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## HOW TO ACQUIRE SPEAKING SKILLS ON CAMPUSES

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**Abstract:** Language is a tool for communication. Communication takes place, where there is speech. The joy of sharing one's ideas with others is immense. As Robert Frost said, "I am writer of books in retrospect, I talk in order to understand, I teach in order to learn". Undoubtedly, the clarity in speech reflects clear thinking. English language is the current lingua franca of the international business, technology, diplomacy, banking, aviation, computing, medicine, engineering and tourism. As a result, English is being taught and learnt around the world as second language today. According to Crystal it is "the world's first truly global language" and has right now dominated the different spheres of world communication. This effect has also made people think of re-evaluating and developing newer methods for teaching English as a medium of communication. However, nowadays it is no longer remains the language of natives but has acquired the status of "World Englishes".

Speaking is one of the skills that have to be mastered by students in learning English. Speaking is an essential tool for communicating. In the fast developing 21<sup>st</sup> century, various innovative technologies have been introduced to teach speaking skills in the classrooms.

This paper tries to focus on the complexities of the skills involved, differences in the socio-economic status, differences in urban and rural background, scarcity of teachers well-versed in content matter as well as the methodology of teaching, lack of adequate aids and instructional material, hamper in their own way the successful handling of English in the classroom. The teaching of English whether for beginners or for the advanced learners has been a challenging pursuit for the teachers of English at campuses.

**Keywords:** Classroom, Communication, Globalization, Skills.

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**Introduction:** Communication is a very important tool in a human life. It is an essential requirement in this world to survive. It is no secret that today's workplace is rapidly becoming vast, as the business environment expands to include various geographic locations and span numerous cultures.

English is a living and vibrant language spoken by over 300 million people as their native language. English language is a store house of social and political knowledge. English is learned everywhere because people have found that knowledge of English is a passport for better career, better pay and advanced knowledge and for communication with the entire world.

English language is the current lingua franca of the international business, technology, aviation, diplomacy, banking, computing, medicines, engineering and tourism. Most people in the world agree with what Alexander V.Sandoval claims in his essay "*The importance of English*" that "*English is becoming the world's language of the 21<sup>st</sup> century*"[1]. Acquiring English language as a communication tool in the era of globalization has become mandatory for those who wish to participate in globalization and take the advantage of what globalization offers in terms of culture, job, travel, technical knowledge and practice. Without learning and communicating in this language, we will perish one day. To survive in modern society, English language is as essential as water.

Of all four key language skills, speaking is deemed to be the most important in learning a second or foreign language. Speaking is "*the process of building and*

*sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts*".[2].

Good speaking skills are the act of generating words that can be understood by listeners. According to Brown and Yule, "*Speaking is the skill that the students will be judged upon most in real life situations*".[3]. Despite of its importance, for many years, teaching speaking has been undervalued and English language teachers have continued to teach speaking just as a repetition of drills or memorization of dialogues. However, today's world requires that the goal of teaching speaking should improve students' communicative skills, because only in that way, students can express themselves and learn how to follow the socio-economic and cultural rules appropriate in each communicative circumstance. Oral skills have hardly neglected in today's ESL/EFL courses. Employability depends more on communication than on technology. So less practice is given to the learners in the elements of the language such as phonology, morphology, semantic and syntax. This is the main reason for huddle in acquiring the language skills among the students in higher education.

Hence, the concentration given in English language teaching and learning so far is only on reading and writing skills. English language is introduced in professional courses to develop their communication skills to pursue their course successfully and excel in their field after their education. Besides, English is a language of opportunities and success for life in India. As was noted by the Education Commission of India in 1996, "When a degree holder from India goes

to any of the developed countries he is not treated at par with a degree holder of that country”.

In the present ELT situation, little is done deliberately to assess oral skills of students in a systematic manner. In real, it is often the examination that decides the teaching and much classroom practice.

WHAT IS “TEACHING SPEAKING”?

1. Produce the English speech sounds and sounds patterns.
2. Use word and sentence stress, intonation patterns and the rhythm of the second language.
3. Organize their thoughts in a meaningful and logical sequence.
4. Use the language quickly and confidently with few unnatural pauses, which is called as fluency. Unfortunately, we know the importance of English language and skills for the students at all levels. as Krishnaswamy and Sriraman also feels **“Students of English in India have realized that English is necessary if they are to talk about their identity, their languages, their society and economy and polity, their values and their culture so that the world outside will know what they are”**. [4]. It is true that the horizon of technology is being enhanced but technical knowledge is not spread to everybody’s expectations, as many of our students are lacking behind in the usage of English.

Let me put some of the reasons for not acquiring speaking skills is

- English is taught as a subject, not as a medium of communication. English is not a phonetic language.
- The IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) sounds are not taught properly at the school level.
- English is not taught by the better qualified teachers.
- The language elements are not identical to mother tongue.
- Our examination pattern is also responsible for the present condition.
- The use of mother tongue for better understanding.
- Majority of students attend the classes without text books.
- Lack of infrastructure, participation..
- Low confidence level.
- Lack of motivation.
- Size of classrooms.
- Evaluation system of the board/universities

The students show an indifferent attitude towards English partially owing to the approach of the teachers. Students lack motivation. But the students’ involvement is very necessary and should be active but the defect in the method of articulation is quite different from the mother tongue which hinders the

learners in uttering words. Some learners feel insecure to pronounce the words properly in public. Learners may be able to get rid of speech impediment with speech training practices.

Teaching a second language to students remains a great challenge. Only devoted teachers can motivate the students and it is the teachers’ responsibility and ability to turn the intelligence of the learners. ***The Hindu, Education Plus, Sep 01, 2008*** published a news item title “Rural students more intelligent than their urban counterparts”.

The teacher should be pleasant, enthusiastic, inter-related between in-class and out of class language activities, communicative by providing game type and integrative by conducting pair work, group discussions, meaningful or relevant and challenging. When these activities are done in a systematic manner, the learner can gain self-confidence, experience of success, learning satisfaction and good relationship among learners and between teachers and students.

Modern society requires students with English speaking skill. It is necessary that this skill should be assessed along with reading and writing skills. Acquiring ability to speak in English is a big achievement for any Indian. Learning English language is an investment. According to Widdowson, **“The idea of investment for eventual benefits in the longer term is unlikely to find favour unless it is reflected in how many marks you get in an exam at the end of the year”**. [5]. As we are in the period of transition, regular monitoring and feedback are essential for improving student learning.

It is therefore understood that it is not the role of a learner only but also the role of a teacher. It is two sides of the same coin. Both the teacher and student should keep countless effort in acquiring language learning. Hence I herewith put forth some of the suggestions for the above problems:

1. Teach English as a language not as a subject.
2. Know the learner’s profile. (Socio-cultural, economic, geographical and educational of the students and their family background).
3. Conduct a diagnostic test to know the language standards of the students.
4. Categorize the students depending on the standards of the learners.
5. Motivate the students towards the topic and its importance.
6. Build confidence by creating congenial environment.
7. Choose appropriate teaching material.
8. Build congenial atmosphere to practice and expose.
9. Collect regular feedback.
10. Evaluate the standards of the learners at regular intervals.

11. Use of proper audio-visual aids to make learning effective.
  12. Focus on skills development.
  13. Feel free on syllabus completion.
  14. Radical change should be on examination system.
  15. Emphasis should be on fluency rather than accuracy.
  16. Systematic planning should be there.
  17. Internal assessment should be task activity based.
  18. Anxiety-free and student friendly assessment is the need of the hour.
  19. Focus on motivating students in order to participate.
  20. Observe on students pronunciation with regard to stress, intonation and rhythm.
  21. Provide exposure to latest technologies.
  22. Allow trained teachers to participate in workshops, conferences and symposiums.
- English language is introduced in professional courses to develop their communication skills and excel in their field after their education.

I personally feel if English is used vehemently, the technical knowledge can be better exposed for the positive use of everybody, as English is a passport for better career, better pay and advanced knowledge and for communication with the entire world. I think everything will be set right to everybody's satisfaction if English is used in a proper way, as an effective tool of communication.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, it can be said that speaking is a productive skill and it has to be given importance in the teaching learning process. This requires that the present day professionals should learn these skills at the college level itself so that their employability level will get enhanced in any multinational company. In order to achieve this objective of enhancing the employability of present day professional college students, by equipping with good communication, writing, reading and writing skills in English. We have to make students recognize its importance in acquiring good employment and placement.

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