EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING SPEAKING SKILLS IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Abdullayeva Nigina Abdukadirovna
Teacher of
Asia International University, Bukhara, Uzbekistan
E-mail:lucky_happy0607@mail.ru

Annotation: Teaching speaking is one of the most dynamic—and challenging—components of language instruction. Unlike grammar or reading, speaking requires learners to actively produce language in real time, negotiate meaning, and respond spontaneously. For many students, this can be intimidating. For teachers, it demands careful planning, creativity, and a supportive classroom environment. This article explores key principles, practical techniques, and classroom strategies that help make speaking classes engaging, communicative, and effective.

Keywords: Speaking, CLT, TBLT, scaffolding activities, creativity, practical, instruction.

Introduction. Speaking is widely recognized as one of the most essential yet challenging skills to teach in language education. Unlike receptive skills, speaking requires learners to produce language spontaneously, interact in real time, and navigate sociolinguistic norms. Many students face anxiety, limited vocabulary, or fear of making mistakes, which can hinder oral participation.

Despite these challenges, well-designed speaking instruction can significantly improve learners' communicative competence. Current pedagogical research emphasizes communicative tasks, learner engagement, and meaningful interaction. The purpose of this study is to explore instructional strategies and classroom techniques that enhance speaking proficiency.

Methods. This article synthesizes classroom-based observations, teacher reflections, and established principles from communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based language teaching (TBLT). The following instructional methods were implemented in multiple speaking-focused classes at intermediate and upper-intermediate levels:

Task-Based Activities
Learners completed role-plays, problem-solving tasks, and information-gap activities designed to mimic real-world communication. Tasks required negotiation of meaning, asking for clarification, and expressing opinions.

Scaffolding Techniques
Lessons followed a sequence from controlled to less-controlled practice:
Modeling and demonstration
Guided pair or group practice
Independent discussion or presentation

Fluency and Accuracy Balance
Two types of activities were used:

- **Fluency tasks** (e.g., discussions, storytelling) encouraged continuous speech without interruption.
- **Accuracy tasks** (e.g., pronunciation drills, targeted grammar application) focused on correctness.

Feedback Approaches Teachers provided delayed feedback, recorded common errors, and used peer-assessment checklists to support learner reflection.

Results. The implementation of these methods led to several observable outcomes:

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Increased Learner Participation. Students became more willing to speak in pair and group work. Role-plays and negotiation tasks reduced anxiety and promoted spontaneous communication.

Improved Fluency. Repeated exposure to structured speaking tasks helped learners speak with fewer pauses, use more connected speech, and express ideas more clearly.

Enhanced Accuracy. Pronunciation drills and focused correction contributed to clearer articulation, better stress patterns, and more accurate use of grammar forms in speaking.

Higher Engagement and Confidence. Learners reported greater enjoyment and confidence when tasks were meaningful and had clear communicative goals. The use of authentic scenarios improved motivation.

Discussion. The findings reinforce the importance of communicative and task-based methods in teaching speaking. When learners interact in realistic contexts, they develop not only linguistic competence but also pragmatic skills such as turn-taking, politeness strategies, and conversation management.

Scaffolding proved crucial: students benefited from clear modeling, gradual task progression, and supportive feedback. Additionally, combining fluency-focused tasks with accuracy-oriented practice ensured balanced skill development.

One noted challenge was the variability in learner participation; shy students sometimes required additional encouragement or differentiated tasks. Technology—such as voice-recording tools or online speaking platforms—was beneficial in giving these learners extra practice outside class.

Conclusion. Teaching speaking effectively requires a structured and communicative approach. Task-based interaction, scaffolding, balanced fluency-accuracy practice, and constructive feedback all contribute to improved learner performance. When speaking lessons create a safe, engaging, and meaningful communicative environment, learners build the confidence and proficiency necessary for real-world communication.

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