

# Learning English Language Skills and Classroom Teaching Activities

Muladjanov Shuhrat Fazlidinovich

Teacher of Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages, Samarkand, Uzbekistan

## ABSTRACT

This paper is devoted to identify you about the importance of language classes in improving one's English language. Nowadays, the English language classes are based on teaching all language skills through listening reading writing and speaking skills to improve language level. Most learners attend the classes to get higher results in their learning-targeted language. This article lets you know the innovative teaching ways of courses and why English language learning helps to communicate. The description is widely carried on the advantages of language courses, benefits of getting good results, researches and development and why it is so important to improve your English language skills. The language courses are being taught through language skills as EFL (English Foreign Language) or ESL (English Second Language). Accordingly, such courses involve the collaboration with classroom activities in order to affect to the learning strategies for the creating teaching and learning outcomes.

**KEYWORDS:** Active learning approaches, English courses, classroom activities, listening and speaking activities, reading and writing activities, language skills, communicative approach

## INTRODUCTION

Once learning any foreign language, first we listen, then we speak, then we read and finally we write. Listening, speaking, reading and writing are the four main language skills that needed to develop for complete communication. The article contributes to explain the importance of English language in our life, the role of language courses in improving the English language, the active ways of learning language skills in language courses. Taking language courses to learn language skills can help you to develop your foreign language. Learning something new can be very scary experience. That's why it is needful to choose, to follow language skills and to try to learn.

Studying a foreign language not only improves communication and memory skills, but it can also increase cultural knowledge and can help you to feel more independently. In this case, the role of language courses and classroom activities can be the advantages in improving the target language.

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## Materials and methods

“English is the most commonly used language among foreign language speakers. Throughout the world when people with different languages come together they commonly use English to communicate. English is spoken by 1,75 billion people worldwide. One in every five people can speak and understand the English language, so just think of all the new people you could meet and communicate with, if you learned English in a high level. People may decide to learn English for many different reasons, but whether you learn English, one can travel, study, work or even just to understand your favorite English TV program. It seemed to be a great language to have under your belt” [5, p19]

“Nowadays, the international business world sees English as an essential language. In fact, many multinational companies have authorized English as the corporate language. As the business language English covers the followings like business correspondence, e-mails, meetings, presentations,

telephone talking, customer care, negotiations, writing reports, socializing and “small talks”, intercultural communication and for special needs. Learning English language can help you meet with new people. English is the official language of 53 countries and is used as a lingua franca (a mutually known language) by people from all around the world. This means whether you are travelling in Brazil, or working in Beijing, learning English can help you to have a conversation with people from all over the world. Learning English gives opportunities accessing to multiple cultures. A good knowledge of English will allow to access films, music, and literature from hundreds of countries around the globe. Not to mention even the fact that many books from across the world have been translated into English. Few experiences will make you to grow as a person more than learning the values, habits and way of life in the culture. Learning English is a fun: new friends, new culture, new places and new information. Many magazines, newspapers, books and novels are printed in English. This means that by understanding English, you are unlocking the door to a whole world of new information and knowledge. English can help you travel more easily, like menus, aero plane announcements, public transport information, emergency information and street signs are often given in English language, so one can feel more independent and confident” [5, p10]

Studying a foreign language not only improves the communication and language skills, but it can also increase cultural knowledge and can help you to feel more confidence. In many countries, particularly in our country were established the modern-innovative and creative ways of teaching English language to the young generation. Nowadays, the language courses are highly developed in improvement the language in higher levels. “The language courses are supplied with modern technologies, innovative and creative approaches in a way of teaching language to learners. English is being taught as a foreign language (EFL) in our country, thus the learners always search the best English language courses where they can develop their learning language. The language courses are based on language skills improvement, which include: listening, reading, writing and speaking skills. These four language skills that needed to be improved for the complete communication. In language courses learners occur and study not only theoretical approaches, but also practical and alternative ways of learning” [3, p10]

“Listening, speaking, reading and writing are the four language skills which need to improve in language courses. Listening and reading are receptive: input,

the exposure you have to accept the authentic language in use. Speaking and writing are productive: output, the action of producing the language as part of the process of second language learning. To achieve the top level of these four basic language skills, you need to surround yourself with English, make English part of your life at home, at work, during your free time. Reasons that will help to overcome the difficulties that might be experiencing to improve your English skills” [6, p12]

“Listening plays a very important part in learning any language. Effective listening ensures understanding and it helps to develop accuracy when one is speaking. By listening actively, pay attention not only what has been said, but also how it is said. So, listening to music-old or modern, the type that one prefers, but also need to pay attention to the lyrics. There are several different listening sub skills. We might listen for gist or global understanding, specific information, details or infer attitude. Other ways of listening are listening intensively and extensively” [1, p35]

Speaking is often the hardest of the four language skills, but as soon as you can speak a little English, there are lots of ways to improve quickly and have tons of fun. In language courses joining voiced chats will help you to evaluate your speaking skills. Technology has advanced a lot in terms of social networks so, wherever you live, you will find a chat-room to join. Talk and record yourself: it will assist to improve the speaking.

“Reading skill is a process of the brain and it takes time to develop: mind has to attach meaning to the words, phrases and expressions represented by symbols, plus get to understand the grammar and structure of the language used in the passage to read. Try to start with easy books, even children’s books and comics. The images will help you understand even if there are some misunderstandings in the words. Full social participation requires a high level of reading- higher than can be accomplished in the lower grades. Often early reading instruction is not very good or there is something wrong in learning. At advanced levels, reading is particularized and these specialized reading routines have to be learned. For the best reading skill, the language courses should motivate and engage the learners overall. The content which is given to learners should be interesting to acknowledge it” [2, p16]

“Writing skill even though it may be intimidating to a lot of people, anyone can get used to writing with a little discipline and willingness to learn. A good writing task should have communicative purpose, be

relevant and interesting to learners. The main goal of writing is a communication which language courses have to pay more attention. Writing is the result of a long, laborious, intensely personal process in which writers address several questions, structure and sort of language. The language courses encourage learners to communicate their own written messages. Communication of the message is paramount and therefore the developing, but inaccurate attempts at handwriting, spelling and grammar are accepted. These skills are further developed in individual and small group conference interviews” [1, p22]

“Teachers have to create a communicative atmosphere between the learners, give them freedom talk to each other, participate in classroom’s activities, act and show the plays. Attractive approaches to the language learning should be done by the teachers who can influence on developing the language skills for learners through their abilities, methods and different kind of teaching approaches. The best tutor or teacher can produce the effective ways of teaching the language. The learners may know their level through the assessment, which will show them their level of skills, however, no skill should be taught in isolation. This section lists objectives for the development of each skill and gives guidelines and suggestions for classroom activities to give learners practice. The main objectives of developing of language skills in language courses is maintain teaching-learning environment, create motivation and engagement, supply with didactic materials and modern technologies, involve learners to be more active in learning language. Thus, here are some practical approaches engaged with a theoretical part of section” [4, p16]

### Results and Discussion

“Active learning classes engage all the senses, not just listening. In multisensory learning, it is eligible to read, listen, write and speak at the same time, using all senses. The active learning of English skills in language courses appeared as a result of modifying the conventional thinking by substituting misconceptions with the new belief system. The active learning main drill consists in performing four actions simultaneously: writing the content, reading the text, listening to the records and speaking. Active learning is the subconscious method of acquiring language skills during repetition and imitation of understandable sentences which preclude any possibilities of making mistakes. Active learning of language skills transforms complex technology into something simple and initiative when practice means many more topics can be provided to the learners, because each learner has an option of creating his or

her own classes. This type of learning introduces learner-centered classes, and ensures more effective results without descending into chaos. In this way of learning, the learners acquire intuitive grammar, language patterns and ability to think in English through subconscious training of all English skills concurrently. Active learning is a disruptive invention. That’s why it differs from conventional methods of learning English” [6, p35]. The differentiation between active learning and passive learning might be recommended the following: If a learner performs 1 or 2 actions while learning-he or she is doing conscious passive learning. *Examples: Reading and listening, or watching and listening or speaking;*

If a learner performs 3 or more actions while learning concurrently-he or she is doing subconscious active way of learning.

*Examples: Simultaneously reading the text, listening to the recordings of this text, and speaking or imitating the recordings;*

English language courses are based on active way of teaching language skills which proclaim active skills.

Listening is a really important skill and there are lots of activities that can be done in the classes to develop this ability. Having regular listening in class is great, but it is also sufficient to demonstrate it listening to the teacher and fellow learners. Below are some fun and interactive ways to provide the listening practice in classes.

*Listen and draw a story.* The teacher reads or makes up a story and the learners listen, they draw the different scenes.

*Adjective draw.* After teaching various adjectives give each learners a piece of paper. The teacher says an adjective/noun combination and learners listen and draw it.

*Listening with flashcards.* Scatter a lot of flashcards that learners have already learned around the room and have the learners sit on the floor. Make up a story and incorporate all of the flashcard pictures as you say flashcard word the learner nearest that card must touch it.

*Listening dialogues.* Before class, prepare some dialogues based on the lesson theme. In class have two learners read the dialogue and the other learners have to listen and then answer the questions.

*Number/Word Bingo.* Playing bingo requires learners to listen carefully. It is essential to use either numbers or words that they are learning. Creating the bingo

sheets and words takes a bit of time, but once done can be used with other classes.

Reading activities are defined as activities that help learners to focus on aspects of the text and to understand it better. During this stage learners will be able to: confirm predictions, gather information, organize information. These are some examples of while reading activities that can be used in the classroom.

*Identify topic sentences and the main idea of paragraphs.* Remember that every paragraph usually includes a topic sentence that identifies the main idea of the paragraph. Distinguish between general and specific ideas. Identify the connectors to see how they link ideas within the text. Check whether or not predictions and guesses are confirmed.

*Skimming.* It is the ability to locate the main idea within a text, using this reading strategies will assist learners to become proficient readers.

*Scanning.* Looking for a particular piece of information; a quick reading, focusing on locating specific information. Scanning involves quick eye movements and is used when a specific piece of information is required, such as a name, date, symbol, formula or phrase is required.

*Infer the meaning of new words using the context.* All language learners rely on context to decipher the meaning of a word, a reading strategy used quite a lot when you do extensive reading.

*Answer literal and inferential questions.* Literally simply refers to what the text says and inferential is using the text as a starting point to get a deeper meaning.

Writing skill is a productive skill where it produced some information, structured with grammar, lexical competences.

*Descriptive writing.* It occurs when the writer uses very detailed information to explain the story. This can involve detailed descriptions of the characters, the setting and even objects. This style of writing is used to immerse the readers in the story, allowing them to create a vivid mental picture of the setting in their minds.

*First-person writing technique.* The writer is able to incorporate his own ideas into the story. Instead of just presenting the facts, the writer can let his own opinions come out in the writing.

*Narrative writing.* The writer introduces different characters and a setting to the readers, while keeping his or her own voice silent.

*Summarization.* This activity teaches learners for summarizing writing material.

*Collaborative writing.* It arranges learners in groups to plan, draft, revise and edit their meaning. Word processing is using technology to support writing.

*Sentence-combining writing.* It teaches learners how to create complex sentences.

*Prewriting.* Using structured activities to help learners plan and organize their meaning.

Now many linguistics and EFL teachers agree on that learners to speak in the foreign language by interacting. Communicative language teaching is based on real-life situations that require communication. Communicative language teaching and collaborative learning serve best for this aim. Activities to promote speaking follows:

*Discussion.* It can be held for various reasons. The learners may aim to arrive at a conclusion, share ideas about an event, or find solutions in their discussion groups. This activity fosters critical thinking and quick decision making and learners learn how to express and justify themselves.

*Role-playing.* Another way of getting learners to speak is role-playing. Learners pretend they are in various social contexts and have a variety of social roles. In role-play activities, the teacher gives information to the learners such as who they are and what they think or feel.

*Information gap.* In this activity learners are supposed to be working in pairs. One learner will have the information that other partner does not have and the partners will share their information. Information gap activities serve many purposes such as solving a problem or collecting information.

*Brainstorming.* On a given topic learners can produce ideas in a limited time. Depending on the context either individual or group brainstorming is effective and learners generate ideas quickly and freely.

*Retelling.* Learners can briefly summarize a tale or story they heard from somebody, or they may create their own stories to tell their group mates. Retelling fosters creative thinking. It also helps learners to express ideas in the format of beginning, development and ending, including the characters and setting a story has to have.

*Interviews.* Learners can conduct interviews on selected topics with various people. Conducting interviews with people gives learners a chance to practice their speaking ability not only in class, but also outside and helps them becoming socialized.

*Story completion.* It is a very enjoyable, whole-class, free speaking activity for which learners sit in a circle. For this activity, a teacher starts to tell a story, after he or she stops narrating, then each learner starts to narrate from the point where the previous one stopped.

*Picture describing.* It is another way to make use of pictures in a speaking activity is to give learners just one picture and having them describe what it is in it. This activity improves the creativity and imagination of the learners as well as their public speaking skills. Learners discuss the picture with their groups, then a spokesperson for each group describes the picture to the whole class.

### **Conclusion**

English language courses can be beneficial for everyday life. These courses are helpful for improving your fluency in speaking, polishing your writing skills and targeting specific skills you need for a particular social and professional environment. In conclusion, as the most spoken language in the world, English holds a huge part in the communication. International business goes well because of English. It helps people when they are using technology products. Learning English language skills assist people to improve their English in different spheres. Activities and active ways of learning help learners easily understand the language

and communicate to each other. Language courses are better scholars than traditional ways of teaching and learning. More practical studies are useful and can be beneficial for learners rather than theory. That's why the proverb follows: Practice, practice and practice. The language skills are the most important points of language courses.

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