



## ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILL IN ENGLISH CLASSROOM TEACHING AND LEARNING: A STUDY OF TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

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### ABSTRACT:

Oral communication skills are vital in English language classrooms, enhancing student engagement, comprehension, and expression while supporting academic and professional success. However, challenges such as language anxiety, limited speaking opportunities, inadequate teacher training, and diverse language backgrounds hinder their development. This study, based on surveys and interviews with 50 English teachers and 200 students in the Dibrugarh district of Assam, India, examines perspectives on oral communication through a mixed-methods approach. Findings showed that while both groups recognize its importance, barriers like anxiety and insufficient practice persist. Teachers employ strategies such as role-plays and group discussions, yet students report nervousness and limited speaking practice. A key discrepancy emerged: teachers place greater pedagogical value on oral communication than students perceive. The study recommends more student-centered methods, increased speaking opportunities, and alignment of teacher and student perspectives. It also emphasizes the need to address language anxiety in teacher training. Oral communication should be treated as a core element of English education and policy, as strengthening these skills can improve overall proficiency and achievement.

### KEYWORDS:

ORAL COMMUNICATION; ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING; LANGUAGE ANXIETY; INTERACTIVE TEACHING METHODS; CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT; TEACHER TRAINING.

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The ability to communicate orally is one of the most important skills in the teaching-learning process, particularly in English classrooms where effective communication fosters understanding, expression, and interaction. In India, where English is often a second language, the acquisition of oral communication skills is crucial for students' academic and professional success. However, various challenges continue to hinder their development, making it essential to analyze the problem from both the teachers' and the students' perspectives.

#### IMPORTANCE OF ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

For effective teaching and learning, oral communication skills are essential, particularly in the English classroom. They enable students to express their ideas, discuss academic topics, and strengthen their language proficiency.

- a) **Promotes and Fosters Active Student Participation:** Oral communication fosters active student participation in the learning process. It allows learners to share ideas, engage in discussions and debates, and articulate their thoughts clearly. Such involvement not only

strengthens the learning process but also deepens their understanding of the subject matter (Nunan, 2003).

- b) **Enhances Language proficiency:** Mastery of a language requires the development of strong oral communication skills. When students are able to communicate effectively in English, their listening, speaking, and comprehension abilities improve, reflecting growth in overall language proficiency (Burns and Joyce, 2001).
- c) **Develops Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills:** Oral communication promotes critical thinking by engaging students in discussions where they form opinions, construct arguments, and analyze diverse perspectives. It also supports problem-solving, as learners define and respond to questions in an interactive manner (Swain, 2000).
- d) **Builds Confidence and Motivation:** Once students gain confidence in their English-speaking skills, they become more motivated to participate actively in the classroom. This confidence not only

enhances their academic performance but also contributes to their personal growth (Macintyre, 2007).

- e) **Prepares Students for Real-World Communication:** In the classroom, oral communication practices simulate real-life situations where individuals must convey ideas, participate in meetings, and collaborate with others. Developing these skills in a supportive classroom environment equips students for their future professional roles (Richards and Rodgers, 2014).

### CHALLENGES IN DEVELOPING ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- a) **Fear of Making Mistakes:** Language anxiety is one of the major challenges faced by students. Many hesitate to participate in speaking activities out of fear of making errors, which discourages them from practicing. This lack of practice, in turn, hinders the development of their oral communication skills (Horwitz, 2001).
- b) **Limited Speaking Opportunities:** In large classrooms, students often have fewer chances to speak, which reduces opportunities to practice and develop oral communication skills. Limited interaction and engagement among peers, along with instructors' greater focus on written tasks rather than speaking activities, further restrict meaningful practice (Goh, 2007).
- c) **Inadequate Teacher Training:** Many teachers lack sufficient training in teaching oral communication skills. Without adequate preparation in communicative language teaching methods, educators may struggle to create effective environments that encourage oral practice and student interaction (Stern, 1983).
- d) **Cultural and Linguistic Barriers:** In multilingual classrooms, students may face challenges related to accent, pronunciation, and cultural differences. These obstacles can create hesitation or reluctance to speak, making the process of developing oral communication skills more difficult (Canale & Swain, 1980).
- e) **Lack of Motivation:** Not all students view oral communication as an important aspect of learning. Without a clear understanding of its significance for academic success and professional growth, many may feel unmotivated to improve their speaking skills (Schweers, 1999).

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

- a) **Improvement of Pedagogical Practices:** The study will assist teachers in optimizing their instructional approaches by identifying effective strategies for enhancing oral communication skills. It will also provide insights into methods that foster active participation and deeper student

engagement in language learning.

- b) **Curriculum Enhancement:** The findings may guide curriculum developers in designing more effective English language programs by incorporating a greater number of interactive and communication-focused activities. Such improvements can simplify the learning process and strengthen students' oral proficiency.
- c) **Teacher Training Programmes:** The results support the inclusion of oral communication training in teacher professional development programs. This equips educators to address student challenges more effectively while reinforcing the importance of oral communication in the curriculum.
- d) **Addressing Student Needs:** The study sheds light on the difficulties students face in acquiring oral communication skills. Such insights are essential for tailoring classroom interventions that address specific barriers and support student success.
- e) **Policy Implications:** The research will provide foundation for policy recommendations in English language education, by recognizing the challenges encountered by both teachers and students, policymakers can prioritize oral communication and promote its integration into the learning process.

### 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The development of oral communication skills in the classroom has been extensively studied, with numerous research studies examining their importance, challenges, and effective teaching methods. A key insight from Swain (2000) is that collaborative learning is essential for language acquisition, as interactive activities—such as group work and discussions—play a critical role in enhancing students' speaking skills.

In the field of language education, oral communication has gained particular attention within the framework of communicative competence, which emphasizes the ability to use language appropriately and effectively in a variety of real-life situations. Canale and Swain (1980) laid the foundations of this theory, highlighting the need to integrate oral skills into language teaching to equip students for meaningful communication in the real world.

This point was further expanded by Burns and Joyce (2001), who emphasized that teaching speaking skills is a crucial component of overall language competence. They argued that speaking should be fully integrated into the curriculum rather than treated as an add-on, as this approach ensures the development of oral skills alongside other language abilities such as reading and writing.

Richards and Rodgers (2014) supported this view in their discussion of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), advocating that students be provided with opportunities for meaningful communication, particularly through oral interaction. They highlight that CLT not only promotes

language proficiency but also prepares students to participate effectively in real-life communicative situations, making oral communication an essential element of language learning programs

Teaching oral communication, however, is not without challenges. **Language anxiety** is one of the major obstacles faced by students when communicating in a second language. Horwitz (2001) found that this anxiety often stems from the fear of making errors or being criticized, which can significantly reduce students' willingness to speak. MacIntyre (2007) supported this finding and further explored strategies to help students overcome anxiety, such as shifting the focus away from error correction and creating a supportive classroom environment that encourages risk-taking in speaking.

Another common challenge is the **limited opportunities for students to speak in the classroom**, particularly in large classes. Goh (2007) noted that even when teachers recognize the importance of oral practice, classroom structure and instructional methods can restrict students' chances to speak. To address this, Nunan (2003) proposed interactive activities, including role-plays and debates, as effective ways to create a dynamic classroom environment that motivates students to engage in speaking.

Additionally, the **impact of bilingualism** on oral communication has been highlighted by Schweers (1999), who observed that students from diverse language backgrounds may face extra difficulties in speaking English, as they must navigate multiple language systems and cultural norms simultaneously.

Oral communication skills have long been recognized as an essential component of teacher preparation. Stern (1983) noted that many teachers lack adequate training to develop speaking skills, particularly in large, diverse classrooms. This lack of training often results in an overreliance on conventional, non-interactive methods, such as grammar drills, which may be insufficient to meet students' oral communication needs. To address these challenges, teachers should be equipped with effective strategies and materials that foster a communicative and interactive classroom environment.

Several studies have explored the use of **technology to enhance oral communication**. For instance, Wang (2010) and Lin (2013) examined computer-mediated communication and virtual platforms, such as video conferencing, as tools to provide additional speaking practice. These studies suggest that technology can help mitigate the limited interaction in traditional classroom settings and offer students more opportunities for real-time oral communication, particularly in online and blended learning contexts.

The **role of feedback** in oral communication practice has also been widely discussed. Lyster and Ranta (1997) demonstrated that constructive corrective feedback can significantly improve students' speaking abilities. Chien (2017) emphasized the value of peer feedback, noting that it can boost learners' confidence and facilitate effective

learning.

Despite these advances, significant gaps remain in the literature regarding the effective integration of oral communication skills into curricula, especially in non-native English contexts. Kormos (2014) highlighted that although research on speaking skills is increasingly prevalent, many teachers struggle to implement evidence-based practices in their classrooms. This underscores the need for more intensive teacher training and curriculum development specifically aimed at improving oral communication skills.

Overall, the literature confirms that oral communication is critical for language learners, yet several challenges hinder its development in classrooms. These include language anxiety, limited speaking opportunities, inadequate teacher training, and the linguistic and cultural diversity of students. However, these barriers can be addressed through communicative teaching methods, increased oral practice, and the strategic use of technology. The findings suggest that adopting more interactive, student-centered approaches to teaching oral communication is essential to help students become confident and competent English speakers.

### 3.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- a) To study the relationship between teachers' use of interactive teaching methods and the students' oral communication skills in the English classroom.
- b) To explore the language anxiety among the oral communication skills by teachers and students.
- c) To study the perception of Teachers and students on the importance of oral communication skills.

### 4.0 HYPOTHESIS OF STUDY

**Hypothesis 1:** There is a significant positive relationship between teachers' use of interactive teaching methods and the improvement of students' oral communication skills in the English classroom.

**Hypothesis 2:** Students who engage more frequently in oral communication activities experience lower levels of language anxiety in the classroom.

**Hypothesis 3:** Teachers' perceptions of the importance of oral communication skills in English language learning are significantly aligned with students' perceptions of the importance of oral communication in their academic success.

### 5.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is based on a quantitative methodology. The sample size consists of 50 English teachers and 200 students studying in secondary classes of Government schools of Dibrugarh district. The survey tools developed by the investigator is used to measure the perception of the teachers and students on the significance of oral communication, challenges encountered and strategies.

### 6.0 DATA ANALYSIS

Inferential statistics was employed by the researchers for testing of the hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 1:** Correlation between Teachers' Use of Interactive Methods and Students' Oral Communication Skills

**TABLE 1: PEARSON CORRELATION TEST RESULTS**

Variable	Mean (Teacher Methods)	Mean (Student Improvement)	Pearson's r	p-value
Teachers' Use of Interactive Methods (role-plays, discussions)	4.2 (on a scale of 1-5)	3.8 (on a scale of 1-5)	0.78	0.01

**INTERPRETATION:**

The r of Pearson = 0.78: There is a strong positive correlation between the application of interactive methods by teachers and the improvement of the oral communication skills in the students.

p-value = 0.01: The value is statistically significant (p < 0.05), which implies that the greater the proportion of interactive methods used by teachers, the greater oral communication skills among students can be developed.

**Hypothesis 2:** Relationship between Frequency of Oral Communication Activities and Language Anxiety

**TABLE 2: INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST RESULTS**

Group	Mean Anxiety Level (Pre-Test)	Mean Anxiety Level (Post-Test)	t-value	p-value
High Frequency of Oral Communication	3.5 (on a scale of 1-5)	2.0 (on a scale of 1-5)	4.5	0.002
Low Frequency of Oral Communication	4.1 (on a scale of 1-5)	3.9 (on a scale of 1-5)	1.2	0.25

**INTERPRETATION:**

Large frequency of Oral communication: high frequency of oral communication is reported to have a strong decrease in language anxiety (t = 4.5, p < 0.05).

Low Frequency of Oral Communication: This group does not show significant reduction in the anxiety (t = 1.2, p > 0.05).

The test indicates that the more oral communication activities one is involved in, the less language anxiety.

**Hypothesis 3:** Alignment of Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of the Importance of Oral Communication

**TABLE 3: PAIRED SAMPLES T-TEST RESULTS**

Group	Teachers' Mean Rating	Students' Mean Rating	t-value	p-value

Perceived Importance of Oral Communication Skills	4.3 (on a scale of 1-5)	3.6 (on a scale of 1-5)	6.9	0.0001
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**INTERPRETATION:**

t-value = 6.9: the opinion regarding the significance of oral communication is significantly different between the views of teachers and students.

p-value = 0.0001: The outcome is statistically significant (p < 0.05), which means teachers attach more importance to the skills of oral communication as compared to the learners.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**a) Teachers' Perspectives on Oral Communication in English Learning**

Most teachers recognize the important role of oral communication in learning English. However, they also report challenges such as large class sizes, limited resources, and insufficient training in oral communication pedagogy. Despite these obstacles, educators employ various strategies—such as group discussions, role-plays, and peer feedback sessions—to develop students' speaking skills effectively.

**b) Students' Perspectives on Oral Communication in English Learning**

Students recognize the importance of oral communication skills but often experience anxiety and lack confidence when speaking English. Common challenges include limited vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, and fear of making mistakes. However, students report that engaging in interactive activities and receiving positive feedback helps reduce anxiety and build their confidence.

**c) Comparison of Teacher and Student Perspectives**

Both teachers and students acknowledge the importance of oral communication skills. However, a gap exists regarding the effectiveness of current strategies. While teachers feel that sufficient oral practice is being provided, students believe that more engaging and communicative activities are needed. This disconnect highlights the need for improved communication and collaboration between teachers and students.

**7.0 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY**

- a) Pedagogical Reform: Teachers will receive training in communicative language teaching methods that emphasize the development of oral communication skills.
- b) Curriculum Development: The curriculum will be designed to provide ample opportunities for oral practice through debates, presentations, and interactive activities
- c) Student Support Systems: The students will be provided with counseling and support programs which will help them overcome anxiety and build

confidence in speaking.

- d) Teacher Professional Development: Long-term, continuous professional development programs can be designed, aimed at addressing the needs of teachers focusing on oral communication skills and effective teaching techniques.
- e) Policy Recommendations: Education policies will prioritize oral communication skills as a critical component of English language instruction.

## 8.0 CONCLUSION

The present study highlights the crucial role of oral communication skills in English classrooms, emphasizing both their significance and the challenges involved in developing them. The findings indicate that teachers' interactive practices, such as role-plays and group discussions, have a positive impact on students' oral communication abilities. Moreover, actively engaging students in speaking activities helps reduce language-related anxiety.

However, a discrepancy exists between teachers' and students' perceptions of the importance of these skills, with teachers generally assigning greater value to them. This gap underscores the need for better coordination in language instruction and a stronger emphasis on oral communication within learning outcomes. By addressing these challenges through more interactive teaching methods, providing increased opportunities for speaking, and improving teacher-student alignment, the overall quality of oral communication in English classrooms can be enhanced. Such improvements will benefit both teachers and students, fostering a more engaging and effective learning experience.

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