

## **An Innovative Technique to Encourage Speech in A Second Language Class**

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Most of the tertiary level students joining English as a Second Language (ESL) classes expect to gain speaking ability. Yet, despite the encouragement provided to them to achieve this objective, they remain silent in class. Teachers, very often, misinterpret this silence as a manifestation of the students' indifference towards speech and focus attention on reading and writing at the expense of speech. Although this approach improves the student's proficiency in reading and writing it lets them down at interviews, limiting their chances of employment. Because career-related interviews are crucial matter to students, language teachers are responsible for equipping them by training them in speech. This presentation describes a technique used in class to overcome that problem.

A questionnaire administered to the students revealed that the inability to recall grammar quickly for speech is a major problem students face with regard to speech. Ignorance of the functions of grammar too was an item they prioritized as a drawback. To overcome these problems, basic grammar patterns were transformed into symbols first. Subsequently they were replaced with self explanatory, simple gestures and used as additional material in class. The simplicity of gestures helped students recall as well as repeat those easily. Their self-explanatory character helped them understand the salient features specific to different grammar patterns too. Discourse markers, relative pronouns and other deviant forms of T.L. too were taught using the same technique. These gestures were recalled at irregular intervals throughout the whole course of study in order to help them use those spontaneously. The Technique helped students to overcome the problems identified through the needs analysis.

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