

The Role of Electronic Media for Improving Oral Comprehension Skills of English Language

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Abstract:

Media studies have become an essential component and in some cases a specialized course in Higher education. There are a large number of young people constantly interacting with the screen far more than books. Along with the print materials, different types of non-print/electronic media supports are provided to meet the learners' need. Electronic media may be treated as a substitute for the personal touch of the teacher. Electronic media specially television and radio etc. the learners can listen to the talks of the course experts and also see them on the TV screen. Radio and TV programs help the learners of English language to get the direction about literacy and linguistic communities. It is felt that a teacher can take an advantage of students interest in the non-print / electronic media while teaching English.

The present study is designed to investigate the role and effectiveness of radio and television in teaching-learning process. The aim of the present study is to examine the learners' knowledge of the Oracy skills and speech habits, note the problem areas and develop their communication skills at the undergraduate level.

Introduction:

English is a jewel in the crown of culture today. English is the 'Lingna Franca' of the world. English has become a dominant language as a result of globalization. Study of English has enriched the Indian languages and literature. With the IT revolution and most of software and operating system being in English language, a new utility for written and oral communication in English language has emerged. English is said to be the world's most important language having communicative and educative value. It is a progressive language. It is dynamic and flexible. About 50 million people in India can speak and write English and therefore English teaching in India is probably the world's largest democratic enterprise.

It is "a window on the world of advanced technology and industrial development" (Alptekin, 1990:22). English as an international language is a logical requirement in an era of worldwide information sharing and commercial exchange (Rossner and Belitho, 1990:5). The knowledge of English will enable us to establish intellectual, culture, economic, commercial and political relations with the rest of the world and its knowledge is essential for higher legal, technical and scientific education and research in almost all branches of learning. "The communication explosion and mass media, like the radio and television, command millions of worldwide listeners and spectators (Rao, 1992:40).

No indigenous language however has come up to replace English; either as a medium of communication or as an official language. Though Gandhiji was totally against English education, but he also appreciated the importance of foreign language especially English. In his book, Young India he said:

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“I do not want my house to be walked in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. I would have our young men and young women with literary tastes to learn as much of English and other world languages as they like and expect them to give the benefits of their learning to India and to the world”.

English symbolizes in Indian minds, better education, better culture and higher intellect. In present times, English is the most preferred language. It has remained at the heart of the Indian society.

Today, the standard of English teaching in kin schools and colleges has deteriorated quickly. Students of the rural colleges face a number of problems. Students find themselves unable to express in English. They have no idea of proper sentence structure. They do not know proper pronunciation, spellings and grammatical rules. The teaching of English in India has a many-sided problem.

It has been amply proved that the unrealistic goals of teaching English, conventional syllabuses, lifeless teaching methods and unreliable evaluation system have miserably failed to produce results. We see BAs and MAs in English with good marks but hardly with any English.

Taking into account the multilingual and multicultural nature of our country and the pressing demands of the new millennium we have to redefine the goals of teaching English and rearrange our priorities. It is high time we should decide whether we need to produce scholars of Milton and Dryden or we need to produce effective users of English who have a reasonably good command over the language for the purpose of communication within the country and with the world outside.

Non-print / electronic media are certainly not new to the classroom. In this age of science and technology, mass media cannot be overestimated. Radio and television are the most powerful media at present. It is a rare college today that doesn't have at least a modest supply of records, film stripes, radio, television and access to a film library. Educational broadcasting through radio and telecasting through television is a means of motivation. According to American Heritage dictionary (2000), mass media is a means of public communication reaching a large audience through the print and non-print media.

Oracy skill is one of the four basic language skills. The media is a vital source whereby good speaking can be learnt. Virtually all of the programs broadcast on radio and television are through speech, some programs broadcast on the radio can easily influence the oral skills of listeners. The media stations have programs such as news debate, comments on public affairs. Most of these talks are going by experts and highly educated individuals. These experts speak very good English, which can influence listeners.

This research work is to find out the impact of the media such as television and radio on the oral skills of undergraduate students in Nasik district, Maharashtra.

Review of Literature:

Language is very relevant in all aspects of broadcasting either on the radio or television. Oral production is the most important tool employed on the radio or television to communicate to the audience.

A part of the study on electronic media usage patterns among the students, the researcher carried out an extensive review of literature to identify the various issues and perspectives with regard to the area of focus. The outcomes of the same are discussed as follows:

Today's education has not remained only on the blackboard and in the textbooks but it has removed all the boundaries of the classroom teaching- learning and with the help of technology one can teach and learn efficiently and perhaps more effectively. To cite few references here, let's have a look what goes on : "After all our relationship with language is very much like what students experience when learning with technology – working in spaces unbounded by rules and amenable to adaptation and creativity....the teacher who adapt technology for the English language teaching as a second language are really benefited. The students I have seen using it really enjoy it and are learning a lot of the academic words they need. Their vocabulary is enriched and they become fluent in English speaking. The audio-visual aids make the classroom environment live and interesting to the students. They can learn English by the direct method and in a very natural way." (Dixit Pushpa, 2009, P.19).

The sources of authentic materials (whether oral or written) are infinite. Merdian (1979) finds that the radio is able to stimulate and make use of the students imagination to a great extent. With the advancements in communication technology, a variety of audio-visual, media-radio, television, video cassettes and computer -have become part of the study package in teaching-learning process.

Kachroo(1999) also reported that Institute of Correspondence Education, University of Jammu as well as IGNOU supported students' learning through counseling and mass media namely radio, TV and newspapers.

To be good speakers, the students need to master the sounds of the English language; word stress, rhythm, sentence structure and intonation. Oral skill is the process. According to Gbenedio (1995) one is able to express oneself clearly in flexible conversation language in the feature of which are nationally and internationally accepted.

Although radio is easy to access, its aural texts are the most difficult for language learners to comprehend. Miller (2003) claims that, "In order to use radio programs with learners, teachers need to..... decide on some global listening tasks for the learners" (P.16).

Bamigbose (1994) says that when the people are well informed, they become more active participants and members of society. This is also true about learning that when students are taught through good channels; they learn better, therefore, the importance of both the electronic and print media in teaching language skills such as oracy skills cannot be over emphasized. Electronic media such as radio, television, tape-recorders telephone and other

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audio-visuals and more recently to the computer are useful in the teaching of oracy skills to senior college students.

Singh, R.P. (1999) reported that television is the most popular medium because it is easily accessible and the most effective telecom technique. The advantages of TV are -1) It is good for reaching mass audience; 2) It can be recorded and watched at any suitable time and 3) It is a permanent source.

Learning with media is a complementary process. Its representations are constructed and procedures performed, sometimes, by the learner and sometimes by the medium. Media has certain characteristics that interact with learner and task. Such characteristics are the structure, formation and modification of mental models. "Technology" refers to the physical, mechanical or electronic capabilities that determine a medium function. "Symbol Systems" are sets of symbolic text, pictures, numbers, graphs and musical scores that exemplify symbol systems. "Processing Capabilities" refer to a medium ability to operate on symbol systems in specified ways – for example, by displaying, receiving, storing, organizing, transforming or evaluating whatever information is available through a particular symbol system.

In the summary, the place of electronic or non-print media is very important in the teaching-learning of oracy skills because it affords the learners the opportunity to do three things at the sametime that is listening, seeing and doing (imitation of sound production).

Statement of the Problem:

The issue of the poor and wrong articulation of English language sounds had been noticed among undergraduate students in Nasik district, Maharashtra. The principal had noticed this and had raised the issue at the staff meeting. An observation by the researcher who went round the colleges to interact with students and teachers found that most teachers do not teach speech work and some of those who taught it were not good models and did not use resources that could help the teachers. Therefore, electronic media radio and television are a reservoir of language items and using these items to teach speech work in the teaching and learning English seems to have a lot of promise.

Objectives of the Study:

In order to study the actual position, the researcher undertook the survey of the use of electronic media in senior colleges of district Nasik, Maharashtra.

- i. To find out problems and difficulties of teaching and learning of English language at undergraduate level.
- ii. To understand the difficulties of the learners of English at undergraduate level.
- iii. To develop students' interest in learning English through the electronic / non-print media.
- iv. To demonstrate, how electronic / non-print media is useful for teaching and learning of communication skills.
- v. To help in raising the academic standard in senior colleges of Nasik district.

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- vi. To create awareness among teachers and students of senior colleges about the importance of audio-visual aids.

Hypothesis of the Study:

- i. There is no significant difference between students who watched the television and listened Radio Education Program and those do not in their performance in language skill i.e. oracy skill.
- ii. The students who are closely related to the context of media-radio and television perform better in learning language items.
- iii. The students who have good environment for assimilating spoken English can learn speech items easily.
- iv. The students who have skills and interest to make use of non-print / electronic media i.e. radio and television can easily overcome difficulties in the use of English.

Scope and Limitations of the Study:

The present research intends to use the non-print / electronic media for the improving oral comprehension skills in EFL classrooms.

For the purpose of data collection, the samples of the study consisted of 200 undergraduate students who were purposefully selected from ten senior colleges.

The researcher however, had to set the following limitations to this study in order to do justice to the problem.

- i. The scope of this study is limited to undergraduate classes i.e. FYBA
- ii. Only twenty students from each college will be selected at random.
- iii. The area of the research is limited to N.D.M.V.P. Samaj's urban, semi-urban and rural colleges of the Nasik district, Maharashtra.
- iv. There are various language items to learn but the researcher has concentrated only on the spoken form of language.
- v. The researcher will use limited media tools like radio and television with special reference to senior college of district, Nasik.
- vi. The study was concerned with presenting concrete measures to provide better facilities on non-print / electronic media education.

Through the researcher was aware of the very broad scope of subject, he had to work within these limitations.

Methodology:

The design of the study is a quasi-experimental design. It included pre-test and post-test for experimental and control groups. The study was designed to highlight the impact of electronic media on the achievements of FYBA students.

Sample Techniques:

The samples of the study consisted of 200 senior students who were randomly selected from 10 urban, semi urban and rural senior colleges. The samples were senior college class 20 students. The students who have access to media like television and radio were put in the experimental group while those who had no access to television and radio were in the control group.

The research instrument was an achievement test in English language especially on speech work. The instrument consisted of 20 items which tested the students knowledge in the area of segmental features, that is, vowel and consonant sounds and supra segmental, that is, stress and intonation pattern.

Research Process:

The experimental sessions lasted eight weeks. The students in both experimental and control groups were subjected to pre-test before the commencement of the experiment. The experimental group in different locations had contacts with the researcher thrice in a week.

The students in the experimental group were guided to use the non-print / electronic like radio and TV for learning oracy skills. The control group had no access to use media such as TV and radio but receive instructions on speech. At the end of experimental session, the two groups were subjected to an achievement test.

- **Data Analysis:**

The data collected from the achievement test administered on the students were subjected to t-test statistics.

- **Result and Discussions:**

There is no significance difference between the pre-test scores of students in the experimental group and the control group.

Table No.1:

T-test analysis of the pre-test scores of students in the experimental and control group.

Groups	N	X	dF	t-cal	t-table	Remark
Experimental	100	63.87	198	1.54	1.96	
Control	100	62.94				

- Not significant $p \neq 0.05$

Table one shows that the calculated 1.54 is less than the t-table value. Therefore the null hypothesis is retained. There is no significant difference between the pretest scores of the students in the experimental and control groups.

The second hypothesis stated that there was no significant difference between the achievement of students who used electronic media like TV and radio and those who do not.

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Table No. 2:

Analysis of post-test scores of students in experimental and control groups in speech work.

Groups	N	X	SD	dF	T-table	t-cal	Remark
Experimental	100	71.40	8.92	98	7.44	1.96	×
Control	100	61.50	9.82				

=Significant at $p \leq 0.005$.

The table no. 2 above revealed that the calculated t-value 7.44 is greater than the value 1.96. This means that there is significant difference between the performance of the subjects in the experimental group the control group.

The findings of the hypothesis one showed that the subjects in the experimental and the control were homogenous as at the commencement of the study. There is a slight difference in the means scores of the students in the experimental group and control group. The findings from the analysis of the data collected in respect of hypothesis two showed that the students in the experimental group had higher achievement in the speech work than those in the control group.

The implication is that using of electronic media like TV and radio is effective means of improving students' performance in speaking skills.

Conclusion:

It is very clear that non-print / electronic media education is very important aspect of teaching and learning process. Conventional syllabuses, lifeless teaching methods have miserably failed to produce results of language learning. This study has proved that individuals can be encouraged to learn through resources that they can find in their environment. The focus in the teaching / learning process was on integrating skills such as problem solving and logical reasoning, process orientation, learning ability, English communication and programming fundamentals. The study was conducted in senior colleges of Nasik district, Maharashtra.

The researcher has used electronic media like radio and television for practical purpose in English language teaching and learning. It improved the communication skills of the students.

Recommendations:

As a result of the findings of this study, language teachers are advised to motivate their students to listen to radio and watch television educational programs. They should also read and use the print media in acquiring the knowledge of foreign language. The enthusiasm, the zeal and interest of the teacher can kindle the spark of learning in the students. Students can be encouraged to listen to English news and English commentaries broadcast on radio and television.

Faculty improvement programs should be held. Teachers should be made aware of the latest techniques and methods. College should provide enabling environment that could make the use of ICTs possible as aids to language learning. The students should read newspapers,

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magazines, dictionaries, thesaurus, encyclopedia etc. in order to increase their vocabulary building.

The college should invite parents and community members to participate in intellectual freedom committees. Special grant-in-aid should be released for the purchase of materials of teaching aids. Syllabus designing is a process. Print and non-print media should be given proper place in such syllabus. Literature courses should be made language oriented rather than literary oriented.

On the basis of suggestions given above, the critical situations in the teaching of English can be checked from further deteriorations. Decidedly one or two persons can't do anything solid. Let everyone concerned with it take the responsibility. Only then we can create a congenial environment and we can be able to achieve better results in the teaching and learning of English.

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