Improving Speaking Skills in ELT

From Guided Questions to Meaningful Interaction

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Give learners something to say

A purpose

A partner

Support

A reason to respond



Our workshop goals

Extend short answers

Build learner-to-learner interaction

Adapt one coursebook activity



The classroom starting point

One unit → a question bank

Familiar language → personal meaning



A question can open a conversation

Answer → add a detail

Explain → give an example

Ask → respond to your partner



Start with accessible questions

What do you enjoy doing?

When do you do it?

Who joins you?



Help learners extend an answer

because…

for example…

last time…

what about you?



Demonstration 1 • A coursebook topic

Food and daily life

Think → talk → ask → report



Food • Questions with a purpose

What meal can you prepare?

How do you make it?

What could we cook together?



From practice to interaction

Practice: name three ingredients

Interaction: agree on a meal



Demonstration 2 • Conversation cards

Choose a question

Explain your view

Ask one follow-up



Environment • Make a decision

How can we reduce classroom waste?

Which action is easiest?

Choose one action together.



Demonstration 3 • Role play

A guest needs help

A receptionist offers options

Agree on a solution



Language for a helpful exchange

Could you help me with…?

We can offer…

Would that work for you?



Demonstration 4 • Listen, then speak

Listen for the situation

Retell in your own words

Suggest the next step



Use varied starting points

Pictures • stories • listening

Movies • songs • presentations



Keep every learner involved

Think first

Rehearse in pairs

Share a selected idea



Support different levels

A1: choices + short frames

A2: reasons + follow-up questions

B1: alternatives + justification



Listen while learners speak

Are they making meaning clear?

Are they responding to each other?

What support is needed next?



Feedback that helps the next attempt

Recognise a clear message

Revisit one useful language point

Try the task again



Notice progress

A clearer message

A fuller answer

A relevant follow-up

A shared outcome



Teachers design a task

Choose one unit

Build a question sequence

Add a partner and an outcome



A practical lesson sequence

Prepare → model → rehearse

Interact → reflect → try again



Make room for meaningful speaking

Start with familiar language.

Help learners expand it.

Give them a reason to interact.



Materials and acknowledgements

Workshop adaptations: BEREKET ELT Archive

Source folder: question booklets + conversation cards

Background illustration: AI-generated

