

# Techniques Involved in the Soft Skills of Literature

R. Kannan

**Abstract:** *To communicate in a foreign language, one needs to acquire the four necessary skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing. This enhancement of speaking ability involves vocabulary as well as communicative knowledge too. These two help in developing the soft skills. Apart from that the ability to interpret, respond to facial or verbal expressions and tones of voice also plays an important role. Different environment, various social interactions will stimulate the learners to acquaint variety of linguistic forms and communication contexts.*

**Keywords:** *communication, social interaction, speaking ability, verbal expression, vocabulary.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

One of the most influential learning theorists opined that language develops through social interaction. It enhances a child's knowledge to a greater heights. Moreover, knowledge involves self-regulation and social interaction helps in developing meaningful construction of knowledge. Hymes, one of the prominent scholar in this field opined that "communicative competence must include not only the linguistic form of a language but also a knowledge of when, how and to whom it is appropriate to use this form".

## II. SOFT SKILLS AND LITERATURE

According to some of the leading language experts, the language teacher can use literature in the classroom in certain circumstances viz. genuine material, cultural fortification, language enhancement and personal interest. The study of literature in a language class helps to enhance speaking and listening skills. A person listens something when he is mesmerized by one's speech. Literature does this purpose. As literature reflects common life of people, it makes the listeners to concentrate. It helps in improving speaking skill too. A drama/play will be more effective when it is enacted then just by reading. This makes the students to speak. A teacher can use various techniques to enhance speaking skill. Poetry and drama can be taken to improve speaking skills of students. Let's examine how poetry can be utilized in the language class rooms.

## III. DEVELOPING ORAL SKILLS THROUGH POETRY

Literature makes the students to express ideas, thoughts, opinions, information and improves the language skill.

**Revised Manuscript Received on December 24, 2019.**

**R. Kannan\***, Department of English, Kalasalingam Academy of Research and Education, Krishnankovil, Virudunagar, Tamilnadu, India. Email: kannanraman1975@gmail.com

A kid begins its learning by listening to the alphabets and reciting. Hence listening and speaking are the most important skills. The same kid learns the second language with more interest when rhymes are taught to them. Rhymes or poetry play a vital role in speaking. On hearing a rhyme, the kid starts to recite it with more confidence and interest. It gives them a wide range of learning opportunities. Poems help to develop oral and mental ability. The kid learns to speak or sing and understand it's meanings too. In KG classes, the children are made to sing the song or rhyme loudly. It improves learners fluency, phonics, lexis and students listening capacity in a way listeners hear the stress, pause, sound, syllables, etc. Poetry require total physical response, shortly known as "TPR". Rhymes help in stimulating their oral skill. It teaches them language, intonation, stress and also introduces new things to the kids. Children learn body parts, numbers, alphabets, animals, birds, relationships and so many basic necessary things through rhymes. The most well-known rhymes 'Johny Johny, Yes Papa' not only enhances their speaking skill but also teaches them some good things. Some rhymes like 'Twinkle, twinkle little star', 'Teddy Bear, teddy bear' require body movements and expressions. Rhymes like 'Old McDonald has a farm' teach the kids to know some birds and animals and its sounds. In the higher studies level, poems are given importance. Poems and rhymes are helpful to check the pronunciation, intonation, stress, vocabulary, and so on. It builds confidence and motivation among the students. Actions in the rhyme can be changed or modified by the teaching, i.e., instead of 'run', teachers shall use 'walk'. The teachers should encourage the learners and guide them how to change the song. This will make the students to try to form new lyrics with more enthusiasm. When the teacher appreciate them by saying that the lyrics is their own invention, they will be excited and they may try to do another version by taking it as their homework.

### A. Poetry practice for students

In order to develop pronunciation and fluency and also practice rhymes and language, the great way is to read aloud poems. Reading together by students will encourage confidence among students. Students need to practice the poems which they are interested and practice those poems with proper expression and tone. Whatever students do, listen carefully and offer feedback without hurting them in the nuances of poetry. Practice students with more rounds along with the entire class. Poems are an excellent way of practicing students either by individual poems or from collected poems and ask them reading aloud with all the technicalities like rhyming, stress, tone, etc.

**B. Ideas for using poetry in the classroom**

- Introducing title with some motivation questions.
- Making the students familiar with the content by relating life experiences.
- Reading the poem aloud.
- Reading the poem with correct stress, pause and pronunciation.
- Finding the meaning of the difficult words.
- Pin pointing the rhyming words in the poem.
- Composing music for the poem to teach effectively.
- Reading/singing the poem with rising and falling tone.
- Using jumbled sentences to make the students learn the poem easily.
- Mentioning alliteration in the poem to create interest.
- Projecting pictures related to the poem.
- Reciting the poem.
- Forming a peer group to discuss the poem.
- Encouraging the students to write a new poem taking the learned poem as model

- The students read the book.
  - Students shall listen to the dialogues either through audio form or audio-visual form.
  - Students shall repeat the audio-visual till they learn the exact deliverance of dialogues and expressions.
  - They choose the role that suits them or impresses them.
  - The teacher makes the students to discuss the dialogues.
  - The students take time to practice and rehearse the play.
  - The students perform the whole play or a scene.
  - Discussion follows the performance.

One of the renowned dramatist, Davies, whose approach, if implemented can enhance the level of knowledge to a greater extent and students in turn motivate themselves for the betterment of their language efficiency and use their knowledge without any effort.

**C. Benefits of using poetry while teaching English**

- It improves students’ interest.
- It stimulates students’ creativity.
- It improves pronunciation.
- It enriches the curiosity to learn vocabularies.
- It helps to learn many rhyming words.
- It reveals the author’s imitation of worldly things.
- It generates imagination power.
- It makes students express their feelings.
- It provides opportunity to play with language.
- It enhances team activities.
- It helps to identify the usage of words.
- It reveals the syntax of words.

The benefits of drama to speaking development are extensively acknowledged. According to Hamilton and McLead (1993), drama is beneficial especially to speaking development. Wessels (1987) adds that drama can reinforce a need to speak by drawing learners’ attention to focus on creating dramatic situations, dialogues, role plays, or problem solving exercises. Other aspects that add to the benefits of drama in language learning are also clarified by Mattevi (2005) and Makita-Discekici (1999). They posit that the use of drama in an English class not only enables English teachers to deliver the English language in an active, communicative, and contextualized way but also equips language teachers with the tools to create realistic situations in which students have a chance to learn to use the target language in context. Furthermore, according to Dougill (1987) and Taylor (2000), drama techniques can satisfy primary needs of language learning in that they can create motivation, enhance confidence, and provide context in learning a language. It is also great fun. All these views seem to confirm the benefits of drama in the enhancement of students’ speaking abilities.

**IV. DRAMA AND SOFT SKILLS**

Drama helps in improving communicative skills. The dialogues in a play help the learners to acquire the way of communication. Drama is a unique genre that enhances the learners to speak as well as act. Plays will be lively when it is enacted. Students will involve themselves to take the role of characters in the play and learn to express their dialogues. It provides the learners an excellent opportunity to speak. So the students learn to communicate in all situations. Drama removes the barrier in assuming the situation and finding vocabulary.

Davies (1990) proposes to include ‘exploiting scripted play’ to experiment in the language classrooms to test the knowledge of the language students. In doing so, students’ language efficiency and other technical nuances with regard to language will enhance to a considerable level. Moreover, students will be boosted to do their own activities in a novel way by using dramatic scripts. Poetry is the first step to attain speaking skill, then drama is the second. Poetry is an individual work and drama is a team work. It’s a combined work of teachers and the students. Developing speaking skill through drama includes various steps. So there are some procedures to be followed. They are as follows:

- The students should know the content of the text.
- The teacher brings out the clear picture of the play.

**A. Drama Activities in the classroom**

Session	Activity	Time
Planning Session	1. Teacher selects the play that suits students performance. 2. Students are selected based on the number of characters. 3. Individual dialogue script is given to the students and make them know their roles.	The minimum time required for planning session is one hour.
Rehearsal Session	1. Students take their exact roles and start to act it. 2. Students say their dialogues with proper pronunciation. 3. Teacher monitor the students and give them proper guidance and encouragement.	The time necessary for rehearsal is 15 minutes if it is a short play or more than that it is lengthy.



Performance session	1. Students perform their roles and give their full effort. 2. Teacher, students, and other viewers observe the scenes and dialogues.	Based on the length of the play it varies from 20 minutes to an hour.
Feedback Session	1. Teacher give feedback for the students' performance. 2. All the students are made to discuss the actions and usage of words.	For feedback time allowed is 10 minutes.

adaptability, fluency, and communicative competence. It puts language into context, and by giving learners experience of success in real-life situations it should arm them with confidence for tackling the world outside the classroom. Thus using poetry and drama in the language classrooms will be more beneficial to students as well as teachers as it will be more interactive and more interesting.

## REFERENCES

1. J. Collie and S. Slater, Literature in the Language Classroom: A Resource Book of Ideas and Activities. Cambridge: CUP, 1990.
2. P. Davies, "The use of drama in English language teaching." TESL Canada Journal, 8 (1): 1990, pp. P87-99.
3. J. Dougill, Drama activities for language learning. London: Macmillian, 1987.
4. M. Esslin, An anatomy of drama. New York: Hill and Wang, 1976.
5. J. Hamilton and A. McLead, Drama in the languages classroom. London: Center for Information on Language Teaching and Research, 1993.
6. Y. Makita-Discekici, "Creative skit activity in Japanese language classroom" Canadian Modern Language Review 55, 3: 1999, pp. 404-412.
7. Y. Mattev, Using drama in the classroom: The educational values of theatre in second language acquisition [online] 1990.
8. P. Taylor, The drama classroom: Action, reflection, transformation. London: Routledge Falmer, 2000.
9. C. Wessels, Drama. Oxford: Oxford University press, 1987.

## B. Benefits of drama-oriented activities

### Cognitive benefits:

- Obtaining ideas, information, and opinion from others
- Stimulating ideas to problem-solving
- Enhancing the ability to understand the target language through clarification
- Demonstrating and confirming one's linguistic knowledge by discussion
- Exchanging ideas, correcting errors, and checking comprehension
- Reflecting preparedness from group work

### Affective benefits

- Attaining boldness
- Demolishing fear
- Acquiring self-confidence
- Improving leadership qualities
- Supporting others
- Relaxing team work
- Feeling comfortable

### Socio-cultural benefits:

- Being cordial with others
- Sharing ideas and thoughts
- Understanding each other
- Cooperating with others
- Removing ego and selfishness
- Helping others

### Linguistic benefits

- Enhances reading, listening, speaking and writing skills
- Correcting errors in pronunciation
- Enriches vocabulary

## V. CONCLUSION

It is a clear fact that using literature to foster competence in soft skills with reference to speaking in language classroom is very rewarding experience. Both poems and dramas are rewarding ones in enhancing speaking abilities of the student. Due to rhythmic nature of its language, poetry will help students write and speak with fluency. This is true when poetry is read aloud, as both the speaker and listener can hear the rhythm of the language. This makes poetry apt for developing students overall skills in fluency. The advantages gained from the use of drama are that students become more confident in their use of English by experiencing the language in operation. Drama in the English language classrooms is ultimately indispensable because it gives learners the chance to use their own personalities. It draws upon students' natural abilities to imitate and express themselves, and if well-handled should arouse interest and imagination. Drama encourages

## AUTHOR PROFILE



**Dr.R.Kannan** is an Associate Professor of English in Kalasalingam Academy of Research and Education. He completed his Ph.D. in 2009. He has a teaching experience of over fourteen years. Under his guidance, one awarded his Doctorate, fourteen scholars completed their M.Phil dissertation. At present, under his supervision, four scholars are pursuing their Ph.D. He has published two papers in Scopus Indexed Journal, fourteen papers in UGC listed and other journals and also presented papers in both National and International conferences. He was a Doctoral Committee Member in VIT, Vellore. He is the journal reviewer of Humanities, Online International Journal, Switzerland. He is the BEC Centre Exams Manager and Speaking Examiner for BEC in Kalasalingam Academy of Research and Education.