

Review

Metruk, Rastislav: *Researching Speaking : Teaching and Assessment*. Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci : 2018. ISBN 978-80-244-5388-0.

In contemporary society the English language is considered as lingua franca. The clear majority of authors, educators and researchers around the world direct their attention toward improvement of language acquisition as well as language teaching. The most important target of learning for any language is the ability to speak/communicate, pass on the message from the speaker to the listener without major breakdowns. The spoken utterance is then logically the most crucial area for both teachers and learners. An even more necessary feature from the teaching perspective appears to be the approach to assessment and scoring the learners' oral performance. Recently a published work called: *Research Speaking : Teaching and Assessment* as the title itself claims to survey speaking skills from two major perspectives. The first one investigates the issues linked to teaching spoken utterance while the second pays more attention to the newly designed holistic and analytic scoring scales aimed for assessment of speaking on B2 and C1 levels according to CEFR.

The structure of the monograph has the work divided into four chapters that cover specific areas that are interconnected, and these include specific subchapters that focus on selected themes. The whole publication is comprised of ninety-nine pages.

The introductory chapter which is further developed into three subchapters discusses the theoretical background of teaching speaking. The presentation of language teaching starts with the identification of communicative competence and its further elements. Next in line is mentioned the definition of the communicative approach together with the roles of a teacher and the shift from teacher-oriented education to learner-oriented classes. This theoretical summary is concluded by the subject matter of English teaching: language systems and skills.

Chapter number two is devoted to the teaching of speaking skills. Its five subchapters analyse selected components that play key roles when learners of English acquire this language in spoken form. The opening part begins with the content when teaching speaking mainly the subskills such as: pronunciation, fluency, cohesion and coherence, discourse markers and others. The following portion of this chapter aims at the descriptors, levels and scales that are stated in the CEFR for speaking. Also described briefly are the features of fluency, accuracy and appropriacy. The fourth subchapter goes more deeply into the practice of teaching and provides examples regarding the way speaking should be taught at school namely by listing and explanation of the most suitable activities.

Furthermore, it strengthens the importance of feedback and provides some advice for carrying out activities. The ending is about pronunciation as a component of speaking and its objectives, models.

The third part of the discussed book is the most extensive as it consists of seven subchapters that cover over 21 pages. Here the author deals with the assessment of speaking skills. In the introduction the principles of assessment are stated. Next the formative and summative types are explained. The third subchapter summarizes all the potential pitfalls that teachers/examiners come across when evaluating speaking. All shown examples are relevant as they may mislead the scope of examining the spoken utterance and regarding this the subsequent part is oriented to the design of speaking tests that have the form of an interview. In addition to this the author also provides the ways to assess the skill of speaking mainly using holistic and analytic scoring. The last two subchapters go in depth when they separately explain holistic and analytic assessment of spoken utterance providing frequent examples of possible rating scales, their criteria and band descriptors being designed by some prestigious examiners.

The last chapter aims for the presentation of the newly designed scoring scales that are both holistic and analytic. According to the author these scales are created for learners of English at B2 and C1 levels. The first subchapter closely depicts the selection and substantiation of criteria for the new scales from analytic typology. These are: fluency and discourse, interaction, pronunciation, grammar range and accuracy, vocabulary. Chapter number two states the fact that the design of new scales is predominantly for the interview format meaning one examinee and two examiners (interlocutor, assessor), although after small amendment these could be applied also for a paired interview. It also contains the explanation of assigned points for each scale and state the grades. The end of the chapter presents tables where two new scales are given together with detailed characterization of each band.

In the beginning of this reviewed publication the idea stated by the author that the content should be useful for teachers and scholars has its validation as the chapters provide lots of important issues concerning the teaching of English specifically the speaking skills with the added value of having scoring scales immediately ready for application. This manual/textbook is suitable for university students that prepare themselves for becoming English teachers together with practising teachers who seek suitable material and tips to make speaking more attractive. It would be beneficial if this book would had had a chapter with results brought by survey from Slovak schools indicating the contemporary English teachers' point of view about the assessment issue. This could be input for future inquiry and deepening of the selected context. Finally, the author has not included the process/system by which the final look of the scales has been composed. This feature is lacking.

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