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THE IMPORTANCE OF SPEAKING SKILLS FOR ACCOUNTING STUDENTS' PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

Hakimova Umida Furqat qizi
Teacher of department "Philology"
Institute of ISFT, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Abstract

In today's globalized business environment, accountants are expected to do much more than work with numbers. They regularly communicate with clients, colleagues, managers, and international partners. As a result**,** effective speaking skills have become a crucial component of professional competence for accounting students**.** While accounting education traditionally focuses on technical knowledge, insufficient attention is often given to the development of oral communication skills. This article discusses the importance of speaking skills for accounting students and explains how these skills contribute to their professional communication and career success.

Key words

competence, cooperation, networking, facilitate, supportive, anxiety, interaction, authentic materials, financial reports.

In recent decades, the accounting profession has undergone significant changes due to globalization, technological development, and increased international cooperation. Modern accountants are no longer limited to preparing financial statements and analyzing numerical data. Instead, they are actively involved in decision-making processes, client consultations, team discussions, and professional negotiations. As a result, effective speaking skills have become an essential component of professional communication for accounting students**.** Despite this growing demand, many accounting programs continue to prioritize technical and theoretical knowledge, often paying insufficient attention to the development of oral communication skills. This imbalance may leave graduates unprepared for real workplace communication. The present article aims to examine the importance of speaking skills for accounting students' professional communication, identify key challenges in developing these skills, and discuss effective teaching approaches that can help prepare students for the communicative demands of their future careers. Traditionally, accountants were viewed primarily as technical specialists whose main responsibility was to work with financial data. However, in the modern business environment, accountants are expected to communicate financial information clearly to a wide range of audiences, including managers, investors, clients, and regulatory bodies. These audiences often do not have a strong background in accounting, which makes clear and effective oral communication especially important.

Accountants regularly participate in meetings, present financial results, explain budgeting decisions, and provide professional advice. In such situations, the ability to speak confidently and accurately can significantly influence how information is understood and decisions are made. Poor speaking skills may lead to misunderstandings, reduced professional credibility, and ineffective collaboration, even when the accountant possesses strong technical expertise. Furthermore, English has become the dominant language of international business and finance. Accounting students who plan to work in multinational companies or engage with international clients must be able to communicate effectively in English. Therefore, speaking skills in

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English play a crucial role in ensuring professional success in the global accounting market. Accounting students have specific communicative needs that differ from those of general English learners. They are required to use specialized vocabulary, explain financial concepts, and communicate in formal and semi-formal professional contexts. For example, future accountants may need to describe financial statements, discuss tax regulations, explain audit findings, or answer client questions during consultations.

In addition to language accuracy, professional speaking requires fluency, coherence, appropriate tone, and confidence. The ability to respond spontaneously, clarify misunderstandings, and adjust language according to the audience is particularly important in workplace communication. Employers increasingly value graduates who can express their ideas clearly, work effectively in teams, and maintain professional relationships. Consequently, accounting students who develop strong speaking skills are often better prepared to meet employers' expectations and adapt to workplace demands.

Although speaking skills are clearly important, many accounting students experience difficulties in developing them. One of the most common challenges is speaking anxiety**,** especially when speaking in a foreign language. Students may fear making grammatical or lexical mistakes, misusing professional terminology, or being negatively evaluated by teachers and peers. This anxiety often leads to limited participation in class discussions and speaking tasks.

Another challenge is the limited amount of profession-related speaking practice provided in many English courses. In some educational contexts, English instruction focuses primarily on reading, writing, and grammar, while speaking is treated as a secondary skill. Even when speaking activities are included, they may be general in nature and not connected to accounting contexts. As a result, students may struggle to transfer their classroom speaking experience to real professional situations.

Lack of exposure to authentic communication is also a problem. Many students rarely have opportunities to practice English outside the classroom, which slows down the development of fluency and confidence. These factors combined can significantly hinder students' progress in speaking skills.

To address these challenges, speaking instruction for accounting students should be closely aligned with their academic and professional needs. An English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approach is particularly suitable for this purpose. ESP emphasizes the teaching of language skills that learners require for specific fields, such as accounting and finance.

Profession-oriented speaking activities can play a central role in ESP instruction. Role-plays, simulations, case discussions, and presentations allow students to practice realistic workplace scenarios in a controlled learning environment. For example, students can role-play meetings with clients, simulate audit discussions, or present financial reports to their peers. These activities help students become familiar with professional language use and communication patterns.

Group discussions and collaborative tasks also encourage interaction and reduce speaking anxiety. When students work together, they can support each other and gradually build confidence. In addition, the use of authentic materials, such as financial reports, business case studies, and professional videos, enhances students' understanding of how English is used in real accounting contexts. Teachers play a crucial role in facilitating effective speaking instruction. By creating a supportive classroom atmosphere and providing constructive feedback, teachers can encourage students to participate actively and take risks in speaking.

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Emphasizing communication over perfection helps students focus on meaning rather than fear of mistakes.

The development of strong speaking skills has a direct impact on accounting students' career prospects. Graduates with good oral communication skills are generally more successful in job interviews, workplace interactions, and professional networking. They are better equipped to express their ideas, defend their opinions, and collaborate with colleagues.

As accountants advance in their careers, they often take on managerial or advisory roles that require frequent communication and leadership. In such positions, speaking skills become even more important than technical expertise alone. Additionally, accountants who communicate effectively are more likely to build trust with clients, enhance professional relationships, and contribute positively to organizational success.

As accountants progress in their careers, they are increasingly expected to take on roles that involve leadership, supervision, and decision-making. In such positions, communication skills become even more important than technical expertise alone. Managers and senior accountants must present financial information to non-specialists, justify strategic decisions, and provide guidance to junior staff. Strong speaking skills enable them to explain complex financial issues in a clear and persuasive manner, which is essential for effective leadership and organizational decision-making.

Moreover, accountants who are able to explain financial information clearly are more likely to gain the trust of clients and stakeholders. Clients often rely on accountants not only for accurate financial data but also for professional advice and reassurance. When accountants communicate confidently and transparently, clients feel more secure in their decisions and are more likely to maintain long-term professional relationships. This trust is a key factor in client satisfaction and loyalty. Good oral communication also enhances professional credibility. Accountants who can present information clearly and respond confidently to questions are often viewed as experts in their field. This credibility can lead to greater professional recognition, increased responsibilities, and opportunities for career advancement. In addition, effective communication supports the development of strong business relationships, which are essential for professional networking and career growth.

In this way, speaking skills contribute not only to individual career development but also to the overall success of the organization. Clear communication improves internal collaboration, strengthens client relationships, and supports informed decision-making. Therefore, investing in the development of speaking skills is beneficial for both accounting professionals and the organizations in which they work.

In conclusion, speaking skills are a vital element of professional communication for accounting students in today's global and competitive business environment. While technical knowledge remains essential, it is no longer sufficient on its own. Accounting students must also be able to communicate financial information clearly, confidently, and professionally in spoken English. Integrating ESP-based, profession-oriented speaking instruction into accounting education can significantly improve students' communicative competence and readiness for the workplace. Therefore, greater emphasis should be placed on developing speaking skills as an integral part of accounting programs to ensure that graduates are fully prepared for professional challenges.

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