

## QUALITY SPEAKING ACTIVITIES FOR ADVANCED ESL STUDENTS

## ЯКІСНІ КОМУНІКАТИВНІ ВПРАВИ ДЛЯ СТУДЕНТІВ ВИСОКОГО РІВНЯ ВОЛОДІННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЮ МОВОЮ

*Speaking skills are an integral part of ESL teaching, and their development requires learners to focus on accuracy, fluency, appropriacy, and communicative competence. To achieve this, effective ESL speaking instruction should include a variety of teaching strategies that engage learners in authentic and meaningful communication, while also providing opportunities for explicit instruction on language structures and functions. Developing strong speaking skills can help learners communicate effectively in English and participate fully in social, academic, and professional contexts.*

*This article provides a comprehensive review of quality speaking activities for advanced ESL learners, highlighting several effective approaches and activities. Drawing on research and publications on task-based language teaching (TBLT), debate activities, drama activities, innovative and varied speaking activities, authentic and relevant speaking activities, and technology-mediated speaking activities, this review shows how these approaches can significantly improve advanced ESL learners' speaking skills and communicative competence. TBLT approach is particularly effective in developing learners' communication skills as it provides opportunities for learners to practice their speaking skills in authentic and relevant contexts. Technology-mediated speaking activities that utilize online resources, such as video chats and voice messaging, are also valuable in helping learners improve their speaking skills in a digital age.*

*Incorporating various speaking activities into ESL teaching can significantly improve learners' speaking skills and communicative competence. By providing diverse and engaging opportunities for learners to practice their speaking skills, teachers can ensure that their students develop their language proficiency and participate fully in social, academic, and professional contexts. This review serves as a valuable resource for educators seeking to design and implement effective speaking activities that cater to the varied needs of advanced ESL learners.*

**Key words:** *speaking activities, advanced ESL students, speaking skills, teaching practice, level of language proficiency.*

*Навички усного мовлення є невід'ємною частиною навчання англійської мови як іноземної і їхній розвиток вимагає від студентів зосередити увагу на правильності,*

*вільному володінні мовою, доцільності та комунікативній компетентності. Щоб досягти цього, ефективно навчання говорінню англійською мовою повинно включати різноманітні стратегії викладання, які залучають студентів до автентичної та змістовної комунікації. Розвиток стійких навичок говоріння може допомогти студентам ефективно спілкуватися англійською мовою та брати повноцінну участь у соціальній, академічній та професійній сферах.*

*Ця стаття містить вичерпний огляд ефективних розмовних вправ для просунутих студентів, які вивчають англійську мову як іноземну, та висвітлює кілька ефективних підходів і вправ. Спираючись на дослідження та публікації, що розглядають викладання мови на основі завдань, дебатів, театральних вправ, інноваційних та різноманітних видів мовленнєвої діяльності, автентичних та релевантних видів мовленнєвої діяльності, а також технологічно опосередкованих видів мовленнєвої діяльності, наша розвідка демонструє, як ці підходи можуть суттєво покращити навички говоріння та комунікативну компетентність студентів, які вивчають англійську мову як іноземну, на просунутому рівні. Підхід TBLT є особливо ефективним для розвитку комунікативних навичок студентів, оскільки він дає можливість студентам практикувати свої навички мовлення в автентичному та актуальному контексті. Технологічно опосередкована мовленнєва діяльність з використанням онлайн-ресурсів, таких як відеочати та голосові повідомлення, також допомагає студентам покращити свої комунікативні навички в цифрову епоху.*

*Впроваджуючи ці підходи та вправи у свою практику викладання, викладачі іноземної мови можуть забезпечити своїх студентів різноманітними та цікавими можливостями для розвитку їхніх мовленнєвих навичок. Ця стаття є корисним ресурсом для викладачів, які прагнуть розробити та впровадити ефективні вправи з розвитку говоріння, що задовольняють різноманітні потреби просунутих студентів.*

**Ключові слова:** *розмовні вправи, просунути студенти, що вивчають англійську мову, мовленнєві навички, практика викладання, рівень володіння мовою.*

UDC 371.33

DOI <https://doi.org/10.32782/2663-6085/2023/57.2.13>

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**Problem Statement.** The development of speaking skills is a crucial component of second language acquisition, as it enables learners to engage in meaningful communication and express their thoughts and ideas in the target language. However, advanced ESL students often encounter challenges in further enhancing their speaking abilities. These learners have already attained a basic level of fluency, but they may struggle to find suitable opportunities to engage in more complex and sophisticated speaking activities that cater to their advanced language proficiency level. This lack of adequate speaking practice can impede their language development and

lead to frustration, hindering their overall progress in language learning.

Recent research indicates that providing quality speaking activities is essential to address the specific needs of advanced ESL students. These learners require engaging and challenging speaking activities that stimulate their communicative competence, promote critical thinking, and enhance their language proficiency. However, educators and language practitioners may find it strenuous to design speaking activities that are appropriate for advanced ESL learners and meet their diverse needs.

Therefore, it is vital to explore the effectiveness of different speaking activities and approaches in addressing the specific needs of advanced ESL learners. This research will facilitate the development of quality speaking activities that cater to the unique needs of advanced ESL learners and support their continued language development.

#### **Analysis of Recent Research and Publications.**

Several studies have explored the effectiveness of various speaking activities for advanced ESL students. For instance, a study by Afria, Yenni and Ratmanida found that task-based language teaching (TBLT) can significantly improve advanced ESL learners' speaking skills. The study demonstrated that TBLT is an effective approach for enhancing learners' communicative competence, as it allows them to engage in realistic and meaningful communication while developing their language skills [1].

Another study by J. Bellon investigated the use of debate activities in promoting advanced ESL students' speaking skills. The study found that debate activities can significantly improve learners' speaking accuracy, fluency, and complexity [2]. Additionally, it was shown that debates can promote critical thinking and develop learners' argumentative skills.

Galante and Thomson examined the effectiveness of using drama activities. The study found that drama activities can significantly enhance learners' speaking proficiency, as they provide opportunities for learners to practice using the target language in a contextually relevant and engaging way. The study showed that drama activities promote learners' confidence, creativity, and cultural awareness, while also developing their communication skills [3].

Furthermore, recent publications have highlighted the importance of providing advanced ESL learners with diverse and challenging speaking activities. For instance, Al-Hassaani and Qaid suggest that educators should incorporate innovative and varied speaking activities in their teaching practice to meet the diverse needs of advanced ESL learners [4]. The authors argue that such activities should focus on developing learners' discourse skills, such as turn-taking, interrupting, and repairing conversational breakdowns.

Similarly, Alshahrani emphasizes the importance of promoting advanced ESL learners' speaking skills through authentic and relevant speaking activities [5]. The author suggests that authentic speaking activities, such as role-plays, simulations, and discussions, provide learners with opportunities to use the target language in real-life situations and develop their communicative competence. Additionally, the author suggests that incorporating technology-mediated speaking activities, such as video conferencing and online discussions, can further enhance learners' speaking proficiency.

The findings of these studies and publications indicate that providing quality speaking activities that

cater to the specific needs of advanced ESL learners is essential. Approaches such as TBLT, debates, and drama activities can significantly improve learners' speaking skills, while innovative and varied speaking activities can meet their diverse needs and enhance their discourse skills. Authentic and relevant speaking activities, as well as technology-mediated activities, can further support advanced ESL learners' language development.

**Aim of the Article.** This article aims to provide a comprehensive overview of quality speaking activities for advanced ESL students. The study will analyze recent research and publications on effective speaking activities for advanced ESL learners, explore different approaches and strategies in promoting learners' speaking skills, and provide practical suggestions for educators and language practitioners to develop engaging and challenging speaking activities.

**Presentation of the Main Material.** Advanced ESL students are those who have already reached an impressive level of proficiency in the English language. They have typically gone beyond basic grammar rules, memorized a wide range of vocabulary, and have the ability to comprehend complex reading materials. Their focus has now shifted towards developing their speaking skills, which are the most challenging of all language skills. To attain advanced proficiency, students need to master the ability to use English accurately, fluently, and appropriately, in addition to demonstrating communicative competence. One of the main features of advanced ESL students is their capacity to use the language with precision and effectiveness, conveying their intended message with clarity and confidence. They are skilled at expressing their thoughts and ideas clearly, using appropriate vocabulary and grammar structures, and are confident in handling various communication situations with native speakers. These learners are also adept at adapting their communication style to suit different contexts and audiences, making them highly versatile and effective communicators.

Speaking skills are a fundamental component of foreign language learning, and their development is crucial for effective communication in social, academic, and professional contexts [6]. In the context of English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching, speaking skills refer to learners' ability to express themselves fluently, accurately, and appropriately in English, using a variety of language functions, structures, and vocabulary.

The main features of speaking skills in ESL teaching include accuracy, fluency, appropriacy, and communicative competence. Accuracy refers to the correctness of learners' language use in terms of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. While accuracy is important, it should not be the only focus of ESL speaking instruction, as learners may become overly concerned with making mistakes

and miss opportunities to develop their fluency and communicative competence.

Fluency, on the other hand, refers to learners' ability to speak smoothly and coherently, without unnecessary pauses or hesitations. Developing fluency requires learners to practice speaking regularly and to build confidence in expressing themselves in English. Fluency can also be enhanced through the use of speaking strategies, such as paraphrasing, self-correction, and chunking.

Appropriacy refers to the social and cultural conventions of language use, such as using formal or informal language depending on the situation or addressing people with the appropriate level of politeness. Learners must develop an awareness of appropriacy in different contexts and be able to adjust their language use accordingly.

Finally, communicative competence refers to university students' ability to use language effectively and appropriately to achieve communication goals. This includes using language to convey meaning, negotiate meaning, and express opinions, feelings, and ideas. Developing communicative competence requires learners to engage in authentic and meaningful communication, using language in real-life situations and contexts.

To promote the development of speaking skills in ESL teaching for advanced university students, a range of instructional strategies can be used, including task-based language teaching, communicative language teaching, and language-focused learning. Task-based language teaching involves learners in communicative tasks, such as role-plays, debates, or discussions, etc. that require the use of language to achieve a specific goal. Communicative language teaching focuses on using authentic and meaningful communication to promote language learning, while language-focused learning involves explicit instruction on language structures, functions, and vocabulary.

**Task-based language teaching** (TBLT) has gained popularity in recent years as an effective approach for promoting language learning. The approach is characterized by a focus on the use of authentic and meaningful tasks that require learners to use the target language in contextually relevant situations. According to R. Ellis, the approach is grounded in the belief that language learning is most effective when learners are engaged in authentic communication, rather than rote memorization and repetition of isolated vocabulary and grammar structures [7, P. 12].

One of the main benefits of TBLT is its ability to foster learners' communicative competence. Communicative competence refers to the ability to use language effectively in real-life situations, taking into account social, cultural, and pragmatic factors [8]. TBLT allows learners to engage in realistic and meaningful communication, which helps

them develop their communicative competence by providing opportunities for them to practice using the target language in contextually relevant situations. As such, TBLT can be particularly beneficial for advanced ESL learners who need to develop more complex and sophisticated language skills to communicate effectively in academic and professional settings.

TBLT is also well-suited to promoting learners' autonomy and independence. D. Nunan believes that the approach encourages learners to take ownership of their language learning by setting goals, planning their learning, and reflecting on their progress [9, P. 4]. This is particularly important for advanced ESL learners, who often have specific language learning goals related to academic and professional success. TBLT can help these learners develop the skills and strategies they need to achieve their goals and become more effective and autonomous language learners.

Overall, TBLT is an effective approach for promoting advanced ESL learners' speaking skills. The approach emphasizes the use of authentic and meaningful tasks that require learners to use the target language in contextually relevant situations. TBLT fosters learners' communicative competence and autonomy, which are essential for success in academic and professional settings.

**Debate activities** have emerged as an effective approach for promoting advanced ESL learners' speaking skills. Debate is a structured form of argumentation that involves presenting arguments for or against a particular topic, with the aim of persuading an audience [10]. Debates provide learners with opportunities to engage in extended and complex discourse, which can help them develop their language proficiency and fluency. In addition, debates provide learners with opportunities to develop their critical thinking skills by analyzing arguments, identifying fallacies, and evaluating evidence.

A. Derakhshan et al. provide evidence of the effectiveness of debates in promoting advanced ESL learners' speaking skills. The study found that debate activities can significantly improve learners' speaking accuracy, fluency, and complexity [11, P.183]. The study also showed that debates can promote critical thinking and develop learners' argumentative skills. Debate activities require learners to use a range of language skills, including vocabulary, grammar, and discourse strategies, to present and defend their arguments. By engaging in debate activities, learners can develop these skills and become more confident and effective speakers.

Debate activities can also promote learners' cultural awareness and intercultural communication skills. Debates often involve discussing controversial topics that may be culturally sensitive or controversial in different contexts. By engaging in debates, learners can develop their awareness of different cultural

perspectives and learn to communicate effectively with people from different backgrounds. This is particularly important for advanced ESL learners who may need to communicate with people from diverse cultural backgrounds in academic and professional settings.

Thus, debate activities are an effective approach for promoting advanced ESL learners' speaking skills. Debate activities provide learners with opportunities to engage in meaningful communication, develop their language proficiency, critical thinking skills, and intercultural communication skills. By engaging in debate activities, learners can become more confident and effective speakers, which is essential for success in academic and professional contexts.

**Drama activities** have started to be extensively employed in recent years as an innovative and effective approach to promoting advanced ESL learners' speaking skills. These activities involve the use of theatrical techniques to create scenarios where learners can practice using the target language in a contextually relevant and engaging way. This approach allows learners to engage in imaginative and creative communication, which can help them develop their language proficiency, as well as their confidence and creativity.

L. Rastelli's study provides evidence of the effectiveness of drama activities in promoting advanced ESL learners' speaking skills. The study found that drama activities can significantly enhance learners' speaking proficiency by providing opportunities for learners to practice using the target language in a fun and engaging way [12, P. 90]. Drama activities also help learners develop their cultural awareness, as they often involve exploring different cultural perspectives and values. Additionally, drama activities promote learners' communication skills by requiring them to engage in dialogue and interact with other learners in a collaborative way.

Drama activities can also promote learners' cognitive and social-emotional development. Drama activities require learners to use their imagination, creativity, and critical thinking skills to create and perform different scenarios. This can help learners develop their cognitive skills, such as problem-solving and decision-making. Drama activities also promote learners' social-emotional development by encouraging them to express their emotions, work collaboratively, and develop empathy towards others.

Summing up, drama activities are an effective approach for promoting advanced ESL learners' speaking skills. Drama activities provide learners with opportunities to engage in imaginative and creative communication, develop their cultural awareness, communication skills, cognitive skills, and social-emotional development. By engaging in drama activities, learners can become more confident and effective speakers, which is essential for success in academic and professional contexts.

**Innovative and varied speaking activities** are an additional means to enhance advanced ESL learners' speaking skills. These activities are designed to create a more engaging and stimulating learning environment that motivates learners to participate actively and develop their language proficiency.

Various studies highlight the importance of incorporating innovative and varied speaking activities in teaching advanced ESL learners. Scholars suggest that these activities should focus on developing learners' discourse skills, such as turn-taking, interrupting, and repairing conversational breakdowns. These skills are essential for effective communication and are critical for success in academic and professional settings.

Innovative and varied speaking activities provide learners with opportunities to engage in authentic and relevant communication, which can help learners develop their language proficiency in a more natural way. These activities can include role-plays, simulations, debates, group discussions, and storytelling, among others. The use of technology, such as online games and virtual reality, can also provide learners with interactive and engaging opportunities to practice their speaking skills.

Moreover, innovative and varied speaking activities can cater to the diverse needs of advanced ESL learners. For instance, learners who struggle with traditional classroom activities may find it easier to engage in more creative and interactive activities, such as role-plays or simulations. Similarly, learners who are more proficient in the language may benefit from more challenging activities, such as debates or group discussions, that require them to use more complex language and critical thinking skills.

In conclusion, innovative and varied speaking activities are essential in promoting advanced ESL learners' speaking skills. These activities provide learners with opportunities to engage in authentic and relevant communication, develop their language proficiency, and cater to the diverse needs of learners. Incorporating these activities in teaching practice can create a more engaging and stimulating learning environment that motivates learners to participate actively in their language development.

According to N. Politykina, **authentic speaking activities** are those that simulate real-life situations in which learners use English to communicate. These activities, such as role-plays, simulations, and discussions, provide learners with opportunities to use the target language in real-life situations and develop their communicative competence [13]. In contrast, traditional classroom activities that involve memorizing vocabulary and grammar rules in isolation do not provide learners with the necessary skills to communicate effectively in real-life situations.

The author suggests that authentic and relevant speaking activities provide learners with opportunities

to use the target language in authentic contexts and develop their language proficiency. For instance, a role-play that involves learners taking on the roles of customer and salesperson in a shop can provide learners with the opportunity to use language related to shopping, such as negotiating prices, describing products, and making purchases. Such activities help learners develop their communicative competence and enhance their confidence in using the language.

Moreover, scholars note that authentic speaking activities should be relevant to learners' interests and needs. When activities are relevant, learners are more motivated to participate and engage in the task. For instance, if learners are interested in sports, an activity that involves discussing the latest sports news or debating the merits of different sports teams can be highly engaging and effective in promoting their speaking skills.

Overall, promoting advanced ESL learners' speaking skills through authentic and relevant speaking activities is crucial to developing their communicative competence and language proficiency. Teachers should design activities that simulate real-life situations, provide opportunities for learners to use the target language in authentic contexts, and are relevant to learners' interests and needs. By doing so, teachers can help learners develop the necessary skills and confidence to communicate effectively in English.

**Technology-mediated speaking activities** provide learners with opportunities to engage in meaningful communication and develop their language skills in authentic contexts. H. Reinders and C. White suggest that incorporating technology-mediated speaking activities, such as video conferencing and online discussions, can be particularly effective for learners [14, P. 63].

Video conferencing tools, such as Skype or Zoom, allow learners to engage in real-time communication with native speakers or other learners from around the world. These activities provide learners with opportunities to practice their speaking skills in a naturalistic and authentic environment, where they can receive immediate feedback on their language use and interact with a variety of speakers.

Online discussions, on the other hand, allow learners to participate in group conversations or debates, exchanging ideas and opinions with their peers. These activities can promote learners' critical thinking and analytical skills, as well as their ability to express themselves clearly and persuasively in English. Online discussions also offer learners the opportunity to interact with a diverse group of individuals from different cultures and backgrounds, further enhancing their communicative competence.

Furthermore, technology-mediated speaking activities can be personalized and tailored to learners' interests and proficiency levels. Teachers can use a variety of online resources and tools to design

activities that are engaging and relevant to learners' needs and goals. These activities can also be used to provide learners with opportunities to practice different language skills, such as pronunciation, intonation, and fluency.

It is important to note that technology-mediated speaking activities require careful planning and preparation to ensure their effectiveness. Teachers should provide learners with clear instructions and guidelines, and ensure that they have the necessary technical skills and resources to participate in these activities. Moreover, teachers should monitor and provide feedback on learners' language use, promoting accuracy and fluency in their speaking skills.

Thus, technology-mediated speaking activities can be an effective approach for promoting advanced ESL learners' speaking skills. These activities provide learners with opportunities to engage in authentic communication, interact with native speakers and peers, and develop their communicative competence. Successful implementation of technology-mediated speaking activities requires careful planning and preparation, but the benefits for learners are numerous, including improved language proficiency, critical thinking, and intercultural communication skills.

**Discussion-based activities** are a common instructional approach in second language teaching, as they provide an opportunity for students to practice communication skills in a low-stakes, collaborative environment. Such activities can be particularly beneficial for advanced ESL students. Through discussions, learners can engage in informal conversations and express their opinions and ideas freely, contributing to the development of their communicative competence.

Discussion-based activities typically involve learners participating in group discussions or pair conversations, with a focus on topics that interest them or relate to their lives. These activities provide learners with a platform to practice their language skills and use language in authentic contexts. Moreover, they can help students improve their comprehension, develop their vocabulary, and enhance their ability to express themselves fluently and accurately.

According to Th. Oradee, discussion-based activities can promote learners' confidence in expressing themselves in English, as they allow students to practice their speaking skills without the pressure of performing in front of an audience [15, P. 532]. Additionally, learners have the opportunity to receive feedback and corrections from their peers and teachers, enabling them to improve their language proficiency.

Effective discussion-based activities require careful planning and facilitation. Teachers should design activities that are appropriate for learners' proficiency levels and interests, and provide clear instructions and guidelines for participation.

Furthermore, teachers should encourage active participation and ensure that all learners have equal opportunities to contribute to the discussion.

In general, discussion-based activities are an effective approach for promoting advanced ESL learners' speaking skills. Through discussions, learners can engage in informal conversations, express their opinions and ideas freely, and develop their communicative competence. Effective implementation of discussion-based activities requires careful planning and facilitation, but the benefits for learners are numerous.

**Presentation activities** are a widely used approach in language teaching, particularly in developing learners' public speaking skills. C. Goh and A. Burns highlight the value of presentation activities for advanced ESL students, noting their potential to enhance learners' ability to organize and present information in a coherent and engaging way [16].

In presentation activities, learners typically research and prepare presentations on a given topic, utilizing a variety of media and resources to support their delivery. Presentations may involve individual or group work, and the focus may vary depending on learners' interests and goals. Presentation activities provide learners with the opportunity to practice their language skills in a challenging and engaging way, and develop their confidence and proficiency in public speaking.

Presentation activities can also promote learners' research skills and expand their knowledge on different topics. Through the process of preparing for their presentations, learners can develop critical thinking skills, learn how to evaluate sources, and organize information in a logical and effective way. Moreover, presentation activities can be tailored to different learning styles and preferences, providing learners with a personalized learning experience.

It is worth noting that successful presentation activities require careful planning and preparation. Teachers should provide learners with clear instructions and guidelines, and support them throughout the process of researching, organizing, and delivering their presentations. Furthermore, learners should be encouraged to provide constructive feedback to their peers, promoting a collaborative and supportive learning environment.

Thus, presentation activities are an effective approach for developing advanced ESL learners' public speaking skills, promoting their research skills, and expanding their knowledge on different topics. Successful implementation of presentation activities requires careful planning and preparation, but the benefits for learners are numerous, including improved confidence, proficiency, and critical thinking skills.

In **conclusion**, the provision of high-quality speaking activities that are tailored to the specific needs of advanced ESL learners is crucial. An

approach that works for one learner may not be as effective for another, so it is essential for educators to consider learners' individual abilities, interests, and language goals when designing speaking activities.

The approaches discussed in this article, such as TBLT, debates, and drama activities, have all shown promise in improving learners' speaking skills. However, it is worth noting that the effectiveness of these activities can vary depending on factors such as learners' level of proficiency, cultural background, and language experience. Therefore, educators should be flexible and adaptable in their approach, using a range of approaches and activities to engage learners in meaningful communication.

Furthermore, incorporating innovative and varied speaking activities can provide learners with opportunities to develop their discourse skills and enhance their overall language proficiency. Authentic and relevant speaking activities, such as role-plays, simulations, and discussions, can help learners use the target language in real-life situations and foster their communicative competence. Additionally, technology-mediated activities like video conferencing and online discussions can also be effective in promoting advanced ESL learners' speaking proficiency.

Ultimately, it is essential for educators and language practitioners to incorporate these insights and recommendations into their teaching practice to support advanced ESL learners' language development. By creating engaging and meaningful speaking activities that cater to learners' individual needs, educators can help learners become confident and effective communicators in English. Ultimately, the goal is to equip learners with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in academic, professional, and social settings.

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