

## **Speaking: The ESL Learners' Perspective**

**J.M.P.V.K. JAYASUNDARA**

**Department of Management Sciences, Faculty of Management**

**UVA WELLASSA UNIVERISTY**

**SRI LANKA**

Email Address: [jayasundarajmpvk@gmail.com](mailto:jayasundarajmpvk@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** English language was a Colonial inheritance to Sri Lanka, reflecting the one of the major consequences of colonial era which still remains supreme in all aspects, gaining more power and acceptance throughout Sri Lankan society. Hence, in Sri Lanka teaching and learning English as a Second Language (L2) is a common and popular phenomenon all over primary, secondary and tertiary educational arenas. In order to be competent in the English as L2, it is essential to acquire the basic language skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. However, it is a well accepted fact that teachers need to stress more on Speaking and Listening opportunities for the ESL/EFL learners in language classrooms to make them exposed towards their target language. Consequently, the most significant consideration should focus on facilitating the ESL learners to be fluent in English. Thus, the present research intends to explore the perspective on speaking skill by undergraduates who pursue English as their Second Language. In order to achieve the objective, primary data, collected utilizing a designed questionnaire from randomly selected sample of 60 undergraduates at UvaWellassa University. Further, statistical software “Minitab 15” has been employed for analytical purpose. The results ascertained through the analysis revealed that majority (61%) of the respondents’ belief of their language skills as average. Moreover, highest number of respondents (65%) stated that the best chance they gain to speak in English is at the university than anywhere else. Subsequently, the biggest problem in speaking English has been reported as finding appropriate words (48%) while second bigger problem has been mentioned as constructing sentences correctly by 35% of respondents. According to opinion of the mainstream, reporting 74%, the best way to improve their speaking skill is, working in an English speaking environment. Most interestingly, no one believes attending English tuition classes as the best way to improve their English skills. If students had to speak in front of an audience, majority of (43%) respondents would choose to present a subject which have been prepared before while only 17% has declared that they take part in “impromptu” speech with short notice. Hence, the findings are imperative to better facilitate ESL learners in achieving speaking skills. Introducing remedial measures to uplift the performance and moreover it is of assistance in motivating L2 learners in Sri Lankan education arena while focusing attention on enhancing listening as a receptive skill in order to make L2 learners competent orators in English. Moreover, the results entail in assisting syllabus designers and curriculum developers as well as providing advantageous for future research to be conducted pursuing this line of research.