

The Influence of Writing Skills on Spoken Skills of Undergraduates: A Study on the Improvement of Oral Fluency of Engineering Students

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In seeking employment, undergraduates with better speaking skills in English with average academic performance tend to get an edge over their colleagues with comparatively lower communication skills despite their excellent academic qualifications. Opportunities that can be made available to undergraduates to speak during class hours are hardly enough to bring about any tangible result. The purpose of the present research was to study the role of writing activities in the development of oral fluency of undergraduates who learn English as a second language. In this study, it is assumed that there is a correlation between speech and writing and thus writing can help stimulate the cognitive mechanisms relating to speech production, which would lead to the improvement of oral fluency.

The study was conducted with two groups of students. All the participants were taught for fourteen weeks where the control group was made to do only the lessons common to both groups. Conversely, in addition to the lessons common to both groups, the experimental group was made to do the specially designed writing activities which were intended to improve their fluency. The recorded conversations of the participants were analyzed for their fluency according to Fillmore's definition of fluency. Speed of delivery, frequency of voiced fillers and silent pauses were taken into account when analyzing the data.

The two groups were statistically compared for their achievement in fluency using statistical package of SPSS (Version 16). The results showed that there was a significant improvement in the fluency of the students of the experimental group, especially of the weaker ones, which could not be found in the students of the control group. Thus the study supported the view that special writing activities could be used for improving the fluency of adult Second Language learners of English.

Key words: English as a Second language, Fluency, Writing, Cognitive, Correlation, Fillmore

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