



Effective Methods of Teaching Speaking in Primary School

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Abstract: It is crucial to remember that teaching young learners is quite different from teaching adult learners, and frequently require teachers to keep young learners engaged in the classroom at primary schools. A competent teacher should be able to encourage and engage his/her pupils. In order to develop speaking skills at primary schools interesting exercises and interactive assignments must be utilized by teachers as there are various issues that schoolchildren may encounter when teaching speaking in English classes. This article highlights effective methods of teaching speaking in primary schools.

Keywords: Methods, Approaches, Teaching English, Speaking, Speaking Skills, Young Learners, Teacher, Primary School.

Introduction

It is argued that effective teachers today must adapt some of their techniques to teaching English in the classroom since the old methods no longer fulfil the standards of the previous year. Because, teaching English in a classroom now is very different from what it was a few decades ago. In the past, the only resources available to teachers were dictionaries and textbooks with homework. This process of learning failed to spark children's attention and motivation to speak English (Arslan, 2023; Awramiuk, 2020; Martinez-Roig, 2022; Schlieckmann, 2024; Schmid, 2024; Troha, 2020; Uztosun, 2016). The situation has evolved over time. Currently we are living in an age of computers, cutting-edge technology, and educational digitalisation. Children are actively utilising cellphones and other electronics. Teaching how to speak is one of the key components of learning English. To develop speaking skills at primary schools interesting exercises and interactive assignments must be utilized by teachers as there are various issues that schoolchildren may encounter when teaching speaking in English classes (Breka, 2015; Li, 2019; Omar, 2020; Szczesniak, 2022; Uztosun, 2016; Yiğit, 2014). For example, schoolchildren may be afraid of speaking or making mistakes, having wrong pronunciation, which might lead to criticism of the teacher and from peers; the learner might lack the necessary comprehensive understanding (rules, terminology, etc.), adequate linguistic abilities to appropriately construct a statement in English or having lack of motivation, etc. In this case, teachers should prioritise engaging

and active participatory foreign language lessons. They should conduct foreign language lessons effectively, interact with children, and encourage them to use the language in the target language (Byom, 2020; Codó, 2018; Dooly, 2021; Rajasekaran, 2020; Schlieckmann, 2024).

Methodology

There are studies conducted with children of different grade levels on improving speaking skill in language teaching lessons (Arifin, 2018; Bashir, Azeem & Dogar, 2011; Duran, Aktay, & Kuru, 2021; Suban, 2021). As each individual's language learning process is unique, various methods, approaches and techniques should be used while imparting language skills to children (Duran, Aktay, & Kuru, 2021). In order to motivate pupils and enrich the content of lessons, it is necessary to draw on different approaches and teaching methods at primary schools. According to Cameron (2001), the activities that support development of speaking skills in young learners are songs, chants, role plays and drama, because they provide authentic language and real-world context that make language learning meaningful, motivating and useful (Cameron, 2001).

It is crucial for the teachers to understand how young learners acquire language, and that they may still be in the process of gaining their first language while still learning a foreign language.

- Learners acquire language through real-life examples, such as listening to parents, teachers, or peers.
- Social interaction
- Memorisation
- Repetition

If we look further into Vygotsky's theory, we can see that he emphasized the function of language in cognitive development and was particularly interested in how social variables influenced cognitive growth. Vygotsky proposed that we develop our cultural values, beliefs, and problem-solving abilities as children through conversation with others in our immediate surroundings. As a result, cognitive growth was not so much a set process determined by age as by how much exposure we had to external stimulus (Kozulin, 2004). Young learners learn languages more easily than older students. Compared to adult learners, these young learners (YL) confront challenges that adults do not. They are still developing physically and mentally, and their emotional demands might be higher (Choi, 2014; Cretu, 2020; Nofrida, 2022; Udaa, 2019). Therefore, teachers are not only to understand methodologies of teaching foreign languages, but also to have skill and teaching competencies. When educating young learners, we must keep in mind that they are a diverse group with varying skills, motivation levels, expectations, knowledge, and learning styles. As a result, we should vary our tactics and provide as many opportunities as possible to ensure that the entire class has something to hang on to, extend, and develop. To build speaking abilities, teachers of young learners should take a deeper look and have more discussions so that they can identify recommendations to get pupils motivated and interested in studying a foreign language.

Result and Discussion

Teaching experiences show that there are effective speaking methods that teachers are highly encouraged to apply when teaching English in primary schools and discuss them below.

Teaching English with songs is one of these approaches. Songs and rhymes are great instructional methods for enhancing children's speech since they allow children to experiment with spoken English in a stress-free setting (Copland, 2014; Hargreaves, 2021; Wang, 2022). Listening to and singing songs helps youngsters learn the sounds of the language and explore with how the mouth functions to make new sounds. They discover similarities between words that sound similar through the rhymes at the end of the lines, as well as how words combine to form rhythm.

To build an effective pedagogical approach, it was required to identify the most significant inadequacies that teachers present or encounter in the classroom when teaching English. We use the diverse and wide range of teaching realities in primary schools, as well as the numerous weaknesses that these teachers must cope with on a daily basis.

When teaching speaking in primary school, speaking activities should be developed to allow pupils to express themselves in a more personal manner.

When learning a language, new words should be introduced verbally and supported by a variety of visual aids such as photos, drawings, puppets, realia, videos, and/or acting out, mime, gesture, and facial expressions. Children learn the meaning of "drive" and "a car" quite fast when you mimic driving and show them a picture of one. Therefore, it is advised that the young learner teacher prepares resources for teaching young learners during their pre-service teaching practicum. These resources include town plan posters, animal masks, puppets, puzzles, paper birthday cakes, birthday presents, balloons, and films that teach young learners the names of risky sports like "skydiving" and "rock climbing."

Discussions

Based on my experiences, there are three sorts of speaking exercises that may be used effectively in primary schools.

Songs and poems

Songs and poems are extremely helpful at encouraging young children to emulate the model they hear on the tape or movie. This allows pupils to learn the sounds, rhythms, and intonation of the English language through easy replication.

Children learn poetic language, which is built on rhythm, far more easily than prose. Along with songs, poetic language teaches youngsters about the flow of the new language and its phonological features, such as emphasis, intonation, pitches, and so on (Eskildsen, 2024; Rius, 2015). Furthermore, many songs and poetry have specific grammatical elements. Well-chosen songs or poetry can be incorporated into classes to reinforce grammatical concepts and require learners to complete physical response (Total Physical Response)

Young learners become really excited about songs that require a lot of body movement, such as clap your hands, close eyes, open mouth, etc. Through the process, motivation and confidence are developed.

Games and Pair Work Activities encourage young learners to begin using the language by providing them with a certain level of choice within a somewhat regulated environment. Furthermore, utilising games is beneficial because conducting games and pair work exercises helps children create a rich bank of grammatical forms and structures, even if they are completely ignorant of it at the time. However, because games and pair work require a lot of energy, they are better suited for usage in the upper grades, i.e., grades 3 to 4.

Presentations and Discussions

Children should discuss what they're reading with one another and share their opinions and insights. This brings the stories to life, allows children to obtain insights and ideas from others, and improves language acquisition.

This integrates and deepens children's understanding of the reading material, reveals any problems they have with understanding a text, and, most importantly, allows them to apply the information they have read into authentic speaking practice, which improves their fluency.

Conclusion

Teaching speaking to young learners is a challenging and responsible job for language teachers. However, if teachers understand children's needs for developing their speaking skills, having opportunities to use language in meaningful communication, and engaging in a variety of fun, interesting, and meaningful listening and speaking activities, they will assist children in laying a strong foundation for foreign language acquisition.

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