

TEACHING SPEAKING: DEVELOPING SPEAKING ACTIVITIES

G.Mirkhodjaeva, the teacher of Humanitarian-Economical Sciences of Turin polytechnic university in Tashkent

Abstract. This article deals with the ways of developing speaking skills. It will be seen the facilities or difficulties to develop a high level of speaking proficiency. As well as, the role of the teacher is in order to improve the learners' skills, the features of oral communication that need to be improved and which strategies have to be used to overcome the difficulties and the effective the methods of teaching speaking.

Keywords: speaking skills, classroom activities, English, language, motivation, teacher, learner

Nowadays, the value of learning and teaching speaking is general, that speaking is paramount, and it is difficult to overestimate it. Learners of all ages, starting to study foreign language primarily want to learn speak the language. At first, they should know the aims of target language speaking skills. As mentioned in many resources speaking like any other skill are not formed themselves. For formation and developing speaking skills, it must be used special activities and exercises, focusing mainly on the development of the skills. (1)

So, what is speaking?

Speaking is "the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts" (2). Speaking is a crucial part of second language learning and teaching. Despite its importance, for many years, teaching speaking has been undervalued and English language teachers have continued to teach speaking just as a repetition of drills or memorization of dialogues. However, today's world requires that the goal of teaching speaking should improve students' communicative skills, because, only in that way, students can express themselves and learn how to follow the social and cultural rules appropriate in each communicative circumstance.

What is "Teaching Speaking"? How to teach speaking?

Currently, many linguistics and English teachers agree on that students learn to speak in the second language by "interacting". (3) Communicative language teaching and collaborative learning serve best for this aim. Communicative language teaching is based on real-life situations that require communication. By using this method in classes, students will have the opportunity of communicating with each other in the target language. In brief, English language teachers (ELT) should create a classroom environment where students have real-life communication, authentic activities, and meaningful tasks that promote oral language. This can occur when students collaborate in groups to achieve a goal or to complete a task.

«Teaching speaking» means to teach English learners to:

- Produce the English speech sounds and sound patterns
- Use word and sentence stress, intonation patterns and the rhythm of the second language.
- Select appropriate words and sentences according to the proper social setting, audience, situation and subject matter.
- Organize their thoughts in a meaningful and logical sequence.
- Use language as a means of expressing values and judgments.
- Use the language quickly and confidently with few unnatural pauses, which is called as fluency. (4)

Usually begin to teach the basics of speaking. With the statement of pronunciation skills, forming lexical and grammar skills, listening skills. On the beginning, stage of learning to separate of the formation of these skills is almost impossible. Teacher should introduce the listeners with the new structure. It involves the study of new words, sounds, intonation.

Many language learners regard speaking ability as the measure of knowing language. These learners 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, and they assess their progressing terms of their accomplishments in spoken communication.

Learners often think that the ability to speak a language is the product of language learning, but speaking is also a crucial part of the language learning process. Teachers help students learn to speak so that they can use speaking to learn.

Language learners are often too embarrassed or shy to say anything they do not understand another speaker or when they realize that a conversation partner has not understood them that misunderstanding and the need for clarification can occur in any type of interaction, whatever the participations' language skill levels.

Among the types of speaking are description, narration, reasoning, identification other types are language in action, comment, encounters, argument, learning and decision-making.

How to develop speaking?

In teaching to speak communicative exercises are organized as information transfer (extracting certain pieces of information from a non-verbal from e.g. a table, graph, a map or diagrams etc.). Another type of exercises is information gap (information is conveyed from the person who possesses it to the one who lacks it). Information gap can take the form of jigsaw (each learner has only some information, which is the part of the whole and is to be brought together by means of oral communication). (4)

In order to teach second language learners how to speak in the best way possible, some speaking activities and games are provided below, that can be

applied to English classroom settings, together with suggestions for teachers who teach oral language. (3)

Activities to promote speaking.

Discussions. After a content-based lesson, a discussion can be held for various reasons. The students may aim to arrive at a conclusion, share ideas about an event, or find solutions in their discussion groups. Before the discussion, it is essential that the teacher sets the purpose of the discussion activity. In this way, the discussion points are relevant to this purpose, so that students do not spend their time chatting with each other about irrelevant things. For example, learners can become involved in agree/disagree discussions. In this type of discussions, the teacher can form groups of students, preferably 4 or 5 in each group, and provide controversial sentences like “people learn best when they read vs. people learn best when they travel”. Then each group works on their topic for a given time period, and presents their opinions to the class. It is essential that the speaking should be equally divided among group members. At the end, the class decides on the winning group who defended the idea in the best way. This activity fosters critical thinking and quick decision-making, and students learn how to express and justify themselves in polite ways while disagreeing with the others. For efficient group discussions, it is always better not to form large groups, because quiet students may avoid contributing in large groups. The teacher can either assign the group members or the students may determine it by themselves, but groups should be rearranged in every discussion activity so that students can work with various people and learn to be open to different ideas. Lastly, in class or group discussions, whatever the aim is, the students should always be encouraged to ask questions, paraphrase ideas, express support, check for clarification, and so on.

Role-play. One other way of getting students to speak is role-playing. Students pretend they are in various social contexts and have a variety of social roles. In role-play activities, the teacher gives information to the learners such as who they are and what they think or feel. Thus, the teacher can tell the student that "You are David, you go to the doctor and tell him what happened last night, and..." (6).

Simulations are very similar to role-plays but what makes simulations different than role plays is that they are more elaborate. In simulations, students can bring items to the class to create a realistic environment. For instance, if a student is acting as a singer, she brings a microphone to sing and so on. Role plays and simulations have many advantages. First, since they are entertaining, they motivate the students. Second, as Harmer (6) suggests, they increase the self-confidence of hesitant students, because in role-play and simulation activities, they will have a different role and do not have to speak for themselves, which means they do not have to take the same responsibility.

Information gap. In this activity, students are supposed to be working in pairs. One student will have the information that other partner does not have and the partners will share their information. Information gap activities serve many

purposes such as solving a problem or collecting information. Also, each partner plays an important role because the task cannot be completed if the partners do not provide the information the others need. These activities are effective because everybody has the opportunity to talk extensively in the target language.

Brainstorming. On a given topic, students can produce ideas in a limited time. Depending on the context, either individual or group brainstorming is effective and learners generate ideas quickly and freely. The good characteristics of brainstorming is that the students are not criticized for their ideas so students will be open to sharing new ideas.

Storytelling. Students can briefly summarize a tale or story they heard from somebody beforehand, or they may create their own stories to tell their classmates. Story telling fosters creative thinking. It also helps students express ideas in the format of beginning, development, and ending, including the characters and setting a story has to have. Students also can tell riddles or jokes. For instance, at the very beginning of each class session, the teacher may call a few students to tell short riddles or jokes as an opening. In this way, not only will the teacher address students' speaking ability, but also get the attention of the class.

Interviews. Students can conduct interviews on selected topics with various people. It is a good idea that the teacher provides a rubric to students so that they know what type of questions they can ask or what path to follow, but students should prepare their own interview questions. Conducting interviews with people gives students a chance to practice their speaking ability not only in class but also outside and helps them becoming socialized. After interviews, each student can present his or her study to the class. Moreover, students can interview each other and "introduce" his or her partner to the class.

Story completion. This is a very enjoyable, whole-class, free-speaking activity for which students sit in a circle. For this activity, a teacher starts to tell a story, but after a few sentences, he or she stops narrating. Then, each student starts to narrate from the point where the previous one stopped. Each student is supposed to add from four to ten sentences. Students can add new characters, events, descriptions and so on.

Reporting. Before coming to class, students are asked to read a newspaper or magazine and, in class, they report to their friends what they find as the most interesting news. Students can also talk about whether they have experienced anything worth telling their friends in their daily lives before class.

Playing Cards. In this game, students should form groups of four. Each suit will represent a topic. For instance:

- **Diamonds:** Earning money
- **Hearts:** Love and relationships
- **Spades:** An unforgettable memory
- **Clubs:** Best teacher

Each student in a group will choose a card. Then, each student will write 4-5 questions about that topic to ask the other people in the group. For example: If the topic "Diamonds: Earning Money" is selected, here are some possible questions:

- Is money important in your life? Why?
- What is the easiest way of earning money?
- What do you think about lottery? Etc.

However, the teacher should state at the very beginning of the activity that students are not allowed to prepare yes-no questions, because by saying yes or no students get little practice in spoken language production. Rather, students ask open-ended questions to each other so that they reply in complete sentences.

Picture Narrating. This activity is based on several sequential pictures. Students are asked to tell the story-taking place in the sequential pictures by paying attention to the criteria provided by the teacher as a rubric. Rubrics can include the vocabulary or structures they need to use while narrating.

Picture Describing. Another way to make use of pictures in a speaking activity is to give students just one picture and having them describe what it is in the picture. For this activity students can form groups and each group is given a different picture. Students discuss the picture with their groups, then a spokesperson for each group describes the picture to the whole class. This activity fosters the creativity and imagination of the learners as well as their public speaking skills.

Find the Difference. For this activity students can work in pairs and each couple is given two different pictures, for example, picture of boys playing football and another picture of girls playing tennis. Students in pairs discuss the similarities and/or differences in the pictures.

There are also some structured activities used to promoting speaking skills. They are pre-speaking, while-speaking and post-speaking activities.

Pre-Speaking activity is used to prepare the learners for the main speaking activity. Schemata activation is recalling prior world-knowledge of the participants that is relevant to the speaking situation. Questions, pictures and texts can be used to these ends. It is also used brainstorm activity as pre-speaking activity. It helps to generate ideas in small groups before main speaking activity. The main aim of this activity is to generate as many ideas as possible within a specific time period. The ideas are not evaluated until the end of activity time. (6) motivation of learners can be enhanced when they clearly see the communicative problem and the ways to resolve it.

While-speaking the participants actually resolve the communicative problem and reduce its resolution as a result of the role-play, problem solving, socialization or communication game.

Post-speaking can provide opportunities for learners to re-visit the language and ideas produced and to think of the ways to make communication more effective. An important part of the post-speaking activity is the development of integrated communicative skills, i.e. reading and speaking task, listening and speaking task, speaking and writing task etc. (7)

Here are some tips for ELT while teaching speaking English language:

1. Provide maximum opportunity to students to speak the target language by providing a rich environment that contains collaborative work, authentic materials and tasks, and shared knowledge.
2. Try to involve each student in every speaking activity; for this aim, practice different ways of student participation.
3. Reduce teacher speaking time in class while increasing student speaking time. Step back and observe students.
4. Indicate positive signs when commenting on a student's response.
5. Ask eliciting questions such as "What do you mean? How did you reach that conclusion?" in order to prompt students to speak more.
6. Provide written feedback like "Your presentation was really great. It was a good job. I really appreciated your efforts in preparing the materials and efficient use of your voice..."
7. Do not correct students' pronunciation mistakes very often while they are speaking. Correction should not distract student from his or her speech.
8. Involve speaking activities not only in class but also out of class; contact parents and other people who can help.
9. Circulate around classroom to ensure that students are on the right track and see whether they need your help while they work in groups or pairs.
10. Provide the vocabulary beforehand that students need in speaking activities.
11. Diagnose problems faced by students who have difficulty in expressing themselves in the target language and provide more opportunities to practice the spoken language.

In conclusion, it should be mentioned teaching speaking is a very important part of second language learning. The ability to communicate in a second language clearly and efficiently contributes to the success of the learner in school and success later in every phase of life. Therefore, it is essential that language teachers pay great attention to teaching speaking. Rather than leading students to pure memorization, providing a rich environment where meaningful communication takes place is desired. With this aim, various speaking activities such as those listed above can contribute a great deal to students in developing basic interactive skills necessary for life. These activities make students more active in the learning process and at the same time make their learning more meaningful and fun for them.

References

1. Agzamova D.B. English teaching methodology. – T.: Barkamol fayz media, 2016.- 160 p.
2. Hayriye Kayi Kayih. Teaching Speaking: Activities to Promote Speaking in a Second Language. The Internet TESL Journal, Vol. XII, No. 11, November 2006 ([http://iteslj.org/Articles/Kayi-Teaching Speaking.ht](http://iteslj.org/Articles/Kayi-Teaching%20Speaking.ht))
3. Chaney, A.L., and T.L. Burk. 1998. Teaching Oral Communication in Grades K-8. Boston: Allyn&Bacon.
4. Celce-Murcia. M. 2001. Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language (3rd ed). USA: Heinle&Heinle.
5. Nunan, D., 2003. Practical English Language Teaching. NY:McGraw-Hill.
6. Gipps C.V., Stoba G.T. Assessment: A Teachers' guide to the issues. Hodder and Stoughton. 1993.
7. Graham S. Effective language learning. Great Britain^ WBC.1997.