

STRATEGIES SHAPING SPEAKING SKILLS IN ESP CLASSES OF ENGINEERING STUDENTS

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Abstract: *The article under discussion describes the strategies encountered in teaching speaking to ESP engineering students. The author of the article elucidates teaching English in ESP classes, highlights the problems in teaching speaking, main factors affecting on the development of speaking skills of students and suggests several strategies to improve speaking competence of ESP learners in engineering sphere.*

Keywords: *Speaking, ESP classes, problems, skills, competence, context, conversation, tone, eye contact, language.*

ESP (English for specific reasons) concentrates more on language in context than on teaching grammar and language structures. It covers subjects varying from accounting or computer science to tourism and business management. The ESP focal point is that English is not taught as a subject separated from the students' real world; instead, it is integrated into a subject matter area important to the learners [1, p.p 1-12].

For students majoring in engineering spheres, EFL classes can be a real challenge due to the acquisition of wide range of field terminologies and complex working mechanisms of technologies in English

In terms of speaking skill, it is the most challenging ability in a foreign language for most students. Even with simple speaking tasks, students often lose interest and do not complete them. Research on this issue indicates that creating a good piece of speaking is considered an extremely difficult skill, especially for the students of non-philological areas of educational institutions. One reason why speaking is so difficult is the fact that, in addition to knowing the appropriate grammar and vocabulary, a speaker's ideas must be presented clearly and well-organized structure. This is the big challenge for second language learners and of course dilemma for teachers who are responsible to look for successful and effective ways to teach the skill. Speaking considered as a difficult skill to master and students are often discouraged by the lack of motivation, which is notable characteristic of some second language learners. As we know, motivation is

a complex construct, and there are many factors that might inspire students to master a foreign language.

There are several strains that effect on students' oral skills in English:

- Lack of motivation and basic knowledge;

At the beginning of teaching process, numerous students complaint that they weren't taught English at school (prior education institutions), or claim that they know only German or French languages although they don't. The fact that having no even elementary level in grammar obviously hinder them from shaping oral skills in English

- Having no interest in their majors:

According to the results of recent needs analysis of ESP students of technical institute showed that most of them do not know even their specialties and claimed that they have almost no interest in it. This issue in its turn brings difficulties to form sentences in foreign language in specific context

- Fear of failure or mispronunciation;

In the process of learning, most EFL learners experience fear or shame of failure while pronouncing words or making grammar mistakes. Particularly, for the students whose majors are non-philological find it really struggling to pronounce words or sentences relating to their field of interest.

However, oral language is one of the most important skills students can master—both for social and academic success. Learners use this skill throughout the day to process and deliver instructions, make requests, ask questions, receive new information, and interact with peers. Majority researchers suggest a wide range of strategies and tactics that enhances communicative skills of ESP students. Here are several basic techniques for improving learners' oral skills:

1. Encouraging conversation:

Every social interaction gives students a new opportunity to practice language. Some of students might need a little guidance from a teacher to engage in conversations, so sparking interactions whenever possible is important. Asking questions, rephrasing the student's answers, and giving prompts that encourage oral conversations to continue.

2. Modelling syntactic structure:

Students may not use complete oral syntax in informal speech, but encouraging them to do so when they're in the classroom can be another workable option. When a student uses fragmented syntax, modelling complete syntax back to them gives motivation and makes speaking easy. This builds oral language skills and gives students practice in a skill necessary

for mastering spoken language. Different situational dialogues can be used effectively.

3. Introducing vocabulary in advance;

Students need to be introduced the vocabulary of new topic before engaging in conversational process. Before starting speaking part, not only words related to the subject topic should be taught thoroughly, but also sample sentences using the vocabulary should be presented.

4. Remind Students to Speak Loudly:

Asking students to feel the muscles used for speech while they're talking and monitor their volume and articulation also improves oral skills. Clear and loud-enough speech is essential for holding the attention of the group and communicate their information and opinions effectively.

5. Attend to Listening Skills:

Ensure that your students are listening by using consistent cues to get their attention. You might use a phrase like "It's listening time" to give students a reminder. Some students might also benefit from written reminders posted prominently on your wall.

7. Incorporate a "Question of the Day."

During each course day's opening activities, asking a question encourages talk. (teacher can even write one on the board so students can read it and start thinking about their answer as soon as they come in.) Simple one-part questions like "What is your favourite animal?" can be a great start. If a student doesn't answer in a complete sentence, modelling a complete sentence and asking students to repeat the model helps them to shape a sentence. Once students are successfully answering these simple questions in complete sentences, two-part questions that require more complex answers is the next step: "What is your favourite book? Why?"

8. Presenting text materials of the field of interest

Starting from short texts on their majors to comprehend, asking and answering questions and gradually moving to larger texts to boost speaking are one of the feasible ways. For struggling students presenting sample texts and asking to make a similar short text is another great technique for ESP learners

9. Questioning to boost comprehension:

Asking questions before and after a reading assignment not only helps sharpen oral language skills, it also helps students think about what they're reading and absorb information from the words. The following strategies facilitate reading comprehension:

If there's an introduction to the story or passage, ask students to read it and answer purpose-setting questions: "Where does the story begin?"

"What kind of story or article is this? Why do you think so?"

10. Ask Students to Predict Outcomes: As it is started from simple texts and short speeches, they should not necessarily be field-oriented. So any texts suitable for their levels can be chosen. If it is a story the following questions may be asked to involve them in conversation: "What Will Happen? How Do You Know?" [2, p. 1]

After the reading, students reveal whether their predictions were correct and identify where the ending or conclusion begins. In that peace students summarize the passage: "Who were the characters?" "What was the plot?" "What was the outcome?" "What was the main idea?" "What were the supporting details?"

11. Teaching concept words:

Some students may have difficulty with abstract concepts such as before, after, or following, and with sequences such as days of the week or months of the year. To help students learn and retain these concepts, many ways can be shown. For example:

Instructor might ask students to identify which holiday comes in each month and then review holidays for other months in sequence: "Independence Day is in September. What holiday is in October? In November?"

Furthermore, teacher may have students identify the month before or after a given month. "May is before June and after April." "May is between April and June."

Oral language is one of the foundational building blocks of learning. Trying these suggestions with students help to boost they need for future academic and social success.

As a conclusion it should be mentioned that it is important that the learners who want to take an ESP class have prior knowledge of English. Background knowledge helps them to overcome problems like learning new words, shaming of failure or incorrect pronunciation. On the contrary, if ESP learners struggles in speaking the above-mentioned strategies can be applied to achieve expected results in teaching.

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