

DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILL THROUGH ICT/MULTIMEDIA (AUDIO-VISUAL) – AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY ON ENGINEERING STUDENTS

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Abstract

The present study is an attempt to find a solution to the problem that hinders the speaking skills of the engineering students (JNTUK). The objectives of the study are to enhance the fluency of the learners by using multimedia as a supplementary material and to find out the effectiveness of multimedia on the learners through an experimental study. It is hypothesized that the effective use of multimedia can provide authentic language input to the learners' fluency. The learners can use the target language fluently by diverting their focus from the forms of target language to its functions. The proposed study answers the research question 'How far does multimedia help in enhancing the classroom interaction of the L2 learners?' Despite the importance given to English, teaching speaking has been undervalued and English language teachers have continued to teach speaking just as a repetition of drills or memorization of dialogues. In order to teach speaking skill, multimedia is an effective tool. Multimedia is the combination of various digital media types such as text, images, sound and video, into an integrated multisensory interactive application or presentation. SLA research emphasizes that literacy development can be improved by providing multiple opportunities for learners to interact in communicative settings with authentic materials that are relevant to students' own needs (Krashen 1982). One of the opportunities is to make use of multimedia for developing the learners' fluency. Multimedia provides vast up-to-date linguistic resources for accent, vocabulary, grammar and syntax, and all kinds of discourse. Multimedia therefore plays a significant role in enhancing the engineering students' communicative skill.

Key words: Speaking skill, ICT, Multimedia, engineering students

Introduction

ICT stand for Information and Communication Technology and is a magic bullet that has changed many aspects of life and teaching. The use of ICT in any field particularly teaching has significantly changed methods of learning and teaching especially in technical colleges. The acronym ICT includes the range of hardware and software devices and programmes such

as English apps, internet, email, WhatsApp, personal computers, assistive technology, scanners, digital cameras and image editing software. The use of ICT helps to improve the quality of teaching and learning in several ways by increasing learners' motivation and engagement by facilitating the acquisition of speaking skills. The appropriate use of ICTs in language learning and particularly speaking skill. It may also be a significant motivational factor in enhancing speaking skill and support them for collaborative learning.

The use of ICTs is a big challenge for language teachers to use it in order to change oral classes atmosphere and motivates learners utilize the different tools since ICT represent a crucial link to enhance learners speaking proficiency.

Today, it is important to talk about the development and usage of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the educational learning process. Belgium & law (2000) stated, "From the beginnings in 1980, ICT has facilitated all aspect of life, work, leisure and education". ICTs are online and offline devices, tools and resources used to enhance speaking skills.

Review of researches

Many researchers believe that Information and Communication Technology tools play a major role and present a big challenge that can change oral classes and motivate ESL learners to speak. There is a literature, which shows the evidence of the effectiveness of using the multimedia or ICT to improve the speaking skill of ESL learners. While defining ICT, Margaret Rouse stated that "ICT (information and communications technology – or technologies) is an umbrella term that includes any communication device or application, encompassing: radio, television, cellular phones, computer and network (...) ICTs in education, health care, or libraries. The term is somewhat more common outside of the United States". (1946, P 34-42)

Toomey (2002) also provides a definition for ICT, "ICT generally relates to those technologies that are used for accessing, gathering, manipulating and presenting or communicating information. The technologies could include hardware (e.g. computers and other advice); software applications and connectivity (e.g. access to the internet, local networking infrastructure, and videoconferencing)" (Toomey, 2002 p.3).

Speaking can help learners to develop their vocabulary, grammar plus they can express their personal feelings, opinions or ideas, even more speaking can help them in their working life. West Rup (2003, p05) argues that: "a student who can speak English well may have a greater chance for further education, of finding employment and gaining promotion". Nevertheless, we often judge learners for the way they speak though they are not good in the other skills. Learner's success in learning second language is measured in holding a conversation in

different context. The oral production class is indeed a difficult to manage and teach and many have spoken about according to Hornby (1995:37) teaching means giving the instruction to a person: give a person a (knowledge, skill). While speaking is giving instruction to a person in order to communicate. Teaching speaking means teaching how to use the foreign language to communicate effectively and easily, for this reason ESL learners have to improve their speaking skill in order to master it in oral courses and even in real life situations.

Methodology

The proposed study is an exploratory in nature.

Sample: The population includes 40 first year engineering students and 6 teachers of English affiliated to JNTUK.

Tools: The tools used for the study are questionnaires and classroom observation

Setting: The setting of the study is the first year classroom in engineering colleges

Aim of the study

The proposed study aims to enhance the speaking skill of the first year engineering students by using ICT in the language classroom.

Research questions

This paper answers the following research questions

- i. How far does multimedia help in enhancing the classroom interaction of the L2 learners?
- ii. What are the appropriate ICT tools to be used in an ESL classroom?
- iii. To what extent ICT can help in enhancing the speaking skill of engineering students?

The objective behind the investigation is to find the usefulness of ICTs in developing speaking skills, and the difficulties faced by both teachers and learners in using ICTs.

Data analysis

The data obtained is analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The data is obtained through questionnaire, which were administered to the first year engineering students and the teachers of English.

Questionnaire Analysis

Students Questionnaire Analysis: The questionnaire of this research was well answered by participants from the first year engineering students. The questions gathered the data pertaining to the usage and effectiveness of using ICT in the language classroom.

The results obtained from the student questionnaire reveal that 90% of them stated the importance of ICT in English language classroom. While 10% were indifferent to it. The majority of the students (80%) was of the opinion that technology should be integrated and certain Apps should be used in the classroom. The majority of the students (95%) stated that these different apps enhance their speaking skill.

Even teachers questionnaire reveals that usage of the ICT in the classroom enhances the speaking skill of the first year students in the language classroom. However, concerning the

usage of the ICT and different language learning Apps, they stated that they do not use them much in the class, still they are aware of the effectiveness of the ICT in the classroom.

	Teachers who use ICT	Teachers who don't use ICT	Teachers who want to use
Smartphone	1	5	6
Internet	2	4	6
Videos	1	5	6
Whatsapp group	0	6	
Language Learning Apps	0	6	6
Group Discussions	2	4	6
Speech Making	4	2	6

The table above clearly indicates that the majority of the teachers of English (5/6) do not use the smart phone for language teaching and learning in the classroom. On the whole, the table reveals that the teachers do not use the ICT effectively in the classroom. Hence, there is a need for the teachers to utilize the technology for better teaching learning in the language classroom.

Analysis of the Classroom observation

The data obtained from the classroom observation also reveals that most of the teachers (5) seem to using the conventional method of teaching through chalk and talk. It is evident from the classroom observation that there s a need for the teachers to effectively use the ICT in the language classroom where students can interact in the target language, English. The usage of different language apps, internet and videos could help teachers teach better in the language classroom, thereby improving the speaking skill of the first year engineering students. It is also evident from the classroom observation that the teachers of English are not aware of the availability and usage of the ICT in the language classroom.

Discussion and Interpretation of Results

The main results that are collected from questionnaires and the classroom observation devoted to both the first year engineering students and teachers of English are discussed in relation to the aim of this study. Teachers and students questionnaires have allowed the researcher to collect a bulky amount of data concerning the use of ICT in the language classroom. The aim is to enhance the speaking abilities of the first years engineering students with effective usage of ICT. The main idea emerged from the researchers' classroom interaction and teaching that the ICT tools such smartphone, Whatsapp, internet, data show, laptop, computers, projector, e-mail may help the first year engineering students enhance their speaking skill. The affirmation was found in the teachers questionnaire where they said that ICT is important in the language classroom. In fact, they notice the use of various tools

by students such as smart phone, apps, tablet, data show, and laptop. Whereas, the main results related to the students questionnaire revealed that ICTs tools do enhance their speaking skills in the language classroom. Furthermore, there was no negative answer to the questions in relation to this research aim. It was evident from the results that when teachers reach the limit of teaching process they may implement ICT to enhance student speaking skills in the language classroom; through teachers questionnaires it is evident that the teachers are overloaded with students which seem inappropriate for achieving their goal in developing students speaking skills. Most of them suggested that A fewer students are appropriate. Therefore, they can participate and the teachers will use ICT tools to captivate the students' attentions in the large classes thus proving this assumption is correct. The last one, i.e., Teachers may have limited background knowledge on ICTs, while students may have less self-confidence to use it.

The results obtained in teachers' questionnaire, the part revolving about the negotiation of the teachers' problems are correct. This indicates that they face technical problems such as audio problems, finding the devices, no electricity. However, the rest of teachers added only sometimes that they face difficulties while using ICT tools. Concerning the second part of the hypothesis there is no concrete proofs about students being less self-confidence in using ICTs; the questionnaire showed the opposite 80% have the courage to use ICT tools in language classroom. According to these results, it is evident that students like and support the use of ICTs in their studies and daily lives. Finally yet importantly, it would be noted that the main findings in both questionnaires and the classroom observation of both the teachers of English and the first year engineering students confirm most of the attained data collection. Furthermore, the use of smart phone, apps, internet, videos, tablets, laptop, projector, etc., will help the researcher to make the same conclusions.

The results of the current study revealed that there are a number of features hold back students and teachers achievement in using ICTs to enhance their speaking skill. As well as teachers who face problems while using these materials which affect their teaching learning process.

The following section is devoted to some possible recommendations and suggestions regarding the use of ICT as an essential material to increase the first years' speaking abilities.

The Main Recommendations

- Teachers and learners are advised to use ICTs in their learning teaching process.
- Teachers have a duty to create a comfortable atmosphere and being friendly in order to support learners to communicate.
- Speaking practice sessions should be at least four till five hours per-week,
- Speaking module should be taught only in laboratories not in classes, also in small groups so that teacher can control easily his\her class.

- Teachers should be trained to use and handle effectively and efficiently language teaching learning process in the classroom.
- They should be trained to use different types of technological devices, because many teachers do not know how to deal with ICTs.
- Teachers have to invent activities and tasks and try to link classroom activities with the existing tools that will be used.
- ESL teachers should encourage learners to respond as much as they can the target language outside the class using different means of communication.
- All the teaching materials that teachers need to use should supply teaching laboratories.
- Teachers should take responsibility that all of students have to talk and participate during the oral class, because the participation of some students and the rest keep calm will never serve teaching and learning process.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to emphasize the incredible role of ICTs in developing speaking skill of the first year engineering students. In addition, it supports them express their ideas and communicate in the target language. Therefore, it is believed that the implementation of ICT tools in ESL classes particularly in the English language classroom is very necessary, and teachers of English are supposed to be aware of the use of these materials to reach a successful teaching and learning process. Through this study, it is observed that ICT creates a joyful atmosphere where students are expected to respond positively towards these technological materials, enlightening us the value of enhancing the speaking skill which in turn will be enhanced by using ICT effectively and efficiently in the language classroom.

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