07

THE DIFFERENT WAYS TO DEVELOP THE SPEAKING SKILLS OF THE DIPLOMA STUDENTS THROUGH VARIOUS STRATEGIES: A CRITICAL STUDY

Yashwant Vasantrao Lahane
Lecturer in English
Government Polytechnic, Washim, MS,, India
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Abstract:
The importance of communication in English is enormously increasing day by day. Communication consistently ranks at the first of the list of the recruiters who look for fresher candidates. They hire fresher who possess effective communication skills and soft skills. In the current situation for successful job careers, speaking skills are emphatically essential. The several studies indicate that speaking competence is very important for job success. Apart from the problem of language barriers, learners across the world face many challenges like stress, anxiety, and fear in the language classes to accomplish the given task in the target language. The current study also claims that the learners can overcome these barriers when they employ certain strategies that will give them room to manoeuvre their speaking skills. Experts believe that the strategies are instinctively used while speaking the first language cannot be applied to the second language. Therefore, communication strategies need to be absolutely taught for students to improve their accuracy and fluency. Among language skills, speaking is regarded as the most important skill to be acquired. The speaking skill as an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information. The form and meaning are dependent on the factors like the context, the participants and the purpose. Speaking competence is considered important as it enables the language users to accomplish their communication tasks. The speaking competence is an ability of an individual to carry on a conversation competently. To acquire speaking competence, it is mandatory to be skilled in various aspects of speaking such as pronunciation, structure, vocabulary, content and fluency. Speaking competence of an individual is improved through different types of speaking activities. There are many methods used by researchers and language teachers to develop the speaking competence of the learners. Nowadays, language teaching is mainly focused on improving the communicative competence of the learners. To help students develop speaking competence, teachers use a balanced approach that combines various language teaching techniques and methods. The main purpose of communication is to accomplish a language activity such as making a telephone conversation, receiving information or conveying an opinion. Therefore, communicative language teaching methods are suggested as it is based on real-life situations and it gives adequate opportunities to communicate in the target language. In this method, the teachers create a classroom environment where the students have real-life communication, authentic activities and meaningful tasks to develop speaking competence.

Keywords: *Communication, Speaking, Essential, Challenges, Target, Strategies, Competence and Environment.*

Introduction:

The present research paper aims to suggest the engineering students to practise a broad range of strategies for speaking. It can be tapped throughout the learning process to help them overcome the difficulties and disabilities like soft-skills. The speaking skills are essential in placement interviews faced by the engineering students who aspire for higher studies as well as employment opportunities in the multi-national job sectors. In the current situation most of the engineering students perform well in their academics but they are unable to perform equally well in various speaking situations. Unfortunately, they fail to get through the oral communication tests like personal interviews and group discussion sessions. Research studies say that teachers do not heed attention to the necessity of teaching communication strategies to the students though they are aware of it. In other words, these strategies are not exploited by teachers to improve the speaking skills of the students. Eventually, it is widely observed that language teachers neglect the message or switch to the first language in language classes. Therefore, enabling the learners to employ strategies to improve their level of speaking competence has become the need of the hour. The researcher finds that there is an acute need for an experimental study focusing on strategy training to develop the speaking skills of the engineering students. Hence, the present experimental study attempts to find out whether there is any significant development in the speaking competence of the students chosen for the study after the use of modules designed by the researcher focusing on strategies.

Speaking Competence:

Among the four language skills, speaking is one of the most important skills to be acquired. The form and meaning are dependent on the factors like the context, the participants and the purpose. Speaking competence is considered important as it enables the language users to accomplish their communication tasks. The speaking competence is an ability of an individual to carry on a conversation competently. Speaking competence of an individual is improved through different types of speaking activities. There are many methods used by researchers and language teachers to develop the speaking competence of the learners. Nowadays, language teaching is mainly focused on improving the communicative competence of the learners. To help students develop speaking competence, instructors use a balanced approach that combines various language teaching techniques and methods. The effective organization of activities is one of the several aspects that contribute to the development of the speaking competence as role-plays, discussions, simulations, information gap, brainstorming, interviews, descriptions and narrations and reporting are the different types of language activities used to develop the speaking skills of the learners.

Strategies for Speaking:

The strategies are the important components of language learning and training. Oral strategies are mentioned in the literature as communicative strategies, communication strategies, conversation skills and oral communication strategies. The strategies for speaking skills are nothing but the methods used by the language learners to solve any communication problem

while speaking in English. The speaking strategies are crucial because they help foreign language learners in negotiating meaning where either linguistic structures or sociolinguistic rules are not shared between a second language learner and a speaker of the target language. The main reason for the learners to use communication strategies is to bridge the gap between linguistic knowledge of the second-language learner and the linguistic knowledge of his or her speaker in real communication situations. The definition of communication strategies emphasized on the planning and execution of speech production. According to the experts, while solving a communication problem the learners not only cooperate with the speaker but also find a solution without the help of others. This view led to further research concentrating on learners' internal mental activities, such as communicative strategies used for solving lexical problems. According to Faerch and Kasper there are two types of communicative strategies:

a) Achievement Strategies:
b) Reduction Strategies:

The achievement strategies allow learners to have an alternative plan to achieve a goal using the resources that are available. Achievement strategies comprise compensatory strategies and retrieval strategies. Compensatory strategies include code switching, interlingual transfer, interlanguage based strategies, cooperative strategies and non-linguistic strategies. Retrieval strategies are used when learners have difficulties in retrieving specific interlanguage items. The reduction strategies are used by learners to avoid solving a communication problem and allow them to give up their attempt to convey an original message. Reduction strategies consist of formal reduction strategies using a reduced system to avoid producing an incorrect utterances and function reduction strategies giving up sending a message or avoiding a specific topic.

Language learners have an urge to speak in the target language in different oral exchanges and different situations in which they aim to become proficient speakers. These speaking strategies which include verbal and non-verbal strategies like verbal circumlocution, clarification, non-verbal mimicry and gestures may be used to compensate for a breakdown in communication and they may also be used to enhance effective communication. Speaking strategies are highly indispensable.Since it provides the language learners with the valuable tools to communicate in the target language in diverse situations. On the other hand, educationists suggest that training in speaking strategies and points out that learners must be shown how such a strategy can be implemented in the second language learning. Furthermore, theysay that learners must be encouraged to use such strategies in different contexts. There are several strategies posited by educational psychologists that explain how a learner acquires, organizes and deploys skills and knowledge. For the current study, these strategies can be classified into three main categories: Behaviourist learning strategy, Cognitive learning strategy and Sociocultural learning strategy.

1. Behaviourist Strategy:
The behaviourist learning strategies had inception during the late 18th century. Their belief is that the learning is a universal behaviour. Their experimental approaches are proximately

matched to associationistic learning which includes the three main categories namely association of ideas, association between sensations and impulses and third is association and reflexology. The basic premise underlying associationistic views of learning is that the ideas become connected or associated through experience. The first category, association of ideas, implies that learning occurs in terms of memory for individual items, most commonly syllables and individual words. It is assumed that a learner's understanding of simpler forms of learning will lead to understand of more complex phenomena. Secondly, the association between sensation and impulses is also a study about learning in terms of association, nevertheless, in terms of action rather than ideas. Here, learning associates a sensation with an impulse where its action has a satisfying result. This principle is termed as Law of Effect which helps to modify the classical principle of association and later significant implications for behaviourism. The learners are viewed as passively adapting to the environment and they are exposed to audio-visual methods of instruction and the practice of oral skills is given in a controlled environment. Mechanical pattern of drills likememorization and repetition of grammatical structures in isolation are the impact of this influence.

2. Cognitive Learning Strategy:

The dominance of behaviourism began to wane in the late ninetieth century and cognitive psychology began to surpass it as an ideal standard of learning psychology. Psychologists discouraged the confinements of behavioural strategiesand methods based on it. As a result of these initiatives, cognitivist came into existence. The foremost group of cognitive strategies is classified as CognitiveInformation Processing (CIP) learning strategy. According to Schunk this strategy is frequently stated as simply "information processing", which is not a distinct strategy. Rather, it is a common name applied to several hypothetical perspectives dealing with the aspects of cognitive actions. Schunk noted that the human learner is apprehended to be a processor of information as a computer is and when the learning arises the information is input from the environment. Then the information is processed and stored in the memory and output in the form of a learned ability. The exponents of the CIP model seek to clarify how environment plays a vital role in altering human behaviour. Nonetheless, a predominant variable between the environment and behaviour is assumed, which is considered to be the information processing system of the learner. The main emphasis of this strategy is placed on non-figurative constructs like mind, memory, attitude and other presumed internal processes. In other words, the changes in the behaviour are observed as an indicator of what is going on in the learner's mind. Hence, the learner is regarded as an active participant in the process of knowledge acquisition. The greater importance is given for understanding the language than to the facility in using it. Moreover; this strategy considers second language learning as the acquisition of a complex cognitive skill. The sub-skills of the language learning process include applying grammar rules, choosing the appropriate vocabulary and following pragmatic conventions governing the use of a specific language.

3. Sociocultural Strategy:

During the time when cognitively oriented perspectives on language acquisition gaining popularity, another perspective of individual development of social and cultural contexts called Sociocultural strategy was also applied to second language acquisition research. This

strategy was based on the principles of language acquisition put forth by Vygotsky. The core concepts of this strategy are inner speech, active theory and the zone of proximal development and mediation. Vygotsky claimed that the individuals experience the cognitive growth and higher-order intellectual abilities through internalization of mediation. Sociocultural strategy holds that language is not a private rather a socially constructed phenomenon. So, the language learning is not only a cognitive task but a social activity in a knowledge-building community, a community of a second language learner. It is believed that once the learner has gained the knowledge of how to solve a particular problem, the level of potential development of the learner increases and thus shifts the zone of proximal development. According to sociocultural strategy, language learning resides not in simply getting thecomprehensible input and the chance for output during interaction, rather in working collaboratively with the speakerand appropriating and constructing knowledge through their collaborative activities. Many research studies have applied the sociocultural frame to the investigation of second language learning.

According to Cohen strategies for speaking can be broadly classified into two types-
1.Language Learning Strategies (LLS)
2. Language Use Strategies (LUS)
The LLS include four subsets of strategies like cognitive strategies, meta-cognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies. On the other hand, LUS include four subsets of strategies like retrieval strategies, rehearsal strategies, cover strategies, and communication strategies. Thus, Cohen's taxonomy of strategies for speaking skills is shown in the following flowchart.

Cohen strategies for speaking

Language Learning Strategies (LLS)

Language Use Strategies (LUS)

1. Cognitive strategies
2. Meta-cognitive strategies
3. Affective strategies
4. Social strategies

1. Retrieval strategies
2. Rehearsal strategies
3. Cover strategies
4. Communication strategies
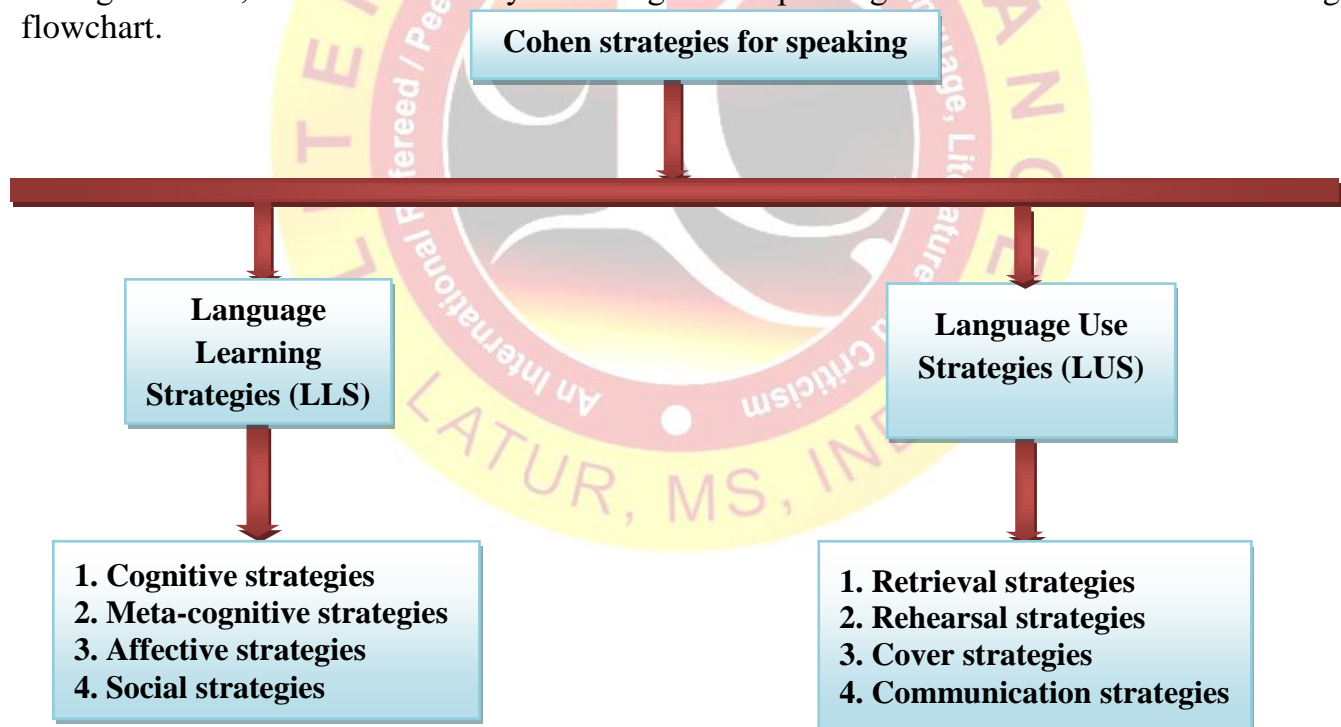
Language learning strategies (LLS):

Language learning strategies serve as a supplement to improve the knowledge of the learners in the target language. Cognitive, meta-cognitive, affective, and social strategies are brought under LLS. The cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies mainly signify the use of mental abilities of a learner to solve a problem or accomplish a task. The metacognitive strategies help the learners understand the way they learn a language. Moreover, they are the processes designed for learners to 'think about their thinking,' metacognitive strategies impact learners to overcome learning difficulties by helping them to develop an appropriate plan for learning. These strategies allow learners to have control over their own learning. They enable learners to be aware of how to learn, to evaluate learning needs and to generate strategies. The cognitive and metacognitive strategies include strategies like summarising, guessing meaning from a context, using imagery, remembering and applying information from content, constructing sentences and paragraphs, editing, paraphrasing, classifying information, thinking aloud, self-questioning, repetition, organising, self-assessing, note making, brainstorming or mind mapping, summarizing, analysing, persuading, reasoning, creative thinking, rehearsing, and role playing challenges. Affective and social strategies represent a broad group that involves interaction with another person and ideational control over affect. They are about the emotional processes of learning which focuses on emotions like feelings, values, motivations, attitudes, and dispositions. Affective and social strategies include the following- identifying one's mood and lowering anxiety level, talking about feelings, rewarding oneself for good performance, using deep breathing or positive self-talk, asking questions to get verification, asking for clarification, seeking help in doing a language task, talking with a native-speaking interlocutor and exploring cultural and social norms.

Language use strategies (LUS):
Retrieval, rehearsal, cover and communication strategies are grouped under LUS. Retrieval strategies are those strategies for retrieving the learned information whenever needed and rehearsal strategies known as form-focused practice are meant for rehearsing target language structures. Retrieval and rehearsal strategies are the learning techniques that help learners revisit content as much as possible. On this context, it is essential to focus on strategies like maintenance strategy and elaborative strategy. Maintenance strategy relies on mechanical repetition and stores information in shortterm memory and elaborative strategy involves more elaborate forms of encoding such as analysis, association and integration.Therefore, helps retention in long-term memory. Retrieval and rehearsal strategies are complex activities requiring a high degree of coordination and integration and possibly consisting of a group of memory strategies. Theyinclude strategies like mental visualizing, crosschecking, questioning, narrating, using keyword mnemonics, linking, and repeated practicing. Cover and communication strategies are those strategies that learners use to create an impression that they have control over the language when they do not. These strategies also focus on approaches to convey meaningful information that is new to the interlocutors or the recipients. They are like the compensatory or coping strategies which involve creating an appearance of language ability. Simplification and complexification are typical examples of cover and communication strategies.

To conclude, Communication strategies are essential for course teachers and students to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of language learning. The application of teaching

strategies will boost their self-confidence and rapport between teachers and students. It also strengthens students' accountability and self-esteem in learning the target language. Referring to the pedagogical implications of the present study, the findings highlight the significance of strategies in developing the speaking competence of the engineering students. Based on this finding, the present study suggests the material developers to give importance to strategies in materials design and development. Stakeholders should judiciously scrutinize the language learning context and decide how strategy training satisfies the requirements and the interests of the course instructors and the learners. Language teachers have to play a key role in developing speaking skills of the students through strategy training. It is necessary for them to create relaxed atmosphere that can inspire the language learners to attain their communication goals freely. Further, it is suggested that speaking strategies should be standardized intensely to regulate their authentic effect on the learning process. Moreover, suitable study materials related to speaking strategies need to be considered for language curriculum. Besides, appropriate strategies should be introduced to the engineering students to develop their speaking skills to become employable graduates. Through strategy training, the engineering students can get adequate exposure to the target language and develop their speaking skills. Especially, the students in the engineering institutions who studied in mother tongue medium schools will be able to perform well in the examinations. Also, they will get more chances to get selected in the campus placement interviews with their speaking competences.

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