

# Enhancing English Speaking Proficiency of Engineering Students through Different Teaching Methodologies

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**Abstract:** Before we start speaking our native language, we listen it first, then speak, we read and finally we write. We have four basic skills in English- Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. All we need to develop to make our communication complete. Among these four skills, Listening and Reading are receptive skills whereas Speaking and Writing are Productive skills. However, it is quite difficult for the students or second language learners to speak a foreign language especially English. Reasons are many. It may be due to lack of or absence of ideas, lack of vocabulary, lack of exposure to speak or may be lack of impressive teaching methodology. Speaking is very much essential for everyone to express their ideas, thoughts, and to communicate to people. The problem of students' poor speaking skill can be solved by providing them ample opportunities to practice English. For this the teacher needs to implement innovative methods to make the speaking skill more interesting and improve the speaking abilities of the students. On the other hand, the students too need to be more proactive and should actively participate in each activity conducted in the English classrooms or Language Labs. They should also remain active during interaction with their friends and teachers. The objective of this study is to- implement innovative teaching methods in the classrooms to improve the speaking skill of the students and secondly to enhance the confidence level of the students in speaking skill and develop fluency in speaking.

**Keywords:** Speaking, Vocabulary, Implement, Language Labs, Innovative.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In most of the Engineering colleges and Universities in India, English has remained as an integral part for the last few decades. It plays a vital role in finding a good job through on campus placements in many popular organisations. This is due to British Colonization, English has become the second language to many Indians. Thus It is very difficult to separate English language from India. They remain inseparable. English is a language that connects people throughout India. People all over India speak different languages in different states. Only English can unite them in sharing their ideas, thoughts and expressions. English plays a prominent role in Higher education, Public and Private sector organizations, Media and the like. In the last few decades, there has been a mushroom growth of Engineering colleges in India. Every year thousands of students graduate from each institution. This has caused a big problem in the job market and Placement has become a serious issue in this present era. Today, there is a cut throat competition in the job market. Thus, the students are expected to fight for their survival by making themselves ready for the challenge and meet their requirements. Prospective candidates are required to open up and present their ideas and thoughts fluently without any ambiguity and fear. Communication skill is the one and only requirement for getting into a job. But it is disappointing to see that graduates in India find it a herculean task to speak or write English with fluency and accuracy.

Basic Communication in English is taught in the first two semesters i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> year of graduation in most of the Govt. and private Engineering colleges in India. The objective of this course is to improve the basic four communication skills. Though many seminars, conferences and workshops are conducted on new methodologies of Language teaching, the real story is different due to several reasons. This may be due to lack of exposure for English Professors, students from different regions present in the same class in large number, limited time to complete the syllabus, giving more importance to written exams, pressure on teachers to produce toppers in English by the end of final semester, lack of support from college management, or it may be due to less focus on English – traded as an optional or yet another subject to study. The traditional method of teaching English is one of the drawbacks for students proper exposure to speak English fluently. Professors are under pressure to complete the syllabus in time and in this process, they do not give much focus on practice English in the classroom. As a result, majority of the students fail to make progress in speaking skill. In many Engineering colleges and Universities, there is a paper on advance level of English called “business communication” from the 4<sup>th</sup> semester onwards. In this course students have to go through listening skill, Writing business letters, Proper CV writing, Mock interviews and focussed Group discussions. Despite the effort, lack of speaking skill has been a big challenge for many students.

## **II. IMPORTANCE OF SPEAKING SKILL**

In a private Engineering Colleges or Universities, teaching of English communication is a challenging task for many teachers as the curriculum design is made in a way that there is no scope for them to deliver traditional teaching method. Moreover, teaching speaking skill is more difficult though important. Teachers do every effort to help their students to improve their speaking fluency. This is important for many reasons. The students should be able to communicate with others comfortably. It is common in most of the colleges students in majority are good at reading and writing but they are poor in speaking and listening. Therefore, teaching the students speaking skill is very important for the teachers.

## **III. DIFFERENT METHODS OF TEACHING SPEAKING**

In order to make English classroom especially speaking activities more attractive and engaging, the teacher must prepare some tasks and innovative technique to deliver the lecture. The students should keep themselves engaging and enjoyable during the class. The following are few teaching methods where the teachers can make a difference in the classroom.

### **3.1. Role plays on real life situations:**

To develop speaking skill, this is one of the best activities that the teacher can do. He/she asks the students to act from a given script. The script may be a scene from plays, text books or may be from a movie. The students are instructed to present it with dialogues. In this way, the speaking skill of the participants will improve as well as it will boost confidence in him/her and reduce stage fright. During the roleplay, the teacher acts as a Director, drawing attention of the students towards the stress, intonation, as well as to test fluency. The students are allotted time for preparation before the final performance. The teacher must keep in mind that the students' involvement is more and more. They should be encouraged to speak as much as possible.

### **3.2. Just a Minute (JAM)**

This activity is the advance level of speaking as students are given topics on the spot and asked to speak for a minute continuously. It's quite a challenging task for a student to speak without any previous preparation and that to within one minute. But if it is done with proper guidance by the teacher, this will boost confidence among the learners and reduce their stage fright. The topics will be for example- "A Red Rose", "A Rainy Day", "an evening with my friend", "The movie I like most" and the like where the average students also can feel comfortable to speak at least few words. Grammatical errors may be excused as this activity is focussed more on their fluency level.

### **3.3. Story telling:**

The teacher can adopt this oldest yet effective art form in the classroom. Storytelling is regarded as the original form of teaching since time immemorial. This can be done in order to increase the performances of the speaking skill. It also helps the students fostering emotional intelligence and provide useful information on human behaviour and attitude. It also promotes language learning. There are many advantages that the students can get from this activity - It provokes curiosity, creates interest among the learners, it makes one's vocabulary, comprehension strong. It teaches human values, attitude, and behaviour and moreover it develops one's speaking and listening skill.

Communication Games: There are numerous communication games and icebreakers to develop a student's speaking ability. The students are given pieces of a picture and tell them to join it. When they get the full image from the pieces, they are asked to make a short oral presentation on it. It will generate interest and fun among the learners. This can be effective in groups.

Students are also asked to have a truth and dare game where they get an opportunity to open up. They speak on their personal experiences in life. Activities like a prepared talk, Newspaper reading are some of the effective tools to develop one's speaking skill. They are given some articles of a newspaper or any writing material to go through and speak on it after allotted time. The teacher checks time duration, pronunciation, tone and reading speed and communication style.

### **3.4. Audio visual aids:**

There are different types of audio-visual aids that can be used in the classroom in order to improve speaking skills. The audio-visual aids are very essential tools as they facilitate both learning and teaching. They provide enough scope to students to speak fluently and fearlessly. It also provides much information about the use of Grammar, vocabulary, intonation and pronunciation. Moreover, it motivates them to understand the concept and perform well when they speak. Audio visual aids are supplementary devices where the teachers are able to clarify, establish, interpret and appreciate. Language Lab is used to implement this tool where the students can use laptops, PCs, headphones, projector and screen. Showing a good video is an important mode of delivery as it helps students to learn the language through viewing and hearing. The teacher can make his/her class interesting by showing good videos. Take for example- short movie clips and students are asked to make a review on it. Ted Talks by famous speakers can be shown and ask the students to make an analysis. Few Youtube videos on effective communication skills, mock interviews and Group Discussions. Students are

given topics to discuss in similar way. This will help the student a lot. Showing videos has a positive impact to enhance their speaking skills. It is observed that many students make wrong use of body language, eye contacts, posture and gesture. These videos will help them a lot in rectifying these.

There are other ways to show videos in the classroom. It may be on fast forwarding mode. The teacher can show it fast forward and ask the students to guess the theme of the video clip. In another context, the teacher can mute the video and students have to predict the dialogues in that scene and then it can be played with sound to know the exact answer. The students are also asked to speak something on a picture displayed on the screen. It can be a pair or group activity to make it more interesting.

Students are asked to listen a music or speech or may be any voice without a picture or video and students have to guess the theme of the speech and can make an oral presentation for two minutes. They may be asked to sum up the and finally get feedback from other participants.

#### **IV. CHALLENGES FACED BY STUDENTS IN SPEAKING SKILL**

As the course is designed for the first-year students, most of the students experience the feeling of anxiety in the classroom. They have just come from Inter level and they find all these things tough and it puts a negative impact on students speaking skill. It may decrease students' self-confidence for which they feel reluctant to speak anything. Therefore, the teacher should create a relaxed and comfortable environment in the class.

In order to get a result-oriented class, the students must get motivation- the driving force behind a learner. Motivation is possible by three elements i.e. Effort, desire and affect. The learners must put much effort to learn a language and improve the skills. They must have desire to succeed in learning second language and they must affect the learners in a positive way and make the learning enjoyable.

Most of the students in English classes have lack of self confidence. As they are in 1<sup>st</sup> year, they feel awkward in speaking before a large audience. There is a great deal of stage fright and low confidence level. They feel they may be scolded if they speak wrong English or something like that. The teacher should boost confidence in them and make them feel comfortable in the classroom.

As the class consists of a huge number of students from different backgrounds and different regions, some of them feel it's not necessary to listen everything that is taught and it's also not important for them to learn. They simply neglect listening skill exercises and activities. As a result they fail to utter a word before others. Their level of understanding is also poor for which they cut a sorry figure during the class.

#### **V. ROLE OF THE TEACHER**

The teacher of English has a prominent role to play during the session in order to develop speaking skill and help him reach to the desired level. The teacher may act a participant himself or herself first. He or she should participate in the activities, participate in the discussions and in role-plays too. They can add some more information, keep students engaged and maintain an innovative classroom environment. The teacher should see that there is no domination on speaking. More and more opportunities should be given to students and draw all attention to the classroom. The teacher may also act as a prompter during a classroom. Most of the time it is observed that students stuck, get lost and find it difficult to speak. They couldn't think what to say next. At this time the teacher could help them go ahead, provide tips, encourage to start speaking. Even he or she could ask them questions to proceed. By doing this, the students feel comfortable and start speaking avoiding stage fright. Then act as a feedback provider after the activity. As it is expected from every student that they should know about their performances, should know where they do mistakes, tips to improve etc. Feedback is essential to develop the speaking ability of the students. He/she should assess the students carefully and provide accurate feedback which will help the students to do better in the next activity.

In the Audio visual aid, the role of the teacher is not only important but also very effective. The teacher has to select appropriate video clips for viewing. He/she should think how to integrate it in the curriculum, prepare tasks, Plan activities and makes the students active, engaging and enjoyable.

#### **VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

It has been observed from various points that activities to test speaking skill are something that can make students nervous. This study has shown that the role of the teachers is more important than the learners. Other conclusions drawn from the study are as follows:

- Activities like icebreakers, communication games, role-plays, JAM and storytelling should be given more to get exposure to speaking ability. Through this, they get an opportunity to interact with their friends and teachers.
- Students should be given more time to speak, participate in each activity assigned to them. Even storytelling and JAM should be more preferable.

- The use of Audio visual aids can make the class more interesting and it will draw attention to a large number of students especially the oral presentation makes them develop their speaking skill.
- Students get more knowledge during audio visual class as they witness the real-life situation on screen and it encourages them to open up and come forward to speak. The materials and tools used in the Audio-visual class help them a lot to build their confidence.

## **VII. RECOMMENDATIONS**

In this era of digitalization teaching English has become more interesting, more innovation and more enjoyable. To make the process of teaching and learning effective, the students should be proactive, involve in every activity and continue practice on the task even after the class. On the other hand, the teachers should be friendly towards the students. They should feel the students' needs and interests before planning and speaking materials. As far as possible, the teachers should speak less and more time should be given to students to speak more. The teachers should be attentive during the audio visual aids for a successful speaking session.

This study is made basing on the Indian scenario and taking example of the course structure of few engineering colleges and universities in India. It is a limited study to find out the difficulties in speaking skill of the students and implementing few techniques to help the students to develop their speaking skill. Further research on this topic can also be done even on a broader sense.

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