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## IMPROVING THE SPOKEN ABILITY IN ENGLISH

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### ABSTRACT

The main focus of the study was to know English as a subject and as a language, the quality of the textbooks, opportunities of listening to good English with proper/correct pronunciation and to high light that various exercises/activities, i.e. seminars, group discussions and debates competitions, etc. were regularly being arranged or not. The study was descriptive in nature. The researchers selected 20 male students and 20 female students from 4 Govt. colleges in district Charsadda (N.W.F.P, Pakistan) studying at the first year and second year level through stratified random sampling procedure. The data was collected through a questionnaire having alternate items. The questionnaire was designed by consulting experts in the concerned field. It was tabulated in the form of counting frequencies and then analyzed through percentages. The main findings of the study were: by teaching English as a subject to the students and not as a language give vent to rote memory only to pass the examination out of burden. Enough time is not given to various exercises and opportunities for the improvement of speaking ability. Students also complained of scolding, and discouraging by their teachers for not speaking correctly. Although the teachers and students are equally responsible for the poor speaking ability, yet the teachers are more responsible by having the professional knowledge and skills. To improve the speaking ability, more stress on the quality of books at the basic level, enough time given to speaking and phonetic drills of students, no scolding but provision of friendly environment, making practical and applicable strategies by teachers for students while speaking most of the time in English, develop boldness and confidence in students for asking questions from their teachers, no overcrowded classes, awards and motivation for students, the role of media such as listening to CNN and BBC, inclusion of viva-voce in the examination system at various levels for checking the competence of the candidates, up to-date and constant training of teachers, arranging various activities and balance in the courses with respect to literature and language should be there to provide opportunities to improve the language competency of students

**Keywords:** English Language; Speaking Ability; Teaching Of English & Students' Perspective.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

As a means of communication, language plays a key role in human life. English is one of these most widely used languages in the world. As a tool of International communication, English is used for many purposes such as bureaucratic, academic, social, cultural, economic, religious, and many other purposes. Mastering English means being proficient in the four language skills, namely: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing which cannot be separated from one another considering that the development of one skill will contribute to the development of the other skills. Basically, the development of the four skills is integrated. However, for an efficient delivery of the teaching material for a certain time allocation, there are often accentuations of certain skills, for example, the teaching of speaking even though there are also times when the teaching of the four skills is done in the same time integrated. Sometimes, two skills are taught in the same time. When teaching speaking, for example, listening is involved. To understand someone speaking, the interlocutor needs to listen to what he or she is saying. Of the four skills, speaking skill usually gets the first priority in English teaching. In relation to this, Danielson et al (1) state : " the scientifically valid procedure in language learning involves listening first, to be followed by speaking than comes reading and finally the writing of the language" It means that English teaching in earlier stages should be focused on the development of listening and speaking skills. Here, the written wants to emphasize the teaching of speaking which is, of course, cannot be separated for listening. Speaking skill, as Lade puts it, is the ability to express oneself in life situations, or the ability to report acts of situations or phrase words, or the ability to express a sequence of ideas fluently (2). This shows that the teacher's first task in teaching speaking is to encourage the students to express their ideas and feeling's freely while motivating them to be involved in constant practices of English communication. There are many ways of teaching speaking. One communicative way of developing this skill is using impromptu speaking, that

is, a method of speaking or making a speech without preparation or with very little preparation and depends only on experience and insight. With this method, the speaker applies spontaneity or improvisation. This sudden speaking is delivered based on the need at the moment of speaking using simple language.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### 1. Research Method

The method used in this research is qualitative method. According to Moleong (16) qualitative research is a research which is intended to understand the phenomena of what is experienced by the subject of research such as behavior, perception, motivation, holistic actions qualitatively using words and language in a natural special contexts by using various scientific methods.

### 2. Sources of Data

Nasution (17) states that in qualitative research, only the sources that can provide information are chosen as the sample. Thus sample can be things, events, people or situations. The researchers collect data based on the natural observation of situations. Lofland and lofland in Moleong (16) says that the main sources of data in a qualitative research are actions, words and others are additional such as documents etc.

### 3. Research Instruments

In this research, the research instruments are the researchers as the planners, executors, data collectors, data analysts and interpreters and finally become the discussers and the reporters of the research results.

### 4. Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis starts from the beginning of the research and during the whole process of research. In this research, 3 techniques of analysis were applied, namely: data reduction, data presentation. And conclusion.

## III. IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING SPOKEN ENGLISH

In today's modern world, learning spoken English has many advantages. English is fast becoming the international language of many fields, including politics, business and education. Not only is English used between native speakers and non-native speakers, but it is also used increasingly as a common language in interactions between non-native speakers. When you are asked to make a lecture in English, you can put it to good use. When you need to make a foreign friend, you just try a little in other ways except for English. If you are skilled in spoken English, you can have more access to knowledge. For example, traveling abroad to know more western customs and culture personally, making friends with foreigners because you can communicate freely with them in English, enjoying more classic western plays, films and literatures and so on. Having a good grasp of spoken English helps you to improve your chances of employment. These days, there are many foreign companies operating from China, and many Chinese-owned companies have trade links with foreign partners. These companies require speakers of English with sufficient language skills to ensure smooth business transactions. Spoken English also provides the chances for you to communicate socially with people from many other countries. It gives you a window into other cultures, and other perspectives of the world. It also gives you access to foreign films, TV programs, music and news. Therefore, spoken English is an important and fundamental tool in today's global village.

## IV. HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR ORAL ENGLISH

### 1. Some effective methods to improve your spoken English

One of the English teachers at our university got into a taxi one day, and as she talked with the driver, she noticed that he had very good spoken English, better, in fact, than that some of her students! "Where did you learn your English?" she asked. "Oh," he replied, "I never went to secondary school. I drive a taxi every day, but while I'm driving around, I listen to English radio stations. And if English-speaking passengers gets in, I try my best to start a conversation with them. That's how I learn my English!" There are many things which contribute to good spoken English, but an important question for you is this: to what extent are your attitudes similar to those of the taxi driver? Are you willing to try to start a conversation with an English speaker? Or do you feel as if "the cat did get your tongue"—that whenever you try to speak in English, your tongue won't behave itself and you can hardly make a sound? How then can you improve your spoken English? How can you try to put your resolution to improve into practice? Here we will suggest some concrete things you can do on your own (for

little or no money) to improve your English-spoken English in particular. Listen to the radio, you could get up five minutes earlier and listen to the news in English. Try watching the news in English instead of Chinese. If you watch a movie and it has subtitles, try taping a paper over them. Invite your English teacher to lunch! Find a friend who also wants to improve his or her English and have lunch of dinner together to speak English of course. Check out books, records, cassette tapes, and other materials in English from your local library. Look especially for books which have lots of dialogue in them. Read plays when you go to see English films, try not to read the Chinese subtitles. Watch for notices of English activities and join in whenever you can. Seek out lectures in English on topics of interest to you. Try to take notes—just for your own use. Learn the words to some popular songs (warning: don't depend on texts provided on Chinese channels or in Chinese magazines!) Find books-on-tape in your local library. Listen while you are relaxing at home or while commuting if you have a walkman. Watch for plays or dramatic performances given in English on campus—or get the student ticket for the public performances. Exchange taped messages with a classmate. Record a few minutes and then ask your classmate to respond later on the same tape. Choose a famous person whose accent you admire, and if you can get recordings of him or her, imitate the way he or she speaks. Practice situations when you are alone, perhaps in front of a mirror. Imagine introducing yourself, disagreeing with someone's ideas, being interviewed or asking for information. If you can get someone to help, assign parts and do role-playing. Make friends with the exchange students on our campus they are here because they want cross-cultural communication. Communicate with them. Take part in a play in English—start out with a small part if you feel shy. Find a friend or two and agree to speak English at certain regular times—after a class together, at dinner every Tuesday, or riding home on the train. Practice reading aloud—get someone to check your pronunciation and intonation, or record yourself on tape and analyze your own speech. Set goals of specific things you can work on improving ---for example, differences between words that contain "l" and "n" or "w" and "v". Keep notes of words you often mispronounce and practice them. If you have a chance to travel, take advantage of the opportunities to use English – airlines and immigration personnel, hotel and restaurant staff, fellow travelers and passengers. Visit a former English teacher either from secondary school or from a course you took at university. Teachers like to hear how their students are doing. Everyone knows that the only really effective way to improve on language skills is to use the language. In reality, however, we know that there are many reasons why people don't want to speak in another language – they are afraid of making mistakes, they can't express their real meaning easily, they are shy, they are afraid people will laugh at them. We all feel this way some of the time, but if you really want to 335 improve your spoken English, try some of the suggestions we have made here. Once you try putting some of these ideas and principles into practice, the cat will have a very hard time getting your tongue!

## **2. How to speak more accurately**

From a learner's point of view, the problem with English is that it is too rich in constructions and vocabulary, i.e.: There are numerous words and constructions which have similar meanings. Mistakes occur when learners remember half of one construction and half of another; they end up with a hotchpotch which is at best "incorrect but understandable" and at worst "nonsense". Choose English for use or recognition purposes only English people do not use every phrase and word in the English language. They have favorite phrases which they use time and time again. I recommend that when you are taught more than one way of saying the same thing, choose only one version to learn accurately for future use. Then store the other one vaguely in your mind for future recognition purposes only. At the same time you should avoid pitfalls. Native English speakers modify their language according to their situation, just as you would do in your own language. Unless you have constant exposure to English over many years, you cannot expect to do this. The trick therefore is to choose the best English for universal speaking purposes and to recognize other version of English, so you are not at disadvantages. By doing so, you will avoid misunderstandings and you will be able to judge the quality of another person's English. Although a knowledge of the following is essential for understanding English (and possibly for some exams), I recommend you avoid them as much as possible when speaking in normal situation. Avoiding grammatical errors when speaking. Many students experience difficulties with the use of the present perfect, because the use of it does not correspond with a similar-looking tense in their own language. If it helps you, it is possible to avoid the present perfect altogether by using simple past + specific time.

### 3. How to speak more fluently

Translation is a very difficult exercise—which is why professional interpreters make a lot of money. During a conversation, we don't really have time to translate what we understand. When you use translation to understand a foreign language, you don't develop the necessary reflexes needed to speak and understand fluently. In other words, you don't always need to translate everything to understand what is being said. Building up reflexes right from the beginning will help you later when your skills are good enough to participate in a conversation. How do you communicate successfully when you only have basic language? It can be done! Don't rely on vocabulary and sentence structure alone. After all, what you probably want most is to be understood, not to dazzle anybody with your command of grammar. Here are a few tips to get you communicating right off. Relax! No one is judging you except you! Look at each communication experience as an adventure. If you are relaxed, you will pick up on small details, body language, etc. That you might miss if you are writing your hands and sweating. Context is your friend. What is the subject, setting and situation? Use these to make intelligent guesses about what is being said. A lot of language can be eliminated when you consider context. You will feel much more comfortable and receptive if you remember that you don't have the entire Spanish language to consider at once. Memorize clarifying questions. After you have proudly stumbled through a request for tickets at the train station, the clerk rattles off long sentences about Vichy and Tuesday. You may be a little unclear or have only understood a portion of what was said. Rather than staring blankly, have a list of memorized clarification questions such as, "Did you say \_\_\_\_?" and "Would you repeat that more slowly?" that you deftly use to move the communication forward. By employing these questions, you build on what you can say and understand instead of starting over with each utterance. Besides improving your communication in your school language, you improve fluently and feel confident and in charge. Employ body language. Use gestures and facial expressions to accompany your words. Don't be afraid to be a little exaggerated. The person you are speaking to wants to understand, and will be carefully observing and listening. As you become more proficient in your second language, you will rely more on oral exchange and less on body language, but there is no shame in supporting the language you can use when you are a beginner. The alternative is to wait until you are an intermediate speaker to have meaningful interactions, and this is far too long to wait.

### 4. Move your mouth

Do not confuse pronunciation of words with their spelling! For example, "threw" and "through", although spelled differently, are pronounced the same. Also, identical letters or letter clusters in words do not always produce the same sound. For example, the "ought" in "though" and "through" represents a different sound in each word. Learn to practice what you hear, not you see. Imagine a sound in your mind before you say it. Try to visualize the positioning of your mouth and face. Think about how you are going to make the sound. Listen to and try to imitate the speaker. In addition to listening for specific sounds, pay attention to pauses, the intonation of the instructor's voice and patterns of emphasis. This can be just as important as the pronunciation of sounds. The English language has many different dialects, and words can be pronounced differently. It is important, however, that you pronounce words clearly to ensure effective communication. Finally, you must practice what you are learning! Remember that you are teaching your mouth a new way to move. You are building muscles that you do not use in your own language. It is like going to the gym and exercising your body. Don't forget to exercise your mouth a little bit each day.

## V. DISCUSSION

The improvement of students speaking skills takes place in each cycle during the action in class. The students seem to increase their confidence as they carry out the speaking activities step by step from practicing simple dialog until performing a mini drama at the end of the semester. The students' test results in three cycles reveal that the students improve their speaking skills significantly. A slight improvement from the mean score in cycle 1 indicates that the students started speaking appropriately. The students were trained to be aware and to get used of applying appropriate grammar and vocabulary when speaking. They were encouraged to do language exercises and various speaking activities. The students seemed struggling and not confident at the beginning, but then they enjoyed the turn taking activity in pairs. The students learned to ask short questions and to give minimal responses without reading a note. One way to encourage students to begin to participate is to help

them build up a stock of minimal responses that they can use in different types of exchanges (Mariam Bashir; Muhammad Azeem; Ashiq Hussain Dogar, 2016). The students then continued speaking using a short role-play in pairs and groups. The students seemed much confident to play different roles and topics in cycles 1 and 2. Variety of topics used for conducting role-play may help the students improve their vocabulary (Krebt, 2017). The students carried out information gap activities in the second cycle. Information gap activity helps introverts to speak (Marashi & Naddim, 2019). The students started focusing on the negotiation of meaning. They were trying to develop their speaking using pictures and maps. The students showed their improvement in speaking. Their score in cycle 2 was better compared to cycle 1. However, accuracy was still the lowest mean score among other indicators. This indicated that it was not easy for the students to use appropriate grammar when speaking. Therefore, the researcher decided to provide the students with speaking activities that challenge the students to evaluate their speaking particular on the use of grammar. The students were assigned storytelling, simulation and mini-drama in the third cycle. They created the story, decided theme and script for the mini-drama in groups. The researcher assisted if necessary. The groups may give feedback to each other on the use of grammar. The students were aware of using appropriate grammar and vocabulary. The students seemed happy performing the activities. They did some improvisation when carrying out mini-drama. It shows that the student were confident enough to speak English in a real-life communication practice. The joy of the learning and the responsibility given to create storytelling and mini-drama performances motivate the students to enhance their speaking skills. The score of the students speaking skills in the third cycle shows significant improvement. The students manage to use task-based learning to increase their speaking skills and confidence.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this study aims to improve students' speaking skills through task-based learning. The results of the pre-test to post-test show development on students' scores after the use of task-based learning. A slight improvement was seen from the mean score in the pre-test results compared to the test in cycle 1. In cycle 2 students' speak score increases. However, accuracy is still the lowest mean score among other indicators. Even though it increases 7 points compared to cycle 1, but it is still at a poor level (50-61). In cycle 3, the scores show the significant improvement of each indicator compared to the mean score in cycle 2. International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding (IJMMU) Vol. 7, No. 6, July 2020 Improving Students' Speaking Skills through Task-Based Learning: An Action Research at the English Department 96 The improvement of the students' scores indicates that students' speaking skills increase. This fact is supported by the students' response to the use of task-based learning. They said that undergoing tasks through various activities in pairs and group works facilitates them to speak better English. They can practice simple dialogues, turn-taking, gap information, interview, discussion, short role-play, simulation, and mini-drama. The most important is they can evaluate their learning. Various learning experiences motivate the students to improve their speaking skills in the future.

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