

SPEAKING METHODOLOGY FOR IELTS: PRACTICAL TECHNIQUES FOR STUDENTS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract: This article explores effective speaking methodologies tailored for students of foreign language universities preparing for the IELTS exam. It highlights key challenges, including fluency, pronunciation, coherence, and lexical resource development. The article provides practical techniques such as structured speaking drills, pronunciation exercises, and interactive learning strategies. Additionally, it discusses the role of self-assessment, peer feedback, and simulated speaking tests in improving performance.

Keywords: IELTS speaking, fluency, pronunciation, coherence, lexical resource, interactive learning, self-assessment, test simulation, structured practice, foreign language universities.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada IELTS imtihoniga tayyorlanayotgan chet tillari universiteti talabalari uchun moslashtirilgan samarali gapirish metodikalari o'rganiladi. Unda asosiy qiyinchiliklar, jumladan, ravonlik, talaffuz, mantiqiy bog'liqlik va leksik resurslarni rivojlantirish muhokama qilinadi. Maqolada tuzilgan nutq mashqlari, talaffuz mashqlari va interaktiv o'qitish strategiyalari kabi amaliy usullar taqdim etiladi. Bundan tashqari, o'z-o'zini baholash, tengdoshlar fikri va simulyatsion gapirish testlarining natijalarni yaxshilashdagi roli ko'rib chiqiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: IELTS gapirish, ravonlik, talaffuz, mantiqiy bog'liqlik, leksik resurs, interaktiv o'qitish, o'z-o'zini baholash, test simulyatsiyasi, tuzilgan mashg'ulotlar, chet tillari universitetlari.

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматриваются эффективные методики развития устной речи, адаптированные для студентов языковых вузов, готовящихся к экзамену IELTS. Особое внимание уделяется ключевым трудностям, таким как беглость речи, произношение, связность высказывания и развитие лексического запаса. В статье представлены практические техники, включая структурированные речевые тренировки, упражнения на произношение и интерактивные стратегии обучения. Кроме того, обсуждается роль самооценки, обратной связи от сверстников и имитационных устных тестов в повышении уровня подготовки.

Ключевые слова: устная часть IELTS, беглость речи, произношение, связность, лексический запас, интерактивное обучение, самооценка, имитация теста, структурированная практика, языковые вузы.

The IELTS Speaking test assesses candidates on fluency, lexical resource, grammatical range,

and pronunciation. Many students of foreign language universities face difficulties in maintaining fluency, structuring responses, and using appropriate vocabulary. This article presents a structured methodology to help students overcome these challenges and enhance their speaking proficiency [1; 110].

Key Challenges in IELTS Speaking

Students preparing for the IELTS Speaking test often face several difficulties that can impact their overall performance. One of the most common challenges is **lack of fluency**. Many learners struggle to maintain a smooth and continuous flow of speech, often pausing frequently or searching for words. This hesitation can make their responses sound unnatural and disjointed. For example, when asked to describe their hometown, a student might pause excessively—"My city... um... it is... uh... quite big and... um... has many places to visit"—which disrupts the flow of communication.

Another significant issue is **pronunciation difficulties**, which can lead to misunderstandings. Mispronouncing certain words or failing to stress syllables correctly may confuse the listener. For instance, a student might pronounce "comfortable" as "com-for-ta-ble" instead of the correct "kumf-tur-bl," making it harder for the examiner to understand them. Pronunciation problems can stem from mother tongue interference, lack of exposure to native speakers, or incorrect learning habits.

In addition, **limited vocabulary** can restrict a student's ability to express ideas effectively. Without a broad range of words and phrases, responses may sound repetitive and simplistic. For instance, if a student repeatedly uses the word "good"—"The weather is good, my teacher is good, my city is good"—instead of employing varied and precise vocabulary like "pleasant," "supportive," or "vibrant," their language may appear basic and underdeveloped. Expanding one's lexical resource by learning synonyms, collocations, and topic-specific vocabulary is essential for achieving a high score.

Another hurdle students often face is **coherence and cohesion problems**, meaning they struggle to structure their responses logically. Some students jump from one idea to another without clear connections, making their speech difficult to follow. For example, if answering a question about their favorite hobby, they might say, "I like painting. My mother is a doctor. Colors are interesting," without linking these ideas in a meaningful way. Using transition words like "because," "however," and "for example" can help create smoother, more structured responses.

Finally, **anxiety and hesitation** can negatively affect performance. Many students feel nervous when speaking in front of an examiner, leading to a lack of confidence and clarity. Nervousness may cause them to speak too quickly, stumble over words, or even forget what they wanted to say. For instance, a student might freeze when asked, "Describe a memorable trip," simply because their anxiety makes it hard to recall details. To overcome this, regular practice with mock tests, relaxation techniques, and positive self-talk can help build confidence and reduce

stress.

By addressing these common challenges through consistent practice and effective learning strategies, students can significantly improve their IELTS Speaking performance and achieve better results. [2; 145]

Practical Speaking Techniques

To improve their performance in the IELTS Speaking test, students can adopt various practical techniques that enhance fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary use. By incorporating these strategies into their practice routine, learners can build confidence and develop more natural and structured speech patterns.

Fluency Development Strategies

One effective way to develop fluency is through **timed speaking drills**. This involves practicing responses to common IELTS topics within a set time limit, helping students improve both their speed and coherence. For example, a student might be given one minute to describe a memorable trip and must focus on speaking continuously without excessive hesitation. Regular practice with timed exercises ensures that students learn to organize their thoughts quickly and respond more naturally during the test.

Another useful technique is **shadowing**, which requires students to listen to native speakers and immediately repeat what they hear. This method helps learners internalize natural speech patterns, rhythm, and intonation. For instance, students can listen to a short TED Talk, a news report, or an interview and mimic the speaker's pronunciation and flow, gradually developing a more native-like speaking style.

Additionally, **speaking with minimal pauses** is essential for maintaining a smooth conversation. Many students rely on fillers such as "um," "uh," and "you know" when searching for words, which can make their speech less confident. To overcome this, learners should practice using linking phrases like "On the other hand," "As a result," and "For instance" to maintain a steady flow of speech. For example, instead of saying, "My city is big... um... and it has... uh... many buildings," a student could train themselves to say, "My city is quite large, and as a result, it has a variety of modern skyscrapers and shopping centers." [3; 185]

Pronunciation and Clarity Improvement

Improving pronunciation is crucial for effective communication. One useful method is **phonetic drills**, which focus on sounds that are particularly challenging for students based on their native language. For instance, many Spanish speakers struggle with the difference between "ship" and "sheep," while Chinese speakers may have difficulty distinguishing "r" and "l" sounds. Practicing these tricky sounds through targeted exercises helps enhance clarity and prevent

misunderstandings.

Another important aspect of pronunciation is **stress and intonation training**. English has a natural rhythm, with certain syllables and words receiving emphasis. Learning how to stress key words in a sentence can make speech sound more natural and engaging. For example, the sentence "I didn't say she stole the money" can change meaning depending on which word is stressed. Training students to recognize and apply stress correctly helps improve their spoken English.

Recording and self-assessment is another powerful tool for pronunciation improvement. By recording themselves answering IELTS-style questions and then listening to the playback, students can identify mispronunciations, awkward pauses, and areas that need refinement. This technique encourages self-awareness and allows learners to track their progress over time. [4; 205]

Expanding Lexical Resource

A strong vocabulary is essential for achieving a high IELTS Speaking score. One way to build lexical resource is through **thematic vocabulary practice**, where students learn and apply words related to specific IELTS topics, such as education, technology, or travel. For example, instead of repeatedly using the word "good" when describing an experience, students can practice using more precise words like "enjoyable," "rewarding," or "memorable."

Paraphrasing exercises also help students develop flexibility in their language use. Being able to express the same idea in different ways is crucial for demonstrating a broad vocabulary. For example, if asked about the advantages of online learning, a student could say, "It allows flexibility in scheduling," or rephrase it as, "One major benefit is that students can manage their time more effectively." Practicing paraphrasing ensures that students do not rely on repetitive phrases.

Lastly, **using collocations and idioms** can enrich a student's spoken English and make it sound more natural. Common collocations, such as "make a decision" instead of "do a decision," or "strongly recommend" instead of "very recommend," help learners sound more fluent. Additionally, idiomatic expressions like "a piece of cake" (meaning something is easy) or "hit the books" (meaning to study hard) can add variety and depth to responses. For example, instead of simply saying, "The exam was easy," a student could say, "The test was a piece of cake." [5; 230]

Interactive Learning and Feedback

Developing speaking skills for the IELTS exam is most effective when learners engage in interactive activities. By participating in group discussions, simulated tests, and technology-

driven feedback sessions, students can significantly enhance their fluency and confidence.

To begin with, **peer discussions** provide an excellent opportunity for students to practice speaking in a relaxed environment. Engaging in group conversations enables learners to articulate their thoughts, respond to different viewpoints, and gain confidence in expressing themselves. For instance, students might debate the advantages and disadvantages of online education, which encourages them to think critically while practicing spontaneous speech. Furthermore, receiving feedback from peers allows them to identify areas for improvement in real time, making this a dynamic and beneficial learning method.

In addition, **mock speaking tests** are essential for preparing students for real exam conditions. By simulating IELTS interviews with a teacher or study partner, students familiarize themselves with the exam format, time constraints, and question types. For example, practicing under timed conditions with an examiner-style interviewer helps students manage their nerves and structure their responses more effectively. Moreover, repeated exposure to test-like situations ensures that students develop strategies to handle unexpected questions with ease.

Beyond traditional methods, **AI-based speaking analysis** has become an increasingly popular tool for language learners. Many language learning apps now offer instant feedback on pronunciation, fluency, and grammatical accuracy. For instance, apps like ELSA Speak or Speechling analyze spoken responses and highlight mispronunciations, allowing students to refine their speech patterns. Additionally, using AI tools provides learners with unlimited practice opportunities, enabling them to track progress over time and focus on specific weaknesses.

Through incorporating these interactive learning techniques, students can create a well-rounded approach to IELTS Speaking preparation. While peer discussions enhance conversational skills, mock tests simulate real exam pressure, and AI-based feedback ensures precise pronunciation and fluency improvement. Consequently, a combination of these strategies leads to a more confident and well-prepared test taker. [6; 260]

Managing Speaking Anxiety

Overcoming anxiety is crucial for improving performance in the IELTS Speaking test. Many students struggle with nervousness, which can affect their fluency and clarity. However, by adopting effective strategies such as relaxation techniques, positive thinking, and gradual exposure, they can gain confidence and reduce stress.

To start with, **relaxation techniques** play a key role in calming nerves before speaking. Practicing deep breathing exercises helps regulate heart rate and creates a sense of control. For instance, students can use the 4-7-8 breathing method, where they inhale for four seconds, hold their breath for seven seconds, and exhale slowly for eight seconds. This simple technique can be particularly helpful right before an exam, ensuring that students feel more composed and focused.

Additionally, engaging in light physical activity, such as stretching or short walks, can further reduce tension.

At the same time, **positive self-talk** is an essential tool for overcoming self-doubt. Many students tend to focus on their mistakes or fear of making errors, which only increases anxiety. Instead, replacing negative thoughts with encouraging affirmations can help build confidence. For example, rather than thinking, "I will forget my words and fail," a student can repeat phrases like, "I am prepared, and I can express my ideas clearly." Moreover, visualizing a successful speaking performance can reinforce a positive mindset, making students feel more capable and ready.

Another important strategy is **gradual exposure**, which involves slowly increasing speaking duration to build confidence over time. Rather than immediately attempting long and complex responses, students can start by practicing short answers and gradually extend their speech. For instance, a beginner might begin with 10-second responses to simple questions and then progress to 30-second or one-minute answers. In addition, participating in casual conversations with friends, recording responses, or joining speaking clubs can provide low-pressure environments for gradual improvement.

By combining these strategies, students can effectively manage their anxiety and perform better in the IELTS Speaking test. While relaxation techniques help maintain composure, positive self-talk fosters a confident attitude, and gradual exposure ensures a steady improvement in speaking abilities. As a result, learners can approach the exam with a sense of calm and readiness, allowing them to perform at their best. [1; 135]

In conclusion, a structured approach to IELTS Speaking preparation can significantly enhance students' fluency, pronunciation, and confidence. By implementing targeted practice techniques, utilizing interactive learning strategies, and managing anxiety effectively, students of foreign language universities can improve their speaking performance. Consistent practice and exposure to authentic English conversations ensure better results in the IELTS Speaking test.

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