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USE OF POWERPOINT PRESENTATION THROUGH CLASSROOM SEMINAR: A FUNCTIONAL APPROACH



Gajanan Pandurang Patil

Asstt. Professor, Dept. of English, Smt. H.R. Patel Arts Mahila College,
SHIRPUR Dist: Dhule-MAHARASHTRA (INDIA).

Short Profile

Gajanan Pandurang Patil is working as an Assistant Professor at Department of English in Smt. H. R. Patel Arts Mahila College, SHIRPUR Dist: Dhule-MAHARASHTRA (INDIA).



ABSTRACT:

Teachers today facilitate learning of English more practically and functionally in the ESL classes. In the functional use of English language, the assistance of computer enabled devices brings up a noticeable change among the learners. Today, students are technologically advanced; hence the related tools increase their involvement and initiate their interactions with teachers and fellow students. The use of PowerPoint has retained a healthy and positive approach in the growing need for the ESL learners. Among students of English language and literature, it has become quite a familiar tool. The topics containing, poetry, drama, fiction, stories, grammar, vocabulary, phonetics etc can be artistically

presented and explained through audio, visual and graphical effects of the PowerPoint media. The research is a practical experience conducted in the classrooms of BA English students. The present research may focus on the practical utility and feasibility of this media in the improvement and development English language in the ESL classes.

KEYWORDS

Facilitate, functionally, involvement, PowerPoint, practical utility, feasibility, ESL

INTRODUCTION:

In the changing scenario of educational development, several innovative methodologies, techniques, practices, experiments have proved effectively exclusive in the development of teaching-learning process. Apart from various tools in teaching-learning process, technology enabled devices and tools have been contributing a major share in motivating both the teacher and the learner. Computer assisted resources have gifted teachers and learners a very efficient way to disseminate knowledge and information. It has become quite interesting to see how technology oriented tools may prove their magical experiments in teaching of various courses.

Teaching and learning of English language through computer technology has become easier with numerous computer enabled applications. The programmes such as MS Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Notepad, Audio-Video software are of great help in ELT classrooms. The use of ICT has now become almost essential in each class irrespective of the disciplines. ELT has been regularly undertaking experiments in teaching and learning of English language to the ESL learners. The learners of such classes enjoy the entire process with additive interest for the novelty and entertaining values of the tools. The audio-visual aids influence the second language learners for their technical effects. The figures, graphs, charts, tables, pictures, images, videos perform a logical as well as psychological impact on the learners. Recently, there has been considerable input of ELT software which is quite convenient and supportive in the practice of ELT.

Along with teaching of English through ICT by the practicing teachers, the students at tertiary level are also effectively and exclusively making use of PowerPoint presentation in ESL classroom for their classroom seminars. The present research brings out one such an experiment in the use of ICT in general and PowerPoint presentation in particular. Classroom seminar, along with other students' participative programmes has been a common practice conducted for the skill development of students. The present research puts forth some positive and healthy observations noted on the regular practice of students' PowerPoint presentation. The practice follows the popular concept of PPTs along with the traditional oral presentation. The results calculated and analyzed on the observations prove a significant contribution in the theory of teaching and learning of English language. The paper aims at an effective use of PowerPoint presentation in teaching and learning of English language among tertiary level students of the semi-urban area.

PowerPoint: An Additional Resource for Presentation

Teachers today facilitate learning of English more practically and functionally in the ESL classes. In the functional use of English language, the assistance of computer enabled devices brings up a noticeable change among the learners. The students, as ESL learners also get motivated by the performing roles of their teachers. Students learn the methodologies and become proactive in the use of this resource to present their classroom seminars, which are made mandatory. Today students are technologically advanced, hence the related tools increase students' involvement and initiate their interactions with teachers and fellow students. They use PowerPoint as a reflection of their understanding and also the medium of their expression of the target ideas. Apart from the traditional oral presentation, the technology supported means invite their interest and make them compulsorily use PowerPoint. There are several reasons in acceptance of this medium which are discussed widely in this paper. There are following features which affect the process. These assumptions seem practically and functionally feasible.

- Interesting, fun oriented, fear free device
- Increases involvement and interactions among fellow learners
- Less time consuming and easy to use
- Helps making points more clear and easy to understand through pictures, videos and graphical presentations
- Appears lively, dynamic and impressive than the regular lecture methods
- Creates among students the awareness about computer related resources
- Builds up confidence among presenters since script on slides is supportive
- Use of animation reflects the highlighted topic
- Effective in presenting points systematically with illustrations
- Gifted technique of hyperlinks on slides lead to extended discussions
- Listeners continuous attention to changing points on slides assist average students

Besides having a few notable observations, PPTs have multiple functions and utilities for the first time users of the ESL learners. Let us proceed on to the actual experiment practiced in an ELT class.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The present research works on the designed assumptions towards the practical utility of PowerPoint. The short research is done in a girls college at Shirpur in semi-urban area affiliated to North Maharashtra University, Jalgaon . The students at the undergraduate level were allotted the task of individual seminar presentation on the topics already taught by the teacher. The topics for presentation from language and literature including the theories, linguistic properties such as grammar, phonetics, etc. are covered by students. The first time presenters are guided and supported by their classmates, seniors, and teachers from the department. A special day has been decided and it creates enthusiasm among the students. Due to fixed time and day schedule, students get adequate time to prepare slides and appear for mock presentation. The routine continues for the academic year which helps the teacher provide opportunities to all students equally. Care has been taken of the advanced and the below average students by managing conditions in their favour. The activity as being participative, interactive, fun-oriented, and collaborative, is well responded by all students.

SAMPLES AND METHODOLOGY

Students from the first year to the third year B.A. get enthusiastically participated in the assignment and prepared their individual PPTs. Almost 50 students from the BA classes prepared and presented PPTs in front of the students of their classes. The course teacher observes their performance and registers his comments on the individual presentation. A separate format has been prepared and distributed beforehand to the presenters few days before having the contents with rows and columns about- topic, time, key points, details, teacher's remark and signature. The format adds an additional impression where teacher's remark appreciates her performance. Students are judged on certain criteria viz. language, grammar, quotations, voice modulation, body language, soft skills. Students are allowed to present topics with modifications if required. Performance is judged on the basis of the ability of individual presenter. A complete non-correctional approach is applied for first or second round. Corrections are suggested commonly and not targeting a single presenter. A Collective response from the listeners is taken into consideration. Adverse comments are avoided by both the teacher and the

listeners.

DATA COLLECTION FROM PRESENTERS

The routine activity proposes an idea of action research. The researcher has made analysis of the feedback collected from the presenters. Certain scales in measuring presenter's feedback are decided and framed. The statements are judged with a five point scale such as,

1. Excellent 2. Very Good 3. Good 4. Average 5. Below Average.

The statements are as follows.

- Selection of topic and idea of its presentation
- Difficulties in preparation of PPT slides / technical problems
- Self experience towards the use of PowerPoint
- Experience during presentation
- Personal attitude and impression while presenting
- Problem areas related to individual inabilities
- Difficulties in use of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation etc
- Response of attendants
- Suggestions, if any

A separate format is prepared to check students' response to the activity and their approach to learn English language with the help of these technical devices. After collection of feedback, a positive and healthy approach came out which is discussed in the latter part of this paper.

DATA COLLECTION FROM ATTENDANTS

To find out the practical utility of the activity, another feedback is collected from attendants. The feedback underlines certain key aspects of the action research. The data collection reflects the actual performance of the research. Following are the key statements upon which the analysis is made.

- Idea of PowerPoint presentation for classroom seminar
- Difference between traditional and PowerPoint presentation
- Understanding of the topic /contents
- Experience of English language learning
- Clarifications on words, phrases, keys given during presentations
- Language of the presenter- expressive (Yes/No)
- Individual impression as an attendant
- Ability to lead the explanation/ discussion
- Body language and soft skills

Apart from these points, informal talks of the teacher with students and supportive statements in favour of the presenter help in getting the proper feedback

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

After collecting data from both the presenters and students/ attendants, the five point scales have shown an increasing interest of students towards the use of PowerPoint presentation in teaching and learning English language and literature. The details of the analysis are as follows.

PRESENTERS FEEDBACK:

- Selection of topic became easy since the topic was already taught in the class hence was easy to represent / reproduce.
- Difficulties in preparation of PPT slides / technical problems arrived in the beginning due to lack of computer literacy, assistance was sought from seniors and computer teacher
- Using PowerPoint in the beginning was difficult since it needed to be presented through English in front of the teacher and students. But the increasing response from both raised up confidence
- During presentation, several difficulties in form of vocabulary, sentence construction, free expression disturbed the presentation but the encouragement by teacher and support of students helped a lot
- In the beginning bit nervousness appeared since it was the first effort to speak in English before the class. But the previous model presentations by teacher helped a lot.
- The problems like improper body language, absence of fluent English, lack of stage daring, failure in topic explanation lead to nervousness. However, the successive attempts helped to remove the problems to some extent.
- Difficulty in use of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation etc was also a big problem. Lack of vocabulary, incorrect grammar use is still the problems.
- The listeners support was quite good and positive.
- The suggestion was made in continuing the practice without fail to learn English language.

These feedbacks were informally collected through discussion with the presenters.

Attendants Feedback:

- The Idea of PowerPoint presentation for classroom seminar is seen welcomed by most of students. They deeply appreciated the efforts taken by the presenters for explaining the points with the help of animations, pictures, graphs etc
- They certainly marked the difference between traditional and PowerPoint presentation. Most of the students favoured the technical aspects of the PPTs and commented adversely upon the lecture methods as being boring and dissuading; while PPTs continuously invite attention for the newness added by the presenter through the hyperlinks to the pictures, audio clips or video clips etc. Hyperlinks helped to find out the meaning of the words and phrases there only hence require no dictionary.
- A few students feel that due to inability of some presenters, the topic is not clarified and sometimes proper presentation is not done.
- All the students registered a great favour to the PPTs as a good experience of learning English language. The words, phrases, lines, sentences appearing on screen clarify the actual spellings, meaning of the phrases or sentences, dictionary meaning of some difficult words etc.
- During presentation, clarifications on words, phrases, keys are given by the presenter. A chance to listen more of English language through a good presenter is possible. The poetic lines or quotations,

definitions, features, examples, chronologies shown through visual effect attracts attention and provides a sound approach to grasp English language.

- As an attendant, PowerPoint is seen fun deriving, motivating, interesting tool in teaching of English language and literature.

RESULT ANALYSIS

After a wide discussion and collection of feedback on the use of PowerPoint, a healthy and positive approach seems growing among the ESL learners. The users of the device or the tool despite of a few adverse reactions propose to utilize PowerPoint in teaching of English language. The traditional grammar-translation method of lecturing needs to be replaced by the PowerPoint method. The novelty, newness and innovativeness of this ICT tool are widely claimed by both the presenters and the attendants. The study approaches such as – observation, classification, experimentation, analysis are found well preserved through such presentations. It invites all types of users irrespective of their background; tribal, rural or urban believe in and support the practical utility of this tool. Among the students of English language and literature, it has become quite a familiar tool. The topics containing, poetry, drama, fiction, stories, grammar, vocabulary, phonetics etc can be artistically presented and explained through the audio, visual and graphical effects of the PowerPoint media. The present research thus focuses on the practical utility and feasibility of this media in the improvement of the learning English language. It may therefore be regarded that teaching and learning of English language has to be done maximum through the PowerPoint tool.

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