



University PGRI Adi Buana
Surabaya - Indonesia



University of Malaya
Malaysia

PROCEEDINGS

International Conference
“Future Education in Global Challenges”

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Enhancing Midwifery Students' Speaking Ability Through Impromptu Speech

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ABSTRACT: This paper presents a technique for teaching midwifery students which is aimed to enhance their speaking ability through impromptu speech. The essence of the impromptu speech is the ability to speak confidently and clearly in front of a group of people or audience with very little preparation. Impromptu speech is a popular kind of speaking activity in which learners prepare a talk and speak on either a given topic or on the topic of their own choice. The aim of this technique is to introduce the concept of a short talk and give speaking practice not controlled for accuracy. But even with little to no preparation, the learners are still expected to deliver a great speech. Recently, learning content-are subjects through the medium of a foreign language has become increasingly popular in many countries. In some cases, a foreign language is used as the medium of instruction in non English language department. Furthermore the objective of English subject for midwifery is to make the students are able to communicate orally and written form in the international communication midwifery contexts.

Keywords: midwifery students' speaking ability, impromptu speech.

Introduction

Speaking is an activity in which learners prepare a talk and speak on either a given topic or on the topic of their own choice. Making a presentation in English can be a difficult and demanding or even daunting task. The presenter needs certain skills which go beyond the range of ordinary language classrooms.

Therefore, learners need some systematic training in preparing and performing its different elements-from planning and introducing a topic to concluding and handling questions. To learn how to make clear and well-organized presentations in front of an audience, even if the audience are own classmates, and to overcome fear of speaking in public takes a lot of practice.

This contribution promotes classroom activities that give students practice in speaking briefly. It is the first step to teaching how to make presentations, and it advocates the personalized approach in the lead-in stages of teaching short talks . 'A short talk' means a non-stop speaking for 2-3 minutes. The talking time may be extended to 5 minutes in the successive stages. In the follow-up activities,

practice involves brief talks on medical data, thus stimulating students' creative speech.

This paper describe how to enhance midwifery students' speaking ability through impromptu speech.

Language Acquisition

Some people view of adult education is one of andragogy . This science and art of teaching adults is based on two concepts: the adult learner is self-directed and autonomous; the lecture is a facilitator rather than presenter of content. There is an assumption that the learner arrives in the classroom with a skill set and knowledge base that will be enhanced by the new learning experience. Developmental learning theory derives from cognitive psychology and believes that adult students have already developed their own cognitive maps and strategies to guide their interpretation of the world. They learn by doing and learning new knowledge and skills which they then associate with previous learning and experience. Prior learning is acknowledged as well as assumed.

Language acquisition must be a combination of academic preparation that

includes behavioural and cognitive approaches that are secondary to the focus or context of the lesson. The design of English for Midwifery reflects this. Lessons are contextually and experientially based to provide hands-on opportunities to apply or use the language immediately. Classes are interactive and promote exploration and discovery of language through discussions and exercises based on the focus of the lesson. The curriculum design is based on health care, not English language structure or rules.

The acquisition of a new language identifies that students are much more motivated to learn when they find value in the material. When designing a curriculum for Midwifery English, it is important to survey the motives of the students. The writers have found these are not always the same. Some students pursue career-specific English course for professional development reasons while others take it with the hopes of immigration. The former is generally more successful than the latter. Students hoping for immigration to an English-speaking country are so burdened with credentialing and testing that their focus is not on actual acquisition but on scores and recognition of coursework by regulatory bodies. Students interested in professional development seem more committed. They are less in a hurry to learn: they do not rush. They are more willing to take the time to practice and use the language with others, and value the importance overall of providing safe midwifery care when using a foreign language at work.

When the curriculum designer begins to develop a course or series of courses in Midwifery English, he/she must consider who the students are, what their motivations will be, and identify which perspective they wish their lecturers to have. The curriculum framework must be developed to meet the needs of the educational institution, the students, relevant legislation, and any other stakeholders such as employers of the students. Fundamental to the curriculum is the legal requirement for the practice and licensing of any and all health professionals: safety to practice. This concept includes skills and competencies that promote health and do no harm to patients or clients. It includes the

ability to do the work in the English language, safely and competently.

The language of Midwifery is quite unique. It is fraught with technical, academic language, abbreviations and acronyms. English for Midwifery addresses each of this in its learning activities. The curriculum never loses sight of its obligation to the public to provide safe practitioners.

Currently, language learning and language teaching is a combination of behaviourism and cognitivism. These comprise the audio-lingual method of language acquisition. Teaching based in behavioural psychology focuses on stimulus-response-reinforcement as the method for promoting learning. The student is presented with a great deal of material over the duration of a course, and frequently drilled or given oral/written feedback to reinforce accuracy and skill. There is a strong focus on repetition with the belief that this will create a habit of using language in certain ways: in response to certain cues. The drawback is that this does not foster thinking, generalization, or application of language in other than the structured, memorized stimulus-response form. Many schools around the world are using this method for teaching midwifery English. Their focus is on the presentation of reams of medical terminology with very little application to the real world of midwifery practice.

Teaching Speaking

Speaking English is the main goal of many adult learners. Their personalities play a large role in determining how quickly and how correctly they will accomplish this goal. Those who are risk-takers unafraid of making mistakes will generally be more talkative, but with many errors that could become hard-to-break habits. Conservative, shy students may take a long time to speak confidently, but when they do, their English often contains fewer errors and they will be proud of their English ability. It's a matter of quantity vs. quality, and neither approach is wrong. However, if the aim of speaking is

communication and that does not require perfect English, then it makes sense to encourage quantity in your classroom. Break the silence and get students communicating with whatever English they can use, correct or not, and selectively address errors that block communication.

Speaking lessons often tie in pronunciation and grammar (discussed elsewhere in this guide), which are necessary for effective oral communication. Or a grammar or reading lesson may incorporate a speaking activity. Either way, the students will need some preparation before the speaking task. This includes introducing the topic and providing a model of the speech they are to produce. A model may not apply to discussion-type activities, in which case students will need clear and specific instructions about the task to be accomplished. Then the students will practice with the actual speaking activity.

These activities may include imitating (repeating), answering verbal cues, interactive conversation, or an oral presentation. Most speaking activities inherently practice listening skills as well, such as when one student is given a simple drawing and sits behind another student, facing away. The first must give instructions to the second to reproduce the drawing. The second student asks questions to clarify unclear instructions, and neither can look at each other's page during the activity. Information gaps are also commonly used for speaking practice, as are surveys, discussions, and role-plays.

Here are some ideas to keep in mind as we plan our speaking activities.

-) **Content**
As much as possible, the content should be practical and usable in real-life situations. Avoid too much new vocabulary or grammar, and focus on speaking with the language the students have.
-) **Correcting Errors**
We need to provide appropriate feedback and correction, but don't interrupt the flow of communication. Take notes while pairs or groups are

talking and address problems to the class after the activity without embarrassing the student who made the error. We can write the error on the board and ask who can correct it.

-) **Quantity vs. Quality**
Address both interactive fluency and accuracy, striving foremost for communication. Get to know each learner's personality and encourage the quieter ones to take more risks.
-) **Conversation Strategies**
Encourage strategies like asking for clarification, paraphrasing, gestures, and initiating ('hey,' 'so,' 'by the way').
-) **Teacher Intervention**
If a speaking activity loses steam, we may need to jump into a role-play, ask more discussion questions, clarify our instructions, or stop an activity that is too difficult or boring.

Many language learners regard speaking ability as the measure of knowing a language. These learners define fluency as the ability to converse with others, much more than the ability to read, write, or comprehend oral language. They regard speaking as the most important skill they can acquire, and they assess their progress in terms of their accomplishments in spoken communication.

Language learners need to recognize that speaking involves three areas of knowledge:

-) **Mechanics** (pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary): Using the right words in the right order with the correct pronunciation
-) **Functions** (transaction and interaction): Knowing when clarity of message is essential (transaction/information exchange) and when precise understanding is not required (interaction/relationship building)
-) **Social and cultural rules and norms** (turn-taking, rate of speech, length of pauses between speakers, relative roles of participants): Understanding how to take into account who is speaking to whom, in what circumstances, about what, and for what reason.

In the communicative model of language teaching, teachers help their students develop this body of knowledge by providing authentic practice that prepares students for real-life communication situations. They help their students develop the ability to produce grammatically correct, logically connected sentences that are appropriate to specific contexts, and to do so using acceptable (that is, comprehensible) pronunciation.

How to Give a Successful Impromptu Speech

If we are known as an experienced presenter or as an expert on a particular subject, we will certainly be asked to give an impromptu speech at one time or another. Rather than declining or becoming tongue-tied, we should view this with enthusiasm as a great opportunity to shine as a speaker. How can we make sure that this will be the successful outcome?

Be prepared with a second presentation.

We have heard and read that Mark Twain said “It usually takes me more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech.” But, we ask, how can we prepare if it is impromptu? If we are already presenting as part of a program or seminar, there is always the chance that one of the other speakers may not show up. Check to see what other topics are going to be covered, and if we have background in these areas, be prepared to give a second presentation. If not, have a second presentation ready that we could offer as a substitute. We would be surprised at how often this situation arises due to travel problems.

Be willing and able.

We just arrived for an evening or afternoon of listening to a presentation in the area of our field of expertise, when the chairman rushes up to we panicked. The speaker isn’t going to get there, could we help out by taking his or her place? If we say “no” we will be thought of an “uncooperative” but if we say “yes” and do a poor presentation, it could hurt our reputation as a speaker and expert. I suggest saying, “yes” but also asking the person who is introducing us to stress “what a good sport we

are to fill in.” Again, however, it doesn’t hurt to be prepared if we will be attending a program in our field of expertise. And, it should be a habit to dress well for every occasion, as if we might end up in front of the group. There is always the possibility that we will be asked to fill in for someone else.

Organize our thoughts.

Hopefully, we will have some time to organize our presentation before we are “on stage.” If it is not too obvious, take a walk to a secluded area where you can think through our opening remarks (usually a good story that we’ve told many times will suffice); what three major points we will make (there are different structures that work well, for example, the past, present, and future); and what will be our conclusion (a strong closing story or a call to action will both work to our advantage). If we can’t slip away, think of these while sitting in the audience.

Take the platform with enthusiasm and confidence.

Even though it is understandable that we will feel some apprehension in an impromptu experience, visualize ourselves as confident and excited about the opportunity to present to a group who will be so happy and receptive that we have agreed to “save the day.” Remember that, on the whole, most audience members want us to succeed, and if the introducer has done his or her job we will be greeted with relief and pleasure. Take a moment to breathe and establish rapport. Once we start and have the audience with us, our nerves will vanish.

Never, never apologize or make excuses.

The minute a presenter starts to apologize and make excuses, he or she robs him or herself of credibility, and the audience prepares for a mediocre or average presentation. Think of ourselves as the hero or heroine and give the very best speech we can give on such short notice. We wouldn’t have been asked if we weren’t up to it.

Avoid the common blunders

If you haven't had sufficient time to prepare, we must be careful not to ramble or stray from the main subject. A good practice when giving any presentation, impromptu or not, is to decide what our main point or view is, support it with facts and arguments, and stick to it. We've all heard speakers who talk on and on without saying anything important.

Enjoy the appreciation!

Once we are finished, let the audience have time to clap and show their appreciation for a job well done. I have seen so many speakers so eager to get back to their seats, they don't give us time to let them know how happy we are that they have shared their knowledge with us. And, appreciate ourselves too! If we forgot to say something we planned to say, or think of something we should have said, no one else knows that. Be happy with what you did! We are all too hard on ourselves!

Teaching Impromptu Speech to Midwifery Students

The aim of this activity is to introduce the concept of a short talk and give speaking practice not controlled for accuracy. Start by pre-teaching (if unknown) the words LAYOUT and KEYWORDS, and introduce these concepts. Negotiate with learners a list of topics for a short talk, e.g. My Hobby, My Best / Worst Holidays,

My Favorite Kind of Music, Terrible Experience I Have Had with a Food (Drink), Annoying Behavior in Public Places, etc. Each teacher knows which topics are taboo with their learners – so avoid including them.

Remember that learners need to be motivated in order to be successful. Personal involvement, which makes language learning content personally meaningful, is a very effective way of enhancing motivation (Griffiths, G. and Keohane, 2001).

Give learners a demonstration of a short talk on one of the topics in the list. Therefore, highlight the keywords and layout of your short talk on the board. Make sure you do not exceed the time limit. Encourage

students to ask you questions concerning your talk and answer them honestly.

Ask students to choose a subject from the suggested list and to prepare carefully what they are going to say. It may help, if you encourage them to work in pairs – rehearsing the talk beforehand takes some of the pressure off the students.

Ask the students not to write their talk in full – just to make notes if necessary – because they will have to speak not read to their partners.

Set the time limit for a talk – 2 or 3 minutes. Allow volunteers to give short talks – do not press all the students, particularly those who do not feel like talking on the first occasion.

After the activity ask the learners to self- and peer- assess their speaking. Do not interrupt the students – let them share their opinions freely.

As a final touch, comment on the effectiveness of the students' brief talks, but make sure you do not express unjust or harsh criticism – learners will need a lot of practicing to perfect the skill of getting the meaning across.

Grabbing Every Opportunity

When you're asked to deliver a public speech without prior notice, you need to prepare as fast as possible. It could only be seconds or minutes before you actually stand in front of everyone so you need to grab every opportunity to prepare. You can't just stand in front of everyone without thinking about the speech. This can easily lead to disaster as you didn't have any thought on what you should talk about. If you're not an experienced speaker, your first sentences could easily lead to disastrous consequences.

The first thing you have to do when asked to promptly speak in public is to look for a pen and paper. This will really help you

control your thoughts. Because of time constraints, you have to create the flow of your speech and this can be done by creating an outline. This will help you concentrate on what you need to talk about instead of delving on too many subjects.

The Launching Point

The first thing you want to write down on your notes or at least remember is the launching point. This should be your main topic in your speech. Because you don't have a lot of time in your hands, you don't have to create multiple points in your speech. Write the main topic and support them with additional information that you already know.

Be sure to choose the launching point well. Don't choose any topic that you vaguely remember. You've been selected for a reason and that is your expertise on the said subject. Focus on the said subject so that you can easily deliver facts and information.

The First and Last Line

One of the best ways to ensure success in an impromptu speech is to write down (or at least remember) your first and last line. These are the words that will be often be remembered by your audience. Create a compelling introduction so that you can easily draw your audience to the topic you are about to discuss. As a conclusion, you can summarize what you have just said or you can simply emphasize a point you just made.

A simple trick is to use a quote. It doesn't have to be a familiar quote but should be related to your topic. With a quote, you can slowly expand your speech as you support the quote with information that you already know.

Relaxing Methods

Panicking and uneasiness is a common reaction even for professional speakers when they are asked for an impromptu speech. Talking to a crowd with very little preparation could easily go wrong. With very little preparation, not enough information might be gathered and the audience might not be informed or at least entertained.

Panicking only increases the chance of giving a bad speech. Take a deep breath before you go up the stage or stand in front of everyone. If you have a minute or two to prepare; close your eyes and breathe slowly but deeply so that you can control the blood flow in your body which could help you relax.

Take Note of Your Tone

With your small notes and quotes to help you jumpstart your speech, there is one more thing that you have to take care: the tone of your voice. Because you can't rehearse for the speech, you have to concentrate on controlling your tone while talking to the public. A controlled tone will mean command of the language as well as knowledge of the subject.

Conclusion

Success in language learning depends on what goes on inside and between people in the classroom (Stevick, 1980:4). Classroom education, to a very large degree, is talk, i.e. it is the social use of language. For learners, social risk-taking is integrated with linguistic risk-taking. Giving a short talk is perceived by learners as a slight and hence justifiable risk to take on.

Preparation for a short talk involves little, or no, preliminary reading, which means that students do not have any materials to narrate. Learners are expected to report, or to enunciate their own ideas in their own words. Creative tasks stimulate social and linguistic risk-taking, i.e. experimenting with language, using it to express own ideas. In this way, giving short talks serves the purpose of acquiring a skill for life long learning.

Finally, having built up self-confidence in speaking briefly in front of their classmates, learners are ready for mastering extended presentations. However, they will apparently need more extensive training for developing masterly presentation skills.

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