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THE IMPORTANCE OF SPEAKING ACTIVITIES IN ENGLISH LESSONS

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Abstract: English has become an international language used in education, business, science, and technology. Therefore, developing communicative competence is one of the main objectives of English language teaching. Speaking activities provide learners with opportunities to practice real communication, improve fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and self-confidence. This article discusses the importance of speaking activities in English lessons, their educational benefits, common challenges, and practical recommendations for effective classroom implementation. The study concludes that regular speaking practice significantly enhances learners' communicative competence and prepares them for successful communication in real-life situations.

Keywords: Speaking activities, English language teaching, communicative competence, fluency, pronunciation, learner-centered learning, classroom interaction, communication.

Introduction English is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world and plays a vital role in international communication, higher education, science, and professional development. As a result, improving students' communicative competence has become a major goal of modern English language education. Among the four language skills, speaking is considered one of the most important because it enables learners to express ideas, exchange opinions, and interact confidently in different situations. Traditional English teaching often focused on grammar and vocabulary, giving students limited opportunities to speak. Consequently, many learners know English rules but cannot communicate effectively. To overcome this problem, teachers should create communicative classrooms where students actively use English through meaningful speaking activities.

Speaking activities such as pair work, group discussions, role plays, debates, interviews, storytelling, and presentations encourage students to use English naturally. These activities improve fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, and confidence while reducing learners' fear of making mistakes. They also develop critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving skills, which are essential in modern education. Furthermore, technology has increased opportunities for speaking practice through online discussions, video conferencing, educational applications, and digital presentations. These tools motivate learners and provide authentic communication experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Therefore, integrating speaking activities into English lessons is essential for developing students' communicative competence and preparing them for academic and professional success.

Research Relevance Developing students' speaking ability has become one of the most important priorities in English language education. In today's globalized world, students need English not only for examinations but also for higher education, employment, international communication, and academic research. However, many learners still face difficulties in expressing their ideas confidently despite having sufficient grammatical knowledge. Therefore, increasing the use of speaking activities in English lessons is essential for improving learners' communicative competence and preparing them for real-life communication.

Main Discussion Speaking activities are an effective way to create a communicative classroom environment where students actively participate in the learning process. Unlike traditional teacher-centered lessons, communicative activities encourage learners to use English naturally while interacting with classmates and teachers. Pair work, group discussions, debates, interviews, role plays, storytelling, presentations, and problem-solving tasks provide learners with meaningful opportunities to practice

Speaking. One of the major advantages of speaking activities is the improvement of fluency. Regular classroom communication helps students speak more naturally and confidently without depending heavily on memorized grammar rules. At the same time, learners gradually improve pronunciation, expand their vocabulary, and develop grammatical accuracy through continuous practice.

Speaking activities also increase learners' motivation. Students become more interested in English lessons when they are allowed to express personal opinions, discuss current issues, and participate in interactive tasks. Such activities reduce speaking anxiety and create a supportive classroom atmosphere where making mistakes is considered a natural part of learning. Another important benefit is the development of critical thinking and collaboration. During discussions and group tasks, students learn to analyze information, solve problems, share responsibilities, respect different opinions, and communicate effectively with others. These skills are valuable not only in language learning but also in academic and professional life.

Technology has further strengthened speaking instruction. Video conferencing, online discussion platforms, podcasts, educational applications, and artificial intelligence tools provide learners with additional opportunities to practice English beyond the classroom. These digital resources make speaking activities more engaging and accessible.

Problems and Challenges Despite their effectiveness, speaking activities may present several challenges. Some students feel shy or afraid of making mistakes when speaking English. Large class sizes often limit every learner's opportunity to participate actively. In addition, insufficient lesson time, lack of authentic teaching materials, and limited teacher training may reduce the effectiveness of communicative speaking practice.

Practical Solutions and Recommendations Teachers should create a positive classroom environment where students feel comfortable expressing their ideas without fear of criticism. Speaking activities should be organized regularly through pair work, group discussions, debates, role plays, and presentations. Teachers are encouraged to provide constructive feedback that motivates learners to improve rather than focusing only on errors.

Educational technology should be integrated into English lessons to provide additional speaking opportunities. Schools should also organize English clubs, public speaking competitions, conversation classes, and project-based learning activities. Continuous practice both inside and outside the classroom is essential for developing learners' confidence and communicative competence.

In conclusion Speaking activities play a fundamental role in developing English communicative competence. They improve learners' fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, confidence, collaboration, and critical thinking while making English lessons more interactive and meaningful. Unlike traditional grammar-focused instruction, communicicative speaking tasks prepare students for authentic communication in academic, social, and professional contexts.

Teachers should integrate a variety of speaking activities into every English lesson and encourage active student participation. Educational institutions should support communicative

teaching through teacher training, modern teaching resources, and technology-enhanced learning environments. By promoting regular speaking practice, schools can significantly improve students' English proficiency and prepare them for successful participation in today's global society.

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