



**SOME TECHNIQUES TO IMPROVE ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS
FOR NON-ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS AT TAN TRAO UNIVERSITY**

Bui Thi Lan

Tan Trao University, Viet Nam

Email address: builan.ngoaingu@gmail.com

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Abstract:

In English, there are four skills that should be mastered, they are: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among the four language skills, speaking skill seems one of the most important skills that allows us to communicate with others and express our thoughts and feelings. However, this skill is also considered one of the most difficult skills of the language learning process. Many students can get good marks in writing exams but they find it difficult to fully express their thoughts in English. Therefore, how to improve students' speaking ability so that they can communicate confidently and fluently is the main goal in the current foreign language curriculum. In this article, the author presents the aspects of speaking skills, some difficulties that students face when learning speaking skill, and also gives some techniques for both teachers and students to improve speaking skills for non major students at Tan Trao University.



MỘT SỐ BIỆN PHÁP NÂNG CAO KỸ NĂNG NÓI TIẾNG ANH CHO SINH VIÊN KHÔNG CHUYÊN TIẾNG ANH TẠI TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC TÂN TRÀO

Bùi Thị Lan

Trường Đại học Tân Trào, Việt Nam

Địa chỉ email: builan.ngoangu@gmail.com

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Thông tin bài viết	Tóm tắt
<p>Ngày nhận bài: 18/9/2022</p> <p>Ngày sửa bài: 17/10/2022</p> <p>Ngày duyệt đăng: 30/12/2022</p>	<p>Trong tiếng Anh, có bốn kỹ năng cần phải nắm vững, đó là: nghe, nói, đọc và viết. Trong số bốn kỹ năng ngôn ngữ, kỹ năng nói dường như là một trong những kỹ năng quan trọng nhất cho phép chúng ta giao tiếp với người khác và bày tỏ suy nghĩ và cảm xúc của mình. Tuy nhiên, kỹ năng này cũng được coi là một trong những kỹ năng khó nhất của quá trình học ngoại ngữ. Nhiều học sinh có thể đạt điểm cao trong các kỳ thi viết nhưng lại cảm thấy khó khăn khi diễn đạt hết suy nghĩ của mình bằng tiếng Anh. Vì vậy, làm thế nào để nâng cao khả năng nói của học sinh để có thể giao tiếp một cách tự tin và lưu loát là mục tiêu chính trong chương trình giảng dạy ngoại ngữ hiện nay. Trong bài viết này, tác giả trình bày những đặc điểm của kỹ năng nói, một số khó khăn mà học sinh gặp phải khi học kỹ năng nói, đồng thời đưa ra một số biện pháp đối với cả giáo viên và sinh viên nhằm nâng cao kỹ năng nói cho sinh viên không chuyên của trường Đại học Tân Trào.</p>
<p>Từ khóa:</p> <p><i>Kỹ năng nói, sinh viên, khó khăn, biện pháp</i></p>	

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, foreign language has become one of the compulsory subjects in colleges and universities. Foreign language is also a challenge with many students. In learning process, students have to study four skills: Listening, speaking, reading and writing. Speaking skill is one of the most important skills that need to be focused and improved. Speaking skill can be separated into formal and informal speaking skills, and we use both types of speaking skills in a variety of contexts throughout life. Informal speaking skills are important for conversations with friends and family, helping us to form emotional connections. Formal speech, on the other hand, is necessary for workplaces,

in presentations or for conversations with people you don't know. Formal language is important as it helps us to make a good impression on people and communicate politely.

II. CONTENT

1. Definition of speaking skills

According to Chaney (1998), Speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of context [1].

According to Gert and Hans (2008), speaking is speech or utterances with the purpose of having intention to be recognized by speaker and the receiver

processes the statements in order to recognize their intentions [1, 207].

Besides, Rebecca (2006) stated that [speaking is the first mode in which children acquire language, it is part of the daily involvement of most people with language activities, and it is the prime motor of language change. It also provides our main data for understanding bilingualism and language contact [6, 114].

From definition above the writer concludes that speaking skills are the ability to convey information verbally and in a way that the listener can understand. Speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and nonverbal symbols, in a variety of contexts. Without speaking we can not express what we want to express and it makes people difficult to communicate with others and will caused bad relations. In other words, Speaking is an interactive process where information is shared, it's important to develop both **speaking** and **listening** skills in order to communicate effectively.

2. Aspects of Speaking Skill

There are some aspects of speaking such as language factor pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar competence, pronunciation and fluency that should be mastered in order to be able to speak well.

2.1. Language factor

Language factors include features such as pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary... Pronunciation plays an important role in making it easy for listeners to understand what the speaker is saying. Mispronouncing any single sound or using the wrong stress and intonation will cause misunderstanding of the speaker's intentions. In addition, using correct grammar is also important when speaking English because if the speaker uses the wrong word or word form, it also makes the listener misunderstand what the speaker means. Vocabulary is like the bricks to build a building. If learners' receptive vocabulary is limited, they can hardly use them in communication and cannot express their thoughts completely. Therefore, foreign language learners need to accumulate a large amount of vocabulary to be able to speak fluently.

2.2. Grammar competence

You may think that we only focus grammar on written language. But grammatical competence includes knowledge of the system of rules of grammar,

syntax, vocabulary and phonetics. This ability helps learners to master the structure and express themselves fluently Grammar helps us to convey information in a way that the listener will understand the content.

2.3. Pronunciation

Pronunciation is a basic quality of language learning, especially in speaking ability. It concerns the way we say, articulate, assimilate, intonate, and stress words.

Having poor pronunciation skill can obscure communication and prevent us from making meaningful utterances. Harmer (2007) states, pronunciation teaching is not only making the students' are able to differentiate sounds and sound features, but also improving their speaking ability immeasurably such as to concentrate on sounds and be aware of using stress when producing sound. In speaking, pronunciation is an important factor. if speaker have good pronunciation, someone will be easier to understand messages or information delivered. In contrast, someone will be difficult in understanding messages if the speakers have bad pronunciation [2, 250].

2.4. Fluency

Fluency is also can define as the ability to speak fluently and accurately suited with professional necessity. Basically, being fluent means able to keep the language coming. Fluency is a difficult topic in speaking, fluency means being able to produce language without wasting much time to think what is being produced, and English language is foreign language for our country. If we want to get fluency in English, we need to practice regularly.

Fluency is the main goal that teachers want their students to achieve when teaching them speaking skills. Fluency is the ability to speak fluently, ability to present the problem in an understandable way so as not to interrupt the ongoing communication process, making the listener feel bored and do not want to continue listening. Hedge (2000) describes, fluency as the ability to respond in a coherent and coherent way through combining words and phrases, pronouncing sounds clearly, and using stress and intonation when speaking [3].

3. Some difficulties that students face in learning speaking skill

There are a number of problems that hinder students' communication ability that teachers accidentally notice when helping them practice speaking in class.

3.1. Nothing to say

The students cannot think of anything to say, because they have no motivation to express themselves in speaking. Actually, the students often lack confidence and they have no ideas to say. They also feel insufficient in language skills to express exactly what they want to say.

Many students also complain that they can't remember anything to say and have no incentive to express their opinion. The reason may be that the teacher chooses a topic that is not suitable for students, so they do not have enough information to talk about this topic.

3.2 Fear of making mistakes

Fearing of making mistake becomes one of the main factors of students' reluctance to speak in English in the classroom. With respect to the fear of making mistake issue, According to Juhana (2012) adds that, fear is linked to the issue of correction and negative evaluation [4, 101]. In addition, this is also much influenced by the students' fear of being laughed at by their classmates or being criticized by the teacher. As a result, students commonly stop participating in the speaking activity. Therefore, it is important for teachers to encourage their students that making mistakes is not a wrong or bad thing because this is quite common in learning process and we can learn from their mistakes.

3.3 Shyness and lack of Confidence

Shyness is an emotional thing that many students suffer from at some time when they are required to speak in English class. This indicates that shyness could be a source of problem in students' learning activities in the classroom, especially in the speaking activities. Actually, the students felt of shyness makes their mind go blank or that they will forget what to say.

It is commonly understood that students' lack of confidence usually occurs when students realize that their conversation partners have not understood them or when they do not understand other speakers. In this situation, they would rather keep silent while others talking. This shows that the students are lack of confidence to communicate.

Lack of confidence is one of the major barriers to speaking effectively. If students are too nervous, they will not be able to say anything because then they can hardly think of any suitable words or phrases, leading to communication failure.

Liu and Jackson (2014) reported, anxiety was a major factor that hindered students' willingness to communicate and led to their reticence in class. Their speaking anxiety was due to insufficient linguistic mastery for efficient idea expressions, and poor English proficiency. Therefore, to become a proficient communicator, students must learn to control their emotions. Negative emotional states will lead to communication failure.

4. Techniques to improve speaking skills for students

4.1. For teachers

4.1.1. Teachers must pay attention to warm-up activities:

Warm-up is also an important part which contributes to the success of a speaking lesson. Warm-ups help learners put aside their daily distractions and focus on English. Warm-ups also encourage whole-group participation which can build a sense of community within the group and warm-ups can help to arouse students' interest in speaking.

Teachers should vary warm-up activities to attract students' attention and interest because if they feel excited about their lessons from the beginning, they will make a good contribution to it. In order to give students exciting readiness for their speaking lesson, teachers can do different things to arouse students' interest by using various teaching techniques such as brainstorming, word web, chatting, etc.

4.1.2. varying communicative activities is also important:

As I have just presented above, effective methods of teaching indirectly encourage oral interaction and they can provide motivation. The direct way to promote oral communication is to provide students with opportunities to participate and to communicate with each other so that students can learn the language from speaking. The more opportunities of speaking the language they have, the more fluent they become. Actually, various activities in each lesson add interest to students and help make students more dynamic

and active. In speaking, students will be motivated if teachers provide them with various communicative activities. Below are some common speaking activities that I often carry out in my classes to make my speaking lessons more interesting and to motivate my students in practicing speaking English:

+ **Discussions:**

In a discussion, students may aim to arrive at a conclusion, share ideas about an event, or find solutions. Before a discussion, it is essential that the purpose of the discussion activity is set by their teachers. In this way, the discussion points are relevant to this purpose. In a discussion, teachers can form groups of 4 or 5 students. Then each group works on their topic for a given time period and presents their opinions to the class. For efficient group discussions, it is always better not to form large groups because quiet students may avoid contributing their ideas in large groups. Group activities help to increase the opportunity and time for learners to practice speaking English. In addition, some learners may be afraid to speak in front of a class but feel comfortable speaking in a small group.

+ **Role play:**

Another way of getting students to speak is role-play. Students pretend they are in various social contexts and have a variety of social roles. In role-play activities, teachers give learners information such as who they are and what they think or how they feel.

+ **Information gaps:**

In this activity, students are supposed to be working in pairs. One student will have the information that the other partner does not have and the two partners will share their information. Information gap activities serve many purposes such as solving a problem or collecting information... These activities are effective because everybody has the opportunity to talk extensively in the target language. The aim of this activity is to get learners to use the language they are learning to interact in realistic and meaningful ways, usually involving exchanges of information and opinions.

+ **Storytelling:**

Students can briefly summarize a tale or a story they heard from somebody beforehand, or they may create their own stories to tell their classmates. Storytelling fosters creative thinking.

+ **Interviews:**

Students can conduct interviews on selected topics with various people. It is a good idea that teachers provide a rubric to students so that they know what type of questions they can ask or what path to follow, but students should prepare their own interview questions.

+ **Reporting:**

Before coming to class, students are asked to read a newspaper or magazine and, in class, they report to their friends what they find as the most interesting news. Students can also talk about whether they have experienced anything worth telling their friends in their daily lives before class.

+ **Using sample conversations**

Teachers can help students develop their speaking skills by making them aware of sample conversations related to different communication situations. Teachers should ask students to study carefully the sample conversations. Some communication situations are often guided through sample conversations. For example, greetings, apologies, compliments, invitations and other functions influenced by social and cultural norms are often accompanied by sample conversations. Therefore, when faced with similar situations, they can predict what they will hear and how they will respond. By organizing interactive activities in class, teachers can create opportunities for students to practice using the language they have accumulated from sample conversations or change this language depending on the situation context.

+ **Organizing the class**

Finally, teachers have to control learners' use of the target language. Teachers need to closely monitor learners' speaking activities and give appropriate punishments to limit the situation that learners use their mother tongue without using English.

4.2 For students

Practice makes perfect if we want to develop English speaking skills and here are some helpful tips on how to develop English speaking skills:

4.2.1. Learn new vocabulary in phrases and focus on pronunciation

Although learning new words and their pronunciation is always beneficial, some words need to

be learnt in phrases to be of much use when speaking in English.

For example, “have breakfast, have lunch and have dinner” might be more useful than just learning “breakfast, lunch or dinner”.

It is said that learning lots of vocabulary can boost English skills. However, if these words aren't pronounced correctly, it can be easy to misunderstand what the student is saying. A top tip to ensure students pronounce the words they've learnt correctly could be to try some tongue twisters. It means that students should start by learning important words or phrases first and then learn how to pronounce them correctly. After you are confident with your pronunciation and usage of those words or phrases, you can choose more phrases to practice. Slowly, start practicing speaking with simple phrases or sentences first, then expand to more complex phrases and sentence structures.

4.2.2. Listen and watch more English.

If we want to speak English, we have to focus on learning to speak. Usually, listening and speaking go hand in hand. Therefore, to improve your speaking skills, you can listen to English more by listening to news, radio or watching more English videos. Listening, watching videos and imitating native English speakers will help you improve your speaking skills a lot.

4.2.3. Don't talk too fast.

Many people often confuse with “speak quickly” and “speak fluently”. People who are fluent in English or native speakers can speak English quickly – but conversely, speaking fast does not mean you are correct and fluent. When you talk quickly, you tend to swallow the last sounds blunderingly and lose control of your ideas, which leads to the listener not understanding what you're saying. Therefore, speak at a moderate speed, speak at a moderate loud volume and clearly, so that the other person can understand your message.

4.2.4. Never give up.

It means that maybe today you find it enjoyable and easy to learn to speak English, but tomorrow you will encounter some difficulties that may make you feel depressed and want to give up. Maybe you feel self-deprecating because you make too many mistakes when speaking English, which discourages you! Try to be confident and never give up. Try your best and

continue practicing English every day, you will see your improvement day by day.

III. Conclusion

Speaking is one of the most important goals of the process of teaching and learning a foreign language because learners are always interested in the ability to use the language effectively and fluently. However, in the process of learning speaking skills, they encounter some difficulties that hinder their ability to speak fluently and accurately. Being aware of aspects of speaking skill and difficulties that students face in learning speaking skill, the author gives some effective speaking techniques to help students improve their speaking skills to become proficient in communication.

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