



**The Effect of a Proposed Remedial Design to Enhance  
English Speaking Skills for Sinai Institute for Specific  
Studies Students**

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### **Abstract:**

The present study aimed at investigating the effect of using a proposed remedial design on the development of English speaking skills of Sinai Institute for Specific Studies Students (henceforth SSISS). The study adopted the quasi-experimental design of two groups: experimental and control. The participants of the study were freshmen SSISS, in the academic year 2019/2020. Then, they were randomly assigned into two groups, an experimental group (n = 35 students) and a control one (n = 35 students). Having approved the necessary English speaking skills for the SSISS by a jury of EFL experts, a speaking test was developed and used by the researcher as a pre-posttest. The experimental group received training through the proposed remedial design, while at the same time, the control group continued to study the content in the traditional way. Data were collected and treated statistically using SPSS. The study results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group (taught through the remedial design using task-based activities) and the control group (taught traditionally) on the posttest in the overall speaking skills for the experimental group. They also revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre- and the posttest in the overall speaking skills favoring the post scores. It was concluded that the proposed remedial design was effective in enhancing English speaking skills of SSISS.

**Keywords:** remedial design, English speaking Skills

## المستخلص

هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى بحث أثر استخدام تصميم تصحيحي مقترح على تنمية مهارات التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية لدى طلاب معهد سينا للدراسات النوعية. واستخدمت الدراسة التصميم شبه التجريبي لمجموعتين تجريبية وضابطة. و تكونت عينة الدراسة من طلاب الفرقة الأولى بشعبة اللغة الإنجليزية بمعهد سينا للدراسات النوعية ، والذين تم توزيعهم عشوائيا إلى مجموعتين : تجريبية وعددها ٣٢ طالبا، وضابطة وعددها ٣٢ طالبا. وبعد تحكيم مهارات التحدث باللغة الانجليزية من قبل خبراء في مجال تدريس اللغة الانجليزية، أعدت الباحثة اختبار تحدث واستخدمته ليطبق قبل تطبيق التصميم التصحيحي المقترح وبعده. تلقت المجموعة التجريبية تدريبا على ذلك التصميم التصحيحي المقترح بينما في ذات الوقت درست المجموعة الضابطة المحتوى بالطريقة المعتادة. تم جمع البيانات ومعالجتها إحصائيا باستخدام برنامج SPSS. أظهرت النتائج أن هناك فرق دال إحصائيا بين متوسطي درجات المجموعة التجريبية التي درست باستخدام التصميم التصحيحي المقترح ذا الأنشطة القائمة على المهام و المجموعة الضابطة التي درست بالطريقة المعتادة في الاختبار البعدي لمهارات التحدث باللغة الانجليزية ككل لصالح المجموعة التجريبية. كما أظهرت أيضا أن هناك فرق دال إحصائيا بين متوسطي درجات المجموعة التجريبية في الاختبارين القبلي البعدي لمهارات التحدث باللغة الانجليزية ككل لصالح التطبيق البعدي. ومن هذا يمكن الاستنتاج بأن التصميم التصحيحي المقترح كان فاعلا في تنمية مهارات التحدث باللغة الانجليزية لدى طلاب معهد سينا للدراسات النوعية.

الكلمات المفتاحية : تصميم تصحيحي - مهارات التحدث باللغة الانجليزية

## **Introduction**

Speaking is amongst the most prominent skills of language. Learners need to be trained as an essential component of their academic life and later in their professional life, which partially explains why teaching speaking has prompted a good deal of research that covers various aspects of its broad instructional contexts. In the last thirty-five years, our world has witnessed some dramatic and incredible changes. The most influential and remarkable ones are the revolution in information technology and the revolution in communication technology with their consequences and prevailing impacts. This revolution in information and communication has turned our world into what has been called a small village. The new situation has entailed the growth of scientific and cultural interrelations among different parts of the world. Such conditions necessitated that the increasing number of the world population should have one medium of communication, which made situations ripe to qualify English as a medium- language. Thus, the teaching and learning of English among people has become something in demand.

Based on the dramatic changes in the field of technology and communication, the new innovation in the field of teaching and learning EFL, and the outcomes of TEFL process in our schools which seem to be not much promising, the Ministry of Education has launched the Educational Reform for Knowledge Economy Project to enhance the outcomes of TEFL process through starting the process of TEFL from grade one instead of grade five, updating the curriculum and textbooks of

English language, and giving the choice to the teacher to use any appropriate method for achieving the instructional objectives.

Using speaking skills to communicate with native and non-native speakers of English is one of the major problems confronting students who are learning EFL in Egypt. This problem could be caused by the lack of a native speaker's environment and the crowded classes at our schools. Therefore, developing speaking skills is a real challenge for both EFL teachers and students. Suthee (2009) conducted a study on the problems related to English listening and speaking skills. He found out that there are certain problems represented in traditional teaching methods besides the lack of English learning environment behind students' weakness in performing these two skills. According to Ruixue, Zejun, and Yijing (2012: 26-27), improving students' speaking skills has always been a challenge for both teachers and learners as with the traditional training mode students have low motivation to speak, insufficient exposure to authentic language input, inadequate teachers' instructions on social strategies unsuitable environment to practice English. In addition, they found out that there are four reasons for learners' low speaking proficiency; learners' lack (a) motivation to practice speaking, (b) target language environment, (c) partners to practice spoken English with, and (d) social strategy training.

Thus, the researcher argues that conducting a study on speaking problems is of the highest priority in an attempt to provide a proposed program design for those problems aiming at improving student-teachers' listening and speaking proficiency.

## **Review of literature**

To assess speaking skills and determine a student's growth and skill, world language teachers turn to how communication is defined within the standard. Communicative skills are manifested within the national standard through the interpretive mode, interpersonal mode, and presentational mode of communication (ACTFL, 2012). The interpretive mode of communication is characterized by the ability to interpret and understand spoken language whereas the interpersonal mode of communication describes the ability to maintain conversation between two or more individuals. The presentational mode of communication is highlighted by information presented through spoken language. When combined, these three modes of communication represent authentic real world communicative settings (ACTFL, 2012). As a result, the authors chose to target the Communication Standard of world language learning when exploring the integration of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and Web 2.0 tools.

Communication is a requisite to discuss, discover, and learn about all other concepts. Communicative competence is comprised of grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence (Canale & Swain, 2000 & Savignon, 1997). Grammatical competence is the knowledge of the structure and form of a language; some of which include its morphologic, syntactic, phonemic and graphic features. The knowledge of the interrelationship between and logic across sentences and phrases is characteristic of discourse competence. An individual with strong discourse competence can aptly judge the relationship between different ideas within a text. Sociolinguistic competence focuses on the recognition and accordance of the rules of interaction; taking turns, appropriate greetings, proper use of formal/informal register, naturalness or overall native-like language. Finally, strategic competence is characterized by the ability to make the

most of the language, particularly when compensating for language deficiencies. For instance, it is the ability to successfully communicate an idea or concept that an individual lacks the proper name for, or to negotiate meaning during conversation through verbal and nonverbal communication techniques. When skillfully combined, the result is successful communicative skills in which one can express, interpret, and negotiate meaning (Savignon, 1998).

Oral performance skills are important for students to acquire and practice knowledge and develop language. That is, listening and speaking have become essential parts of any communication process as they are the media through which children, young people, and adults can express thoughts, ideas, and feelings. That is why methodologists and linguists, in recent years, have begun to argue that oral performance should be the principal objective in language teaching. Ahmed (2000), Aly (2001), Coughlin (2006) and Kayi (2006) regarded listening and speaking as the most common and important means of providing communication among human beings. According to them, the key to successful oral language performance is speaking phonologically, semantically, and syntactically, as well as using the English language appropriately in real communicative situations combined with some compensatory strategies such as body language, rephrasing, and demonstration.

According to Zuheer (2008) conversational English is rarely heard among the students in the department of English-Faculty of Education, Sana`a University. It has been confirmed by lecturers who teach oral skills to the second level students that students have many problems in this field; most

of the graduates are poor in oral communication skills. American Association of Yemeni Scientists and Professionals (AAYSP) (2007) declared that Yemeni students are so weak in learning English due to curriculum issues and teaching methods. This was supported by a report made by learning expert in British Council, London (Makki, 2009) who revealed that there is still an existing weakness in teaching/learning English in Yemeni governmental and private teachers training institutions, indicating that there is a need for highly qualified English teachers.

Furthermore, numerous studies stressed the importance of listening and speaking for foreign language learning. In a research conducted by Kayi (2006) she found that EFL learners are badly in need for these important skills to demonstrate knowledge, gain more confidence in front of peers, express thoughts and ideas, and explore the world. This result goes in line with a group of field studies conducted by Al-Khuli (2000) Nickell (2003) Sasson (2007) Beheery (2008) Ulas (2008) Al- Sabagh (2009) Ragab (2010) and Piccolo (2010) who recommended that it is essential for language teachers to pay more attention to teaching listening and speaking and providing a rich environment where meaningful communication can take place. In spite of the importance of these two skills, they are still considered two of the most neglected skills in language teaching; they have received less attention in language teaching than the other language skills. This was revealed by many researchers such as Hong and Aiex (1995) Bertram (2002) Abdel-Halim (2004) Zuheer (2008) and Chuang (2009). Consequently, despite the great efforts made by people in charge of enhancing oral proficiency among student-teachers, oral performance

problems are increasing sharply in EFL classrooms. This can be revealed throughout the following field studies. Jordan in his study (1997: 45) found the most persistent problem for the overseas students was the inability to express adequately in the spoken language. Jordan added that the reason for such an obstacle is “due to the little time students spent in actually speaking English in a typical day”.

The weakness of English language learners in general, and English language department majors/graduates more specifically, can be attributed to various factors. According to Rababah (2002:184) these factors are “lack of pertinent information on the part of school graduates when they join the university, curricula, teaching methodology, lack of the target language environment, and the learners' lack of motivation.

the researcher noticed that teaching courses devote much more emphasis on training the students` language skills, especially on reading and writing while oral English is neglected. Most students have accumulated a large number of English vocabulary and managed to pass different kinds of English tests. But when it comes to oral English, many students mostly keep silent. The researcher also noticed that students find it difficult to communicate in English either inside or outside classroom. This might be due to:

- The emphasis on teaching grammar rather than communicative competence.
- The lack of self-confidence and motivation.
- The absence of qualified teachers.
- The lack of integrating technology in language classrooms.

Thus, the researcher claims that there is a consensus that English language teaching and learning face some critical problems that form obstacles and challenges for both students and teachers. These problems need to be probed and tackled to improve the situation of English language teaching and learning in the country as a whole because Faculties of Education are the main sources that train and prepare English teachers.

### **Context of the problem:**

Mastering oral competencies is not an easy task for EFL learners who should learn these competencies to be able to communicate in the target language. Therefore, there is an urgent need to give these competencies more attention and however, despite the crucial role which oral performance plays in language acquisition, it is still neglected at the different learning stages. This has been revealed in many field studies conducted by Hadi (2007), Aydarous (2007) and Mahdi (2009). In addition, results of some field studies such as Al- Nashmi (2006) and Zuheer (2008) confirmed that student-teachers suffer from poor mastery of oral skills due to different problems. According to these studies, these problems are attributed to the following reasons:

- (a) Traditional teaching practices that do not help promote speaking and do not give learners a chance to communicate English fluently and freely.
- (b) Inappropriate teaching practices that focus on language form, rather than on developing learners' listening and speaking proficiency.
- (c) The evaluation system that does not give due emphasis to speaking and listening.

Conducting a speaking skills questionnaire in November, 2019 as

a pilot study to identify the difficulties facing EFL students in the first year at Sinai Institute for Specific Studies (n=70), it was found out that EFL students lacked some speaking skills.

### **Statement of the problem**

In light of the aforementioned argumentative account, it is clear that Sinai Institute EFL students lack some speaking skills as it has been revealed by the pilot study. It could also be mentioned that giving the activities of the Proposed Remedial Design-based program would help in achieving high standards of skill mastery for the EFL students. Accordingly, the problem under investigation in this study could thus be stated in the following main question:

How effective is a proposed remedial design in developing EFL Freshmen SSISS' speaking skills?

### **Questions of the study:**

1. What are the speaking skills needed for the first year EFL Freshmen SSISS?
2. To what extent do those students master these skills?
3. How can a proposed remedial program be designed to enhance EFL Freshmen SSISS' speaking skills?
4. To what extent is the designed program effective in developing EFL Freshmen SSISS' speaking skills?

### **Significance of the study**

The results of this study are hopefully expected to be useful to:

1. The EFL students: This study may improve the EFL students' speaking skills.
2. Teachers: This study may supply teachers of this stage with task-based activities that could improve their performance in EFL classrooms and their students' speaking skills.

### **Delimitations of the study**

This study was delimited to:

1. Seventy students at Sinai Institute for Specific Studies , Ismailia city.
2. Speaking skills which were specified by the questionnaire results.

### **Instruments of the study**

*The following instruments were designed by the researcher:*

- a. The speaking skills questionnaire.
- b. The pre-post speaking skills test.

### **Hypotheses of the study:**

1. There would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre-administration and the post-administration of the EFL Freshmen SISSS' speaking skills in favor of the post-administration
2. There would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control one in the

post-administration of the speaking skills test in favor of the experimental group.

## **Method and Procedures**

*The experimentation went as follows:*

- The researcher designed the task-based program, which was then validated by a number of TEFL experts.
- 70 EFL students were randomly chosen from the first year EFL students at Sinai Institute.
- The students were divided into a control group (35 students) and an experimental group (35 students).
- The researcher administered the pre-speaking skills test to the first year EFL students ( both groups).
- The researcher taught the experimental group by using the proposed design for an academic term.
- The researcher taught to the control group by using the traditional method.

In teaching activities, the researcher followed specific teaching steps as follows:

### *a) Presentation:*

The researcher used various styles to initiate the practice of the activities whether through giving an introduction about the topic or asking questions or making discussions with the students.

### *b) Practice:*

At this stage, the researcher provided students with various activities through group discussion. Students were given the opportunity to engage in practicing these activities with the instructor and among themselves.

*c) Evaluation:*

At the end of each session, students were evaluated using questions about the chapter to measure the students' ability to master the speaking skills.

**Description of the proposed design:**

The proposed design consisted of 10 sessions. Each session is concerned specifically with the use of conversation groups. Each session includes a group of activities. The number of activities varies from one session to another according to the objectives to be achieved. Some activities took 45 minutes and others took 60 minutes. Thus, each lesson took time according to the numbers of its activities including their presentation and procedures. Evaluation of each lesson was at the end of implementing the whole activities of this session.

Having collected the data, they were treated statistically using SPSS.

**Study Results:**

It was hypothesized that "there would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre-administration and the post-administration of the speaking skills test in favor of the post-administration." To determine the relative extent of change fostered by the implementation of the proposed program , t-test for paired samples was used. Table 1 shows the results.

**Table 1.** t-values comparing the mean scores of the experimental group on pre-post speaking skills test

	N	Mean	Std	t	Df	Sig.	Effect size
Pre	35	14.65	2.36	50.60	34	0.000	0.987
Post	35	27.80	1.67			Sig.	High

Table 1 illustrates that there was a statistically significant difference at 0.01 level in the speaking test between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre-post administration of speaking skills test in favor of the post-administration scores. It can be indicated that t-value (50.60) is significant at 0.01 level. The mean scores of the posttest (27.80), whereas the deviation of the scores of the pretest is much higher than that of the posttest. These results provide enough evidence to support the first hypothesis.

It was hypothesized that "there would be a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and those of the control one in the post-administration of the speaking skills test in favor of the experimental group". Table 2 shows the results.

**Table 2.** t-values of the mean scores of the post speaking skills test comparing the experimental group and those of the control group

	N	Mean	Std	t	Df	Sig.	Effect size
Control	35	15.14	1.59	-32.37	68	0.000	0.968
Experiment	35	27.80	1.68			Sig.	High

Table 2 indicates that there is a statistically significant difference at 0.01 level between the attained mean scores of the control group and those of the experimental group in favor of the experimental group post application of the speaking skills test. The estimated t-value is- 32.37. It is significant at 0.01 level in favor of the post application of the experimental group. The mean of the experimental group in the post application is (27.80) and that of the control group is (15.14). So the mean of the experimental is higher than that of the control group. These results confirm the effect of the designed task-based program on the experimental group students' speaking skills.

Hence, the above results seemed to provide adequate evidence to support the study hypotheses. The change that occurred in the experimental group was bigger than the control group due to the implementation of the designed program. So, the study hypotheses were supported by the results. And all the findings of the study proved to be positive. The experimental group students had developed their use of speaking skills more than the control group. This could be attributed to the training that the experimental group was exposed to.

**Discussion of the results:**

Following is a detailed discussion of the results related to the empirical part of the study. Such a discussion relates to the purpose as well as the hypotheses of the study. The purpose of the present study was to investigate the effect of a proposed remedial design on the development of EFL secondary school students' speaking skills. In this study, a designed program produced statistical as well as educational gains in the speaking skills.

The data from the present study supported the positive effect of a designed program in developing speaking skills in the study hypotheses. The results also revealed that the designed program is of high efficiency on the students' speaking skills.

The results also revealed the superiority of the experimental group students who received designed instruction activities over their counterparts who received the typical teacher-directed instruction in the same content. Students in the experimental group made significantly greater gains than students in the control group on the speaking skills test.

Using a designed program helped students overcome some of their problems and increased their friendship in speaking skills. During the experiment, students in the experimental group were working as if they were one team in a group through suggesting ideas, offering critical viewpoints, correcting each other mistakes, and helping each other.

At the beginning of the experiment, the researcher observed a weak response from students in session 1, but this response, after that, turned into an effective participation in applying the activities that the program included. Later, students themselves prepared a list of criticism techniques, and then they applied it to the texts that the researcher taught. Through administering the program, the researcher observed that the students' EFL speaking skills were developed.

The designed task-based program has an effect on developing students' speaking skills; this was illustrated through the students' desire to talk aloud and share the conversation carefully twice at least before analyzing it within the classroom. Also, during the administration of the program, the researcher observed that the students became highly motivated towards speaking skills and these are what we call the higher learning skills.

It can be noticed that the majority of students in the control group were uncertain of their knowledge of all skills in the measurement of these skills. The reason for that is that these students did not have any previous idea of these speaking skills. These results suggest that the participants were drawing on their L1 skills to support their English language writing knowledge. In other words, they did not have any practice in teaching these skills in their written lessons. Therefore, they did not make much progress in the use of speaking skills. This indicates that there was a relationship between the improvement of speaking skills and the amount of practice they had. Most students faced some problems in understanding these skills and they did not acquire any more positive attitude towards speaking skills. However, the impact of the designed program on scores

of participants in the research group shows that the majority of the participants improved their scores in the speaking sub-skills. The discussion with the regular teacher stated that these students had missed lessons that would have helped them gain knowledge in the four language skills. This can be related to their struggle with this type of work. As a whole, the program improved the speaking skills of language secondary school students.

These results can be attributed to the following:

- Overall findings suggest that students benefited from learning the proposed design stages that provided an approach to master speaking skills.
- Language is an instrument of communication and therefore, the primary objective of second language learning and teaching process is to develop learners' speaking skills.
- Classroom learners can acquire speaking skills by participating in different tasks such as, sharing conversation or speaking aloud and clarifying the main idea in discussion, making a conversation inside the class about a specific problem and how to solve it.
- The teacher was also oriented to play a role of classroom manager, facilitator or role model for the activities that learners are asked to carry out. Giving guidance and feedback (when it is felt necessary) were also other roles allocated to the teacher. The teacher empowers the students.
- Students began to show certain changes and progress especially in speaking skills.
- The designed program was found suitable in promoting pair work, group work and discovery technique in language teaching.

- The designed program has an effect in enabling learners to acquire and understand their roles in communication.

### **Conclusions:**

The results of the present study revealed that:

Using the designed program helped students overcome some of the study participants' problems and increased their friendship, and speaking skills. During the experiment, students in the experimental group were working as if they were one team in a group through suggesting ideas, offering critical viewpoints, correcting each other mistakes, and helping each other.

At the beginning of the experiment, the researcher observed a weak response from students in session 1 but this response, after that, turned into an effective participation in applying the activities that the program included. Later, students themselves prepared a list of criticism techniques, and then they applied it to the texts that the researcher taught. Through administering the program, the researcher observed that the students' EFL speaking skills were developed.

The researcher, at the end of the administration of the proposed program, conducted that students' speaking skills activities were developed. On the other hand, students told the researcher that they were interested in the activities they practiced in the program, to the extent that they can apply it to other academic subjects. Thus, it can be said that the program developed the skills of transfer of learning among students.

### **Study Recommendations:**

Based on the results, the following recommendations can be given:

1. Teacher institutions in Egypt need to train student teachers to develop written communicative skills programs that integrate more analytic issues and themes.
2. Language curriculum developers need to team with curriculum developers from different content areas to make use of their expertise in enriching the language curricula with themes, issues and topics that would help student teachers acquire both language and content.
3. Task-based designs in future language courses have to be motivating, interesting, engaging, and consistent with the aims of the other subjects students are currently studying.

4. Task-based designs in future language courses have to enhance students' critical thinking.

5. Methods of teaching English should use task-based activities to assist students to be more autonomous. The role of the teacher in these classes has to be that of a guide or a facilitator. 6.

Written communicative skills need to be introduced in our language classes in the pre-university level.

### **Study implications:**

The findings of the investigation demonstrate that using designed program helped students overcome some of their problems and increased their friendship and speaking skills. In addition, this study emphasized the valuable role of discussion in helping students become more active, this point was useful to the present study.

Also, the results of this study also support the contention that gaining access to meaning through speaking skills depends strictly on the prior mastery of the language structure that leads to it, and also the comprehension of the structures that signals meaning.

The results partially proves Arnold's (2009: 147) theory: that communicative competence encompasses the knowledge of how to use the language in the real world; it breaks down into two major components of the knowledge; knowledge of the language and knowledge of how to achieve the goal of communication.

The findings of the study recognize that speaking skills are of utmost importance for EFL students. It provides the educational policy makers with insights into perception and practices of teaching reading comprehension skills.

According to Harmer (2007:69), language is used for exchanging ideas, feelings and emotions; the speaker needs to possess the capacity to construct grammatical sentences (grammatical competence) and socially appropriate utterances (communicative competence). Thus, communicative language teaching provides students with more opportunities for communicative language. This theory was supported by the findings of this study.

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