

## THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH PROVERBS AND SAYINGS IN DEVELOPING B1 LEVEL LEARNERS' SPEAKING SKILLS

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**Abstract:** *This article investigates the role of English proverbs and sayings in enhancing the speaking skills of B1 level learners. Through classroom-based research and observation, it demonstrates that integrating proverbs into speaking activities increases fluency, lexical diversity, and pragmatic competence. The findings suggest that proverb-based instruction can enrich communicative language teaching by providing learners with culturally embedded and ready-to-use expressions.*

**Keywords:** *English proverbs, speaking skills, B1 level, communicative competence, formulaic language, metaphorical language, cultural awareness*

Proverbs and sayings are an integral part of any language, reflecting the wisdom, culture, and worldview of its speakers. In English, proverbs such as "Actions speak louder than words" or "Better late than never" convey concise and memorable lessons that enrich communication. For B1 level English learners, the use of such expressions can significantly enhance speaking skills by increasing fluency, cultural awareness, and lexical variety.

This article examines how English proverbs and sayings contribute to developing speaking proficiency in B1 level learners. It explores how incorporating these expressions in speaking practice not only improves linguistic competence but also boosts confidence, pragmatic ability, and communicative effectiveness.

Research in language pedagogy underscores the importance of formulaic language—chunks, collocations, idioms, and proverbs—in developing oral fluency (Wray, 2002; Nation, 2013). Proverbs are part of this formulaic repertoire and are often used in native speaker interactions to express complex ideas succinctly. According to Moon (1998), proverbs serve not only as linguistic tools but also as cultural signposts, fostering intercultural competence in language learners.

Studies by Boers and Lindstromberg (2008) also highlight that teaching metaphorical language, including proverbs, can enhance memory retention and engagement. Moreover, learners who can use proverbs appropriately demonstrate higher pragmatic competence and social awareness (Taguchi, 2011).

This qualitative study was conducted in two English language centers, involving 24 B1-level learners aged 17 to 25. Over six weeks, learners were exposed to English proverbs through targeted classroom activities, including:

- Contextual dialogues

- Role-playing scenarios
- Storytelling using assigned proverbs
- Group discussions and debates

Data collection methods included:

- Pre- and post-intervention speaking tests
- Observational notes
- Learner interviews and feedback forms

Speaking performance was evaluated based on fluency, lexical richness, and appropriateness of expression using CEFR B1 descriptors.

The intervention showed notable improvements in learners' speaking abilities:

#### Increased Fluency

Learners began to use proverbs spontaneously in conversations, helping them maintain speech flow. Expressions like “Every cloud has a silver lining” were used to express optimism during discussions.

#### Improved Lexical Range

Learners’ speech incorporated metaphorical and idiomatic expressions, making their language more expressive and nuanced.

#### Pragmatic Awareness

Students learned to apply proverbs appropriately to social contexts, enhancing not only linguistic but also communicative competence.

#### Cultural Engagement

Discussions about the meanings and equivalents of proverbs in learners’ native languages encouraged cross-cultural reflection and deeper learning.

The results affirm that integrating English proverbs and sayings into B1 speaking instruction is both effective and engaging. These fixed expressions serve as ready-made linguistic chunks, allowing learners to express abstract thoughts with clarity and efficiency. In doing so, learners gain fluency by reducing cognitive load during speech.

Furthermore, the cultural content embedded in proverbs opens the door for intercultural communicative competence, a vital goal in 21st-century language education. Proverbs often provoke reflection and discussion, making them ideal for speaking activities such as debates, presentations, and storytelling.

However, challenges such as misinterpretation or overuse of proverbs can arise. Therefore, teachers must provide context, usage models, and opportunities for guided practice. Using visuals, comparing English proverbs with those in learners' first languages, and encouraging students to invent new ones are all effective strategies.

English proverbs and sayings offer a valuable resource for developing speaking skills among B1 level learners. By incorporating them into communicative activities, teachers can foster greater fluency, lexical diversity, and pragmatic competence. Proverbs not only add stylistic richness to learners’ speech but also deepen their cultural understanding. Future research could explore the long-term impact of proverb-based instruction on spontaneous spoken interaction and compare its effectiveness across proficiency levels.

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