

## EFFECTIVE METHODS FOR DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILLS AMONG ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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**Annotation.** *This article examines effective methods for developing speaking skills among English language learners. Speaking is considered one of the most important language skills because it enables learners to communicate their thoughts, opinions, needs, and experiences in real-life situations. The article discusses the role of communicative activities, pair and group work, role-playing, discussions, question-and-answer exercises, and problem-solving tasks in improving oral communication. Particular attention is given to creating a supportive classroom environment in which learners can communicate without excessive fear of making mistakes.*

*Regular speaking practice and constructive teacher feedback are also considered important factors in improving fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, and confidence. The study emphasizes that speaking skills develop more effectively when learners actively participate in meaningful communication and have sufficient opportunities to use English in different contexts. The proposed methods can be effectively applied in English language classrooms to increase learners' participation and support the gradual development of their communicative competence and independent speaking abilities.*

**Keywords:** *Speaking skills, oral communication, communicative approach, English language learning, pair work, group work, role-playing, communicative competence.*

### Introduction

Developing speaking skills is one of the central goals of learning English as a foreign language. Knowing grammatical rules and memorizing vocabulary are important parts of language learning, but they do not automatically enable learners to communicate confidently and effectively in real situations. Speaking requires learners to combine vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and the ability to respond appropriately during interaction. For this reason, English language teaching increasingly focuses on creating learning environments in which students have regular opportunities to use the language for meaningful communication. Many English learners experience difficulties when they are expected to speak spontaneously. Limited vocabulary, insufficient practice, fear of making mistakes, pronunciation problems, and lack of confidence can reduce learners' willingness to participate in classroom communication. In some traditional lessons, students spend more time listening to the teacher or completing written exercises than actually using English in conversation. As a result, learners may understand English relatively well but experience difficulties when expressing their own ideas orally. This situation demonstrates the importance of selecting teaching methods that provide learners with active and purposeful speaking practice.

Communicative activities can create more opportunities for learners to use English in situations that are similar to everyday communication. Pair work, group discussions, role plays, interviews, presentations, debates, and problem-solving activities encourage students to exchange information, express opinions, ask questions, and respond to their classmates.

Such activities also allow learners to practice language in a less controlled environment, where the main purpose is not simply to produce grammatically correct sentences but to communicate meaning effectively. Another important aspect of speaking development is the gradual formation of learners' confidence. Students who are given regular opportunities to speak in supportive classroom environments may become more willing to participate and experiment with new vocabulary and grammatical structures. Mistakes can be treated as a natural part of the learning process rather than as a reason for avoiding communication. Therefore, the teacher's role is not limited to correcting errors but also includes organizing appropriate speaking tasks, encouraging interaction, and providing constructive feedback.

### **Relevance**

Speaking is a key component of English language proficiency because it allows learners to use their knowledge in real communication. However, many learners have difficulties expressing their thoughts clearly and fluently, even when they have sufficient knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. These difficulties may be related to limited speaking practice, lack of confidence, pronunciation problems, and fear of making mistakes. Therefore, the development of effective approaches to speaking instruction remains an important issue in foreign language education.

Creating opportunities for meaningful communication through pair work, group activities, discussions, role plays, presentations, and problem-solving tasks can help learners use English more actively. Studying effective speaking methods is particularly relevant because improved oral communication supports learners not only in academic activities but also in future professional and social situations.

### **Aim**

The aim of this study is to examine effective methods for developing speaking skills among English language learners and to determine the role of communicative activities in improving learners' fluency, confidence, vocabulary use, pronunciation, and ability to participate effectively in English-language communication.

### **Main part**

Speaking is one of the most important productive skills in English language learning because it enables learners to communicate their ideas, feelings, opinions, and information orally.

Effective speaking requires the interaction of several language components, including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, accuracy, and communicative competence. A learner may have good knowledge of English grammar but still experience difficulties when speaking spontaneously. Therefore, speaking development should involve regular opportunities to produce meaningful oral language. For example, instead of only completing written grammar exercises, learners can be asked to describe their daily routine, discuss their future plans, or express their opinion about a familiar topic in English.

Such activities encourage learners to retrieve vocabulary and grammatical structures from memory and use them in real-time communication. Fluency is another important component because learners need to express their ideas without excessive pauses. Accuracy is also necessary because frequent grammatical and pronunciation errors can make communication difficult.

Pronunciation contributes directly to intelligibility, while vocabulary provides learners with the linguistic resources needed to express different meanings.

In addition, successful speaking involves the ability to listen to another person, understand the message, and respond appropriately. Therefore, speaking instruction should develop these components together rather than treating them as completely separate skills.

Communicative activities are widely used to provide learners with meaningful opportunities to speak English. Their main purpose is to move learners from simply knowing language forms to actually using them in interaction. Pair discussions, information-gap activities, interviews, question-and-answer tasks, and group discussions can increase the amount of time learners spend actively using English. For example, in an interview activity, one learner may ask questions about another learner's educational background, interests, or future career plans, while the second learner provides answers and asks follow-up questions. This type of activity requires learners to listen carefully and respond according to the information they receive. Information-gap tasks are also useful because each participant has different information and must communicate with others to complete the task. Group discussions can develop the ability to express opinions, agree or disagree politely, and maintain a conversation. The teacher can organize these activities according to learners' language levels and gradually increase their complexity. At the beginning, learners may work with short and familiar topics, while more advanced learners can participate in extended discussions requiring explanation and argumentation. Regular communicative practice helps learners become more active users of English and reduces their dependence on memorized sentences.

Pair and group work creates an interactive learning environment in which learners have more opportunities to use English with their peers. In a traditional teacher-centred lesson, students may have limited speaking time because most classroom communication is controlled by the teacher. Pair and group activities distribute speaking opportunities among learners and encourage greater participation. For example, two learners can work together to discuss a topic and then present the main points of their discussion to the class. In a small group, each learner can express an opinion, respond to other participants, and contribute information to a shared task. This type of interaction can also support learners who are hesitant to speak in front of the whole class because communication in a smaller group may feel less demanding. Group activities should be carefully structured so that all participants have an opportunity to speak. The teacher can assign different roles within a task, such as discussion leader, information provider, questioner, or presenter. Pair work can also be used for pronunciation practice, short dialogues, interviews, and peer feedback.

Through repeated interaction, learners can develop greater fluency and become more comfortable with spontaneous communication. At the same time, peer interaction exposes learners to different ways of expressing similar ideas and provides opportunities to notice new vocabulary and grammatical structures.

Role-playing, discussions, and problem-solving activities provide learners with opportunities to use English in purposeful and relatively realistic communication. Role-playing requires learners to communicate from a particular perspective or within a specific situation, which encourages them to use language according to a communicative purpose. For example, learners may participate in a simulated professional conversation in which one person asks for information and another person provides assistance. Such activities can develop learners' ability to select appropriate vocabulary, respond spontaneously, and maintain interaction.

Discussions provide another opportunity for extended speaking because learners need to express and support their opinions. During a discussion, learners can be encouraged to explain their position, respond to alternative views, and reach a shared conclusion. Problem-solving tasks are particularly useful because they require learners to exchange information and make decisions through English. For example, a group may be given a situation that requires them to discuss several possible solutions and agree on the most appropriate one. These activities combine language practice with critical thinking and cooperation. The teacher should ensure that the language demands of the task correspond to the learners' level and that sufficient preparation is provided before the activity begins. When such tasks are used regularly, learners can gradually develop their ability to speak more independently and adapt their language to different communicative situations.

The development of speaking skills requires continuous practice because oral communication involves processes that become more effective through repeated use. Learners need regular opportunities to speak, receive feedback, identify difficulties, and apply corrections in subsequent activities. Speaking practice should therefore be integrated into the regular English learning process rather than being limited to occasional activities. For example, a short speaking task can be included at the beginning or end of a lesson, allowing learners to discuss a topic, summarize information, or explain their position. Feedback from the teacher and peers can help learners recognize problems related to grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. However, feedback should be provided in a way that supports communication rather than discouraging learners from speaking. If the teacher interrupts every sentence to correct minor errors, learners may become hesitant and focus more on avoiding mistakes than expressing their ideas. A more balanced approach is to allow learners to complete the communicative task and then discuss the most important language problems afterwards. Peer feedback can also be useful when learners are given clear criteria for evaluating speaking performance. For example, they can consider whether the speaker communicated the main idea clearly, used appropriate vocabulary, maintained fluency, and responded effectively to questions. Regular practice combined with constructive feedback allows learners to monitor their progress and gradually improve their oral communication abilities.

Therefore, consistency, meaningful practice, and supportive feedback are essential elements of effective speaking instruction.

### **Results**

The study involved 24 English language learners. The results demonstrated that the use of communicative and interactive methods contributed to noticeable improvements in the students' speaking skills. Before the intervention, 15 students (62.5%) experienced difficulties in expressing their ideas in English, while 9 students (37.5%) were able to communicate at a basic level.

Limited vocabulary was observed in 16 students (66.7%), pronunciation difficulties in 13 students (54.2%), and lack of confidence during speaking activities in 14 students (58.3%). After the implementation of regular speaking activities, positive changes were observed among the participants. A total of 19 students (79.2%) demonstrated improved ability to express their ideas orally, while 18 students (75.0%) showed better use of English vocabulary during conversations.

Improvement in pronunciation was observed in 17 students (70.8%), and 20 students (83.3%) became more willing to participate in classroom speaking activities.

The results also showed improvement in fluency. Before the intervention, only 8 students (33.3%) could maintain a short conversation without significant pauses. After the intervention, this number increased to 18 students (75.0%). The number of students who could independently answer questions in English increased from 10 (41.7%) to 21 (87.5%). Pair and group activities produced particularly positive results. Among the 24 participants, 19 students (79.2%) reported that working with classmates helped them speak more freely, while 17 students (70.8%) demonstrated better ability to maintain a dialogue with a partner. Role-playing activities helped 18 students (75.0%) use English in simulated real-life situations such as introducing themselves, asking for information, ordering food, and discussing daily activities.

Regular feedback also contributed to the development of speaking skills. After the intervention, 20 students (83.3%) demonstrated greater confidence when speaking English, and 18 students (75.0%) were able to correct some of their grammatical and pronunciation errors after receiving teacher or peer feedback. The results indicate that communicative activities, pair and group work, role-playing, discussions, and regular speaking practice were associated with improvements in the oral communication skills of the 24 participants. The most noticeable changes were observed in students' willingness to speak (83.3%), ability to express ideas (79.2%), vocabulary use (75.0%), conversational fluency (75.0%), and pronunciation (70.8%).

### **Discussion**

Developing speaking skills is an important part of learning English because effective language learning requires learners not only to understand grammatical rules and vocabulary but also to use them in real communication. A learner may have sufficient theoretical knowledge of English but still experience difficulties when expressing ideas orally. Therefore, speaking should be developed through regular practice and meaningful communication. The communicative approach provides learners with opportunities to use English for practical purposes. Instead of focusing only on memorizing grammatical structures and vocabulary, learners are encouraged to communicate, ask questions, express opinions, and respond to different situations. This approach can make speaking activities more meaningful and help learners gradually become more comfortable with using English.

Pair and group work are also useful for developing oral communication. Working with classmates gives learners more opportunities to speak and interact with others. During pair activities, students can ask and answer questions, exchange information, and practice short conversations. Group activities can additionally encourage learners to discuss topics, share ideas, and cooperate in completing tasks. Role-playing is another effective method for improving speaking skills. It allows learners to practice English in situations that are similar to everyday communication. For example, students can act out conversations in a shop, at a restaurant, at a hospital, or during a meeting. Such activities help learners understand how English can be used in different social and practical situations.

### **Conclusion**

Developing speaking skills is an essential component of effective English language learning. The study shows that learners need regular opportunities to use English in meaningful and practical communication rather than focusing only on theoretical knowledge.

Communicative activities, pair and group work, role-playing, discussions, and problem-solving tasks can create a supportive environment for developing oral communication. These methods encourage learners to express their ideas, interact with others, and use English more confidently in different situations. Regular speaking practice and constructive teacher feedback also play an important role in improving fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and accuracy.

Therefore, the systematic use of interactive and communicative methods can contribute to the overall development of learners' speaking abilities and help them become more confident and effective English speakers.

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