

## PHONETICS COMPETENCE IN SPEAKING SKILLS

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Abstract:

English has now been established as a language of global communication and a language of opportunities. A fairly high degree of proficiency in English and excellent communication skills enhance learners' competency. A most notable advance has been a deepening knowledge of both *what language is* (Language as an object) and of *what it does* (Language as a tool). Language is a network of systems which need to be mastered and bought to use. For effective communication, an individual should have awareness of *productive skills* and *receptive skills*. By acquiring these skills, one develops the ability to support his/her knowledge. These four skills (i.e., Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) are very much necessary. In a nutshell, the four language skills comprise...

Listening skills	Speaking skills	Reading skills	Writing skills
1. Listening for specific Information e.g., Listening to the announcement of the principal. 2. Listening for general information e.g., listening to the small talk.	1. Accuracy 2. Fluency 3. Intonation e.g., creating a situation to speak	1. Skimming e.g., reading a newspaper 2. Scanning e.g., scanning quickly for a specific information	1. Formal writing e.g., Academic writing 2. Informal writing e.g., writing a letter to a friend.

Keywords: English, global communication, communication skills, skills, .etc

The knowledge of all four integrated skills is essential. Among the four, listening and reading are considered as receptive skills as the information has to be decoded, whereas speaking and writing are considered as productive skills where the production takes place in mind (Language, vocabulary, and grammar are to be considered).

Right from our childhood days, we have been listening to 'speakers' of various kinds. We have heard stories, lectures, and discussions. Although we communicate every day in a hundred and one different ways, why is it that we remember some stories and some discussions in particular and forget the rest? Is it because some people can do it better than the others? The spotlight in this article is on the acquisition of speaking skills and various elements involved in it.

This article focuses on:

1. The two key perspectives to the development of speaking skill
2. The distinction between Linguistic competence and Communication competence
3. The distinction between form and function
4. Interaction with fluency and accuracy
5. Types of speaking
6. Advantages of acquiring effective speaking skills
7. Importance of phonetics in speaking skills

A successful act of speech must have a purpose for speaking. Effective communication through speaking takes place when all aspects of language have been integrated into a single utterance.

The training in speaking must produce skills and abilities that are needed for communicating successfully. In learning one's first language listening and speaking always precede reading and writing. Even for learning to speak in the second language, good listening paves the way for good speaking.

The two key perspectives to the development of speaking skills:

Language learners must be capable of expressing an idea or taking part in the conversation by selecting particular structures or vocabulary, not only as a part of the controlled activity in which their focus is on the items in questions but also in response to a particular communicative intention which arises, unpredicted during the interaction.

The development of speaking is seen as a *skill - getting* and *skill – using*. It is very important to know to whom we are speaking, the message or the speech act, the extra-linguistic world's situation, in addition to the language and functions used.

Skill learning model, (Rivers, 1983:43)

The distinction between Linguistic competence and Communication competence:

- If a learner has mastered the grammatical rules of the language and able to read and understand some passages of prose, ability to translate – said to be *acquired linguistic competence*.
  
- If the learner is aware of the rules of speaking for example how to open and close conversations, i.e., “How are you?” need not necessarily be a query regarding one’s health. *Communicative competencies* give the ability to show not only linguistic or grammatical competence but also the rules to use language appropriately.

Communicative competence includes:

- i. Knowledge of the grammar and the vocabulary of the language
- ii. Knowledge of rules of speaking
- iii. Knowing how to respond to different types of speech acts, such as requests, apologies, thanks and invitations
- iv. Knowing how to use language appropriately  
(Richards, Platt, and Weber, 1985: 49)

The distinction between form and function:

- *The form* is the means by which an element of language is expressed in speech or writing. Forms can be shown by words, structures in the standard writing system for a language
- The purpose is *the function* of this utterance. According to the context, this utterance may have a variety of function.
- Some of the *sub-skills* of speaking that an individual need to develop so that they can function effectively in all situations and contexts are:
  - i. Talking about an object or topic of an interest
  - ii. Discussing ideas
  - iii. Giving instructions

- iv. Conveying intentions
- v. Asking and answering questions
- vi. Taking part in academic discussions
- vii. Narrating an event
- viii. Making extempore speeches
- ix. Reviewing a book
- x. Presenting a paper

The most effective second language users are those who can apply a pre-learned structure to a natural communicative situation without interfering with the flow of communication.

(Bird and Dennison, 1987: 81)

Therefore let us look at the two approaches to the development of oral communication skills:

1. Learning a language as a skill, in the classroom
2. Developing spoken English through exposure and use.

Interaction with fluency and accuracy

Clarify your meaning (e.g., 'I mean.....', 'What I am trying to say is....'), confirming understanding (e.g., 'mm', 'uhum', 'right'), we speak with *fluency and accuracy*.

Fluency is speaking at a normal speed, without hesitation, repetition and with some use of connecting forms of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Depending on the situation we speak different functions.

Types of Speaking ,,

1. Interactive ,,
2. Partially interactive ,,
3. Non – interactive

INTERACTIVE	PARTIALLY INTERACTIVE	NON-INTERACTIVE
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Face to face conversations</li> <li>2. Telephone calls</li> <li>3. We are alternately listening and speaking</li> <li>4. A chance to ask for clarification, repetition, or slower speech from our conversation partner</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The speaker checks comprehension from the audiences' face.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When recording a speech for a radio broadcast.</li> <li>2. Performing in a play</li> <li>3. Reciting a poem</li> <li>4. singing</li> </ol>

Pulmonic Egressive Airstream mechanism plays a vital role in the English language

Ten years later, Austrian mechanic Wolfgang von Kempelen invented the machine that produced speech sounds.

What is phonetic transcription?

The treatment of the segmental basically includes sound contrast in words, the pronunciation of vowel and consonant phonemes. The interesting thing is that we cannot say that each alphabet gives the sound(s); so there is no one – to – one correspondence in English. For example, an employee has four vowel letters but it has three syllables and the last two letters "ee" give one sound only that is /I:/. A letter can represent many sounds such as "c" as in car /kɑː/, cell /sɛl/ and church /tʃɜːtʃ/ and one of the alphabets stands for a sequence of two sounds. E.g. Quality, queen.

Some more complexities are:

Some words can have the same spelling but different pronunciation and maybe a different meaning: (Homonyms and homographs)

1. A minute piece of metal has accidentally escaped into the bloodstream in the last minute of the surgery
2. I saw a saw near the sea.
- 3.

Some words have different spelling but the same pronunciation: (Homophones)

1. He gave me a one rupee note.
2. She won the cup.

In the first example, both the verbs (a) and (b) "saw" gives the same meaning but in (b) "saw" is used as a verb and a noun. Though the pronunciation is the same, it gives the different meaning whereas in the second example, "one" and "won" are pronounced same although they have different meanings.

If one knows the phonetic transcriptions, they are able to understand the correct pronunciation by looking at the transcription in the dictionary. One is Daniel Jones English pronouncing dictionary and the other one in Oxford.

In order to achieve one's desire towards reaching great heights in communication, the proficiency in language skills is a must. Each and every segment of language study carries its own importance, but focusing on the speech form of communication, speaking skill plays a major role in the transformation of information from the conveyor to the receiver.

To make the process more effective, there are many methodologies and strategies proposed by many linguist and Phoenicians. The basic form of speech is produced from a sound that is articulated in a certain manner; concentration on variation in the manner of production of different sounds and the authentic, correct pronunciation gives exact articulation which helps in accurate speech. Of course apart from the manner of articulation, there are many other elements that are involved in Speaking skills like functional usage of the language, vocabulary, grammar, syntax etc..., But the initial major weight of importance is carried out by pronunciation, because even if one is aware of all the rules, structure, grammar and all., there are of no use if one doesn't know how to pronounce a particular word properly.

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