

CHALLENGES IN TEACHING SPEAKING AT THE LESSONS OF ENGLISH
IN MODERN SCHOOL

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Abstract: *Teaching speaking skills in schools presents various challenges that can hinder students' ability to communicate effectively. Factors such as lack of confidence, limited vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, and mother tongue interference often impact students' speaking proficiency. Additionally, external barriers like large class sizes, limited exposure to the target language, and fear of peer judgment further complicate the learning process. Traditional teaching methods and time constraints may also restrict opportunities for meaningful oral practice. This paper explores these challenges and suggests interactive and student-centered approaches to enhance speaking skills in the classroom. By incorporating engaging activities such as role-plays, discussions, and storytelling, educators can create a supportive environment that fosters confidence and fluency in students. Addressing these challenges effectively can lead to improved speaking competence and better communication skills among learners.*

Key words: *Speaking skills, language learning, communication barriers, pronunciation, vocabulary development, confidence building, classroom challenges, student engagement, interactive teaching methods, fluency enhancement.*

Speaking is a fundamental skill in foreign language acquisition but « one of the major problems of language learning is that most of students do not have the capacity to express themselves in the foreign language after studying English at junior and high school» [Akbari 2015: 400]. Today at school the student have to acquire several language skills aspects: reading, writing, listening and speaking and there are plenty of teaching techniques. In spite of the criticism of «available methods, techniques or resources, speaking is generally perceived as the most fundamental skill to acquire» [Aleksandrak 2011: 38] because the todays aim of school language learning is communication.

Speaking plays a crucial role in communication, personal expression, and cultural understanding. Below are key reasons why developing speaking skills is essential:

1. Enhances Communication and Interaction

Speaking enables learners to actively participate in conversations, express their thoughts, and interact effectively with native and non-native speakers. It fosters real-life communication skills, making language learning more practical and relevant.

2. Builds Confidence and Fluency

Regular speaking practice helps learners gain confidence and reduce anxiety when using a foreign language. It improves fluency, pronunciation, and spontaneity, making conversations more natural and engaging.

3. Strengthens Listening and Comprehension Skills

Speaking and listening are closely connected. Engaging in spoken interactions helps learners develop better listening comprehension, improve their ability to understand different accents, and respond appropriately in conversations.

4. Encourages Active Language Use

Unlike passive skills such as reading and listening, speaking requires active participation. This active engagement reinforces vocabulary, grammar structures, and pronunciation, leading to better language retention.

5. Promotes Cultural Awareness and Adaptability

Language and culture are intertwined. Through speaking, learners are exposed to cultural norms, expressions, and idiomatic language, helping them communicate more effectively in diverse social and professional settings.

6. Supports Academic and Professional Growth

Strong speaking skills are essential for success in academic presentations, interviews, business meetings, and international collaboration. They open opportunities for study, work, and travel in global environments.

7. Improves Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Abilities

Speaking involves organizing thoughts, forming arguments, and responding to questions in real-time. This enhances cognitive abilities, critical thinking, and the ability to articulate ideas clearly and persuasively.

Developing speaking skills in a foreign language is crucial for effective communication, confidence-building, and overall language proficiency. Modern teaching methods that emphasize interactive and engaging speaking activities help learners become more fluent and capable in real-world situations.

Teaching speaking skills in a foreign language to teenagers and young children presents unique challenges due to differences in cognitive development, motivation, and social factors. Below are the key challenges educators face:

a) Limited Attention Span

Young children have short attention spans and can quickly lose focus. Keeping them engaged requires dynamic and interactive activities such as games, songs, and storytelling.

For example: One can put the song and students sing the song together and they have attention for song.

b) Lack of Vocabulary and Conceptual Understanding

Since their vocabulary in both their native and foreign language is still developing they may struggle to express themselves fully. Teachers must use simple words, visuals, and repetition to support learning.

For example: One can use cartoons and movies for their level, age interests and needs. Such as **FRIENDS** or **HOME ALONE**.

c) Pronunciation Difficulties

Children may find it difficult to produce certain sounds that do not exist in their native language. Frequent practice, phonetic exercises, and exposure to native speakers can help improve pronunciation.

For example: One can use **BBC** podcast 6 minute English and they exposure the native speaking [BBC Learning English].

d) Fear of Making Mistakes

Some children may be hesitant to speak due to fear of making errors or being corrected too often. Creating a supportive and encouraging environment is essential to build confidence.

For example: One can always give feedback their speech after their speaking. They try back up them.

e) Dependence on Native Language

Young learners often rely on their native language to understand instructions or express themselves. Teachers need to create immersive language experiences to encourage natural communication in the foreign language.

For example, anyone use shadowing methods in teaching speaking I give students speech for homework and they use shadowing which makes students speak correctly.

a) Lack of Motivation

Teenagers may struggle with motivation, especially if they do not see the immediate relevance of learning a foreign language. Using real-world applications, interactive discussions, and media can help maintain interest.

For example, teachers always back up them and try to teach lessons interestingly:

b) Fear of Embarrassment and Peer Pressure

Teenagers are highly self-conscious and may fear judgment from peers. This can make them reluctant to speak in class. Encouraging a non-judgmental environment and group activities can help reduce anxiety.

For example: During lesson, one can try to make students speak and not to discuss about their peer evolution.

c) Uneven Language Proficiency Levels

Teenagers in the same class may have different levels of speaking proficiency, making it challenging to cater to everyone's needs. Differentiated instruction and personalized feedback can help address this issue.

For example: One can usually give written feedback and I try to make them not to be shy.

d) Over-Reliance on Textbooks and Grammar Rules

Traditional language learning often emphasizes grammar and writing over speaking. Many teenagers struggle with spontaneous speech because they are more focused on accuracy rather than fluency. Incorporating communicative activities and role-playing can balance fluency and correctness.

For example: One can must give more attention fluency than accuracy, because student must speak spontaneously.

e) Digital Distractions

With constant access to technology, teenagers may become distracted or prefer passive learning methods. Integrating digital tools like language apps, video content, and interactive exercises can make speaking practice more engaging.

For example:

a) Lack of Exposure to the Target Language

If learners do not have enough exposure outside the classroom, they may struggle to practice speaking naturally. Encouraging language immersion through media, games, and cultural activities can help.

For example: One can usually make native environment atmosphere such as AT RESTARANT, AT SCHOOL, AT SHOPPING, AT LIBRUARY. This situation they play their role on stage.

b) Difficulty in Retaining New Words and Phrases

Both children and teenagers may forget newly learned vocabulary and struggle with spontaneous speaking. Repetition, contextual learning, and active recall techniques can enhance retention.

For example; One can give exercises related new vocabulary and they use vocabulary in doing exercises, also I give them chants:

c) Limited Opportunities for Speaking Practice

Classroom settings often focus more on reading and writing than on speaking. Teachers must create more opportunities for structured and informal speaking activities, such as discussions, role-playing, and real-world interactions.

Teaching speaking skills to young children and teenagers requires addressing age-specific challenges through engaging, interactive, and supportive methods. By fostering a positive learning environment, using creative teaching techniques, and integrating modern tools, educators can help students overcome their fears and develop strong speaking abilities in a foreign language.

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