



## Journal of Education for Humanities

A peer-reviewed quarterly scientific journal issued by College of Education for Humanities / University of Mosul



# The Role of Speaking Skill in Improving Second Language Learners' Communication in and outside the Classroom

Sanaa mohammed khudair

Al-Mutafaweqat High School For Girls /Najaf - Iraq

Article information	Abstract
<b>Accepted:</b> 4/2/2025 <b>Published</b> 31/7/2025	
<b>Keywords</b> native speakers , school syllabus , global usage , language learners , four skills , teaching methodology ,language production , communication processes .	
<b>Correspondence:</b> Sanaa mohammed khudair <a href="mailto:sanaamoha72@gmail.com">sanaamoha72@gmail.com</a>	In this research paper, I shall demonstrate that language production is an active process whereby producing the language requires a kind of mental activities throughout using the productive skills in order to achieve and maintain a solid communication. After that, I shall talk about the connection between speaking and writing as productive skills. Then, I shall discuss the productivity of speaking skill and the way it helps second language learners in communication. Besides, I shall discuss in details some major reasons for teaching speaking skill and the importance of its impact on interaction between learners. Finally, I shall suggest some activities that can help improve second language learners' speaking skill.

DOI: \*\*\*\*\* , ©Authors, 2025, College of Education for Humanities University of Mosul.

This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

## دور مهارة التحدث في تحسين التواصل لمتعلمي اللغة الثانية داخل الفصل الدراسي وخارجه

سناء محمد خضير المجمع

ثانوية المتفوقات للبنات / النجف الاشرف- العراق

معلومات الارشفة	المخلص
تاريخ القبول : ٢٠٢٥/٢/٤	في هذه الورقة البحثية سأوضح أن إنتاج اللغة هو عملية نشطة حيث يتطلب إنتاج اللغة القيام نوعاً من الأنشطة العقلية من خلال استخدام المهارات الإنتاجية من أجل تحقيق تواصل قوي وفعال والحفاظ عليه. ويوضح البحث الصلة او العلاقة بين مهارتي التحدث والكتابة باعتبارهما مهارات إنتاجية. وكذلك يناقش البحث إنتاجية مهارة التحدث والطريقة التي تساعد بها متعلمي اللغة الثانية في التواصل. كما يتناول البحث بالتفصيل بعض الأسباب الرئيسية لتعليم او تدريس مهارة التحدث وأهمية تأثيرها على التفاعل بين المتعلمين. أخيراً، سأقترح بعض الأنشطة التي يمكن أن تساعد في تحسين مهارة التحدث لدى متعلمي اللغة الثانية .
تاريخ النشر : ٢٠٢٥/٧/٣١	
الكلمات المفتاحية : المتحدثون الاصليون ؛ المنهج الدراسي ؛ الاستخدام العالمي ؛ متعلمو اللغة ؛ المهارات الاربعة ؛منهجية التدريس ؛إنتاج اللغة ؛ عمليات التواصل	
معلومات الاتصال سناء محمد خضير المجمع <a href="mailto:sanaamoha72@gmail.com">sanaamoha72@gmail.com</a>	

DOI: \*\*\*\*\*, ©Authors, 2025, College of Education for Humanities University of Mosul.

This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

### 1. Introduction

Nowadays, English language is one of the most important languages in the world. People learn English language to become competent in order to use it in their daily life. Starting from primary school to higher studies, people tend to learn English language to fulfil their needs related to their field of study or everyday life. Moreover, English language is not only related with its native speakers, on the contrary, none native speakers also compete to learn the language and master it. In fact, many none native speakers try hard to learn English language because of its great usage in all aspects of

life. In addition to that, almost all countries around the world include English language in their syllabus from an early stage at primary school. Some other countries include English language in pre-school stage too.

Furthermore, most English as second language learners face a lot of obstacles during their learning process, basically in relation to the four skills, and more specifically, speaking. This is due to the fact that speaking, apart from writing is a productive skill of English language. Besides, speaking skill enriches second language learners' knowledge so that it enlarges their scope to improve their ability to produce what they have learnt from English through practicing it. We cannot deny that mastering English language means mastering its four skills. However, there is sometimes much focus needed on a certain skill at the cost of the others based on learners' needs. For example, a learner who has a problem in speaking has to exert much efforts in that skill in order to improve it.

Talking about this point, in fact, one of the major problems I have seen as an English language teacher is that the majority of students do not realise the importance of speaking and how it massively improves their communication.

As a result, they give it less attention and are unable to respond with a correct and clear response. There are various causes for this major problem, but one of the most significant ones is a lack of confidence while speaking English. In this regard, it is the duty of the educator to provide strategies that will assist his students in resolving such issues both within and outside the classroom. For example, teachers are ought to seek and use efficient teaching methodologies that can help and improve learners' speaking competence with more confident spirit and self-awareness.

## 2. Language production and communication

Communication is one reason among many others that urge many people around the world to learn English language. However, a very well-constructed communication process particularly requires a very good knowledge of the productive skills. When it comes to the productivity of English language, no one doubts that speaking and writing are the only two productive skills. In fact, language production is simply the production of spoken or written language.

Furthermore, writing and speaking are two crucial skills that influence learners and improve their ways of communication and interaction. Besides, the two skills increase learners' creativity traits during their learning process, whereby they expresses

themselves freely and more openly in any different social context through using these skills. Speaking and writing involve mental awareness and usage, which is why "in cognitive theory, language production is seen as an active process of meaning construction and expression" (O'Malley and Chamot 37). In addition, language production is a dynamic process that necessitates both of these mental awarenesses. So, it is obvious that both skills play an essential role in expressing oneself and being able to communicate through mental activity.

According to O'Malley and Chamot (p. 37), language comprehension and language creation may both be broken down into three levels. Although the levels of comprehension and production are comparable, there are actually significant distinctions in the underlying brain processes. In this respect, it is clear that writing and speaking are two significant aspects in mental processes whereby both of them cannot be just a process of conversing or filling papers randomly, rather it is a sophisticated process containing a kind of mental activity.

To elaborate, the ways that learners use writing and speaking in order to produce what they feel vary according to the existing situation. For example, for some learners they prefer to use speaking instead of writing, and vice versa. Such kind of decisions can be made according to certain constraints such as "time pressure" (Bygate, 1987, p. 14). In one way or another, learners choose to switch between using writing and speaking specifically when they are under a time pressure. However, 'time pressure' affects the language that the learners use in more than one way. Furthermore, as Bygate (1987) sees it, one reason is that learners use different methods and devices in order to simplify their production in a certain communication context. A second reason is that learners equalize the difficulties during their speaking. Clearly, that is why time pressure confines the learners and their ways of communication. However, such shifts form learners between speaking and writing in such situations derive from their feeling that they can "improvise if they use less complex syntax" (Bygate, 1987, P. 14). In addition, they are more comfortable in producing "short cuts to avoid unnecessary effort in producing individual utterance" (Bygate, 1987, p. 14). This kind of short cuts according to Bygate (1987) enables learners to shorten their speech and their message and produce incomplete sentences excluding any needless elements in their speech whenever possible, such process is called 'ellipsis'.

Obviously, it was shown in the previous example about time pressure how the productivity of language switch from writing to speaking and vice versa, therefore, it is an important reason to teach second language learners the skills of speaking and writing, but before teaching them such skills, teachers ought to draw out the importance of the two skills, and the position that they hold inside the classroom whereby each skill play a distinctive role in producing the language and communication.

### 3. The Speaking-Writing Interference

Producing the language is all about creating spoken or written language, as was previously established. Without a question, speaking is a key English language ability. It works in tandem with the other three abilities to help the speaker generate proper English. All English language abilities, even those that are useful, differ in various ways. Speaking and writing, for instance, are useful talents, yet they have certain differences from one another. One may illustrate some of the correlations between speaking and writing by discussing this.

Speaking and writing have a dual connection that is both comparable to and distinct from one another. In light of this, both abilities share the productivity of language patterns, but their employment varies depending on the context of the conversation. For instance, a person cannot talk or write while he is having a discussion with others in a community or while he is composing an official piece of writing. Speaking and writing, however, differ further in that "in speaking the primary emphasis is on the building of relationship" (Tribble, 1996, p. 9), while "in writing the emphasis is on recording things, on completing tasks, or in developing ideas and arguments" (Tribble, 1996, p. 9). It goes without saying that each ability has distinct qualities and special uses of its own. In this context, instructors' jobs are to emphasise the importance of speaking and writing to students and to show them the best methods to use each talent on its own, at the appropriate time and place.

Tribble (1996) goes one step further in illustrating how speaking and writing are used differently by stating that language has its own styles and that the types of language that a speaker and a writer use are entirely different because even the social contexts are different.

Although speaking and writing have somewhat distinct use aspects, it is important to note that they are comparable in terms of how they convey and produce the language as a whole. According to Halliday (1985, p. 93), "Spoken language and written language are saying the same things". In this sense, Halliday (1985) makes the case that speaking and writing share certain similarities since both are employed to generate language and are utilised in a variety of contexts and for a variety of purposes. As a result, they are comparable in the sense that they both practise within a variety of social contexts. However, he acknowledges that they also differ in how they are used since each of them has the ability to produce a wide range of realities because "writing creates a world of things; talking creates a world of happening" (Halliday, 1985, p. 93).

To sum up, depending on the situation, speaking and writing differ at times and are comparable at others. To ensure that second language learners who are acquiring productive skills are well-prepared to employ the relevant skill in the most appropriate context, both similarities and differences must be made plain to them. The instructor can do this by organising the classroom and implementing the best teaching strategies there.

#### 4. Speaking as an active skill and its impact on communication

Speaking ability involves a cerebral process, as was already indicated. And it is plain to see that acquiring this ability can aid a learner of a second language in communicating. Speaking ability also plays a significant role in reflecting the production and communication processes.

With this regard, speaking is a significant obstacle that exists in front of second language learners' mind. Most Second language learners do not take into consideration the importance of speaking in the classroom and its role in improving communication. They think it is an easy skill to use but the reality is that it is a difficult skill to be used and mastered by most second language learners without learning it properly. Additionally, to put it another way, "when we speak, a great deal more than just the mouth is involved" (Cornbleet & Carter, 2001, p. 17). In order to generate and transmit the message, each component of the human body must be involved, beginning with the brain and finishing with the mouth. It is not simply a process of making sounds at random; rather, it is a very complex issue. Speaking is a natural human activity, and prior to the invention of technology, Cornbleet & Carter (2001) note that speaking could only take place in face-to-face interactions, therefore in order to initiate a

discussion and engage in interaction, the speaker and the listener must physically come into contact. However, in modern times, engagement goes beyond just physical proximity. Even though it occurs over great distances, both the speaker's and the listener's voices are audible.

According to Bygate (1987), the process of communication through speaking cannot be only by the speaker and the listener having the processor of each spoken word, and their ability to create a rational set of words in some difficult situations during interaction. It is also valuable if those two people are very well communicators, whereby they possess the special ability to express themselves by saying what they want to say in a way that is understandable. In fact, it is agreeable that speaking is as important as writing in communication, and it is significance as same as the other skills. However, the productivity of speaking is of a great importance, and that is why learners have to learn it. Otherwise, they will not be able to communicate properly with each other within their society and classroom.

## 5. Reasons for teaching speaking

Speaking is no less important than the other skills as mentioned earlier, whereby it can play an essential role in producing the language in an oral way. But one of the hardest parts of learning a language is speaking. Helping his pupils learn to generate the language is one of the teacher's most challenging jobs, according to Hasan (1993, p. 145). How would a second language learner engage without being able to talk or even start a brief discussion with his classmates, given how vital speaking is as a means of communication? The opening sentence of an article titled "Teaching Speaking Skills 2 - Overcoming Classroom Problems" poses the query "Why Should We Teach Speaking Skills in the Classroom?" The essay looked into the factors that might be crucial in helping second language learners learn how to speak. The incentive factor was one of them. For instance, if a student shows up in class unable to speak or feels as though he is not receiving the chance to speak the language, he would quickly lose motivation and get discouraged. This implies that he won't be motivated to learn the language. On the other hand, if the proper activities for speaking are taught using the best teaching techniques, the learner will love speaking the language and discover that he is unknowingly learning it.

It is crucial that every instructor consider why he would advise his pupils to practise speaking in class. Anyone can find a tonne of answers to this specific question, but at least one can be satisfactory, which is "for many students, learning to speak competently in English is a priority" (Hedge, 2000, p. 261), because "they may need this skill for a variety of reasons, for example to keep up rapport in relationships, influence people, and win or lose negotiations" (Hedge, 2000, p. 261). As a result, speaking is a crucial ability that a student of a second language has to acquire in accordance with the most effective teaching techniques in the classroom.

Additionally, Hedge (2000) observed that teachers were impacted by the communicative approach's development at the time, and as a result, they were concerned to ensure that students were not only using and practising speaking in a constrained manner but also producing its components, such as pronunciation and vocabulary, freely in a determined communication. Despite this, second language learners need to develop their speaking abilities for a variety of reasons, some of which are more significant than others, such as the need to understand others and the need to control interpersonal interactions. Regarding the former, Hedge (2000) reports that using communication strategies is one way to be understood. At this point, most learners are eager to express themselves, but they unfortunately fail because they lack the necessary vocabulary and structure. Their only option then is to move to one or more communication techniques, such altering the subject of the conversation or staying out entirely. A speaker may occasionally produce a misleading message based on his or her own concept of illusionary shared knowledge between them and the listener. This can make it more challenging for the listener to understand the message. The other way that learners can make themselves understood is through the process of negotiation of meaning. In order to avoid the speaker becoming stuck on one meaning based on falsely presumed common knowledge, it is necessary to teach them how to negotiate the meaning until it is understood. In order to create the message more clearly, learners need to be taught various accomplishment tactics that allow them to negotiate the meaning, such as gesture and paraphrase.

In regards to the latter, Hedge (2000) believes that managing interaction can be done by adhering to some rules that control any ordinary interaction. As a result, a learner needs to be taught how to open conversation, progress it, and close it flexibly in accordance with some factors of status such as cultural standards, well-adjudicated

formality in style of speech, and the level of courtesy that can coincide with the level of the relationship between people who are involved in the conversation.

That clearly indicates that speaking and interacting in class require discussion, which dialogue does not provide. Every communication has a specific goal since "the nature of this interaction is transactional" (Cornbleet & Carter, 2001, p. 27). Furthermore, "the purpose is very precise-action is required as an outcome of the conversation" (Cornbleet & Carter, 2001, p. 27). However, as mentioned by Cornbleet and Carter (2001), some talks have interpersonal aims, such as to establish or maintain a connection. Additionally, a single individual is unable to start a discussion by themselves, therefore "you need more than one person to interact" (Cornbleet & Carter, 2001, p. 27)! Additionally, even if there are several people present, none of them may speak before the others; instead, they must wait their time as "taking turns is such a basic, simple principle that it is an unconscious part of normal conversation". In a discussion, we say something in turn. B answers after A has spoken, and then A speaks again (Cornbleet & Carter, 2001, p. 27). In fact, speech is so important that kids need their professors' assistance and, as Hasan (1993) notes, they require encouragement from their teachers to utilise speaking in order to engage and express themselves.

In short, a second language learner has to be taught all the previous aspects concerning speaking. This is because what has been demonstrated previously; concerning learning how to produce conversation in order to interact or trying to make oneself understandable through using communication strategies; along with the ways in which the learner can be skilful in negotiating the meaning; are all important and sufficient aspects for a second language learner to be able to use speaking not only in his classroom but also in his daily life.

#### 6. Suggested activities to improve speaking skill

Once again, speaking skill can be very helpful in enriching second language learners' knowledge about English language and developing their awareness of it inside and outside the classroom. Indeed, there are many methods to obtain this. The teacher usually takes into his responsibility finding and using such methods to improve learners' speaking skill. For example, a teacher can ask his students to talk about something that they like such as sport, music, food, etc...

Another nice suggestion to improve speaking that is 'moral dilemma', like for example, "a student is caught cheating in an important exam. Given the student's circumstances, which of five possible courses of action should be followed? Groups reach a consensus" (Harmer, 1998, p. 96). In fact, the 'moral dilemma' suggestion is likely to appear inside the classroom, whereby all students will have the chance to participate in a systematic order. By following and applying this suggestion, students can improve their speaking skill in an unconscious way since they are depending on their own mental lexicon.

Another suggestion posed by Harmer (1998) is that the teacher divide his class into groups, and then, the students in each group should look at five different photographs for instance, after that, students have to decide on one picture from the five to win a photographic prize. By doing so, each group has to convince the other in

which all the students agree on one final decision. In fact, this is another simple

suggestion to improve speaking because it allows second language learners to think and come up with words that best fulfil the situation.

In all, there is a big number of suggestions and activities to improve speaking yet using the former techniques can help second language learners to develop speaking skill rapidly. Such development come from the freedom that the learners feel while practising such kind of activities in which they find themselves very well speakers.

### Conclusion

It is so clear that learning a second language demands a lot of effort. Therefore, second language learners need to know the importance of English language skills mainly speaking especially in the classroom. This is simply because the classroom is the healthiest place to build up a well-educated learners who are capable of using speaking in order to establish a solid communication whereby they express their thoughts and ideas in the most appropriate ways. This can be also achieved by the help of expert teachers who are able to evaluate and assist their learners' needs whereby they draw their learners' attention towards the role of speaking in improving their communication. This can be achieved by using the most suitable speaking activates that make learners excited and open to learn more and more.

## References:

- ❖ Bygate, M. (1987). *Speaking*. (C. N. Widdowson, Ed.) Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- ❖ Carter, S. C. (2001). *The Language of Speech and Writing*. London: Routledge.
- ❖ Chamot, J. M. (1990). *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ❖ Halliday, M. A. (1985). *Spoken and Written Language*. (F. Christie, Ed.) Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- ❖ Harmer, J. (1998). *How to Teach English*. England: Addison Wesley Longman Limited.
- ❖ Hasan, A. S. (1993). *Methodology of Teaching English*. Damascus: Damascus University Press.
- ❖ Hedge, T. (2000). *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- ❖ Lawtie, Fiona. "Teaching Speaking Skills 2 - Overcoming Classroom Problems." Think Articles of BBC Feb. 2004: 10 pars. 20 Jan. 2010 <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/teaching-speaking-skills-2-overcoming-classroom-problems>
- ❖ Tribble, C. (1996). *Writing*. (C. N. Widdowson, Ed.) Oxford: Oxford University Press.

المراجع:

- ❖ بايجيت، م. (١٩٨٧). التحدث. (سي. إن. ويدوسون، محرر) أكسفورد: مطبعة جامعة أكسفورد.
  - ❖ كارتر، س. س. (٢٠٠١). لغة الكلام والكتابة. لندن: روتليدج.
  - ❖ شاموت، ج. م. (١٩٩٠). استراتيجيات التعلم في اكتساب اللغة الثانية. كامبريدج: مطبعة جامعة كامبريدج.
  - ❖ هاليداي، م. أ. (١٩٨٥). اللغة المنطوقة والمكتوبة. (ف. كريستي، محرر) أكسفورد: مطبعة جامعة أكسفورد.
  - ❖ هارمر، ج. (١٩٩٨). كيفية تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية. إنجلترا: دار أديسون ويسلي لونجمان المحدودة.
  - ❖ حسن، أ. س. (١٩٩٣). منهجية تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية. دمشق: مطبعة جامعة دمشق.
  - ❖ هيدج، ت. (٢٠٠٠). التدريس والتعلم في فصول اللغات. أكسفورد: مطبعة جامعة أكسفورد.
  - ❖ لوتي، فيونا. "تعليم مهارات التحدث ٢ - التغلب على مشاكل الفصل الدراسي". مقالات Think من BBC، فبراير ٢٠٠٤: ١٠ أجزاء. ٢٠ يناير ٢٠١٠.
- <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/teaching-speaking-skills-2-overcoming-classroom-problems>
- ❖ تريبل، س. (١٩٩٦). الكتابة. (سي. إن. ويدوسون، محرر). أكسفورد: مطبعة جامعة أكسفورد.