

S2 Oral Communication

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Handouts to be studied:

1. Oral Communication I

Definition – functions – Some important elements of Oral Communication- some basic Oral Communication skills. (done in class)

1.1. Top ten communication skills:

- Listening (active listening skills)
- Non-verbal communication
- Clarity and concision
- Friendliness
- Confidence
- Empathy
- Open-mindedness
- Respect
- Feedback
- Picking the right medium

2. Oral Communication II

2.1. Non-verbal Communication

- Physical appearance
- Paralanguage
- Kinesics
- Oculistics
- Haptics
- Proxemics
- Chronemics

3. Oral Communication III

- 3.1. How to improve Oral Communication skills
- 3.2. Effective techniques to improve Oral Communication skills
- 3.3. How to apply the oral communication skills

Oral Communication II

Non verbal communication

Some notes about oral communication:

Oral communication takes place in face-to face conversations, group discussions, telephone calls and other circumstances, in which spoken word is used to express meaning. It is the ability to talk with others to give and exchange information and ideas, such as: ask questions, give directions, coordinate work tasks, explain and persuade.

Students are supposed to learn more about the types and benefits of oral communication and find out how they can improve their own communication abilities. Effective oral communication skills help students to improve their own academic performance, increase their employment options, enhance their subsequent professional competence and improve their own personal effectiveness.

Communication skills include the mix of verbal, interpersonal and physical strategies needed to interact confidently and effectively with a range of audiences. A skilful communicator draws on a number of different means (e.g., graphical, visual, statistical, audio-visual and technological) to get the point across.

What is non verbal communication?

In the process of exchanging information between people, communication also involves the transferring of feelings, emotions, attitudes and thoughts through body movements and gestures, which are referred to as non verbal communication. This includes behaviour and elements of speech aside from the words themselves that transmit meaning. Non-verbal communication includes pitch, speed, tone and volume of voice, gestures and facial expressions, body posture, stance, and proximity to the listener, eye movements and contact, and dress and appearance.

According to the Wikipedia dictionary, nonverbal communication between people is communication through sending and receiving wordless clues.

It includes the use of visual cues such as *body language (kinesics)*, *distance (proxemics)* and *physical environments/appearance*, of *voice (paralanguage)* and of *touch (haptics)*. It can also include *chronemics (the use of time)* and *oculesics (eye contact and the actions of looking while talking and listening, frequency of glances, patterns of fixation, pupil dilation, and blink rate)*.

Non verbal communication, especially body language, can usually send a strong message in addition to that of the words. The tone of the voice, its pitch, volume, quality and speed may have certain effects on what you say.

The most common forms/components of non verbal communication:

- 1. Physical appearance:** The physical appearance of the speaker usually contributes to how he/she is perceived. Neatly combed hair, ironed clothes and a lively smile will always carry more weight than words.
- 2. Paralanguage:** It is the study of variation in pitch, speed, volume and pauses to convey meaning. Interestingly, when a speaker is giving a presentation and is looking for a feedback from the audience, he/she will most likely pause. However, when no response is desired, that speaker will talk faster with no pause.
- 3. Kinesics (body movement):** It is the study of facial expressions, posture and gestures. It is interesting to study how body movement is interpreted in different cultures and societies.
- 4. Oculesics:** It is the study of eye contact. As a social or behavioral science, oculesics focuses on deriving meaning from eye behavior.
- 5. Haptics: Haptic communication** refers to the ways in which people communicate and interact via the sense of touch. As well as providing information about surfaces and textures, touch, or the haptic sense, is a non verbal and non visual component of communication in interpersonal relationships. Touch is extremely important for humans and is vital in conveying physical intimacy.
- 6. Proxemics:** It is the study of human spatial requirements and the effects that population density has on behavior, communication, and social interaction. In other words, it is the study of measurable distance between people as they interact.
- 7. Chronemics:** It is the study of the role and the use of time in non verbal communication.

Oral Communication III

How to improve oral communication skills

Many people nowadays need to have the basic skills to communicate in English. However, some lack the ability to communicate in English and often suffer from a kind of "inferiority complex". They fall back and stay behind others in this competitive world and often fail to reach the top of their career owing to the lack of oral communication skills. They often retreat from important conversations and events and fail to promote and growth in their career.

How to start improving Oral Communication Skills? Oral communication skills start with listening and understanding, reading, writing and then presenting. If you are not often exposed to many situations of English conversation, you should improve your oral communication skills now. Do not let the inability to converse in English become your major barrier in your career improvement. You can overcome your fear, ignorance and abhorrence for this language by improving the skills in the following ways.

General Ways to Improve Your English Oral Skill

Though there are a number of ways to improve oral skills in English, there are very few that really work and are highly recommendable. Some of the effective techniques to improve your speaking skill are the following.

1. Understanding the fundamentals of oral communication: Before you step into the matter and start working on your oral communication skills, it is quite essential to understand the basics of communication skills. Do not refrain from practicing oral communication in English in the fear of making mistakes and getting embarrassed. Mistakes are an important part of any learning

process. Initially, you might face difficulty, yet with practice and proper guidance, you will definitely improve your standards.

2. Frame in words what you think: The major failure that a person faces during oral communication is the inability to put the words in a frame and express what he/she thinks. So, have the courage and confidence to speak your mind out and express what you think. Never mind if you cannot arrange the words properly and frame a sentence. Intensive practice is essential.

3. Kick off your hesitation or reluctance: "He who hesitates is lost" Hesitation, mixed with the thinking about how people perceive you if you commit mistakes while speaking, is the greatest fear that almost everyone, especially non-native speakers, experience. This fear may haunt you for quite a long time until and unless you start giving no importance to it. In the process of developing exceptional oral communication skills, these ideas should not hinder your progress.

4. Practice will make you better: Knowing that "**practice makes perfect**", it is considered as the basic learning process. You cannot improve your oral communication skills unless you interact more with people. In order to bring out your skills and fluency in speaking, you should practice speaking with friends, classmates, roommates colleagues etc. in English.

Effective Techniques to Improve Oral Communication Skills

Certainly, you cannot become skillful in communicating in English in a single day. The learning process should start from the scratch and must be completed successfully. Enjoy speaking in English and you would improve rapidly. Overcome all your fears and worries by practicing English speaking and participating in conversations spontaneously.

1. Read as much as you can: Reading is considered to be the best practice that can enhance basic oral communication skills. Reading English literature (novels, plays and poetry), news papers, magazines, etc. improves vocabulary. Also, this will help you in

developing your thinking process and increasing your sharpness in gathering ideas and expressing them in English.

2. Check out the dictionaries (refer to the Study skills course): The dictionary is an extremely helpful tool that enables people to learn the meaning of new words, with their synonyms, antonyms, and derived forms. Also, the dictionary provides a variety of explanations and examples of different uses, in addition to the phonetic transcription, which is a key to successful pronunciation. Students are strongly advised to make regular use of their dictionaries.

3. Listen to learn (see active listening): Listening is another practice that will help you to train yourself for oral communication. Initially, you will be diverted from the listening as most of the words will appear to be unfamiliar and you might not be able to understand everything that you hear (this happens, for example, while watching a film in English). Moreover, the accent of a native English speaker might not be easy to understand as you might find difficulty in the tone and accent of the spoken words and sentences. However, you will learn gradually, but for that you need to have a lot of patience and perseverance. Listening to slow English songs, speech, presentations, news and debates, or watching movies, will help you considerably. Commitment and devotion will take you far in improving oral communication skills.

4. Writing the necessary points: While you read, you generally come across some specific words that are difficult to spell or pronounce. Writing them down and checking their pronunciation can only make it easier to recognize and spell such words properly. Also, writing helps you to become familiar with sentence construction, which will later help you in conversation.

5. Read Out Loud: Reading is indeed a good habit and you need to keep it up. However, silent reading may not always be efficient in getting over your oral communication lags. Read out loud so that you can clearly hear your own voice and make out the mistakes while reading. The golden tip for brushing up your communication skills is to pronounce each and every word clearly and loudly. Read whatever you get in your hand, whether it is a torn out page from an old book or a column from a newspaper.

6. Ask your guide or teacher: The communication issues or errors can be corrected at the bud if you approach your teacher or guide who probably have some expertise in English. Clearing the doubts related to both grammatical and sentence construction, as well as pronunciation issues will significantly help you become skilled at oral communication.

7. Take help from Internet: Being the best option for e-learners, many websites and links can help you in clearing your doubts (Google, Yahoo, Wikipedia etc.). For example, if a particular pronunciation is bothering you, enter the word in Google and click the audio version to listen to the correct and proper pronunciation. You can also look out for other online dictionaries. Other than Google, you can take the assistance of Oxford online dictionary or other renowned dictionaries. These dictionaries not only have a wide range of words and their meanings, but also include an audio version. You can listen to the audio version for every word and can practice on your own. Moreover, you would find the phonetic transcription of each and every word, which will give you a clear idea of the proper pronunciation of a given word.

8. Enhance your vocabulary skills: A good orator/speaker has new words in his/ her register and uses them intelligently while speaking. So, when you are on the way of becoming a good oral communicator, you should increase your vocabulary as well. Learn at least one word everyday and try to use it the next day.

9. Watch movies to learn more: If watching English movies during leisure is your favorite pass time, then you are a lucky person. Your hobby will help you in improving your communication skills. Good quality movies can help you in brushing up your accent and sentence construction. Also, this effective way enhances your self-confidence.

10. Attend English-activities going around you: How about spending some time in some debate or discussion sessions in your university? (Conferences, seminars, study days etc.) Attend them, not just for the sake of attending, but to learn something.

11. Get engaged in debates and discussions: If you have few willing friends who also want to boost up their English oral communication skills, then plan a debate or discussion session with them. Contribute your ideas, your thoughts and ask them about

their perspectives. A healthy and interactive session once or twice a week will definitely help you in learning and sharing.

12. Find out helping materials from the market: It is better to avoid books with titles like 'learn to speak English in five days' or similar to this. These are not that important; they include some fake and misleading instructions that will not help you much. There are some really inspirational English learning books available in the market that will empower your oral communication skills.

13. Inquisitiveness (the pillar to success): How inquisitiveness helps in improving English oral communication skills is not new to anyone. Curiosity means interest and brings in the urge to learn new words, accept the challenges and develop smooth communication skills. Unless you are curious to learn more, you will never develop confidence and knowledge.

How to Apply the oral Communication Skills You Have Learned

Now that you are familiar with some techniques suggested for improving oral communication, you need to find out how to apply them to your conversation. Here are a few ideas for you.

1. Become friendly and approachable while speaking: (see previous handout).

Communication made in a friendly tone always gets an upper hand compared to communication done in a formal manner. Engage your listeners as much as possible through your words.

2. A clear speaking: Be and talk to the point. Stick to the point on which you want the discussion to be done. Be brief and highlight on the main points as often as you can. Do not forget that long and wordy speeches may become monotonous and cause the audience to lose interest and you to lose track of what you are presenting.

3. Apply gestures while speaking: While you speak, try making your point clear by including some gestures with the help of your hands and face (see previous handout). Adequate gestures often create a positive impact on the audience as well as on the speaker by making him/her more comfortable and less tense.

4. Confident body language: While you are engaged in oral communication, your body posture is a factor that may speak, in some situations, more than your words. For example, a decent and approachable body language engages the audience, while hunched shoulders and crossed arms reflect your unwillingness in speaking.

5. Optimistic attitude: An oral communication is greatly influenced by confident attitude. A calm and composed attitude shows your patience, sincerity, respect, honesty and value for the work.

6. Control over your words: If you want to get hold of good oral communication skills, you need to follow few things that will give you control over words and language.

- Speak clearly and do not mumble
- Make the audience understand you at the very beginning of your speech so that you do not need to repeat
- Pronounce the words clearly (know the proper pronunciation of the words)
- Use appropriate words while speaking
- Use words that are familiar
- Slow down your speech where necessary

7. Stick to one accent: While speaking, it is recommended that you apply your skills intelligently and not mix up the accents (British, American). Also, do not mix up the messages that you want to deliver to the audience.

8. Speak with humbleness: Besides patience, you should also work on watching your modesty while speaking. Humility is one of the best traits that listeners would appreciate. This may be a good sign of your oral communication skills.

By now, you have got the ways to improve the oral communication skills. As a learner and a beginner, you might come across various hurdles, but keep your calm, dedication, patience and perseverance, and carry on. By practicing hard, you can reach greater heights and might end up becoming an English orator one day.