

# “RESEARCH-BASED TRANSFORMATION OF TEACHER EDUCATION: TRADITION AS A BASIS FOR INNOVATION” International Conference on Teacher Education

## OVERCOMING CHALLENGES OF TEACHING SPEAKING SKILL IN EFL CLASSES

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**Abstract.** *Teaching a foreign language is considered one of the most challenging processes, and both teachers and language learners may face various difficulties, especially in speaking skills. The research will discuss the most crucial challenges of teaching speaking skills in English classrooms and how to overcome them in substantial and effective ways.*

**Key words:** *teaching English, speaking skills, difficulties, authentic materials, language learners, teachers.*

The demand for learning English is increasing rapidly year by year, and this trend requires well-qualified teachers at the same time. Although most teachers are well-experienced enough, they often have difficulties with teaching speaking skills, and students' results and improvement take much time in many cases. According to Florez (2000), speaking skills are a communication process to convey meaning, including receiving, producing, and processing information. The majority of teachers find it difficult to understand what students' interests are in language learning, how and why it affects them, and what teaching language will be useful to them in the future. Therefore, the development of students' academic and interpersonal skills is a prerequisite for language education. Lack of command of English, classroom management, adaptation to new materials, attention to students, and effective communication are some of the challenges that teachers face when teaching speaking. The majority number of studies shows that teachers are challenged by students' lack of knowledge, lack of study time, and confusion about media options. Many other studies indicated that students' limited vocabulary and inability to express their thoughts made it difficult to communicate with teachers. In addition to that many students' knowledge of the language is measured by their ability to speak a target language. To be more precise, as Nunan (1991) writes, "Success is measured by the ability to communicate in the target language." Therefore, if students cannot learn to speak or do not have the opportunity to speak in a language class, they will soon become discouraged and lose interest in learning. However, if the teacher teaches the

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right exercises, it will make speaking in class more fun, increase students' motivation, and make English class more fun and dynamic. There is a common problem with speaking skills: language learners often do not want to speak or say anything in the classes. One way to solve this problem is to find the cause of the problem and its starting point. First common problem can be cultural, if in students' culture it is not common for students to speak out loud in class, or if students are too shy to speak in front of other students, one way to break this cultural barrier is to create a set in classroom culture that means speaking in English better. Giving positive feedback can help shy students relax and encourage them to talk more. Another major problem is poor pronunciation and accent in the target language. Most language learners struggle with how to pronounce the words properly while speaking, and they can demotivate easily. To address this kind of problem, teachers should implement the humanistic approach of teaching as much as possible and using authentic materials. Because with the help of authentic materials, language learners have access to authentic language, natural pronunciation of words, or using them in the right contexts. But teachers should be absolutely careful when choosing authentic materials because they have to take into consideration the learners level, their needs, and the suitability of the materials for use in the classroom without any sensitive contexts. If authentic materials are higher than the students' level, it makes them demotivated with complex words or structures and an unclear context of language. If materials are below the students' level, they become bored and feel a sense of self-congratulation about their knowledge. Furthermore, teachers should focus on what the students are paying attention to and truly want to discuss. To be more precise, instead of continuous factual-based lessons, teachers may conduct them with various interesting and energizing tasks, such as group discussion, pair work activities, and story telling, which make the students speak more. For example, after explaining the grammatical rules of tenses, the teacher may organize a pair work activity with questions like “Can you share the most memorable and perfect day in your childhood?” or “What was your first achievement?” or group discussion as hot debates via “What is the most important: a big salary or job satisfaction?” or “Which one is the most essential: love or money?”. The lesson captures students' attention easily, energizes them and learners' moods are risen, and they try to speak more and more with pleasant emotions about their childhood, their biggest accomplishments, or they are full of excitement for proving their opinions about the debatable questions of love or money, a big salary, or job satisfaction to their opponents. After such various lessons, students acquire enough self-confidence and motivation to speak in their



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target language over time. EFL learners commonly have trouble speaking in their native language. This problem is linked with the poor grammar. When students struggle with poor grammar, they often return to their original language to finish their speeches. This problem also is related to semantic issues, when they struggle to use appropriate vocabulary when communicating. According to surveys, students use their mother tongue when they cannot complete their speech grammatically or cannot find the right word for context. As a result, they feel uncomfortable and unhappy. Poor grammar students often complain about the difficulty of mastering grammar and understanding its' utilization. Tenses, as verbs, are said to be complex. EFL learners attribute bad grammar to a variety of circumstances that negatively impact efficient interaction. Most students think that shyness is a major barrier to speaking fluently. Shyness can lead to a lack of confidence, resulting in a lack of proficiency. As a result, they are unable to speak clearly. It is the teacher's obligation to identify and address the fundamental causes of the aforementioned problems. Teachers should prioritize improving students' speaking skills in the classroom. Second, teachers must dedicate adequate time to teaching grammar. Additionally, teachers should assign extra assignments and homework to engage students outside of the classroom. Focusing on grammar can help pupils overcome two or three common challenges with communication that depend on using their mother tongue, poor grammar, and others. Learning proper grammar allows students to communicate more fluently and use less of their first language. Third, teachers should always encourage learners to interact totally in English in the classroom. This will help the students speak English more fluently. To help learners establish an appropriate accent, teachers ought to allocate listening time in the classroom. They can encourage students to watch English movies and music outside of class to improve their accent. The teacher is considered to be in charge of addressing and solving any classroom issues that arise.

### **Conclusion**

Speaking is highlighted a critical skill for EFL learners to have in order to be able to communicate effectively, as was previously discussed. Speaking skill requires a specific type of cognitive activity to be produced. Effective teaching of the English language is thought that a goal shared by instructors everywhere as they work hard to keep learners on pace. In addition, a lot of teachers make a concerted effort to emphasize speaking abilities. But during the learning process, EFL students must run into some serious speaking issues. To solve those issues, the teacher needs to acknowledge them and take appropriate action. This will undoubtedly develop skilled EFL learners with adequate communication abilities.

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