

# How to Teach Speaking

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## Introduction

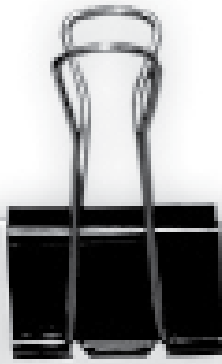
One of the basic problems in foreign language teaching is to prepare learners to be able to use the language. How this preparation is done, and how successful it is, depends very much on how we as teachers understand our aims. For instance, it is obvious that in order to be able to speak a foreign language, it is necessary to know a certain amount of grammar and vocabulary. Part of a language course is therefore generally devoted to this objective (Bygate, 1987).

Speaking a language involves more than simply knowing the grammar and vocabulary of the message. In other words developing language skills requires more than grammatical comprehension and vocabulary memorization (Chastain, 1988).

Nunan (1999) believes that the ability to function in another language is generally

characterized with the ability to speak that language. He also believes that one needs to know how to articulate sounds in a comprehensible manner, have an adequate vocabulary, and also gain the mastery of syntax in order to be able to speak in another language. These various elements add up to linguistic competence. However, while linguistic competence is necessary, it is not sufficient for someone who wants to communicate effectively in another language. The notion of communicative competence includes linguistic competence and beyond that according to Richards, Platt and Weber (1985), it includes:

1. Knowledge of rules of speaking, such as how to start or end a conversation
2. Knowledge of how to use and respond to different types of speech acts, such as requests, apologies, and thanks.
3. Knowledge of how to use language appropriately



# Teaching and Learning in Close-up

Speaking seems to be the most desired but the least practiced skill in EFL contexts. There are a number of reasons why speaking does not receive the attention it deserves. The most important one might be the lack of enough opportunities for learners to speak outside the classroom. In addition to this limitation, too much emphasis on formal features such as vocabulary and grammar as a prerequisite for reading comprehension as the highly emphasised skill in the curriculum of English as a foreign language often leads to poor students' performance in oral communication. In the following article, the author has tried to introduce certain aspects of the speaking skill which need to be considered by teachers in teaching speaking. The article starts with a focus on oral competency and what teachers can do to help reluctant students have more contributions to classroom interaction. The focus then shifts to the challenging features of speech followed by the type of speaking activities in language classes. The article ends up with some guidelines to teachers in designing speaking activities.

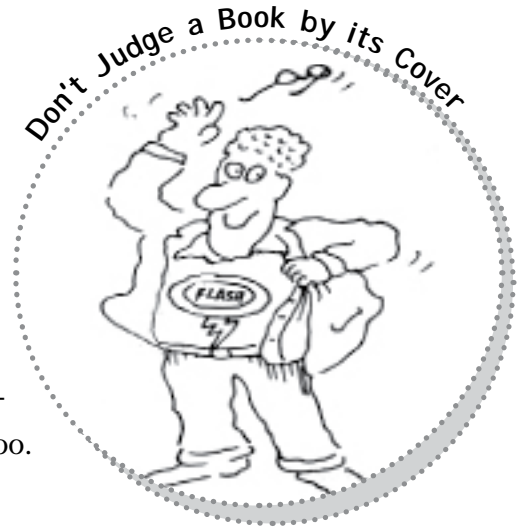
## نگاه نزدیک به آموزش و یادگیری

به نظر می‌رسد مهارت سخن گفتن پیش از سایر مهارت‌ها مورد توجه زبان‌آموزان است، در حالی که در محیط زبان خارجی، این مهارت نسبت به سایر مهارت‌ها، کمتر مورد تمرین قرار می‌گیرد. دلایل متعددی برای این کم‌توجهی می‌توان ذکر کرد که از همه مهم‌تر شاید فقدان فرصت‌های کافی برای صحبت کردن به زبان خارجی در خارج از کلاس درس باشد. علاوه بر این محدودیت، تأکید زیاد بر مشخصه‌های صوری زبان، از جمله دستور و واژگان، به‌عنوان پیش‌نیاز مهارت خواندن و درک مطلب که مهم‌ترین مهارت مورد تأکید در برنامه‌ی درسی زبان خارجی محسوب می‌شود، به عملکرد ضعیف دانش‌آموزان در مهارت‌های شفاهی می‌انجامد. مقاله با بحث در مورد توانش شفاهی و اشاراتی به نحوه‌ی فعال کردن دانش‌آموزانی که علاقه‌ای به سخن گفتن در کلاس از خود نشان نمی‌دهند، آغاز می‌شود. نویسنده سپس به مشخصه‌های چالش‌آفرینی مهارت سخن گفتن و انواع فعالیت‌های شفاهی در کلاس می‌پردازد و در نهایت، با پیشنهاداتی در مورد نحوه‌ی طراحی فعالیت‌های شفاهی، مقاله را به پایان می‌برد.

## II What You Need to Know

### 3. PROVERBS

- I think our new neighbor is a true pain in the neck. She never looks friendly.
- You are judging a book by its cover again, Emilie. Yesterday she brought me her home-made cookies and asked me to give you some, too. Here! They're delicious.



(Don't form an opinion about something based on appearance alone)

### 4. JOKES

A Sunday school teacher asked the children just before she dismissed them to go to church, "And why is it necessary to be quite in church?" Annie replied, "Because people are sleeping."



### REFERENCES

- Abedini, A. (2005). *101 best English jokes*. Tehran: Jungle Publications.
- Collis, H. (1992). *101 American English proverbs*. Lincolnwood: Passport Books.
- Collis, H. (2004). *136 American English idioms*. Lincolnwood: Passport Books.
- Collis, H. (2004). *101 American Superstitions*. Lincolnwood: Passport Books.

## Brain teasers: Paired Letters!

In each of these puzzles, there are two double blanks. Fill in the blanks with the same pair of letters to complete an English word. For example, use the letter-pair ac in b\_\_ckp\_\_k to make the word backpack.

- |              |                 |               |              |
|--------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|
| #1 v__lat__n | #6 who__sa__    | #11 __s__de   | #16 c__kb__k |
| #2 h__dw__e  | #7 p__sev__e    | #12 __od__rk  | #17 a__mo__  |
| #3 __rses__e | #8 tr__bad__r   | #13 p__dl__   | #18 __at__   |
| #4 a__a__a   | #9 __da__ted    | #14 __p__zard | #19 s__ur__e |
| #5 s__tim__t | #10 d__tingu__h | #15 h__g__lin | #20 lo__i__  |

## I What You Need to Know

### 1. SUPERSTITIONS

According to tradition, a person cannot be lucky at everything. If he is lucky at cards, he will be unlucky at love.

- I don't know why my lottery ticket never wins. I used to win every game I played when I was younger.
- Well, that's because you are lucky at cards, but unlucky at love. You can't have it both ways.

Lucky at Cards, Unlucky at Love



Pull someone's Leg



### 2. IDIOMS

(fool someone)

When Jonnie answered Mr. Smith's question wrongly, everyone clapped. He thought his answer was correct so he became happy, but later his friends told him they were **pulling his leg**. They told him his answer was entirely wrong!

be obtained not just by extending voting rights but also by ensuring that there exists a fully-formed public opinion, accomplished by effective communication among citizens, experts, and politicians, with the latter being held accountable for the policies they adopt.

Dewey's educational theories were presented in «My Pedagogic Creed» (1897), *The School and Society* (1900), *The Child and Curriculum* (1902), *Democracy and Education* (1916) and *Experience and Education* (1938).

His recurrent and intertwining themes of education, democracy and communication are effectively summed up in the following excerpt from the first chapter, "Education as a Necessity of Life", of his 1916 book, *Democracy and Education: an introduction to the philosophy of education*: "What nutrition and reproduction are to physiological life, education is to social life. This education consists primarily in transmission through communication. Communication is a process of sharing experience till it becomes a common possession."

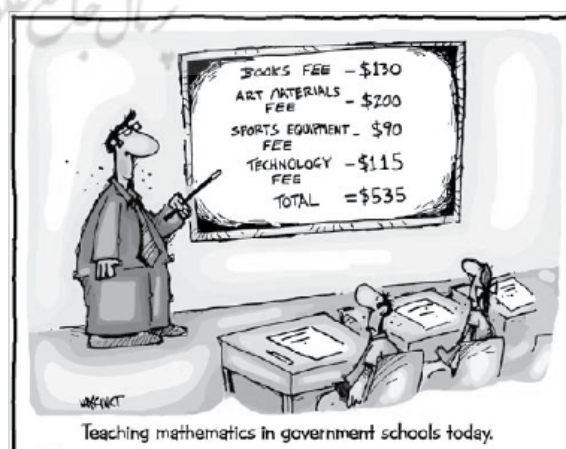
Dewey was a relentless campaigner for reform of education, pointing out that the authoritarian, strict, pre-ordained knowledge approach of modern traditional education was too concerned with delivering knowledge, and not enough with understanding students' actual experiences.

Dewey was the most famous proponent of hands-on learning or experiential education, which is related to, but not synonymous with experiential learning. Dewey went on to influence many other influential experiential models and advocates. Many researchers credit him with the influence of Project Based Learning (PBL) which places students in the active role of researchers.

Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Dewey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Dewey)

## No Comment?

This is a new section added to ETFun. From now on, No Comment brings you a cartoon in every edition of the Roshd FLT Journal. Though these cartoons are already telltale, we invite you all to send us (etfun@roshdmag.ir) your interpretations in a short paragraph. Your name along with your comment will be published in the same section in the subsequent edition of the journal.





**6. Put your words where your mouth is!** You may decide to show your students you are the only authority in your class! Apart from the point that this is not an accepted educational policy, your decision, whatsoever, may not be a correct one. If you try to apply your decision, that would be a historic blunder. If you choose to forget what you have told your students you will do, your authority will undergo serious questions. Teaching is a matter of making appropriate decisions in hard times. The solution to this issue is this: keep calm all the time and say what you should, will, and can actually accomplish!

**7. Remember: students are always smarter than what we may think.** There are times when we, teachers, may think we understand things more than our students do. We may say or do things we think students do not notice: well, let me tell you something: this is the time when we do not deserve to be called teachers. As a general principle, students are always smarter than what we think: respect their intelligence!

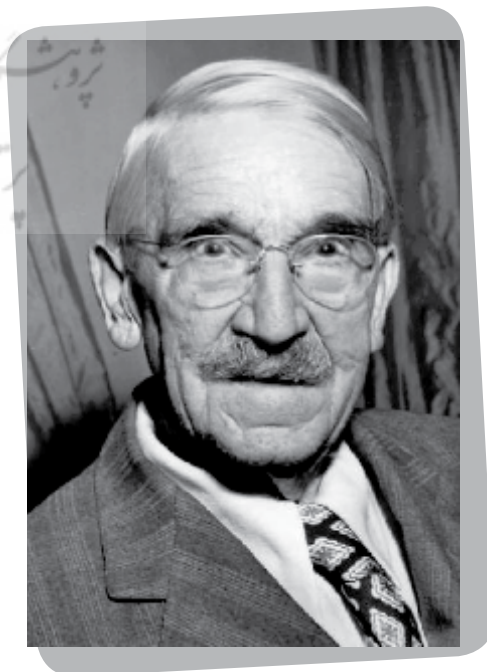
OK, then! Done! These seven tips are key tips for every teacher; however, it should be born in mind that no two classes are identical. Different students and classes have their own proclivities. Consequently, modification of these tips is inevitable.

Close up!

### John Dewey

John Dewey (October 20, 1859–June 1, 1952) was an American philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer whose thoughts and ideas have been highly influential in the United States and around the world. Although Dewey is best known for his works on education, he also wrote on a wide range of subjects, including experience and nature, art and experience, logic and inquiry, democracy, and ethics.

In his advocacy of democracy, Dewey considered two fundamental elements—schools and civil society—as being key areas needing attention and reconstruction to encourage experimental intelligence and plurality. In the necessary reconstruction of civil society, Dewey asserted that full democracy was to



some of your mischievous students will never find a chance to drive you up the wall!

**2. Show you are funny in the second place, but first be serious.** Although this tip depends on the age, gender, and characters of your students, experience shows that students prefer to have a teacher who is funny. Being funny and saying jokes are great tactics to attract students, but one should not take them, mistakenly, as final goals. Make students wait for funny moments, but do not make them wait for moments when you actually teach!

**3. Students follow you, so let them take what is believed to be a virtue.** As a generally true asset of every classroom, keep in mind that you will make a pattern for students whatever you do/say something. Your being punctual will encourage the students to be punctual as well, for instance. So, be on time and be on time all the time. This point is also true for your other activities. Dress casually and you will have casually-dressed students; be relaxed and your students will feel comfortable in your class. You can use this principle to pursue what you think is good for your students.

**4. Punishment is for one; encouragement for all.** Some teachers, unintentionally, take their classrooms as a unit in the army! That is why such teachers apply group punishment for a mistake committed by one student only. Contrary to disciplines in army, which entail total obedience by those who are ranked lower, education is founded on total respect for each and every individual no matter where they are put in the hierarchy of education. Teachers, therefore, are encouraged to respect each and every student's right. Group punishment disappoints students while benefits of group encouragement are unbelievably immense!

**5. Be flexible but not whimsical.** You need to be flexible, sometimes, so that you do not look rigid and too strict. However, you should not change your decisions over and over again. This makes you sound whimsical in the eyes of your students. If this feeling is aroused in your students, they will lose faith in you, and as a result, no matter how hard you try, your attempts to teach them will not be fruitful enough if not totally in vein.



Marriage is the one subject on which all women agree and all men disagree.

- **Oscar Wilde**

Common sense is the collection of prejudices acquired by age 18.

- **Albert Einstein**

Nationalism is an infantile disease. It is the measles of mankind.

- **Albert Einstein**

He knows nothing; he thinks he knows everything - that clearly points to a political career.

- **George Bernard Shaw**

Most people do not pray; they only beg.

- **George Bernard Shaw**

Reason has always existed, but not always in a reasonable form.

- **Carl Marx**

## Teaching Tips

Teachers' behavior in classroom is a very complex phenomenon. One cannot give you a list of fixed proper teacher behaviors as guidelines. This is because what teachers do/ say is interpreted differently based on many criteria, the most important of which is the students' culture. The following is a list of class conduct tips which teachers should try to localize according to their peculiar contextual demands.

### 1. Never turn your back to the students.

Psychologically speaking, human beings accept faces: you do not look at your friend's arms or legs when you are speaking to him/her. You may take a stroll in front of your class, but always show your face. Even if you are writing on the board, you can do it in a way that your students can see your face most of the times. Moreover, if you are always facing the class,

