

The Impact of Teaching Speaking as a Skill for Grade 3 English as a Second Language (ESL) Learners in Sri Lanka

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English, as a global lingua franca, is crucial for communication, education, and professional growth. In Sri Lanka, English is taught as a second language (ESL) from early primary education, emphasizing its importance for students' academic and future career prospects. This study investigates the impact and effectiveness of teaching speaking skills to Grade 3 ESL learners in Sri Lanka, focusing on how instructional strategies influence speaking proficiency and overall language development. Speaking is a fundamental skill that enhances cognitive abilities, social interactions, and self-confidence among young learners. The research aims to identify the impact of teaching speaking on students' speaking strategies and evaluate the overall effectiveness of these instructional practices. The study involved 10 Grade 3 ESL students from St. Francis College, Dalugama, using a mixed-method approach that included pre-tests, instructional sessions based on the "talk as transaction" theory, and post-tests. Findings indicate significant improvements in speaking proficiency, including reduced use of fillers, fewer requests for clarification, decreased reliance on mimes, and increased use of paraphrasing. These results suggest that targeted interventions and structured teaching methodologies, such as role-playing and interactive activities, can enhance speaking abilities, leading to greater confidence and fluency. The study underscores the need for continuous assessment and adaptation of teaching methods to meet diverse learner needs. However, it also highlights limitations due to the small sample size and suggests future research should involve larger, more diverse groups to provide a comprehensive understanding of effective ESL speaking instruction.

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