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STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS AMONG EFL STUDENTS

Abstract: Developing speaking proficiency among EFL learners is crucial for effective communication in global contexts. This paper examines various pedagogical strategies aimed at improving English speaking competence. The study highlights the importance of communicative language teaching (CLT), task-based learning, and peer interaction in promoting fluency and accuracy. Findings suggest that consistent practice, constructive feedback, and exposure to authentic materials significantly enhance learners' speaking performance. These strategies can be implemented by educators to foster communicative competence in EFL classrooms.

Keywords: EFL students, communicative competence, fluency, task-based learning, speaking strategies, language pedagogy.

Аннотация: Развитие навыков говорения у изучающих английский как иностранный (EFL) имеет решающее значение для эффективного общения в глобальном контексте. В данной статье рассматриваются различные педагогические стратегии, направленные на развитие навыков говорения на английском языке. В исследовании подчеркивается важность коммуникативного обучения языку (CLT), обучения на основе задач и взаимодействия со сверстниками для развития беглости и точности речи. Результаты показывают, что постоянная практика, конструктивная обратная

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связь и использование аутентичных материалов значительно повышают эффективность говорения учащихся. Эти стратегии могут быть использованы преподавателями для развития коммуникативной компетентности в классах, изучающих английский как иностранный EFL классы..

Ключевые слова: Студенты, изучающие английский как иностранный язык, коммуникативная компетентность, беглость речи, обучение на основе задач, стратегии говорения, языковая педагогика.

Introduction

In today's globalized world, developing English speaking skills has become one of the main challenges for EFL learners. Therefore, this study aims to explore a range of effective strategies for improving English speaking skills among EFL students. Such grammatical and structural disparities mean that without targeted practice, Uzbekgraduate students may struggle with English fluency even after years of study. Moreover, a shortage of highly qualified English teachers and limited resources in some institutions have historically impeded speaking instruction. Many English teachers in Uzbekistan are non-native speakers with varying proficiency, and older teaching generations were trained under Soviet-era methodologies that emphasized grammar and reading over communicative skills.

As a result,students often have had few opportunities to practice speaking in class – a recent British Council study of secondary schools found only about half of students regularly engage in speakingactivities during lessons. By the time these learners reach graduate programs, they may have strong reading or writing skills but still lack confidence and fluency in speaking. Recognizing these gaps, the Uzbek government launched major reforms in the past decade to improve English teaching. A 2012 Presidential Decree mandated the introduction of English from first grade and alignment of teaching with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) standards. English courses, and changing the teaching pedagogy

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and role of the teacher in the classroom. The study also suggested maximizing the group discussion among students and conducting speaking activities such as speaking contests, debate, public speaking, and other activities to offer learners speaking practice. Furthermore, EFL teachers must help their learners improve their pronunciation because words must be articulated and given a specific verbal form. If a student wants to utter a word or sentence, he/she must know and be trained in how to pronounce it. Just as written expression needs an alphabet and writing conventions, spoken expression needs verbal signs to be produced by the vocal organs. Training the correct pronunciation is a prerequisite for achieving acceptable conversational/spoken English. Pronunciation with proper intonation and accent is a sign of elegant use of language as it expresses the state of mind in a precise way, which many EFL learners often struggle with. In this respect, King (2015) observes that many foreign learners of English show poor ability in proper expression and inflection, so the meaning of the words they use falls flat and is sometimes interpreted incorrectly.During conversation, EFL learners must also be trained to be aware of the norms of the society in which he/she is living. It should be acknowledged that the conventions of speaking, i.e., what to utter in what circumstances, vary across communities and cultures (Sanders, 1987, p. 153). The violation of social rules is no less serious than the violation of linguistic rules. Greeting, thanking, offering, congratulating, bidding bye, etc., are constrained by social conventions. Therefore, it is necessary to learn not only what to speak about but how to speak in a certain social setting. A faux pas in expression may lead to a misunderstanding between the speaker and listener; it may even at times turn offensive to the point of evoking a harsh reaction. Therefore, it is important for learners to know social rules and conform to them while speaking.

Conclusion

Speaking is taken as the toughest skill to get mastery by the students of EFL contest, so is the case of Nepal too. Based on the research findings, mainly

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learners get four major speaking difficulties such as personal problems, linguistic problems, social problems, and environmental problems. Lack of confidence, poor vocabulary power, hesitation, anxiety towards speaking, fear of making mistakes, not having a suitable environment to practice English, no strong motivation from teachers were some common difficulties students faced while speaking in English. The second part or objective of the study was to explore the causes of speaking difficulties. Deducing the themes from the participant's responses, the researcher categorized causes into four main themes: teacher/teaching factors, environmental factors, course content factors, and classroom culture factors. Among the various causes mainly teacher-centered teaching method, the active role of the teacher in the classroom, lack of proper environment for speaking practice, poor schooling, overuse of L1 while teaching English in the classroom, classroom culture, and lack of intense focus on speaking skills in the course content of the university courses were found major causes of speaking difficulties. To eliminate these difficulties, the study also suggested creating afavorable English-speaking environment in the classroom, modifying existing English.

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