

DEVELOPING ACADEMIC SPEAKING SKILLS THROUGH AN INTEGRATED APPROACH IN EAP CONTEXTS

Kholikova Shirinoy Artikboy kizi

Teacher at Tashkent university of Economics and Pedagogy

mail: shirinoy28@gmail.com

Phone: +998 99 461 01 68

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Abstract

This article explores the effectiveness of an integrated skills approach in developing academic speaking and listening abilities among university-level learners in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) context. The study focuses on combining listening, reading, speaking, and writing tasks to enhance learners' participation in academic discourse. Drawing on established theoretical frameworks, the paper examines how structured activities such as lecture comprehension, peer discussions, and presentations contribute to improved fluency, coherence, and confidence. The findings suggest that integrating multiple language skills creates meaningful learning experiences and supports students' transition from general English proficiency to academic communication competence.

Keywords: EAP, academic speaking, integrated skills, listening comprehension, presentation skills, language learning

Introduction

In modern higher education, English language instruction extends beyond the teaching of grammar and vocabulary to include the development of effective academic communication skills. For students enrolled in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses, the ability to participate in academic discourse—particularly through speaking and listening—is essential for academic success.

However, many learners at the intermediate level struggle with expressing complex ideas, organizing arguments, and understanding extended spoken input. These challenges are particularly evident among students transitioning from general English courses to academic contexts.

Basturkmen (2002) emphasizes the importance of raising learners' awareness of academic discourse through observation and reflection. In line with this perspective, this study adopts an integrated approach that combines multiple language skills to support the development of academic speaking competence.

Literature Review

The integration of language skills has been widely recognized as an effective approach in language teaching. Wei-ping (1999) argues that combining reading and speaking activities provides learners with meaningful contexts for language use, enabling them to develop both comprehension and production skills simultaneously.

Listening plays a crucial role in academic settings, as students are frequently required to process lectures and respond to spoken information. The Integrative Listening Model proposed by Thompson et al. (2004) highlights the importance of structured listening instruction, including pre-listening preparation, active listening, and post-listening reflection.

In terms of speaking, Metcalf, Layton, and Goslin (2016) suggest that structured presentation tasks can significantly improve students' ability to organize and deliver ideas clearly. These tasks also help learners build confidence and develop audience awareness.

Additionally, pronunciation remains a key challenge for many EAP learners. Kaiser (2018) demonstrates that mobile-assisted language learning tools can effectively support pronunciation development by providing immediate feedback and opportunities for independent practice.

Methodology

This study was conducted with a group of 18 university-level learners aged 19–23, enrolled in an intermediate EAP course. The participants had an average IELTS score of 5.5, indicating a moderate level of English proficiency.

An integrated instructional approach was implemented over a series of lessons, incorporating the following activities:

Academic lecture listening tasks

Reading-based discussions

Peer presentations

Reflective writing exercises

The instructional design followed a structured sequence: preparation, task engagement, interaction, and reflection. Data were collected through classroom observations and analysis of student performance in speaking and listening tasks.

Results and Analysis

The findings indicate that the integrated approach had a positive impact on learners' academic speaking and listening skills.

Firstly, pre-listening activities, such as vocabulary introduction and topic discussion, helped students better understand lecture content. This aligns with Thompson et al. (2004), who emphasize the importance of preparation in listening comprehension.

Secondly, group discussions allowed learners to share ideas and clarify misunderstandings, promoting collaborative learning. Students became more confident in expressing their opinions and engaging in academic conversations.

Thirdly, presentation tasks contributed significantly to the development of fluency and coherence. Students demonstrated improved ability to structure their ideas logically and use appropriate academic language.

Finally, reflective writing activities encouraged learners to evaluate their own performance and identify areas for improvement. This process supported the development of metacognitive awareness.

Pronunciation also showed noticeable improvement, particularly among students who regularly used mobile applications for practice, supporting Kaiser's (2018) findings.

Discussion

The results suggest that integrating language skills is more effective than teaching them in isolation. By engaging in tasks that combine listening, reading, speaking, and writing, learners are exposed to authentic language use and meaningful communication.

This approach not only enhances linguistic competence but also fosters critical thinking and learner autonomy. Students become active participants in the learning process, rather than passive recipients of knowledge.

Moreover, the inclusion of peer interaction and feedback creates a supportive learning environment, which is essential for developing confidence in academic speaking.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the integrated skills approach is a highly effective method for developing academic speaking and listening abilities in EAP contexts. By combining multiple language skills within structured activities, learners are better prepared to participate in academic discourse.

Future research may explore the role of technology in further enhancing integrated language instruction and supporting individualized learning.

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