

## **Teaching Spoken English Communication Skills to the Students of MANUU Polytechnic Using Multiple Intelligence Approach: An Experimental Study**

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### **Abstract**

The present study focuses on finding out the effectiveness of teaching Spoken English Communication Skills to the first year students of diploma in civil engineering of MANUU Polytechnic, Bangalore using video-based tasks with multiple intelligence approach. It is an experimental study. In the process of research, firstly students' multiple intelligences are tested using modified standard Multiple Intelligences Test of Howard Gardner (1993) which aims to help a teacher to meet the English language needs of all the students with different socio, economic, cultural and language backgrounds, and their tested multiple intelligences are analysed to help the researcher of this study to prepare tasks for teaching the students effectively. Secondly, the study focused on knowing the students' language level. A pre-test is conducted for them on spoken English communication skills by playing the selected videos in mute which showed the greatest civil engineering constructions of the world, and the spoken test is video recorded. Through this their language difficulty level is understood by the researcher. Thirdly, spoken English communication skills are taught to the students for a period of about forty days using tasks prepared by freely available videos from YouTube, and these videos are selected as used in the pre-test with British English. The videos are used to create interest and motivation among the students to learn the language effectively. Fourthly, to test the improvement of the students' spoken English communication skills, post-test is conducted by playing the selected videos in mute, and the results of pre & post are analysed

by the modified standard spoken English tes. Fifthly, results of pre- and post-tests are compared using the standard 'T-test' to check the students' language skills improvement. Finally, findings and suggestions are offered.

## **Introduction**

There is a need for English Communication Skills to Engineering students in academic and professional settings as mentioned by many of the researchers in the field. To mention a few, Mandly (2008), a researcher, did a survey as part of his M.Phil. dissertation on the need of Spoken English Communication Skills and found that engineering students must need these skills. And the National Knowledge Commission of India (2006) also stressed on the need for preparing suitable syllabus as per the industry needs. The reason is that India is a developing country and has hundreds of thousands of engineering students every year in the productive age group, and the country needs to utilise these students for the development of India. For this, these students need to be equipped with the English language skills along with the subject knowledge. Therefore, every teacher of English should join hands to use suitable materials and methods to teach the students to develop Spoken English Communication Skills. In the present study, Multiple Intelligences approach of Howard Gardner (1993) is used for the research as it aims to fulfil the language needs of all the students. The study prepares tasks using nine multiple intelligences, namely: Verbal/Linguistic, Logical/mathematical, Visual/Spatial, Bodily/Kinesthetic, Rhythmic/Musical, Inter & Intra personal and Natural Intelligences.

## **Research Question and Hypothesis**

### **Research Question**

Do the video tasks with Multiple Intelligence approach improve the spoken English communication skills of the first year Diploma Students of Civil Engineering at MANUU Polytechnic, Bangalore?

### **Hypothesis**

Teaching English using video tasks based on Multiple Intelligence approach will improve the spoken English communication skills of the first year Diploma Students of Civil Engineering at MANUU Polytechnic, Bangalore.

### **Significance of the Study**

The present Polytechnic curriculum offers English course for the students for three years, except in the last semester, with an aim to develop English Communication and Employability Skills to meet the current academic and future professional English language functions. The English course has both theoretical and practical components for the students to study. The English course of the Polytechnic has been adopted from boards of technical education. The researcher of the study has been teaching English course in the college who through his experience felt that the present English course must be modified. The reason is that the students have studied through Urdu and Hindi as medium of instruction at their secondary school level and now also they need to study the core subjects in Urdu language as one of the mandates of the university. Along with this, they come from various socio, economic, cultural backgrounds. With all these, the students also need to cope up with the growing language demands in future job market. Hence, the researcher undertook this study to contribute to the development of courses, course materials, and students' skills and help implement the goals of the university at large.

### **Research Sampling and Tools**

MANUU Polytechnic, Bangalore is one of the three Polytechnics of Maulana Azad National Urdu University, a central university having headquarters in Hyderabad. The other

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two Polytechnics are in Hyderabad and Darbhanga in Bihar. The total intake of Diploma in Civil Engineering for the first year in each of the three colleges every year is 140. Thirty students were taken for the study as a sample through simple random method.

Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Test (1993) was used for identifying students' multiple intelligences. Spoken English Communication Skills test was used to know the language level of the students, and 'T-test' to compare the results of pre and post- tests were used to check the effect of the study.

### **Why does a teacher need Multiple Intelligence Approach?**

Every classroom has students with mixed language abilities and learning styles. Teaching English communication skills to students with such diverse backgrounds is a tough task for a teacher of English. To meet the needs of students with this kind of heterogeneous groups, Howard Gardner (1993), an American Psychologist and educationist, has mentioned as part of his multiple intelligence theory that a teacher is required to go into the class with the tasks prepared based on multiple intelligences. As per Gardner, these intelligences fulfil the language needs of all the students in the classroom. This kind of approach has been followed to teach English Communication Skills to the Students of MANUU, Bangalore.

The original Multiple Intelligence Test of Howard Gardner is modified as per the level of understanding of the students taking part in the present research. For this, the test required changes four times with reference to difficulty level, examples, meaning, etc. Translation method is also used for the students to explain the content of the test to make them understand it.

### **Videos and Method of Selection**

Freely accessible videos from *YouTube* are chosen for designing tasks for this study. The videos are selected specifically from the area of world famous Civil Engineering constructions. These included world heritage sites, the longest arch bridges, the canals, the

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airports, the greatest walls, the historical monuments, the tallest building towers and the biggest auditoriums and open theatres, etc. Here, only civil engineering videos are selected with the assumption that these students get motivated by watching videos of their field of study. The other factors are: language with the British English as it has been comprehended by most of the people in India; good clarity of video with 2-3 minute length.

### **Tasks for Teaching Spoken English Communication Skills**

Tasks are activities which mainly focus on meaning-based language use and involve four language skills. Exercises are also activities which mainly emphasize form-based language use (Ellis 2003:03). Tasks involve basically real-life communication and focus on meaning (Widdowson, 1978). Tasks are not necessarily real-world tasks. There can be information tasks (Nunan 1989). Tasks enable the learners to achieve both grammatical and communicative competences, and the examples of tasks are: real-life tasks, opinion-gap activities, reasoning-gap and information gap activities (N. S. Prabhu, 1991).

The aim of these task-based communicative activities is to improve the spoken English communication skills of Polytechnic students. Individual, pair and group activities are used in this study to teach tasks. And all the tasks have the similar frame work: rationale, time frame, mode of activity, teaching material, and situation.

### **Tasks for Teaching Spoken English Communication Skills**

Twenty tasks were prepared and each task has nine sub-tasks involving nine intelligences: Verbal/Linguistic, Logical/Mathematical, Visual/Spatial, Body/Kinesthetic, Rhythmic/Musical, Inter & Intra personal and Naturalist. Overall, 180 tasks were designed for teaching the skills with an arrangement of simple to complex method. These tasks were taught to these students in the study for about forty days with an hour of time a day.

### **Spoken English Communication Skills**

The aim of the prepared tasks is to enable the Polytechnic students to communicate in both academic and non-academic settings/contexts. The skills taught included:

Introducing oneself and introducing others; expressing feelings, expressing opinions, giving comments and offering suggestions; describing a person, describing a place, describing an object, describing an event, describing an incident, describing a picture and describing a sculpture; talking about a present situation/condition, talking about future plans, participating in a group discussion, giving an oral presentation, giving and taking instructions, preparing guidelines, narrating a story and describing a video.

Along with the teaching of spoken English communication skills, there should be focus on grammar also: auxiliary verbs, present, past & future tenses, active and passive voices, comparative and superlative degrees; adjectives, nouns, verbs; prepositions of place and time; both definite and indefinite articles, linkers/connectors: and , but, because, so, therefore, and hence.

### **Criteria for Testing English Spoken Communication Skills**

Based on the Common European Framework for writing and speaking (2011), Sample Assessment Rubrics (2016), Verner, S (2007) and Study.com (2016), the following criteria are used in deciding upon the five rubrics: fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, comprehensible and appropriate content. And four levels are provided with marks in descending order: 4, 3, 2 and 1. Securing 4 marks is the highest and 1 is the lowest, and 2 and 3 come in between.

### **Analysis of Difficulties of Spoken English Communication Skills - Pre & Post-Tests**

In pre-test, out of 30 students, 7 students have difficulty in using plural nouns; 6 students in using subject verb agreement and preposition of place (on), 4 in using article addition (a), singular noun, vocabulary, and 4 have repeated the same words unnecessarily; 3 students have difficulty in using passive voice (simple present tense), present perfect tense,

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preposition of place (in) and articles (an & the); some students used relative clauses (who, which & whose), superlative degree, active voice (present tense), preposition of places (at & between), to + infinitive and one of the plural patterns correctly.

In post-test, 5 students have difficulty is using subject verb agreement; 4 students with plural nouns; 2 students with using preposition (by), conjunction (and), article addition (a), words redundancy, repetition of words and sentence order (S+V+O); and a single student has a difficulty in using every item: simple present tense, passive voice (simple present & present perfect), adjective (quality & order), preposition of place (through), purpose (for) & with, article omission (a), wh-words (who), pronunciation, Has/as; a student has used Hindi word.

### Comparison of Marks awarded in Pre & Post-Tests

Pre-test		Post-test	
Marks	Students	Marks	Students
1	21	1	00
2	06	2	01
3	03	3	10
4	00	4	19

Thirty students participated in the study, and the marks ranged from 1 to 4. In the pre-test, out of 30 students, 21 students are awarded with 1 mark, 6 with 2, 3 with 3 and no student with 4. Here, the majority of the students is having less marks and no student has got 4 marks as the highest as per the criteria of spoken English communication skills rubrics.

In the post-test, out of 30 students, 19 students have got 4 marks, 10 with 3, 2 with 1 and none with 0. Here, the majority of the students have got 4 marks which show the improvement of students' spoken English communication skills after attending the research

classes. And 10 students getting 3 marks also indicate an improvement in comparison to their performance in the pre-test.

Marks Range (1 – 4) From Pre-test to Post-test	No. of Students (30)	Difference of Improvement	Ranking	Remarks
<b>1 – 4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>03</b>	I	Improved
<b>1 – 3</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>02</b>	II	Improved
1 – 2	01	01	IV	Improved
<b>2 – 4</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>02</b>	III	Improved
2 – 3	01	01	V	Improved
3 – 4	03	01	VI	Improved

Out of 30, there are 11 students who got 3 marks difference of improvement, 9 with 2(1-3), 5 with 2(2-4), and none has got the same or lesser marks than in the pre-test. Overall, majority of the students has improved their performance. Hence, students have improved their spoken English communication skills.

#### **Comparison of Pre and Post-tests using ‘T-test’**

According to ‘T-test’ formula of Hall, R (1998), it is found that the calculated value (22.222) is greater than the tabulated (2.048) at 5% level of significance. Therefore, the difference between the sample is seen to be significant.

#### **Research findings of the study**

Overall, majority of the students (11+9=20) have improved their spoken English communication skills. There is a significant improvement from pre-test to post-test. Hence, the study gives positive result.



Majority of the students (21) have language difficulties in pre-test, and these students (11+9+5=25) have improved from grade 1 to 4 & 2 to 4. It shows the improvement.

Majority of the students (25) have improved their levels of spoken English communication skills in the areas of fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, comprehensible and appropriate, content and length of words from pre-test to post-test.

It has been observed that many of the students have taken care while recording their words for post-test with reference to the content and grammatical errors. Hence, the speed of the speech has come down and limited to words and showed their fear about their grammatical errors.

All the selected videos of great constructions are motivating to all the students. These videos have brought a positive change and a confidence among the students in setting strong career goals.

All the 30 students have lost their stage fear after attending these classes, and are thorough with their greetings and self and partner-introductions and the description of a person, place, thing, a situation, a condition, as these are required for them in their regular academic study and future employment.

Regarding playing the videos with British English, initially students haven't understood, and they understood them in subsequent classes; it has been found that 3-5 minute length of video is comfortable to all the students (30) for watching videos to learn; each video has been played to the students 3-5 times to make them comprehend the content of the video; it was required to play the video at medium level of speed.

It has been observed that students felt bored watching the videos continuously for a long time. During longer classes of playing videos, students requested for playing comedy videos. And the same was done, and it brought about a change in their attention.

It has been a tough task for the researcher to design a task with rhythmic/musical intelligences using the civil engineering construction videos.

### **Suggestions for further research**

Conducting a pilot study before the actual study will help the researcher in getting accurate results.

The prepared tasks can be tested by using them with the similar kind of students to do changes to meet the objective of the tasks.

Standard tests can be modified as per the level of the students to give significant results.

Further research may be done on the students of other branches other than Civil Engineering.

Number of classes may be increased from 40 to 60 with the time 1: 00 to 2: 00 daily to get better results.

Care should be taken in selecting a video related to clarity, language and speed of the voice to make the videos understood to students.

Researcher should have clear objective in selecting the videos and watch the videos thoroughly before teaching it to students to get better results.

Researcher should conduct a sample study to identify the duration of video for playing to students. Classes should be conducted for the study as per the convenience the students to get good results.

Playing same kind of videos on construction continuously will bore students; hence alternatives may be decided based on the students' interests for a short period.

### **Conclusion**

Students of MANUU Polytechnic, Bangalore have got motivated and improved their spoken English communication skills after attending the classes conducted during the **Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 17:8 August 2017  
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research. The multiple intelligence approach is effective in enabling the students' learning. Therefore, the tasks can be designed and used for teaching English communication skills in a classroom.

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