

Developing Speaking Skills through Group Presentation: A Special Reference to a Nursing College in Bangalore

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Abstract

This paper presents group presentation as one of the activities to improve students' oral proficiency. A speaking module on Group presentation was taught for two weeks to a class of nursing college in Bangalore. The tools for collecting the data were observation method and written feedback from the students. All the participants involved positively and showed much interest towards the activity. Findings of the study revealed that students actually had highly positive about the benefits and usefulness of group presentations as a learning activity. It has revealed that group presentations were beneficial to help students foster their speaking performance. It created more space for the students to speak in English and the usage of mother tongue or other languages has been reduced. Besides that, their stage fear has been minimized.

Key Words: Speaking Skills, Group Presentation, Oral Proficiency

1. Introduction

Speaking Skill or Oral Communication in English is one of the skills that people of this global citizen is expected to have. For many, learning English language means being able to speak and communicate with others. Therefore, speaking occupies an important place in any matter of teaching and learning foreign languages. Most people consider or believe that the ability to speak a language is synonymous with knowing that language as speech is the most basic means of human communication (Lazaraton 103). Furthermore, Nunan also says that "the ability to function in another language is generally characterized in terms of being able to speak that language" (225).

Hence, to teach speaking skill effective methods should be employed to help students improve their speaking ability.

This skill is keenly observed and evaluates in the job market especially for the professionals. The importance of speaking skill is inevitable and is important for career success. Nursing professionals on the other hand, are not exempted from this skill. This paper presents on developing speaking skills through Group Presentation for students of a nursing college in Bangalore.

1.1 Literature Review

1.1.1 Significance of Speaking Skills

According to Bygate, "Speaking is the vehicle par excellence of social solidarity, of

social ranking, of professional advancement and of business. It is also the medium through which much language is learnt, and which for many is particularly conducive for learning. Perhaps, then, the teaching of speaking merits more thought" (1).

Proficiency in each language skill (LSRW) is essential to become a well-rounded communicator, but the ability to speak skillfully provides the speaker with several distinct advantages. It has the *ability to inform, persuade, and direct*- In other words, speaking clearly and confidently can gain the attention of an audience, providing the opportunity for the speaker to make the message known. It can *stand out from the rest*-It is often seen that people are afraid of public speaking. The ability to stand before others and speak effectively is an exceptional quality which can stand out others. It is an added advantage for *career enhancement*- Employers, today, have always valued the ability to speak well. It is a key to opens doors for better opportunities to one's career. Besides that it offers *personal satisfaction*-Speakers who have experienced a well-composed and well-delivered presentation before an audience often find a deep level of satisfaction that is seldom achieved in other forms of communication. This boosts one's confidence and produces a positive outlook (Gerald Gillis, 2013).

1.1.2. Previous Studies

A research conducted by Sursattayawong (2006) depicts the importance of speaking skills among nursing professionals. It was found that nurses had to communicate in English with the patients, doctors and

colleagues in English who are not of their same mother tongue at Rajavithi Hospital, Thailand. The study also depicts that although, the nurses were communicating in English they had several problems such as grammatical errors, difficulty in self – expression, not being able to use the right words, inappropriate use of intonation, stress, mispronunciation and lack of self – confidence.

Badrov T. and Ivana Jurković (2017) also conducted a research to identify and understand the attitude towards the importance of communication skills in English Language (speaking) among the nursing students in Croatia. The results show that nursing students are generally aware of the importance of practical use of communication skills in English within the clinical setting and further proposed the need of implementing this course in the nursing curriculum at higher education institutions.

It is said that every nurse is not a born communicator. The art of speaking and making things feasible to reach the patient has to be learned (The Importance of Effective Speaking in Nursing). Wongsuwana (2006) also asserts that speaking skills can be trained and it doesn't depend on the talent.

2. Some Methods for Developing Speaking Skills

Kayi in her article presents several methods to promote speaking skills. Some of them are listed below (Kayi, 2006):

Role-Play: It is one of the methods to develop speaking skills. In this activity, the

teacher introduces and guides the learners with their roles such as who they are and what they think or feel. Students pretend they are in various situations and contexts and enact their roles. This leads to a very interactive and vibrant atmosphere of learning.

Information Gap: In this activity, students work in pairs. One student will have the information that other partner does not have and the partners will share their information. Information gap activities serve many purposes such as solving a problem or collecting information. Here, each partner plays an important role since the task cannot be completed if the partners do not provide the information the others need. These activities are effective because everyone gets the opportunity to speak in the target language.

Brainstorming: On a given topic, students can produce ideas in a limited time. Depending on the context, either individual or group brainstorming is effective where learners generate their ideas quickly and freely. One of the good characteristics of brainstorming is that the students are not criticized for their ideas so they will be open to sharing new ideas. This is how learners get opportunity to speak in class.

Story Telling: Students can tell a tale or story they heard from somebody beforehand, or they may create their own stories to tell their classmates. Story telling enhances creative thinking. It also helps students express ideas in the format of beginning, development, and ending, including the characters and setting of the story. This may include riddles or jokes. In this way, not only will the teacher address students'

speaking ability, but also get the attention of the class.

Interviews: Students can conduct interviews on selected topics with various people. The teacher may provide a rubric to students so that they know what type of questions they can ask and in what way. However, students should prepare their own interview questions. Conducting interviews with people gives students a chance to practice their speaking ability not only in class but also outside and helps them becoming socialized. Besides that, students can interview each other and "introduce" his or her partner to the class.

Reporting: In this activity, students are asked to read a newspaper or magazine. It should be assigned before coming to class. And in class, they report to their classmates what they find as the most interesting news. It could be the news of the day. Students can also talk about if they have experienced anything worth telling their friends in their daily lives, which may include an anecdote.

Picture Describing: Making use of pictures in a speaking activity is to give students just one picture and having them describe what it is in the picture. This may include graphs or charts or tables. For this activity students can form groups and each group is given a different picture. Students discuss the picture with their groups then a spokesperson for each group describes the picture to the whole class. This activity fosters the creativity and imagination of the learners as well as their public speaking skills.

3. The Background of the Sample

The samples taken for the study were mostly from West Bengal. They had been from non-

English environment and schools. Initially, it was found that even in class they would communicate in Bengali. There was no or very less opportunity to speak in English in such a classroom context.

3.1 Methodology

- The researcher as a teacher had taken classes for a group of nursing students for two weeks on speaking module
- Group Presentation as a strategy and method was employed on the subjects to develop speaking skills (Students were not allowed to speak any other languages except English language throughout the module)
- Observation and written feedback were the tools to collect the data

4. What is a Group Presentation?

Group Presentation basically happens when a group of people or students (size may differ) prepare on a topic/agenda and present before an audience. In the context of classroom, there are substantial benefits to assigning presentations in groups. It encourages teamwork and help students get feedback from each other throughout the process of developing the presentation. Certain standards should be adhered so that everyone is aware what to expect (*How to Use and Evaluate Student Speaking*, 1). For instance, how long is each member expected to speak? How is the subject matter divided? What are the criteria while presenting orally (audibility, Grammar, Speech clarity, body language, Teamwork)?

Group Presentation is important as learners have to give presentations in real life, to speak before others which are excellent

preparation for real life speaking (Thornbury 94).

5. Intervention

Step 1: The class was divided into five groups consisting of 8 to 10 students

Step 2: Each group was allotted with one topic

Step 3: Each group was asked to discuss for 15 minutes and come up with some points

Step 4: All the groups presented for 12 -15 minutes

Step 5: Other groups remained as audience and asked questions (teacher would select one group and assigned the group to pose questions)

Step 6: Feedback by the teacher-researcher after their presentations

6. Findings/Outcomes

The findings or the outcomes obtained from observation and feedback form are summarized below:

- It created English Speaking environment- Students had more opportunities to speak and discuss in English during the sessions. It was observed that although the students were at different levels, they could support and learn from each other. More importantly, it was beneficial for practicing speaking in English.
- They have come out of their inhibitions and the stage fear has been reduced- At their initial presentations, their body language would reveal their stage fear and lack of confidence. However, there was a gradual progress in their body language as they could overcome the

spirit of inhibitions which led to increase their confidence level.

- They have developed the art of questioning and answering in English. Questioning and answering allows them to have a good and long conversation. Conversation can progress further if only we learn to ask question. In classroom, the students became more interactive since after every presentation there would be some time for QnA. They participated actively by asking several questions which gave opportunity for the presenters to speak while answering. It was a win-win approach.
- They have been motivated to speak/converse in English with their classmates more than before- It has been revealed that students started to communicate more in English with their classmates even outside the classroom, especially during breaks. If they continue the same, it will help them to become better at speaking.

7. Students' Feedback (Some Sample)

Some of the feedback samples taken from the students are listed:

Student 1:

"I think my English speaking skills have improved because of the group presentation. I got chance to speak in English with my friends. It will be very helpful for my future career."

Student 2:

"Group presentation helped me to practice my English speaking. It is very interesting activity."

"I have started to speak more in English. I like English now."

Student 3:

"I can ask questions in English to other teachers. I am confident now."

Student 4:

"The discussion time was very helpful because we discussed in English. I want more time for the activity. It is very interesting."

Student 5:

"I am good at English but my biggest problem was stage fear. But through this group presentation, my stage fear is gone. I wish to have such activities more in class."

8. Significance of the Research

The findings of this study will redound to the benefits of the society considering that speaking skill plays a vital role especially for the nursing professionals. The greater demand for the nursing graduates would be when they are good at speaking besides their medical knowledge. The employability will be increased getting placed in international and global organizations. Hence, it is essential that nursing colleges in India should give importance to English Language and Communication particularly the speaking skills.

9. Conclusion

Group Presentation was a relevant vehicle to improve the speaking skills of the research participants. It was observed that the students were keen towards the activity and participated actively in class. There has been some improvement in their speaking proficiency. It can be concluded that activities like Group Presentation can be

implemented to teach speaking. It will help the class to be more vibrant and agile, at the

same time meeting the objectives of the course.

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APPENDIX

Sample topics for Group Presentations:

- Is attendance compulsory in college?
- Educational system in India
- Impact of Social Media
- Mobile phone should be banned in schools
- Is Money everything?
- Steps to become successful
- Women Leadership
- Corruption in India