

# DIFFICULTIES IN TEACHING SPEAKING FOR EFL LEARNERS

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According to River, the main goal of teaching speaking is to develop the communicative efficiency. When learners try to express themselves there is a hesitation; cliché expressions which fill in pauses, much repetition and frequent indefiniteness as the speaker seeks the most convenient combination of element to express his intended meaning [1, p. 15-16].

These difficulties are due to a lack of interest in the subject, poor listening practice, deficient vocabulary, or lack of self-confidence and fear of making mistakes.

## A. Lack of Interest in the Subject:

Most of the students in foreign language classrooms stay silent because they have "nothing to say". This may be because the teacher has chosen a topic about which students know very little. Moreover; the common expiration second language learners use when they are imposed to participate in a given topic is "I have nothing to talk about", "I don't know", "no comment" or they keep silent.

## B. Poor Listening Practice:

Listening plays a major role in the interactions that occurs between two or more people. Student may have an experience in expressing himself in the foreign language in a conversation. Therefore, the student does not comprehend sufficient elements in the message to be able to make further contribution to the discussion.

## C. Deficient Vocabulary:

Most of the students find difficulties in using the appropriate words when expressing their thoughts so they use the simple form of language. The teacher must be aware of this psychological factor and help his/her students to feel at ease while using the foreign language.

## D. Mother Tongue Use:

Foreign language students of the same mother tongue tend to use it outside and even inside the classroom because they feel more comfortable and less exposed to the target language.

## E. Lack of Self Confidence and Fear of Making Mistakes:

In many classes, some students prefer to keep their ideas to themselves because they are afraid of being corrected by the teacher. However, students' mistakes must be corrected, but when the student is attempting to encode his thoughts he should be interrupted as little as possible. This problem reveals more when learners try to participate in the classroom but many factors stop them to do so. Ur [2, p. 23] argued that "it is too easy for a foreign language classroom to create inhibition and anxiety." Such factors refer to the feeling of shyness and fear of making mistakes and these are due to the development of communicative skills and the feeling of linguistic inferiority. Students fear to make mistakes especially if they will speak to critical audience. He states that: "learners are often inhibited about trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom. Worried about, making mistakes, fearful of criticism or loosing face, or simply shy of the attention that their speech attracts".

## F. Low Uneven Participation:

There are some students who tend to be dominant and take almost the whole students' talk time. However, others prefer to speak only if they ensure that what they will say is correct, and some others keep silent, show no interest or participation all along the course. Harmer (2001) suggests streaming weak participators in groups and letting them work together. In such cases they will not hide behind the strong participators, and the teacher can achieve a high level of participation. Another factor that can create problem of participation is the classroom arrangement that may not help students to perform some speaking activities. Low participation is due to the ignorance of teacher's motivation too. If the teacher does not motivate his learners, the talkative ones also will show no interest. So, increasing and directing student motivation is one of the teacher's responsibilities.

### • The Role of the Teacher:

The teacher has to play different roles in the classroom at the same time. Three roles if the teacher is trying to get students to speak fluently:

*Prompter:* the teacher should help his/her students when they get lost, or cannot think of what to say next or in some other way lose the fluency the teacher expects of them. Sometimes, the best option teacher can do is to leave the students to struggle out on their own. However, the teacher may offer discrete suggestions to help the students.

*Participant:* teachers can participate in discussions or role-plays themselves to prompt covertly, introduce new information this will help the activity along, ensure continuing student engagement, and maintain a creative atmosphere.

*Feedback provider:* teachers should be aware of when and how to give feedback in speaking activities because over-correction may inhibit students and take the communicativeness out of the activity.

### ***References***

1. *Harmer J.* How to Teach English. Longman Press., 2001.
2. *Ur P.A.* Course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory. Cambridge: CUP, 2000.