Practice makes perfect

**Summary:** Talking to native speakers is the fastest way to improve language fluency and proficiency. Even if at the beginning the L2 learner will not feel at ease, for example because he is not confident in his abilities, or his vocabulary is limited, or maybe because he is afraid of making grammatical errors, the only way to overcome these fears is by practicing. Striving to rephrase, mispronouncing words and listening to the correct pronunciation, experiencing the correct word usage, will make the person enhance his language skills or strengthen the ones he already possessed.

**Key words:** Conversation, speaking, practice, fluency, proficiency.

**Aims:** Enhancing learners confidence through conversation practice; increasing language proficiency and fluency; promoting socialisation and inclusion.

**Participants:** Trainers, teachers and students of all school levels.

**Description:** This activity consists of two exercises where the participants will be divided into groups. For the first one, each group will be provided with a list of words on a specific topic, for example weather, sport, food, clothes etc. Then they will have half an hour to think about something pertaining to that topic: past experiences, personal tastes, personal interests or curiosity. Then native speakers will be invited to join the activity; there will be one native speaker for each group. The member of each group will introduce themselves to the guest and then they will start a conversation focusing on the topic they have been assigned. They will take turns and will speak one at a time. The exercise will last an hour. After that, the native speakers will provide feedback and will highlight the most common errors made by the members of their groups. The facilitator will correct the mistakes and will provide further examples or other ways of saying the same things.

For the second exercise each group will have to pretend to go grocery shopping. The native speakers will play the part of the cashiers and will answer their questions. The participants will have to ask the price of some products, will ask for directions and will talk about one of the other topics addressed by the other groups. When all the groups will have concluded the exercise, a circle time session will be carried out, where each group will comment on the performances of the other participants.

**Material:** Lists of words, pieces of paper, pens.

**Method:** Learning by Doing; Active Learning; Speaking.

**Advice for Facilitators:** Try to explain that these exercises are aimed at developing their language skills and that they will not be judged.

**Contributor:** School administration, refugee institutions, youth welfare institutions, migrant associations.