

**BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO**  
**TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC QUẢN LÝ VÀ CÔNG NGHỆ HẢI PHÒNG**

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# **KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP**

**NGÀNH : NGÔN NGỮ ANH**

**Sinh viên : Phạm Minh Hiếu**

**HẢI PHÒNG – 2024**

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**A STUDY ON THE SELF STUDY METHODS TO  
IMPROVE SPEAKING SKILL OF 2ND YEAR  
ENGLISH MAJORS AT HPU**

**KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP ĐẠI HỌC HỆ CHÍNH QUY**  
**NGÀNH: NGÔN NGỮ ANH**

**Sinh viên : Phạm Minh Hiếu**  
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Tên đề tài: A study on the self study methods to Improve Speaking Skill Of 2nd  
Year English Majors at HPU

## **NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI**

### **1. Nội dung và các yêu cầu cần giải quyết trong nhiệm vụ đề tài tốt nghiệp**

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### **2. Các tài liệu, số liệu cần thiết**

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### **3. Địa điểm thực tập tốt nghiệp**

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## **CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP**

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**XÁC NHẬN CỦA KHOA**

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**Độc lập - Tự do - Hạnh phúc**

**PHIẾU NHẬN XÉT CỦA GIẢNG VIÊN HƯỚNG DẪN TỐT NGHIỆP**

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**1. Tinh thần thái độ của sinh viên trong quá trình làm đề tài tốt nghiệp**

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**2. Đánh giá chất lượng của đồ án/khóa luận (so với nội dung yêu cầu đã đề ra trong nhiệm vụ Đ.T. T.N trên các mặt lý luận, thực tiễn, tính toán số liệu...)**

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**3. Ý kiến của giảng viên hướng dẫn tốt nghiệp**

Được bảo vệ ☐ Không được bảo vệ ☐ Điểm hướng dẫn ☐

*Hải Phòng, ngày ... tháng ... năm .....*

**Giảng viên hướng dẫn**

**CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM**  
**Độc lập - Tự do - Hạnh phúc**

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Họ và tên giảng viên: .....

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Họ và tên sinh viên: Phạm Minh Hiếu

Chuyên ngành: Ngôn ngữ Anh

Đề tài tốt nghiệp: A study on the self study methods to Improve Speaking Skill  
Of 2nd Year English Majors at HPU

**1. Phần nhận xét của giáo viên chấm phản biện**

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**2. Những mặt còn hạn chế**

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**3. Ý kiến của giảng viên chấm phản biện**

Được bảo vệ ☐ Không được bảo vệ ☐ Điểm hướng dẫn ☐

*Hải Phòng, ngày ... tháng ... năm .....*

**Giảng viên chấm phản biện**

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## **Abstract**

A study on the self study methods to Improve Speaking Skill Of 2nd Year English Majors at HPU.

This is a study that helps find ways and solutions to improve English speaking work through self-study of second-year students at HPU. English speaking skill is one of the observation skills besides Art, Reading, and Writing skills.

The applicability of this skill appears in almost all work, daily communication, study and research,... so their importance is extremely great.

By being able to speak and understand English, individuals can access a wealth of information and resources, build relationships with people from different cultures, avoid understanding issues, and develop empathy. multicultural sensitivity and competence, while providing social justice and equality.

Therefore, individuals interested in learning about other cultures and promoting global communication and understanding should consider investing in their English skills, and speaking skills are also important.

English proficiency can be a powerful tool in promoting cross-cultural understanding and communication. One way that knowing English can help individuals better understand other cultures is by providing access to a wealth of information and resources.

## **Acknowledgement**

While working on my graduation thesis, I received support, help, and dedicated guidance from teachers at the university, family, friends... Everyone was always by my side during the process. To me, my graduation thesis is a noble thing and I know I must cherish it.

First of all, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the Master - Ms. Nguyen Thi Quynh Hoa, who guided me in writing my graduation thesis this time! She is one of the instructors who has taught me and my classmates for the past 4 years.

She is always an encourager, an inspiration, and helps us a lot in our studies as well as extracurricular activities, events... organized by the department or the school. This graduation thesis would not have been successful without the guidance and advice of Ms. Quynh Hoa.

Next, I would like to send my sincere thanks to the teachers of the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Hai Phong University of Management and Technology, for their dedicated teaching and guidance not only on professional knowledge but also on work skills.

Especially during my internship at Ishare International English Center, where I really found myself and needed to know what to do in the future. To me, it was like a lighthouse that showed me the way when I was in the final stages of not knowing where my future would go.

My family and friends in class as well as all students of the Faculty of Foreign Languages have given me the opportunity to continuously exchange and learn. They are always by my side and help me when I encounter difficulties or adversity, walking together through happy and sad times.

Finally, I just want to say again, Thank you everyone for everything we've overcome together!

## **PART I: INTRODUCTION**

### **1. Rationale**

Nobody can deny the benefits of learning English in today's modern world. This is an important key to help them open up opportunities to work and develop themselves, contributing advice for the common benefit of the whole society. Learning English basically means mastering the main skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing.

However, working in Vietnam is located in an area where the environment is not very favorable for Vietnamese students to be able to communicate regularly in English like students from countries like the Philippines, Singapore... Should work Continuing to use English as well as having an environment where English is used as a second language is also really difficult.

To improve communication in English, there is nothing else to do but find an environment where you can regularly use this language every day. However, not every second-year student at HPU has the conditions to have more opportunities to communicate in English outside of school hours.

Therefore, some have had to find their own solutions to enhance and improve their English communication skills in many different forms.

One of them is the Self-Study Method to improve speaking skills for second-year students of the Foreign Language Department of Hai Phong Management and Technology University.

Researching self-study methods to improve speaking skills of second-year students majoring in English at HPU is extremely important for second-year students at HPU. There are many deciding factors, but they all boil down to this. Environmental factors, learning, studying, and practicing regularly and regularly are still the most important factors.

## **2. Aims of the study**

- The purpose of the study and research question is to find an effective self-study method to improve the speaking skills of second-year students at HPU.

### *Research objectives*

Find out what self-study method Second Year students at HPU use to improve their speaking skills:

- Survey overview of each subject in this work
- Find similarities and differences if any
- Summarize equivalent things to find a specific general solution

### *Research questions*

- a) What have second-year students of the Foreign Language Department at HPU done to improve and enhance their Speaking skills through self-study?
- b) Did they do it correctly and how effective was it?

## **3. Scope of the study**

### ***Participants:***

Second year student, Foreign Language Department of Hai Phong Management and Technology University.

Timeline: 8 weeks from August 2024 to October 2024

Major aspect: Finding self-study methods to improve speaking skills for second-year students of HPU Foreign Languages Department.

## **4. Method of the study**

The research is based on the results of a survey of second-year students of the Faculty of Foreign Languages, HPU. Ultimately, what is the deciding factor in improving English speaking skills through self-study?

Reviewing the recent research situation, it can be seen that there have been some related to speaking skills in Vietnam and around the world. Within the framework of this topic, the researcher found a number of related articles: 'Students' learning strategies to develop speaking ability' by Sofyan and team of authors (2015) shows that students use many different strategies to learn speaking skills.

Besides, Research has shown that the better students are at speaking skills, the more strategies they have to learn; The data collected demonstrated that students used these strategies creatively; On the contrary, students with weak speaking skills use inappropriate and less effective learning strategies.

They mainly rely on (1) looking up the dictionary (memory), (2) asking friends (social), (3) practicing pronunciation (cognitive), (4) using their mother tongue (compensation strategy), and ( 5) memorize sample sentences (memory).

Researchers believe that the causes may come from different sources such as teachers, programs and students themselves. Therefore, educators need to pay attention to students' real abilities to have appropriate directions when building training programs.

The author also proposed that "training goals for English programs at universities also need to be paid attention and considered so that training results are more positive.

## **5. Significances of the study**

Finding a method to self-study English to improve speaking skills for second-year students at HPU will help find ways to help students reduce time spent researching and applying many different but effective methods. Still not getting good results. We need to find out what are the main causes of negative outcomes, as well as positive ones. Is this method suitable for the majority or can it only be applied to small individuals.

## **6. Design of the study**

Part I: INTRODUCTION. In this chapter, the researcher has focused on general introduction of research topic, reasons for choosing research topic, objectives and research questions.

Part II : DEVELOPMENT focuses on presenting the theoretical basis of forming research models, reviewing previous studies related to the topic, pointing out the remaining research gaps, thereby giving the theoretical framework applicable to the research. Presents and discusses the research's findings.

Part III: CONCLUSION of the key findings from the research, its implication, its limitation and the researcher's suggestions for further studies.

## **PART II : DEVELOPMENT**

### **Chapter 1: Theoretical Background**

#### **1. Speaking**

##### **1.1 Defining speaking**

###### **General definition**

Speaking is different from other skills Speaking differs from writing and the other skills in many aspects. Badr (2009: 17) views that the speaking skill has a unique nature, which differs from that of the writing skill.

These differences are due to (1) the vocabulary used in writing should be formal, while the vocabulary used in speaking skill should be informal, (2) complex sentences are used in writing, while speaking is characterized by simple structures and (3) there is a lack of sentence boundaries in speech but writing is characterized with sentence boundaries.

Speaking is the ability to produce language Byrne (1990) as cited by Ibrahim (2007:49) states that speaking is the human ability of producing the language with its phonological, syntactic and semantic rules to express oneself meaningfully.

Speaking is social.

Thornbury and Slade (2006: 15- 17) claim that speaking is social, in the sense that it establishes relation and mutual agreement, maintains and modifies social identity, and involves interpersonal skills.

This social element is expressed through wishes, feelings, attitudes, opinions and judgments, which can clash with the formal nature of the classroom when teaching speaking. They also state that speaking happens in a small group of people with a minimum of two.



Speaking is a complex skill Hinkel (2005:485) states that speaking is the most complex and difficult skill to master. Syakur (2007:4) argues that speaking requires that not only knowing how to produce it well but also understanding when, what, and why to produce the language.

Speaking is a multi-sensory activity According to Thornbury (2005:9), speaking is also a multi-sensory activity because it includes some nonverbal communication skills such as eye-contact, facial expressions, body language tempo, pauses and voice quality changes.

## **2. Types of Speaking**

### **a) Public Speaking:**

- Involves delivering a speech to an audience. It includes persuasive speaking, informative speaking, and entertaining speaking.

- Focuses on engaging the audience, clear articulation, and effective use of body language.

### **b) Interpersonal Communication:**

- Refers to one-on-one or small group conversations.

- Emphasizes active listening, empathy, and the ability to express thoughts clearly.

### **c) Presentational Speaking:**

- Involves presenting information to an audience, often using visual aids.

- Common in business and academic settings, requiring clarity and organization of content.

### **d) Debate and Argumentation:**

- Involves presenting arguments and counterarguments on a specific issue.

- Focuses on critical thinking, logical reasoning, and persuasive language.

e) Storytelling:

- The art of narrating stories to entertain or convey messages.
- Relies on creativity, emotional engagement, and effective pacing.

f) Conversational Skills:

- Involves casual dialogue and informal discussions.
- Emphasizes rapport-building, turn-taking, and adaptability in communication styles.

g) Negotiation Skills:

- Involves reaching agreements through discussion and compromise.
- Requires persuasion, active listening, and strategic thinking.

h) Interviewing Skills:

- Involves asking and answering questions effectively in a formal or informal setting.
- Focuses on clarity, confidence, and the ability to read non-verbal cues.

### **3. Students' difficulties in speaking comprehension**

#### **3.1 Linguistic problem**

Linguistic is a study of language, which studies about the language structure (grammar), words, and phonology. Generally, linguistic consists of information about vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. Linguistic problem is the problem that hinders students' speaking skills. According to Richard (2008), several students' problems in speaking are:

#### a) Vocabulary

Vocabulary is someone's knowledge about words and the meanings. There are two forms of vocabulary, namely oral vocabulary and printed vocabulary.

Oral vocabulary is the word that we understand when we speak and read it orally. Printed vocabulary is the word that we understand when we speak and read it silently. Khan (2005) stated that most foreign learners have difficulties to use words and expressions when they speak. This problem occurs because the students do not know how to combine their vocabularies to be a meaningful utterances.

#### b) Grammar

Grammar is the most important part of language. It is a examine, where sentences are established and formatted. Students' problem in grammar is they are not capable of recognising the regulations of the grammar, so that they can not speak in English effectively.

#### c) Pronunciation

Pronunciation means how to say the words. Students' difficulties in pronouncing word is because they do not know the correct way to spell it. This problem make the students' pronunciation gone wrong, then the meaning is not appropriate.

### **3.2 Psychological problems**

Psychology is a study that study the process of human thought and behavior in interaction with the environment. Psychological problems of speaking are related to students' emotional and physical health that can bring negative impacts to the students' speaking abilities.

### **3.3 Less Confident**

Self confidence is someone's capacity in doing good thing with positive thinking. Self confidence is related to someone's personality, someone's ability, someone's power, that sometimes manifested excessively.

Good self confidence comes from focusing on self. Less confident may occur because of bad feelings and thinkings, such as feel guilty, shy, unrealistic expectation, false sense of humility, fear, depression, and so on. Less confident can make students become bad speaker. Thus, it is really important to build up students confidents, so that they can express their utterances in good manner when they speak.

## **4. Factors affecting learners' speaking comprehension**

### **4.1 Listener factors**

#### **a) Lack of interest**

Often times, we get ourselves caught in a conversation that essentially does not hold our interest. In such cases, we'll be tempted to float off in our own contemplations or concentrate on something unique — which, shockingly, can be an obstruction to listening. As an example, I usually lost interest when someone discuss football with me because I don't have interest in it. I tend to inform the speaker about my lack of interest in the topic before he goes too far. Of course, it's not by any means a good idea to drive your consideration on a topic you find horribly boring. In the event that the discourse isn't vital, steer the discussion to an alternate heading. In the event that it is essential, in any case, attempt to concentrate on the important focuses and note them down.

Noise, Awkward seating positions and temperature Ecological factors, for example, noise, temperature and awkward seating positions can make us concentrate our attention on other factors alongside what the speaker is saying.

Attempt to control environmental factors at whatever points conceivable. Take a stab at finding a calm at another seat or move to a quiet place to proceed with the discussion. It is really hard to center concentration when we are always occupied by outside powers.

#### b) Distractions

The most evident and presumably the most significant barriers to listening this day and age are different distractions. Tragically, a large number of us can't be part of a discussion without continually looking at our phone or PC. In addition to the fact that it is viewed as discourteous, yet it additionally tells the other individual that you're exhausted and whatever is on your telephone is more critical to you than this discussion.

As you're distracted, you're additionally liable to miss critical points or information that you may require later on. When you're having a discussion with somebody, it's best to keep these distractions away and concentrate on the individual before you.

#### c) Personal bias

Personal bias can cloud your judgment and influence you to deliberately ignore towards significant information or great individuals. When you live and work in a multicultural domain, it's essential to abandon every one of your biases when you're speaking with others.

For instance, on the off chance that you accept a person as unintelligent (or even less astute than you) as a result of his educational background, you're blinding yourself. You have to give everybody the advantage of uncertainty and listen to what they have to say.

#### c) Intrusion

The fact that no good thing originates from interfering with somebody while they're talking is one of those cardinal tenets of communication we're all taught as kids. Sadly, that lesson doesn't tend to stick. Individuals are so anxious

to be heard that occasionally they intrude on discussions to express their own supposition. Be that as it may, in addition to the fact that it is viewed as inconsiderate, but on the other hand, it's one of the greatest barriers to effective listening. To refrain from committing this mistake, attempt to hold up until the point when the other individual has completed the process of talking before saying your own thoughts so anyone can hear.

#### **4.2 Speaker factors.**

In order to facilitate learners in overcoming challenges related to the acquisition of speaking skills, educators should endeavor to identify and analyze various aspects that exert an influence on their speaking performance. The speaking performance of learners is subject to various influences, such as performance conditions, affective aspects, listening competence, and feedback received throughout speaking activities (Vietnam, 2015).

The initial factor pertains to performance circumstances.

Learners engage in a speaking task within varying circumstances. Speaking performance is influenced by several performance conditions, which encompass factors such as time constraint, organizing, the standard of efficiency, and the level of support provided (Newton & Nation, 2020).

The second element is associated with emotive aspects.

According to (Oxford, 1990), the emotive aspect of students plays a significant role in language acquisition. (Krashen, 1981) posited that numerous affective characteristics have been linked to the process of acquiring a second language. Among these variables, motivation, self-confidence, and fear have emerged as the primary types that have garnered significant attention from studies.

The third factor is the ability to listen. According to (Doff, 1998), the enhancement of learners' speaking proficiency is contingent upon the cultivation of their listening skills.

In order to facilitate effective communication, it is important for learners to possess a comprehensive understanding of the spoken content directed towards them. According to (Shumin, 2002), it has been observed that in classroom settings, when students engage in verbal communication, their peers respond by actively in the process of listening and providing appropriate answers.

Speakers fulfill the dual task of both engaging in active listening and delivering spoken communication. It might be argued that speaking and listening are intricately interconnected.

The fourth factor pertains to topical knowledge. According to (Bachman & Palmer, 1996), it can be described as the cognitive frameworks stored in the long-term memory. Topical knowledge refers to the knowledge possessed by speakers regarding relevant information pertaining to a specific issue. This facilitates the application of language skills in relation to the pupils' surrounding environment. According to (Bachman & Palmer, 1996), the acquisition of topical information significantly influences the speaking proficiency of learners.

## **5. Some common problems with speaking skill**

### **5.1 Grammatical Errors**

Most of the students encountered typical grammatical errors when communicating. Students tend to make mistakes in tenses, active and passive, vocabulary.

### **5.2 Lack Of Confidence**

One of the crucial explanations as to why students have a problem speaking the English language in public is a lack of confidence, it makes them uncomfortable. Educators are usually accountable for this since they do not provide adequate motivation to speak in public.

Most teachers do not enable them to speak English in the classroom or to people in front of them. Self-confidence plays an important role; if a student doesn't believe in themselves, they can't get through with communicating fluently.

It is the teachers who give students self-confidence and grow their belief system.

### **5.3 Errors Causing Frustration**

A standard concern among the students is that they worry about making errors while speaking English. They worry about being bullied or denounced by their peers for making mistakes while communicating. It's usual to make errors. Nobody is ideal.

### **5.4. Public Speaking Anxiety**

The pupil's anxiety or apprehension is also a cause as to why they cannot speak in public or in front of a crowd. Due to this, the timid students are incapable to speak English and communicate. They need to overpower their anxiety when speaking in public. One must keep in mind to feel more comfortable and assured.

### **5.5. Use Of Slang/Textual Language**

The other issue is that with the English language including such an ample vocabulary and intricate grammar, there is enough room for error. Sentences can be primarily filled with slang words, so carrying on a conversation can be challenging for anyone who doesn't comprehend what they imply. Today's casual language has become so vague that okay has become 'k' and expressive sentences have been replaced by emoticons.

### **5.6. Influence Of Pop Culture**

Students nowadays are massively impacted by movies and music. They find it cool to replace emphasizing words with cuss words. Consistency in reading and speaking correctly can help resolve challenges that the students face while public speaking.



## **5.7 Environment To Speak English**

There is the fact that most students do not focus on speaking English, especially students in the provinces. They are often taught to pay more attention to grammar. Besides, a common class of more than 30 students, with grades up to 35, 40. This figure often makes all students without the opportunity to speak in front of the class during a class session. Besides, visual media in classes are too poor. Most of the classrooms are not equipped with video or audio recorder, so fail to attract students to thenative environment has not been real life into the classroom.

## **5.8 Attitude of student learning**

The students often shy when speaking. They have no habit of arguing in class or dare not raise their own opinion because they notice their classmates' attitude. For example, a student stands up and says the wrong one; the classmates often laughed or revised sarcastically. This phenomenon has limited the participation of student lessons. More than 30% of students said they are lazy and not motivated to learn to speak English. Some of them do not like to learn English because they have no passion for English. Others chose to major in English as their last resort after they failed their favorite major.

## **5.9 Lack of vocabulary**

Students do not have a wide range of vocabulary, leading to situations where they do not know how to express their thoughts. Moreover, many words in English have more than one meaning. and students do not know how to use themappropriately in a certain context.

## **Chapter 2: Research Methodology**

### **1. Survey Research**

#### **1.1 Steps in conducting a survey research**

Step 1: Identify research goals and objectives

Step 2: Define the population and sample (who will participate in the survey?)

Step 3: Decide on the type of survey method to use

Step 4: Design and write questions

Step 5: Distribute the survey and gather responses

Step 6: Analyze the collected data

Step 7: Create a report based on survey result

##### **1.1.1 Defining a Population**

The number of members participating in the survey are 2nd year HPU students. Student members will be asked about what factors affect speaking skills and what solutions are available for improving this skill. Is there a difference in results between opinions, what do 2nd year students emphasize as the most important of those factors. Are there any additional solutions or contributions from each individual during the survey process? Events are consistent and synchronized with opinions that need to be discussed.

##### **1.1.2 Sampling**

The survey was conducted on HPU second-year students, using a survey based on many factors and criteria. Members participating in the survey will choose what is the deciding factor and influence. of how those factors impact speaking skills. Can the factors be separated from each other? Close connection is required, finally reaching a methodological conclusion with questions as well as unresolved problems in practice.

### **1.1.3 Methods of Collecting Survey Data**

#### **1. Observe**

The easiest and most direct data collection technique is observation. The most common form of observation in the context of data collection is simply watching a subject's behavior or actions in a particular context to understand them and record what has been observed. In today's online world, an example of an act of observation might include watching people interact

#### **2. Interviews and focus groups**

Another direct data collection technique is to conduct interviews and focus groups. A focus group is a type of interview-like conversation that takes place in a group of six to twelve people who share common interests, characteristics, or needs. The group will have a moderator who will ask questions for discussion. The purpose of interviews and focus group discussions is to gain more information and depth about different topics, perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes in an environment where they all come together.

#### **3. Survey**

Surveys are one of the most famous data collection methods. They are administered using questionnaires and can be conducted physically and digitally to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. These questionnaires are typically inexpensive to create and answer, thus making surveys a very accessible option for both researchers and their reporters. Typically, surveys are used to gather feedback about an event or item. The feedback collected can then be used as a basis for product improvements, decision-making matrices or further research.

#### **4. Similar to survey**

Forms try to gather data through a set of questions. However, unlike surveys, forms can be more general. Often, forms are used to gather qualitative data from a subject or a group of subjects, particularly their demographic data or contact details. Forms are also used to get in touch with one's potential clients and get to know them better.

#### **1.1.4 Data Analyses**

Data is collected based on a survey of HPU sophomores. Identify the research objectives and questions: The objective is to find a self-study method to improve speaking skills and the questions are given which aspects and factors affect speaking skills. The questions are based on components such as: Grammar, vocabulary... The objects that make up the completion and improvement of speaking skills.

Identify the survey and the proposed survey form Biology except for the second HPU, the proposed survey form is based on 3 questionnaires. Identify the method of data collection. Student members will be given a survey including the elements in the 3 questionnaires with levels from agree to disagree, strongly agree or not completely agree with the objects given in the survey.

Determine the questions in the questionnaire. The questions are given to survey the actual situation and approved by the instructor, so the level of closeness to reality is high. The arrangement of the questions should not be far from experience, guiding the perspectives and points of view appropriately.

## **2. Techniques employed in this study**

The techniques used in this study include: Presenting and listing the main and key elements that make up speaking skills, with moderation and consensus through the instructor, establishing a survey and were printed out as individual worksheets, delivered to HPU 2nd year students and conducted a survey.

The technique used is to present the main factors and ask whether they agree with the proposed factors or not. Is there a need for additional additions? If necessary, some inappropriate parts can be changed or eliminated.

Because the survey is conducted on each individual, it requires focus and privacy, avoiding discussion because it will easily lead to a certain standard or level. The solution when problems or difficulties arise is to present them directly to express if there is any problem.

## 2.1 Data collection

Data is collected based on the results of the survey, for HPU second year students are presented on statistics through factors based on the factors or components listed in the survey. The layout and presentation of the survey are based on reality and are conducted right in the classroom. Ensure accuracy and if any problem arises, it will be immediately resolved.

The factors recorded in the survey were approved by the instructor and had the consent and permission of the teacher in charge of the class on the day of the survey. Preparation work takes place and is carried out within a supervised and permitted time period. Answer all students' questions if there are any issues they are still wondering about.

## 2.2 Table questionnaire

a) For speakers, the followings affects the speaking skill.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. Working memory	Working memory with mother tongue					
	Working memory with					

	foreign language					
b. Proficiency and experience of foreign language	Vocabulary size					
	Phonological information					
	Grammar information					
	Back ground knowledge of the topic					
c.Anxiety						

b) For speaker factors, the followings affects the speaking skill

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a.Passage	Length					
	Complexity					
	Type and organization					
b.Auditory features	Speaker accent					
	Pause					
	Speech rate					

c) For context factors ( testing condition), the followings affects the speaking skill

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Time limits					
Back ground noise					
Note taking					

## Chapter 3 : Findings And Discussions

### 1. Findings from questionnaires

The results from the questionnaire show what factors affect the effectiveness of English speaking skills. Survey results: Most students choose and strongly agree and agree or are neutral, with few options to disagree or disagree strongly. Below are the results of the first part of the questionnaire. It is about factors that can affect students' speaking ability.

In this question

*Among these factors, which do you think affecting the speaking skills the most?*

- Listener factor                      b. Speaker factor   c. Context factor
- d. Stimulus factor                      e. All of them

Most students choose the answer as “ e. All of them ”

Only a few select factors: “ a. Listers factor or a. Speaker factor”.

#### 1.1 For speakers, the followings affects the speaking skill.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. Working memory	Working memory with mother tongue	1	5	11	1	0
	Working memory with foreign language	2	11	5	0	0
	Vocabulary size	4	8	4	1	0



b. Proficiency and experience of foreign language	Phonological information	1	6	10	0	0
	Grammar information	3	9	5	0	0
	Back ground knowledge of the topic	6	10	2	0	0
c.Anxiety		5	5	3	0	0

In general, the factors that affect speaking skills are selected by students at a level of 80% agreeing and neutral, the remaining 1% are disagreeing. The survey showed that the level of agreement and neutrality had the highest percentage. Working memory with mother tongue, Working memory with foreign language, this shows that communication requires regular and regular accumulation and cultivation to improve its skills, the remaining elements are distributed more evenly. Back ground knowledge of the topic and Phonological information.

Using and communicating in specific contexts helps us be flexible and practical in communication, avoiding impractical communication and lack of application.

Grammar and vocabulary are also things that need to be discussed, but these two things are complementary because we can cultivate and learn from many different sources, but if only the grammar and vocabulary are covered. common sense, but without a specific context to implement it, it will be very difficult to achieve effective communication. For the remaining factors, the student choice rate is not high.

### 1.2 For speaker factors, the followings affects the speaking skill.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. Passage	Length	0	5	10	0	0
	Complexity	8	7	3	0	0
	Type and organization	1	9	7	0	0
b. Auditory features	Speaker accent	3	8	7	0	0
	Pause	0	5	10	2	0
	Speech rate	4	5	7	1	0

The survey above shows that the choices of 2nd year HPU students still focus on strongly agree, agree and neutral. This shows that the influencing factors are starting to have a more reasonable and even distribution although there are still some factors that are less chosen, 75% of the level of agreement and neutrality. Complexity, Type and organization, Speaker accent accounts for the highest proportion.

### 1.3 For context factors ( testing condition), the followings affects the speaking skill.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Time limits	2	11	4	0	0
Back ground noise	2	7	6	2	0
Note taking	3	6	7	0	0

The level of neutrality and agreement accounts for 85% in this survey, the absolute agreement rate accounts for about 14%, the level of disagreement accounts for the lowest rate. In general, timing and noise levels in audio tend to affect speaking skills. Inherently, environmental factors are still the deciding factor and greatly influence this. In terms of taking notes, the human brain needs repetition to remember and practice many times to become proficient, communication not only with English but with any language will be similar.

## **2. Findings from interviews**

The survey shows that the factors affecting speaking skills are closely related to each other. Most students choose to agree, strongly agree and neutral, the percentage of disagree and strongly disagree is very rare. If vocabulary and grammar are only understood on a theoretical basis but cannot be used in practice, speaking skills will certainly not be effective.

Communicating in your mother tongue essentially still requires time to cultivate and accumulate over the years, and learning a language like English also requires the same things. Mastering any language in a short period of time is almost impossible.

External factors such as: Specific circumstances, certain topics when you speak and communicate will also help you recognize shortcomings in the parts of your vocabulary, and develop your ability to talk about what you want. There is understanding but no opportunity to express it.

Effective English communication requires more practice than theory, which requires more improvement in environmental factors. In fact, there are many cases of English communication, but when using slang, people often easily misunderstand it to mean something else by translating each word into their mother tongue to understand.

This causes communication to sometimes be misunderstood or misinterpreted, leading to unsatisfactory results. Daily improvement of

vocabulary and grammar is sometimes not enough to achieve complete communication, but requires a combination of many aspects.

### **3. Students' attitude toward speaking skill**

#### **3.1 Students' perceptions about their speaking difficulties**

Students experiencing public speaking anxiety say they are concerned they will be embarrassed if they speak. They say they are worried they will make a mistake, look “stupid” to others, or be judged unattractive. Some students say they get upset thinking about others looking at them or being the center of attention. Others express the belief that no one would be interested in anything they would have to say, or that nothing they would say would be worthwhile. The bottom line is fear of unfavorable evaluation by others. Many students reveal that their public speaking anxiety started after an upsetting or humiliating public speaking experience when they were in elementary or high school.

They may not have examined these experiences from an adult point of view or received objective feedback about the situation from someone else. Some students feel their oral presentation must be perfect (something, of course, not expected or reasonable), and feel anxious due to their self-imposed pressure for perfection. Many students who experience public speaking anxiety have low self esteem.

#### **3.2 Students' choice of the most difficult speaking exercises**

The emotional aspects of public speaking anxiety, there are often physical symptoms as well. These are symptoms that are associated with anxiety, and include trembling or shaking, cold clammy hands, shaky voice, rapid heartbeat, sweating, blushing, dizziness, shortness of breath, digestive discomfort, or forgetting something you know or were about to say.

In some cases, a person with Social Phobia for public speaking may experience a panic attack.

### **3.3 Students' opinions on the way which they should do to help them improve speaking skill**

#### **a) Listen**

The first step in improving your students' English speaking skills is to spend time listening, especially to native English speakers. They will get used to the correct pronunciation of words, and they will become familiar with phrases and expressions used regularly by native English speakers, not just individual words that they have memorized in classes or from the dictionary. Your students will also quickly get a better understanding of how native speakers use intonation and rhythm to convey specific meaning or emotion. Having a good understanding of all of this will help them communicate better!

#### **b) Take your Time**

Your students have been studying the grammar and vocabulary, and now it's time to put it all together in a normal conversation. They need to think about the words that are coming out of their mouths and put the things you've been teaching into action. They need to relax! We all hear people saying they speak better in their second language when they drink alcohol. They aren't necessarily speaking better, but their inhibition has been lost; they feel more relaxed and are willing to take risks, which helps them improve. You can lower your students' stress levels by choosing activities and topics that are interesting and applicable to the real world.

#### **c) Practice, Practice, Practice**

Let's be real! Your students won't improve if they don't try. They need to take advantage of any opportunity that comes their way: conversation groups, language exchange websites, spending time with native English speakers, and even other English students! Today, technology has a lot to offer us. There are apps like Duolingo (and it's free!) or programs like Rosetta Stone that will allow students to practice pronunciation and get feedback. And although it won't directly help them improve their ability to communicate, reading aloud will help them experiment and practice pronunciation and accents.

## **PART III: CONCLUSION**

### **1. Conclusion**

In general, when surveying second-year students at HPU, most of them chose and agreed with the factors affecting speaking skills outlined in the survey. Every element is important and the best self-study method is to practice everyday vocabulary well. We can use books or read postcards, listen to audio of topics you are interested in, that is also is a passive way of listening, helping to enhance listening ability and improve pronunciation due to the collective influence of the brain when connecting speaking and listening work.

You can improve your grammar by regularly reviewing theory or practicing readings. After writing or reading, you can read aloud the part you just wrote or read, which is also a way to learn according to the topic you just learned. contact.

The next deciding factor is practice, any theory cannot run smoothly without regular practice. Learning a language if you just stop at the theoretical step to achieve high results in your studies will have almost no progress in the future if you do not practice speaking.

Time is the next factor associated with environmental factors. Find a place to practice speaking English, sometimes when you are on the road or doing something you try to explain the content or topic you are doing in English using simple to complex vocabulary and grammar. miscellaneous.

Environmental factors are the key to self-study to improve speaking skills. Don't hesitate to say something wrong and then you won't say anything next. The more you avoid speaking, the more you will fall behind in speaking skills. People will support you when you try to speak and don't be afraid to share the basics and small things. Sometimes it's about the weather or simply asking about their health every day when they meet.

Practice and practice regularly, gradually over time your speaking skills will improve and then you will see your own development, try to speak and speak more.

## **2. Suggested techniques**

### **a) Nervousness Is Normal. Practice and Prepare!**

All people feel some physiological reactions like pounding hearts and trembling hands. Do not associate these feelings with the sense that you will perform poorly or make a fool of yourself. Some nerves are good. The adrenaline rush that makes you sweat also makes you more alert and ready to give your best performance. The best way to overcome anxiety is to prepare, prepare, and prepare some more. Take the time to go over your notes several times. Once you have become comfortable with the material, practice a lot. Videotape yourself, or get a friend to critique your performance.

### **b) Know Your Audience.**

Your Speech Is About Them, Not You. Before you begin to craft your message, consider who the message is intended for. Learn as much about your listeners as you can. This will help you determine your choice of words, level of information, organization pattern, and motivational statement.

### **c) Organize Your Material in the Most Effective Manner to Attain Your Purpose.**

Create the framework for your speech. Write down the topic, general purpose, specific purpose, central idea, and main points. Make sure to grab the audience's attention in the first 30 seconds.

### **d) Watch for Feedback and Adapt to It.**

Keep the focus on the audience. Gauge their reactions, adjust your message, and stay flexible. Delivering a canned speech will guarantee that you lose the attention of or confuse even the most devoted listeners.

### **e) Let Your Personality Come Through.**

Be yourself, don't become a talking head — in any type of communication. You will establish better credibility if your personality shines through, and your audience will trust what you have to say if they can see you as a real person.

### **f) Use Humor, Tell Stories, and Use Effective Language.**

Inject a funny anecdote in your presentation, and you will certainly grab your audience's attention. Audiences generally like a personal touch in a speech. Good communication is never perfect, and nobody expects you to be perfect. However, putting in the requisite time to prepare will help you deliver a better speech. You may not be able to shake your nerves entirely, but you can learn to minimize them.

#### g) Voice recording

Voice recording helps pupils identify their weaknesses and strengths and to find their own mistakes. It also helps them correct their mistakes and improve their pronunciation. It promotes learners' awareness through self-reflection and self-assessment.

According to Bygate M. (1987), speaking skill is one of the reflective skills that helps learners express their thoughts, desires and emotions through verbal communication with listeners (1 ).





Byrne (1986) believes that speaking is a two-way process between the speaker and the listener involving receptive and practical skills, in which the speaker encodes the information conveyed in an appropriate language while The listener decodes that information (2).

Contexts help speakers convey their ideas naturally. These are not only formal contexts but also everyday contexts such as communication at church, the library or the workplace (3). Sonca V. (2020) believes that both verbal and non-verbal communication contribute to the effectiveness of speaking skills (4).

The teacher's teaching method has a great influence on success in learning English speaking skills, reflected in the perception of "speaking to learn" and "learning to speak" (5). Speaking skills help learners perform communication functions. Speaking skills also contribute positively to strengthening learners' listening comprehension skills while helping them accumulate vocabulary for use in other related skills. According to Underhil (1987, p.120), there are several characteristics of a supposedly successful speaking class:

a) Students talk a lot

The more time, the better allotted for students to participate in the discussion in speaking activities. This is obvious, but most of the time for students to participate in speaking in class is very little because the size of each lesson is very short, lasting only 45-90 minutes. That means the students have to actively talk to their friends as much as possible. Obviously students are busy, but they rarely take the time to talk to their teachers.



#### b) Equal participation

Classroom discussion is not dominated by a group of talkative participants: All students have the opportunity to participate equally in class speaking sessions, i.e. to the benefit of individuals and groups are equally guaranteed.

#### c) High motivation

Students are eager to speak: because they are interested in the topic and have something new to say about it, or because they want to contribute to achieving an objective task. That means students are highly motivated to speak English.

When highly motivated, students will be interested in learning English, especially speaking skills. At this time, students will confidently express and speak in front of a group and then to a crowd they still have the ability to express what they want.

#### d) Acceptable language

Students express themselves by making statements that are relevant, mutually intelligible, and have an acceptable level of linguistic accuracy, where grammar and sentences are expressed appropriately, are standardized, and create understand for the listener. That means they use speech components appropriate to an acceptable level of language, such as pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and intelligibility.

#### e) Factors affecting 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.

### **3. Student's self-study methods to improve speaking skills**

#### **a) Nature of self-study**

Although it seemed to be an approach to adult learning, self-study proved to be suitable to young learners. Knowles, (1970) proposed that five basic issues needed to be considered and addressed in establishing formal learning environment for adults:

- Letting learners know why something is important to learn.
  - Showing learners how to direct themselves through information.
  - Relating the topic to the learner's experiences.
  - People will not learn until they are ready and motivated to learn; and,
  - People must be helped to overcome inhibitions, behaviors, and beliefs about learning.
- Finally, Knowles himself admitted that four of those five conditions for learning mentioned above, applied equally well to children, with the primary difference being that children have fewer experiences.

#### b. Nature of the speaking skill

Nature of the speaking skill is described by many researchers and linguists. It has some characteristics. These characteristics include the following: Speaking is different from other skills Speaking differs from writing and the other skills in many aspects. Badr (2009: 17) views that the speaking skill has a unique nature, which differs from that of the writing skill.

These differences are due to (1) the vocabulary used in writing should be formal, while the vocabulary used in speaking skill should be informal, (2) complex sentences are used in writing, while speaking is characterized by simple structures and (3) there is a lack of sentence boundaries in speech but writing is characterized with sentence boundaries.

Speaking is the ability to produce language Byrne (1990) as cited by Ibrahim (2007:49) states that speaking is the human ability of producing the

language with its phonological, syntactic and semantic rules to express oneself meaningfully.

This social element is expressed through wishes, feelings, attitudes, opinions and judgments, which can clash with the formal nature of the classroom when teaching speaking. They also state that speaking happens in a small group of people with a minimum of two. Speaking is a complex skill Hinkel (2005:485) states that speaking is the most complex and difficult skill to master. Syakur (2007:4) argues that speaking requires that not only knowing how to produce it well but also understanding when, what, and why to produce the language.

Speaking is a multi-sensory activity According to Thornbury (2005:9), speaking is also a multi-sensory activity because it includes some nonverbal communication skills such as eye-contact, facial expressions, body language tempo, pauses and voice quality changes, speaking skill and language content.

Speaking requires that learners not only know how to produce specific points of language such as grammar pronunciation, or vocabulary (linguistic competence), but also they understand when, why, and in what ways to produce language (sociolinguistic competence).

In the same context, Brown (2001) states that learning to speak a foreign language requires more than knowing its grammatical and semantic rules, as pupils should know how native speakers use the language in daily interpersonal exchange. Syakur (2007:4) also states that there are at least five components of speaking skill concerned with comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency.

#### **4. Student's self-study strategies adopted**

##### **a) Note-taking strategies:**

The mapping method this strategy was adopted because of the following advantages:

- The main idea is more clearly defined.
- The relative importance of each idea is clearly indicated. More important ideas will be nearer the center and less important ideas will be near the edge.
- The links between the key concepts will be immediately recognizable because of proximity and connection.
- Structure allows for the easy addition of new information without scratching out or squeezing in.
- Recall and review will be more effective and rapid.
- It is easy to edit your notes by adding numbers, marks, and color coding.

Miraza (2016) conducted a study to find out whether mind mapping improves students' speaking ability or not and to find out how does mind mapping strategy improves students' speaking ability.

The findings of the study revealed that mind mapping strategy improved students' speaking ability and helped them generate idea while speaking. Finally, the writer concluded that mind mapping strategy is one of strategies which can be used in order to improve the students' speaking ability.

**Note-Taking Strategies** Note-taking is simply, a way of concisely recording important information so that you can recall it later. It is also a powerful aid to communication, a way of summarising and retaining the key points from what you've heard and understood (Note-Taking, (n.d.)). Piolat et al.(2005) argue that non-linear styles of note-taking are more effective than linear styles because non-linear styles facilitate the process of making connections between idea units, which enhances learning through deeper processing and strengthens long-term retention of content.

Additionally, systematic behavioral procedures that train pupils to be effective note- takers may not only enhance the accuracy of content within their

notes but also improve learning outcomes. Friedman (2014) states that in contrast, non-linear styles that use graphical representations (e.g., allow pupils to organize the content of their notes in a systematic, yet unconventional fashion that may be difficult for others to understand easily.

Importantly, whatever style of note-taking the learner chooses to adapt (linear, non-linear, or a combination of the two). The differences between note styles has a minimal impact on content comprehension. There many different techniques of note-taking will be discussed as follows:

The mapping method Mapping is a method that uses comprehension/concentration skills and evolves in a note taking form which relates each fact or idea to every other fact or idea. Mapping is a graphic representation of the content of a lecture. It is a method that maximizes active participation, affords immediate knowledge as to its understanding, and emphasizes critical thinking (Note Taking Systems, (n.d.)). Mapping allows us to see the total picture. Mind map can show relationships and how the parts relate to the whole. Steps to follow:

- You need several sheets of blank paper, standard size.
- Print the main subject in the middle of the page and draw a geometric shape around it.
- All ideas plotted on a mind map should be expressed in just one or two key words.
- Key words should be concrete, meaningful, and summon up the same image or idea.
- Think of subtopics that will represent all the data. The supporting points come after subtopics.

Advantages: The main idea is more clearly defined.

- The relative importance of each idea is clearly indicated. More important ideas will be nearer the center and less important ideas will be near the edge.
- The links between the key concepts will be immediately recognizable because of proximity and connection.
- Recall and review will be more effective and rapid.
- Structure allows for the easy addition of new information without scratching out. Each map will look different, aiding recall.
- It is easy to edit your notes by adding numbers, marks, and color coding.

## **5. Some forms of self-study strategies**

### **a) Cornell method**

The reasons behind adopting this strategy are:

- It results in more organized notes.
- It can easily be used as a study guide for exams.
- Arrangement of information is aesthetically pleasing and easy to scan.
- It helps students make connections between ideas, synthesize information.
- It allows students to quickly identify key words and concepts.
- One advantage of Cornell Notes is that allows greater flexibility. because they could be incorporated with the linear and non-linear styles.
- Skeleton Notes Skeleton notes are helpful in teaching students how to organize ideas in a logical order. Combination notes Combination notes are useful for students who learn well through visuals. By adding a sketch to an informal outline, students draw a picture to help them understand and recall information.

### **b) 5w's strategy**

- This strategy help pupils list information that answers Who, What, When, Where, Why related to the learning from the lesson.



- Who: Identify and make a list of the characters in a picture, a video or a reading passage. - What: Identify the things, events or actions.

- Where: Identify all the places.

- When: Identify all the time factors.

- Why: Identify the causes for events or actions. Then describe the relationship among the characters, events, places or times.

#### c) KWL strategy

Mantra conducted a study to attempt at improving Speaking skill through Know, Want, and Learned (KWL) strategy to the students of English Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education. The findings of the study revealed that KWL could be used to improve the students' speaking skill.

In addition, the result of the percentage analysis of questionnaire scores was clearly shown significant improvement in the students' learning motivation in learning speaking during the implementation of KWL strategy. Therefore, these findings clearly suggested that improving speaking skill through KWL strategy was highly effective.

#### d) Think-pair-share

Think-Pair-Share's purpose is to help students process information, develop communication skills, and refine their thinking. In his research, Usman (2015) proved that the think-pair-share strategy was effective to be implemented at STAIN Ternate in order to improve the students' speaking ability.

#### e) Think-write-share:

It is similar to Think-Pair-Share.

#### f) Gaphic organizers

Conducted a study to investigate the effectiveness of graphic organizers on students' writing ability as well as their attitudes towards this essential language skill. The results of this study proved that the graphic organizers model had significantly improved the students' writing ability and had positively impacted their attitudes towards this skill.

These results suggested that graphic organizers could be an effective support in teaching writing of learners of English as a foreign language. Therefore, the present study tried to use graphic organizers to improve the first year preparatory schoolers' speaking skills.

## **6. Practice methods**

### **a) Practice with the “intensive reading” technique**

“Intensive reading” or close reading is reading with a focused focus to understand the exact meaning of what you are reading. This is in contrast to skimming, which is reading to get a general understanding of the content.

This type of reading helps the reader feel confident and enjoy the reading process because they can visualize what they are reading without having to focus too much on the details. Although skimming can be effective in many ways, close reading is more useful in helping you quickly improve your English skills.

The technique of close reading includes the following steps:

- Identify important vocabulary
- Cover some words and guess their meanings
- Write a summary after reading
- Read with an English tutor (or a friend) or discuss the content of the text you have read.
- Make sure you choose short reading passages when practicing intensive reading, otherwise you will be overwhelmed and quickly give up the practice.

This “intensive reading” technique not only helps you understand the meaning of the text deeply, it also helps you accumulate ideas from the reading so that when communicating, your brain will quickly turn what you read into the content of the conversation naturally.

b) Practice speaking in front of the mirror

Practicing in front of a mirror can help you feel less self-conscious when speaking English. Sometimes speaking English when your current level of English is low can feel awkward and awkward. This is partly because you don’t know what your mouth looks like when you say sounds that aren’t in your native language, even if you’re pronouncing them correctly. So, watch how your mouth moves when you speak English in front of a mirror. Better yet, compare your pronunciation to that of native English speakers. For example, you could repeat some dialogue from a TV show and try to imitate mouth movements of the actors. This will not only help you build confidence, but will also help you improve your English pronunciation.

c) Learn with the “distributed practice method”

The “distributed practice” method ensures that you will always improve your English and make lasting progress. In this method, you will have many very short study sessions. This is different from many other study methods such as cramming, studying too much or just starting to study right before a test.

In addition to being really annoying, cramming does not help you retain information for a long time. Most people forget everything they have learned as soon as they finish their test.

To start using distributed practice, create a study schedule. Try to study at least a few times a week and plan out what you want to study each day/week/month/etc. Set multiple goals for the English skills you want to improve to better track your progress.

d) Highlight unfamiliar words as you read

When reading an English book, highlight the words you don't know and don't look them up in a dictionary until the end of the chapter. Then turn these unfamiliar words into a list of words to learn that day.

This is a good test to improve your vocabulary and reading comprehension in English. Just pick a book that looks interesting and sit down with a pen and notebook. By the end of the chapter, you should have at least a few words to look up.

e) Practice with real English videos

One of the hardest things about trying to improve your English is that you don't get much exposure to real-life English. The British Council's Video Zone is the perfect solution. Video Zone teaches English through real English videos, each video comes with a script underneath, which you can look up to look up definitions, grammar. This way, you can improve your English vocabulary and grammar while understanding how native speakers actually use English.

When you finish watching a video, it has small exercises to make sure you remember everything you have learned. This type of practice ensures that you are actively improving your English with the videos. There are thousands of videos for every level of English from beginner to advanced. You can easily select videos by level and genre to find the ones that are right for you.

YouTube or TedxTalk are great sources for you to find relevant content and you can listen to practice pronunciation and improve your speaking skills while listening to conversations.



f) Repeat English puns (“tongue twisters”)

“Tongue twisters” are short English sentences that are repeated over and over again with a lot of similar sounds, making them very difficult to say even for native English speakers. These sentences are great for fun and improving your real English pronunciation. They will help you master difficult English sounds and use them more naturally. Start slow to make sure you pronounce each word correctly, then work your way up to speaking faster and faster!

g) Record your English pronunciation every day

This may sound tedious (because it’s boring and repetitive) but you’ll be so glad you decided to do it. Use a voice recorder app to create a recording of yourself speaking English every day. You can simply talk about your day for a few minutes, read a passage from an English book or newspaper, say some new English words you’ve learned, or whatever suits you!

But don’t stop there. After your recordings, listen to them again and try to catch your mistakes, whether they are pronunciation mistakes, grammar mistakes, misused words, etc. This is one of the most practical and immediate ways to improve your English, especially if you are learning a foreign language on your own. If you don’t correct your mistakes, you will continue to make them and your English will progress more slowly.

An added bonus is that these recordings can be a great motivator later in your studies. There will inevitably be times when you hit a wall, when you’re not learning as quickly as you used to, and complex English grammar concepts seem too daunting. You may even want to give up. At this point, the recordings will remind you of how far you’ve come in your studies, which can pick you up when you’re feeling discouraged!

#### h) Memorize common homophones

Homophones are words that have the same pronunciation but different meanings (and possibly different spellings). Some examples of English homophones include:

Blew - blue

Know - no

Here - hear

Studying homonyms will help improve your English conversation skills and avoid confusing words. It will be easier for you to listen to English if you are familiar with common words that sound the same. To remember common homonyms, you can use the flashcard method of creating word pairs with their actual meanings

#### i) Speak, speak, speak

Let's start right off by saying that there isn't a magic pill for better speaking. That would be too easy, right? Basically, the best way to speak better is to, well – speak! Commit to practicing often and with as many different people as possible. Do you already live or study overseas? Take advantage of the thousands of native speakers in your immediate community, such as your friends, their families, your coworkers, classmates, employees at the coffee shops, supermarket, post-office and other places you visit.

If you're learning in your own country, increase your practice time by meeting your classmates after class, finding a language exchange partner or joining an online community of learners. Reflect on your conversations. After your conversation is over, take a moment to reflect. How did it go? How much do you think you understood? How comfortable did you feel with that subject matter? Did you encounter any unknown words? The mere act of thinking about it in this

way will increase your confidence for the next time you speak (and give your targeted things to work on, for example vocabulary you didn't understand).

j) Listen and read

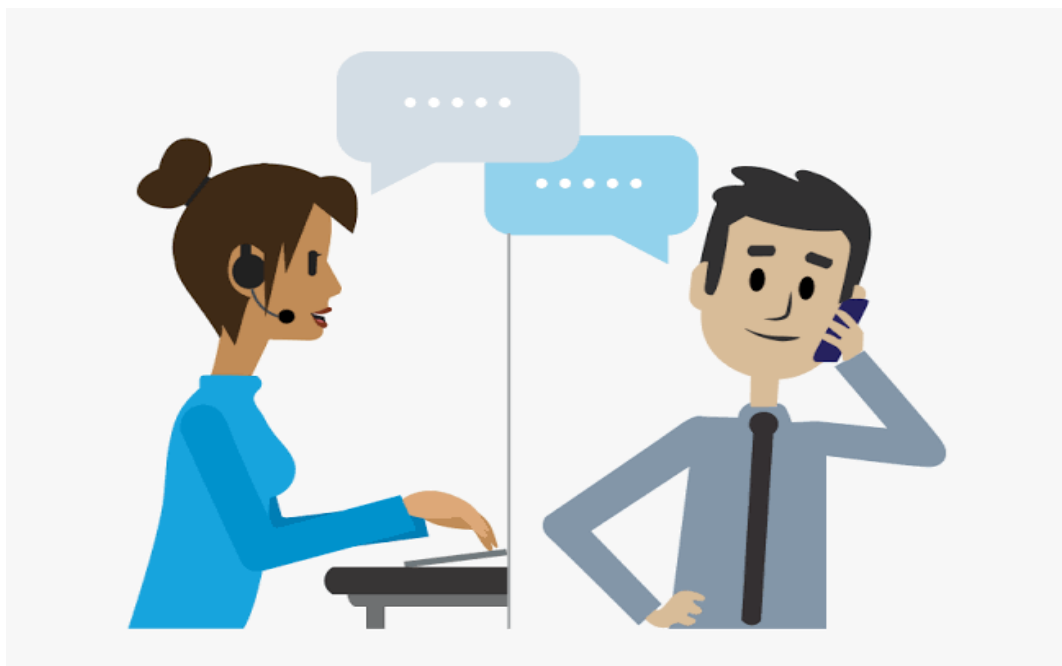


You need words in order to talk, right? Class time is great for learning vocabulary, but there are other ways you can increase yours: Watch movies, listen to music, the radio and to podcasts. Read books, magazines and blogs. When listening and reading, find new and interesting expressions, slang terms and synonyms, write down this new material and look up anything you're not familiar with. All this will provide more "meat" for you to use next time you practice.

Part of nervousness around speaking is the feeling of not knowing what to say. To combat this, prepare a cheat sheet. Are you going to the doctor's? Before your appointment, research vocabulary relating to your condition and some common phrases you'll probably need. Use the technique before going to pay a bill, eating at a restaurant, job interviews, making a complaint, or for any other situation that might make you anxious.

### k) Pick up the phone

Most people find phone conversations particularly challenging. Why? Because on the phone, we can't see the other person's body language or watch their mouth move, both of which are tools that really help communication. To feel more confident on the phone, start small with phone conversations with friends – then move on to more challenging calls like making appointments or inquiries. (This is a great time to use tip 4, and prepare a list of questions and useful vocabulary to help you during your call ).



### l) Record your voice

We know, we know – most people dislike hearing their voice recorded – but it's actually an extremely beneficial way to improve your speaking! Hearing yourself on tape shows you things you might not realize (maybe you tend to speak quickly when nervous, swallow your "s's" or mumble).

On the other hand, you could be pleasantly surprised to hear that your speaking is far better than you thought! For bonus points, take your recording to your teacher or to a native speaker friend and have them give you feedback. Learn phrases rather than single words. Another tip to increase your fluency is to speak using a variety of phrases rather than individual words. (You probably do this all



the time in your native language.) Instead of automatically asking “Hello, how are you today?”, mix it up by choosing other expressions like “What’s up, man?” “Hey dude!” or “How ya going, mate?” (Be careful though: Some expressions will be very informal and not ideal for some situations!)

#### m) Have fun

Let’s face it. It’s far easier to learn something new when you’re having fun. Inject silliness into your speaking practice by talking to yourself when you’re alone, singing along with popular songs in English, doing tongue twisters (Try our top tongue twisters) or doing one-minute “impromptu speeches” on randomly-chosen topics (such as snakes, coffee, India or subjects such as “If I ruled the world, I would...”, “Three surprising facts about me,” or “Which came first, the chicken or the egg?”). Great practice and great, silly fun.

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