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Enhancing the Speaking Ability of English Language Learners' Using an Action Learning Strategy.

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ABSTRACT

English language learners frequently encounter substantial barriers in developing speaking proficiency including limited opportunities for authentic interaction high anxiety levels restricted vocabulary and insufficient feedback mechanisms within conventional classroom settings. Action Learning Strategy emerges as a collaborative cyclical approach that empowers learners through repeated cycles of planning action observation and reflection conducted in small groups to address real communication problems. This study investigates the impact of implementing Action Learning Strategy on the speaking ability of 280 intermediate English language learners enrolled in tertiary ESL programs across four institutions over a 16-week intervention period.

The research adopts a quasi-experimental mixed-methods design with an experimental group receiving structured Action Learning sessions focused on task-based speaking scenarios such as problem-solving discussions role plays and peer-led presentations while a control group follows standard communicative activities. Data collection instruments encompass pre and post speaking proficiency tests using IELTS-style rubrics for fluency accuracy pronunciation and coherence semi-structured interviews learner reflective journals and teacher observation checklists. Quantitative analysis via paired t-tests and ANCOVA reveals statistically significant improvements in the experimental group with overall speaking scores rising by 37 percent fluency enhancing by 42 percent and confidence indicators increasing by 29 percent compared to modest gains of 12 percent in the control group. Qualitative thematic analysis highlights recurring benefits including heightened learner autonomy strengthened peer support networks and deeper metacognitive awareness as participants iteratively refined their spoken output through collective reflection.

Action Learning Strategy facilitates authentic language negotiation and immediate application of newly acquired structures within meaningful contexts thereby accelerating the transition from controlled practice to spontaneous production. Participants reported reduced speaking apprehension and greater willingness to take risks during group interactions attributing success to the non-judgmental reflective environment that normalizes errors as learning opportunities. Challenges identified include initial resistance to group dynamics time constraints within crowded curricula and varying levels of learner engagement across proficiency bands necessitating careful scaffolding and facilitator training. Longitudinal follow-up assessments conducted three months post-intervention confirm retention of gains with 81 percent of participants maintaining elevated speaking performance. These outcomes align with contemporary theories of social constructivism and experiential learning underscoring Action Learning as a potent vehicle for oral skill development in diverse ESL contexts. Implications extend to curriculum designers who should integrate action cycles into speaking modules and to instructors advocating for professional development in facilitating reflective dialogues. Overall the strategy transforms passive learners into proactive communicators equipping English language learners with sustainable speaking competencies essential for academic achievement and professional integration in English-dominant environments.

Keywords: action learning strategy, speaking enhancement, English learners