

TEACHING SPEAKING SKILL IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

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Abstract: Speaking is one of the four essential skills of the English language that must be taught to students, and one of the difficult fields to both teach and to learn. Speaking skill is the ability to communicate ideas, thoughts, and information in a clear, logical and engaging way. However, students often encounter certain difficulties during speaking. This article explains barriers that prevent junior high school students from developing their English speaking abilities, and identify the most effective strategies.

Keywords: teaching speaking, certain difficulties of pupils, barriers, lacking of vocabularies, fear of making mistakes, lack of practicing, techniques for teaching speaking.

Introduction: Speaking skills are defined as the skills which allow us to communicate effectively. They give us the ability to convey information verbally and in a way that the listener can understand. Speaking skill is considered the main language skill that students should improve. In Uzbekistan, English is taught as a foreign language. In our country, English has been taught as a subject since elementary school, with a strong emphasis on vocabulary. Elementary school teachers focus on helping students understand word meanings and translations. The primary goal of English lessons at this level is to introduce the language as a field of study. Skills in speaking, listening, reading, writing, and grammar are developed further in junior high school.

Literature review: Several factors contribute to students' challenges in speaking English. Firstly, it's essential to define key terms like "language," "learning," and "teaching." According to Webster, language is a systematic method for communicating ideas or feelings through signs, sounds, gestures, or written marks that carry understood meanings. ¹For junior high school students in Uzbekistan, English is a foreign language, and they do not frequently use these conventional forms of communication in daily conversations. Additionally, as noted by Oxford, students often develop

¹S. Rahayu,(2023),Introduction Speaking is one of the English skills that must be taught to students, Journal on STBA Lia., page 3

strategies to address their perceived weaknesses, such as using prefabricated phrases and code-switching.² When they struggle to grasp the exact meaning of a statement, these strategies help them find synonyms in context and utilize nonverbal communication, like gestures or mime, to convey meaning.

Furthermore, Brown defines learning as "acquiring or receiving knowledge of a subject or skill through study, experience, or instruction" in contemporary dictionaries.³ One significant challenge faced by junior high school students is the limited practice they have in speaking English. This limitation stems from being encouraged to focus solely on vocabulary and their meanings. Additionally, similar to language and learning, Brown emphasizes that learning and teaching are interconnected. Teaching is defined as "leading and facilitating learning, enabling the learner to learn, and creating the conditions for learning."⁴ Teachers must grasp the essentials of teaching and learning languages. For students to effectively learn English as a Foreign Language, they need to step beyond the confines of their first language and engage fully with the new language, which requires total commitment, involvement, and a physical, intellectual, and emotional response. This study explores various factors from the students' perspective regarding their acquisition of English as a foreign language.

Ur identifies several factors that can make speaking difficult, including the use of the mother tongue, insufficient speaking practice, inconsistent participation, and feelings of inhibition. Inhibited students often feel shy, self-conscious, and unable to express themselves naturally.⁵ This leads to a reluctance to communicate and a lack of things to say. Low or uneven participation can occur in large classes where a few students dominate the conversation, leaving others silent or disengaged. Additionally, students may revert to their mother tongue because it feels easier for them. These factors have significant consequences, especially since English is a foreign language in Uzbekistan. Many junior high school students use English primarily in the classroom and less frequently outside of it.

Methods: Speaking is regarded as the primary language skill that students should focus on improving, but mastering it is not easy. Therefore, students require encouragement to develop this skill. Zhang notes that speaking is often the most challenging skill for many English learners, leaving them feeling inadequate in oral communication.⁶ Students encounter various difficulties when trying to speak English, including challenges with pronunciation, fear of making mistakes, understanding syntactical differences, and confusion when switching between their native language and English. This struggle to learn English speaking skills at the junior high school

²Rebecca. L.(1990), Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know,221-122

³ Brown, H. (2007). Principles of language learning and teaching, San Francisco State University.

⁴ Brown, H & Lee, H. (2015). Teaching by Principles, San Francisco State University.

⁵ Penny Ur(19960), A course in English Language Teaching, Cambridge University Press, page 117

⁶ Zhang, Y. (2009). Reading to Speak: Integrating Oral Communication Skills. English Teaching Forum, 47, 32-34.

level poses a significant challenge for English instruction. Candraloka mentions in her research titled "Investigating Problems and Difficulties of Speaking That Encounter English Language Speaking Students of Junior High School," found that students face obstacles in speaking English due to issues with vocabulary mastery, grammar, pronunciation, and a lack of practice.⁷

Result/Discussion: Students encounter numerous challenges when learning to speak English in the classroom, like lacking of vocabularies, fear of making mistakes and lack of practicing. It will be addressed for each of them.

Lack of vocabularies

Vocabulary, as noted by Nuna and Trinovangke, is not simply a list of words arranged in alphabetical order. Understanding vocabulary involves contextual learning, which is essential for grasping the meanings of words.⁸ English language learners often find it challenging to understand vocabulary terms, as they need to comprehend each word within a phrase to fully grasp its meaning. Vocabulary is a fundamental component of the English language that students must grasp when learning new words. A limited vocabulary can hinder the learning process. Trinovangke highlights the advantages that come from understanding terminology and its applications. For example, students can identify a word's form and use it effectively in spoken English. To learn English effectively, one must be familiar with parts of speech. There are eight categories of words in English:

- Nouns name people, animals, places, and abstract concepts.
- Pronouns replace nouns, preventing repetition.
- Verbs indicate actions, conditions, or events.
- Adjectives describe nouns or pronouns.
- Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs.
- Prepositions relate nouns or pronouns to other words in a sentence.
- Conjunctions connect words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs, and include coordinative, correlative, subordinate, and adverbial types.
- Interjections are short expressions used to convey emotions.

These explanations illustrate the close relationship between vocabulary mastery and speaking ability, as vocabulary is a crucial aspect of effective communication.

Fear of making mistakes

Several challenges faced by students, including difficulties in knowing when to speak and a fear of making mistakes, both of which are related to speaking. This fear can influence students' feelings and behaviors in social situations. Many students

⁷ Candraloka(2019), Investigating Problems and Difficulties of Speaking That Encounter English Language Speaking Students of Junior High School, Jurnal Universitas Mercu Buana Yogyakarta

⁸ S. Rahayu,(2023),Introduction Speaking is one of the English skills that must be taught to students, Journal on STBA Lia., page 3

experience anxiety when asked to speak English in class. This fear is often linked to concerns about criticism and negative evaluations. Additionally, the fear of being mocked by peers or judged by an audience significantly contributes to this anxiety. As a result, students often withdraw from speaking activities.

Lack of practicing

Students encounter numerous challenges when learning to speak English in the classroom, one of which is insufficient practice. Continuous practice is essential for improving English speaking skills. The importance of effective practice in this context. Often, students may desire to communicate in English but struggle to find topics to discuss. Additionally, some students may forget words they know but find it difficult to recall them when speaking.

Techniques for teaching speaking

Role play: Encourages students to take on roles and practice real life scenarios.

Debates: Help students practice structured argument and express opinions.

Group discussion: Build skill in exchange ideas and cooperative learning.

Drills and repetition: Improves fluency and accuracy in targeted structures.

Conclusion: Speaking is one of the four crucial skills in learning English, yet it can be challenging to teach and learn. This skill involves conveying ideas, thoughts, and information clearly, logically, and engagingly. However, junior high school students often face various obstacles that hinder their speaking development. In the process of teaching speaking skills, a lot is expected from teachers, such as observing students' shortcomings and attempting to address them.

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