

Individual Paper Session 20

Oral Discourse

Thursday, July 6

11:45-12:15pm

Would You Like to Join My Speaking Circle?

Havva Kurt Taşpınar
Anadolu University
havvakurt@anadolu.edu.tr

Speaking is the stage where students perform their abilities regarding language skills. Although it has become a central phenomenon in language teaching and learning with the development of communicative language teaching methodologies, speaking has been neglected for a long time by language teachers. Communication is now what triggers learners to learn a language. As a result of this, communicating in the target language has become the ultimate goal both for the teachers and learners.

In the light of the recent trends in language teaching, this study explores the influence of speaking circles which are carried out outside the class on the development of students' speaking skills. Because group cohesion is perceived as one of the most important sources of student motivation (Dörnyei, 2001), students participated in the study were chosen on voluntary basis, and they had different proficiency levels in English.

Students were given a "rate yourself questionnaire" to rate their speaking skills in the first week. Based on a theme which was chosen with the students, students were asked to give impromptu speeches. Students were encouraged to involve in the circle actively during 8 weeks. Both the speaker and the audience were asked to evaluate the speaker's performance. A session during which the speaker was asked to reflect on his /her performance and provided with feedback from the audience was held after each speech. At the end of 11 weeks, students were asked to rate themselves again. Also, interviews were conducted to explore the effects of the speaking circles on students' speaking skills. The most important of all the results and extracts from students' interviews will be presented.

The results support the importance of having "out of class activities" to improve students' speaking skills and the influence of a friendly atmosphere in reducing anxiety to enhance motivation (Dörnyei, 2001).