

THE ROLE OF TONGUE TWISTERS IN IMPROVING YOUNG LEARNERS’ SPEAKING FLUENCY IN ENGLISH

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Abstract

This article examines the role of tongue twisters in improving young learners’ speaking fluency in English. The study highlights how tongue twister activities help learners develop accurate pronunciation, speech rhythm, articulation, and confidence in oral communication. The article also discusses the effectiveness of interactive pronunciation exercises in enhancing speaking fluency and increasing learners’ motivation in English language classrooms.

Keywords: tongue twisters, speaking fluency, young learners, English language teaching, pronunciation practice, oral communication, articulation, speaking confidence.

Аннотация

В данной статье рассматривается роль скороговорок в развитии беглости английской речи у юных учащихся. Исследование показывает, что использование скороговорок способствует совершенствованию произношения, речевого ритма, артикуляции и уверенности в устном общении. Также анализируется эффективность интерактивных фонетических упражнений в повышении беглости речи и мотивации учащихся на уроках английского языка.

Ключевые слова: скороговорки, беглость речи, юные учащиеся, обучение английскому языку, фонетическая практика, устное общение, артикуляция, уверенность в речи.

Annotatsiya

Mazkur maqolada tez aytishlarning yosh o‘quvchilarning ingliz tilida ravon nutqini rivojlantirishdagi o‘rni tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda tez aytishlardan foydalanish o‘quvchilarning talaffuzi, nutq ritmi, artikulyatsiyasi hamda og‘zaki muloqotdagi ishonchini rivojlantirishga xizmat qilishi yoritilgan. Shuningdek, interfaol fonetik mashqlarning o‘quvchilar nutq ravonligini oshirish va ingliz tili darslaridagi motivatsiyasini kuchaytirishdagi samaradorligi tahlil qilingan.

Kalit so‘zlar: tez aytishlar, ravon nutq, yosh o‘quvchilar, ingliz tilini o‘qitish, talaffuz mashqlari, og‘zaki muloqot, artikulyatsiya, nutqdagi ishonch.

In recent years, developing students’ communicative competence has become one of the primary goals of English language teaching. Among the four language skills, speaking is often considered the most challenging skill for young learners because it requires not only vocabulary knowledge and grammatical accuracy but also clear pronunciation and fluency. Many primary school students experience difficulties in expressing their thoughts confidently in English due to limited speaking practice and fear of making mistakes. Speaking fluency refers to the ability to communicate ideas smoothly, naturally, and with minimal hesitation. Fluency is an essential component of effective communication because it allows learners to participate actively in conversations and express their opinions with confidence. Therefore, English teachers need to

create a supportive classroom environment where students can practice speaking regularly through engaging and interactive activities. One of the most effective tools for improving speaking fluency among young learners is the use of tongue twisters. Tongue twisters are short and challenging phrases that contain similar sounds and sound patterns. They encourage students to repeat words and sentences several times, helping them improve pronunciation, articulation, speech rhythm, and speaking speed. Unlike traditional pronunciation drills, tongue twisters make language practice enjoyable and motivating for learners. Furthermore, tongue twisters help students overcome hesitation and develop confidence in oral communication. Through regular practice, learners become more familiar with English sound combinations and gain greater control over their speech production. As a result, they are able to speak more fluently and accurately in classroom interactions. Considering the educational value of tongue twisters, this article aims to examine their role in improving young learners' speaking fluency in English and to identify effective ways of integrating tongue twister activities into English language lessons.

Tongue twisters play an important role in improving young learners' speaking fluency in English. They provide students with opportunities to practice difficult sound combinations repeatedly, which helps them develop clearer pronunciation and smoother speech production. Regular pronunciation practice through tongue twisters enables learners to become more familiar with English sounds and sound patterns, leading to greater confidence during oral communication. One of the main advantages of tongue twisters is their ability to improve articulation. Young learners often struggle with certain English sounds that do not exist in their native language. By practicing tongue twisters containing these sounds, students gradually learn how to position their speech organs correctly and produce sounds more accurately.¹ Brown emphasizes that regular pronunciation practice contributes significantly to learners' oral fluency and communicative competence.

Another important benefit of tongue twisters is the development of speech rhythm and speaking speed. Fluency requires learners to speak continuously without frequent pauses or hesitation. Tongue twister activities encourage students to repeat phrases several times, helping them increase speaking speed while maintaining pronunciation accuracy.² According to Harmer, repeated oral practice enables learners to develop automaticity in speech production and communicate more naturally. Furthermore, tongue twisters increase learners' confidence in speaking English. Many young learners feel nervous when speaking in front of their classmates because they are afraid of making mistakes. Fun and engaging pronunciation activities create a relaxed learning environment where students feel more comfortable practicing English.³ Scrivener notes that interactive speaking activities help learners reduce anxiety and participate more actively in classroom communication. Tongue twisters also encourage active participation during English lessons. Students often view tongue twister activities as games rather than traditional exercises, which increases their motivation to practice speaking. Activities such as pair work, group competitions, and pronunciation challenges make lessons more enjoyable and interactive.⁴ As a result, learners spend more time speaking English and improve their fluency through meaningful practice.

¹ Brown H. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. – New York: Pearson Education, 2014. – P. 72.

² Harmer J. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. – London: Pearson Education, 2018. – P. 29.

³ Scrivener J. *Learning Teaching*. – London: Macmillan Education, 2016. – P. 81.

⁴ Richards J., Rodgers T. *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. – Cambridge University Press, 2017. – P. 53.

In addition, tongue twisters contribute to vocabulary development. While practicing pronunciation, students are repeatedly exposed to new words and expressions. Frequent repetition helps learners remember vocabulary more effectively and use it more confidently in speaking activities.⁵ Nunan points out that meaningful repetition strengthens both language retention and speaking performance. For example, tongue twisters such as:

- “She sells seashells by the seashore⁶”;
- “Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers⁷”;
- “Six sleek swans swam swiftly southwards⁸” can be used to practice specific English sounds while simultaneously developing learners’ speaking fluency. Through regular practice of such expressions, students gradually improve pronunciation accuracy, speech rhythm, and oral confidence.

The findings suggest that tongue twisters are not only pronunciation exercises but also valuable teaching tools for developing overall speaking fluency. Their combination of repetition, entertainment, and interaction makes them particularly effective for young learners. Therefore, English teachers should integrate tongue twister activities into their classroom practice to create more engaging and productive speaking lessons. Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed for improving young learners’ speaking fluency through tongue twister activities in English lessons.

First, English teachers should regularly integrate tongue twisters into classroom activities. Short pronunciation exercises at the beginning or end of lessons can help learners practice English sounds in an enjoyable and effective way. Consistent practice enables students to improve their articulation and speaking fluency over time.

Second, tongue twisters should be selected according to learners’ age, language level, and pronunciation needs. Teachers should begin with simple tongue twisters and gradually introduce more challenging ones as students gain confidence and proficiency. This approach prevents frustration and encourages continuous progress.

Third, pronunciation practice should be combined with interactive activities such as pair work, group competitions, role-playing, and language games. Such activities increase students’ motivation and provide more opportunities for meaningful speaking practice.

Fourth, teachers should make use of multimedia resources, including audio recordings and videos, to provide accurate pronunciation models. Listening to native speakers and repeating tongue twisters can help learners improve their pronunciation accuracy and speaking rhythm.

Finally, a supportive classroom environment should be created where students feel comfortable making mistakes and practicing English. Positive feedback and encouragement from teachers can significantly increase learners’ confidence and willingness to speak.

In conclusion, tongue twisters play a significant role in improving young learners’ speaking fluency in English. Regular practice of tongue twisters helps students develop clearer pronunciation, better articulation, improved speech rhythm, and greater confidence in oral communication. These activities also encourage active participation and make English lessons more

⁵ Nunan D. *Practical English Language Teaching*. – Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2015. – P. 44.

⁶ Schwartz, A. *A Twister of Twists, A Tangler of Tongues*. – Philadelphia & New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1972. – P. 111.

⁷ Филиппенко М. *Скороговорки на английском языке для начальной школы*. – Ростов-на-Дону: ФЕНИКС, 2014. – С. 38.

⁸ Schwartz, A. *A Twister of Twists, A Tangler of Tongues*. – Philadelphia & New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1972. – P. 112.

engaging and enjoyable for primary school learners. The findings of this study indicate that tongue twisters are not merely pronunciation exercises but effective pedagogical tools for enhancing speaking fluency. Through repeated practice, learners become more comfortable using English in classroom interactions and develop stronger communication skills. Furthermore, tongue twisters contribute to creating a positive learning environment where students can practice speaking without fear of making mistakes. Their interactive and entertaining nature increases learners' motivation and encourages them to participate actively in language learning activities. Therefore, the systematic use of tongue twisters in English language classrooms can significantly support the development of speaking fluency among young learners. English teachers are encouraged to incorporate tongue twister activities into their teaching practice as an effective means of improving learners' communicative competence and overall speaking performance.

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