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## THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN IMPLEMENTING JUST A MINUTE (JAM) SESSIONS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

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### **Abstract:**

*In this modern and competitive world, there are lots of changes taking place in each and every field. We can witness these changes in science and technology, engineering, medicine, educations, research, information technology, business and communication, research, trade and commerce and so on. The same scenario is repeating in the present world of job market and there are very few skilled people who can prove their real talent in the existing corporate and business organisations. The managements of these organisations are trying to pick the right candidates for the progress of their organisations in order to sustain in this healthy competition. As they assume that the employees of the company are the main pillars of their further development, they take utmost care in choosing the people who have got thorough knowledge about the latest trends in their fields and excellent skills to prove their talent in this modern world. The present generation of learners and the job seekers also understand the requirements of the employers and try to learn these skills, especially communication skills, in order to lead a successful career. They also realize that the immediate solution for this problem is to acquire oral communication skills such as JAM sessions, group discussions, debates, presentations, etc. So the job seekers try to acquire these skills by approaching some training centres where they are trained properly with the required skills. As classroom is the ideal place to learn these skills, teachers should pay more attention on these JAM sessions to prepare their learners to get good opportunities in their future job attempts. As JAM sessions are the foundation stones to develop oral communication skills, the teachers and the trainers should think of alternate strategies to prepare their learners to develop their oral communication skills in order to make them self-confident and successful in their job attempts.*

*The present research paper lays emphasis on the need to acquire oral communication skills in the present competitive job market. It also explores the importance of JAM sessions as they play a vital role in developing these speaking skills. Moreover, the main purpose and the advantages of these JAM sessions are elaborated in detail. Furthermore, the role of teachers in promoting these skills among their learners is comprehensively given. Finally, some suggestions are given how to develop these skills innovatively by using the available technology and adopting certain novel techniques in English classrooms in the modern era.*

**Key words:** *activities, JAM sessions, job market, English language classroom, learners, oral communication, speaking skills, strategies, teachers.*

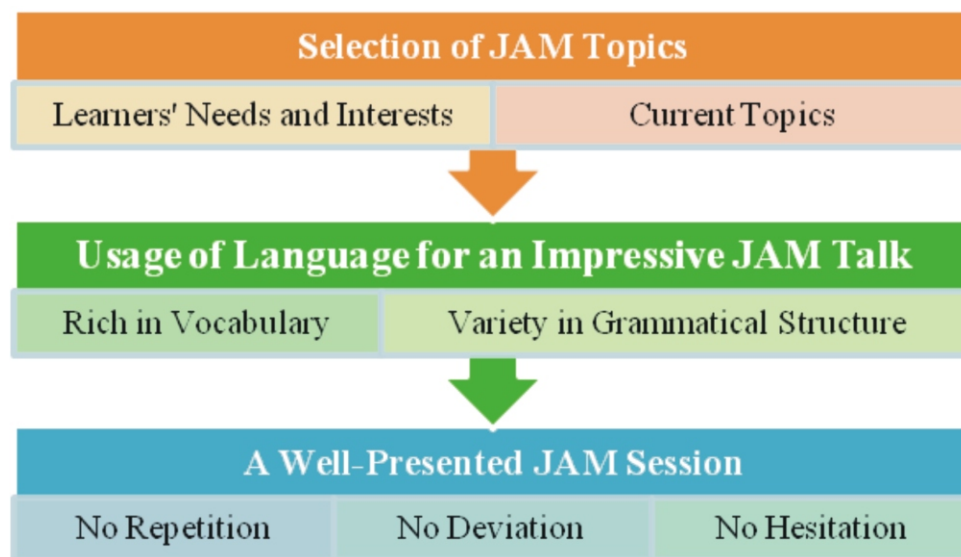
### **Introduction**

In this modern world, communication plays an important role in order to achieve success in one's life. Without communication, no one can achieve any kind of progress in their respective fields. There are a lot of changes taking place in almost all the areas and people should have a good knowledge about these changes. They witness these changes in communication technology, engineering, medicine, trade and commerce, education, business, etc. Accordingly, they try to bring changes in their thoughts and feelings to achieve success in their respective fields. They also realize the importance of speaking skills that develop their oral communication as well as presentation skills to sustain in the present competitive job market. As

most of the employers are aiming at selecting the versatile, multi-talented and high-skilled people with good communication skills, the job seekers realize that learning the language skills is the right solution to overcome these problems. So, the job aspirants have understood the present situation in the international job market and are now trying their level best to acquire the communication skills.

Due to globalization, there have been tremendous changes in all the fields and most of the business organisations and software companies have started establishing their firms in most of the countries. They aim at capturing a major part of their businesses at the international level. Thus, they look for highly-skilled and well-talented people who can communicate well with the others and convince them in selling their products. So the companies try to recruit people whose communication skills are excellent and extraordinary in addition to their subject knowledge. After realizing the actual scenario, the job seekers are now trying to acquire the needed skills for communication such as JAM sessions, group discussions, interviews, debates, presentations and so on. JAM sessions seem to be the basic foundation for all these activities and the job seekers of the contemporary society are trying to improve their speaking skills by approaching some private coaching centres.

The modern English language teachers who always have conscious about the outer world are trying with various innovative techniques and methods in their teaching. They have come across the problems faced by their learners and the struggles they experience at the time of their interviews. Then the teachers finally come to a conclusion that JAM sessions are of immense use for those who are hesitant to speak or who cannot speak continuously at least for a minute. So they introduce these JAM sessions as speech improvement activities in their regular English classrooms in order to prepare their learners to participate in various speech activities without any fear or hesitation.



**Fig: Important factors of a JAM Session**

JAM sessions are very simple and short activities that take only one-minute time to give a talk but they develop the speakers' speaking skills as well as their flow of thoughts. The main principle behind these JAM sessions is to prepare the speakers to speak on a given topic for a short period of one minute, by following the main three principles: *No Deviation*, *No Repetition* and *No Hesitation*. Here, *No Deviation* means the speakers should not go beyond the given subject and they have to stick to the topic till the end of their speech. *No Repetition* means the speakers should not repeat certain vocabulary items except the content words, prepositions, conjunctions, etc. and there should be a variation in the use of grammatical structures also. The speakers should not use the same sentence structures in their speech/talk. So the best

JAM speech includes rich in vocabulary and variety in grammatical structure. The selection of topics depends upon the needs and interests of the learners and most of the topics are chosen from day-to-day life events or current topics.



**Fig: Steps involved in a JAM Session**

The above figure discloses that there are four main steps involved in these JAM sessions and these steps are very crucial both for the learners as well as for the teachers. First of all, the topic selected for these JAM sessions should be a familiar one and it should be selected by the learners according to their needs and interests. When the learners find any difficulty in choosing the topics, the teachers have to suggest them some topics. Then, the preparation part is a crucial part for the learners. Once the topic is declared or chosen, the learners prepare for the specific topic in the given preparation time of two-minutes. If the class is very large, then the teachers divide the class into various groups and the learners discuss the topic within their groups and jot down the important points and prepare a final draft. Later, the same points will be organized well in order and presented to the whole by one among the members from each group. But, individual participation will be there when the class is small in size. During this preparation time, the teachers act as facilitators and go around the classrooms in order to make the learners to do the task with care and also assist them whenever and wherever they need any help. The third stage is the most important stage where the participants have to give a talk without any deviation to the topic, without any repetition and without any hesitation. There should be a continuous flow of speech, without any long pauses and there should be variation in vocabulary and grammatical structure. There may be some objections from the fellow-learners in case if anything goes wrong. At this juncture, the teachers have to decide whether the objection is genuine or not and once it is decided, then the speakers are asked to continue their talk. Once this session is completed, the teachers have to give right feed back to the learners. At this final stage, the teachers discuss the learners' mistakes in the feedback session and from this experience the learners try to improve their speech for the next session.

Though JAM sessions take a short time to perform, the learners are benefited a lot from them. First of all, the learners enhance their speaking skills. As JAM sessions prepare the learners to speak continuously for a minute without any deviation to the given topic, the learners speak precisely and they try not to repeat a single point. Moreover, the listeners have to listen to the talk carefully and they have to raise an objection whenever the speaker deviates from the topic or repeats the same points again and again. As the listeners have to concentrate more on the talk, it automatically improves their listening skills. When the topic is given to the speakers, they have to prepare for the topic and a two-minute preparation time is given

to the speakers to prepare their speech. In this speech preparation process, the learners have to go through several resources to get suitable points for the talk. So the learners search for the relevant information and go through it very quickly by skimming the text. Later, the learners search for the specific or particular point that seems to be more relevant to the given topic and they scan the text thoroughly for this purpose. In this way, the learners develop their skimming and scanning skills from these JAM sessions to get the relevant details to prepare for their speech.



**Fig: Qualities of the best JAM Presenter**

The above table discloses the qualities of the speakers of a JAM session. It shows that when the topic is given to the speakers, they should stick to the given point and there should not be any deviation to it. As the main aspect of the JAM session is to impress the audience, there should be novelty in the talk. Furthermore, the vocabulary used in the talk should not be repeated and there should be variation in grammatical structure. The speakers should give the talk with high self-confidence and the ideas should be well prepared and properly arranged. While giving a talk, the speakers should not give longer pauses and the tone should not be flat, but there should be a variety in tone and speech. Moreover, the speakers should have good speaking skills as well as nice presentation skills. It is a known fact that the whole speech becomes in vain unless it is well presented. So the speakers should take utmost care while preparing their speeches and presenting them to the audience. Once the listeners find any fault with the speakers' speeches, it shows the way how the speeches have been prepared. The most important thing in presenting the speech is the proper use of body language. The presenters have to use all the possible expressions and gestures to grab the attention of the listeners and make them concentrate on their speeches. Finally, the speakers should manage their time well by utilizing the maximum time duration given to them. Once the speakers follow these points while giving their talk freely and without any hesitation, it will be a well-organized talk

and the listeners really appreciate that talk. The listeners are greatly impressed by the talk that is well-organized and well-prepared and then they also try to give such flawless speeches. This kind of encouragement develops the confidence levels of the speakers so that they can also prepare their speeches without any drawback and try to impress the listeners.



**Fig: Benefits or Advantages of a JAM Session**

In these JAM sessions, the learners always try to think in different ways to improve their speech. As a result, the learners' critical thinking about the subject will be immensely developed. When the learners work individually to prepare for the speech, they develop their self-learning skills so that their self-confidence levels also increase automatically. So, it leads to learners' autonomy where the learners work independently without taking the assistance either from their teachers or from their peers. Furthermore, the speakers concentrate only on the given topic and the listeners listen to their speeches with more attention as they have to find out the loopholes of the speech. So, with these JAM sessions, the speakers as well as the listeners develop their power of concentration on the topic given. When the speakers prepare for their speeches, they note down some important points from the available resources and try to make their speeches more attractive and interesting. This leads the learners to improve their note taking skills also. Moreover, when a lesson or topic is taught, the learners note down some important points from it and later they refer to those points in order to make a better understanding about the lesson or topic that is taught in the regular classrooms. So the learners develop their note-taking skills through these JAM sessions as this note-taking skill is more important one which is more essential even to jot down some main points from a speech. Gradually this skill leads the learners to make a summary of the lesson or topic that is taught in the classroom. In this way, the learners can develop their summarizing skills as well. These summarizing skills are very important to speak only about the important points by eliminating or discarding the repeated or unnecessary points from the lesson or topic taught. By keeping these points in view, the learners can elaborate these points whenever and wherever necessary. This is an added advantage for the learners to prepare for their exams or give speeches effectively without any hesitation or repetition.

Once the learners get confidence in delivering speeches on a particular topic for one minute without any deviation or repetition through these JAM sessions, they can extend their speeches for more than a minute also. This technique certainly boosts up the learners' self-confidence to prolong their speeches even for a long time. Hence, these JAM sessions promote the learners to have a good discussion about the topic taught in their classrooms. So the learners develop argumentation skills from these discussions and debates and they participate very actively in these discussion or debate sessions. As a result, the learners will be able to participate in group discussions and debates with more self-confidence and without any hesitation. Moreover, the learners can also give presentations on a specific topic with the motivation they have got from these JAM sessions. These sessions also lead the learners to give presentations on the topic taught in the regular English classrooms. As there is a great demand for oral communication skills in the present globalization era, everyone is interested in acquiring these skills. As most of the business organisations promote their businesses through good presentations, acquiring these presentation skills also has become one of the essential elements for the job aspirants. According to Thornbury (2005: 91), "Oral presentations provide realistic language tasks for students to engage in. This is important because speaking tasks that have no relation to real-life language use "are poor preparation for autonomy". He further says, "Presentations also provide a more authentic way of practicing English than simple speaking drills. This is because they require students to use their L2 to understand the topics they are presenting on and communicate this understanding to others. This is closer to real language use and gives students an opportunity to develop research and critical thinking skills, as well as linguistic and communicative skills.....". In this context, Živković (2014) adds, "Presentations have also been shown to improve students' abilities in ways that can be beneficial for their future employment". Further Bruce says, "This is especially true in the EAP or ESP context, where there is a much higher chance that students will be asked to use English to present in their future jobs". So the preparation that the learners have underdone during these JAM sessions becomes the best rehearsals for them to promote their speaking skills to participate in some activities like group discussions, debates and presentations which are very crucial for their future in getting the right jobs and building their bright career. Hence the English language teachers should concentrate more on these JAM sessions as they are of immense use for the learners to develop their multi-skills in order to prepare them to give a talk on the given subject without any deviation, repetition and hesitation. Before the teachers going to wind up these JAM sessions in their normal classrooms, they can assign some additional work to the groups or pairs in order to make them busy as well as to develop the learners' oral communications well. It is true in the words of Ur (1996:22), who says, "Before the actual process of bringing the activity to the end, however, some pairs or groups may finish earlier than others. Such extra work may include, for example, a further elaboration of the task, getting students to read their books, or asking students to get on with their homework". In order to make the class always busy and to avoid students from disturbing the others, these extra activities are very useful in the normal English classrooms. There is also a possibility for the teachers to concentrate more on the bright learners by giving some extra work to those who can finish the tasks given to the whole classroom early and this kind of activities certainly make those bright learners involving busily in the classroom activities. Thus, the ideal teachers can develop the bright learners' oral communication skills to the maximum extent and make them to participate actively even in the classroom activities that are additionally given to them.

As the present job market mostly depends on oral communication skills, presentation skills and individual talent in addition to the subject knowledge of the employee, the job seekers have formed a kind of phobia in their minds about these JAM sessions and some of them try to escape from speaking in these sessions. In such cases, the teachers should recognize them and try to motivate them to participate in these JAM sessions. If needed, the teachers should supply some sentences to those who struggle a lot in searching for the words or sentences. Therefore, the teachers have to arrange some special sessions for

these learners in order to encourage them to improve their speaking skills. The English language teachers have to conduct many more JAM sessions in their regular classrooms so that the learners develop their speaking skills and also get success in their future job attempts. As the English classroom is the main platform to mould the learners in such a way that they develop their oral as well as written communication skills, the teachers should try their best to motivate the learners and allot more time to practise these skills in their classrooms.

Once the learners are trained systematically by following all the principles of these JAM sessions, they will follow all the rules so that they will turn into excellent speakers. Furthermore, the learners can improve problem-solving techniques, critical thinking and presentation skills. Therefore, these JAM sessions are just like an acid test for the job aspirants. As the main intension of introducing these JAM sessions is to develop the learners' communication skills and build confidence in them to face any challenge in their lives, there is no wonder that they excel not only in their job interviews and in their professional career, but also in solving problems and making right decisions. So the English language teachers are expected to work with more commitment and dedication to mould the future of their learners as the EFL/ESL classrooms are the ideal places to learn the skills which are very essential for their survival in the future. As oral communication is given much importance these days in the selection procedure of the job aspirants, it is the need of the hour for the English language teachers to introduce these skills in the EFL/ESL classrooms. Therefore, the English language teachers have to adopt various innovative techniques and methods to employ these JAM sessions since their main purpose of these activities is to promote the learners' oral communication skills. Furthermore, the learners should also understand that the present complex system of getting through the several rounds of interviews so that they have to concentrate more on these JAM sessions to improve their oral communication skills in the presence of their teachers in the EFL/ESL classrooms.

### **Conclusion**

In this paper, an attempt has been made to give a clear picture of the current job market and the requirement of the oral communication skills has been emphasized. This paper also brought to light the importance of JAM sessions where they promote learners' oral communication skills. Furthermore, some principles involved in these JAM sessions have been highlighted. Later, the application of these JAM sessions to various language skills has been expounded. Finally, some useful suggestions have been given for the teachers to develop their teaching skills in organizing these JAM sessions successfully and some useful tips have been given to the learners by making use of the classroom regularly to get mastery over their speaking skills, build self-confidence to perform various difficult tasks and get success in their future career.

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Furthermore, the learners should understand that the present critical **complex** system of getting through the several rounds of the interview and concentrate more on JAM sessions to improve their oral communication skills in the presence of their teachers in their EFL/ESL classrooms.



**Fig: The Role of the Teachers during the JAM Sessions in the Modern English Classrooms**

The above figure discloses that the role of the teachers during these JAM sessions in the modern English classrooms has become very crucial as there is no scope for the teacher-centred learning in the present learner-centred approach. Hence, the teachers have to change their out-dated methods and techniques of their teaching and must adopt the latest techniques in teaching the language. Especially in these JAM sessions, teachers in the English classrooms should act like a facilitator, a co-operator, a helper, a director, a supervisor, a counsellor, a companion, a motivator, a trouble shooter, an organizer and a prompter, rather than a dictator and a teacher. As a result, the responsibility of the English teachers will be increased automatically and the learners will perform their tasks well in a learner-friendly atmosphere.

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