

Effective Ways of Teaching Speaking

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1. introduction :

L'oral n'est pas une découverte nouvelle. Sa place a toujours été reconnue dans les programmes du moyen et du secondaire. D'objet d'apprentissage qu'il était au départ – mais souvent limité, il faut bien l'avouer, à l'expression ou à l'exposition des connaissances de l'élève devant la classe, l'oral devient également un moyen pour apprendre. De plus en plus de recherches didactiques tentent de répondre aux besoins pressants des enseignants et des élèves à propos de la maîtrise de l'oral, en développant des outils adaptés comme par exemple, les interactions verbales, les interactions sociales et les échanges coopératifs.

Effective Ways of Teaching Speaking

It is universally known that learning a foreign language depends crucially on four basic skills. These skills are: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. To most people, mastering speaking, which is an active skill, is the most important aspect of learning this foreign language, and success is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the target language. So, the importance is not in how much the learner knows in his head, it is how he uses it, and how he brings it into life.

In this paper there will be an attempt to discuss the meaning of speaking or what does it mean? What are its characteristics? What types of speaking activities can be used in the classroom? What are the problems of the speaking activities? What are the ways to encourage student to speak? How to develop guide lines for a free / creative speaking? By supplying answers for such question, it may help the teacher to find away to develop their teaching.

If we want to speak about the meaning of speaking skill; so, we have to mention the two main aspects in this regard which are:

- **Accuracy**

Accuracy means the correct use of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. The use of correction and the importance of accuracy depends crucially on the type of activity which we use. The controlled and guided activities focus on accuracy, one can conclude that from the feedback. Ongoing correction often appropriate during accuracy activities. Free activities using a correct language is important, but these are another more important thing which is allowing and encouraging students attempts to use the language communicatively (Bygate, 1987:23).

- **Fluency**

Fluency can be thought of as Gower *et al.* (1995: 100) says that "*the ability to keep going when speaking spontaneously.*" Speaking fluently means to be able to convey the message by using one's abilities and resources, in spite of the grammatical and other mistakes. The teacher should not correct the mistakes during fluency activity. But he can comment on any strategies the students use to increase their fluency in the afterwards feedback. Some of these strategies are:

- 1- The use of natural-sounding (incomplete) sentences.
- 2- The use of common expressions like: I see, never mind.
- 3- The use of fillers and hesitation devices.
The use of communication strategies, such as asking for clarification.
- 4- The ability to paraphrase
- 5- The use of useful expression such as ... by the way .../ talking of... etc. when introducing a topic; still .../ any way .../, really... etc. when finishing with a topic; and well...nice talking to you, etc. when finishing a conversation (Gower et al, 1995: 100).

Some of these aspects are more difficult to focus on than others. Students obviously transfer many of the speaking skills they have in Arabic or French when they are speaking English. However, do not forget that some conventions of conversation are not universal and it can be very useful to focus on particular aspects in class. For example, Japanese people consider it impolite to interrupt – especially someone older or of a higher status. With more advanced students who have to take part in discussions with native speakers of English, it can be helpful to teach Japanese students how to interrupt in English in away which is considered acceptable by native speakers (ibid).

All the interactive activities can be divided into three main categories which we are going to discuss.

1- Controlled activities:

The main reason for using such activities is to improve the accurate use of words, structures and pronunciation, and to foster confidence. Some examples of these activities are repetition practice or set sentence prompted by picture or word cues (Gower *et al.*, 1995:100).

2- Guided activities:

For example model dialogues which the students can change to talk about themselves and to communicate their own needs and ideas; tasks which the students carry out using language (structures and/or vocabulary) which has been taught beforehand.

3- Creative or free Communication :

These activities are usually designed to give either creative practice opportunities, or general fluency practice. The students are given the opportunity to experiment, to see how far they can communicate in situations where all the choices of language used are made by the people speaking; to practice the fluent use of language that they know. These activities increase the students' mo-

tivation, and help in bridging the gap between the artificial language of the class room and the real one from the world outside. (Gower et al, 1995: 120).

Of course, any situation the teacher sets up in his classroom for such experiment will point the language used. For any limited communicative situation one can predict some of the language items likely to occur and teachers often plan a freer stage to follow the introduction and more controlled practice of language items.

The most important point to remember is that the students must have a reason for speaking in order to be truly communicative; in other words, there must be a gap between the speakers to be filled, either an opinion gap or an information gap. The process of bridging this gap must be carefully planned for a successful speaking lesson.

a- Characteristics of oral study activities

- 1- Learners talk a lot. As much as possible of the period of time which is devoted to such activities is in fact occupied by learner talk. This may seem obvious, but often most time is taken up with teacher talk or pauses.
- 2- Participation is even. The classroom discussion isn't dominated by minority of talkative participants; the opportunity is allowed for the students all.
- 3- Motivation is high. Learners are eager to speak, because they are interested in the topic and have something new to say about it, or because they want to contribute to achieving a task objective.
- 4- Language is of an acceptable level. Learners express themselves in utterances that are relevant, easily comprehensible to each other, and of an acceptable level of language accuracy (Ur, 1997:120).

b- Advantages of oral study activities :

- 1- All students participate with interest.
- 2- Errors are corrected immediately.
- 3- All students complete work together.
- 4- The worksheets are not prepared.
- 5- There are not exercises to correct later

4- Problems with Speaking Activities:

4.1 Inhibition:

Unlike reading, Writing and listening activities, speaking requires some degree of real-time exposure to an audience. Learners are often inhibited about trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom, worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism or losing face, or simply shy of the attention that their speech attracts.

4.2 Nothing to say:

Even if they are not inhibited, you often hear learners complain that they can't think of anything to say they have no motive to express themselves beyond the guilty feeling that they should be speaking.

4.3 Low or uneven participation:

Only one participant can talk at a time if he or she is to be heard; and in a large group this means that each one will have only very little talking time. This problem is compounded by the tendency of some learners to dominate, while others speak very little or at all.

5- Ways to encourage student to speak:

5.1 Encourage students' interaction:

Using Props. This way helps students to have more assurance. Assign "How - to" topics for speaking require the students to show the class things from his personal experience, for example: "How

to open a new book?". Students will not feel of the eyes which are on him; they are on the object he is handing.

A speaker's stand. It gives the students a sense of security. He may stand behind a table or a desk or you can construct a simple stand which will hold notes and add to the reality of the atmosphere. More speeches brief for the students who have difficulty. One short type of speech is telling of jokes. The materials readily gain the interest of the audience, so the speaker feels a sense of support from his schoolfellows and eagerness to hear such jokes.

Taping a speech is not awesome for many students as speaking before the group. It's supposed as an easy way because the student has no eyes on him while he is recording or taping.

Puppetry also permits the student to lose his identity in that of the character he is portraying. Even the shyest child may be able to shout triumphantly as he kills the wolf in Red Riding Hood (ibid).

Group speaking is the method in which the shy child can speak confidently as part of the group. Then the teacher can motivate him to work in smaller and smaller groups.

5.2 Give plenty of controlled and guided practice:

Generally, the lower the level of students the more controlled and guided practice, compared with freer practice, you will do. However, even quite advanced students often welcome the chance to get their tongues round new vocabulary and grammar structures, expressions and model sentences before using them in a real communications.

5.3 Make speaking activities communicative:

The aim of communication activities is to encourage purposeful and meaningful interaction between students. Communicative tasks are designed so that students have a reason or a purpose for speaking. They are bridging an information or opinion gap; they are asking for or giving real information or finding out about the opinions of their fellow students. Not only are these activities mo-

tivating in the classroom, but also they offer a challenge reflect real- life communication. Controlled activities can be made communicative if it motivates the students to speak about real - life actions and opinions. In free activities student listen and respond in a real communication without knowing what will come next, so the importance here for the successful communication rather than the grammatical accuracy (Gower *et al.*, 1995:102).

5.4 Plan speaking activities carefully:

Teachers have to structure speaking activities carefully. It is often difficult for students to come up with ideas at the same time as having to cope with language. Teachers have to provide their students of things to speak about, like pictures; or a purpose such as performing a role play from the context of a reading text. After a period of controlled and guided activities and after students become more sure of themselves and more adventurous so that freer activities can be attempted (Gower *et al.*, 1995 102) Teachers need to plan Freer activities (role play, picture, problem-solving, etc.) carefully and provide the reason, purpose and guidelines by which students can speak more freely . Example of these activities are cited and discussed below in this research.

6- Guidelines for a creative speaking activity:

6.1 before the lesson:

Before the lesson the teacher has to decide on his aims by asking himself some questions like: What do you want to do? And why ? Then he has to try to predict what the students will bring to the activity and any problems they might have. Will they have something to speak about? Are they capable of doing the activity successfully? Do they have the necessary language? Will the students find the activity interesting, useful, fun? Work out how long the activity will take and tailor it to the time available, prepare the materials and work out his instructions (Gower *et al.*, 1995 : 103).

6.2 during the activity:

While the lesson is going on the teacher has to arouse the students interest through visual, a short lead-in talk, a newspaper headline, etc. Try to relate the topic to the students own interests and experience. He may want to remind student of any structures or vocabulary that might be useful. Set up the activity so that the students know the aims of the activity and what are to do. This means giving clear instructions and checking that they have enough time to prepare, perhaps in pairs or groups, before asking them to tackle the main activity. Do not forget that the students are probably getting useful speaking practice at this stage too. Making the activity like the process rather than like the product is more logical for the teacher. The teacher has not to interrupt except to provide help and encouragement if necessary. The last point here is the evaluation, the teacher needs to evaluate the activity and the students' performance in order to provide feed back later but he does not jump in with instant corrections (Cross, 1992:90-6).

6. 3 after the activity (provide feedback):

The teacher can provide his feedback by the following orders. Firstly, indicating how each person communicated, comment on how fluent each was, how well they argued as a group, and so on. Then, recording the activity on audio or video cassette and play it back for discussion. Focus on possible improvements rather than mistakes, in fact if it is taped, sometimes they can be asked to do a rough version first then discuss improvements, then re-record. Finally, note down glaring and recurrent errors in grammar, pronunciation, use of vocabulary. Individually mistakes might be discussed (in private) with the students concerned and you might recommend suitable remedial work to do at home. Mistakes which are common to the class can be mentioned and then practiced another day when you have had a chance to prepare a suitable remedial lesson.

Conclusion:

It has become as a belief that speaking is in many ways undervalued skill in our schools, therefore, this communication is written, somehow, to supply of teaching the speaking skills. In this paper it is used to show and discuss varied of activities which help in enabling the learners to speak with confidence in order to carry out many of their most basic transactions. Speaking is the skill by which learners are most frequently judged, through which they may make or lose friends; consequently, the activities and here are ordered from the most relevant to less then the less; that is, there are activities highly appropriate and can be easily used in our school while the other not so like that, for example, the information gap activities are more appropriate to our schools than the words fun activities.

Finally, this communication aims to outline some ways in which our teachers may be able to get a better understanding of how the learners learn to speak a foreign language through the various activities which can be made available to them.

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