Sample Suggested Activities for Effective Teaching Speaking Skill Utilizing Digital Devices

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to develop communication skills for learners and enable them to express their abilities of speaking in a natural way. Most students are afraid of speaking in front of others because of lack of practice and opportunity to use English language. So the teachers need to focus attention on the prevention of shyness. To be effective teaching speaking skills and reduce the students' foreign language speaking anxiety, teachers need to create a warm, easygoing and comfortable situation in the classrooms and practice their skills using technology aids (multimedia) to capture their attention and to enhance their skills easily. Utilizing different types of digital devices in teaching allows students to communicate and actually to apply in an active way. Technology is a platform for the students to express their creative opinions energetically. Hence, it is hoped to fulfill the needs of learners to give practice effectively using digital aids.

Keywords: Digital aids, communication, speaking practice, activities.

1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking is an essential tool for communicating and teaching speaking is a very important part of foreign language learning. The ability to communicate in a second language clearly and efficiently contributes to the success of the student in school and later in every phase of life. Therefore, it is essential that language teachers need to pay great attention to teaching speaking. This paper targets on under graduate level. Nowadays various innovative technologies are being introduced to teach speaking skill in the classroom. Technological tools or digital devices help students improve language skills such as speaking skill. Computers, Internet, videos, projector, or audiovisual aids are the best tools for teaching and learning English speaking and for reducing the students' anxiety in speaking activities. This communicative teaching approach is based on active learning principles and is designed to create effective learning environment to reduce students' anxiety. So the creative specific teaching method has been facilitated by the use of electronic technology. The aims of utilizing digital devices as a

supplement in teaching are to create a lively situation in the classroom, to grab the students' attention with full involvement in giving practices, to remove the students' fear of public speaking. By this ways, the students can be engaged in meaningful and authentic language use for learning to take place.

1.1 Communicative Language Teaching Approach

Communicative language teaching approach (CLT) was developed in the 1970s and it has controlled approaches to language teaching today. According to Jack C. Richards (2006), CLT produced an excited interest or eagerness when it was introduced as a new approach to language teaching in the 1970s and 1980s. CLT approach provided a rethinking classroom teaching methodology. It was developed to help the learners to communicate effectively in the target language. Language learning through the process of communicating in the classroom supplies a better opportunity for learning than through a grammar-based approach. Communicative language teaching approach emphasizes meaningful communication. In other words, it helps the learners know how to use the language for different purposes.

2. GOALS AND TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING SPEAKING

The goal of teaching speaking skills is to acquire the communicative efficiency. In order to achieve this, teachers can use a balanced activity approach that combines language input, structured output, and communicative output.

Language input comes in the form of teacher talk, listening activities, reading passages, and the language heard and read outside of class. It gives the students producing language themselves. In structured output, students may have options for responses, but all of the options require them to use the specific structure that the teacher has just introduced. In communicative output, the students may use the language that the instructor has just presented, but they also may draw on any other vocabulary, grammar, and communication strategies that they know.

Students often think that the ability to speak a language is the product of language learning, but speaking is also a crucial part of the language learning process. Efficient teachers teach students speaking strategies using minimal responses, recognizing scripts, by the help of digital devices. Applying the digital aids such as Internet, videos, TV, and projector, the teachers can help students learn to speak effectively. As utilizing one of digital tools, video can be a stimulating English language learning tool especially in situation where a native speaker model is unavailable. Other video platforms like You Tube are a great source for teaching and practising. So videos help the learners improve their speaking and stimulate discussion.

By using minimal responses, the students who lack confidence to participate successfully in speaking activities often listen in silence while the other students talk. So minimal responses enable a student to focus attention on what the other participant is saying without having a response. One way to encourage such students to begin to participate is to help them use in different types of conversation.

In recognizing scripts, some communication situations such as greeting, introductions, compliments and other functions are influenced by social and cultural norms as scripts. So the transactional conversations can be done in activities or in repetition of an activity to improve skill giving practices by the use of audiovisual aids. Through activities, teachers can give students practice in managing and changing the language for various situations.

2.1 Digital Devices and Teaching ELT Speaking

Using digital devices (computers, projectors, and televisions, DVD players) in traditional ELT classes has exposed to be a powerful teaching medium (Hartsell, T & Yuen, S. 2006) and has proved to be successful technological medium to grab the students attention and motivation to learn, and be able to create authentic environment. Technological innovations are effective for teaching and learning English. Language teachers from University of Computer Studies, Yangon (UCSY), use incorporating multimedia with online or downloadable videos as a powerful tool for practising and developing speaking fluency. To be an effective teaching and learning speaking class, the teachers use language labs for video watching, online English exercises, listening practice and powerpoint presentation by projector. Multimedia video material develops the students' understanding of English-specific thinking way, of correct pronunciation and of formulaic expressions. Moreover, the video can be stopped, reversed, paused, and re-started according to the students' need for a more practical level. According to new learning and teaching approaches by the use of digital aids, English language teachers should encourage their students to use technologies during speaking classes using available technique such as mobile phones, computers, projectors, and televisions for their effective speaking or presentation.

3. THE ROLE OF CLASSROOM INTERACTION

The most common view of the role of classroom interaction in the profession currently is the somewhat narrowly 'methodological' one that proposes that classroom interaction contributes to language development simply by providing target language practice opportunities. Through carefully designed classroom interaction activities involving various

forms of more or less realistic practice, students can become skilled at actually doing the things they have been taught. Being able to interact in a language is essential. Therefore, language teachers should provide students with opportunities for meaningful communicative behavior about relevant topics by using learner-learner interaction as the key to teaching language for communication. Communication in the classroom is embedded in the meaning-focused activity. Teachers require to make their instruction carefully to the needs of learners and to teach them how to listen to others, how to talk with others, and how to negotiate in shared opinions. Negotiation can be expected to be identified as a relevant target language skill for the students to develop in the classroom. So the key factor in foreign language development is the opportunity given to learners to speak in the language promoting interaction.

3.1 Reducing Fear of Public Speaking or Communication Apprehension

Fear of public speaking is a form of anxiety which can seriously affect much or all of a student's oral communication, social skill and self-esteem. Some students show a more serious problem when they have a chance to give public speeches. Their problems can be defined as speech anxiety or communication apprehension. Communication apprehension is frequently found in the classrooms. There are at least two reasons to know about communication apprehension. The first one is the difference between the normal fear most people feel before they give a speech and high communication apprehension. The second reason is to give special treatment to people who are highly apprehensive. Nearly all of the students in the public speaking class feel worry when they are encouraged to give the speeches. Many ELT teachers are getting more difficult to teach anxious students successfully. Anxiety leads to poor understanding, poor results and a loss of self-confidence. Teaching oral communication in the foreign language, freely and correctly, is more difficult and more demanding. So the teachers need to create a suitable classroom atmosphere to give treatment or to reduce the anxiety of the students. Today, Digital Age, their anxieties can be treated using electronic teaching aids such as Internet, videos or audiovisuals to get their attention, to persuade their participating in activities and to give practice of listening and speaking in order to learn to do well.

English language teachers from the University of Computer Studies, Yangon, use the language labs appropriately to be effective practices for the students, to enhance the students' accurate production of stressed syllables in English words, and to create the authentic situations for the students' active participation in activities. According to technological tools in effective teaching and learning process, teachers can provide students overcome the anxiety and can also give students strategies and phrases to use for clarification and comprehension check. Teachers

can create an authentic environment within the classroom and motivate students to participate in interactive activities to get speaking practice and to prevent their shyness gradually. By this way, students will have confidence in their ability to manage the various communication situations that they may encounter outside the classroom.

3.2 Creating Activities to Enhance Speaking Skill

According to the study of under graduate students from the University of Computer Studies, Yangon, ELT teachers create activities for students' speaking practice and they motivate the shy or quiet students to participate in activities. At first, teachers do not give difficult activities. These students are fearful of difficult activities because of lack confidence. So, teachers start with the relevant topic to the students' level and then they raise the level of complexity step-by-step. By this way, they get confidence gradually and they participate in group activities, pair work, and individual presentation and then as the highest level they participate in speaking contest of national level.

Figure 3.1 Practising with video lessons

Figure 3.2 Group discussion before performance activity

Figure. 3.3 Group discussion in front of the class

Figure 3.4 Individual presentations in the class

Figure 3.5 Focusing on video lessons in Language Lab

Figure 3.6 Drama Contest of National Level

Sample Activity 1

Ask each pair of the students for this activity after watching video lessons. Let student A and student B. Students A and B are old friends. They see each other again after four years. Student A has an important meeting and can't talk long. Practice using any words or expressions appropriate to express the functions given.

Student A	Student B
1.*greets B, expresses surprise*	1. *returns greeting and gestures*
Hi, Betty! Haven't seen you in ages!	Oh, hi! It has been a long while!
2.*asks about B's family*	2. *answers questions, asks about A's job*
How's your family?	John is fine and the kids are doing well in school. I hear you're working for IT company.
3.*replies to B's question, precloses*	3. *replies to preclosing, gives closing*
Yes, I really like it a lot. In fact, I've got to go to work now.	It's great seeing you. Bye!
4.*replies to closing*	
Bye!	

Sample Activity 2

Teachers can give speaking practice to each student by showing pictures by projector in the class and let each student make dialogues. Students are motivated to speak using them.
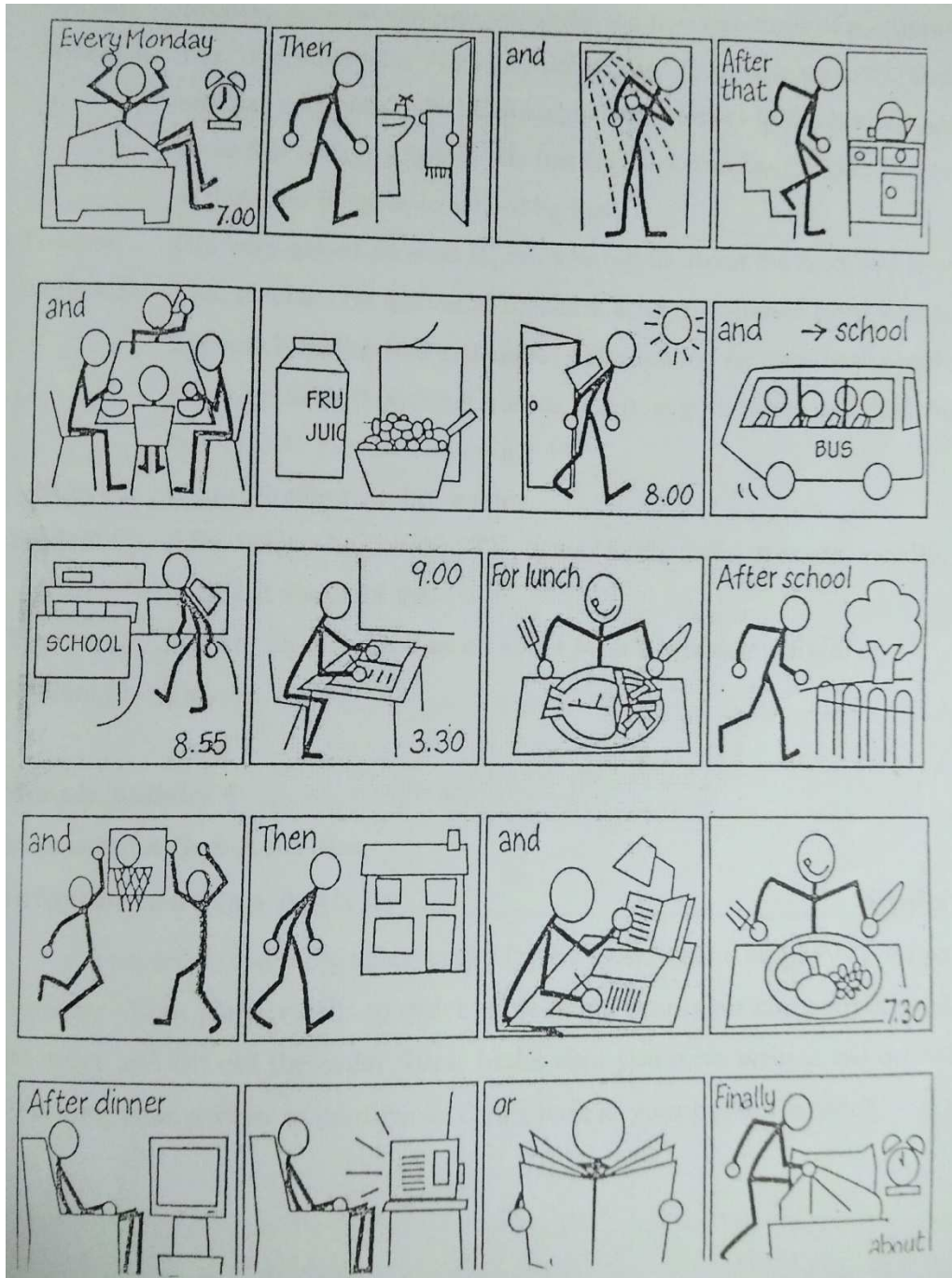
Figure 3.7 John's Monday Activities

Source: Paul Seligson, 1997 Helping Students to Speak

Teacher: Look at these pictures and let's make dialogues. You can describe what you see on the pictures. It's about John's regular activities on Mondays.

Students: Yes, teacher.

Teacher: Students, what can you say about each row of pictures?

Students: Yes, teacher. We can do.

4. SUGGESTIONS FOR ELT TEACHERS IN TEACHING SPEAKING

There are some suggestions for English language teachers for teaching oral language and for creating active situations.

- Provide maximum opportunity for students to speak the target language by providing a rich environment that contains collaborative work, authentic materials and tasks, and providing technological facilities to create as a real situation.
- Try to involve each student in every speaking activity.
- Show positive signs when commenting on a student's response.
- Do not correct students' pronunciation mistakes very often while they are speaking.
- Circulate around the classroom to ensure that students are on the right track and see whether they need the teacher's help while they work in groups or pairs.
- Provide the vocabulary beforehand that students need in speaking activities.

Findings

According to this study, before using multimedia, most of the students are found to have lack of confidence and they show little interest in interactive activities. After using multimedia instructional materials, most students' anxieties and errors are decreased. So the incorporation of multimedia in traditional class has reduced the number of anxious students. This paper has presented the quality of learning outcome of under graduate students of UCSY. Through the semesters in academic years, teachers have given practices to the students with multimedia instruction, such as video watching, online English lessons and exercises, Youtube video presentations, and PowerPoint presentation using TV, DVD, computer and projector to raise the quality of learning outcome and to reduce the number of anxious students. As the result, some anxious students become active participants in any activities and some students eager to participate in any English speaking contests or any other conversational situations. So the results of the consequence, using digital devices in communicative teaching reduce the number of anxious students in each class.

Evaluation Form of Language Classroom Anxiety Scale after using Digital Devices

no.	Question Items	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
1.	I think computers, DVD, Youtube, Internet, PowerPoint Presentation are good to learn English.			
2.	Video in English class encourage me to learn English.			

3.	I am afraid of making mistakes in speaking.			
4.	I am afraid of taking more English speaking classes.			
5.	I feel upset in English speaking class.			
6.	I am afraid that the other students laugh at me when I speak.			
7.	It embarrasses me to participate as a volunteer in English class.			
8.	I wish to enjoy in any activities in classes.			
9.	I think English speaking is difficult for me.			
10.	I feel confident to participate in speaking contests.			

According to evaluation, we found that 75% of the development of participants in activities and development of speaking skills based on the effect of digital devices through the semesters in academic year 2017-2018. The study included 50 students chosen at random from fourth year students, University of Computer Studies, Yangon, Myanmar. After using electronic devices, the numbers of anxious students reduced vividly according to evaluation form.

Problems

It was found that the students faced difficult situations in their speaking skills because of interference of the mother tongue in foreign language learning. At first, they showed shyness in the oral activities and they did not ask any question when they did not understand anything during the class.

Solutions

Teachers create a warm, easygoing and comfortable situation in the classroom. After teaching with technology aids, the teachers lead the activities for a drill and motivate to speak the students to speak and give practices to get confidence. By this way, we can reduce the number of anxious students and raise the quality of their learning outcome step by step.

5. CONCLUSION

According to the incorporation of digital aids in traditional teaching and learning environments, the teachers can create active classroom as much more interesting place for the students in order to foster and motivate them to join in group activities, individual presentation, and to participate in national English speaking contests (impromptu talk, panel discussion or debate). Technology innovation moves away teacher-based authority to more applied learning that requires students to become more creative and critical thinkers. Consequently, it can be concluded that teaching with digital aids was found to be effective in developing speaking fluency skills and in reducing anxiety among the students, and encouraging and motivating them to use the language orally. English language teachers from the University of Computer Studies, Yangon, use the language labs appropriately to be effective practices, to enhance the students' accurate production of stressed syllables in English words, and to create the authentic situations for the students' active participation in activities. Thus, it is also concluded that creating activities with the incorporation of digital devices within the traditional class environment help the students reduce their speaking anxiety, develop speaking skills, and create real life situations. Moreover, learning is effective in developing the students' speaking fluency skills through academic year.

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