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DISCUSSION ABOUT SOME PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS AT TEACHING SPEAKING OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

This article is devoted to describe what teaching speaking English is and some problems faced by the teachers and students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Speaking is considered one of the urgent skills that need to be acquired by students of EFL. It might become a problem for some EFL teachers to teach students to speak English. This is not a quite easy task for teachers to make their students speak because the language is not spoken in the community. Just as Harmer said (1998:52), to facilitate students with the 'new' language, teachers should have students exposed to the language, understand its meaning, understand its form (how it is constructed) and practice it. Therefore, teachers need to change their approach to teaching in order to motivate students to speak. By incorporating activities like role-play, discussions, and games, teachers can create a more engaging speaking class that enhances students' speaking skills.

Keywords: *EFL, speaking, speaking activities, problems, silence, solutions and methods.*

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is a crucial skill that needs to be honed for effective oral communication. Those proficient in speaking can convey and understand information better.

It involves sharing meaning through verbal and non-verbal symbols in different contexts. Mastering speaking is a top priority for many learners of second languages like English, as success is often measured by improvement in speaking abilities. Communication through speaking serves various purposes like expressing desires, negotiating, or maintaining relationships. In the context of learning English as a foreign language, speaking plays a significant role despite being a challenging skill to develop. Limited exposure to English in Indonesia hinders learners' progress in spoken English, leading to difficulties in fluency, idiomatic expressions, and cultural understanding. Achieving native-like proficiency in oral communication remains a challenge for many adult EFL learners due to these factors.

How to Teach Speaking

That's a great approach to language teaching! Encouraging students to interact and communicate in the target language is essential for developing their speaking skills. Collaborative learning and communicative language teaching provide students with opportunities to practice speaking in real-life situations, which can greatly enhance their language acquisition. Creating a classroom environment that fosters authentic communication and meaningful tasks can help students feel more confident and motivated to speak in the target language. I look forward to hearing more about the activities that can be done in the speaking classroom.

Creating ESL-like situations in the EFL classroom can be highly beneficial for students to practice and improve their speaking skills. By simulating real-life English-speaking settings, teachers can provide students with authentic opportunities to use the

language in meaningful ways. This approach helps students develop their communication skills and gain confidence in speaking English.

Teachers can set up various activities and tasks that mirror everyday situations where English is used, such as role-plays, discussions, debates, and problem-solving activities. These activities can engage students in interactive communication and encourage them to express their thoughts and ideas in English. Additionally, incorporating authentic materials like videos, articles, and audio recordings can expose students to natural language use and help them understand different accents and speech patterns.

By creating a supportive and communicative classroom environment, teachers can motivate students to actively participate in speaking activities and improve their fluency and accuracy in English. Providing regular opportunities for speaking practice in ESL-like situations can enhance students' language learning experience and prepare them for real-world communication in English.

While it may not be feasible to expose EFL students to the outside world within the classroom, educators can equip them to become independent learners in English-speaking environments. The objective is not solely to develop fluent English speakers, but rather to cultivate learners who can effectively utilize their language skills and input to navigate real-world situations in English. Language acquisition occurs naturally when individuals engage in communication using the language, highlighting the significance of communicative skills as a vital component of the overall learning journey, whether within or beyond the classroom.

What Makes Speaking Difficult?

Speaking is distinct from other language abilities, with writing often being the preferred choice when comparing the two. The challenge in speaking primarily arises from the specific language being used, particularly in the case of English. It is a foreign language and the use of it is very seldom. English can be conveniently used in written form to observe various aspects of life without the need to speak out loud, thus avoiding any potential embarrassment. However, it is important to consider that the features of

spoken language can make oral communication both effortless and challenging, as highlighted by Nunan (2003:270).

1. **Clustering:** Clustering refers to grouping words or phrases together in a way that helps the listener understand the message more easily. This can involve combining related information or ideas into a cohesive unit. For example, in a sentence like "I need to buy milk, eggs, and bread," the items to be purchased are clustered together to convey a shopping list.

2. **Redundancy:** Redundancy involves the use of unnecessary or repetitive information in communication. While redundancy may seem inefficient, it can actually enhance understanding by providing extra context or reinforcement. For instance, saying "I will see you tomorrow, on Tuesday" adds redundancy by specifying the day of the week twice for clarity.

3. **Reduced forms:** Reduced forms are shortened or simplified versions of words or phrases commonly used in spoken language. These forms often occur in casual or informal speech to facilitate faster communication. An example of a reduced form is "gonna" instead of "going to" in the sentence "I'm gonna go to the store."

4. **Performance variables:** Performance variables are factors that influence how effectively a message is communicated, such as speaking rate, volume, and clarity. These variables can impact the overall quality of communication and how well the message is received by the listener.

5. **Colloquial language:** Colloquial language consists of informal expressions, slang, or regional dialects used in everyday conversation. It may not adhere strictly to formal grammar rules but is commonly understood within a specific cultural or social group. An example of colloquial language is saying "wanna" instead of "want to" in the sentence "I wanna watch a movie."

6. **Rate of delivery:** Rate of delivery refers to the speed at which a speaker presents information. A fast rate of delivery can convey excitement or urgency, while a slower rate can indicate thoughtfulness or emphasis. Adjusting the rate of delivery can impact how effectively the message is conveyed.

7. ***Stress, rhythm, and intonation:*** Stress, rhythm, and intonation are elements of prosody that affect how words are emphasized, structured, and pronounced in speech. These aspects can convey emotions, intentions, and nuances in communication. For example, placing stress on different syllables in a word can change its meaning (e.g., "record" as a noun vs. "record" as a verb).

8. ***Interaction:*** Interaction involves the dynamic exchange of information between speakers and listeners during communication. It includes turn-taking, feedback, and nonverbal cues that shape the flow and effectiveness of conversation. Effective interaction fosters mutual understanding and engagement between participants in a dialogue.

Problems Found in the Speaking Class

Students do not want to talk or say anything

One issue is that students feel very hesitant to speak in front of their classmates due to a fear of making mistakes and appearing embarrassed in front of their teacher and peers. Speaking in public requires courage and motivation, both internally and externally, such as creating a positive and engaging atmosphere during conversations on interesting topics. Additionally, some students may dominate discussions, which can be intimidating for others. Another reason for student silence could be uninteresting or inappropriate classroom activities.

And there are several solutions may be appropriate to facilitate these problems:

- Solution is to create a positive and engaging atmosphere during conversations on interesting topics to boost students' confidence.
- Solution is to provide opportunities for students to practice speaking in a supportive and non-judgmental environment.
- Solution is to implement strategies to ensure all students have equal opportunities to participate in discussions, such as setting ground rules for turn-taking and actively encouraging quieter students to share their thoughts.

While many students have strong English language skills, they struggle to express themselves when communicating in English due to fear and anxiety about making

errors or being misunderstood. One effective way to encourage students to speak in English is by consistently using English as the primary language in the classroom.

b. Students keep using their own language.

One challenge teachers may encounter is students using their native language instead of English for classroom tasks. This behavior may stem from a desire to effectively communicate important information using the language they are most comfortable with. Students may struggle to express themselves and fear losing face in front of their peers, leading them to default to their native language for clarity. This issue is also linked to students' reluctance to speak in a foreign language, leading them to rely on their own language.

To address these aforementioned problems:

- teachers can establish an English-speaking environment and consistently remind students to use English.
- to establish clear expectations and guidelines for using English in the classroom, emphasizing the importance of practicing and improving their language skills.
- to provide support and resources for students to enhance their English proficiency, such as vocabulary lists, language practice activities, and language learning tools.
- to create a supportive and inclusive environment where students feel comfortable taking risks and making mistakes in English, encouraging them to gradually increase their use of the language.

CONCLUSION

Teaching speaking is a crucial aspect of learning a foreign language. The ability to effectively communicate in a foreign language is key to a student's success in school and beyond. Therefore, it is vital for language teachers to prioritize teaching speaking by providing students with ample exposure to the language and motivating them to communicate using it. Instead of focusing solely on memorization, creating an environment that fosters meaningful communication is preferred. To achieve this,

teachers should be mindful of potential challenges in conducting English speaking classes, including issues faced by both students and teachers, as well as the language itself not being commonly spoken in the community. This article suggests considerations and guidelines for teachers before entering the classroom, such as determining the type of speaking class they aim to have, principles for teaching speaking, activities to encourage student participation, principles for designing speaking techniques, and suggestions for effective teaching. Engaging in various speaking activities can greatly enhance students' interactive skills necessary for daily life. It is hoped that these activities will encourage students to actively speak in the target language during the learning process, making their learning experience more meaningful and enjoyable.

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