Animated Stories for Enhancing Speaking Skills

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Speaking – a Natural Skill

Speaking is a natural skill and considered as the heart of a language. Language is primarily a speech. It is the most used aspect of any language. Speech is biologically pertinent behaviour of human beings. It is true that babies spontaneously babble, and they later imitate the sounds of the language they hear around them. Even, the totally deaf babies babble initially and then only fall silent. It is true that the human vocal track has become automatically adapted to facilitate speech.

Functions of Speaking Skill

Speaking can reinforce the learning of new vocabulary, grammar or functional language. Speaking activities give students the chance to use the new language that they are learning. It gives them the chance to experiment with the language they already know. There is a need to use lots of interesting ways to motivate students to learn and improve. The teachers teach many new words and tell them how the language is organized. But the teachers must also give the opportunity to use and practice the language they have learnt. They should provide the students with lively situation and giving students a chance to participate in the class. Student should also involve in variety of activities.

In some classrooms speaking means that the students repeat sentences or dialogue or chant English words. Repetition is not the only useful way of practicing new language. In real life, we do not repeat what others say, we make our own sentences and dialogues. It is important for learners to practice the language, they are learning in situations which are similar to life outside the classroom. They need to practice the real communication. Teachers need to create an encouraging environment where students can express themselves and make themselves understand even if they commit mistakes.

Problems in Acquiring Speaking Skill

There are many problems in acquiring the speaking skill among students. Some of them are given below:

- Environmental factors
- Lack of listening
- Lack of practice
- Influence of mother tongue
- Loss of self-confidence
- Lack of infrastructure facilities
- Lack of motivation

Speaking Skill in Indian Curriculum

Speaking skill is not given importance in the evaluation system in India. But, the educators have been using some methodologies to develop the speaking skill of the students.
They are:
- Seminars

- Group discussions
- Debates
- Elocution
- Language lab
- Language software
- Pronunciation software
- Online programme

Other Methods to Improve Speaking Skill

Likewise, in this modern era, so many new approaches and methods have been introduced to improve speaking skill. All the new methods are learner centered. We should access the learners need and their interest before using any methodology. Now-a-days children are attracted towards visual media. They are seeking for the variety to learn a language without much effort. So we can make them learn a language interestingly through animation. Students have already familiar with vocabulary and they have certain related structures in their mind. But they are not given opportunities to use in communication. So it is the duty of the teacher to motivate the students to speak the language without any difficulties.

Use of Animation

Animation is an entertaining and a motivating tool for the students to interact in English. It creates an impact in their mind and also gives confidence for the learners. By seeing visually, they can easily comprehend and retain that through their own words.In order to develop the speaking skill, the researcher has given some animated activities in the class room.

Animating something means giving life to it. The easiest way to make something look alive is to make it move. However, it is very difficult to make artificial objects look lively just by making them move, because the motion of an object is very complex and difficult to model. An animation system is a piece of software that makes the process of making an animation much easier. The uses of animation are

- Through animation, we can attract the attention of the students.
- It creates the positive attitude and confidence to speak in English.
- Its uniqueness appeal to the young people.
- It helps in comprehension and retention of concepts in memory.
- It leads to interpretation.
- It is a fascinating activity for language learners.
- It is also used for educational purposes- animation has a place in learning and instructional applications as well.
- The visual symbols are clearer, more concrete and less ambiguous.
- It increases critical mindedness of the students.
- It can help the students to acquire the new skills.
- Repetition is possible.
- It is powerful tool to learn a language.

- It helps to overcome the negative preconception of language.
- It develops creativity and presence of mind. It is a multimodal nature of communication.

Communicating Ideas Effectively

One of the most difficult aspects of teaching is communicating ideas effectively. When this becomes too difficult using the classical teaching tools, animation can be used to convey information. From its nature, an animation sequence contains much more information than a single image or a page. Animation can be pleasing to eye, and it is also a perfect tool for learning. It is the only way to see and understand things that cannot be seen otherwise. Visualization is the key to understanding and animation is going to be a huge part of it.

Motivating Learning

Learning a foreign language is a kind of understanding. If they understand, they can speak easily. Likewise, here the animation acts as one of the motivating materials to comprehend the ideas. When we show the animated picture, they can comprehend and speak in English. It also makes them to speak foreign language confidently. If we ask the students to speak about the subject, they will be having some hesitation to speak. But if we ask them to speak about their own interest like cinema, they will be comfortable in speaking. We should go in their interest to make them to speak in English. The animated activities are powerful teaching device to develop the speaking skill of the students.

Animated Activities to Develop Speaking Skill

The researcher has given four animated activities to develop the speaking skill. The speaking skill is not an isolated skill. We have to acquire the language skills in an integrated manner. Here all the activities deal with the speaking skill but with the help of other language skills.

- **Narrate the Story -** The teacher gives the text of the story and asks the students to read. She helps the students to comprehend the story. She asks some questions related to the story. She plays the animated version of the same story. The teacher asks the students to narrate the story in English.

  Outcome- By visualizing the whole story, they are comfortable in comprehending the story. They fluently narrated the story. They tried to use the words and sentences which they have got from the story. In this way, they developed the language elements and they learnt how to use the language.

- **Role Play-**The teacher played the animated story in the class without dialogues. The students are asked to watch that story. The teacher asks few questions to find whether they have understood the story. Then again, she played the same story. The teacher divides the class into group and asks them to discuss and write the dialogues for the animated story. She asks the students to enact the same story into a play.

  Outcome- this activity is effective in making the students to speak in English. She motivated the students to write the dialogues. By seeing their own dialogues, they felt comfortable in enacting it as a play. It kindled their creativity.

  - **Guess the Climax**-The teacher plays the animated story with dialogues. The students are asked to listen to the story. The end of the story is not given. The teacher gives some examples to write the ending of the story. She gives some clues for the students. The teacher asks the students to write the ending of the story individually.

Outcome- this activity developed the creativity and enhanced the critical thinking of the students. It is easy for the students to comprehend the story. They have given different endings to the story. They have used their imagination to give the ending. They narrated their story effectively. Through this activity, they get the confidence to speak fluently in English.

- **Generate a Story** - The animated clipping is shown to the students. In that clipping, there is a situation for the story. Some related words are given. The teacher asks the students to watch that clipping keenly. She asks the students to generate the story with the help of the animated clipping. The students are asked to use those words in the story. The teacher asks the students to narrate the story.

Outcome- the students actively participated in the activity. By seeing the animated clipping, the students wrote different stories on their own creative way. They learnt new words and also learn how to use the words in sentences. They developed the writing skill as well. They narrated the story in English. As it is their own story, they felt comfortable to narrate it. In this way, they developed their speaking skill.

Past Practices

In the past the speaking skills was never taught as a separate skill. Most of us believed that it develops when a learner is immersed in an environment. In this way they can develop the speaking skills. But this is not possible for all the students. Now, it can be improved through technology. Speaking skills is extremely important. It also does wonders for enhancing self- esteem and for building confidence among the speakers.

In the world of globalization, English has increasingly become the medium in every domain of communication, both in local and global contexts. As a result, the demand for speakers using English effectively has increased. The speaking skill can also be developed through animation. Stories are there forever. Using stories for language learning is not something new. They offer an ideal way of introducing students to language learning. With technology, storytelling has become a fascinating activity for language learners. It offers a wide range of uses of a particular story for various purposes, integrated to make language learning easier for the students.

Supporting Material

The animated story acts as a supporting material for the students. The students can learn and listen to the same at any number of times. It kindles the interest of the story. The students engage themselves actively in these activities of learning with the help of technology. A game like sort of activity cheers them up incessantly to continue the activity with goals defined.

We hate bitter taste. But most of the time it will be good for health. Though we are aware of it, we show aversion towards it. But tasting the bitterness is not that much easy. If we give the same bitterness in a sweet manner, the children will accept it. In the same way, the speaking is one of the important as well as difficult skills to learn. But it can easily be acquired unconsciously. Here the activities were framed according to the students' interest. Nowadays, the students are interested in seeing moving pictures. If we cater their interest, they will learn the language.

All the speaking activities were designed like games. Students acquire the speaking skill unknowingly. All the activities include animated stories and pictures. These activities were conducted in Bharathiar University Arts and Science College, Modakurichi for the first year English Literature students. The aim of the activity was achieved to a greater extent. The students enacted the animated story as a play. Most of the students delivered the dialogues fluently even though few struggled a lot. They did

not have much problem in enacting the play, as the dialogues were generated by them. Some of the students did not have the confidence, they read from the paper. After completing the game, they came to know that they are capable of speaking and writing in English. The limitation of the activity is, the students have to keenly observe   the story otherwise they cannot write the dialogues. Through this activity, they have acquired the speaking skill at least for the purpose.

The students saw the animated story enthusiastically. They thought creatively and gave innovative ending to the same story. They also had given different ending to the same story. They felt happy to narrate their story to their fellow friends. Though they had committed mistakes in between, they have developed the confidence to speak in English.

The animated clipping had been shown to students. They were interested in creating the story. They used all the new words in the clipping. Some of the students had used their passive vocabulary to narrate the story. They had written the story and they narrated the story in English. They acquired some new words and their usage in day- to- day life.

The researcher had given the story in written form initially. The students felt bored to read the story. When the animated story had been played, they watched it with enthusiasm. They tried to narrate the story almost to the original.

Some Findings
The researcher has done the research on "Animated Stories for Enhancing Speaking skills". At the end of the research she has arrive at the following findings.

- As animation can be seen visually and verbally, it is easy for the students to comprehend and retain the story.
- It developed the students' confidence to speak in English.
- The animated stories shown were effective for the students to speak in English than oral narration.
- The animated stories promoted the interest among the students.
- The animated story helps to understand the language.

Animated activities make the students to participate in speaking. It made them to express their ideas in English without any fear. As it is like a fun, they enjoyed the activities.
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