

Teaching ESL/EFL speaking and listening

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We all know that an ability to participate in spoken communication defined as *oracy* is an interest and a concern in second language teaching (Hedge, 2000). A number of textbooks used as guidelines have gradually added literature in the field of second/foreign language education. Among these books, *Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking* has recently been published and entered this field as an comprehensive textbook for graduate students, experienced teachers, and course designers. It contains a total of ten chapters of between 7 and 21 pages, with an average length of 17 pages.

The first four chapters are dedicated to the theoretical and methodological bases of listening skills. Ch. 1 orientates readers to detailed explanations of the four strands, namely meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development. These are used as the framework for the entire book. Other topics in this chapter include how to balance the four strands along with principles of differentiated teaching methods.

Ch. 2 presents guidelines and principles for organizing content as well as learning activities starting from motivating beginners. It also introduces activities geared toward providing learners with input. Ch. 3 examines fundamental concepts of listening, ranging from roles, models, types, and processes of listening. The second half of this chapter moves on to principles and examples of activities for meaning-focused listening as well as how to train learners to use communication strategies. In addition, some focus is given to guidelines for monitoring meaning-focused activities. Ch. 4 mainly examines the principles and applications of language-focused learning through various forms of dictation including dictogloss, running dictation, and unexploded dictation. Pre-dictation exercises clearly presented in this chapter can enable teachers to creatively utilize dictation to both facilitate and challenge learners. The rest of the chapter presents examples to challenge learners through intensive listening.

In Chs. 5-9, the authors briefly discuss theories and applications in teaching speaking. Ch. 5 begins with the importance of pronunciation followed by a discussion of factors affecting learning sound systems of a second/foreign language. The rest of this chapter covers teaching procedures and techniques to deal with problematic sounds. This chapter ends with a discussion on the influence of learners' attitude on their pronunciation. Individual segments of speech are also discussed.

Ch. 6 expands on the ideas from the previous chapters into task-focused interaction. Training techniques to involve negotiation and communication strategies are also highlighted and

supported by research findings. For example, training learners to employ clarification expressions and to transcribe their own language can enhance language awareness and improvement. The last part of this chapter is dedicated to monitoring learners beginning to speak and those reluctant to speak. Ch. 7 begins with controversial issues between waiting for learners to speak when they have sufficient knowledge or readiness and getting learners to speak through demanding tasks. This chapter deals specifically with the latter by introducing principles of pushing learners' output through formal speaking. Ch. 8 focuses on learning through deliberate teaching. To clarify the phrase *deliberate teaching*, this chapter examines principles of teaching vocabulary and grammar followed by the treatments of errors. Ch. 9 shifts the focus to how to develop learners' oral fluency. The beginning of this chapter presents conditions leading to fluency and instructional techniques supplemented by ready-made fluency checklists for teachers.

Ch. 10, the last chapter, briefly discusses listening and speaking assessment through a list of current techniques for assessing both skills. It also reviews fundamental concepts of validity, reliability, and practicality of language evaluative tools. In addition, a two-paged conclusion with an emphasis on course design and a few recommendations for instructional adjustments ends this book with a straightforward closure of all ten chapters bringing together 'how' to teach ESL/EFL listening and speaking.

A strength of the book lies in the arrangement of content directly related to an emphasis on promoting both fluency and accuracy. The four strands that guide Chs. 1-9, another strength, are in line with the integration of both the strong and the weak versions (Howatt, 1984) of the implementation of the communicative approach. While the weak version treats "opportunities to speak" as the center to learn a language, the strong version supports "the development of a language through communication" (Howatt, 1984, p. 279). This can lead to an awareness of not to lean toward fluency than accuracy or vice versa. The last strength involves the use of clear and simple language, except for some terminology. It is likely that the widespread of audience finds this book useful for teaching listening and speaking in both ESL and EFL contexts.

Overall, *Teaching ESL/EFL Speaking and Listening* is a highly readable text for practitioners, course designers, supervisors, and even language program administrators in the field of ESL/EFL. Also, the arrangement of all ten chapters is geared toward the implementation of four harmonized strands. Therefore, in addition to being a framework for drafting ESL/EFL education practitioners, this book can serve as a sourcebook for college students majoring in TESOL and looking for a well-written textbook on teaching language oral skills.

References

- Hedge, T. (2000). **Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom**. Oxford : Oxford University Press.
- Howatt, A.P.R. (1984). **A History of English Language Teaching**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.