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## DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILLS FOR ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDENTS

### РАЗВИТИЕ НАВЫКОВ РАЗГОВОРНОЙ РЕЧИ У СТУДЕНТОВ, ИЗУЧАЮЩИХ АНГЛИЙСКИЙ ЯЗЫК КАК ИНОСТРАННЫЙ.

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**Аннотациясы:** Англис тилин чет тили катары окутуунун негизги багыты, англис тилинде жеткиликтүү жана тушунуктуу сүйлөшүүнү студенттерге үйрөтүү бул макаланын негизги максаты. Англис тилин үйрөнүүчүлөрүнүн көпчүлүгү, ооз ээки сүйлөшү жөндөмүн билимдин жогорку көрсөткүчү деп эсептешет.

**Негизги сөздөр:** оозэки сүйлөшү жөндөмү, чет тил, студенттер.

**Аннотация:** Цель данной статьи - показать высокую значимость развития навыков разговорной речи для студентов, изучающих английский язык как иностранный. Многие, изучающие английский язык, считают разговорные навыки мерой знания языка.

**Ключевые слова:** навыки разговорной речи, иностранный язык, студенты.

**Annotation:** The aim of this paper is to show the high importance of developing speaking skills for English foreign language students. Many language learners regard speaking ability as the measure of knowing language.

**Keywords:** speaking skills, foreign language, students.

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In today's globalized world the language used most often is English. English has become the *Lingua Franca* for communication, business, education and opportunity in general. Economic and technological factors played their part in keeping English at the centre of communication. Along the history of foreign language teaching and learning, speaking has always been considered as the most essential skill to be mastered for several reasons. First, approaches and methods for teaching speaking have long been major focuses of language teaching researches and conferences. Second, a huge number of conversation and other speaking course books, audios and videos are continuously published. In addition, many language learners regard speaking ability as the measure of knowing a language. They define fluency as the ability to converse with others, much more than the ability to read, write, or comprehend oral language. They regard speaking as the most important skill they can acquire.

At present, the need for speaking mastery in English has been dramatically increasing due to the strengthening position of English as a language for international communication. Its use as the working language in 85% of international organizations and its function as the main gate to get a better job, especially in multinational companies have motivated a great number of people around the world to learn English as a second language (henceforward ESL) or and as a foreign language (henceforward EFL) in order to be able to speak in it.

Realizing the high importance of speaking skill in EFL programs, it is very important to find and use the best instructional methods, materials, activities, media, and other requirements that will help the learners master speaking skill. However, although a great number of studies aimed to help learners master speaking skill has been conducted, many EFL learners still find speaking it very difficult to master. In addition to the view that

speaking is —the most complex and difficult skill to master, another cause is possibly that those studies still mainly dealt with the linguistic aspects of second language acquisition<sup>1</sup>. Little research has been carried out regarding students' perspectives on the learning of speaking in the EFL classroom, whereas students' views—which at least provide awareness to teachers in this context—is an important aspect to be considered.

The skill of speaking skill is as crucial as any other language skill. The four skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) naturally appear together in every English class, even in the EFL context. Listening, speaking, reading and writing also occur naturally together in learning events at all grade levels, even though traditionally they were taught separately. Learning to speak a foreign language requires more than knowing its grammar and vocabulary. Learners should acquire the skill through interaction with each other. However, it is difficult for EFL learners to speak appropriate English in the classroom because of the limited language use in their real lives.

Affective factors are the most important issues that may promote students' speaking. Affective factors include self esteem, emotion, attitude, anxiety, and motivation. L2 or foreign language learning is a complex task that is susceptible to human anxiety, which is associated with feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self doubt, and apprehension. These are the factors that affect students' speaking in most EFL contexts and there are other issues as well. For example, the language level may be too difficult, or too much is given at once and the amount of the language the teacher gives the students in each session may be too much.

### **Motivating Students to Speak**

To motivate students in English Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, teachers should include many activities and strategies that attract students' attention<sup>2</sup> and make them interested in the lesson. Activities need to be student centered and communication should be authentic. This means that students are listening or speaking about something that interests them, for their own

reasons, and not merely because a teacher has asked them to. Also teacher should consider in the activities: a focus on meaning and value, not correctness; a focus on collaboration and social development; the provision of a rich context, and teaching the four skills through a variety of activities. A superior teacher encourages her/his students to speak English as much as possible inside and outside the classroom.

EFL teachers must encourage students to use language for social interaction in the classroom. Students get enough opportunities to practise the language. This helps them to acquire the language in more natural contexts. Through interaction, students can build their own conversations and create meaning that they understand, and that supports and helps them. Communication provides students with opportunities for them to focus on using the language rather than talking and learning the structure of the language. Therefore, the topics or themes around which students learn language should capture their attention and encourage them to interact more with each other. Teachers' emphasis should be on making meaning, not on error correction.

### **Strategies that Encourage Participation**

The strategies the teacher should focus on should be interesting and should capture students' attention. In the students' classroom, these activities are usually centred on songs, poems, chants, drama, stories, games and Total Physical Response (TPR) activities. All these activities can affect students and enhance their learning the language. Many teachers consider games as merely fun activities that are a waste of time, but I am sure that games in the EFL context are much more than that. Games include many factors such as rules, competition, relaxation, and learning which are all useful in promoting speaking. Games are useful because they offer situations that lower students' stress and give students chances to engage in real communication. It is asserted that students are encouraged when they have friendly competition with each other, so each student will participate in the classroom. Consequently, teachers can use these games to present and review new knowledge,

<sup>1</sup> Cameron, L. (2005). *Teaching english to young learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>2</sup> *Forum English Teaching*. Volume 50. November 2, 2012. Office of English Language Programmes.

vocabulary, and grammar. Games are good teaching tools that can be used to develop students' language learning and practise communication.

Teachers should take into consideration that songs can develop language skills, and bring enjoyment and fun into the classroom. The enjoyment aspect of learning language through songs is directly related to affective factors.

In EFL classrooms students are not comfortable and feel hesitant to speak English because they are not sure of the words. Teachers should choose activities that enhance students learning, and avoid ones that are a waste of teachers' and students' time. It can therefore be concluded that interesting and fun strategies can be used to promote speaking in the EFL classroom. If strategies are intrinsically motivating and appeal to students' goals and interests then it can have a positive impact on their speaking.

### **The Teaching Strategy**

Teachers can implement<sup>3</sup> the use of songs as everyday activities to encourage students to speak. After that, the students had to create their own dialogues and practise them, and then present them to their classmates. The songs can be used every day during teaching practice placement. A framework to investigate the use of creative strategies to encourage students' speaking, especially the use of songs and different subjects. This action is made up of a four step process: identifying an area of focus, collecting data, analyzing and interpreting the data, and developing an action plan, which is again evaluated, and the process continues until a satisfactory result is reached<sup>4</sup>. It follows a reflective cyclic pattern which makes it an ideal approach to improve teaching.

The English activities are one of opportunities to practice the students' speaking skill. The stimulations activities in the classroom should motivate students and include answering the question, sharing the idea, and also presentation. If the students do not get enough chances<sup>5</sup> and activities to practice speaking skill in language classroom, they may get discourage soon in

learning. Activities and tasks must be designed to expose the students to the aims language and increased students' motivation to learn the language in class. Those good speaking activities can motivate students<sup>6</sup>. The study that opens students' attitude to focus on individual leaning, where students do the talking activities in groups and have to take responsibilities for using communication to complete a task are revealed to be more conductive to language learning than teacher-centered classes, an organization dedicated to the development of teachers. One task used as an English teaching speaking skill activity is storytelling. It is one of activities that is the best choice which researcher see through the abilities of its.

Storytelling is the original form of teaching. Many researchers believed that story learning plays an important role in students' language development. All kinds of interesting storytelling are used in different situation which depend on the suitable of students' age and situation. Using storytelling in English classroom is one of good activities to encourage students to study English. Storytelling also can help ESL learners become more self-confident to express themselves spontaneously and creatively. Moreover the storytelling is not only assisting to stimulate students' imagination, but also in developing their language abilities. Storytelling is a process that offers opportunities to practice organizing, categorizing, and remembering information concurrently with practice in predicting, summarizing, comparing and contrasting information. The process of connection language and thought to imagery is the basic element involved in oral and written language comprehension, language expression, critical thinking, increased listening and reading comprehension, greater language fluency, and increased vocabulary.

### **Solutions to Speaking Activity Problems**

Teaching English as a second language means being able to solve problems students may have in acquiring certain language skills. There are a

<sup>3</sup> *Forum English Teaching. Volume 50. November 3, 2012. Office of English Language Programmes.*

<sup>4</sup> *Zang, Y. (2009). Reading to speak: Integrating oral communication skills. English Teaching Forum. 2009 (1).*

<sup>5</sup> *Lightbown, P. & Spada, N. (1999). How language are learned. Oxford: Oxford University Press.*

<sup>6</sup> *Shumin K. (1997). Factors to consider: Developing adult EFL students' speaking abilities. English Teaching Forum 25(3). Retrieved November, 29, 2005, from <http://exchanges.state.gov/forum/vols/vol35/no3/p8.htm>*

number of resources and activities available to get round these common speaking problems:

**Group work:** Group work increases the amount of time available for oral practice and allows more than one student to benefit from speaking time. Working in groups also lowers the inhibitions of shy students who are not comfortable speaking in front of the whole class.

**Easy language:** Simple language makes it easier for students to speak for longer without hesitation and gives them a sense of accomplishment. Essential vocabulary can be pre-taught or reviewed before the activity enabling students to fill-out their speech with more interesting sentences and rich language.

**Interesting topic:** Choosing a topic according to the interests of the class ensures student motivation. If the material and task instructions are presented clearly and enthusiastically students will be more likely to meet the challenge set for them.

**Clear guidelines:** Stating clearly what is expected from each student is essential in ensuring that everyone in the group contributes towards the discussion. Appointing a chairperson to each group to regulate participation is a way to make sure that dominant students leave discussion opportunities open to more reserved students. Feedback reveals the results of the discussion and motivates each student to follow the guidelines.

**English monitors:** A monitor can be appointed to each group to remind students speaking their mother tongue to switch back to English. A lack of classroom management and discipline will encourage students, who do not feel that there is resistance to their mother tongue, to easily revert back to it as soon as they have problems expressing themselves. A humorous points system or yellow and red football card system often works well.

### **Conclusion**

Most EFL students are more interested in learning oral skills in English than in acquiring reading, writing or listening skills. Although all four skills are equally important, it is easy to understand this point of view as people who know

English are referred to as “speakers” of English and learning to orally communicate in English presents numerous travel and work opportunities. Therefore, classroom activities that develop the ability to communicate through speech are an important component of an English language course for most learners.

None the less, writing this article made me aware of the importance of the teaching of speaking in the EFL context. I recommend that teachers of language to Foreign Language Students should use a variety of strategies that encourage the students to speak in the classroom. Materials from the prescribed course book can be adapted to include more speaking activities. Additionally, I recommend that teachers encourage students to work collaboratively on speaking tasks. I also strongly recommend that teachers consider implementing other strategies to promote students’ speaking skills, such as presentations, interviews, role plays and show-and-tell sessions. Through this article, I shared some strategies that help to promote speaking in the Foreign Language Students’ classroom, and it gave me an opportunity to implement the use of songs and storytelling and etc. to enhance students’ speaking skills. The data collected seem to support my assumptions that using different speaking methods would have a positive impact on students’ spoken production, and would increase students’ confidence in acquiring the language, and would improve their speaking skills.

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