

## DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILLS OF ESL AND EFL STUDENTS

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**Annotation:** *This article brings to light the importance of communication skills, especially speaking skills of English, in all spheres of life. Moreover, the benefits or advantages of speaking skills in grabbing the opportunities in global market are discussed comprehensively. It also focuses on developing speaking skills among the learners in EFL/ESL classroom environment. The article emphasizes the role of a teacher in enhancing learners' speaking skills by applying various methods, techniques and approaches in English language classrooms since communication skills play a vital role in getting employment opportunities in any sector.*

**Key words:** *career, classroom, interaction, communication skills, EFL/ESL, ELL, employment opportunities, learners, speaking skills, teachers.*

In this modern, communicative and technological era, English plays a prominent role in the development of global education and business. In recent years, one of the major problems related to English language learning (ELL) is to develop learners to use the language effectively and proficiently. To overcome the hindrances in ELL, teachers have to make the classroom instruction strong and dynamic. Classroom interaction must be encouraged because it is a useful strategy to enhance learners' communicative competence since it plays a significant role in learning English as a foreign language or second language by giving ample opportunities to learners to be able to communicate with others without any hesitation or phobia. Undoubtedly, the learners can acquire the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary that is useful in improving speaking skills when they can interact with others in language learning activities in a dynamic way in English classrooms. Eventually, it leads them to improve their communication skills. It is a well-known fact that communication skills are highly useful getting jobs and developing the career of learners.

In the process of language learning, the main aim of the learner is to acquire the four language skills- listening, reading, speaking and writing. Among these, listening and reading are receptive skills whereas speaking and writing are productive skills. These skills must be focused in the classroom by teachers because the soul of the language learning lies in language skills. The main objective of all these four language skills is to develop the learners' learning abilities in producing oral discourses.

In the modern classroom, English teachers apply various methods and techniques in the classroom to teach speaking skills. Predominantly, they focus on communicative language teaching (CLT) and collaborative learning because CLT is based on real-life situations and it is more useful in developing communication skills among learners.

Collaborative learning is also encouraged by teachers to involve the learners in various task-based activities. It is applicable to both EFL/ESL settings, while teaching speaking skills to the learners, teachers need to focus on speech sounds, sound patterns, stress and intonation patterns, the selection of appropriate words and sentences; according to the audience, social setting, subject matter and situations. The teachers help the learners organize their thoughts ideas logically meaningfully in order to use their language to express with values and judgments. Since speaking is considered one of the language productive skills, according to the intention of the speaker, Brown (2004) has classified them into five types: imitative, intensive, responsive, interactive and extensive. Imitative speaking is the learners' ability to parrot back or repeat the others' speech as a word, a phrase or a sentence. This type of repetition involves grammar and lexis which are useful to interact in a conversation or to convey the meaning. Intensive speaking is the product of short discourses where the learners have to complete the tasks like reading aloud and completing sentences and dialogues. Responsive speaking involves two persons or two groups in short conversations, small talk and simple requests to make them authentic. Interactive speaking involves transactional language is meant for exchanging information whereas interpersonal language for social relationships. Extensive speaking is more deliberative and formal for extensive tasks and it involves speeches, oral presentations and story-telling.

The role of teachers in training the learners in speaking skills is crucial in English classrooms. According to Vilar (2003), "Teachers have two primary functions in education: the managerial and the instructional functions. The latter refers to the conditions that teachers create for learning to take place and the other is the knowledge that the teachers impart in the classrooms. Teachers should carry out these functions simultaneously for efficient language instruction because they cannot be separated".

In order to develop the speaking skills of the learners, English language teachers have to put their focus mainly on vocabulary and grammar and then on speech, sound, stress intonation patterns and finally on patterns of sentences. To enable the learners to enrich good vocabulary and to have a good command over grammar, the teachers should concentrate more on speech sounds, stress and intonation patterns which are the fundamental elements required for speaking skills. After proper training in these areas teachers have to provide the learners with a number of opportunities to make use of them in their speaking practice sessions. Moreover the teachers are supposed to conduct some learner-focused activities like activity-based or task-based activities that involve the learners to develop their speaking skills in their real classroom environment. Here the teachers can implement innumerable activities such as JAM (Just a minute) sessions, role plays, group discussions, preparing for both interviews and presentations and preparing the learners to present papers in conferences, seminars, workshops, etc. the role of teachers is very crucial here to prepare the learners for their

future career and prepare them to be competent in their speaking skills as the classroom is the main platform for learners to perform their tasks.

The need of teaching speaking skills in English classroom has been identified and stressed. More importance has to be given to speaking skills in order to make the learners to communicate effectively at all places. Moreover, the focus has been on the assessment of speaking skills in a systematic way.

As communication skills are playing a key role in the modern society, the responsibility is more on teachers to train the learners in those skills. Speaking or oral communication is important in personal and professional life. Therefore, English teachers have to give importance to speaking skills in classrooms and encourage the learners to communicate in English not only in the classrooms but also in social life as far as ELT is concerned.

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