

DESIGNING AND EVALUATION OF SPEAKING ACTIVITIES FOR EFL  
LEARNERS

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### Abstract

This paper investigates the role of speaking activities in English language classrooms through a needs analysis questionnaire. The aim is to explore students' preferences, needs, and challenges related to speaking tasks and to improve classroom activities accordingly. Speaking activities are essential for enhancing learners' fluency, confidence, and interaction skills.

**Keywords:** needs analysis, questionnaire, speaking activities, EFL learners

### Introduction

The aim of this paper is to present a needs analysis questionnaire based on students' speaking activity preferences and difficulties in English language learning. The paper outlines the teaching context and a review of needs analysis theory. The content, design, and structure of a speaking-focused questionnaire are described,

followed by the presentation and discussion of results, leading to classroom improvement suggestions.

### Part 1: Teaching Context

This study involved 45 university EFL students with varying levels of speaking skills. The participants took part in a speaking-based needs analysis questionnaire. All feedback was collected anonymously to ensure open and honest responses.

### Theory on Needs Analysis and Questionnaire Design

Since the 1970s, needs analysis has been a key tool in language teaching planning (Nunan, 1988). Richards (2001) defines it as a procedure for collecting learners' needs to inform lesson planning. Dörnyei (2003) recommends clear, brief questionnaires completed in under 30 minutes to ensure reliable feedback.

### Par 2: Description and Justification of the Sample Needs Questionnaire

The questionnaire used here was selected for its practicality in gathering direct data from learners (Tudor, 1996). The objective was to adjust speaking activities to better match students' needs.

It focused on subjective needs, covering motivations, preferences, learning styles, and common difficulties with speaking tasks. The format included Yes-No, multiple-choice, ranking, and rating questions for easy analysis (Richards, 2001). Section titles and instructions guided students through the questionnaire.

### Presentation and Discussion of Results

Data analysis revealed that most students wanted more pair and group speaking activities. The primary motivations included improving fluency, gaining confidence, and preparing for real-life communication.

The most popular activities were role plays, conversations, interviews, and debates. Students preferred interactive, fun, and realistic speaking exercises, rather than formal presentations or reading aloud.

Key challenges identified were fear of making mistakes, limited vocabulary, pronunciation issues, and shyness. Students recommended informal discussions, games, and task-based speaking to build confidence gradually.

### Listening stages

As a pre-listening activity, there is a speaking task which aims at familiarizing the students with the following spoken discourse. Particularly, students are asked to describe their bedrooms to their partners and say why they are special, using specific words. In this way, they familiarize themselves with the home items as well as the grammatical structure. As far as the while-listening stage is concerned, there is a gap-filling task in which students are required to listen carefully for specific information and then fill in the gaps with words that they have learnt. This is a macro listening skill that learners should be able to exercise. Also, learners can be motivated by engaging in information gap activities, which also help them practice both listening and speaking skills (Sifakis, 2018), while activating their schemata. Also, it has a listening purpose which is to make learners identify the house objects as well as to understand the use of have/has got. Furthermore, as a post-listening activity, there is a writing task in which students are required to compose a written text, describing their own home as Luke did in the listening activity. Thus, they can take ideas from what they have just heard.

### Skills integration

As I mentioned before, the listening task includes a pre-listening activity exercising speaking skills and a post-listening activity in which students must collect ideas during the speaking and listening part and compose a written description of their own flat. The role of the speaking skill is to gradually introduce students to the listening part and familiarize them more with the topic. On the other hand, the writing activity aims at applying the knowledge they gain from the other parts. This is how the input becomes intake. Thus, all these skills are integrated in a well-organized way.

### Teaching or testing

The listening activity is teaching-oriented as it is created for teaching purposes such as the teaching of grammar and vocabulary.

### Teachers' monitoring of tasks

Regarding the “time-on-task”, the listening activity takes five to seven minutes to be completed. More specifically, I take two minutes to read and explain the task rubrics, making sure that all my students have understood. Then, the listening part itself lasts about 1.20 minutes and I play it two to three times because there are usually students who need it. After this, I wait for them to complete the task before we proceed to the feedback part. Also, regarding the “wait time”, I usually wait two minutes for my students to answer the question before I go on to others. Then, if no one knows the right answer, I provide it myself

### Conclusion

This needs analysis revealed students' preferences for interactive and engaging speaking activities. Educators are encouraged to focus on communicative tasks, reduce the fear of errors, and design fluency-oriented activities. Needs analysis questionnaires are valuable tools for refining language curricula based on learners' voices.

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