

TEACHING SPEAKING SKILLS THROUGH VOCABULARY ACTIVITIES BASED ON DEFINITIONS AND APPLICATIONS OF WORDS

Raxmonaliyeva Muxlisa Zafarjon qizi

MA 2nd year student of Uzbekistan State World Languages University

E-mail: erkinjonovamuxlisa923@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article reviews teaching foreign language methodology. The purpose of the article is to provide basic understanding of teaching speaking skills, the related issues, principles of instruction of oral skills, frequently-observed activities in communication classrooms and the vocabulary tasks based on definitions and applications of words. FL teachers can benefit gaining awareness of and applying the activities highlighted in the article to their speaking classes.

Keywords: speaking skills, fluency, accuracy, appropriacy, authenticity, characteristics of speaking, principles of oral skills instruction, group work, presentation, role play, drills, vocabulary activities

АННОТАЦИЯ

В данной статье рассматривается методика преподавания иностранного языка. Цель статьи состоит в том, чтобы дать базовое понимание обучения разговорным навыкам, связанным с ними вопросам, принципам обучения устным навыкам, часто наблюдаемым действиям в классах общения и словарным заданиям, основанным на определениях и применении слов. Учителя иностранного языка могут извлечь пользу, узнав и применяя упражнения, описанные в статье, на своих занятиях по устной речи.

Ключевые слова: навык говорения, беглость, точность, уместность, аутентичность, особенности говорения, принципы обучения устной речи, групповая работа, презентация, ролевая игра, метод тренировки, словарная деятельность

ANNOTATSIYA

Ushbu maqolada chet tilini o'qitish metodikasi ko'rib chiqiladi. Maqolaning maqsadi nutq ko'nikmalarini o'rgatish, ular bilan bog'liq masalalar, og'zaki nutqni o'rgatish tamoyillari, muloqot sinflarida tez-tez kuzatiladigan mashg'ulotlar va so'zlarning ta'riflari va qo'llanilishiga asoslangan lug'at vazifalari haqida asosiy tushunchalarni berishdir. Chet tili o'qituvchilari maqolada ta'kidlangan

mashg'ulotlardan xabardor bo'lish va nutq darslarida qo'llashdan foyda olishlari mumkin.

Kalit so'zlar: nutq mahorati, ravonlik, aniqlik, moslik, haqiqiylik, nutq xususiyatlari, og'zaki nutqni o'rgatish tamoyillari, guruhda ishlash, taqdimot, rolli o'yin, drill mashqlari, lug'at faoliyati.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the fundamental skills in language learning, which is highly important to acquire for effective communication in a native or foreign language to be a competent user. However, Celce Murcia (2014) claims that “when queried about competence in other languages, it would certainly sound odd to be asked, *how many languages do you write*”. In contrast, we are mostly asked, *How many languages do you speak?* In other words, language learners are expected to attempt to develop speaking skills for successful communication even from the beginning levels in a different way from the written language, which has been the focus of most recent research to concentrate on productive approaches to language teaching (like Communicative Language Teaching) “to ascertain the role of input, interaction and corrective feedback in the acquisition of L2” (Celce Murcia, 2014).

Teaching speaking skill issues

The act of speaking is not easily performed. This complexity of speaking process can be explained by a number of characteristics put forward by H.D. Brown (2007) cited in Celce Murcia (2014) as follows: “clustering (i.e., speech is segmented into thought words rather than single words and even single words may be contracted); hesitation markers and pausing; colloquial language including slang and idioms; suprasegmental features including stress, rhythm and intonation”.

From the point of the debatable issues in teaching communicative skills, it needs to be highlighted that fluency, accuracy, appropriacy and authenticity are major factors influencing speaking competence. Nation and Newton suggest (2009) that in an ESL setting where there are many opportunities to practice L2 out of class more time could perhaps be devoted to accuracy-based speaking activities. Yet, in an EFL setting where there are limitations to these opportunities, more attention should be paid to more fluency-based, meaning-focused tasks. As for appropriacy, it “is all about sociocultural context and pragmatics” (Celce Murcia, 2014). L2 speakers must be able to communicate “with the proper politeness, directness and formality... [they] also need to know what to say at all and what to communicate nonverbally (Ishihara and Cohen, 2010)”. Finally, the matter of authenticity at all stages of teaching merit the attention of the teacher of oral skills. Roberts and Cooke, according to their study (2009) of linguistic-minority migrant adults, highlight two meanings of authenticity: the first

dealing with authentic teaching materials and the second focusing on issues of “self-expression and the development of authentic voice”. Celce Murcia (2014) summarizes that ...”our new knowledge about the nature of Spoken Grammar English and conversation should encourage, rather than discourage, teachers of L2 speaking to explicitly teach these forms, designing and implementing activities that contain them...”

Principles of teaching oral skills

As oral skills development is essential in communication, how to teach speaking skills may be a great concern for teachers. H.D. Brown (2007) suggests a number of principles of teaching these skills such as:

1. Focus on both fluency and accuracy

“Make sure your tasks have a linguistic (language-based) objective, and seize the opportunity to help students to perceive and use the building blocks of language”.

2. Provide intrinsically motivating techniques

“Appeal to students’ ultimate goals and interests, to their need for knowledge, for status, for achieving competence and autonomy ... help them to see how the activity will benefit them”.

3. Encourage the use of authentic language

“It takes energy and creativity to devise authentic contexts and meaningful interaction, but with the help of a storehouse of teacher resource materials, it can be done”.

4. Provide appropriate feedback and correction

“It is important that you take advantage of your knowledge of English to inject the kinds of corrective feedback that are appropriate for the moment”.

5. Capitalize on the natural link between speaking and listening

“The two skills can reinforce each other. Skills in producing language are often initiated through comprehension”.

6. Give students opportunities to initiate oral communication

“Part of oral communication competence is the ability to initiate conversations, to nominate topics, to ask questions, to control conversations, and to change the subject”.

7. Encourage the development of speaking strategies

Speaking Strategies

- asking for clarification (what)
- asking someone to repeat something (pardon me)
- using fillers (uh, I mean) to get time to process
- using conversation maintenance cues (uh-huh, right, yeah, OK, Hmm)
- getting someone’s attention (hey, say, so)

- paraphrasing for structures one can't produce
- appealing for assistance from the interlocutor
- using formulaic expressions
- using mime and non-verbal expressions

Popular activities used in speaking class

With communicative language teaching popularizing, teaching speaking in an authentic context to reach fluency and accuracy for real communicative purposes has gained FL teachers. According to Celce Murcia (2014), “with adults in an academic context, authentic practice in activities and skills required in post-secondary school classrooms would be central: giving oral presentations, listening to content lectures, reading academic texts, and the like”. The reason may be the fact that academic learners have to deal with more complicated vocabulary and complex structures in a formal register. Thus, the activities for a speaking class should be prepared paying attention to learners’ needs, their level of proficiency, engagement and the time spent as well as assessment. Such activities as discussions, group work, presentations, role plays, drills are mostly used ones that can help oral skills development.

Discussions and group work

Students are given a topic through a reading or listening passage and divided into pairs or groups to discuss this topic to come up with different ideas, solutions, responses and so on. Celce Murcia (2014) highlights the three important aspects of group work that L2 speaking teacher must consider. Firstly, the teacher should identify whether “the students have interactional skills necessary for task completion”. In earlier lessons students should be taught how to state opinions, agree or disagree, clarify their ideas or interrupt others’ speech so that they can work in groups successfully. The next thing the teacher needs to do is to divide into groups or pairs. It can be done in a planned or random way based on the number of students, their proficiency levels, interest etc. Finally, “L2 learners need to know what they are going to discuss, why they are discussing it, how long they have for the activity and what outcome is expected”.

PRESENTATIONS

Presentations are performed in the way of slides or posters in which the (individual or group) presenter(s) delivers oral speech to the audience within a time limit on the topic chosen by the teacher or through self-selection depending on students’ proficiency level or the aims, objectives of the course. In order to prevent the speaker’s fear and the listeners’ resulting boredom, the process should be “guided by the evaluative criteria that the teacher, the students or both develop”. “Categories of performance may include: content and organization (Was it easy to locate and

understand the main point of the presentation? Was there an appropriate introduction and conclusion?); language use (What issues were there with grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and fluency?); interaction and rapport with the audience (How effective were the non-verbal aspects of the presentation: eye contact, posture, gestures and composure?)". (Celce Murcia, 2014)

Role plays

"Role play is a valuable teaching and training tool where learners take on different roles, assuming a profile of a character or personality, and interact and participate in diverse and complex learning settings" (Maria Ashok, 2015). Ments (1999) states that "by devising scenes of everyday life, in particular those situations which make use of the vocabulary to be learnt, the students can be encouraged to use language in a free and interesting way". The teacher needs to pay attention to the objectives of the role play, class size and available room, time limit, setting, clear role descriptors, evaluation etc.

Drills

Brooks (1960) points out that "the language class, at early levels, is essentially a drill session. ... As learning increase, drill turns into discussion, for the student eventually has a stock of structural patterns and lexical items that enable him to express his own intentions and views without, in desperation, being obliged to invent what he has had no model for. If drills have been sufficiently representative and have been fully practiced, analogy will guide the learner along the right linguistic path, as it does in the mother tongue". Brown (2007) suggests cited by Celce Murcia (2014) that "if drills are to be used, they should be short, simple, and snappy; they should be used sparingly and they should lead to more authentic communicative activities".

Vocabulary activities based on definitions and applications of words (for speaking skills improvement)

Celce-Murcia (2014) claims that effective word learning activities encourage learning vocabulary step-by-step in different ways. The priority should be "repetition, engagement, and interaction", concentrating on both the meaning and form of words. It is necessary to reach rich content and authenticity in such activities as possible. She classifies these activities into three levels:

1. Word level. It is in isolated forms that words are practiced focusing on some of its features like meaning, spelling, pronunciation, grammatical forms and so on.
2. Sentence level. Words are practiced in sentences, applying grammatical forms and collocations.
3. Discourse or fluency level. Paragraphs or larger content-rich texts are sources to practice words, in which the focus is on the fluency and accuracy of speech.

Sentence and discourse level activities or combination of the three level activities can be beneficial for not only vocabulary but also speaking skills improvement as learning process is related to usage of the words in not just separate ways but in utterances, longer pieces of texts, paragraphs etc., which can stimulate students to produce speech and interact with each other in some way. Below are some activities of such levels that can be applied to teaching speaking skills as well:

Find the word through the definitions

Invite a volunteer to the whiteboard and ask him/her to turn back to students who are shown a word on a paper. Then ask the volunteer to turn round to students who give definitions, explanations or examples of the same word until he/she finds the word.

Continue the story

Distribute handouts on which new words are written to students. Ask them to begin making up, continuing and ending a story based on the new words they have turn-by-turn.

Matching

Divide students into two groups. Give handouts with words to the first group and the ones with definitions to the second group. Ask them to match the words with their definitions finding the pair. Then tell them to make up a sentence using the words they have in the same pairs.

Find the mistake

Divide students into small groups. Distribute handouts with longer pieces of text including new words. Ask them to replace some words with inappropriate ones or make mistakes with the usage to influence the meaning and share them with the groups who then find and correct the mistakes in a hot discussion.

Describe the picture

Invite two volunteers to the whiteboard. Give them a picture that depicts new words and ask one of them to give definition of everything in the picture and the other to support his/her pair with an example sentence in which new word is applied.

CONCLUSION

Speaking is one of the main skills one needs to master to be able to be competent in oral communication. Yet, teaching speaking skills draws the attention of L2 or FL teachers to the issues of oral skills development like fluency, accuracy, appropriacy and authenticity; awareness of teaching speaking principles (i.e., by Brown, 2007) and preparation or choice of activities, tasks that correspond to them for successful instruction. Teaching speaking in an integrated way with reading, writing, listening and vocabulary learning can also lead to successful results. In the meantime, word learning activities based on definitions and applications of words can be one of the major steps in oral skills development as students interact with each other, have fun, and communicate in a foreign language as the rule of the activities.

REFERENCES:

1. Marianne Celce Murcia, Donna M. Brinton and Marguerite Ann Snow. (2014). *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* (4th ed.). National Geographic Learning. 20 Channel Center Street, Boston, MA 02210 USA
2. H.D. Brown. (2007). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy* (3rd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents
3. Nation, I. S.P., and Newton. J. (2009). Developing fluency. *Teaching ESL/EFL listening and speaking*. New York, NY: Routledge.
4. Ishihara, N., and Cohen A. D. (2010). *Teaching and learning pragmatics: Where language and culture meet*. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education
5. Roberts, C., and Cooke M. (2009). *Authenticity in the adult ESOL classroom and beyond*. TESOL Quarterly, 43 (4).
6. Ammu Maria Ashok, M.A. (April, 2015). *Effectiveness of Role Play in Enhancing Communication Skills of English Language Learners*. Language in India www.languageindia.com. Retrieved from <http://languageindia.com/april2015/ammuroleplay.html>.
7. Ments, V. M. (1999). *The effective use of role-play: practical techniques for improving learning* (2nd ed.). Retrieved May 12, 2012, from http://books.google.com.bd/books/about/The_Effective_Use_of_Role_Play.