



THE ROLE OF CLASSROOM INTERACTION IN DEVELOPING STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS

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ABSTRACT

Speaking is one of the most challenging skills for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Many students experience difficulties in expressing their ideas orally due to limited vocabulary, lack of confidence, and insufficient opportunities for communication. Classroom interaction plays a crucial role in overcoming these challenges by creating meaningful opportunities for learners to practice speaking in authentic contexts. This paper examines the role of classroom interaction in developing students' speaking skills and highlights recent research findings on the effectiveness of interactive learning environments. The study argues that active participation, collaborative activities, and teacher-student interaction significantly contribute to the improvement of speaking proficiency.

Introduction

The development of speaking skills is a fundamental objective of English language education. Effective speaking enables learners to communicate ideas, express opinions, and participate in social and academic interactions. However, many EFL students struggle to develop oral proficiency because classroom instruction often emphasizes grammar and reading rather than communication.

Classroom interaction has been recognized as a key component of successful language learning. Through interaction, learners receive input, negotiate meaning, and produce language in meaningful situations. Recent studies have demonstrated that interactive learning environments provide learners with greater opportunities to practice speaking and increase their willingness to communicate (Abrar et al., 2024). Therefore, understanding the role of classroom interaction is essential for improving students' speaking abilities.

Moreover, classroom interaction contributes not only to linguistic development but also to learners' confidence and motivation. When students actively participate in discussions, pair work, and collaborative tasks, they become more comfortable using English in real-life situations. Such interaction reduces speaking anxiety and encourages learners to express their thoughts more freely.

Classroom Interaction and Speaking Development

Classroom interaction refers to the communication that occurs between teachers and students as well as among students themselves during the learning process. It includes discussions, pair work, group activities, role-plays, presentations, and question-and-answer sessions. These interactive activities encourage learners to use language actively rather than passively receiving information. Research indicates that students who frequently engage in classroom interaction demonstrate higher levels of speaking proficiency. Orafi (2023) found that pair and group work activities significantly increase student participation and create opportunities for meaningful communication. The study also revealed that learners perceive interactive activities as motivating and beneficial for language development.

Furthermore, classroom interaction helps students overcome barriers such as shyness and fear of making mistakes by providing a supportive learning environment. Social interaction is particularly important because language is acquired through communication. Intang et al. (2023) reported that social interaction activities contributed to significant improvements in students' pronunciation, vocabulary, and overall speaking performance. The researchers concluded that regular communication practice enables learners to develop fluency and confidence in using English.

The Importance of Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning is one of the most effective forms of classroom interaction. Through pair and group work, students are encouraged to share ideas, solve problems, and negotiate meaning. Such activities increase the amount of speaking practice available to each learner and reduce anxiety associated with speaking in front of the whole class. Recent studies support the effectiveness of collaborative approaches. Zhong (2024) found that interactive and learner-centered classroom environments positively influence students' speaking competence and self-regulated learning. Students who participated in collaborative learning activities demonstrated higher engagement and greater improvement in oral communication skills than those in traditional teacher-centered classrooms.

Similarly, Ribahan (2023) emphasized that contextual teaching approaches promote diverse interaction patterns among students and teachers. These interaction patterns facilitate immediate feedback, encourage active participation, and support language development through authentic communication.

Modern Approaches to Classroom Interaction

Technological advancements have expanded opportunities for classroom interaction. Digital tools, artificial intelligence, and mobile learning applications provide additional platforms for speaking practice. Recent research has shown that technology-mediated interaction can significantly enhance learners' speaking abilities. For example, a study by Tai and colleagues (2024) demonstrated that AI-mediated interactions improved EFL learners' speaking fluency, coherence, pronunciation, and willingness to communicate. The researchers observed that students benefited from increased opportunities for practice and immediate feedback provided by AI-supported learning environments.

Likewise, mobile-assisted language learning applications have been found to improve speaking skills while increasing learners' motivation and enjoyment. Students reported positive attitudes toward interactive mobile learning because it allowed them to practice speaking in flexible and engaging ways. Although technology offers valuable support, it should complement rather than replace face-to-face classroom interaction. Direct communication

with teachers and peers remains essential for developing authentic conversational skills and fostering social engagement.

Conclusion

Classroom interaction plays a vital role in the development of students' speaking skills. Through active participation, collaborative learning, and meaningful communication, learners gain opportunities to practice English in authentic contexts. Recent studies indicate that interaction-based teaching approaches improve fluency, confidence, engagement, and overall speaking proficiency. Furthermore, technological innovations provide additional opportunities for communication and language practice. Therefore, English language teachers should incorporate interactive activities, pair work, group discussions, and technology-enhanced learning tools to create communicative classrooms that support speaking development.

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