

# Importance of Television Talk-Shows in Classroom Lectures (An analysis using 'EK Mulakat' as Reference)



Florence Handique Rabha, Rahul Chanda

**Abstract:** Teachers in classrooms constantly face a variety of challenges. Poor communication skills, lack of vocabulary, poor grammar, and lack of motivation among students can hamper the teaching and learning process. To deal with these issues, teachers use a variety of methods and teaching materials. This study was conducted to evaluate how teachers can use TV talk shows in their classes to inspire the students. This research study was carried out to understand if talk shows are an effective tool which could be used in classroom lectures. The findings show that using TV talk shows can often excite classes into enthusiastic collaboration in real. Exposing students to visual images of TV talk-shows are more effective than readings alone. They cannot act as substitutes for instructors but can complement readings and lectures. If properly introduced and discussed, TV talk-shows can stimulate inquisitiveness, willingness to learn more and provide frameworks for analysis. However, the focus is on how teachers can make their sessions more interesting and productive by integrating this teaching tool.

**Keywords:** TV Talk-shows, Teaching Tool, Classroom, Teachers, Students, Communication

## I. INTRODUCTION

The role of a teacher in promoting learning processes is crucial. It has been analyzed according to different frameworks. For example, the **Theory of Didactic Situations** (by G. Brousseau, 1997), defines the teacher as a didactical engineer. The teacher designs and constructs the situation in any classroom and the students follow that design. Similarly, a talk or chat-show is a genre of TV or radio programming that is structured around the act of spontaneous conversation. A talk-show is distinguished from other TV programs by certain common attributes. (Erler, 2010) In a talk-show, one person/guest (or a group) discusses various topics put forth by the talk-show host. This discussion can be in the form of an interview or a simple conversation on various topics viz., social, political, art and culture, lifestyle or religious issues and events.

The personality of the host shapes the tone of the show, which also defines the "trademark" of the show. (Erler, 2010) A common feature or unwritten rule of talk-shows is that it must be based on "fresh talk" - talk that is spontaneous or has the appearance of spontaneity.

## II. HISTORY OF TALK SHOWS

Talk-shows have been broadcast on TV since the earliest days of the medium. Joe Franklin, an American radio and TV personality, hosted the first TV talk-show in 1951 on WJZ-TV (later WABC-TV) and moved to WOR-TV (later WWOR-TV) from 1962 to 1993. (Hinckley, 2010) NBC's *The Tonight Show* is the world's longest-running talk-show; having debuted in 1954, it continues to this day. The show underwent some minor title changes until settling on its current title in 1962, and despite a brief foray into a more news-style program in 1957 and then reverting that same year, it has remained a talk show. Ireland's *The Late, Late Show* is the second-longest running talk-show in television history, and the longest running talk-show in Europe, having debuted in 1962.

According to Ilie, C. (2006) Talk shows *Encyclopedia of Language and linguistics*, the participants in a talk-show comprise of both experts and common people who have an interchange of views between them.

It is monitored by the talk-show host (generally a media personality) through stimulation, guidance and facilitation of the roles and contributions of the participants (viz., for information exchange, confrontation and entertainment).

The topic of the program could be of social, political or personal concern. The selection of topics and participants usually leads to confrontation and conflicting opinions which generate interest and raise the popularity of the talk-show.

## III. TALK SHOWS IN INDIA

The Indian television industry has produced some remarkable talk-shows that have left a lasting impression in the minds of the viewers. They have played a vital commercial role by increasing the popularity and TRPs of TV channels and thereby, contributed to the revenue generation process.

A few of the popular TV talk-shows in India, that have catered to the masses since inception, are *Satyamev Jayate*, *Seedhi Baat*, *Movers & Shakers*, *Koffee with Karan*, *Comedy Nights with Kapil*, *Jeena Isi Ka naam hai*, *Rendezvous with Simi Garewal*.

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#### IV. EK MULAKAT

The concept of the TV talk-series – 'Ek Mulakat' was conceived in 2016 by Nabanita Das, Programme Executive, PPC DD NE (now known as DD Assam). Her proposal was to produce thirteen episodes of in-depth interviews with different celebrities from all over Northeast for DD Arunprabha, with a pilot episode shot with the popular actor from Assamese Cinema – Mr Ravi Sharma. The researcher was chosen as the anchor, script writer, research and resource person for the entire series at a professional level. Meanwhile, a number of similar proposals from various other producers were also received by DD Arunprabha but 'Ek Mulakat' and one more talk-show (based on sports personalities of NE) were finally selected. Thirteen celebrities from across the NE were interviewed for the talk show series in 2017 and the episodes were telecast on DD Arunprabha in 2018 and on DD NE & DD Assam in 2019-2020. The series was sponsored by Ministry of DONER.

#### V. EK MULAKAT – THE MAKING

After receiving permission and finances to produce the show, the team shortlisted thirteen celebrities from Northeast which included Popular Singer **Mr Lou Majaw** from **Meghalaya**, National Award winning singer from **Assam** - **Ms Tarali Sharma**, World record holder and mountaineer

– **Ms Ansu Jamsenpa** from **Arunachal Pradesh**, National Award winning musician - **Mr Moa Subong** of **Abiogenesis Band** from **Nagaland**, Famous Singer from Assam- **Ms Kalpana Patowary**, Popular actor from Arunachal Pradesh- **Mr Hage D Appa**, Veteran actor from Assam- **Mr Pranjal Saikia**, Popular Actress from Assam- **Ms Prastuti Parasor**, Two times National Award winning filmmaker - **Mr Pradip Kurbah** from **Meghalaya**, Marathon Man & runner, holding a place in the Limca Book of world records - **Mr Amar Subba** from **Sikkim**, Popular flautist from Assam- **Mr Deepak Sarma**, Winner of Filmfare award (east)- **Actress Ms Zerifa Wahid** & Veteran and evergreen actor - **late Shri Biju Phukan** (Ek-Mulakat was his last TV interview).

A detailed in-depth research was done on the lives and works of these personalities from various sources and based on that, interesting questionnaires were prepared by the script writer and the anchor.

The structure of the talks was informal and they were shot in scenic locales. The attires were mostly semi-ethnic or Indian. These visual contents were to keep the viewers interested and glued to the show. Efforts were made to bring out all the information in an entertaining way.

(Photographs taken during the shooting of TV talk show- Ek Mulakat in 2017)



#### VI. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Despite the prevalence of English in academic spheres and increase in English Language Teaching (ELT), the inability of students to communicate effectively in English is a matter of concern. The findings of a few researchers have suggested that the old approach of ELT through Grammar Translation

Method (GTM) make way for new communicative approaches. Findings by Esmail, A., Ahmed, M., & Noreen, S. (2015) Why Pakistani students are reluctant to speak English.

*Academic Research International*, suggest that teacher-centric classrooms should be replaced by learner-centric classrooms where the teacher should stress more upon pronunciation and encourage students to speak English.

According to Al-Amir, B. A. H. (2017) *Female Teachers' Perceptions of Teaching Culture in EFL Classrooms at a Saudi University, English Language Teaching*, the literature of the second language, teaching and learning, culture and language have always been assumed to be interdependent as language is not code free from culture, but an embodiment of it. However, there is still need on the part of teachers to realize the importance of integrating culture with language study. Moreover, it aims at discovering the type of cultural competence teachers seek to promote - whether inter-cultural or multicultural.

When TV talk shows are used as teaching tool by teachers in class rooms, they can serve as an effective tool for the teaching and learning process as well as the all-round development of both students and teachers. Horton and Wohl describe how the illusion of intimacy and participation is created in talk-shows by using four central devices: 1. The host duplicates the gestures of informal interaction, conversational style, and a person's social environment. 2. The host attempts, verbally, to give the impression of mutual trust, friendship and personal knowledge of the production team, who are addressed and brought into the programme. 3. The host moves physically among the studio audience, and for short periods he can become a spectator to the performance of others, along with the studio audience. 4. Focus is put on the host's method of communication, i.e., the medium itself and its technology. Horton and Wohl conclude that these four devices help to create and emphasise the main values of the programme type in relation to the viewers. These values are predominantly orientated around how this form of togetherness is characterised by sociability, courtesy, friendship and close contact. However, Horton and Wohl also emphasise that it is different in personality-centred programmes. Bode, L., Vraga, E. K., Alvarez, G., Johnson, C. N., Konieczna, M., & Mirer, M. (2018) in *What Viewers Want: Assessing the impact of host bias on viewer engagement with political talk shows. Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, reveal that while adults find congruent biased news hosts more engaging and credible (but unaffected by subtler partisanship), young adults find them more engaging but not more credible. Their perceptions of credibility are affected by subtle prejudice in favour of a particular cause. Al-Mnaseer, F. A. J. M. (2013). *Politics, power and ideology in American comedy late night talk shows: A critical discourse analysis* (Doctoral dissertation, Universiti Utara Malaysia.), analyzes Obama's linguistic and gestural variables in the transcripts collected through interviews in two talk-shows. The analysis of the linguistic data applies the systemic functional linguistics approach (SFL) while the analysis of the gestural ones is done in association with eclectic models of non-verbal behaviours. This study has revealed the different bases of power which Obama used in his talk, the influence tactics and the types of power relations which he employed in relation to the shows' hosts - David Letterman and Jay Leno. The researcher is of the view that such talk-shows can also be displayed in various classrooms of political science or

language subjects during the teaching and learning process so that university students gain more insight while honing their communication skills. Rössler, P., & Brosius, H. B. (2001) in *Do talk-shows cultivate adolescents' views of the world? A prolonged-exposure experiment. Journal of communication*, state that prolonged-exposure experiments (as used in the study) can make a fruitful contribution to the investigation of cultivation effects, especially on certain target groups (e.g., adolescents) using certain subsets of TV content (e.g., talk shows). Their results say that cultivation researchers should not exclude use of the experimental paradigm just because cultivation effects once were conceptualized as long-term general effects of television. In a rapidly changing media environment, it seems more appropriate to look into genre-specific effects with strict control for content. Certainly, heavy talk show viewers might consume more than five programs a week (the dose in their experiment) over a much longer period of time. Prolonged-exposure studies of the present type should be regarded as providing a model for long-term effects.

Mittell, J. (2003). *Audiences talking genre: Television talk shows and cultural hierarchies. Journal of Popular Film and Television-* explores how audiences make sense of the talk-show genre from daytime issue oriented programs to late-night entertainment shows - through a qualitative survey of television viewers. He argues that the genre is linked to assumed notions of identity and hierarchies of cultural value that help explain the genre's controversial history.

According to Devadas, M. B., & Ravi, B. K. (2013) in *Cultural impact of television on urban youth-An empirical study. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, intentionally or unintentionally, globalised television has brought about significant changes in people's attitude, lifestyle, behaviour, which are the various elements of culture. Their study makes an effort to trace cultural implications of television on urban youth empirically in the Indian state of Karnataka. The study of Yang, S. (2014) - *The use of Grice's cooperative principle in Chinese TV talk shows/Yang Shuwei* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Malaya) Chapter 1 - aims specifically to examine if Grice's Cooperative Principle is observed by a bilingual Chinese TV talk show host who interviews in Mandarin and English. This study also aims to compare and contrast the similarities and differences of Grice's (1975) four maxims as observed by the interviewer in Mandarin and English. The importance of being bilingual can be taught by the teachers by using of these types of talk show in the class rooms. Students can also learn the repair strategies while communicating. Davis, S., & Mares, M. L. (1998) in *Effects of talk show viewing on adolescents. Journal of Communication*, investigated the effects of talk-show viewing on social reality beliefs of adolescents. A survey was administered to 282 high school students to evaluate the effects of viewing talk-shows. The results revealed that talk-show viewing was positively related, among some age groups, to perceived importance of social issues.

## VII. STUDY GAP

The researcher, after going through various papers, identified the need to study talk-shows and their use in classrooms. Brown and McIntyre (1993) have explained that the teacher works with students in classrooms and designs activities for classrooms using her or his craft knowledge, namely a knowledge that is largely rooted in the practice of teaching. The researcher therefore opted to understand if talk-shows could be used as an effecting learning-teaching tool.

## VIII. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1) To understand the effectiveness of talk-shows as learning tools in classrooms
- 2) To evaluate the behaviour of students towards learning through talk-shows
- 3) To study the feasibility of using talk-shows as an effective teaching tool

## IX. METHODOLOGY

The researcher opted for the primary research method to analyse the objectives of the study. An episode of *Ek Mulakat* (a regional talk-show) was screened in a classroom of 103 students (aged 18 to 24 years). After the screening, an unstructured interview was conducted with these students. Unstructured interviews are particularly useful in obtaining clearer details behind respondents' experiences or when there is little information about a topic.

## X. ANALYSIS

It was seen that the students were quite involved with the learning process. Questions related to the talk-show were answered correctly by most of them. They were able to observe the communication design of the entire talk-show and understood the context clearly. Understanding communication design is vital for communication studies. As this was a regional talk-show, the students could relate to the discussion as most of them were locals from the same region and were familiar with the concept & settings. The researcher identified that talk-shows are more interesting than reading for learning process.

## XI. OBJECTIVE BASED FINDINGS

To Understand The Effectiveness Of Talk-Shows As Learning Tools In Classrooms:

- Communication skills (both verbal and non-verbal) and confidence improve when students observe two experts communicating in an easy but effective way in this kind of inter-personal, face-to-face interaction.
- It was observed that talk-show was quite effective as students expressed their interest in producing their own talk-shows and broadcasting them through internet.
- While some were keen on anchoring, doing research and scriptwriting for the programme, others were inclined towards handling camera angles, photography, direction, and editing.

To Evaluate Students' Behaviour Towards Learning Through Talk-Shows :

- It was observed that the students adapted a positive approach towards learning from talk-shows. Their

behaviour showed that they were not bored. It was observed that they wanted to attend more of such screenings and participated keenly during the unstructured interview session after the screening.

- The researcher hence identified that students inculcated a positive behaviour towards learning from talk-shows.

To Study The Feasibility Of Using Talk-Shows As An Effective Teaching Tool :

- The duration of a talk-show is mostly 30 minutes in the northeast region and hence it is viable for screening in a classroom.
- With the advent of social media and online meeting platforms, the feasibility of screening such shows online has also gone up.
- The researcher, after talking to the students, identified that these can be screened both online and offline.
- Therefore, it is concluded that talk-shows can be easily used as teaching tools.

## XII. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

It can be concluded that talk-shows can be used as an effective, feasible and viable classroom teaching-learning tool. It is therefore proposed that as in colleges and universities the teachers and students could be informed about the importance of talk-shows as an effective form of inter-personal (face-to-face) communication. Teachers may be trained in making talk-show (AV) capsules for various stages of research work, preparing questionnaire on different topics of interest, scriptwriting, direction, recording, editing and other aspects including using the correct body language for the required effect. Both teachers and students can hone their communication skills and make teaching and learning processes more interactive and vibrant. Students' feedback based on inter-personal communication with teachers should be designed to know which teacher should work on his or her skills. More advanced technical assistance, equipment for recording, and studio facilities will enhance the quality of the talk-shows.

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