



## DEVELOPING SPEECH-RELATED COMPETENCIES IN PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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**Abstract:** This article explores the importance and strategies of developing speech-related competencies in primary school students. Oral communication skills such as pronunciation, vocabulary use, sentence formation, fluency, and listening comprehension are crucial for academic success and social integration. The study examines pedagogical approaches and classroom techniques that help enhance learners' verbal abilities in early education. It also emphasizes the role of teachers, curriculum design, and supportive environments in fostering strong speech skills among young learners.

**Keywords:** speech development, primary education, oral communication, linguistic competence, speaking skills

Language and speech are the foundational elements of communication and learning in primary education. Developing speech-related competencies in young learners is critical not only for literacy and academic performance but also for building confidence and interpersonal skills. This paper focuses on identifying effective practices for fostering these competencies in the classroom.

In the 21st-century classroom, oral communication skills are no longer supplementary—they are essential. Effective speaking lays the groundwork for reading and writing, as well as for developing higher-order thinking skills. Moreover, in multilingual and multicultural learning environments, speech competence plays a vital role in helping students build identity and form social connections.

Developing these skills early ensures that children are prepared to engage in academic discussions, comprehend lessons across subjects, and participate confidently in classroom activities. Therefore, fostering speech-related competencies is not simply a linguistic task—it is a holistic developmental goal that supports emotional intelligence, cognitive growth, and social interaction.

This paper aims to shed light on practical, research-based strategies that educators can use to nurture speaking abilities in primary school learners, while also addressing common barriers and proposing sustainable classroom solutions.

Speech-related competencies refer to a child's ability to express thoughts clearly, use appropriate vocabulary, articulate words correctly, construct grammatically accurate sentences, and participate in meaningful conversations. These skills are commonly categorized into:

- **Phonological competence** (clear pronunciation)



- **Lexical competence** (vocabulary acquisition)
- **Syntactic competence** (sentence structure)
- **Pragmatic competence** (contextual language use)
- **Listening comprehension** (understanding spoken language)

To effectively develop speech-related competencies in primary school students, teachers can implement a variety of engaging and student-centered approaches. Interactive activities such as storytelling, role-playing, pair conversations, and classroom games encourage learners to actively use language in meaningful contexts. These methods help students practice speaking naturally while building confidence and fluency.

Incorporating visual and audio materials—like songs, videos, and flashcards—enhances comprehension and supports vocabulary development. These aids provide multimodal input that caters to different learning styles and reinforces language patterns.

Encouraging students to respond to open-ended questions allows them to express their thoughts freely and construct more complex sentences. Reading aloud and reciting short poems or dialogues also contributes to better pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation, as well as increased comfort with speaking in front of others.

Group discussions and collaborative tasks promote peer interaction, helping students learn from one another while applying their oral skills in social settings. Throughout these methods, the teacher plays a guiding role, providing appropriate feedback and creating a classroom environment where students feel safe and motivated to participate.

The teacher plays a pivotal role in modeling correct speech, correcting errors supportively, and encouraging consistent practice. A positive and inclusive classroom environment where students feel safe to speak without fear of judgment is essential for nurturing oral skills.

Among the most common challenges are:

- Lack of exposure to rich language models at home
- Limited classroom time for speaking activities
- Teacher-centered approaches dominating over student interaction
- Anxiety or low self-esteem in students

Addressing these issues requires careful lesson planning and individualized support.

Speech-related competencies form the backbone of effective communication and academic progress in primary education. By integrating interactive teaching methods, providing a supportive environment, and giving ample opportunities for oral practice, educators can significantly improve students' speech abilities. The development of these skills must begin early and continue consistently throughout primary schooling.



Developing strong speech-related competencies in primary school learners requires more than isolated speaking drills. It involves creating a rich language environment, building student confidence, and using varied, engaging activities that reflect real-life communication.

Teachers must act not only as instructors, but also as facilitators and role models, promoting active participation and guiding each learner according to their needs. Supportive classroom culture, inclusive practices, and formative feedback mechanisms are crucial in this process.

Investing in oral language development at the primary level has long-term benefits. It sets the foundation for academic achievement, lifelong learning, and effective citizenship. As educational priorities shift toward 21st-century competencies, schools must ensure that every child has the opportunity—and the support—to find their voice.

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