

The Effectiveness of Teaching Speaking through Audio Aids

Ganesh Prasad Dulal

**Asst. Lecturer Department of English Education
Mahendra Morang Adarsha Multiple Campus, Biratnagar**
Email : ganeshdulal60@gmail.com

Abstract

Effectiveness of teaching speaking through audio aids plays principal role in scaffolding speech communication verbally in the classroom, such as selection and use of language as a resource as well as medium of instruction, instructional strategies and teaching materials. Considering classroom space as a social space, this paper explores whether or not linguistic discourse analysis can be used as a resource for learning, the effectiveness regarding the use of audio aids as a resource in second/foreign language classroom management. The information for this phenomenological qualitative research study in a constituent campus through a series of interviews of the students reveals by the researcher, classroom observation and informal interactions of the students to raise the issues. From this study it is concluded that ample opportunities should be given to use audio aids as the medium of instruction in the classroom settings creating face to face interaction, speech conversation, debate and live dialogue in order to tap the students' communicational talents and abilities for developing constituent campus.

Keywords: scaffolding, phenomenology, monosyllabic, supra-segmental feature, Strip story, connected speech

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Introduction

Speaking is an expressive in human communication since language is primarily meant for speaking. It occurs in the second position of the hierarchical order of the language (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing) skill. Lado (1965:24) defines speaking skill as, "The ability to use language in essentially normal communication situation, the signalling systems of pronunciation, stress, intonation, grammatical structure and vocabulary of the foreign language a normal rate of delivery for native speakers of the language." This definition states that speaking includes various aspects such as pronunciation, accuracy, fluency, vocabulary and so on. Similarly, Yadava & Shah (2002:88) Say, "listening and speaking skills are obviously interrelated as either of them require another skill, they go together. Through speaking, we express our emotion, opinions, desires, views etc. and establish social relationship and friendship. In other words speech enables us to communicate our intentions, interact with other persons and situations and influence other human beings."

Speaking skill is not as easy as to smoothly move ahead and get success. The speaker has to format various communicative forms and functional use and appropriate grammar, vocabulary with morphology and syntactic elements. Harmer (2001:269) states, "the ability to speak fluently pre-supposed not only knowledge of language features, but also the ability to process information and language at spot." Native speakers can speak fluently and accurately

in a natural Way. These are some features of natural speech. Cross (1992:4) identifies the features of natural speech as purpose, unpredicted ability, slips and hesitation. Speaking is a main part of language teaching. It is a process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols in a variety of contexts. A piece of writing can be corrected but a speech once gone cannot be corrected. By teaching speaking, Kayi (2006:1) means to make the learner able to produce English speech sound and sound pattern and rhythm of the second language, select appropriate words and sentences according to the proper social setting, situation and subject matter, organize their thought in a meaningful and logical sequence, use the language as a means of expressing values and judgements, use the language quickly and confidently with few natural pauses. Regarding this issue, Rivers (1968:41) suggest the three key items for teaching speaking.

- i. Forms focused instruction; that is attention of details pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary and so on.
- ii. Meaning focused instructions; that is opportunities to produce meaningful spoken message with real communicative purpose.
- iii. Opportunities to improve fluency.

There are different types of teaching aids. Aggrawall (1996:161) presents the following types of teaching aids.

Audio Materials	Visual Materials	Audio-Video Materials
Language laboratories Radio Sound distribution System set Tape and disco Recordings	Bulletin boards Chalk board Charts & drawings Exhibits Film strips Flash cards Illustrated books Magnetic boards Maps Models Pictures Posters and slides Photographs and silent films	Demonstration Films Printed materials with Recorded sounds Sounds filmstrip Study trips Televisions Videotapes Drama/play Computer VCD player Language laboratory

The ability to speak in foreign language consist of the articulation and production of sound and sound sequences, production of stress and intonation patterns, connected speech, communicative competence, grammar, vocabulary, paralinguistic features and social components. To develop the speaking capacity in the students speaking should be emphasized on teaching and learning speaking. While teaching speaking skill, Harmer (1991:55) presents several activities can broadly be divided into two classes:

Control Activities	Free Activities
Conversation ,mini exchange	Guessing games
Oral description	Rank ordering
Strip stories	Interviewing
Prepared talks	Opinion polls, debate
Role play	Pair work
Guided interview	Role play

Speaking in English for non-native speakers is one of the most problematic areas in language teaching and learning. One of the reasons to carry out this study is the researcher's personal experience; the researcher wonders how his speaking skill would be, whether he has used audio aids. Teaching speaking through audio aids is really challenging job in the field of language teaching especially to the non-native learners in English. Moreover, in the educational context in Nepal speaking in English is being neglected from the primary level to secondary to higher level too. The learners can read but cannot ask for a cup of tea by speaking in English confidently. The learners fail to understand the native speakers' accent, tone, juncture, tempo etc and feel monotonous in learning speaking through old and traditional method without using modern means of teaching materials.

Teaching speaking is not an easy task. The problem may lie with the teaching process or with the students or with the material itself. The degrees of difficulty often differ according to the situation and the linguistic background of the learners. It is difficult to describe how utterances are processed and how they come out while speaking. Speaking takes place in a context where the speaker is under pressure to produce his/her utterances without having much time to organize what and how they want to say. Oral interaction is very complex tending to posture that even a professor of English who can speak on an academic topic for hours to the audience may have difficulty in coming with the situation where he/she has got things orally. Interacting with English speaking people Khaniya (2005:123) mentions the following types of problems that the ELT classrooms the teachers are facing in teaching speaking as:

- i. Few students participate in the discussion.
- ii. Learners share a common mother tongue.
- iii. Students chat in their own language.
- iv. Individuals are different.
- v. Large classroom management.
- vi. Lack of motivation.
- vii. Lack of sufficient knowledge in language.
- viii. Students may not have enough practice.
- ix. Students feel shy to speak.
- x. Examination system etc.

By observing such and such problems in teaching speaking, the researcher attempted to study this issue to help the ELT teachers and students overcome the problems they encounter while comprehending speaking skill. It helps the learners encouraging confidence in speaking using audio aids interestingly. Audio aids help them to understand native speakers' tongue and supra-segmental features. Far more, they will be habituated in the native speakers' voice is far different

than the non-native speakers' voice. Meanwhile, the researcher insists consulting to the authentic material for developing speaking skill in the use of foreign or second language, the learners must be provided lots of opportunities for interaction in situation where the learners' heat and reply is relatively unpredictable. The whole attention of the learners must be engaged by the task or topic which is related to develop their spoken skill. Harmer (2001:269) presents the most common ways to improve the speaking skill as under:

- a. The learners should interact/speak with their teachers, parents and friends involving in both formal and informal conversations.
- b. They should take part in language games, dialogues, strip stories, role play and simulation.
- c. They should involve in discourse chain, speech debate and storytelling.
- d. They should convey news message and directions to others.
- e. They should practice being announcers or anchors of particular program.
- f. They should take part in turn wise dictation questions and answers in classrooms activities.
- g. They should take part in information gap activities under communicative approach.
- h. They should be asked information by eliciting picture display, making caricature and conveying messages.
- i. They should be asked to sing songs, recite poems/rhymes/count numbers.

These means adequate opportunities in speaking should be provided to the students by creating different situations during the instructive period. So, teaching speaking through audio aids is quite lively and interesting. This method breaks the monotonous of the students.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study was to find out the effectiveness of audio aids in English speaking skill and to promote students better pronunciation in connected speech in bachelor level.

Research Questions

In accordance with the objectives of the study, the research had been conducted to investigate answers to the following research questions:

- i. How audio aids are effective for teaching speaking skill?
- ii. How can teachers and students get benefited from audio aids in teaching pronunciation?
- iii. What policies and programmes should interfere to increase the involvement of the total students in speech competition?

Theoretical Foundation

Theories are the eyes and ears to understand particular phenomena of the world. Theories are considered as a framework in conventional research that shapes the process and outcomes of the study but I have attempted the creative notion of the theories as references.

Giri (2009) carried out a research on ‘‘Effectiveness of Teaching Pronunciation through Electronic Dictionary’’. He found out the teaching pronunciation through electronic dictionary is better and more effective than teaching pronunciation without electronic dictionary. In his study experimental group excelled the control group by 131.88 mean score. It proved that experimental group had learnt to pronounce better than control group.

Pandey (2007) conducted a research on ‘‘Effectiveness of Imitation Drill in Teaching Pronunciation’’. He attempted to find out the effectiveness of imitation in teaching pronunciation and compared the student’s pronunciation in terms of boys’ versus girls’ performance. He concluded that the experimental group was found much better than the control group. The experimental group excelled the control group by 8.05 percent in the total performance. Moreover, he concluded that the boys of experimental group performed better than the girls of control group. In total performance girls of experimental group performed better than the boys of experimental group.

Sapkota (2006) carried out a research on ‘‘Study on the Effectiveness of Live Presentation and Recorded Materials in Teaching Listening Comprehension.’’ The purpose of his study was to find out the effectiveness of live presentation and recorded materials in teaching listening comprehension. Students of grade 8 were taken to fulfil his research purpose. The findings showed that live presentations are more effective for teaching listening comprehension than recorded materials.

All these three theoretical perspectives support that second or foreign language learning and acquisition is facilitated in the use of teaching audio aids along with different instructional teaching materials and creating English speaking environment at any cost to impart speaking and pronunciation effectively.

Research Methodology

In this study, a qualitative framework was utilized in collecting and analyzing the collected data. It was confronted to the phenomenological research design. I selected 50 students studying at B. Ed first year from Mahendra Morang Adarsha Multiple Campus while teaching compulsory English as the sample population. I used judgemental sampling procedure with 25 students in experimental group and 25 students in control group. I forwarded my own assumptions, experiences and biases to analyze and interpret the collected data only from the primary instrument of inquiry.

The sources of data were included interview and field notes. The tools used to elicit the data were semi-structured open-ended interview and questionnaire. One to one individual in-depth interviews were conducted with the selected participants using the semi-structured interview questionnaire. The entire interview was audio taped for data analysis. Field notes were also used in course of data collection. Coding for the interview transcripts was done inductively using methods of constant comparison.

Results and Discussion

This study was an attempt to assess the participants’ talents in fluency. Moreover, the study oriented to investigate the proficiency level of the respondents in their English speaking and pronunciation. For this study I had taken interview to the stated two groups

i.e. experimental and control groups to collect data and interpreted them using both pre-test and post-test on the basis of the following two categories.

Holistic Comparison

The holistic comparison deals with the average score of control group and experimental group in the both pre-test and post-test. To find out the effectiveness of audio aids in teaching pronunciation of words and correct speaking in connected speech, the obtained score of each student in the pre-test and post-test was subtracted from the score of the post-test. Then, the mean score difference of the tests was calculated and compared between the both control and experimental groups.

The average score in Holistic Comparison

Group	Average Score in Pre-test	Average Score in Post-test	Difference
Control	41.2	112.8	71.6
Experimental	43.7	129.16	85.46

This table shows that the mean score of experimental group is far better than the mean score difference of control group in the pre-test was 41.2 and 112.8 in the post-test. The average score of experimental group in pre-test was 43.7 and 129.16 in the post-test. The experimental group has excelled the control group by 13.86 total mean score. Thus, the result is the experimental group has done more improvement than the control group.

Gender-Based comparison

Gender-based comparison is based on the two different comparisons of performance in terms of control and experimental group. They are boys performance and girls performance. To prove the effectiveness of audio aids in teaching speaking skill and pronunciation t-test (the test of significance of the difference between two means) was applied. In the analysis, if 't' value was greater than calculated value at 0.05 level of t-test, it was strongly claimed that the difference higher than the zero it referred the progress of the group.

Gender-based Mean Score Difference

Performance	Cont. Mean	Exp. Mean	Difference
Boys'	70.8	84.95	14.15
Girls'	73.4	86.3	12.9
Total Mean	144.2	171.25	27.05

This representation shows that the experimental group has 171.25 total mean score different in holistic comparison of two variables; whereas control group has only 144.2 mean score difference. It shows that control group has less mean score difference than that of experimental group. The experimental group has excelled the control group by 27.05. Similarly, the boys' performance in control group seems less than that of Girls' and this continues to the experimental group too. Girls' speaking power is found better from the analysis of the tabulated data. So, it proves that experimental group has learnt to pronounce better than the control group. Due to this fact, what we can conclude that audio aids is effective and useful in teaching speaking (pronunciation). It has been found out that in all variables, experimental group has got better mean score difference than the control group. It has been

proved that teaching pronunciation through audio aids has been effective over conventional way of teaching speaking skill.

Conclusion

The 'revolution' in language teaching methodology coincided with World War II, when American became aware that it needed people to learn foreign language very quickly. The new ideas about language learning came from the disciplines of descriptive linguistics and behavioural psychology which later became popular as Audio-lingual method. This method was one of the first to have its roots firmly grounded in linguistic and psychology theory (Brown, 1994:57) which apparently added to its credibility and probably had some influence in the popularity. During 20th Century, with the advent of scientific technology, different types of audio materials have been introduced. Technical aids in the language teaching are the major forces today and among these aids audio recorders, radio, gramophone, CD player, language laboratory and computer occupy the most places in language teaching classes. In building competencies speech performance the audio aids have a significant impact on their improved status and greater role in communicational discourse. Hence, this paper concludes that it is the responsibility of the ELT teachers using audio aids in teaching speaking skill to provide ample opportunity to interact face to face actively to their students participating in the social activities.

From the result of this study it is found that teaching pronunciation through audio aids is more effective than the teaching pronunciation without using audio aids. In the research the experimental group has been found better than the control group. The audio aids are also seemed significant in girls' performance than that of boys' performances from the tabulated mean score girls secured higher mean score than the boys' mean score. It has been found that the recorded materials allowed students to hear variety of different voices apart from just their own teachers. Some native teachers' voice couldn't be with the appropriate use of supra-segmental features. Again, from the analysis of word types, monosyllabic word was found easier to the students in comparison to others. Moreover, English fricatives were more difficult to Nepali learners in comparison to others. Further the study found out that student couldn't see the gestures, body languages, head movements and lip movements in audio materials; therefore it was very difficult for them to understand the native speakers' pronunciation as they are habituated in the non-native speakers' voice which is far different than the native speakers' voice. Thus, access facilities of audio aids with adequate training about the use of sources would be helpful to the teachers in the present condition in teaching speaking skill in bachelor level.

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