



# IMPROVING SPEAKING SKILLS FOR ELEMENTARY LEVEL LEARNERS THROUGH MOVIES

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**Abstract:** Speaking is a part of daily life that everyone should develop in subtle and detailed language. One of the most important factors about language is that it deals with social contexts and culture. Movies can be an effective way to motivate the learners to develop their oral skills, since movies usually present the most current and real language with for instance different types of fashionable words or expressions.

**Key words:** movie, learners, interesting, native speaker, interaction, activity, natural way.

English is divided into four skills which are as follows: listening, speaking, reading, and writing; therefore, speaking is the second skill and has an important role in communication. Non-native speakers of English seek to develop fluency and accuracy in speaking. Each generation of pupils is taught the important skill of structuring and delivering their oral talks. Nevertheless, the problems in learning good speaking skills persist as new generations of learners arrive at university. It is well known that English proficiency of majority of school-leavers has been going downhill for the last ten years. This leads to pupils' difficulties in applying general language skills to mastering professional language. Learners must be taught fluency and accuracy during classroom activities as it is essential for them to learn how to speak well on professional issues in English. In order to achieve this objective, it is important to find out what difficulties pupils have in developing English speaking skills.

Speaking is the production skill that is included in two main categories: accuracy and fluency. Accuracy consists of using vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation through some activities, fluency take into account "the ability to keep going when speaking spontaneously".

Classroom interaction is also necessary and useful as an educational strategy to enhance speaking skills. The role of interaction in a classroom context in enhancing speaking skills comes from the understanding of its main types: teacher-learner interaction and learner-learner interaction, where negotiation of meaning and the provision of feedback are highlighted. Classroom interaction involves verbal exchanges between learners and teachers. Teachers should know that the learners need to do most of the talk to activate their speaking, since speaking skills require practice and exposure.



Some authors consider that, at the basic level, more emphasis should be placed on books and speaking ability, since learning is a step-by-step process and such competencies cannot be improved abruptly. English should be taught as language, as well as a subject, so that more time may be available for the pupils to perform various activities or exercises in a natural way. Some individual activities, such as speaking on a certain topic for a minute or so should be assigned to pupils in the beginning speaking stages. Pupils should be given motivation, encouragement, some psychological training, reassurance, and counseling for removing their shyness and fear of being laughed at by their classmates and scolded by their teachers. Teachers should also be trained not to discourage the pupils and to control the other pupils in order to provide a friendly and stimulating environment in the classroom.

Nowadays it is widely believed that the main teacher's role is to support the learners in developing their communicative competence. Hence the major objectives must be stated. Firstly, the teacher should encourage the learners to have confidence in their own system and exploit it for communicative activities. Secondly, the teacher should encourage the learners to compensate for the gaps in their second language knowledge by using communication strategies. Thirdly, communicative effectiveness should be given priority over formal accuracy when evaluating the learners and their development. In addition, it is very common that movies invoke feelings, opinions and create discussion. This usually helps the teacher to provide the learners with reasonable discussion topics. Some tasks focused on oral skills and based on a movie could be for instance group discussions about the topic with the learners' own opinions, a debate, re-acting a scene of a movie or acting an alternative ending to the movie. This is a useful way to find out the learners' immediate reactions, since usually the film is still 'working' on their minds and the responses are rather immediate. Using movies in teaching oral skill in the EFL classroom is absolutely worth trying and can be motivating for both the teacher and the learners as long as teachers follow accepted standards of choosing movies: choosing the right film for a particular level of students. Thus, finding an appropriate feature movie is one of the most useful things that a teacher can do. It is important to choose scenes that balance dialog with a high degree of visual support, appropriate speech delivery, clear picture and sound, and standard accent. Sometimes the storyline might be appealing to learners, but the enunciation, speed and accent make it very difficult to understand. Using the wrong movie in the wrong way can lead to utter frustration. Learner may end up confused, depressed and convinced they will never understand "real" English. Viewing movies could easily turn into a frustrating experience for learners who might give up this stimulating tool for English learning.

## **1) Fill in the Blanks – Teach English with Movie**

This is the most common kind of activity. As a teacher you can watch the movie and prepare a part of the script and blank out some of the words for students to listen and complete.



Very often the script can be found online as well. To make this activity a little more challenging you can ask the students to guess the word or phrases that have been blanked out using the context around it; and to make it simpler you can provide the first letter of the word or phrase or just provide options in a box for students to choose from.

## **2) Spot the Word – Teach English with Movie**

Another fun activity is to give the students a set of words or phrases that they have to watch for and check them off on a handout. This can be even set up as a bingo card and students can yell ‘Bingo’ when they have them all.

## **3) Spot the Still Image – Teach English with Movie**

Similar to the activity described above, you can provide the students with a set of still images from the movie and as the scene takes place they must let you know they have recognized it. This is ideal for lower level students and to ensure they pay attention while watching.

## **4) Match the Dialogue to the Character – Teach English with Movie**

Another activity would be to give the students a dialogue that has been mixed up and they have to match the sentences to the characters who say them. An extension to this activity would be to ask the students to pretend to be those characters and read out the dialogue trying to imitate the way the characters speak. This extension can actually be applied to many other activities and it helps develop fluency and intonation.

## **5) Silent Watching – Teach English with Movie**

Another activity is to watch a scene without any sound and ask students to guess what is happening and why. For more advanced students they can even be challenged to guess what the characters are actually saying and re-create the dialogue. As an extra challenge, you could ask them to read the lines they created as the movie plays silently. This is a great activity to help develop more speaking fluency through practice.

## **6) Comprehension – Teach English with Movie**

When watching a full movie, or full episode, comprehension questions in short answer form or multiple-choice form can help you check how much the students understood. Even students who are not good at listening skills tend to do better with movies or TV shows because the context helps them to comprehend more.



## Other Creative Activities

Depending on the level of the learners they can also interact with the plot by changing or predicting the ending if they haven't seen it before. They can write interviews to the characters or even add 'deleted' scenes that they can even act out as a special project or extension of the activityю

Speaking is considered to be one of the four macro skills necessary for effective communication in any language according to most research, particularly when speakers are not using their mother tongue. As English is universally used as a means of communication, especially on the Internet, English speaking skills should be developed along with the other skills so that these integrated skills will enhance communication competenceю Most pupils are not confident in their ability to learn to speak; teachers must overcome their reluctance in order to change this situation.

## The list of used literature

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