

STRATEGIES OF TEACHING ELEMENTARY STUDENTS TO SPEAK A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**Kuchma Viktoriya**

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**СТРАТЕГИЯ ОБУЧЕНИЯ УСТНОЙ РЕЧИ НА УРОКАХ ИНОСТРАННОГО ЯЗЫКА НА
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Abstract. Speaking a foreign language is a main and supreme objective as for learners so for teachers and at the same time this main learning goal usually seen as one of the most valuable skills and may appear rather problematic at the elementary level. On this basis one of key prerogative tasks for teachers to lead their students towards this aim successfully and smoothly. This article describes strategies of teaching speaking to elementary level students that are applicable to young learners. A three-stage strategy is proposed, consisting of controlled practice, guided practice and free practice, with emphasis on various activity types for each stage. Advice on integrating grammar and vocabulary activities with a focus on speaking is provided. Overall, success in teaching elementary speaking seems to be linked with transition to free practice activities, including role-plays and language games and a positive, non-judgmental classroom atmosphere.

Аннотация:

Говорение на иностранном языке как правило считается одним из самых важных умений и основной целью обучения как со стороны учителей, так и со стороны обучающихся и может казаться проблематичным на начальном уровне обучения. Данная статья рассматривает стратегию обучения навыкам устной речи обучающихся начального уровня. Предлагается трехэтапная стратегия, состоящая из контролируемой отработки навыков говорения, управляемой отработки и свободной отработки с упором на различные виды активностей на каждом этапе. Предусматривается внедрение лексических и грамматических упражнений с упором на отработку устной речи. В целом, успех в обучении базовым навыкам устной речи представляет собой переход к заданиям свободной отработки говорения путем включения ролевые игры и языковые игры, а также позитивная и не осуждающая атмосфера в классе.

Keywords: Elementary level students, role-play, dialogue, communicative activities, genuine communication, speaking skills, aural / oral activities, meaningful speaking tasks, positive classroom environment, error correction.

Ключевые слова: обучающиеся начального уровня, ролевая игра, диалог, коммуникативные занятия, настоящая коммуникация, языковые умения, задания на отработку устной речи,

осмысленные задания на отработку устной речи, позитивная обстановка в классе, исправление ошибок.

Most teachers concern to find new and efficient techniques and strategies, methods and approaches in order to update and improve the available data and information for furnishing their young students with appropriate practicing oral speech within classes. Taking into consideration that students at primary level are generally very restricted in the volume of language they know, a free flow of conversation is merely not feasible on this level of study. Hence a clearly defined framework should be settled for all oral tasks such as drills, dialogues or simple role-plays. The opportunity of practicing L2 speaking outside the classroom is limited so they need lots of practice when they are in class [1]. Tendency to observe the balance between providing languages using control and guided activities is quite essential and simultaneously with this giving them opportunity to enjoy genuine talk.

The sequence we are proposing can happen in three stages:

1. Control Practice
2. Guided Practice
3. Free Practice

Controlled Practice: Controlled practice goes in parallel with presentation as it is essential for students trying out new language directly after they have heard it. Using controlled practice, the chance of making mistakes by students is respectively decreased. For instance, the teacher provides students the example it can be affirmative or interrogative statement or sentence. The young learners repeat following the sample provided by the teacher. For example, the teacher asks one of the students 'Can you swim...?'. The students answer and then proceed and ask each other in pairs 'Can you swim or use other familiar action verbs such as run, jump, fly', with the other classmate simply answering, 'yes, I can' or 'no, I can't'. As soon as the pattern is composed with the class, they can successfully do it in pairs. Taking into consideration such approach the following activities such as information gap games, sorting, ordering or arranging games can be carried out based on the same scenario [11], [12].

As Scott Thornbury points out [2], activities like these give the foundation for speaking activities however do not always generate 'real' language with that at once. Training students to apply simple, correct and available language is one of main goals of teachers within this stage of teaching speaking. Young learners may have to repeat sentences, be corrected and go through the same structure several times. For building security in the language familiarity and safety are important. It's rather essential to render support and encouragement to young learners on this stage, however the necessity of correcting and adjusting mistakes in pronunciation should be taken into account also.

Guided Practice: Guided practice is the following stage after controlled practice and usually carried out either in pairs or in small groups. The purpose of guided oral practice is to provide students an opportunity of limited freedom of using and practicing obtained knowledge, still will be under some restraints though. Pair working can be also considered as a good way of practicing speaking skills. In general, the whole situation and content of what is to be said is presented but some freedom in the form of expression is allowed and encouraged. Monitoring the situation but allowing variety of expression, the dialogue has been changed from controlled to guided oral activity. Guided practice usually provides the students some kind of alternative, but the choice of language is restricted.

Dialogues and role play work: Using dialogues is an effective way to combine the span between guided practice and freer activities. Controlled dialogues is an appropriate option to grow into freer activity when the students are sufficiently prepared for this. Organizing of students practicing dialogues by splitting them into pairs is a basic option of arranging work even in classes with large number of children. Firstly, the dialogue will have been presented by the teacher in most suitable option. Young learners prefer to work with the dialogues that require some actions or movement. Intonation should also be taken into attention. Teacher should from the beginning of teaching speaking activity to young learners pay attention to intonation and stressing. The atmosphere of the

lessons should be friendly and supportive. Teacher should allow students to express their ideas within the stated topic of the lesson and encourage them to use other words and phrases from the already studied material.

The next variant for practicing oral skills in a guided way is organizing a role-playing situation. Role-play work is an option of flexible technique which can be applied as in more structured and predictable way during the controlled period, so with less guidance during the next stage of the lesson where continued practice is passing into active productivity. Young students in their educational period are much more acquisitive to taking part in communication activities such as speaking and role-play. Due to the fact that young learners are generally more confident and therefore happily practice a second language aurally and consider it highly motivational. Involvement of the role-play into the classroom activities introduces catholicity, a variety of usual course and chance for increasing language production and ability to have a lot of fun. It can be an integrated element of the lesson and not a 'one-off' event. For successful implementation such activities the teacher should believe in it and support students [2]. Correction mistakes should be done by the teacher softly and accurately. As one of the options that may be applicable within teaching speaking, the teacher can repronounce correctly after the incorrect students' expressions of the word, phrase or sentence and demonstrate the right variant. As one of the main goals for teacher on the initial stage of teaching speaking is teaching young students to ability express their intentions and thinking in a foreign language rather than correctness of the sentences and phrases and obeying grammar rules.

For role-playing the young learners are pretending to be someone else. The students can begin with role-play dialogues by learning a simple one off by heart and then playing it out in pairs. Teacher can give for the seven- to ten-year-old students a model as an example by acting out the dialogue with a puppet, or stuffed toy and making the students to repeat the utterances after teacher. Hereafter, the teacher can act it out with one of the cleverer pupils. The aim of the teacher on this stage is to explain the task clearly so when the learners will start working on their own in pairs, they can add what they want to say. In role-play activities students must be familiar with the language needed [13]. Young learners should not hesitate trying to express their ideas and utterances. They should clearly understand that during such activities their task is to practice using words, phrases as much as possible.

Decades of research [see 1, 2, 3, 4, 5] have shown that dialogues and role-play are useful oral activities because:

When young learners speak, they usually do it in the first and second person. Texts are often in the third person, so they don't hesitate to take risks without concerning about mistakes while talking.

Simultaneously with asking students learn to answer as well. They learn using short complete pieces of language and reply accordingly. Students should be taught and use not only words, but also all the other parts of speaking a language such as tone of voice, stress, intonation, facial expressions [1], [3], [4].

The above mentioned can be used to support a genuine chat in the classroom, making up dialogues about some things which have happened, and which engage the learners at present. It is important to pay attention on the atmosphere in the classroom. The environment should be relaxed and comfortable in order that nobody worries and anxious about formal mistakes or using the mother tongue now and then. Thereafter even elementary level students can have enjoy trying out to use the little language they know.

Free Activities: communication in the target language for younger learners means providing a more controlled environment for speaking and listening using task-based activities such as information-gap, role play and extended tasks, working either in pairs, small groups or as a whole class. Implementation of controlled and guided activities furnishes a good bases for activities where younger learners are able to express what they want to say. The focus of free activities is on the message and not on the language, even though the used language will be restricted by the activity itself in general. There is a natural 'chat' even if the situations may sometimes seem simulated. Nevertheless, free activities train young learners for their lives outside the classroom. Free activities should be focused on meaning more than on correctness. Understanding the meaning is

more essential for students rather than avoiding formal mistakes. During the stage of free activities, it is more crucial that the young learners use the language with fluency rather than speak paying attention to accuracy.

Teacher's control should be minimal during the speaking activity; however, teacher must feel certain that students have enough language to perform the task. The environment on the lesson should be informal and teacher's duty to include a game element in the activities on an ongoing basis. Classes activities should be organized so that young learners can do them in pairs and small groups. Thereafter students will get resources using a foreign language not only to respond questions, but ask questions. Young learners will also have the cantonment of accomplishing a task on their own [5].

Hudelson [6] continues a generalization about children's learning by saying that children learn best in social atmosphere, 'in groups where some group members know more than others' those who know more are believed to assist the learning of others using motivation and support them to go beyond their current level. Young learners should have the opportunity practicing the language with each other together with the teacher. During pair or group work students get more feasibility for speaking, asking and answering questions within such way of practicing speaking skills young learners gain confidence based on speaking in private instead of the whole class. Furthermore, such type of activity as pair work or group work allows students to practice speaking more intensive rather than working with the whole class.

As Hedge states [3], speaking activities are probably the most challenging for both students and teachers with regard to involvement of emotional aspects. During the process of practicing speaking on L2 in front of other students can cause high levels of anxiety. Some students may have shy personalities and do not speak very much in their first language. Taking this into consideration the teacher should support the atmosphere of benevolence within the lessons.

Dunn [7] claims that young learners are willing to use language and they do not worry so much about making mistakes. Young learners rarely have inhibitions so usual to teenagers and adults. Due to this factor elementary level students learn faster than adults moreover young learners have an amazing ability to imitate. Thus, students can speak a foreign language without an accent when they have a good model of imitation whereas adults normally have an accent.

As Brumfit [8] says, making mistakes and learning from their correction is a natural way of the learning process, so for successful and smooth process of teaching speaking control should be minimized in order to make the teaching process more efficient and emotionally comfortable.

During practicing communicative activities, it is crucial to tend towards a classroom atmosphere in which young students feel comfortable and confident, feel free to take risks, and have sufficient opportunities to speak [9]. Such environment will be an additional means in order to facilitate teaching process.

Taking into consideration mentioned above a primer responsibility of the teacher to form an encouraging classroom climate in which students are ready to take risks and experiment with the speaking activities using L2. It can be complicated to determine how often and how much correction of oral work should be done. Too much corrections might inhibit the students and too little means that they will learn incorrect language, which is problematic for changing later. While the young students are working on free oral activities, the emphasis should be on content rather than the language. When students are trying to express themselves on problem solving or role-play activities, then correction of language mistakes should be done only after the completion the expression and not earlier. Moreover, the teacher should range criteria of correction based on expectations for individual students. Some students require lots of encouragement to speak freely and should not be over-corrected rather than quicker students that might gain from a little more correction [10].

Conclusion:

Consequently, it's quite essential for elementary level students to extend beyond simple repetition and form manipulation. Sometimes it is necessary for young learners to evade from simple

'language practice' and to press for meaningful communication about topics, which really interesting for them. For fruitful process of teaching L2 speaking activities it is very important to take into consideration interests of the students in order to increase their motivation and desire in learning a foreign language.

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