

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING SPEAKING ACTIVITIES FOR INTERMEDIATE LEVEL LEARNERS

*Kalbaeva Umida – 4th year student
Nukus state pedagogical institute
Dauletmuratova Khurziya - scientific advisor
Nukus state pedagogical institute*

Speaking plays a fundamental role in language acquisition, serving as both cognitive and communicative process that facilitates linguistic development. It enables learners to actively engage with the target language, practice linguistic structures, and enhance overall proficiency. In teaching English the students should be taught not only to have knowledge on particular subjects as grammar, speaking, writing, listening etc. but they also should have been introduced with educational-upbringing materials on, for instance, culture, moral, customs and rituals of everyday-use of the people living in English speaking countries [1; 56]. Various theoretical perspectives highlight the significance of speaking in language learning, emphasizing its role in interaction, cognitive processing, fluency development, and motivation.

From an interactionist perspective, speaking is essential for language acquisition as it allows learners to participate in meaningful communication, negotiate meaning, and receive corrective feedback. Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis suggests that modified interaction, where learners adjust their speech based on feedback, enhances comprehension and promotes learning [3; 413–468]. The assertion that modified interaction, wherein learners adapt their speech based on feedback improves not only understanding but also promotes learning which is fundamentally rooted in the principles of second language acquisition. This process, often termed "negotiation of meaning," facilitates language development through several key mechanisms.

Firstly, comprehensible input, a cornerstone of Krashen's Input Hypothesis posits that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to input that slightly beyond their current level of competence [2; 65]. Modified interaction provides this input through adjustments in speech, such as simplification, elaboration, and paraphrasing, making the target language more accessible. When a learner signals a lack of understanding, either verbally or non-verbally, the interlocutor modifies their output, thereby offering input that is tailored to the learner's immediate needs.

The relationship between speaking, listening, and overall communication has been a focal point of research in linguistics, psychology, and education. Numerous scholars have explored how these elements interact to facilitate effective communication. One prominent figure in this discourse is Albert Mehrabian, who is well-known for his work on nonverbal communication. In his research, he suggested that a significant portion of communication is nonverbal, with studies indicating that 7% of communication effectiveness is determined by verbal content, 38% by tone of voice, and 55% by body language [4; 109-114]. This underscores the notion that speaking and listening are deeply interconnected processes that must consider both verbal and nonverbal cues for effective communication.

Intermediate-level learners in speaking exhibit several distinctive characteristics that reflect their developing language proficiency and communicative abilities. Understanding these traits can help educators tailor their instruction effectively.

One key characteristic is an expanded vocabulary. Intermediate learners possess a broader range of vocabulary compared to beginners, allowing them to discuss various topics. However, they may still struggle with nuanced word choices and occasionally rely on basic vocabulary, which can lead to repetition.

In terms of grammatical accuracy, intermediate learners demonstrate a greater understanding of grammatical structures and can produce more complex sentences. While their accuracy is significantly better than that of beginners, they may still make errors, particularly with less frequently used grammatical forms, especially in spontaneous speech.

Increased fluency is another hallmark of this level. Intermediate speakers can communicate their thoughts more fluidly than lower-level learners, engaging in conversations without prolonged hesitations. However, they may still experience occasional pauses while formulating their ideas or searching for the right words. These learners are also capable of participating in conversations effectively. They can initiate discussions, express opinions, and provide reasons to support their views. While they can sustain interactions, they may need prompting to elaborate on their thoughts. Intermediate learners increasingly utilize contextual clues to aid comprehension and expression. They can infer meanings from context, allowing them to navigate discussions even when they do not fully understand every word.

When it comes to pronunciation, intermediate learners typically produce clearer speech than beginners, though phonetic errors related to their native language influence may still occur. They might also struggle with certain sounds that are less familiar to them.

Types of Effective Speaking Activities

Discussions are interactive communicative tasks where participants engage in the exchange of ideas, opinions, and information on a given topic. This cognitively demanding activity promotes higher-order linguistic functions such as argumentation, justification, and perspective-taking, fostering pragmatic competence and discourse management skills.

Role-playing involves assuming a particular character or social role to simulate real-life communicative contexts. This activity facilitates the development of sociolinguistic competence by enabling learners to practice appropriate language use, register variation, and pragmatic intentions in authentic or semi-authentic scenarios, thereby enhancing communicative competence.

An interview task requires one participant to produce questions aimed at obtaining specific information, while the interlocutor provides relevant responses. This asymmetrical interaction enhances skills in question formulation, information retrieval, and response organization, contributing to both transactional and interpersonal communication competence.

Debates are structured argumentative exchanges wherein participants advocate for or against a proposition. This form of speaking activity catalyzes the development of critical thinking, persuasive language, and formal discourse strategies. It requires interlocutors to employ evidential support, refutation techniques, and strategic turn-taking to influence audience judgment.

In conclusion, diverse speaking activities serve as critical pedagogical tools that address multiple dimensions of oral language proficiency. Each activity uniquely contributes to the development of linguistic form, pragmatic function, cognitive processing, and sociocultural understanding. By integrating tasks such as discussions, role-plays, interviews, presentations, debates, storytelling, dialogues, problem-solving, descriptions, and pronunciation drills, language learners can achieve comprehensive communicative competence. The systematic use of these varied speaking exercises facilitates not only linguistic accuracy and fluency but also the ability to navigate complex social interactions, thereby enhancing overall communicative effectiveness in real-world contexts.

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