

CHALLENGES IN DEVELOPING SPEAKING FLUENCY AMONG UZBEK EFL LEARNERS

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Annotation:

This thesis discusses some of the major challenges that hinder Uzbek learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) from developing the ability to speak English fluently and confidently, as well as the key factors contributing to these challenges.

Keywords:

speaking skills, confidence, anxiety, practice, environment

INTRODUCTION:

In this globalized world, English is considered one of the most influential languages. People use it for education, sports, diplomacy, business, trade, and communication throughout the world. Amoah & Yeboah (2021) stated that English, as a language, has attained the status of a global language because it is spoken all around the globe. In this globalized and rapidly changing world, the demand for oral proficiency in the language is very high. Therefore, it would not be an exaggeration to say that nowadays, a large number of young people in Uzbekistan are eager to learn English, and their primary goal is to be able to speak English freely and fluently. This is because the ability to speak a language fluently is widely regarded as one of the most immediate and evident indicators of language proficiency. However, many English language learners in Uzbekistan encounter a number of difficulties in developing their speaking fluency, and there are several underlying reasons for these challenges.

MAIN BODY:

Speaking is one of the basic skills of a language that plays a vital role in communication. According to Al-Roud (2016), speaking is considered one of the four crucial language skills that can result in fruitful communication among people in this era. There are five commonly recognized components in speech process analysis. They are: Vocabulary; Vocabulary is the basic element of language. Mastering a limited vocabulary makes it impossible for a person to communicate effectively and will not be able to express one's ideas orally or in writing. Grammar; Grammar is the rules of spoken and written language. Students must follow grammar rules to achieve good results. Fluency; It shows that people can communicate well because of their fluency. A person who can communicate fluently can certainly use this language eloquently. Speaking fluency is the goal of many language learners. Comprehension; When speaking, both speaker and listener must understand clearly because understanding can lead people to the information they need. Pronunciation; Pronunciation is a clearer means of conveying language than orally. Pronunciation is how we make the sound of language, how and where we emphasize, and how we use pitch and intonation to express our feelings and meanings.

A large number of language learners experience difficulties primarily related to the five elements mentioned above. First and foremost, learners often lack self-confidence; that is, they

are afraid of making mistakes when speaking the language and ultimately prefer to remain silent. This can be considered one of the primary factors hindering the development of speaking fluency. At the same time, during the speaking process, they tend to focus on recalling various grammatical rules and structures, constantly strive to produce grammatically correct sentences, and sometimes struggle with the pronunciation of words. There are several underlying factors contributing to these difficulties, and, to some extent, they are related to the learners themselves.

There are various factors that make it challenging for EFL learners to speak English, and those factors can be psychological and/or linguistic. Vocabulary is one of the basic components and most critical foundations of the English language. Students often struggle with the lack of vocabulary in the language. According to Misbah et al. (2017), learners' family's socioeconomic status, the effect of their first language, and limited vocabulary are some of the vital factors that affect their English language learning. Djahimo & Taneo (2021) found that EFL learners struggle to perform well in speaking the language because of the lack of cultural knowledge of the language. Amoah and Yeboah (2021) found in their study that EFL learners' English-speaking difficulties are more often related to their psychological factors than linguistic factors.

Uzbekistan is a monolingual country, and the dominance of the mother tongue among students works as one of the impactful factors in not using the English language. Developing speaking fluency remains one of the major challenges faced by Uzbek EFL learners. Although students may acquire sufficient knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, they often experience difficulties in using English spontaneously and confidently in real-time communication. These difficulties can be associated with limited opportunities for authentic communication, fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence, insufficient vocabulary and excessive concentration on grammatical accuracy.

As a result, learners may understand English relatively well but still hesitate or struggle when they are required to express their ideas orally. To address these challenges, English language instruction should provide learners with more opportunities to participate in meaningful and communicative activities. Pair work, group discussions, role-plays, debates, presentations, problem-solving tasks, and other interactive activities can encourage students to use English more actively and naturally. Teachers should also create a supportive classroom environment in which mistakes are regarded as a natural part of the learning process rather than a reason for embarrassment. This can help learners overcome anxiety and gradually develop greater confidence in speaking.

Furthermore, speaking fluency should be developed through regular and continuous practice rather than occasional speaking activities. Learners need opportunities to express their opinions, describe experiences, discuss familiar and unfamiliar topics, and interact with their peers in English. The effective integration of communicative approaches and learner-centred techniques can therefore contribute significantly to overcoming speaking difficulties among Uzbek EFL learners.

CONCLUSION:

Ultimately, improving speaking fluency requires cooperation between teachers and learners, consistent practice, appropriate teaching strategies, and a classroom atmosphere that promotes active communication. By addressing both linguistic and psychological barriers, EFL instruction can help Uzbek learners become more confident, spontaneous, and effective English speakers.

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