



**DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILLS THROUGH COMMUNICATIVE
ACTIVITIES IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM**

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ABSTRACT

This article examines how communicative activities in English language classes can foster speaking proficiency. It explores the impact of activities such as pair work, group discussions, role-playing, and open speaking exercises on enhancing students' oral abilities. Furthermore, the paper contrasts traditional teaching methods with communicative approaches, explaining the greater effectiveness of communicative techniques in boosting classroom engagement. The research indicates that communicative tasks contribute to learners developing increased self-assurance, participation, and autonomy when speaking English.

KEYWORDS

Speaking skills, communicative activities, English classroom, communicative competence, pair work, role play, group discussion

INTRODUCTION

Annotatsiya:

Maqolada ingliz tili darslarida kommunikativ faoliyatlar asosida o'quvchilarning gapirish ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirish masalasi yoritiladi. Gapirish ko'nikmasini shakllantirishda juftlikda ishlash, guruh muhokamasi, rolli o'yinlar va erkin muloqot topshiriqlarining o'zni tahlil qilinadi. Shuningdek, an'anaviy yondashuv bilan kommunikativ yondashuv o'rtasidagi farqlar ko'rsatilib, nutqiy faollikni oshirishga xizmat qiluvchi metodlarning samaradorligi asoslanadi. Tadqiqot natijalari kommunikativ faoliyatlar o'quvchilarda tilga nisbatan ishonch, erkinlik va faol ishtirokni kuchaytirishini ko'rsatadi.

Kalit so'zlar: gapirish ko'nikmalari, kommunikativ faoliyatlar, ingliz tili darsi, kommunikativ kompetensiya, juftlikda ishlash, rolli o'yin, guruh muhokamasi

Аннотация:

В статье рассматривается развитие навыков говорения на уроках английского языка с помощью коммуникативных видов деятельности. Анализируется роль парной работы, групповых обсуждений, ролевых игр и свободных устных заданий в формировании речевых навыков учащихся. Также показываются различия между традиционным и коммуникативным подходами, обосновывается эффективность методов, направленных на повышение речевой активности. Результаты исследования показывают, что коммуникативные виды деятельности способствуют росту уверенности, самостоятельности и активного участия учащихся в процессе общения.

Ключевые слова: навыки говорения, коммуникативные виды деятельности, урок английского языка, коммуникативная компетенция, работа в парах, ролевая игра, групповое обсуждение

Introduction:

In contemporary foreign language education, effective communicative ability has emerged as a principal indicator of successful learning. English is no longer taught solely as a system of grammar rules and vocabulary; it is delivered as a means of real communication. Consequently, the development of speaking skills has become a central objective within English language classrooms. Recent educational reforms in Uzbekistan have increasingly focused on enhancing foreign language instruction quality, notably through learner-centered and communicative methodologies. The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Education” and related state programs prioritize practical language use and the cultivation of learners’ communicative competence [1].

Nevertheless, many students continue to encounter difficulties with oral production. Although they may possess knowledge of grammar and individual lexical items, they frequently struggle to articulate ideas clearly, respond spontaneously, or participate effectively in discussions. A primary contributing factor is that speaking has historically been taught via reproductive exercises rather than through meaningful interaction. In numerous classrooms, learners are required to memorize dialogues, imitate language structures, or answer closed questions instead of engaging in authentic communication, resulting in speech that is often limited, hesitant, and teacher-dependent.

Scholars have investigated the role of communication in language acquisition. Hymes introduced the notion of communicative competence, demonstrating that mastery of a language encompasses not only grammatical knowledge but also the capacity to use language appropriately within context [5, 52]. Canale and Swain further developed this framework by delineating grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences as integral components of communicative ability [3, 29]. Their work underpins communicative language teaching, which posits interaction as the central condition governing language development. Brown also contends that speaking involves more than mere sound or sentence production; it is an interactive process in which learners construct meaning in real time [2, 267].

Although the theoretical foundations of communicative language teaching are well established, a practical gap remains in the deployment of communicative activities within ordinary classrooms. In some instances, teachers acknowledge the value of communication in theory yet persist with teacher-centered explanations and mechanical drills in practice. In others, communicative tasks are introduced but lack systematic organization to yield stable development in speaking. This indicates that the issue

extends beyond whether communicative activities are employed to how they are chosen, adapted, and integrated into the overall lesson framework.

The present study aims to investigate the contribution of communicative activities to the development of speaking skills in the English classroom. It concentrates on classroom practices such as pair work, role play, group discussions, information-gap activities, and problem-solving tasks. The research seeks to address the following questions: What role do communicative activities play in enhancing speaking skills? Which categories of communicative tasks generate greater learner participation? How do these activities affect confidence, fluency, and willingness to speak? The hypothesis posits that regular and purposeful use of communicative activities improves oral performance by placing learners in contexts where language functions as a tool for expressing ideas, solving problems, and sustaining interaction.

The theoretical significance of the article lies in elucidating the pedagogical value of communicative tasks for speaking development. Its practical significance relates to classroom application, as the study provides examples and conclusions that can inform English teachers working in secondary schools, academic lyceums, and higher education institutions. The article comprises an introduction, literature review, research methods, results, discussion, conclusion, and references.

Literature review

The development of speaking has long occupied a central role within language teaching methodology. Researchers repeatedly note that speaking is among the most challenging skills for learners to master, given its demand for immediate processing, selection of linguistic units, and interaction with others. Unlike reading or writing, spoken communication occurs in real time, requiring learners to produce language rapidly and coherently. Consequently, many methodologists regard speaking not only as a linguistic skill but as an active process of social interaction [7, 114].

A key theoretical foundation for this study is the notion of communicative competence. Hymes contended that language learners should understand not only what is grammatically possible but also what is socially appropriate within a given context [5, 54]. This perspective signaled a shift away from purely structural approaches to language teaching. Subsequently, Canale and Swain articulated communicative competence as comprising several components, demonstrating that effective communication relies on both linguistic knowledge and strategic ability [3, 31]. Their framework remains highly influential in research on speaking and classroom interaction.

Another significant contribution comes from Littlewood, who argues that communicative language teaching prompts learners to use language for meaningful purposes rather than mere formal repetition [6, 18]. He asserts that classroom tasks should simulate authentic communication to render learners active participants in speech production. This view is corroborated by Richards, who contends that communicative activities establish conditions in which learners negotiate meaning, respond to unpredictable input, and develop fluency through practice [8, 22].

Harmer emphasizes the practical classroom aspects of speaking instruction, noting that speaking lessons yield greater productivity when students engage in pair work, role plays, interviews, discussions, and problem-solving tasks [4, 271]. Such activities reduce excessive teacher talk time and enhance learner participation. The concept likewise appears in Nunan's work, which characterizes speaking as a competence best cultivated through task-based interaction rather than through isolated grammar instruction [7, 119]. Concurrently, several scholars have emphasized that communicative

activities do not inherently yield positive outcomes unless they are pedagogically well designed. Skehan observes that fluency tasks may heighten learner participation, yet without adequate support they may not consistently advance accuracy or complexity [10, 96]. This implies that communicative teaching should not entirely repudiate form; rather, it should strike a balance between meaningful usage and guided development of linguistic resources. Thornbury maintains that effective speaking instruction hinges on preparation, scaffolding, lexical support, and a classroom climate in which students feel unafraid to make mistakes [11, 38].

Recent research in language pedagogy indicates that communicative activities achieve particular effectiveness when learners experience emotional safety coupled with intellectual engagement. Group discussions, collaborative tasks, and role-playing cultivate speaking by creating a genuine need for communication rather than an artificial obligation to respond to the instructor. Moreover, such activities can enhance motivation, as students perceive that their views and contributions bear significance within the lesson [9, 141].

Nevertheless, despite extensive inquiry into communicative language teaching, a persistent issue is evident. Numerous studies articulate communicative principles in broad terms, while comparatively fewer investigations examine how distinct communicative activities influence speaking development within classroom practice. Additionally, there is a paucity of studies that integrate learner confidence, participation, and oral fluency within a single practical framework. Accordingly, the current article seeks to advance this domain by evaluating communicative activities not as abstract techniques but as direct instruments for enhancing speaking performance in the English classroom.

Research methods

This study adopts a qualitative-descriptive methodology augmented by elements of straightforward quantitative observation. Its principal aim is to investigate how communicative activities influence learners' development of speaking in the English classroom. Given the study's focus on classroom behavior, participation, fluency, and confidence, a descriptive design is deemed appropriate.

The research was conducted through classroom observation, comparative analysis, and the interpretation of methodological literature. It concentrates on English lessons in which communicative activities such as pair work, group discussion, role play, question-and-answer exchanges, and information-gap tasks were employed. These activities were chosen because they exemplify the most prevalent and pedagogically salient forms of communicative practice within speaking instruction [4, 274].

The primary analytical method employed was pedagogical observation. The observation process tracked several indicators, including the number of students engaging in oral tasks, the duration of their responses, their willingness to speak without direct prompting, and the degree of interaction among students. Additionally, learners' responses to different activity types were compared to determine which tasks yielded greater engagement and more natural communication.

A secondary method utilized in this study was a critical review of methodological literature. Works by Brown, Harmer, Nunan, Richards, and Thornbury were examined to identify key theoretical positions on speaking and communicative teaching [2, 269], [4, 276], [7, 121]. This facilitated the alignment of classroom observations with established perspectives in the field.

The study also incorporated elements of comparative analysis. Traditional, repetition-based, teacher-centered instruction was contrasted with communicative instruction characterized by learner

interaction. This comparison elucidated the pedagogical differences between controlled speech and meaningful oral communication. The objective of this analysis was not to achieve widespread statistical generalizability. Rather, its intention was to delineate discernible trends and derive actionable insights pertinent to the advancement of speaking skills. Consequently, the methodologies employed in this research encompass in-class observation, descriptive examination, comparative interpretation, and a synthesis of existing literature. Collectively, these approaches facilitated a comprehensive investigation of speaking development, addressing both its theoretical underpinnings and practical applications.

Discussion

It turns out that getting students to talk in English class is super important for improving their speaking. These activities aren't just about giving them more chances to speak, but they also change how students use language in class. Usually, speaking in class feels like a memory test or just about getting it right. But when you use communicative activities, speaking becomes about sharing your thoughts, swapping info, and keeping conversations going. This is a big deal for teaching because speaking can really only get better when students treat language like a real tool for talking to people.

These findings line up with what experts in communicative language teaching say. Hymes believed that being good at communicating means using language in different situations, not just knowing the grammar rules [5, 55]. Watching students in this study, you could see this in action: they spoke up more when they were doing interesting tasks that needed them to respond, work together, and figure out what each other meant. So, these communicative activities help turn what they learn in theory into actual speaking skills.

The results also back up what Brown said about speaking being a back-and-forth thing where you need to both speak and listen [2, 271]. When students worked in pairs, did role-plays, or solved problems, they weren't just spitting out memorized sentences. They were actively listening, responding, asking for clarification, and keeping the conversation going. This interactive part built up their confidence and made their speaking sound more natural. So, communicative activities shouldn't just be seen as an extra thing to do in class, but as a fundamental part of actually practicing speaking. Concurrently, the research indicated that communicative pedagogy encounters obstacles. In large-group dialogues, certain students exhibited passivity, and less proficient learners occasionally required augmented assistance prior to engaging in verbal exchanges. This corroborates Skehan's assertion that communicative assignments in isolation do not inherently ensure equitable advancement without meticulous structuring [10, 101]. Consequently, educators ought to furnish linguistic scaffolding, explicit directives, appropriate dyadic or group configurations, and a phased transition from regulated to liberated discourse. In the absence of these, more adept students might monopolize interactions, leaving their less capable peers as spectators.

A further critical consideration pertains to the pedagogical function of the instructor. Within communicative instructional contexts, the teacher transitions from being the primary orator to assuming the capacities of an organizer, facilitator, and mentor. This necessitates an alteration in the instructional methodology. The educator must design purposeful assignments, oversee interactive dynamics, foster confidence in reticent learners, and cultivate an encouraging milieu. Although this role is more onerous than mere exposition, it is also more efficacious, as it propels learners towards autonomous language acquisition.

In summation, this discourse demonstrates that communicative undertakings enhance oral proficiency not solely through augmented practice but also by transforming the classroom into a setting conducive to dynamic language application. Nevertheless, their efficacy is contingent upon judicious planning, responsiveness to learner requirements, and balanced methodological reinforcement.

Results

The study indicated that communicative activities exerted a notable positive impact on the development of learners' oral skills. When lessons regularly incorporated pair work, group discussions, and role plays, students exhibited a greater willingness to speak and engaged more actively in oral tasks. Their responses tended to be longer, less reliant on memorized formulations, and more connected to authentic classroom interaction.

A prominent finding was the rise in learner participation. In conventional teacher-centered speaking tasks, only a minority of students answered questions, and most responses were brief and predictable. By contrast, communicative tasks involved a substantially larger portion of the class, as the lesson structure emphasized interpersonal interaction rather than unidirectional teacher questioning. This aligns with Harmer's assertion that communicative speaking tasks expand opportunities for student talk and diminish passive classroom behaviors [4, 279].

A further result pertained to confidence. Students who engaged in role play and small-group discussions appeared less anxious than those required to speak individually before the entire class. When collaborating with peers, learners demonstrated greater willingness to experiment with language and to continue speaking even amid imperfect accuracy. This pattern corroborates Thornbury's claim that speaking development is enhanced in an environment where the fear of error is reduced and communicative value is prioritized over immediate correction [11, 41].

The observations also revealed an enhancement in fluency. Although learners continued to commit grammatical and lexical errors, their speech exhibited greater continuity and deliberate articulation. In information-gap and problem-solving tasks, students prioritized meaning exchange over the production of isolated sentences, resulting in more spontaneous oral performance. This outcome aligns with Nunan's assertion that speaking fluency develops when language is used to achieve a communicative objective rather than to demonstrate formal knowledge [7, 124].

Concurrently, the results indicated that the impact of communicative tasks varied. Pair work and role-play yielded the highest levels of participation, whereas open, whole-class discussions were occasionally less effective for weaker learners, who tended to remain silent. This implies that the choice of communicative activity should be guided by learners' proficiency, confidence, and classroom context.

Overall, the findings corroborate the study's primary hypothesis: communicative activities meaningfully enhance speaking development when introduced regularly, with clear purpose, and in formats attuned to learners' needs.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that communicative activities substantially contribute to the development of speaking skills within the English classroom. It is grounded in the premise that speaking cannot be effectively enhanced through memorization and mechanical repetition alone; rather, learners require regular opportunities to use language through meaningful interaction. The analysis findings corroborate this assumption and indicate that communicative tasks—such as pair work, group

discussions, role-plays, and information-gap activities—establish conducive conditions for oral development.

The research addresses the issue of limited speaking practice in traditional English instruction and investigates how communicative activities can mitigate this constraint. It was observed that such activities elevate student engagement, improve fluency, and bolster confidence in oral communication. They also encourage learners to respond more autonomously and naturally, which is essential for the development of genuine communicative competence.

Theoretically, the article endorses the view that speaking is an interactive, context-dependent skill closely linked to communicative competence. Practically, it recommends that English teachers allocate greater emphasis to learner-centered oral tasks and organize classroom communication with greater intentionality. Simultaneously, the study acknowledges that communicative teaching requires appropriate support, particularly for less confident learners and in classrooms with varying proficiency levels.

Limitations of the study arise from its descriptive nature and relatively narrow classroom scope. Consequently, future research could examine the development of communicative speaking using broader empirical data, surveys, and comparative classroom experiments. Nevertheless, the current work demonstrates that communicative activities are not only beneficial but essential for cultivating active, confident, and functional speaking skills in English learners.

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