

CHALLENGES UZBEK STUDENTS FACE IN SPEAKING ENGLISH FLUENTLY

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20179998>

Abstract: This article examines the major challenges Uzbek students face in speaking English fluently and confidently. In the modern era of globalization, English has become one of the most important international languages used in education, science, business, and intercultural communication. Although English is widely taught in Uzbekistan from school to university level, many students still experience difficulties in oral communication. The study analyzes linguistic, psychological, methodological, and socio-cultural factors influencing students' speaking abilities. In addition, the article suggests effective strategies and pedagogical approaches that may help learners improve fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and communicative competence. The findings demonstrate that improving speaking skills requires not only grammatical knowledge but also continuous practice, motivation, and modern teaching methods.

Keywords: English speaking skills, fluency, Uzbek students, language barriers, communication, pronunciation, motivation, language learning.

Today, English plays a significant role in the educational and professional development of young people around the world. In Uzbekistan, special attention is being paid to foreign language learning, particularly English, as it creates opportunities for international cooperation, academic exchange, and career growth. Many universities and educational institutions have introduced modern language teaching programs in order to improve students' communicative competence.

Despite these reforms and opportunities, a considerable number of Uzbek students still struggle to speak English fluently. While students often perform well in grammar exercises and written tasks, they face difficulties when participating in real conversations. This problem is connected with several factors, including lack of speaking practice, fear of making mistakes, limited vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, and traditional teaching methods.

Speaking is considered one of the most complex language skills because it requires simultaneous use of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and listening comprehension. Therefore, students need supportive environments where they can practice speaking regularly and confidently. This article aims to analyze the main obstacles preventing Uzbek students from speaking English fluently and to provide possible solutions for overcoming these difficulties.

One of the major challenges Uzbek students face is the lack of regular speaking practice. In many classrooms, teachers focus mainly on grammar rules, translation exercises, and written assignments rather than oral communication. As a result, students have limited opportunities to express their ideas in English during lessons.

Outside the classroom, students also rarely use English in daily communication because Uzbek and Russian remain the dominant languages in society. Without constant practice, learners cannot develop fluency or confidence in speaking. Language acquisition requires active participation and communication, but many students only encounter English during formal lessons.

Furthermore, classroom sizes in some educational institutions are large, making it difficult for every student to participate actively in speaking activities. Some students may remain silent throughout the lesson due to insufficient interaction with teachers and classmates.

Psychological barriers significantly affect students' speaking performance. Many Uzbek learners are afraid of making grammatical or pronunciation mistakes while speaking English. This fear often leads to anxiety and hesitation during conversations.

Students may worry about being criticized or laughed at by classmates, which negatively impacts their confidence. As a result, they prefer to remain silent rather than attempt to speak. Fear of failure reduces motivation and prevents learners from improving their communicative skills.

In addition, perfectionism is another common issue among language learners. Some students believe they must speak without errors, which creates additional pressure. However, making mistakes is a natural part of language learning and an essential step toward improvement.

Vocabulary deficiency is another important factor affecting speaking fluency. Many students know basic grammatical structures but cannot express their thoughts clearly because they lack sufficient vocabulary. When learners do not know the appropriate words or expressions, communication becomes slow and difficult.

Students often memorize vocabulary lists for examinations but forget the words quickly because they do not use them in practical communication. Passive vocabulary knowledge does not automatically become active speaking ability. To speak fluently, learners need regular exposure to words in context and opportunities to use them actively.

Moreover, students may know individual words but struggle to use collocations, idioms, and natural expressions correctly. This problem limits the development of authentic communication skills.

Pronunciation remains one of the most challenging aspects of English learning for Uzbek students. English pronunciation differs significantly from Uzbek phonetics, stress patterns, and intonation systems. Certain English sounds do not exist in the Uzbek language, making them difficult to pronounce accurately.

Incorrect pronunciation can create misunderstandings and reduce students' confidence in speaking. Many learners are embarrassed by their accents and therefore avoid participating in conversations. Additionally, insufficient listening practice contributes to poor pronunciation because students cannot imitate authentic speech effectively.

Another problem is that some teachers focus more on grammar and reading than pronunciation training. Consequently, students may complete years of English study without developing understandable oral speech.

Traditional language teaching methods still influence some educational institutions in Uzbekistan. In many cases, lessons are teacher-centered, and students play passive roles in the learning process. Teachers may prioritize memorization, grammar translation, and textbook exercises instead of communicative activities.

Such approaches do not adequately prepare students for real-life communication. Speaking skills develop through interaction, discussion, role plays, presentations, debates, and collaborative learning activities. When students are not actively engaged in communication, fluency cannot improve effectively.

Modern communicative language teaching methods emphasize student participation and practical language use. However, not all schools and universities have fully implemented these approaches due to limited resources or insufficient teacher training.

Motivation plays a crucial role in language acquisition. Some students study English only to pass examinations rather than for genuine communication purposes. Instrumental motivation without personal interest often leads to low engagement in speaking practice.

Additionally, the absence of an English-speaking environment creates further difficulties. Students rarely interact with native speakers or participate in international communication. Without authentic exposure to the language, learners cannot develop natural speaking habits.

Technology and social media provide new opportunities for language practice, but not all students utilize these resources effectively. Watching English videos, joining online speaking clubs, communicating with foreign learners, and listening to podcasts can significantly improve fluency if used consistently.

Several effective strategies can help Uzbek students improve their English-speaking abilities.

First, educational institutions should create more communicative classrooms where students actively participate in discussions, pair work, and group activities. Teachers should encourage learners to express their opinions freely without fear of criticism.

Second, speaking practice must become a regular component of language lessons. Role plays, presentations, storytelling, interviews, and debates can increase students' confidence and fluency.

Third, modern technology should be integrated into language learning. Mobile applications, online courses, language exchange platforms, podcasts, and English films can provide additional opportunities for practice outside the classroom.

Fourth, teachers should create supportive learning environments where mistakes are viewed as natural learning experiences. Positive feedback and encouragement can reduce anxiety and increase students' motivation.

Finally, students themselves must take responsibility for their learning process. Consistent practice, vocabulary expansion, active listening, and communication with others are essential for achieving fluency in English.

In conclusion, Uzbek students face numerous challenges in speaking English fluently, including lack of speaking practice, fear of making mistakes, limited vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, traditional teaching methods, and insufficient language environments. Although English education in Uzbekistan has improved significantly in recent years, many learners still experience barriers in oral communication.

Developing speaking fluency requires not only theoretical knowledge but also practical experience, motivation, and continuous interaction in English. Teachers, educational institutions, and students should work together to create more communicative and supportive learning environments. By implementing modern teaching methods and encouraging active language use, Uzbek students can gradually overcome these difficulties and become confident English speakers.

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