

A Study On Fostering Undergraduate Learners' Oral Skills In ELT Through E-Learning

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Abstract:

English Language has currently occupied an unassailable position in the modern world. A recent report by the British Council suggests that the number of people learning English is likely to continue to increase over next five-year, peaking at around two billion. On the other hand it is a prevalent concept that technology is infused into many areas of Education. Number of novel pedagogic methods and changes related to technology has got their prominence in the field of English Language Teaching too. The phrase 'e-learning' has become the common word in most of the educational institutions. Today's e-classroom environment is entirely different from the previous year's traditional classroom. This paper focuses on the development of an online course in improving oral skills in English Language. Fifteen hour independent study online course was developed and delivered to forty-two students and four teachers from one of the higher education institutions in Visakhapattanam. The materials used are clearly discussed in this paper. Mixed (qualitative and quantitative) methodology has been used to find the facts. However most of the learners gave positive responses to the course content and course delivery through e-learning.

Key words: *Language Teaching and Learning, E-learning, Online Course, and Oral Skills,*

1. INTRODUCTION

There are innumerable ways to relate technology with education (Kenning, 2007) Now the entire world can be explored by the gen z generation with fingertips. Web-based learning has gained momentum in the aspect of e-learning in recent days. Numbers of pedagogic approaches have come into existence which could involve technology in the field of education. Online-based learning is one of the examples. As information technology rapidly develops and spreads, there is an increasing body of literature that emphasizes the importance of introducing E-learning to facilitate the studying of English as a foreign/second language (EFL/ESL) depending on country or context (Yang & Chen, 2007; Allam & Elyas, 2016). Presently, e-learning is a concept which is computer-enabled learning usually involves the internet as a medium for learning and teaching English as an additional educational resource. E-learning offers the option to remove the temporal and spatial restrictions that apply in traditional learning contexts (Smith, 2000). Few E-learning programs permit students to practice and learn English to eagerly get the benefits of language resources and can communicate directly with the native English speakers. The students can study English listening verbal communication, reading and written communication skills in authentic contexts (Debski & Gruba, 1999; Yang & Chen, 2007; Al-Qahtani, 2016; Al-Hassan & Shukri, 2017).

Learner –centered learning is considered as one of the best adjustments in the English Language instructional method. This is considered a recent shift that signals a recent development, in which speaking skills in English should provide space to the students to express themselves in speaking. Speaking is considered as one of the important skills to be developed and enhanced as a means of Communication (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). The cutting edge work market requires great command and proficiency of communication skills in English. A learner who can speak fluently can communicate effectively. A learner can memorize the list of words in English, but speaking is very difficult for him. Thorough practice is essential to develop speaking skills.

With respect to an online –based learning approach, the facilitator facilitates the learners by directing them to search for data on the internet. Consequently, the facilitator will not become the major source of knowledge, it's been replaced by technology. Incorporating E-learning into the studying of EFL is not delivering anticipated outcomes (westbrook, 2006). While the successful inclusion of E-Learning for the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign or second Language is measurable, proper assessment methods that capture the perceptions of both students and teachers towards technology use still demand consideration (Debski and Gruba, 1999).

English as a second language is taught in Indian colleges and various organizations. English is a language used for global verbal exchange; subsequently people, who grasp and speak it well can reap the benefits of social and professional advantages (Efrizal, 2012). In a college setup, proficiency in English helps the learners to gain the knowledge of other subjects in a simpler way. Bashir, Azeem and Dogar, 2011 have proposed a few ways of enhancing beginners' speaking capabilities with the help of different strategies of teaching, appropriate usage and learner-centered techniques in teaching and learning English. By use of a teacher-centered approach to teaching and learning, teachers seem to do most of the talking and act as the only source of knowledge to students while students are treated as passive recipients in the learning process (Ning2011). The specified effects have shown negative results and produced incompetent learners of English Language, who would like to enhance their oral capabilities. On the contrary, the learner-centered methods provide enough freedom to the learners in speaking the language. Oral skills can be developed, while giving equal importance to the other skills like listening, reading and writing. So speaking skill is an important skill needed to be developed among Indian undergraduate students' who would like to seek their bright future in corporate fields after their under graduation.

2. Literature Review

Apprehension in communication is one of the biggest worries for learners who consider English as a foreign/secondary language. It is the worry that is related to oral communication.. In learning a foreign/second language, the concept of communication apprehension is used when an individual or a learner feels fear to speak in the target language in front of another person (Amogne & Yigzaw, 2013). A recent research shows that 28 percent of the learners develop apprehension when they are at the primary stage of their learning. Through various courses, the necessities and requirements of English language learners can be considered. Such courses put special emphasis on the spoken communication skills of the students (Lopez, 2011). On the other hand, the learners can also focus on fostering oral skills in the context of English as a foreign/second language. Nevertheless, the apprehension in communication varies from situation to situation and person to person. Due to lack of knowledge in using grammatically correct sentences, knowledge in vocabulary and pronunciation of the target language creates little apprehension in the learner's mind. Most of the learners who cannot speak English confidently regard themselves as low, but they never step back in learning English as a foreign language. They try to bring equal competence with the native speakers by involving themselves in regular conversations. Recent studies have revealed that some techniques and strategies create comfort in developing the oral skills of the learners in the target language. Most of the learners who belong to the south eastern parts of Andhrapradesh are hesitant with regard to pronunciation of words in English for the reason that the native speakers may make fun of them.

Moreover, e-learning offers extraordinary opportunities whilst growing their studying abilities, due to the unrestricted availability of path materials online (Brandl, 2002). On-line data permits students to overcome the confines of textbook based learning, totally gaining knowledge of, through selling providing him/her the access to know-how at any time and from anywhere. Possibilities for taking note of real language additionally abound online. Certainly, Romeo (2008) found the importance of listening to physical activities to recognize relative clauses and audio activities available through online packages. He also reports on proof that suggests that once more syntactically complex clauses are used; beginners regulate their approach of technique to mastering and expertise.

The e-learning mode of interactions is not only simple but also helps the learners to improve their interest and motivation in language learning. The subsequent paragraphs of this paper also discuss the methods used and to analyze the progress of the learners once they are equipped with online material and the instructions followed.

3. Methodology

Inorder to explore the role of E-learning in fostering the oral skills of the learner, who considers English as a foreign language in south eastern parts of Andhra Pradesh, a qualitative approach has been considered. As part of this, small group discussions were used. Qualitative methods are well-established as in depth tools for exploring the perceptions of individuals or group of learners about particular phenomena including E-learning (Creswell, 2009). Based on this statement the study focuses on qualitative approach, involving voluntary participation of learners. Forty two students/learners were selected to achieve the aim. The sample distribution of learners included forty two students and four teachers. The learners were selected and grouped on the basis of gender, proficiency in English and whether they had any previous knowledge in usage of e-content.

Table 1 describes the distribution of the learners. The reason behind exploring various criteria is to show the diversity in group composition which would enrich the knowledge in discussion and the learners come under the boundaries of the selected area.

Table 1 represents the learners according to their gender, e-learning experience and proficiency in English as a foreign language.

S . No	Number of Participants	Gender	e-learning experience	Proficiency in English
1	9	female	low	medium
2	11	male	Medium	low
3	7	Female	medium	high
4	15	Male	Low	low

To collect this data a google form was prepared and circulated to the selected students. The link for that particular form is given under appendix. After the collection of diverse data the learners were asked to take part in an on-line course to improve the oral communication, which consisted of twenty hours of independent study. Under the phase of primary data collection, another google form was created. Data collection was done at regular intervals by tracking various activities scores and performances of the learners, which were recorded and monitored. Data was considered on the basis of the learner's interaction before and after the online course. At the end of the course, a questionnaire was given to the learners to make a note of change in their oral

skills. The google form which was circulated after the completion of course is also included in the appendix.

4. Findings and Discussion

The role of E-learning in fostering the oral skills of undergraduates

E-learning has provided many benefits in learning the English Language Teaching and learning, the study focused on fostering the oral skills. According to the previous data each skill of every language has its importance, but oral skills are subject to considerable limitations in the context of traditional face-to-face English. So the participants choose E-learning as a required platform, through which learners can foster their oral skills in real life situations. As a proof some comments of the learners are shared regarding the usefulness of E-learning, highlighted on oral skills in the paper.

“It is one of the rapid and cost effective method to learn the language skills.”

“A lot of training time is compressed with reference to learners, travel, course materials, and accommodation.”

“Learners can foster their learning capabilities at their individual pace and can apply them at their workplace effectively.”

Through this study the learners have focused on oral skills as one of the important skills of communication by considering E-learning as one of the useful. They find this particular course is beneficial for them to foster the oral skills. They are able to interact with the native speakers of English through chat rooms and social media which is quite a difficult task in traditional teaching methods.

The outcome of this research has proved that the learner is able to be equipped with the oral skills where he/she can utilize them by reducing the apprehensive nature. The mentioned research proves that despite the fact that they took into consideration e-learning allows proactive involvement for English studying and coaching via diverse sorts of interaction, together with on line collaboration and the availability of immediately remarks. Thus powerful collaboration among instructors and undergraduates are key to an powerful coaching and learning process, each on line or off line.

5. CONCLUSION

It appears that every learner and lecturers were focusing a lot of on the attributes of E-learning instead of how it develops their use of EFL and the way it will be integrated into the south eastern part of Andhrapradesh so as to reinforce results. within the current study, it's conjointly noticeable that examination the views of learners and teachers in congestible that the previous appeared more sophisticated than the later concerning such technology. The implication is that teachers would possibly lack the requisite information to pile up the two pedagogies (traditional and E-learning). This implies a transparent got to supply coaching to teachers concerning how to apply such technology to the academic curriculum. The study thus prescribes Hampel and moralist (2005) seminal series of skills, starting from technological to pedagogical, that lecturers may well be inspired to accumulate for effective teaching mistreatment E-learning. this can be supported by decorated (2016), who contended that for users to use E-learning effectively they need skills, equivalent to the power to spot resources for learning, choosing and implementing learning methods, observance personal performance, and effectively applying skills and information to achieve learning objectives. a lot of importantly, Lai, Yeung, and Hu (2016) have argued that teachers got to share strategies with their students about a way to comprehend authentic materials and learn from them. They contend that doing thus can facilitate guide students to develop the abilities and techniques they need to method authentic materials. Herein, the analysis outcomes establish the importance of setting realistic E-learning systems.

The system should also be able to facilitate independent learning. In conclusion, this research is limited in a number of ways. For instance, with a small sample size means that caution must be applied in its application, as findings might not be transferable to a large population.

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Appendices

1. Questionnaire before conducting and after the on-line course

2. Tell me about your family
3. Describe the area where you live?
4. What do you like most about your college?
5. Describe the illness you have had.

2. The course which has been introduced to the students

Week 1

Talking about your job, Daily routines in English, Telephone phrases, Giving personal information in English

Week 2

How to ask questions and learn to talk about a free time

Week 3

Transport vocabulary and polite phrases

Week 4

Vocabulary for clothes, grocery and conversations at various situations

Week 5

How to express about likes and dislikes, food and vacation related vocabulary, few soft skills need to be maintained while speaking to others.

