the world. It is the language that provides employment opportunities throughout the globe. Those whose communication skills are outstanding, they can excel in their professions. Since most of the trade and commerce has become international, there is a huge demand for the English language. Even the people of Japan and China have realized the importance of English and now they are concentrating more on it on order to develop their businesses internationally.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS IN THE GLOBAL MARKET

The twenty-first century has paved a path for people to perform well in their jobs and businesses. Since everything is connected internationally, there is a huge demand to learn English since it is extensively used for all the purposes. In order to get better job opportunities, the candidates have to showcase the talents at the time of their interviews. For this purpose, they have to learn all skills of English and get mastery of them. Therefore, it is high time for the learners to acquire all the language skills of English, namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing. Since each skill has its own importance, the learners should not neglect any of these four skills.



Fig: The Four Language Skills of English



Among these four skills, listening and reading are called passive or receptive skills since there is no need to showcase these skills by performing on their own, the learners have to just either listen to the English language or read it without producing these skills. Here, the learners just receive and understand the language. On the other hand, speaking and writing are called active or productive skills since the learners have to perform these skills on their own and it depends on the performance levels of the individuals. In the case of non-native speakers of English, learning starts from listening so that they learn the language gradually. In this regard, Stevick (1980: 42) says, "Learners can take their knowledge of the first few words in the new language and figure out additional words by using that knowledge". As the teachers of English give more prominence to understand the learners' learning ability and encourage self-learning approach, the learners get ample opportunities in learning a second or foreign language. Therefore, the teachers of English should think of some different innovative tasks and activities that help the non-native learners to understand how to use the English language in real-life situations by engaging them more in performing the tasks or activities in the regular classrooms. Also, the non-native learners of English have a lot of responsibility on them in learning English since learning a foreign or second language needs more practice. So as to acquire the language skills of English, the non-native speakers should allot more time on practising the language skills so that they will attain desired results in their lifetime.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS IN THE MODERN WORLD

There are tremendous changes that have been taking place in the twenty-first century and people are striving to work hard to compete in this cut-throat competition. Since there is heavy competition in all the fields including employment, it is the right time to prove the talents of the individuals to settle down in a better position. The primary focus of the job aspirants is to acquire the language skills of English, especially, the communication skills. These communication skills are classified into oral communication or speaking skills

and written communication or writing skills. Since there is a huge demand for communication skills, they should be taught at all levels of teaching English. Furthermore, speaking allows the learners to convey their messages in a more comprehensive way. In this regard, Michael Bygate (1987: 57) states, "Speaking is, however, a skill which deserves attention every bit as much as literary skills, in both first and second languages. The teachers have to incorporate these skills in their teaching topics so that the learners' productivity can be improved in leaps and bounds and they can showcase these skills whenever and wherever necessary.

THE REASONS TO TEACH SPEAKING SKILLS IN EFL/ESL CLASSROOMS

In this modern world, most of the EFL/ESL learners give more prominence to speaking skills in their learning because once they master speaking skills, then they will automatically master the remaining three skills. A majority of people consider knowing a language and speaking are both synonyms, but the prominence of speaking skills is exposed well with the amalgamation of all the other three language skills such as listening, reading and writing. For instance, learners can develop their grammar and vocabulary with their speaking skills and at the same time, they also develop their writing skills massively. While speaking, the learners will be in a position to express their ideas, opinions and feelings freely. Moreover, speaking skills are useful for the learners to converse or discuss with others, explain things, inform some matter, tell stories to others.

According to Howarth (2001), "Speaking is a two-way process involving a true communication of ideas, information and feelings. A number of researchers including Howarth approved that a language learner needs speaking as it is the most important skill. They also found out that language teachers should direct them by giving direct instructions in speaking skills in order to help EFL/ESL learners. Direct instructions sometimes have as added advantage for the learners to take advantage of the new vocabulary items. Also, the learners can recall, use, store and retrieve the new vocabulary items comprehensively. According to Luoma (2004), "Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and



processing information. According to Wang (2005), ELLs have to recognize that speaking, like writing, involves three areas of knowledge such as mechanics like vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar, functions like transaction and interaction and social and cultural rules and norms like rate of speech, turn-taking, relative roles of participants and length of pauses between speakers.

THE NEED TO ADOPT INNOVATIVE METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

English is taught as a foreign or second language in most of the countries and the majority of its learners are also learning it as English as a foreign language or English as a second language (EFL/ESL). Teaching English to the EFL/ESL learners is quite a difficult task for the teachers because it needs a lot of patience and different strategies are to be used in the classrooms in order to involve the learners more on the activities that take place in the EFL/ESL classrooms. In order to create interest among the EFL/ESL learners, the teachers of English should always update and revise their teaching materials as well as teaching techniques that they follow in the classrooms. Therefore, there is a need to devise materials based on activities through language games, role plays, conversational activities, discussions and so on so that the learners participate very actively in the classroom activities and learn the language in more fun-filled environment. Moreover, the learners need to acquire both knowledge-based and skill-based learning for their own growth and development. The theory of second language acquisition proposed by Krashen influences the development of integration institution in the classrooms at all stages. In this regard, Krashen (1981) states, "Second language is the most successfully acquired one when the conditions are

similar to those present in the first language acquisition: that is, when the focus of instruction is on meaning rather than on form; when language input is at or just above the proficiency of the learner; and when there is sufficient opportunity to engage in meaningful use of that language in a relatively anxiety-free environment". This clearly indicates that the EFL/ESL learners' focus on the second language acquisition will certainly improve their employability and promote them to be successful in their selected fields.

While teaching the young EFL/ESL learners, the teachers of English should follow different strategies in their classrooms. As the young learners grasp very fast, the teachers can adopt several innovative techniques in their classroom. Even the materials they choose for this purpose should meet the needs, interests and levels of the learners. Also, the teachers should create more encouragement among the learners in order to involve them in the activities held in the classrooms in a learner-friendly manner. Since the young learners grasp the learning content very fast, it will be easier for the teachers to teach the language skills. Therefore, the teachers of English should understand the learning levels of the learners and also introduce the teaching items from simple to complex level. In this regard, Rao, S.P. (2018) says, "In order to develop the speaking skills of the learners, the English language teachers have to put their focus mainly on vocabulary and grammar and then on speech sounds, stress, intonation patterns and finally on patterns of sentences". So the teachers of English should try to incorporate innovative techniques, methods and approach to develop the learners' speaking skills. Let us discuss the strategies the teachers have to adopt in the classroom to improve the young EFL/ESL learners.



Fig.: Novel Waysto Develop Speaking Skills Amongthe Non-native Speakers of English

CHORAL DRILLS OR CHORAL REPETITION:

Choral drills or choral repetition should be introduced at the initial stages of learning English. Since learning English for non-native speakers will be quite a difficult task, it is better for teachers to introduce some activities in the form of choral drills. These activities make the learners to pronounce the words clearly and also they improve their rhythm, accent and intonation. Though it is a teacher-centered technique and highly controlled one, it benefits the learners to have good practice of pronunciation in a non-threatening dynamic. According to the behaviourist view, learners can learn to speak a foreign language with correct habit formation and repeating phrases and sentences many a times will lead the learners to mastery of the language. If drilling is used skillfully and appropriately by the teachers, then it will be a useful technique to develop the learners' speaking skills. The teachers can use this technique only to introduce new vocabulary items. The teachers can also use substitution drills by using the flashcards and the students substitute the nouns or verbs by looking at the flashcards. Teachers can introduce substitution drills to give more practice on vocabulary items or different grammatical structures. Also, the teachers

can give the learners some prompts so that they can form questions and their partners answer the questions. Since drills provide a focus on increasing learners' accuracy which leads to increase their fluency and it must be continued whenever there is a need during a certain task or lesson. This activity also builds more confidence among the learners who do not want to take any kind of risk. Moreover, this technique is better to involve all the learners into the learning process and it is a boom for teachers to manage the classroom. Hence, the teachers are advised to use this technique whenever necessary, especially, to drill the vocabulary or chunks of language that cause the problem of pronunciation of non-native speakers of English.

LANGUAGE GAMES

Playing games is one of the best techniques to help the learners develop problem solving skills and simultaneously, learn speaking skills. When the English language teachers introduce games in the classrooms to develop the speaking skills of the learners, it not only promotes their speaking skills but also creates fun in the classrooms. The teachers can introduce a game called secret word where the learners are given a random topic and a random word which is not related to the given topic. The



learners have to hide the given word in their speech about the topic and they never give a chance for the other students to guess the secret word. The other learners listen to the speech carefully and try to guess the secret word carefully.

Another interesting game that works well in the English classrooms to develop the non-native speakers is two truths and one lie. The teacher asks a learner to tell three truths about him/her, but also tells the learner that two of them must be true and one of them must be a lie. Then the learners get up and tell three things about themselves whereas the audience chooses the lie among the three and then they see if they are right. Since the non-nativespeakers of English find it very easy and do not take much time, the teachers do not go into full details about it and where it creates a real time fun in the classroom.

BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITY

Brainstorming is a technique used in the classroom to create a situation where a team or group of learners meets together to find a solution for a problem by extracting new ideas spontaneously from the members of the team or group. In a brainstorming activity, the learners think more freely and generate many innovative ideas spontaneously. The teachers note down all the ideas given by the learners without any criticism and these ideas are evaluated once the brainstorming session is over. Since the learners get an opportunity to express their ideas in a free and independent environment, they feel free to supply as many points as possible. As there is no hard and fast rule for the learners to express their ideas, the learners go on speaking spontaneously so that they develop speaking skills unintentionally. So, brainstorming activity is a boon for learners who hesitate to speak in the classroom, especially for non-native learners. Therefore, the teachers of English should always introduce these activities in their classrooms so that the non-native speakers of English can develop their not only speaking skills but also critical thinking and reasoning skills.

Storytelling: Storytelling is one of the important tools for language teaching and learning and it encourages the learners' to develop their speaking skills as well

as creative thinking and problem solving skills. Storytelling has gained more importance in the English classrooms since stories contain lessons to instruct the learners and they also teach the learners not only to love and forgive others but also to be just and to strive for better than they have. Barzaq (2009: 7) demarcates storytelling as a knowledge management technique, a way of distributing information, targeted to audiences and a sense of information. Also, she adds that stories provide natural connection between events and concepts. She further says that visual storytelling is a way of telling stories through images. The learners create mental picture and try to express their ideas using their creativity by observing a picture or listening to a situation. The teachers of English can implement this technique by giving the initial sentence to the class and ask the learners to expand the story by adding one sentence each. The teachers can also show them a picture and ask the learners to form in groups to create a story based on it. Also, the teachers can play a part of the story and ask the learners to complete it. Here the learners participate enthusiastically and try to speak more sentences in English. Therefore, the teachers should try various techniques of storytelling in order to develop the speaking skills of the non-native speakers of English.

JAM (JUST A MINUTE) SESSIONS

Developing the speaking skills through JAM (Just a Minute) sessions is one of the essential techniques to implement in the classrooms. This technique is more suitable for the non-native speakers of English because they lack oral communication skills as well as insufficient vocabulary and grammatical structures. Since the main objective of JAM is based on three principles: no repetition, no deviation and no hesitation, it prepares the learners to practise their speech using a wide range of vocabulary and variety of grammatical structures. These JAM sessions are more useful for job seekers where they get a chance to showcase their multiple talents within a short span of time. In this context, it is wise to quote Rao, S.P. (2018) who says, "As these JAM sessions are of immense use for the job seekers, the main concentration of the teachers should be on conducting as many JAM



sessions as possible so that the average level participant also comes up with bright and new ideas to make his speech more attractive. As the classroom is the right place to do more and more rehearsals, there is a possibility for the learners to enhance their speaking skills and presentationskills". Hence, the teachers of English should concentrate more on JAM sessions since they form a solid base for the non-native speakers of English to develop their speaking skills immensely.

Debates: Debates are the effective way of developing the non-native speakers of English because they engage them in a wide range of linguistic and cognitive ways. Besides providing meaningful speaking, writing and listening practice, debates also more useful for developing argumentation skills for persuasive writing and speech. Debate activities drive the learners to improve their public speaking skills and also help prepare them for their academic purposes. They also boost the learners' confidence levels and their language learning. The teachers can prepare an activity where the teacher reads a controversial statement after giving each learner a piece of paper by writing "agree" on one side and "disagree" on the other side. After listening to the statement, the learners give their response by holding up the paper and then they are divided into two groups according to the given response. Then the teacher invites one learner from each side to have their opinion on the given topic in the form of a short debate in the classroom. Once the task is over, the teacher selects some more topics for debates and this time he/she invites each and every student to participate in the debate so that it develops the speaking skills of the non-native speakers of English as well as their critical thinking and self-confidence.

Group Discussions: Since collaboration is the part of the process of group work or group discussions, the non-native speakers of English start learning independently by cooperating with each other in the group. It is the best teaching technique of speaking skills as these activities give the right opportunity for the learners to express their own thoughts and ideas and enhance their language proficiency. When the learners in the group participate in the group discussions, there is a chance for the learners to improve their speaking skills. According to Oakeshott

(1962), "Group discussion stimulates and propels learners to take the responsibility for the learning task and is characterized as an "unrehearsed intellectual adventure".

The teachers of English give the topic to the learners and invite them to have a discussion in the group by implementing collaborative approach and give the learners a chance to discuss their points independently among the members of the group. While the learners are discussing, the teachers should acts as facilitators by encouraging and motivating them to participate actively in the group discussions. Sometimes, the teachers should give prompts to the learners whenever they face any kind of difficulty. Concerning the number of the members of the group, it is ideal to have four to six learners should be there to handle the discussion smoothly and to provide more opportunities for the speakers to express their own ideas, otherwise, some of the shy learners may stay in the "safe corner" and they frequently depend on the work of the other members of the group. Moreover, the topics selected for this purpose should be familiar to the students and fulfill the needs and interests of the learners. Thus, the teachers should take care while making the non-native speakers of English into groups and should also make the learners to participate in the tasks actively.

Impromptu Speech Activity: An impromptu speech is a talk that is given on the spur of the moment without any prior preparation. The topic of the speech may be general one or specific one related to the profession, but the speaker has to say something witty, charming and smart. Giving an extemporaneous speech indicates the speaker's talent and versatile personality and it also shows the speaker's innate talent as an excellent leader as well as the best communicator. In the English classrooms, the teachers should make a list of some interesting and burning topics that the learners can speak on the spot. For this purpose, the teachers should divide the whole class into two groups and each member chooses a number of their choice to speak on a topic. Then each member of the group selects a topic from the list given by the teachers and respond to the given topic or statement without any prior preparation. The speakers should continue their



speech for 45 seconds. While a speaker is giving his/her speech, the members of the other group listen to the speech carefully for not only the vocabulary and grammatical mistakes but also the moments of hesitation. When the other team finds any error in the speech, they will automatically get a point. As the non-native speakers of English develop their speaking skills massively through these activities, the teachers have to develop many impromptu speech activities in their classrooms every now and then.

Since the non-native speakers of English get an opportunity to begin learning language skills in the English classrooms, the ESL/EFL teachers should motivate them by adopting various novel techniques of developing their speaking skills. To achieve their desired results, the teachers should understand the level and interests of the non-native speakers of English and introduce various speaking activities that promote their speaking skills colossally.

CONCLUSION

The present paper has brought out the various possible techniques and approaches of teaching speaking skills to the non-native speakers of English. Initially, this paper has discussed the importance of English and the language skills and how these skills are more important for non-native speakers of English. Later, this paper has highlighted the importance of speaking skills in the modern society. Then this paper has also elaborated the advantages of speaking skills. Moreover, this paper has mainly focused on various techniques, methods and approaches of teaching speaking skills to the non-native speakers of English who struggle a lot in producing sentences in English. Ultimately, both the teachers as well as the learners have been given valuable suggestions to improve their teaching-learning speaking skills in English.

Since speaking is one of the most difficult skills for the non-native speakers of English, some among them feel shy and find more inconvenient to take part in activities that are organized in the classrooms. Moreover, they are vexed with the traditional method of teaching and do not pay more attention on the teaching and learning process. In order to involve the learners in speaking English and

encourage them to participate in the classroom activities, the teachers of English should always think of novel techniques in their teaching and introduce more activities in the classroom according to the needs of the learners. As a result, the non-native speakers of English will participate in the activities and perform well in the given tasks. In this regard, the teachers of English should always motivate the learners by introducing the activities according to the interests of the learners and present numerous latest activities in order to encourage the maximum participation by all the learners of the classroom. Furthermore, the teachers of English should implement the discussed activities regularly in their classrooms on order to improve the speaking skills among the young EFL/ESL learners and make their teaching and learning an effective one in the learner-friendly environment.

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