

Effective Way Of Reading To Enhance Fluency In Spoken English Among Students

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ABSTRACT

English Language Learning or Teaching has two broad areas to cover namely language skills and language areas. Developing language skills have become mandatory in the globalized context. The prime motivation of the learners to speak in English is thwarted by the difficulties and ignorance prevailing behind developing that particular skill. This is the greatest challenge for many Indian learners in spite of its importance. This leads the EFL learners to a strange conclusion that English is a difficult language to learn. The teachers of English should carefully divert students from such strong conclusion and provide them avenues to learn micro-skills involved in speaking like pronunciation of words, stress and intonation and the usage of expressions to be used in formal and informal contexts. In recent times, this notion of binomial operation of skills development seems outdated as all the four skills are inter-related and interdependent. The study in this research paper concentrates on how the habit of reading can improve the fluency in speaking among the English as second language learners. This paper envisages how reading could be considered a base to improve fluency in communication and how reading could help the speakers maintain their pace in communication. The role of teachers in inculcating the habit of reading to enable students to communicate in English fluently is also discussed in detail.

Keywords : English Language Learning, Language skills, Reading, Fluency in communication.

Introduction

Every skill is unique in itself pertaining to the use of it. English in India is either considered to be a Foreign Language or a Second Language as per the ethnic and cultural set up. It is expected that the students in India are supposed to master English language for the very purpose of being equipped to converse or communicate in a language that is common to create understanding between the talk and talked. No skill can be disregarded or discarded unimportant. Among the four skills, the learners of English as a Foreign Language or English as a Second Language are expected to pay more attention to speaking skills. According to Dubin and Olshtain (1986) a humanistic orientation is concerned with each individual's growth and development, while emphasizing affective factors as well.

The task-based teaching and learning practice reverses the translation method used in language teaching. The renaissance of 16th century Europe made the regional languages important, with the invention of printing press. John Comenius, the famous Greek educationist was the pioneer to teach grammar indirectly by induction. Methods were followed for imitation, repetition and plenty of practice in reading and speaking. During the 17th and 18th centuries the usual practice of translating from the second language into the first was reversed while stressing the use of grammar. This method was introduced by Meidinger (1783). This grammar translation method went out of use when Latin disappeared towards the end of the 18th century. Moreover emphasis was on learning grammar rules and vocabulary by rote. Students wrote sentences with grammar points irrelevant to the real world. There followed the heyday for grammar schools with teaching by translation method.

The teacher of English for engineers is

privileged to understand perspectively the existing linguistic dualism in terms of having professional teaching and meaningful learning. The teacher knows the academic situation and learning by personal and practical experience. She/he knows the language uses and class room techniques innovatively in the spirit of modernism and academic vision. Therefore the teacher is most suitable to be the course designer with the guidelines of teaching techniques. The course design will be more realistic with the relevant production of syllabus. The teacher is left at liberty to design a feasible course for learning- teaching agenda involving interaction. She/he finds no dichotomy between the traditions of old fashioned lecturing on the subject of English and the modernity of the new thinking on teaching.

The language teacher's counselling will be on how to review the errors that are being committed while learning the foreign language, English. It is common knowledge that there should be luxury of making errors in the process of their learning a foreign language. According to Dubin et al (1986)

Another important shift in current thinking about language learning theory is the attitude towards learner's errors. If in the 1960s errors had to be avoided at all costs, today errors are to be viewed as an integral part of the language learning process from which we can gain very significant insights. The question of universality becomes relevant again, the issues being (a) To what extent do errors made by second language learners represent transfers from the first language system? (b) To what extent do they exhibit universal characteristics of developmental features (since they often resemble errors made by first – language learners)? (74).

It is owing to the fact that the learning of English is associated with doing the linguistic practices on a transactional basis. However there is a pragmatic view of rationalizing. The errors are instrumental as the natural inclination is to study the life- like situations with examples.

There is an argument for making curriculum learner centered. The learner is central to learner-centered curriculum, which is to be designed to satisfy the needs and

wants of learners. This kind of curriculum encourages active participation of learners in the teaching-learning process. Learners get involved in doing tasks and language activities. Teacher is to provide appropriate material, motivation, support and encouragement. The learners are obliged:

- To get involved in the act of communicating with each other and with the teacher;
- To get taught of the language skills;
- To give their ideas on content and teaching;
- To be autonomous learners;

Altogether the curriculum should be learner centered. The instructors are to provide meaningful and relevant materials. The learner is to take part in classroom activities. Hence, it is necessary to frame a suitable syllabus to fulfil the needs of the learners like getting them eligible for suitable employability.

Language vocabulary and word power are the essentials to convert the thoughts into words with respect to speaking. It is a usual scene that students when given a task of public speaking, they accept and confess their incapability of converting their thoughts into appropriate vocabulary to be conveyed. They complain that they know what to speak but they fish for vocabulary to disclose what they thought. This problem can be suitably dealt with by inculcating the habit of reading. While reading, the readers come to realize new words, expressions and structures. When the readers closely read they imitate the words they come across and try to use it in formal or informal contexts appropriately. While one reads, he/she visualizes what is present in the text and the same is stored in the photographic memory. If stored, the words or expressions or structures can easily be retrieved for future use appropriately in the right place for the right thought.

Transition from learning General English to specific Technical English is to be gradual and result oriented. There are many theories on the process of learning the language.

All these theories are characteristically western oriented and marked by the concepts of Challenge and Response. Our tradition of having Macaulay English at all levels of national life from 1835 onwards is to provide us with long experience of knowing English for its practical worth. The student and teacher in particular will have to go by the changed views of demanding redefinition of their respective roles. It is to be a brave new world for the students to be independent minded and free from the tutelage of authorised teacher. The teacher is being a facilitator rather than motivator. There is no prospect of identity crisis for the teacher. In fact his/her role is to gain meaningful identity as a humanistically committed teacher.

Improving Reading task

An English classroom is an ideal place where experiments like the above illustrations can be experimented. As English is a universal language, it is the responsibilities of English teachers to equip students meet the global needs with respect to oral communication. Here are some of the techniques that English teachers can make use of to develop reading skills among students that can help them develop fluency in speaking.

Interpretive task

The students have to put into the practice of reading easier text or some short story in the class and ask them to recall it mentally. Each student must be motivated to at least read 5 short stories in a week and must be allowed to recall it, but they should not be allowed to express it. After a week, the students must be allowed to recall and express themselves or narrate a story that they have read the previous week. This will enable a teacher to assess the interest of a student in reading stories. Choice can be given in selecting a text as per the interest of the students. When such freedom is provided, this could definitely pave way to develop interest in reading.

Procedural task

This task is an immediate task. The students can be asked to read a text and reflect on it on spot with their own

interpretations, inferences and explications. This will help the students to be original and critical from what they have read. They should be given freedom to express anything they like to so that the spontaneity is not disturbed. Freedom of speech is one of the important aspect through which the students can become expressive, but it has to be done under the title of interpreting or reflecting on a text. The magnitude of reflection may be thin, but the outcome would really be sound after a period of time.

Decision making task

This model is an essential one through which reading and speaking skills can be developed. Keeping reading as a base, peer discussion should be prompted. When the student discusses with his/her peer, the originality is maintained and critical evaluation can be done to decide further steps to be taken to improve speaking skills. Discussion, especially with the peers is an important module to develop and strengthen communicative capability of the students. Here again the choice of text is left with the students so the autonomy is maintained to elicit optimum response.

One way, two way tasks

In this task, the students must be asked to read a story till the proper understanding of it is achieved and they must be asked to create a new story and speak it out on the same theme or themes related to it. This will enable students to enhance creativity and expressive skills. After reading they will have a base to build on it. So reading provides a base from where students can construct their own thoughts to spin a story. Newspapers can also be used through which the students can create new news in mind and speak it out in the class.

All the tasks mentioned about should be inculcated meticulously and seriously to expect ultimate results. All these are NOT EASY tasks yet can be gradually introduced in the class to enhance reading habit to develop fluency in speaking in English. The authors of this paper are of strong opinion that reading can not only develop writing skills but it can contribute a lot to speaking skills also. The

fluency in speaking can to a greater extent be achieved through rigorous reading practice inside an English classroom. The teachers of English are greatly indebted to use such novel practices to develop skills in different ways.

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