

# Speech Training Introduced in Required English Classes

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## Abstract

The effects of the introduction of a speech training method on the motivational change of university students and their apprehension of the effects of the course were examined. The results show the use of materials in a special field of study is accepted by the students and the speech training that is based upon the contents is accepted as effective though the habituation of the method requires some more thoughtful devisal of the whole procedure of the introduction.

## Introduction

Nation and Newton (2009) showed five causes and solutions for learners who were not willing to speak. Causes described are: 1) inadequate vocabulary, 2) inadequate control of grammar, 3) lack of fluency, 4) shyness, and 5) lack of encouragement. The first three of these causes are personal and each student has his or her level of problems. For the causes, 4 and 5, they suggest the use of small groups where their mental tension is lower and they are easily encouraged among group members. For the first 3 sets of problems some kind of individualized approach will be necessary. The speech training method introduced in this paper, which is also introduced in the previous research (Tanabe, 2005), is not only for the classroom activity but mainly for the individual learning situation. This paper discusses the effects of the introduction of the speech training method on the motivational change of university students and their apprehension of the effects of the course based on the idea of content based approach that would provide the contents or topics of speech for the students.

## Research Method

### Method

A questionnaire with 16 items was given to the subjects after the course of three months of regular English classes of two different universities.

### Subjects

There were three groups of subjects in this study. Two groups of students were in the first year of Keio University majoring in literature and another was in the second year of Tokyo Polytechnic University who was majoring the imaging art (TPU). There were 10 students in the first group (Keio 1), 18 in the second group (Keio 2) and 22 in TPU at the time of this research. The members of the two groups of Keio University were in the third level, the first having the highest scores and the fourth the lowest. The levels would be estimated as that of the second grade or pre-first grade of The Step Examination (Eiken) or 600 to 700 points in the TOEIC examination. The level of the students of TPU was lower as the third grade of STEP examination or 450 to 500 in the TOEIC examination. The contents dealt with in each class were those of applied linguistics for Keio 1, human behavior for Keio 2 and TPU.

## Philosophy of Teaching

The content-based approach was taken. The philosophy presented here was the same as the one

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presented in 2008. The purposes of the use of that approach were:

- (1) to motivate the students by introducing the specialized field in the level of higher education,
- (2) to provide students with the opportunity of the practical use of English,
- (3) to provide students with the opportunity of immersing in the situation with a lot of comprehensible input (Krashen, 1972 in Tanabe, 2008) .

### **Syllabus of the course**

The syllabus and the contents of the classes were almost the same as the one presented by Tanabe, 2008. The only difference was audio-visual materials were frequently used for Keio 2 and TPU. The AV materials were used almost two times in a month. This was to complement the lacking information that was caused by the lecture sometimes given in English and the abstract idea of the complicated brain structures and functions, *etc.*

For Keio 1

Textbooks

The Natural Approach by Krashen (1972)\*1, The Language Learning Strategies by Oxford (1985)\*2, and Understanding Second Language Acquisition (1985) \*3 were mainly read.

Topics were:

- 1) Introduction (1 hour)
- 2) Language Learning Strategies (4 hours)
- 3) Interlanguage (3 hours)
- 4) Language Acquisition Theories (5 hours)

For Keio 2 and TPU

Textbooks

Emotional Intelligence by Goldman (1994)\*4, People Watching by Morris (1977)\*5, and Human Motivation by Franken (1982) \*6 were mainly read.

Topics were:

- 1) Introduction (1 hour)
- 2) Past and Current Issues in Motivation (4 hours)
- 3) Emotion and Human Behavior (4 hours)
- 4) Components of Human Motivation (4 hours)

Followings are the instruction about the self-training method of presentation that were explained by the instructor for both groups of the students:

### **Monologue Method of Speech Training**

Prepare topics in a specific field. Speak to a microphone. When you find words you don't know, look them up in the dictionary. You don't have to stop the recording during the whole process. You can go back and start from the beginning. You can stop and think as long as you want. After school, you can summarize the points of lectures and explain them in English. You can also summarize the sections of a book as you proceed to the next section. In that case, you can use vocabulary in the book and it makes the training more efficient. You can do it without recording equipment, but it may

make your training more meaningful and you can recognize your development after a few months. Try in three minutes fast and then increase the length of the speech. Just try it and report your trial.

(Tanabe, 2005)

The major difference of the class schedule among the classes was that in Keio 1, each student had the chance of presenting their summary of each class about three to five minutes at the end of the class every week. The other two classes did not have the opportunity to present in public.

## Results and Discussion

The following are the questionnaire items:

Evaluated on five-point scales having 10 “very positive” to 1 “very negative.”

The reasons are given for each evaluation.

Table 1. Average for each questionnaire item

Average	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
KEIO 1	1.7	8.8	1.0	2.5	8.0	4.6	8.3	8.7	7.3	8.3	8.6	8.4	N/A	N/A	N/A	9.0
KEIO 2	3.5	8.3	1.0	1.5	7.8	5.7	6.6	9.0	8.7	9.5	9.3	9.8	9.6	8.8	8.2	9.1
TPU	2.7	6.1	1.4	4.2	6.9	5.5	6.7	8.5	6.3	8.1	8.1	8.4	8.4	9.1	6.8	7.4
N (total)	35	35	38	40	31	31	42	36	28	28	28	28	24	29	23	31

In the question from 9 to 16, the procedure of the classes was evaluated. These questions were given in order to eliminate the other factors that would affect the questions that asked the major interest of this paper the introduction of speech training in required English classes: Q9) Were the materials in the first semester presented in the appropriate level for you?, Q10) Did the class move forward too fast or too slow?, Q11) Was the quantity of the contents presented appropriate for the class purpose?, Q12) Was the quality of the presentation by the lecturer good enough?, Q13) Was the frequency of the use of audio-visual materials appropriate for the class purpose?, Q14) Were the contents of the audio-visual materials appropriate for the class purpose?, Q15) Was the use of subtitles appropriate for understanding the videos?, Q16) Was the style of the class appropriate for the class objectives?

The answers from the three groups to the question above show their satisfaction with the class procedure and this might not affect the evaluation of the speech training method in question at least negatively.

## The Questionnaire items and the replies from the students

The ratio of each answer was shown in the square brackets:

1. Did you do the speech training taught in the beginning of the lecture at home?

Positive (Evaluated as from 7 to 10 point) [0, 0%]

Neutral (4-6) [9, 25.7%]

Negative (1-3) [25, 71.4%]

As are shown above, there is no student who evaluated he or she regularly did the speech training as taught in the class. In Keio1, where the subjects regularly had the opportunity of presenting among their classmates they evaluated as 1.7 on an average, which is lower than those of the other two classes of 3.5 of Keio 2 and 2.7 of TPU. This is contradictory to the general assumption.

2. Was the speech training effective for the reading class?

Positive (7 -10) [22, 62.9%]

Neutral (4-6)[10, 28.6%]

Negative (1-3)[3, 8.6%]

In Keio 1, where the subjects had the regular opportunity of the presentation, all of them answered positively about this question. In the other classes, where they rarely had the opportunity gave fairly high points to this question. The negative reasons induced from their comments are they had less general motivation for the class or for the learning of English because no one who evaluated this item below three gave any comment.

3. Have you ever experienced the speech training method that recommended you to summarize the learning contents at the last part of the class?

Small number of the students had the experience of that kind of speech training. One student in Keio1 answered he or she had a conversation class but was not taught that way of speech training.

4. Do you do something for your speech training?

More number of students in TPU answered they did speech training of some kind. Several students listened to and sang English songs. One student went to a conversation school and asked questions when he or she could not understand the lecturer. Another student watched movies in English. The other student talked with an Indian friend.

5. Was the speech training asked in the question 3 effective for you?

The average points to this question were high. TPU showed a little lower point, though. The examples of the comments from Keio 1 and 2 were: "Good for reviewing contents," "I can speak because I did this training," "I found what to learn to become able to speak in English," "I became able to speak English after these three months," "Sometimes I couldn't use basic words but I could remember those words by checking them in the dictionary," "This training motivated me. This is good for reviewing contents and vocabulary." The comments of the TPU students were: "I think it is effective, but I sometimes can't understand the lecture given in English.", "Summarizing the contents at the end of the class is very good for learning," "I don't need grammar tests any more, so speech training is a good idea," "This is very effective, but I often have problem of vocabulary."

From these comments, many of the students understood the superiority of the speech training method, but some students of TPU thought they needed some more vocabulary to take this method.

6. Did the speech training asked in the question 3 motivate you for the English learning?

The average points of the three groups showed the speech training method did not affect the other area of motivation for the English learning. The comments from the students of Keio 1 and 2 were: "I was too nervous speaking in public," "I was motivated at the spot but I could not continue to be motivated," "The method needed a lot of mental and physical endeavor," "I would like to try the method and see what happens," "I became able to read faster and felt enjoyment in learning," "I basically have an inferiority complex in speaking in English," "I don't like speaking in public," "I was motivated to train speaking in English for myself." They evaluated lower in points but they appreciated the method in their comments. They tended to be strict about evaluating their progress and that attitude seemed to be reflected

in the score of the average points. The comments of TPU had the same tendency: "I made a progress in this class, but I need much more effort."

7. Do you agree to the idea of learning reading taught in English in a reading class?

Teaching reading in English is to provide readiness of grammar and vocabulary to ease the speech training. The expressions and vocabulary used in the lecture also are the target items of the class. The problem in the use of English is that students should agree to the idea and tolerate the ambiguity of certain contents explained in English. The lower evaluation by the students showed that teaching reading in English requires certain conditions to meet. The comments by the students would suggest this. Followings are the comments of the Keio group: "I know it effective but learning in English causes uneasiness," "I don't have good opportunity to study contents in English, so I think it's effective," "I need listening ability," "I need some Japanese," "I want to be able to read than speak," "It seems to hard for me," "I think it will be effective but I am not sure I can keep up with the lecture," "I process English language according to the grammar and I cannot follow the contents given in spoken English." Followings are those of TPU: "I need both English and Japanese explanation in the lecture," "I cannot understand the contents clearly in English," "I don't understand the lecture contents fully," "I don't understand English," "Using AV materials help me to understand the contents," "I don't have enough vocabulary." While TPU students scored lower, many of the other comments not here were positive about learning reading in English.

8. Do you agree to the idea of learning reading English in a special field of study?

This topic is thought to be closely related to the basic motivation for the learning in the class. The students of Keio 1 and 2 chose the theme or the content of the class according to the syllabi. In the case of the students of TPU, they had no choice than to take the class. The point of discussion here would be the evaluation of this questionnaire item by TPU and the result was that there was no big difference among the groups. The typical examples of the comments of Keio are: "I fully agree because I want to learn in the special field," "I cannot choose good reading materials by myself," "I want to study in a special field as a university student," "A little difficult, but it provides us a good opportunity to think about the subject," "It is just interesting," "I can learn both English and contents," "I cannot study in the special field by myself, but in the class I can study effectively," "This is a good preparation to study in a specific field." Almost the same sorts of reactions were elicited by TPU: "The materials were very interesting," "Technical terms are hard to memorize," "It is a lot better than learning stupid samples of conversation," "I can learn both English and contents," "It depends on the contents," "It is motivating," "Setting a theme is a good way to learn about," "Studying English in a special field is effective in learning English," "The level of English was too high, but I was passionately interested in the contents." These comments eradicated the uneasiness for the teachers of English in dealing with a theme in a specific field of study for a required English class where general topics have been chosen for English teaching.

16. Was the style of the class appropriate for the class objectives?

The basic style of the class of reading comprehension, discussion, lecture in English and AV materials for Keio 2, and TPU was generally accepted by the students. The questionnaire item 16 had choices for the improvement of the class.

- 1) More opportunity of discussion is necessary.
- 2) More lecturer's comments are welcome.

- 3) More use of AV materials is welcome.
- 4) Lecturer's explanation of English structure and contents is necessary.
- 5) Quizzes should be given.
- 6) More writing assignments are necessary.
- 7) More time for listening practice is necessary.
- 8) More opportunity of discussion in English is necessary.
- 9) Basic grammar of English, *etc.*

Table 2. Idea about improvement of the class

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Keio 1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0
Keio 2	3	0	2	1	0	1	1	0	0
TPU	2	1	12	6	0	1	1	1	2

The results showed the use of AV materials and discussion is welcomed by the students. The students of TPU majored in the imaging art and this might have affected the basic favor of the use of AV materials. That small number of the requests from the students means the class management in general is accepted by the students.

### Conclusion

The effects of the introduction of a speech training method on the motivational change of university students and their apprehension of the effects of the course are examined. The results showed the use of materials in a special field of study is accepted by the students and the speech training that is based upon the contents are accepted as effective though the habituation of the method required some more thoughtful devisal of the whole procedure of the introduction.

### References

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- [4] Tanabe, Hiroshi. (2004) "Student Understanding of the Philosophy of Content Based Approach in a General English Course". *The Academic Reports of Engineering Tokyo Polytechnic University* Vol.27.No.2 pp. 1-17
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#### Notes

- \*1 Stephen. Krashen., and T. Terrell. (1983) *The Natural Approach*. Prentice Hall.
- \*2 Rebecca. L. Oxford. (1990) *The Language Learning Strategies: what every teacher should know*. Longman.
- \*3 Rod.Ellis. (1985) *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford University Press.
- \*4 Daniel. Goldman. (1994) *Emotional Intelligence*. Bantam.
- \*5 Desmond. Morris. (1977) *People Watching*. Random House.
- \*6 Robert. E. Franken. (1982) *Human Motivation*. Brooks/Cole Publishing Company. This book is written according to the idea of componential approach to human motivation. The theory explains human activity is explicable in terms of three aspects such as "biological", "cognitive", and "learned" factors. This book mediates fields such as psychology, neurology, behaviorism, etc., which separately deals with the human motivation. (Tanabe, 2004)