TEACHING SPEAKING FOR ENGLISH YOUNG LEARNERS

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Abstract
Teaching speaking is very important for young learners. One of the characteristics of teaching speaking is the process and conveying information to students. Information learning in teaching speaks to the students to be taught and students will also find it easier to motivate themselves in learning if teachers can teach English in a fun way for children. This article aims to study the theory of teaching speaking for children using relevant literature studies in the form of books, books, and journals. In the family of linguistics, it is a communication tool used by humans to think and ideas. In teaching speaking for young learners, there are several strategies that can be used in teaching speaking, difficulty aspect in speaking, activities for speaking.
Keywords: teach, speak, learners

A. INTRODUCTION

Speaking in English is a fundamental skill that students, especially beginners, need to develop. Through speaking, students can build confidence to communicate, express ideas, and interact with others in both social and academic contexts. However, for beginners, mastering English-speaking skills can be challenging due to limited vocabulary, grammar knowledge, and confidence in speaking.

Speaking is a challenging skill for students learning a foreign language. To make it effective for children, activities should be fun, enjoyable, communicative, and motivating. Fun activities keep children happy, enjoyable ones foster enthusiasm, and communicative tasks encourage interaction. Motivation comes from engaging students in activities they look forward to. Simple, repetitive tasks

are also beneficial. Harmer (2003) highlights three key elements: rehearsal, feedback, and engagement. Rehearsal involves repeating language in real or realistic contexts, feedback provides correction, and engagement keeps children emotionally invested in the learning process.

With beginner-focused speaking materials, students are expected to grasp the fundamentals of English speaking, including pronunciation, intonation, and simple expressions that support daily conversation. The ultimate goal is for students to have the basic skills to express ideas and understand spoken English, establishing a solid foundation for more advanced language proficiency.

B. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Strategies For Teach Speaking

To effectively teach speaking to beginner learners, it is crucial to incorporate both controlled and free speaking activities that cater to different learning needs. Here are six key strategies:

Controlled Speaking Activity: This strategy provides structured exercises where students practice using specific language forms to complete tasks. The goal is to build their confidence in speaking by guiding them through the use of target language structures in a controlled setting.

Free Speaking Activity: In contrast, free speaking activities allow students to engage in more spontaneous conversations without specific language prompts. This helps learners practice real-world communication, fostering their ability to express themselves naturally and confidently in a variety of situations.

Role Playing: Role playing is a valuable strategy where students act out real-life scenarios, which helps them practice pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary in context. It has been shown to improve fluency and confidence as students simulate realistic interactions (Aisyah, 2021).

Talking Stick Method: This method encourages participation by passing a "talking stick" around the class. Whoever holds the stick must speak, either answering or asking questions. It is an effective way to ensure equal speaking opportunities and build confidence in a structured yet dynamic classroom environment (Rindengan, 2023).

Interactive Teaching with Visual Aids: Incorporating visual aids such as pictures, flashcards, and videos is a proven method for teaching speaking. These aids help students engage more deeply with new vocabulary and sentence structures, enabling them to respond more confidently in speaking tasks (Suryani, 2021). This method also promotes active participation as students can visually connect words with their meanings, reducing hesitation in real-time conversation.

Use of Scaffolding Techniques: Scaffolding refers to providing temporary support structures that help learners perform tasks that they cannot complete independently. According to research by Rahayu (2022), scaffolding activities like modeling dialogues and providing sentence starters can assist beginners in overcoming initial barriers and building fluency. This gradual release of responsibility allows learners to take on more complex speaking tasks over time.

These methods create a balanced and supportive environment for students to develop their speaking skills, reducing anxiety and increasing engagement.

2. Difficulty Aspect In Speaking

Scott and Ytreberg (2004) highlight that young learners face significant challenges in speaking English, particularly when they do not have sufficient prior language input. These learners often resort to using their native language when they are unable to express themselves in English, especially when they lack the necessary vocabulary. Moreover, balancing controlled activities with natural conversation is a common difficulty, as students may feel restricted by structured exercises but are still not confident enough to engage freely in conversation (Dimara, 2023).

Research indicates that limited vocabulary and low confidence are key factors hindering students' speaking abilities. This lack of vocabulary makes it difficult for them to convey their ideas clearly, leading to hesitation and fear of making mistakes, particularly in group settings, which in turn limits their participation in class (Dimara, 2023). Additionally, the lack of opportunities for practicing English outside of the classroom further exacerbates these issues. Without real-world exposure or a supportive environment, students' language fluency remains restricted (Scott & Ytreberg, 2004). To address these challenges,

increasing opportunities for speaking practice within the classroom, as well as creating a more encouraging and supportive environment, is crucial for improving students' confidence and language skills.

Pronunciation and Intonation Issues, pronunciation difficulties often arise when learners attempt to produce sounds not present in their native language. As explained by Wijaya (2021), Indonesian students often struggle with English vowel sounds and word stress patterns. This makes their speech less intelligible, reducing their confidence and hindering smooth communication.

Fear of Making Mistake, fear of making errors, especially in front of peers, is another barrier to speaking. This is exacerbated when students are not encouraged to practice in a low-pressure environment (Rahayu, 2022). According to Wijaya (2021), promoting a classroom culture where mistakes are viewed as learning opportunities rather than failures can help reduce this anxiety and encourage more frequent speaking attempts.

3. Activities For Speaking

Effective speaking activities are essential for beginner learners to develop confidence and improve their communication skills in English. These activities engage students in interactive, fun, and structured exercises, allowing them to practice vocabulary, sentence structure, and pronunciation. Through a combination of controlled and free activities, students can practice both guided and spontaneous speaking. Below is a list of recommended activities that encourage participation, interaction, and the use of English in real-life contexts. These activities provide a balance between skill-building and creative expression, making learning enjoyable and impactful.

The Yes Game: Students ask the teacher or classmates questions that prompt "Yes" or "No" answers. The game can be intensified by requiring specific responses such as "Yes, I am" or "Yes, I have." This activity helps students practice question formation and comprehension of short responses.

Question Chains: In this activity, students ask and answer a series of questions, with each round introducing a new question. As students pass an

object along, they ensure they remember previous questions while adding new ones, promoting interaction and memory recall.

Find Someone Who: Students ask each other questions to match a set of characteristics on a worksheet. This activity encourages mingling and the use of basic question forms while helping students practice speaking in a fun, interactive setting.

Dialogue Substitution Chains: After reading a dialogue, students take turns modifying it by changing one piece of information (such as names or times). This challenges students to remember previous changes and think creatively while practicing sentence structure.

Gapfill Pairwork Dictations: One student dictates sentences with missing words, and the other fills in the blanks. This activity enhances listening, recall, and sentence structure, promoting cooperative learning between students.

Clap Clap Clap Game: Students sit in a circle and, on the fourth beat of a clapping pattern, say a word in a designated category (such as colors, countries, or months). The game continues until a word is repeated or a student hesitates, encouraging quick thinking and vocabulary recall.

Tennis: One student "serves" a word (e.g., "play"), and the other "returns" it with a related word (e.g., "player"). This activity helps reinforce pairs of words like subjectobject or verb-noun relationships, promoting vocabulary development.

Information Gap Activities

In information gap activities, students are given different pieces of information and must communicate with their peers to complete the task. This activity promotes real communication, as learners need to speak and listen actively. This method is widely recommended by Rahayu (2022) for enhancing both fluency and listening comprehension.

Question-and-Answer Sessions

Regular question-and-answer sessions, where students ask and answer simple personal questions, are an effective way to practice speaking in a controlled context. Research by Saputra (2023) highlights that these sessions help students become more familiar with question forms and responses, improving both fluency and grammar. These activities are designed to foster communication, increase student engagement, and build the necessary skills for beginners to feel confident using English in both structured and real-life situations.

4. Effective Approaches and Activities for Enhancing Speaking Skills in Beginner Learners

Teaching speaking to beginner learners requires a focus on building foundational skills, encouraging active participation, and creating a low-stress environment for practice. Here are additional insights based on recent research:

Encouraging Active Participation through Games:

Task-based Learning (TBL): According to research by Fitrah (2022), task-based activities, such as simple conversation games and role plays, are highly effective for encouraging speaking practice. These tasks allow students to focus on communication rather than linguistic accuracy, reducing anxiety and building confidence. For example, a simple "find someone who" game can encourage interaction, where students practice questions and answers in a more engaging and real-world context.

Focus on Pronunciation and Intonation:

Pronunciation Practice: Beginner students often face difficulties with pronunciation due to differences between their native language and English sounds. Research by Santoso (2023) suggests integrating pronunciation-focused activities, such as minimal pair drills and listening and repeating exercises, to enhance learners' understanding and production of challenging sounds. This helps improve their clarity and confidence when speaking in class.

Encouraging Peer Interactions:

Peer Feedback: Encouraging peer interaction in speaking activities allows students to practice in a relaxed environment. Simanjuntak (2021) highlights that peer feedback, when structured properly, can help learners identify areas for improvement and build motivation. Simple exercises like paired interviews or group discussions provide opportunities for learners to exchange ideas while working on their speaking skills.

The Role of Error Correction:

Error Correction in Context: While it's important to allow students to make mistakes to build confidence, Dewi (2022) suggests that providing immediate but supportive error correction can help beginners correct their mistakes and avoid ingraining incorrect language patterns. In activities like role-playing or dialogue substitutions, teachers can model the correct form or pronunciation in a non-judgmental way to guide students toward improvement.

Teaching speaking to beginner learners can be a rewarding challenge. It's essential to foster a safe, supportive environment where students feel confident to experiment with new language skills. Drawing from recent research, here are some more strategies, difficulties, and activities designed for beginners:

Strategy: Scaffolding in Speaking Tasks

Scaffolding is an important strategy for helping beginner learners gradually build their speaking skills. According to Yunus (2022), scaffolding provides the necessary support through various stages of learning, where teachers initially provide more guidance (e.g., through controlled activities) and gradually reduce this support as students' confidence and ability grow. For example, beginners may start with simple dialogues where they repeat after the teacher before gradually moving on to more independent forms of speaking like role plays and discussions.

Example: Start by asking students to fill in the blanks of a simple conversation (e.g., "How are you? I am _"). Then, as they become more comfortable, encourage them to create similar dialogues on their own.

Difficulty: Fear of Making Mistakes

One of the major difficulties for beginners is the fear of making mistakes. This anxiety often results in silence or avoidance of speaking activities. Sari & Arief (2023) suggest that creating a non-threatening environment, where errors are seen as a natural part of the learning process, can help overcome this fear. Teachers can use encouraging feedback and praise to reassure students and motivate them to continue practicing.

Solution:

Encourage learners to focus on communication rather than accuracy in the beginning.

Use pair and group activities to lessen the pressure of speaking in front of the whole class.

3. Strategy: Repetition and Drills

Drills and repetition are vital tools for beginners to internalize basic sentence structures and vocabulary. Andriani (2021) emphasizes the importance of constant practice to reinforce language retention, suggesting that pronunciation drills and sentence pattern practice can be useful for reinforcing correct language use. Activities like "Listen and Repeat" or "Find the Right Word" (where students match vocabulary with pictures) can provide students with the opportunity to practice pronunciation and fluency in a nonthreatening environment.

Example: Provide students with flashcards showing everyday objects and practice simple sentences like, "This is a pencil," and then progress to more complex structures.

Activity: Storytelling and Picture Descriptions

Storytelling is another great method to improve speaking skills. Haryanto (2020) suggests that beginners can begin by telling short stories using a series of pictures or storyboards. This activity helps students practice speaking in a sequence, while also enhancing their creativity and ability to express thoughts in English.

Storytelling encourages them to use new vocabulary in context and improves their fluency.

Example: Give students a set of pictures (e.g., a picture of a park, a dog, and a person) and ask them to create a short story using those images.

Difficulty: Lack of Immediate Practice Opportunities

A common challenge for beginners is that they often lack the opportunity to practice speaking outside of class. Agustin (2022) reports that limited real-world exposure to English outside the classroom means that students don't get enough practice to build fluency. To address this, teachers can incorporate more interactive in-class activities and homework that involve speaking, such as recording short dialogues or finding language exchange partners.

Solution:

Use technology to connect students with native speakers through platforms like video calls or language exchange apps.

C. CONCLUSION

Teaching speaking to beginner learners requires a combination of effective strategies, awareness of common difficulties, and engaging activities. Strategies like interactive teaching with visual aids and scaffolding techniques support vocabulary acquisition and help reduce speaking anxiety. However, challenges such as limited vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, and fear of making mistakes often hinder learners' ability to communicate confidently. To address these issues, activities like role-playing, information gap tasks, and question-and-answer sessions can provide opportunities for practice in a supportive environment. By using these approaches, teachers can help students build their speaking skills, improve fluency, and gain confidence in using English in real-life situations.

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