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THE ROLE OF INTERACTIVE METHODS IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' ENGLISH-SPEAKING PROFICIENCY

Abdusalomova Barchinoy Jo'rabek qizi
Student, English Language Teaching
(Philology and Language Teaching) Program
Faculty of Foreign Philology.

Abstract. This article examines the role of interactive teaching methods in developing students' English-speaking proficiency. Speaking is one of the most important language skills because it enables learners to communicate their thoughts, opinions, and ideas in real-life situations. The study focuses on the effectiveness of role-playing, group discussions, pair work, debates, and communicative activities in English language teaching. It also explores how interactive methods influence students' fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, confidence, and communication skills. The findings suggest that learner-centred activities create more opportunities for meaningful communication and encourage students to participate actively in the learning process.

Keywords: interactive methods, English language teaching, speaking proficiency, communicative competence, role-playing, group discussion, pair work, student engagement.

Introduction

In modern education, learning a foreign language is not limited to memorising grammar rules and vocabulary. Students are expected to use the language effectively in different communicative situations. Among the four main language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—speaking plays a particularly important role because it allows learners to express their thoughts and interact with other people.

However, many students experience difficulties when speaking English. Some learners understand grammatical structures and know a considerable number of words but cannot use them confidently in conversations. This problem may be connected with limited speaking practice, fear of making mistakes, insufficient vocabulary, and traditional teacher-centred approaches.

Interactive teaching methods can help address these challenges by involving students directly in the learning process. Instead of simply listening to explanations, learners participate in discussions, dialogues, role-playing activities, presentations, and collaborative tasks. These methods create a supportive environment in which students can practise English regularly and develop their communicative abilities.

The purpose of this study is to examine how interactive methods contribute to improving students' English-speaking proficiency and to identify the main classroom activities that support the development of oral communication skills.

Methods

The research is based on a qualitative analysis of pedagogical approaches and methodological literature related to interactive language teaching. The study examines the educational value of several interactive techniques commonly used in English language classrooms.

The following methods were considered:

- Observation: examining students' participation and communication during interactive classroom activities.
- Comparative analysis: comparing traditional teacher-centred instruction with interactive, learner-centred approaches.

- Pedagogical analysis: evaluating how different activities contribute to fluency, vocabulary development, pronunciation, and confidence.
- Generalisation: identifying common educational benefits and challenges associated with interactive speaking activities.

The analysis focuses on five major interactive methods: role-playing, pair work, group discussions, debates, and presentations. These activities were selected because they provide opportunities for students to use English in meaningful and communicative contexts.

Results

The analysis indicates that interactive methods can support the development of students' speaking proficiency in several important ways.

First, role-playing activities help learners practise everyday communication. Students take different roles and participate in situations such as shopping, travelling, visiting a doctor, ordering food, or attending a job interview. These activities allow them to use appropriate expressions, ask questions, respond naturally, and develop confidence in speaking.

Second, pair work increases the amount of time students spend communicating in English. When learners work in pairs, they can practise dialogues, interview each other, discuss personal experiences, and exchange information. This approach gives more students an opportunity to speak during a lesson rather than depending only on teacher-student interaction.

Third, group discussions encourage learners to express their opinions and respond to different viewpoints. Topics such as education, technology, environmental protection, culture, and social issues can be used to stimulate meaningful conversations. Through these activities, students develop vocabulary, logical thinking, listening skills, and the ability to organise their ideas.

Fourth, debates and presentations improve students' ability to speak independently and communicate more systematically. During debates, learners defend their opinions, provide arguments, and respond to opposing ideas. Presentations help them organise information, use appropriate language, and speak in front of an audience.

Finally, interactive methods can positively influence students' psychological readiness to communicate. Regular participation in speaking activities may reduce anxiety and fear of making mistakes. A supportive classroom environment encourages learners to practise without feeling embarrassed about occasional errors.

Discussion

The results demonstrate that interactive methods have considerable potential for improving English-speaking proficiency. Their main advantage is that they transform students from passive recipients of information into active participants in the educational process.

In traditional language classrooms, students may spend much of their time listening to explanations and completing written exercises. Although grammar and vocabulary are essential, they do not automatically guarantee effective oral communication. Speaking requires regular practice, quick thinking, appropriate vocabulary selection, and the ability to respond to another person.

Interactive activities provide opportunities to develop these abilities simultaneously. For example, role-playing combines vocabulary, pronunciation, listening, and spontaneous speaking. Group discussions encourage learners to formulate opinions and communicate them clearly. Pair work creates a less stressful environment in which students can practise conversations and correct their mistakes.

Another important aspect is the teacher's role. In an interactive classroom, the teacher acts not only as a source of information but also as a facilitator and organiser of communication. Teachers should select activities according to students' language levels, interests, and learning needs. They should also provide constructive feedback, correct important errors, and encourage students to continue communicating.

Technology can further strengthen interactive language learning. Online discussion platforms, educational applications, video materials, and digital communication tools allow students to practise speaking beyond the classroom. Recording their own speech can also help learners identify pronunciation problems and monitor their progress.

Nevertheless, interactive methods should be used systematically. If activities are not properly organised, some students may dominate discussions while others remain passive. Therefore, teachers should distribute speaking opportunities fairly, provide clear instructions, and create tasks that involve every learner.

Conclusion

In conclusion, interactive teaching methods play an important role in improving students' English-speaking proficiency. Role-playing, pair work, group discussions, debates, and presentations create meaningful opportunities for communication and help learners develop fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and self-confidence.

The effectiveness of these methods depends on regular practice, appropriate task selection, active student participation, and supportive teacher guidance. Interactive activities should therefore become an essential part of English language teaching. By creating a communicative and learner-centred classroom environment, teachers can help students overcome speaking difficulties and prepare them to use English confidently in real-life situations.

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