

# INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN EFL

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**Abstract:** Foreign language teaching is evolving, with innovative methods and tools increasingly employed to enhance oral speech skills. Effective development of these skills relies heavily on understanding and applying psychological processes, lexical knowledge, and strategic communication techniques. This article reviews various strategies, such as metacognitive, cognitive, and social/affective strategies, and their roles in improving speaking abilities. Additionally, it addresses common interaction issues and suggests solutions like oral negotiation strategies and brainstorming techniques. The article defines the significance of modern teaching methods in improving effective and confident communication in foreign language education.

**Keywords:** foreign language learning, oral communication, speech development, language education, innovative teaching methods

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The importance of learning and teaching foreign languages is increasing steadily. Significant efforts are being made, particularly in studying, applying, and broadly developing oral communication in foreign languages. In our country, the attitude towards foreign languages is evolving swiftly. The demand for foreign languages is rising not only in higher education but also in schools, colleges, lyceums, and even pre-school education. According to foreign language teaching psychologists, speech is not merely a communication process but a means of realizing and expressing thoughts through activity. Effective development of oral speech skills in a foreign language largely depends on the communication process. Since speech is a complex process, studying and expressing it requires extensive theoretical and practical knowledge. The development of oral speech skills is a dynamic and rapid process.

Oral speaking is also a mental activity that involves psychological processes like listening comprehension, reasoning, and thinking. Acquiring knowledge of the lexical, grammatical, and phonetic parts of the English language is crucial for improving one's speaking abilities.

The majority of people around the world owe their success to have great communication skills to attend confidently in different kinds of discussions, debates, conferences and to give good and well-organized presentations among hundreds of people. From one perspective, it is believed that those people have an inborn talent to interact confidently. However, from the other perspective, it is proved that other individuals who are not gifted can learn to communicate effectively since there is a set of techniques, approaches and

strategies which assist to develop and facilitate speaking skills.

## 2 MAIN PART

It is recognized that during interactions, issues can arise related to language form or meaning. Additionally, learners often struggle with maintaining interactions effectively due to a lack of strategies to sustain conversations or make discussions meaningful. McDonough (2004) and Y. Nakatani (2005) identify two types of oral strategies to address this.

These strategies assist to keep conversations going, and they include the 1.Oral communicative strategies: following three strategies. In time-gaining strategy learners or participants use filler expressions like: *so, well, let me see, sure, really?*, etc in order to gain time to think.

Maintenance strategy demands participants to make comments and remark such as *I mentioned, as I see, I understand, sounds good, I see what you mean, etc* during conversations. Finally, help-seeking strategy teaches speakers how to ask help and it includes: firstly, indicate that there is a problem: *louder please; I can't hear; Ask for help: I don't understand; what?; what does it mean?; How do you say that ? Ask for repetition: Please repeat; can you repeat .*

**Oral negotiation strategies:**Oral negotiation strategies are techniques used to manage and sustain effective communication during interactions, especially when misunderstandings or communication breakdowns occur. These strategies are essential for learners to maintain the flow of conversation and ensure mutual understanding. Here are some key oral negotiation strategies:

**Confirmation Checks:**These involve repeating what the speaker has said in one's own words to ensure

understanding. Phrases like "Do you mean...?" or "So, you are saying that...?" help verify that the message has been interpreted correctly.

**Comprehension Checks:** These are used by the speaker to ensure that the listener understands the message. Questions such as "Are you following me?" or "Do you understand?" are typical examples.

**Rephrasing or Paraphrasing:** If a message is not understood, the speaker can rephrase or paraphrase it in simpler or different terms. This helps convey the meaning more clearly and effectively.

**Using Synonyms or Descriptions:** When a specific word is not understood, learners can use synonyms or describe the concept. For instance, if a learner doesn't know the word "bicycle," they might say "the two-wheeled vehicle you pedal."

**Gestures and Non-Verbal Cues:** Non-verbal communication, such as gestures, facial expressions, and body language, can support verbal messages and help clarify meaning.

The above mentioned strategies mostly focus on keeping conversations on and lasting it for a long time, Moreover, common and daily used filler phrases and sentences are the base of applying these strategies. By employing these oral negotiation strategies, learners can enhance their interaction abilities, maintain conversations more effectively, and make their discussions more meaningful. These strategies are particularly useful in language learning, where communication barriers are common, and they play a crucial role in improving overall communicative competence. Overall, these strategies will be effective and efficient when they are used in the EFL classes which the learners are in the initial step of developing oral interaction.

It is evident that most students periodically find it difficult to participate fully in discussions or debates due to a lack of thoughts, viewpoints, or information to provide. Researchers also come up with a solution for this issue, which involves using brainstorming techniques in interactive classrooms. One of the best methods for coming up with ideas or arguments in a short amount of time is brainstorming. It helps people use their imaginations more and encourages effective teamwork. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) discuss three effective tactics that can be used to promote spoken communication. They are as follows:

- Metacognitive Strategies
- Cognitive Strategies
- Social/Affective Strategies

Metacognitive strategies involve planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's own learning

processes. These strategies help learners become more aware of their own communication skills and take control of their learning. Metacognitive strategies are connected with thinking and problem to think solving to a particular situation. Identifying purposes for learning and monitoring one's own comprehension through questioning are sub-strategies of metacognition as well.

- **Planning:** Before engaging in a conversation, learners can set goals and plan how to approach the interaction. This might include anticipating possible topics, organizing thoughts, and preparing key phrases or vocabulary.

- **Monitoring:** During the conversation, learners can keep track of their own performance. They can self-correct, pay attention to whether they are being understood, and adjust their strategies as needed.

- **Evaluating:** After the conversation, learners can reflect on what went well and what could be improved. This reflection helps in identifying areas for future practice and setting new learning goals.

Cognitive strategies are basically related to learning tasks and are used by learners when they mentally or physically control material to be learned, or when they apply a specific strategy to learning tasks themselves.

- **Repetition:** Practicing words, phrases, or sentences repeatedly to reinforce learning and improve fluency.

- **Resourcing:** Using reference materials such as dictionaries, language apps, or online resources to find necessary information or clarify doubts.

- **Translation:** Converting thoughts from the learner's first language into the target language, which can help in forming sentences and expressing ideas more effectively.

- **Note-taking:** Writing down key points, new vocabulary, or important phrases during learning sessions or conversations to aid memory and review later.

The social and affective strategies also impact on learning. It is widely acknowledged that Learning can be improved or developed when people communicate with each other to clarify a problem or when they participate in a group discussion or cooperative learning group to solve this problem. Social/affective strategies involve interacting with others and managing emotions to facilitate learning. These strategies emphasize the social aspects of language learning and the importance of maintaining a positive attitude.

- **Cooperation:** Working with peers, teachers, or native speakers to practice language skills. Group activities, pair work, and language exchange



partnerships can provide valuable interaction opportunities.

- **Questioning for Clarification:** Asking questions to obtain more information or clear up misunderstandings during a conversation. This not only helps in comprehension but also keeps the interaction going.

- **Self-talk:** Encouraging oneself through positive self-talk to reduce anxiety and build confidence in speaking. Phrases like "I can do this" or "It's okay to make mistakes" can be very helpful.

By integrating these strategies into their language learning routines, learners can significantly enhance their spoken communication skills. These strategies offer a comprehensive approach to managing the cognitive, metacognitive, and social/emotional aspects of language learning, leading to more effective and confident communication.

Three strategies by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) can be considered as learning strategies since the learner is in the centre of the strategy to apply. All in all, above mentioned strategies help both teachers and students to formulate a good oral interaction and to create meaningful, relevant and free communication.

### 3 CONCLUSIONS

**In conclusion**, the development of speaking skills is a critical aspect of foreign language education. Employing various modern and innovative methods ensures effective development of oral speech skills. The proven importance of teaching and learning speaking skills underscores the need for continued advancement and implementation of effective strategies in foreign language education. The development of speaking skills is one of the main perspectives in the field of foreign language. Therefore, it is important to work on the basis of various modern and innovative methods and apply them in science in the development of oral speech skills in English. It is effective to ensure the development of speech through innovative methods. The importance of teaching and learning speaking skills has been proven in many ways.

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