

**КРАЙОВА Олена Володимирівна,**  
*Національний університет оборони  
України*

**ЦИБАНЮК Тетяна Іванівна,**  
*Національний університет оборони  
України*

## **ENCOURAGING STUDENTS TO EXPRESS OPINIONS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING**

Helping students express their ideas and opinions in English is vital for developing fluency, confidence, and critical thinking skills. Many learners feel the barrier to speak due to fear of lack of vocabulary, making mistakes, or lack of opportunities. As educators, we can use engaging and structured methods in order to make the process of sharing opinions enjoyable and natural. The essay is aimed to introduce several effective strategies, which have demonstrated high level of students' response in the classroom.

### *1. Create a Safe and Supportive Environment*

Feelings of judgement or anxiety will make students hesitate to share their thoughts and usually block their readiness to

communicate. Open communication is fostered by a positive classroom atmosphere which allows learners not to be afraid to take risks in speaking. A classroom culture where mistakes are seen as a part of learning process rather than failures is essential for speaking skills development. There are several ways to create a supportive atmosphere. Establishing a non-judgmental space where students feel comfortable expressing themselves is the key to a safe environment. A teacher should focus on meaning instead of correcting every mistake immediately. Using positive reinforcement could be valuable to encourage participation. Praising effort rather than perfection helps increase confidence. Allowing extra thinking time before expecting responses gives students a chance to organize their thoughts before speaking.

☞ Example: If a student hesitates to answer, give them time or let them write their ideas before speaking. You can also encourage peer support by having a partner help them formulate their thoughts.

## *2. Use Open-Ended Questions*

Closed questions (e.g., “Do you like sports?”) lead to short answers, while open-ended ones encourage thinking. A teacher

should give students a room to explain their ideas, and open-ended questions engage students in more meaningful conversations. It is a good idea to ask students to give examples when explaining their points of view. Using phrases like “Give me two reasons why” or “Explain your answer with an example” helps students make their responses wider.

☞ Example: Instead of asking “Do you like going to the cinema?”, ask “What kind of films do you prefer watching in the cinema, and why do you prefer this genre?”. It will make students express opinions with supporting details.

### *3. Debate & Discussion Activities*

Debates and discussions simulate real-world conversations, allowing students to think critically and articulate their perspectives. They let teachers create dynamic engagement in the classroom, helping students build logical arguments and respond to different opinions. There are several popular techniques, a teacher can use successfully in the classroom to create alive speaking environment. The first one is Agree/Disagree Line – After a teacher gives a statement, students move to one side of the room if they agree, the

other if they disagree, then explain their choice. This task encourages spontaneous speaking and students feel the support of their groupmates who help to justify their viewpoints. Another technique, which is worth trying, is Four Corners – A teacher Labels classroom corners with different opinions; students choose one and discuss their reasoning. This allows diverse viewpoints to appear. One more idea, which encourages students to speak is Speed Debating – Students pair up and argue both sides of a topic within a time limit. This forces them to think quickly and articulate their ideas effectively.

☞ Example: For a topic like “Social media is more harmful than beneficial”, students can debate and provide real-life examples to support their arguments.

#### *4. Use Thought-Provoking Prompts*

Many students struggle to think of what to say. Using visual and conceptual prompts helps develop ideas and generates discussions. Teachers should show controversial statements (e.g., "Robots will replace soldiers in the future.") and ask students to react. This encourages analytical thinking. “Would you rather...?” questions help encourage comparisons. Having students respond to pictures,

quotes, or real-world scenarios can involve students in alive discussion.

☞ Example: Show a picture of a war scene from science fiction film and ask, “What do you think war will be like in 2050?” This helps students develop speculative language and express opinions.

### **References:**

1. Gebhard, J. G. (2006). Teaching English as a foreign or second language: A teacher self-development and methodology guide. University of Michigan Press.
2. Hornby, G. (1995). Definition of speaking skill. New York: The Publisher.
3. Kagan, S. (n.d.). Kagan (2009). Kagan Cooperative Learning. San Clemente, CA: Kagan Publishing.