

SPEAKING EXERCISES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGY

Bazarbayeva A.Sh.,
Teacher, Fergana State University

Mushtariy Abdurakhmanova,
Student, Fergana State University

Kushakova Shahzoda,
Student, Fergana State University

ABSTRACT:

This article discusses practice in areas relevant to the teaching of speaking: the debates concerning native speaker and nonnative speaker models for spoken pedagogy, the issue of authenticity in spoken materials, approaches to understanding speaking in the classroom, the selection of texts and aspects of spoken language for the teaching of speaking and developments in materials and methods for the teaching of speaking. Finally, practical discussion on the teaching of specific spoken genres is reviewed and probable future directions are discussed.

Key words: speaking as a skill, speech activities, speech exercises, medium practical aim, means of communication, paradigmatic and syntagmatic relation, oral speech, spoken discourse, oral conversation, stimulus and their response.

INTRODUCTION

1. Speaking as a speech activity and a skill

Psychological content of speaking is expressing ideas. In a simpler way speaking as a methodic concept envelops: 1) the process of expressing idea; 2) utterance; 3) oral speech; 4) statement. Answering a question or even a whole monologue can be the expression of idea. So speaking is an integral part of oral conversation. Speaking is the use of certain lexical, grammatical or pronunciation phenomenon in the aim of expressing the idea. The proverb “First think then speak” proves this idea. So thinking is the usage of language material and expressing the idea is speaking skill.

Teaching speaking in English is considered as a medium practical aim, i.e. at the beginning stage of the education pupils learn speaking and listening but reading and writing used as a means of teaching. At the higher level, when reading and writing becomes an aim, speaking turns into a means of teaching. Speaking in English is a three part of speech activity. In the expressing part of the idea speaker begins to analyzing process began to work. Paradigmatic and syntagmatic relation is also observed, in paradigmatic relation inner connections are compared basing on different features of the word. It can be seen in the words with the same pronunciation but different spelling (write-right, son-sun); close in meaning (little-small); opposite in meaning (come-leave, give-take). Syntagmatic realation plays important role in learning to speak here we can see the usage of words in different word-combinations.

However interference is observed (order of words in foreign language and mother tongue).

The third part of speaking is performing or express an idea, pronunciation, namely, it consists of usage of it in outer speech.

Speaking skill should be taught closely connected with other skills (writing, listening and reading).

Teaching monologue and dialogue is one of the main requirements of the curriculum. For performing oral speech learners should gain some psycho physiological mechanisms.

According to ideas of some foreign language psychologists speaking is not either a communication process or utterance but it is a means of statement or expression of the idea. There are certain genres of oral conversation. They are description (telling the details to an active listener), narration (telling the development of events), reasoning (telling one’s train of thought to an active listener), identification (talking about one’s likes and dislikes), language-in-action (people doing things and talking), comment (opinions and points of view),

service encounters (buying and selling goods and services), debate and argument (seeking a solution and pursuing one's point), learning (use of language in learning) and decision making (people working towards a decision).

2. Approaches to learning and teaching speaking

Speaking in the English language has been considered the most challenging of the four skills given the fact that it involves a complex process of constructing meaning. This process requires speakers to make decisions about why, how and when to communicate depending on the cultural and social context in which the speaking act occurs. Additionally, it involves a dynamic interrelation between speakers and hearers that results in their simultaneous interaction of producing and processing spoken discourse under time constraints. Given all these defining aspects of the complex and intricate nature of spoken discourse, increasing research conducted over the last few decades has recognized speaking as an interactive, social and contextualized communicative event.

Finally, it presents the importance of integrating this skill within a communicative competence framework so that learners can acquire their English language communicative competence through speaking.

Up to the end of the 1960s, the field of language learning was influenced by environmentalist ideas that paid attention to the learning process as being conditioned by the external environment rather than by human internal mental processes. Moreover, mastering a series of structures in a linear way was paramount. Within such an approach, the primacy of speaking was obvious since it was assumed that language was primarily an oral phenomenon. Thus, learning to speak a language, in a similar way to any other type of learning, followed a stimulus-response-reinforcement pattern which involved constant practice and the formation of good habits. In this pattern, speakers were first exposed to linguistic input as a type of external *stimulus* and their *response* consisted of imitating and repeating such input. If this was done correctly, they received a positive *reinforcement* by other language users within their same environment. The continuous practice of this speech-pattern until good habits were formed resulted in learning how to speak.

There is also another approach which is called interactionist. This approach is based on interactionist ideas that emphasized the role of the linguistic environment in interaction with the innate capacity for language development.

3. Teaching speaking within a communicative competence framework

Communicative approaches to English language teaching have undergone significant changes over the past two decades. A strong background influence is associated with the work developed by Hymes, who was the first to argue that Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance did not pay attention to aspects of language in use and related issues of appropriacy of an utterance to a particular situation. Thus, he proposed the term *communicative competence* to account for those rules of language use in social context as well as the norms of appropriacy.

Considering how a proper operationalization of this term into an instructional framework could contribute to make the process of English language teaching more effective, different models of communicative competence have been developed by specifying which components should integrate a communicative competence construct.

In such a construct, it can be assumed that the role of speaking is of paramount importance to facilitate the acquisition of communicative competence. Figure 1 shows the diagram representing this framework with speaking positioned at its core.

The proposed communicative competence framework has at its heart the speaking skill since it is the manifestation of producing spoken discourse and a way of manifesting the rest of the components. Discourse competence involves speakers' ability to use a variety of discourse features to achieve a unified spoken text given a particular purpose and the situational context where it is produced. Such discourse features refer to knowledge of discourse markers (e.g., well, oh, I see, okay), the management of various conversational rules (e.g., turn-taking mechanisms, how to open and close a conversation), cohesion and coherence, as well as formal schemata (e.g., knowledge of how different discourse types, or genres, are organized).

Making effective use of all these features during the process of producing a cohesive and coherent spoken text at the discourse level requires a highly active role on the part of speakers. They have to be concerned with the form (i.e., how to produce linguistically correct utterances) and with the appropriacy (i.e., how to make

pragmatically appropriate utterances given particular sociocultural norms). Additionally, they need to be strategically competent so that they can make adjustments during the ongoing process of speaking in cases where the intended purpose fails to be delivered properly. Consequently, an activation of speakers' knowledge from the other components proposed in the framework displayed in Figure 1 (that is, linguistic, pragmatic, intercultural and strategic) is necessary to develop an overall communicative ability when producing a piece of spoken discourse. Each of these components is described in turn below.

Discourse analysis or competence produces distinction between interactional and transactional function of the language. The information-transferring function is called transactional. Transactional function of the language is message-oriented. The purpose is to get things done. Examples are science reports, news stories, eye witness accounts to the police, a talk between a patient and a doctor, etc. In all the cases it is necessary to extract the salient details, to sequence and to present them to the listener or to the audience. This function is performed for "bringing the message across" and for "getting things done".

Other types of conversation are different. People chat with each other for pleasure. They talk in order to feel comfortable and to be friendly with each other. This function of the language is called interactional. Interactional function of the language is listener-oriented. The purpose is to "oil the wheels of communication". Such speech consists of friendly dialogues.

Linguistic competence consists of those elements of the linguistic system, such as phonology, grammar and vocabulary that allow speakers to produce linguistically acceptable utterances. Regarding phonological aspects, speakers need to possess knowledge of suprasegmental, or prosodic, features of the language such as rhythm, stress and intonation.

Apart from being able to pronounce the words so that they can be understood, speakers' linguistic competence also entails knowledge of the grammatical system. Thus, speakers need to know aspects of morphology and syntax that will allow them to form questions produce basic utterances in the language and organize them in an acceptable word order. Similarly, speakers' ability to choose the most relevant vocabulary or lexicon for a given situation will also contribute to the elaboration of their spoken text.

The mastery of these three linguistic aspects (i.e., pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary) is, therefore, essential for the successful production of a piece of spoken discourse since it allows speakers to build grammatically well-formed utterances in an accurate and unhesitating way. However, it has been claimed that it is possible to communicate orally with very little linguistic knowledge if a good use of pragmatic and cultural factors is made. These factors refer to the next two components proposed in the framework, which are also interrelated to build discourse competence through speaking.

Pragmatic competence involves speakers' knowledge of the function or illocutionary force implied in the utterance they intend to produce as well as the contextual factors that affect the appropriacy of such an utterance. Thus, speakers need to master two types of pragmatic knowledge: one dealing with pragmalinguistics and the other focusing on sociopragmatic aspects. On the one hand, pragmalinguistics addresses those linguistic resources that speakers can make use of to convey a particular communicative act. In other words, depending on the meaning speakers want to express, they can choose a particular form from among the wide range of linguistic realizations they may have available. On the other hand, sociopragmatics deals with speakers' appropriate use of those linguistic forms according to the context where the particular utterance is produced, the specific roles the participants play within that contextual situation and the politeness variables of social distance, power and degree of imposition. These politeness factors and the way speakers may use them to save face play a paramount role in successful communication.

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