

## ENHANCING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE THROUGH SPEECH ACTIVITY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AT GENERAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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**Abstract** Communicative competence has become one of the most important goals of foreign language education in the twenty-first century. The ability to communicate effectively in English enables students to participate successfully in academic, social, and professional environments. Speech activity plays a crucial role in developing communicative competence because it integrates listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills into meaningful communication. This article explores the significance of speech activity in English language teaching at general secondary schools, examines the factors influencing its development, and discusses innovative pedagogical approaches that can improve students' communicative abilities. The study emphasizes the importance of learner-centered instruction, interactive methodologies, and educational technologies in promoting effective language learning.

**Keywords:** communicative competence, speech activity, English language teaching, secondary education, language learning, interactive methods, educational technology, communication skills.

**Introduction** The growing importance of English as a global language has transformed educational priorities around the world. In many countries, English is taught as a foreign language from the early stages of education, and schools are expected to prepare students who can communicate effectively in diverse contexts. However, successful communication requires more than knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. Learners must develop the ability to understand, interpret, and produce language appropriately in real-life situations.

Speech activity is the foundation of communicative language learning. It enables students to use language as a practical tool for interaction rather than as a collection of isolated linguistic structures. Therefore, the development of speech activity has become a central objective of English language teaching in general secondary schools.

Despite considerable efforts to improve language education, many learners continue to face difficulties in using English confidently. This challenge highlights the need to investigate effective approaches for developing speech activity and communicative competence.

**Understanding Speech Activity** Speech activity refers to the purposeful use of language for communication. It includes both receptive and productive language processes that allow individuals to exchange information, express ideas, and interact with others.

Speech activity consists of four interconnected components: Listening Activity Listening is the process of receiving and understanding spoken messages. It provides learners with exposure to authentic language and supports the development of pronunciation, vocabulary, and comprehension skills.

**Speaking Activity** Speaking involves the production of oral language for communication. It requires learners to organize thoughts, select appropriate vocabulary, and express ideas clearly and fluently.

**Reading Activity** Reading enables learners to access information, acquire new language structures, and develop comprehension abilities. It contributes significantly to vocabulary expansion and language awareness.

**Writing Activity** Writing allows learners to communicate ideas in a structured form. It strengthens language knowledge and supports the development of critical thinking skills.

These four components work together to create effective communication and should be developed in an integrated manner. **The Importance of Communicative Competence**

Communicative competence is the ability to use language effectively and appropriately in different contexts. It extends beyond grammatical knowledge and includes social, cultural, and strategic aspects of communication. According to modern language teaching theories, communicative competence includes:

Grammatical competence

Sociolinguistic competence

Discourse competence

Strategic competence

Students who develop communicative competence can understand messages, participate in conversations, express opinions, and solve communication problems effectively. Therefore, communicative competence serves as the ultimate goal of speech activity development.

### Factors Affecting Speech Activity Development

#### Psychological Factors

Language learning is closely connected with psychological variables such as motivation, confidence, anxiety, and attitudes toward learning. Students with high motivation are more likely to engage actively in communication tasks and seek opportunities to practice English. In contrast, language anxiety may prevent learners from participating in classroom activities.

**Social Factors** The social environment significantly influences language learning outcomes. Supportive relationships with teachers and peers encourage learners to communicate more frequently and confidently.

Collaborative learning environments create opportunities for meaningful interaction and language practice.

## Pedagogical Factors

Teaching methods, classroom organization, and instructional materials directly affect speech activity development.

Teachers who employ interactive and communicative methodologies provide learners with greater opportunities for language use and skill development.

## Technological Factors

Modern technologies have expanded access to authentic language resources and communication opportunities. Digital tools enable learners to practice English beyond the classroom and receive immediate feedback on their performance.

## Challenges in English Language Teaching

### Limited Communicative Practice

Many English lessons continue to emphasize grammar exercises and textbook activities rather than meaningful communication. As a result, students have limited opportunities to develop practical language skills.

### Teacher-Centered Instruction

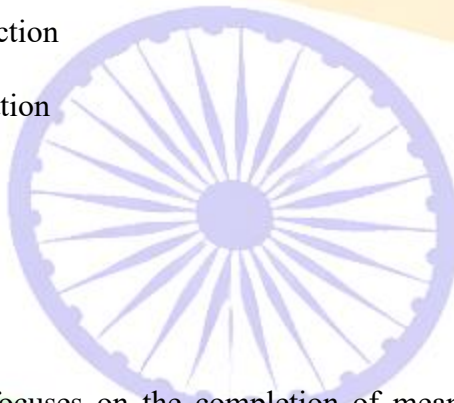
Traditional teaching approaches often position teachers as the primary source of knowledge while students assume passive roles. Such environments restrict learner participation and interaction.

**Lack of Authentic Language Exposure** Students may encounter English only during classroom lessons. Limited exposure to authentic language reduces opportunities for developing natural communication skills. **Examination-Oriented Learning** In some educational systems, language teaching is heavily influenced by examinations that focus primarily on grammar and vocabulary. Consequently, communicative competence receives insufficient attention.

**Diverse Learner Needs** Students possess different learning styles, abilities, interests, and language backgrounds. Addressing these diverse needs presents a significant challenge for teachers. **Innovative Approaches to Speech Activity Development** Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasizes meaningful communication and authentic language use. Students participate in activities that simulate real-life situations and encourage interaction.

The main principles of CLT include:

- Learner-centered instruction
- Meaningful communication
- Authentic language use
- Collaborative learning
- Task-Based Learning



**Task-Based Learning** focuses on the completion of meaningful tasks through language use. Students engage in activities such as planning events, solving problems, conducting interviews, and presenting information. This approach promotes language acquisition through purposeful communication. **Cooperative Learning** Cooperative learning encourages students to work together toward shared goals. Through collaboration, learners develop both language skills and interpersonal competencies. Group projects, discussions, and peer teaching activities provide valuable opportunities for speech activity development. **Project-Based Learning** Project-based learning integrates language instruction with inquiry, research, and creativity. Students use English while investigating topics, gathering information, and presenting results. Such projects increase learner motivation and encourage authentic communication. **Integrating Educational Technologies** Educational technologies provide powerful tools for enhancing speech activity.

**Multimedia Application** Videos, audio recordings, animations, and interactive presentations expose learners to authentic language and support comprehension. **Online Learning Platforms** Learning management systems facilitate communication, collaboration, and independent learning. Students can participate in discussions, complete assignments, and receive feedback online.

Virtual Communication Video conferencing technologies enable learners to interact with peers, teachers, and native speakers regardless of geographical location. Artificial Intelligence Tools Artificial intelligence applications can personalize instruction, monitor learner progress, and provide adaptive feedback. These technologies support individualized learning experiences and increase engagement. The Teacher as a Facilitator Modern language education views teachers as facilitators of learning rather than transmitters of information. Effective teachers create environments where students feel comfortable expressing themselves and taking risks in communication.

Teachers should:

Encourage participation.

Provide meaningful feedback.

Foster collaboration.

Support learner autonomy.

Integrate innovative teaching methods.

Professional development programs are essential for helping teachers acquire the knowledge and skills needed to implement contemporary instructional approaches. Practical Recommendations To improve speech activity development in general secondary schools, educators should:

Increase opportunities for classroom interaction.

Implement communicative and task-based methodologies.

Utilize authentic learning materials.

Integrate educational technologies effectively.

Promote collaborative learning activities.

Support learner motivation and confidence.

Develop comprehensive assessment systems.

Encourage independent language learning.

Provide regular feedback on communicative performance.

Create language-rich educational environments.

**Conclusion** The development of speech activity is essential for fostering communicative competence in English language learners. Effective communication requires the integration of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills within meaningful and authentic contexts. Although numerous challenges continue to affect language education, innovative pedagogical approaches and technological advancements offer valuable opportunities for improvement. Communicative language teaching, task-based learning, cooperative learning, project-based instruction, and educational technologies can significantly enhance students' language abilities. By creating learner-centered environments that promote interaction and engagement, teachers can help students develop the confidence and competence necessary for successful communication in English. Ultimately, strengthening speech activity in general secondary schools contributes not only to language proficiency but also to learners' academic achievement, personal development, and participation in the global community.

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