Untie your tongue
Speaking Skills in the FL classroom

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Whenever we try to get our students to participate in the classroom, no excited faces are found around us. We will offer activities to enhance students to use English as a means of communication. A dynamic approach is proposed for acquiring basic speaking skills since we believe that using dynamic exercises is an effective motivator to create “appropriate pieces of communication”.

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“You live a new life for every new language you speak. If you only know one language, you live only once.” (Czech proverb)

Many English students complain that they understand English, but don't feel confident enough to join a conversation and follow it fluently. In this sense, teachers try to create artificial scenarios for the practice of oral skills in the ESL classroom; however, speaking activities usually fail due to some common problems faced by every single teacher all around the world.

Speaking activities require a student to have all eyes on him and exposure to an audience can often give students stage fright. They may also be worried about making mistakes, being criticized or losing face in front of the rest of the class, they think that they lack the strategies necessary to overcome the problems they face when speaking and they can use in L1. As well, teachers sometimes face problems in making adequate pairing due to the difference of age between students and the necessity to create as many opportunities as possible to expose them to the language, which sometimes is stressful and counterproductive.

Our presentation will be mainly divided into three parts. Basically, we will start by introducing the theoretical and pedagogical framework, which shapes the use of speaking activities in the ESL classroom. Secondly, we will roughly analyze some common problems faced in our classrooms, which have become the basis for the design of the activities we intend to show. In this sense, and taking those problems as starting point, we will interact with the audience in the development of the activities. These activities are fluency oriented, but also focused on grammar, vocabulary and accuracy. Moreover, we will also focus on small talk, which makes conversation more effective and natural. As noticed with all the previously stated, we make our students bust the frontier of speaking and going beyond.
Students’ & Teachers’ difficulties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENTS</th>
<th>TEACHERS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of fluency</td>
<td>Lack of time</td>
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<td>Stage fright</td>
<td>Lack of creativity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of confidence</td>
<td>Embarrassment</td>
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<td>Use of L1</td>
<td>Noise</td>
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Pedagogical Framework
Activities

Fluency

- Speed dating.
- Crazy chat.
- Speak your colour.
- Speaker's corner.
- Who gets the goodies?

Accuracy

Grammar

- Tic-Tac-Toe.
- Board Games.

Vocabulary

- Picture games.
- Jenga.
- Paul's games.
- Taboo.
- Post-it games.

Pronunciation

- Tongue Twister Race.


