



STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP EXTEMPORE SKILLS AMONG ESL STUDENTS: AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT Conveying ideas effectively is an uphill task for the upcoming professional students. Lack of effective communication skills especially oral presentation skills for the students studying engineering and technology is pervaded in many regions. These skills are essential and pre-requisite for professional students to be successful in any professional event. The candidate's performance is assessed in various events such as group discussions, interviews based on the presentation skills aspect as one of the major parameters. The prospective candidate's performance is being judged in career quest. Hence it is essential for the ESL students to acquire effective extempore skills to excel in their attempts.

KEYWORDS : ESL students, extempore skills, Learner's opinions, Class room interactions, Procedure etc.

Introduction

Today's neck deep of competitive world, proficiency in effective communicative skills require in addition to academic excellence. The ESL learners need acquisition training, whose back drop is L1 medium and those from vernacular medium need constant training and exposure in the skills. It is an emerging time to keep special focus and concentration to give big proportion for career development training for the upcoming technocrats in the domain of effective oral presentation- prepared and extempore skills.

Coming to socio-cultural aspect, it is every day experience for our young learners to use effective communication pattern where ever they go even other than class room environment. Social measuring on students' interaction are always challenging and comparing with others among the professional academic learning. In the context of attending a seminar, participating in a group discussion event, facing an interview, presentation event (PPT, poster presentation etc.) are different from interactive sessions such as formal interactions with industry officials, bank employees and project heads etc.

Relevance

Based on the perceptions and research observations it is found that effectively conveying ideas especially the oratorical and extempore skills among engineering students with regional medium background due to lack training and exposure. In order to enable the ESL learners' proficient, prominent place should be given for communication activities in the areas of LSRW with the focus on oral presentation skills. As a faculty member for engineering students, the author experienced with communication problems of many students who especially hailed from different regions of both rural as well as urban areas. It is observed that the students are quiet enthusiastic to learn and project, if provided opportunities and ambience. Be it a group discussion, be it an interview, be it a debate or any related activity, the judging parameter is undoubtedly effective presentation skills in the desired format to inculcate enthusiasm and zeal for acquiring effective communication skills.

Among the utmost required skills, extempore skills-oral presentation regularly needs practice not only to excel in academic activities but also career and socio-cultural perspectives. In one of the mock presentation events conducted recently, students are given a feel free session to share their event experiences. In course of conversation, some common opinions have been extracted from learners regarding their hesitation and anxiety towards extempore skills.

- S1- I want to speak fluently but I am unable to do it because I am not groping with thoughts.
- S2- There are some clear thoughts in my mind. I could not be able to express them due to short of words.
- S3- I am totally tongue tied. I am at loss of words. I could not look at audience due to shyness and apprehension.
- S4- Don't know exactly how to begin my conversation. But I would love to speak like an extempore.
- S5- I am with fear. My feet are trembling and with sweating forehead I could not open my mouth. I am totally precipitated.

Communication apprehension due to anxiety has been envisaged by large number of learners. It is always a challenge for ESL teachers to bring the light in the lives of learners by implementing practical and effective methodologies to develop prospective communication skills encouraging them towards industry ready climate.

In fact time bounded teaching instruction; prepared set of curriculum pattern may not permit the teachers to take advance initiatives. But to the large interest of priorities it is a need inevitable to organize self-driven events for better prospects of learners. By and large, the author self motivated, despite all the reasons, chose to investigate the important aspect of oral presentation prepared and extempore skills with detailed observations in the present context of ESL learners especially with the back drop of engineering first year study.

Beginning of the study

"According to Collins dictionary "the set of techniques and skills required successfully to present oral information to others."

"The presentation is a means of communicating ideas, thoughts, experiences, knowledge and information effectively to a group of interested listeners. These are generally made to inform or persuade group of people about a topic."

Objectives

Extempore is in the form of oral communication (spoken format). It is a two-way communication process modeled by the formal and structured presentation of information with effective use of visual aids. It is goal-oriented and certainly purposeful.

1. It is basically a formal situation
2. Interactive-involvement of speaker as well as listeners
3. Listener's perspective-audience oriented
4. Effective visual aids presentation
5. Spontaneous-extempore presentation

Significance

Oral presentation-extempore skills is a purposeful event focuses on a specific formal event in any form either a seminar, work shop, conference and product launch etc. professionals belong to divergent fields from science, technology and management deliver oral project reports or present project profiles. So, in every day professional life, the presentation skills play a major key role to meet the selected objective/goal. Largely, opinion making, negotiation, decision making are based on effective presentation skills. Hence the ESL students irrespective of any professional stream need to enhance their oral presentation prepared and extempore skills as an immediate requirement.

Learning

Learning can be taken in any form depending upon the teaching strategies of prospective teaching/Learning methodologies because a good presentation can do miracles such as getting an employment offer or a big business deal or project which aspirant had been long waiting for.

Procedure

Effective oral presentation-prepared and extempore skills are found to be audience perspective. Interactive communication need to be geared up as listener's oriented aspect. To be effective and successful the presenter need to have certainly the following objects as strategic.

1. **Plan** : Firstly plan or select your topic for presentation. Collect and organize all required materials in systematic manner.
2. **Set objectives** : Fix set objectives of your presentation event. The objectives and aims of the presentation should be relevant of the topic chosen. Reliability is important.
3. **Structure** : Prepare your ideas according to design of the topic. Order your thoughts structurally to meet the objectives of your topic. Keep audience in your mind.
4. **Chronological method** : Good and effective opening is always a welcoming note. The events should be desired to organize in systematic and sequential order. This brings attractions to your presentation.
5. **Focus on audience** : Think about audience for a while. You must have a clear idea or understanding about the audience assemble in front of you. Try to reach out them with smart approach by knowing their interests and expectations. Don't forget to address them politely.
6. **Split structure (Sub sections)** : It is very essential to divide your main topic into many sub topics. All possible breakups are to be made to present the topic convenient for verbal communication. Presentation should be precise and reinforced. No round about matters. Make it effective and straight forward.
7. **Question method** : Remember the aim of the presentation is to acknowledge the exact purpose of the concerned topic. It is a pre requisite for the presenter to split the topic according to question and answer method of narration. This can be done to large extent possible to make the session easy going for smooth understanding of the average audience. Precious solutions are drawn in the events when suitable questions encouraged from learned audience.
8. **Stages (Levels)** : Make your entire presentation into three brief levels. The first level should be beginning of the presentation. Second level is narration with all relevant materials with suitable techniques required for the event such as ppts, exhibits, slides, handouts and recorded video clips –audio-visual aids. Make your presentations enriched with all useful materials and techniques and gradually end with the note of conclusion.
9. **Conclusion** : This is a very important stage of your presentation. To conclude you must make up your mind with brief sum up what you have done before concluding. Recap the most important points in nut shell and welcome queries from the audience and suggest all possible methods, approaches or solutions of the topic concerned.

Speaking strategies

Depends on the nature of presentation, the speaker may follow the following speech techniques to make presentation successful.

- Repeat the main points of the topic
- Draw picture (power point presentation)
- Narrative style
- Friendly voice
- Pleasant posture
- Balance mood
- Plain speech
- Jokes
- Relax

Conclusion

To conclude, it is the fact that the learners from the beginning should be made the part of the language labs of their respective study. Active participation in oral presentation events eventually provides chances for them to be adept in prepared and extempore skills. What they just need to do is to keep their mind and heart in what they are learning. And it is also require learning with passion and dedication thus paves the way towards perfection. As the ladder, oral presentation-prepared and extempore skills are stepping stones for effective communication skills.

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