

## IMPROVING SPEAKING SKILLS.

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**Abstract:** This article examines the different circumstances under which infant and adult learners develop speaking skills. We will see the facilities or difficulties in both cases in order to focus on the real possibilities of adults to develop a high level of speaking proficiency. We will see what the role of the teacher is in order to improve the learners' skills, the features of oral communication that need to be improved and which strategies can be used to overcome the difficulties.

**Key words:** speaking skills, adult learning, oral communication, teaching strategies.

Resumen Este artículo analiza las diferentes circunstancias en las que niños y adultos desarrollan las destrezas orales. Veremos las facilidades y dificultades en ambos casos para así centrarnos en las posibilidades reales que tienen los adultos de alcanzar un alto nivel de competencia oral.

Improving Speaking Skills Betsabé Romero Navarro Synopsis The many conditions under which adult and newborn learners acquire speaking abilities are examined in this article. We will examine the advantages or challenges in each scenario to concentrate on the actual potential for individuals to reach a high degree of speaking skill. We'll look at the role that teachers play in helping students become better communicators, what aspects of oral communication require improvement, and how to overcome obstacles.

**Key words:** oral communication, adult learning, speaking abilities, and instructional methodologies.

Fleta claims that one of these unique skills is "filtering sophisticated information about language properties from birth". To put it another way, children possess a remarkable capacity to assimilate complex information in a simple and unconscious manner from the outset of their development. They can absorb and process complex information without even realizing it, something that would take much longer for other students of different ages to accomplish. In addition, aside from this unique ability of infants to absorb complex information, we can highlight some of their other attributes, such their ability to perceive and mimic sounds. Young newborns are particularly sensitive to auditory alterations near the phonetic boundaries between categories, according to certain research. Furthermore, infants have an incredibly strong sense of syllable chunk prediction: according to Kuhl, "infants are sensitive to the sequential probabilities between adjacent syllables." This gives youngsters an unexpectedly

strong sense of language expertise. Ultimately, pupils also pick up the skill of automatically learning grammar rules, or the arrangement of words within a sentence: "there is some evidence that young children can detect non-adjacencies such as those required to learn grammar". In summary, when kids "are exposed to the right kind of auditory information," they pick up language without even realizing it. On the other hand, other researchers argue against it. "The apparent facility with which children learn a second language is often attributed to biological factors, but an alternative explanation might be that, unlike adults, children have no need to fear the loss of their social identity," wrote Wolfgang Klein in his book *Second Language Acquisition* (1986: 6). Some authors, like Klein, contend that psychological factors rather than biological ones account for children's phonological abilities. Adults are hindered from reaching perfection in L2 pronunciation because they are attached to their original social identities, or their native identities. According to Klein, "suitably motivated adults are capable of mastering the pronunciation of the most exotic languages. The only way of training students in this direction is by means of a bank of activities in which they become aware of the different possibilities that they can put into practice. Authors such as Goodwin or Lazaraton offer a varied list of exercises to be used in class: poems, rhymes, dialogues, monologues, role plays, debates, interviews, simulations, drama scenes, discussions, conversations... Therefore, coming back to the initial question proposed above, I think it is absolutely feasible to teach adults strategies to improve their speaking skills. Of course, that objective depends on many different factors that will affect the degree of acquisition, let us think of age, motivation, or even the context in which the language is learned: ESL versus EFL. In that respect, learners in a second language context will have numberless occasions to practice the language and that will undoubtedly influence their skills development. With reference to the foreign language context, authors such as Lazaraton admitted the difficulties learners

The only way to prepare pupils in this direction is to provide them with a bank of activities that will make them aware of the various options available to them. A wide range of exercises, including debates, interviews, role plays, poetry, rhymes, dialogues, monologues, simulations, theatrical scenes, talks, and chats, are available from authors like Goodwin and Lazaraton for use in the classroom. So, to return to the original topic presented above, I believe it is totally possible to teach adults speaking skills improvement techniques. Naturally, achieving that goal will depend on a wide range of variables that will influence the level of acquisition. For example, consider age, motivation, or even the environment in which the language is learned—for example, ESL versus EFL. In that regard, students

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