

Methods Of Teaching Speaking In English Language Classrooms

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Abstract

This article examines the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching speaking in English language classrooms. Speaking is considered one of the most important and challenging language skills because it requires learners to use linguistic knowledge actively in real communication. The study discusses psychological and linguistic characteristics of speech, common difficulties in listening and speaking, prepared and unprepared speech, error correction techniques, and effective classroom activities for developing oral communication skills. Special attention is given to methods that help teachers foster learners' communicative competence through meaningful interaction.

Keywords: speaking skills, language teaching, communicative competence, listening comprehension, dialogue, monologue, oral communication, English language learning.

Language functions primarily as a means of communication, and speaking plays a central role in this process. In foreign language education, the development of speaking skills is essential because learners must be able not only to understand speech but also to express their own thoughts effectively. Teaching speaking involves two interconnected processes: listening comprehension and oral production. Therefore, successful language instruction should provide opportunities for learners to develop both receptive and productive skills.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the main principles of teaching speaking, identify common difficulties faced by learners, and discuss effective techniques that can be applied in classroom practice.

Psychological and Linguistic Characteristics of Speaking

Speech is a motivated activity through which individuals communicate ideas, feelings, and opinions. Effective speaking requires a communicative purpose and interaction with an interlocutor. Psychologists emphasize that speech is always motivated, addressed to someone, emotionally colored, and situational.

From a linguistic perspective, spoken language differs from written language. Oral communication often includes incomplete sentences, contractions, conversational expressions, and spontaneous responses. Therefore, language instruction should prepare learners to participate in authentic communication rather than merely reproduce memorized texts.

Difficulties in Teaching Speaking and Listening

One of the major challenges in language learning is listening comprehension. Learners often experience phonetic, lexical, and grammatical difficulties when processing spoken language. Differences between native and target language sound systems may lead to misunderstandings, while unfamiliar vocabulary and grammatical structures can further complicate comprehension.

Speaking itself is equally challenging because students must quickly select appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation while expressing their thoughts. Many learners hesitate to speak due to fear of making mistakes or lack of confidence. Consequently, teachers should create supportive classroom environments that encourage meaningful communication.

Prepared and Unprepared Speech

Speaking activities can be divided into prepared and unprepared forms. Prepared speech allows learners time to organize ideas and practice language before speaking. Examples include presentations, retellings, and planned discussions.

Unprepared speech, on the other hand, requires spontaneous language use. Learners may be asked to discuss a topic, respond to questions, summarize a text, or participate in role plays without prior preparation. Although more difficult, unprepared speaking is essential for developing real communicative competence and should gradually become a major component of classroom instruction.

Error Correction in Speaking Activities

Errors are a natural part of language learning. Effective correction should support communication rather than interrupt it. Minor mistakes in familiar language may be corrected immediately through teacher reformulation, while more complex errors can be addressed after the learner finishes speaking.

Teachers should avoid excessive interruption because it may reduce learners' confidence and willingness to participate. Instead, correction should focus on helping students improve accuracy while maintaining fluency and motivation.

Techniques for Developing Speaking Skills

A variety of classroom techniques can be used to develop speaking abilities:

- substitution and transformation exercises;
- picture description activities;
- question-and-answer tasks;
- information-gap activities;
- role plays and simulations;
- interviews and discussions;
- storytelling and retelling exercises;
- dialogue construction and performance.

Teaching speaking should progress from simple sentence production to extended utterances and finally to coherent discourse. Both monologue and dialogue activities are important. While dialogues help learners practice interaction, monologues develop the ability to organize and present ideas logically.

Conclusion

Teaching speaking is a complex process that requires systematic development of both listening and oral communication skills. Learners encounter numerous psychological, linguistic, and communicative challenges when speaking a foreign language. Effective instruction should combine prepared and unprepared speaking activities, encourage meaningful interaction, and provide opportunities for authentic communication.

The use of appropriate teaching techniques, supportive feedback, and communicative tasks helps learners gain confidence and achieve greater fluency in English. As a result, speaking becomes not only a classroom activity but also a practical tool for real-life communication.

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