

## FACTORS AFFECTING THE SPEAKING PERFORMANCE OF GENERAL STUDENTS AT HANOI METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

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**Abstract:** *Students' speaking performance has been claimed to be problematic. In reality, many language learners find it is difficult to express themselves from spoken language into the target language. Each student has their own problems. So, the paper aims to point out the speaking problems of the general students at Hanoi Metropolitan University. It is expected to help students improve their speaking performance.*

**Keywords:** *Communicative competence, speaking performance, general students.*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Regarding speaking, we often think of the movements of rib cage, the vocal cords and the mouth. However, speaking is more complicated than that and it involves more than just pronouncing words. Speaking involves thinking of what to say, choosing the right words from our vocabulary, putting the words in the proper grammatical framework, communicating the feelings we have, and so on.

Speaking is the productive skill, like writing, but it is in oral mode. Thus, it differs from writing in a number of respects. It is usually less formal in use of vocabulary, uses fewer full sentences as opposed to phrases, contains repetitions, repairs and has more conjunctions instead of subordination. Moreover, speakers often do not have as much time to plan, produce and correct as writers. Speech has to be done with considerable speed that is sometimes referred as fluency. Fluency is one of the typical features of spoken language.

### 2. CONTENTS

#### 2.1. What are the problems that the general students Hanoi Metropolitan University encounter when they learn to speak English?

In order to help students overcome problems in learning speaking, it is necessary for the teachers to figure out problems that the general students Hanoi Metropolitan University encounter when they learn to speak English.

*\* Common Grammar Mistakes While Speaking English Language*

Common grammatical mistakes mostly the students faced in speaking. Learning English grammar is very difficult for students. In speaking English language mostly, the students make grammar mistakes. Usually, students make mistakes in tenses, active and passive, and vocabulary during speaking English language. They used the wrong tenses sometimes they want to speak in the past tense but they used to speak in the present tense instead of the past tense. They cannot easily differentiate between the difference and how to use the past, present, and future tenses.

*\* Lack of Confidence in Speaking English Language*

Lack of confidence is also one of the reasons by which the students cannot speak English language in public. They are not confident about themselves speaking English language in front of people. This is usually caused by the teachers, the teachers not giving sufficient encouragement to speak English language in public. Usually, the teachers didn't encourage them to speak English in the classroom or in front of people. They learn English language but they didn't learn how to speak it. This one of the problems that mostly the students faced in the classroom or in front of people. Self-Confidence plays a very important role in speaking English language if the students didn't believe and confident in themselves then they cannot speak English language. The self-confidence and beliefs of the students are completely depending on the teachers. The teachers have to encourage and motivate them to believe in themselves and be confident in speaking English language in public. If the students are worried about making mistakes in speaking. So, the teachers have to teach them that no one can be born perfectly, everyone learns from their mistakes. They have been self-confident in speaking even they are speaking wrong. They will learn from their mistakes and correct them in speaking again. So self-confidence in speaking English language is very important

*\* Shyness in Speaking English Language*

Shyness is also one of the biggest factors by which the students cannot speak English language. It's a kind of feeling which students feel while speaking English language. They are unwilling in front of their teachers and their friends. By shyness, they are unable to speak what they are thinking and what they want to speak. In shyness, they are not confident of themselves to speak, they are unable to remember the grammar rules and correct vocabulary in speaking English language. Due to shyness, they feel uncomfortable and anxious in front of people speaking English language. Teachers have to motivate the students to be self-confident, it's okay to feel awkward in front of people but they should know that they can do it and encourage them to speak English language as much as they can. They have to overcome their shyness and speak English language confidently.

*\* Fear of Making Mistakes When Speaking English Language*

Fear of making mistakes in speaking English language is also one of the big problems

that usually the students faced in speaking. Learning English language is a means of learning how to communicate with other people in speaking English language. The students are afraid of making mistakes in speaking English language that their mates laugh at them or looking silly in front of their mates, or even criticize them in the classroom. The fear of making mistakes has resulted in failure in speaking English language with other people.

Factly, no one is born perfect, so making mistakes is a normal thing. Everyone makes mistakes but they should learn from their mistakes and overcome their mistakes in speaking English language.

*\* Lack of Motivation in Students in Speaking English Language*

Lack of motivation is also one of the reasons students cannot speak English language. Motivation plays a very important role in speaking English language. Motivation can be driven by the teachers, other students, and also their parents. But they didn't motivate them very well to speak English language. By the lack of motivation in speaking English language then they didn't take interest in speaking English language.

*\* Nervous in Speaking English Language in Public*

Nervousness and anxiety are also one of the reasons behind the students who cannot speak English language in public or in in front of people. By nervousness, the students feel uncomfortable and confuse in speaking English language and communicating in English language in public. The students should learn how to overcome their nervousness about speaking in public. There are a few things students to keep in mind when they feel nervous about speaking English language. When students feel nervous in speaking English language in public, they have to breath properly, stay calm and remember the reason why they learn English language, it helps the students to relax and confident to speak.

In conclusion, the problems and reasons by which the students cannot speak English language even after more than 16 years of learning English as I discussed above. The teachers have to focus on these problems and try to resolve them.

## **2.2. What are the factors that affect their speaking performance?**

Students' speaking performance can be affected by the factors that come from performance conditions (time pressure, planning, standard of performance and amount of support), affective factors (such as motivation, confidence and anxiety), listening ability and feedback during speaking activities. In addition, after making questionnaire with English teachers at Ha Noi Metropolitan University, the teachers were asked to choose the speaking problems that their students encountered including seven problems provided for the teachers to choose from.

All the teachers agreed that their students spoke very little or not at all in speaking class. 90% of the teachers thought that their students could not think of anything to say. 80% of the teachers stated that their students often used Vietnamese instead of English in English lessons. The same number of teachers (eight out of ten) believed that the students had no

motivation to express themselves in English. For seven teachers, the students were fearful of criticism or losing face. 60% of the teachers claimed that the students were worried about making mistakes. Half of the teachers said that in speaking class, the students were shy.

When being asked about which problems they encountered in speaking classes, a majority of the students (74%) highly agreed on the fact that they spoke very little or not at all. 73% of the students were worried about making mistakes when speaking English. 71% of them reported that they could not think of anything to say. 70% of the students said that they often used Vietnamese in speaking classes. 61% of the students claimed that they had no motivation to express themselves in speaking class. When taking part in speaking activities, 48% of the students were shy of the attention that their speech attracted. 28% of them agreed that they were fearful of criticism or losing face.

In brief, the findings from the questionnaires delivered to both the teachers and the students showed that when the students learn speaking, they encountered many problems. According to the teachers, the most common speaking problem was that the students spoke very little or nothing in speaking classes. Most of the teachers said that the students could not think of anything to say. Moreover, they often used Vietnamese and they had no motivation to express themselves. The results from student questionnaire were nearly the same as from the teacher questionnaire. The students reported that they spoke very little or nothing in speaking class. Most of the time, they could not think of anything to say so they used Vietnamese. A significant number of students also claimed that they were fearful of criticism or losing face. They had no motivation to use English to express themselves.

#### ***The factors that affect students' speaking performance***

With regard to the research question, the results indicated that there were a variety of factors that affect the students' speaking performance. A majority of the teachers said that the students' speaking performance was affected by topical knowledge. The next two important factors mentioned were listening ability and motivation to speak. Besides, the teachers' feedback during speaking activities also was also reported to affect the students' speaking performance. Finally, confidence was considered to be a factor that had influence on students' performance. The results from student questionnaire were quite similar to those of the teachers, most of the students thought that their speaking performance was affected by topical knowledge. The next important factor was listening ability. In addition, the students thought that they needed to be confident to perform well. Last but not least, the students reported that their performance was also affected by feedback during speaking activities and the pressure to perform well. The data from class observations revealed that the students' speaking performance is also affected by time for preparation.

#### ***The problems that the general students at Ha Noi Metropolitan University encounter when they learn speaking***

In the current study, the findings from the questionnaires delivered to both the teachers and the students showed that when the students learn speaking, they encountered many

problems. According to the teachers, the most common speaking problem was that the students spoke very little or nothing in speaking classes. Most of the teachers said that the students could not think of anything to say. Moreover, they often used Vietnamese and they had no motivation to express themselves. The results from student questionnaire were nearly the same as from the teachers' questionnaire. The students reported that they spoke very little or nothing in speaking class. Most of the time, they could not think of anything to say so they used Vietnamese. A significant number of students also claimed that they were fearful of criticism or losing face. They had no motivation to use English to express themselves.

Some more speaking problems that the students encountered in the classrooms observed were also recorded. The first problem was that the students often translated the information in the textbook into Vietnamese before they did the tasks. The second problem was that most of the students' speaking performance sounded unnatural because they did not remember the structures and vocabulary when they spoke. They just looked at their book and read. Furthermore, uneven participation in all the lessons observed was also considered to be another problem. Some students participated in the classroom activities actively while the others did it unwillingly.

In general, from the results of the investigation, it was evident that the students encountered many problems in the speaking class. Moreover, there were many factors that contributed to their success and failure in performing speaking tasks. On the whole, the current teaching and learning of speaking skills at Ha Noi Metropolitan University needed to be improved in a hurry because they were given limited time for every task.

### 3. CONCLUSION

In order to help students overcome problems in learning speaking, it is necessary for the teachers to figure out factors that affect their speaking performance.

In fact, every speaker plays the role of both a listener and a speaker. Therefore, one is certainly unable to respond if he/ she cannot understand what is said. It means speaking is closely related to listening. In other words, topical knowledge is the speakers' knowledge of relevant topical information. The information that topical knowledge provides enables learners to use language with reference to the world in which they live. Most students want and expect their teachers to give them feedback on their performance. However, all speaking production should not be dealt with in the same way. Another problem in speaking class is that participation is low or uneven. In a large group, each student will have very little talking time because only one participant can talk at a time so that the others can hear him/her. There is a tendency of some learners to dominate while others speak very little or not at all. Finally, when all or a number of learners share the same mother-tongue, they tend to use it because it is easier for them. Hopefully, the article can contribute to the improvement of English teaching and learning at Ha Noi Metropolitan University.

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**CÁC YẾU TỐ ẢNH HƯỞNG ĐẾN KHẢ NĂNG DIỄN ĐẠT  
CỦA SINH VIÊN CỦA CÁC LỚP TIẾNG ANH ĐẠI TRÀ  
TẠI TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC THỦ ĐÔ HÀ NỘI**

**Tóm tắt:** Sinh viên các lớp tiếng Anh đại trà gặp nhiều khó khăn khi diễn đạt bằng Tiếng Anh. Thực tế cho thấy có nhiều sinh viên cảm thấy rất khó khi muốn trình bày ý tưởng của mình bằng ngôn ngữ đích. Bài viết nhằm mục đích chỉ ra một số vấn đề mà sinh viên gặp phải khi diễn đạt bằng ngôn ngữ nói cũng như mong muốn hỗ trợ sinh viên cải thiện khả năng nói của mình.

**Từ khóa:** Năng lực giao tiếp, khả năng biểu đạt, sinh viên đại trà,