
Developing speaking skills of young learners through interactive activities

Malika Mutalliyeva
malikamutalliyeva89@gmail.com
PhD Student,
Namangan State University

Annotation *This article discusses the development of speaking skills of young learners through interactive activities in English language classes. Speaking is one of the most important and, at the same time, one of the most challenging language skills for children, as it requires vocabulary use, pronunciation, fluency, listening comprehension, confidence, and the ability to respond in real time. The analysis shows that interactive activities increase learners' participation in the lesson, reduce anxiety, create meaningful situations for communication, and help children use English more naturally.*

Keywords *Young learners, speaking skills, interactive activities, English language teaching, role play, storytelling*

Interfaol mashg'ulotlar orqali kichik yoshdagi o'quvchilarning nutq ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirish

Malika Mutalliyeva
malikamutalliyeva89@gmail.com
Tayanch doktorant,
Namangan davlat universiteti

Annotatsiya *Mazkur maqolada ingliz tili darslarida interfaol mashg'ulotlar orqali kichik yoshdagi o'quvchilarning nutq ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirish masalasi yoritiladi. Nutq ko'nikmasi bolalar uchun eng muhim, shu bilan birga eng murakkab til ko'nikmalaridan biridir, chunki u lug'atdan foydalanish, talaffuz, ravonlik, tinglab tushunish, o'ziga ishonch hamda real vaqt rejimida javob bera olish qobiliyatini talab qiladi. Tahlil natijalari shuni ko'rsatadiki, interfaol mashg'ulotlar o'quvchilarning darsdagi ishtirokini oshiradi, xavotirni kamaytiradi, muloqot uchun mazmunli vaziyatlar yaratadi hamda bolalarga ingliz tilidan tabiiyroq foydalanishga yordam beradi.*

Kalit so'zlar *Kichik yoshdagi o'quvchilar, nutq ko'nikmalari, interfaol mashg'ulotlar, ingliz tilini o'qitish, rolli o'yin, hikoya qilish*

Развитие навыков устной речи у младших школьников посредством интерактивных занятий

Малика Муталлиева
malikamutalliyeva89@gmail.com
Базовый докторант,
Наманганский государственный университет

Аннотация *В данной статье рассматривается развитие навыков устной речи у младших школьников посредством интерактивных занятий на уроках английского языка. Устная речь является одним из наиболее важных и одновременно сложных языковых навыков для детей, поскольку она требует*

использования словарного запаса, правильного произношения, беглости речи, понимания на слух, уверенности в себе и способности реагировать в режиме реального времени. Анализ показывает, что интерактивные занятия повышают активность учащихся на уроке, снижают тревожность, создают содержательные ситуации для общения и помогают детям более естественно использовать английский язык.

Ключевые слова

Младшие школьники, навыки устной речи, интерактивные занятия, обучение английскому языку, ролевая игра, рассказывание историй

Introduction

In modern English language teaching, the ability to speak is regarded as a key indicator of communicative competence. Learners are expected not only to know grammar and vocabulary, but also to use language for real communication. This requirement is especially important for young learners, because early positive experience with oral communication can influence their future motivation, confidence, and language development (Brewster, 2002).

Speaking is a complex skill. A learner must understand the situation, choose suitable words, pronounce them clearly, organize ideas, listen to the partner, and respond appropriately. For children, this process may be difficult because their vocabulary is still limited and they may be afraid of making mistakes. Therefore, speaking instruction should be organized in a supportive and enjoyable way (Cameron, 2001).

Traditional teacher-centered lessons often give children few opportunities to speak. In such lessons, learners mainly repeat words, answer closed questions, or memorize dialogues. These activities may help them remember forms, but they do not always prepare them for spontaneous communication. Communicative and task-based approaches suggest that learners develop speaking more effectively when they take part in meaningful interaction and use language to complete real or realistic tasks (Ellis, 2003).

Interactive activities are useful because they create situations where learners need to speak, listen, ask questions, respond, and cooperate. Games, role plays, storytelling, pair work, information-gap tasks, songs, and drama give children a reason to communicate and make the learning process more natural. The purpose of this article is to analyze the role of interactive activities in developing speaking skills of young learners and to suggest practical ways of using them in English lessons.

Materials and Methods

This article uses a descriptive-analytical research method. The material for analysis consists of methodological works and research literature related to teaching English to young learners, speaking instruction, communicative competence, task-based learning, and interactive classroom activities. The main sources include works by Brewster, Cameron, Canale and Swain, Ellis, Harmer, Krashen, Nunan, Pinter, Richards, Scott and Ytreberg, Thornbury, Ur, Vygotsky, Willis, and Wright et al. The selected sources were analyzed according to three criteria: relevance to young learners, relevance to oral communication, and practical value for classroom teaching. The analysis focused on the following questions: what difficulties young learners face in speaking English; what types of interactive activities are most suitable for children; and how teachers can create conditions for active oral participation. The study does not present experimental classroom data; instead, it

summarizes and systematizes pedagogical findings from the existing literature.

The development of speaking skills is closely connected with the concept of communicative competence. Canale and Swain (1980) explain that successful communication includes grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences. This means that learners need more than correct grammar. They also need to know how to use language appropriately, organize ideas, and overcome communication problems.

Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory is also important for speaking instruction. According to this theory, children learn through social interaction with adults and peers. In language classrooms, pair and group activities create opportunities for learners to support one another. When children work together, stronger learners can help weaker learners, and the teacher can provide scaffolding through examples, prompts, gestures, and visual aids.

Krashen's (1982) affective filter hypothesis emphasizes the role of emotions in language acquisition. If learners feel anxious, embarrassed, or afraid of mistakes, they may avoid speaking. Young learners are particularly sensitive to classroom atmosphere. For this reason, games and playful activities are valuable because they lower anxiety and allow children to focus on meaning rather than on errors.

Task-based language teaching also supports speaking development. In a task-based lesson, learners use language to achieve a goal, such as finding information, solving a problem, planning an event, or completing a picture. This approach encourages meaningful language use and helps learners develop fluency through practice (Wright, 2006).

Results and Discussion

The analysis of the literature shows that interactive activities contribute to the development of young learners' speaking skills in several important ways.

Interactive activities increase learner talking time. In whole-class teacher-centered

instruction, only one learner usually speaks at a time, while the others listen passively. Pair and group work allow many learners to speak at the same time. This is especially important in large classes, where individual speaking time is limited (Pinter, 2017). For example, in a simple "find someone who" activity, children ask classmates questions such as "Do you like apples?" or "Can you swim?" The activity requires repeated use of target language, but it remains meaningful because learners are collecting real information. Such tasks help children practice speaking without feeling that they are being tested.

Many young learners are afraid of speaking because they do not want to make mistakes. Interactive activities reduce this fear by making speaking playful and collaborative. Games, songs, chants, and drama help learners use English in a relaxed environment. When the focus is on completing a game or acting out a role, children are less worried about grammar and more willing to communicate (Brewster, 2002).

Teachers should respond to mistakes carefully. Immediate correction during every utterance may interrupt fluency and discourage learners. A more effective strategy is delayed correction, where the teacher notes common mistakes and discusses them after the activity. This helps maintain confidence while still supporting accuracy (Harmer, 2007).

Children speak more actively when the activity has a clear purpose. Role plays are useful because they imitate real-life situations, such as shopping, asking for directions, ordering food, visiting a doctor, or inviting a friend. These situations help learners understand why they need English and how language functions in daily life (Brewster, 2002).

Information-gap tasks are also effective. In these tasks, learners have different pieces of information and must speak to complete the task. For example, one learner has a picture and another learner asks questions to draw it. Because the communication is necessary for

task completion, learners produce more natural and spontaneous speech (Nunan, 2004).

Young learners benefit from repetition, but repetition should not be mechanical. Interactive activities allow children to repeat useful language patterns with small changes. For example, in a classroom survey, learners may repeat "What is your favorite...?" many times, but each answer is different. This type of repetition supports fluency and automaticity (Richards, 2008).

Songs and chants can also support speaking skills by developing rhythm, pronunciation, and intonation. However, to develop speaking rather than only memorization, teachers should ask learners to change words, add new lines, or use the language from the song in a short dialogue (Brewster, 2002).

Young learners usually enjoy stories, fantasy, and pretend play. Storytelling activities help them organize ideas, use vocabulary in context, and speak creatively. Picture sequences, story cards, puppets, and unfinished stories can encourage children to predict, describe, and continue a story in their own words (Cameron, 2001).

Drama and role play are especially valuable because they combine language with movement, emotion, facial expression, and voice. This multimodal nature suits the developmental needs of children and makes English more memorable. It also gives shy learners a chance to speak through a role rather than as themselves (Scott, 1990).

Practical recommendations

First, teachers should include short speaking activities in every lesson. Even two or three minutes of pair work can help learners become more confident speakers. Regular practice is more effective than occasional long speaking tasks.

Second, teachers should provide language support before asking children to speak. Useful support may include word banks, sentence starters, pictures, gestures, model dialogues, and examples on the board. Such

scaffolding helps learners participate even when their language level is limited (Vygotsky, 1978).

Third, activities should be age-appropriate and concrete. Young learners understand language better when it is connected with pictures, objects, actions, and familiar situations. Abstract discussion topics should be avoided or simplified (Cameron, 2001).

Fourth, the classroom atmosphere should be positive and supportive. Teachers should praise effort, encourage risk-taking, and show that mistakes are a normal part of learning. This is essential for lowering anxiety and increasing willingness to communicate (Krashen, 1982).

Finally, speaking assessment should focus not only on grammatical accuracy but also on fluency, participation, clarity, interaction, and ability to communicate meaning. Simple observation checklists can be used during pair work, role plays, and group activities.

Conclusion

Developing speaking skills of young learners is an important goal of English language teaching. Children need opportunities to use English actively, confidently, and meaningfully. The analysis shows that interactive activities such as games, role plays, storytelling, pair work, group work, songs, drama, and information-gap tasks create favorable conditions for oral communication.

Interactive activities help learners participate more actively, reduce speaking anxiety, develop fluency, and use language in realistic contexts. They also support cooperation, imagination, and motivation. However, their effectiveness depends on careful teacher planning, suitable language support, positive classroom atmosphere, and age-appropriate materials.

Therefore, interactive activities should be used systematically in young learner classrooms. They should not be treated as extra

entertainment, but as an essential part of developing communicative competence and

preparing learners for real-life English communication.

References:

1. Brewster, J., Ellis, G., & Girard, D. (2002). *The primary English teacher's guide*. Pearson Education.
2. Cameron, L. (2001). *Teaching languages to young learners*. Cambridge University Press.
3. Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1(1), 1–47.
4. Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford University Press.
5. Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching* (4th ed.). Pearson Education.
6. Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Pergamon Press.
7. Nunan, D. (2004). *Task-based language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
8. Pinter, A. (2017). *Teaching young language learners* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
9. Richards, J. C. (2008). *Teaching listening and speaking: From theory to practice*. Cambridge University Press.
10. Scott, W. A., & Ytreberg, L. H. (1990). *Teaching English to children*. Longman.
11. Thornbury, S. (2005). *How to teach speaking*. Pearson Longman.
12. Ur, P. (1996). *A course in language teaching: Practice and theory*. Cambridge University Press.
13. Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
14. Willis, J. (1996). *A framework for task-based learning*. Longman.
15. Wright, A., Betteridge, D., & Buckby, M. (2006). *Games for language learning* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.