ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE SPEAKING IN A SECOND LANGUAGE

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Abstract. This article is about how to improve students’ speaking and communicative skills through free activities during the lesson.

Key words: skill, activity, debate, communication, whole-class activity.

АКТИВИЗАЦИЯ УСТОЙ РЕЧИ У ИЗУЧАЮЩИХ АНГЛИЙСКИЙ КАК ВТОРОЙ ЯЗЫК

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Аннотация. В статье приведены новые интерактивные методы, способствующие улучшению уровня устной речи и коммуникативных способностей студентов.

Ключевые слова: мастерство, деятельность, дебаты, общение, групповая деятельность.
In the past English was taught just as a foreign language at schools. Teachers taught with grammar Translation Method, which used translation, grammar study, recitation, and dictation to practice English. These methods helped students translate texts. Teachers didn’t need to teach pupils to speak English well. But today, not only students or pupils but all people recognize the value of English. As we see today’s learners are absolutely different than the past. Because, nowadays knowing English help people becoming smart in all fields of society. They want to use English for different purposes: such as communicating with people from the other part of the world, listening to news broadcasts and analyzing what’s going in the world, and watching films or just being a professional interpreter or guide-translator. To put all in a nutshell, people began to live with worldwide. Translating written texts don’t satisfy students any longer. Students want to communicate, not just translate. Now teachers need to teach pupils how to speak and listen, as well as read and write. Unfortunately, the Grammar Translation Method will not help your students speak English well. Traditional exercises such as recitation and dictation do not prepare pupils to communicate with other English speakers. Therefore, teachers must use new methods in order to promote their speaking skills. If we want our students to speak English well, they must practice by speaking English in the classroom. Communicative methods make pupils do things in English. These methods help teachers and students communicate using English. Your students will learn by «doing” if you use the activities and techniques [3, p. 46].

Speaking lessons often tie in pronunciation and grammar which are necessary for effective oral communication. Or a grammar or reading lesson may incorporate a speaking activity. Either way, your students will need some preparation before the speaking task. This includes introducing the topic and providing a model of the speech they are to produce. A model may not apply to discussion-type activities, in which case students will need clear and specific instructions about the task to be accomplished. Then the students will
practice with the actual speaking activity. These activities may include imitating (repeating), answering verbal cues, interactive conversation, or an oral presentation.

Now many linguistics and ESL teachers agree on that students learn to speak in the second language by «interacting». Communicative language teaching and collaborative learning serve best for this aim. Communicative language teaching is based on real-life situations that require communication. By using this method in ESL classes, students will have the opportunity of communicating with each other in the target language. In brief, ESL teachers should create a classroom environment where students have real-life communication, authentic activities, and meaningful tasks that promote oral language. This can occur when students collaborate in groups to achieve a goal or to complete a task.

Now we will present you some more activities that develop your pupils’ communicative and conversational skills.

What steps are involved in speaking?

1. Listen and understand other people.
2. Have an idea and want to express it.
3. Remember vocabulary which can express this idea.
4. Use grammar correctly.
5. Pronounce the words understandably [4, p. 67].

Speaking is an active skill. Speakers think of everything themselves, the ideas, the words, and the grammar. Finally, all of the words and grammar must be pronounced clearly. This is much more difficult than listening.

In order to teach second language learners how to speak in the best way possible, some speaking activities are provided below, that can be applied to ESL and EFL classroom settings, together with suggestions for teachers who teach oral language. Here are some classroom activities to promote your students’ speaking skills during the lesson:
Story completion: You read or tell the beginning of an interesting story to the pupils. It may be from life or from your textbook. Students finish the story orally. One student may finish the story or many pupils could add to the story in turn. This is a very enjoyable, whole-class, free-speaking activity for which students sits in a circle. Each student is supposed to add from four to ten sentences. Students can add new characters, events, description and so on.

List making: List making is a good way to review vocabulary. The teacher chooses a theme and students say all the words they know which relate to this theme. The teacher writes the words on the blackboard. This kind of list making is called «brain storming» by Americans. For example, here is a list for the theme clothing: shirt, boots, hat, dress, blouse, coat, to wear, to put on, to take off... «To wear» isn’t an article of clothing, but it is a verb connected with clothing. Making lists before a free activity reviews the vocabulary pupils may need.

Ranking: Students may rank (put in order of importance) the items on a list they have made. For example, after students have made a long list of clothing words, you can ask those questions. «Which are the most important clothes to wear in winter?» Or after making a list of countries, «Which countries would you like to visit? Where would you go first?» After making a list of hobbies, «Which of these hobbies are the most fun?» You can use this activity to learn nouns during the lesson. With a list of character adjectives, like: kind, smart, quite you could ask «Which of these character do you have? Which of these characteristics describes your best friend?» To learn the adjectives use this activity making a list of some more adjectives which you had at the lesson. Students may answer their partners or in turn to the whole class. The level of the activity depends on difficulty of the words on the list.

Giving directions: Students may tell others to do things in class. This practices the imperative mood. Students may also explain how to do things. For example, the teacher may ask «How do you make plov?», «How do you walk to home from school?», «How do you sew a dress?», or «How do you
play football?» Students explain orally. You could also make a game out of this. One pupil explains how to do something, and the other pupils guess what it is. This activity is used when you are having lessons on the themes «Imperative mood» and «Present Indefinite Tense».

Group interview: A guest speaker comes to your classroom. Students ask the guest questions. You could ask a real guest to your class (foreigner or professional translator) or one of your students could pretend to be a famous person (Madonna, Steve Jobs, Queen Elisabeth II and etc.).

Story telling: Sit in a circle with your students. Give the first line of an interesting story. Each student around the circle tells one or two sentences of the story until it is finished. In this case the story should be familiar to the students. For example: «Once upon a time there lived a little frog whose name was Feddy the frog. He was very …».

Story telling fosters creative thinking. It also helps students express ideas in the format of beginning, development, and ending, including the characters and setting a story has to have. Students also can tell riddles or jokes.

Show and tell: Students bring something important with them. They show the item to the class. Then they explain why the item is important, when they got it, and who gave it to them. They may also answer questions about the item.

This activity is used to learn the Demonstrative pronouns (this is, that is these are, those are). For example:

One pupil: – This is my favorite handkerchief. This is a present of my best friend.

Another pupil: – This is a picture of my dog. I drew it myself. It is my lovely pet. It is big and clever.

Debate: This is very difficult. Debate is organized discussion about a topic. The teacher makes a statement, for example «Women’s rights are equal the men’s». Students choose whether they agree or disagree. They write a short presentation explaining their opinion. The students who agree speak
first. Afterword, the pupils who disagree have a rebuttal. They respond to the first presentation. They explain why the other students are incorrect. Afterward, the class decides which team the better argument by voting with their hands. Debates stress logical thinking and persuasion. Here are some themes for debate:

«Each student may work while they are studying»,
«Everybody must know English»,
«Physical training is unnecessary subject».

Make me laugh: Pupils tell jokes and stories. If it is a contest, the pupil who makes his classmates laughs the most wins.

Problem solving: Present a problem to the students. Students work in pairs or as a whole class to solve the problem. For example «Jasur never does his homework. What should his teachers do? What should his parents do?» or «Rano wants to buy a beautiful dress but she doesn’t have much money». Use this activity to get better results in teaching of «Modal verbs: should, can, could, may, to be to, must».

Fantasy: If you are studying about London or America in your class, ask pupils to imagine being in America or in London. For example:
«If you were in London where would you go?»,
«If you could talk to the President, what would you say?»,

Here are some statements for fantasy:
«If you were the teacher, how students would you teach pupils?»,
«If you won the lottery one million dollars, how would you spend them?».

Fantasy doesn’t have to be complicated. Stimulate your students’ imagination.

Those practices can be used when you’re having lessons on the themes «If- Conditional sentences» and «Subjunctive mood».

Besides above mentioned activities the English language teachers should keep in mind some ideas and suggestions while teaching oral language:
Provide maximum opportunity to students to speak the target language by providing a rich environment that contains collaborative work, authentic materials and tasks, and shared knowledge.

Try to involve each student in every speaking activity; for this aim, practice different ways of student participation.

Reduce teacher speaking time in class while increasing student speaking time.

Do not correct students’ pronunciation mistakes very often while they are speaking. Correction should not distract student from his or her speech.

Involve speaking activities not only in class but also out of class; contact parents and other people who can help.

Provide the vocabulary beforehand that students need in speaking activities.

Diagnose problems faced by students who have difficulty in expressing themselves in the target language and provide more opportunities to practice the spoken language.

Encourage strategies like asking for clarification, paraphrasing, gestures, and initiating (‘hey,’ ‘so,’ ‘by the way’).

Moreover, here are some strategies for getting adult ESL students to speak. As my own experience students need to speak out loud by themselves and not just follow along in their heads while someone else speaks. It isn’t good enough for them to only mumble along with the crowd as in a drilling exercise.

Here are some possible speaking opportunities that you can provide your students or draw their attention:

Stand up in front of the class and speak. (This is good practice for the speaking part of exams such as IELTS, TOEFL or TOEIC.)

Stand up in front of the class with a partner and present something together.

Be part of a group presenting a drama or role-play in front of the class.
Take part in a whole class discussion or debate. Make sure everyone participates. Be involved in pair work where every student must talk with a partner.

Be involved in small group discussions where individual students are less likely to get left out.

Teaching speaking is a very important part of second language learning. The ability to communicate in a second language clearly and efficiently contributes to the success of the learner in school and success later in every phase of life. Therefore, it is essential that language teachers pay great attention to teaching speaking. Rather than leading students to pure memorization, providing a rich environment where meaningful communication takes place is desired. With this aim, various speaking activities such as those listed above can contribute a great deal to students in developing basic interactive skills necessary for life. These activities make students more active in the learning process and at the same time make their learning more meaningful and fun for them. The games and activities in this article are organized into those that encourage speaking skills of the English language learners. The activities benefit both the students and the teachers.

Список использованных источников