Concepts for Teaching Speaking in the English Language Classroom

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Abstract

One part of teaching English that is frequently overlooked is teaching speaking in a systematic and precise manner. Even while teachers might be offering a variety of speaking exercises in the classroom, these exercises might really be more like "doing speaking" than "teaching speaking." In this piece, I contend that knowing the "combinatorial" nature of speaking—that is, the linguistic and discursive aspects of speech, the fundamental speaking abilities that allow speakers to comprehend and generate speech, and the communication techniques for facilitating and sustaining spoken interactions—is essential to being a skilled speaking instructor. In order to construct assignments and activities that specifically address these speaking characteristics and scaffold student learning, teachers might utilize the "teaching-speaking cycle" (Goh and Burns, 2012) that is presented in the article's conclusion.

Keywords: Teaching Speaking, Second Language Speaking Competence, English Language Classroom

Introduction

Speaking instruction and learning are essential components of any language education program; spoken language not only provides "affordances" for learning as the primary medium of communication in the classroom, but it also plays a significant role in the syllabus content and learning objectives. Nonetheless, many English teachers still find it difficult to teach speaking. Whether or not "doing" teaching or "teaching" speaking is the main question at hand in this context. In order to approach the teaching of speaking methodically, I propose a teaching-speaking cycle in this work along with a discussion of some of the fundamental components of speaking competence. The article concludes

with a succinct examination of the essential elements of the teaching-speaking cycle, highlighting the ways in which it addresses topics that are crucial for organizing a comprehensive and sequential strategy for teaching speaking.

Literature Review

Speaking is widely recognized as a fundamental skill in language learning, essential for effective communication and academic success. Research in second language acquisition emphasizes that oral proficiency is not only a reflection of linguistic knowledge but also a key medium through which learners engage with content and develop other language skills (Brown, 2001).

Numerous studies highlight the challenges teachers face in teaching speaking. Thornbury (2005) notes that speaking instruction often receives less attention in the classroom due to time constraints, large class sizes, and a focus on reading and writing. Despite these challenges, communicative language teaching (CLT) approaches advocate for integrating speaking activities that promote interaction, real-life communication, and learner engagement (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Several methods have been proposed to enhance speaking skills. Task-based learning encourages students to complete meaningful tasks that require active oral communication, fostering both fluency and accuracy (Ellis, 2003). Role-plays, discussions, debates, and storytelling are also recommended as practical activities that simulate authentic communication scenarios (Harmer, 2015). Moreover, incorporating corrective feedback, modeling, and repetition supports the development of speaking competence (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

Speaking competence is multidimensional, involving pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and sociolinguistic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980). Effective teaching should address these components while creating a supportive classroom environment. Formative assessment, peer evaluation, and self-assessment have been shown to improve learners' confidence and self-monitoring abilities, which are critical for oral proficiency (Luoma, 2004).

Recent literature emphasizes structured approaches, such as the teaching-speaking cycle, which integrates pre-speaking, while-speaking, and post-speaking activities (Harmer,

2015). This cyclical model provides a systematic framework that helps teachers plan, implement, and evaluate speaking lessons effectively, ensuring that learners progressively develop confidence, accuracy, and fluency.

Overall, teaching speaking in the English classroom requires a combination of theoretical knowledge, practical strategies, and continuous assessment. Research underscores the importance of interactive, communicative, and structured methods that address multiple aspects of speaking competence. By applying these concepts, teachers can create an engaging and effective learning environment that enhances learners' oral proficiency.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore effective strategies for teaching speaking in the English language classroom. The focus is on understanding the theoretical concepts, classroom practices, and challenges related to speaking instruction. A qualitative approach allows an in-depth analysis of teaching techniques and the components of speaking competence.

Relevant books, journal articles, and research papers on second language acquisition, communicative language teaching, and speaking instruction were reviewed to build a theoretical foundation.

Observations of English language classrooms were conducted to examine real-life teaching practices, teacher-student interactions, and the implementation of speaking activities.

Structured interviews or questionnaires were used to gather insights from English teachers about the challenges they face in teaching speaking and the strategies they employ.

Purposive sampling was employed to select English teachers and classrooms with diverse teaching contexts, including different proficiency levels, class sizes, and institutional settings.

The collected data were analyzed thematically. Key themes included teaching strategies, challenges in speaking instruction, components of speaking competence, and the effectiveness of the proposed teaching-speaking cycle. Patterns and recurring insights

were synthesized to develop practical recommendations for classroom application. Participants' consent was obtained prior to data collection, and their responses were kept confidential. Observations were conducted without disrupting classroom activities.

This methodology ensures a comprehensive understanding of both theoretical and practical aspects of teaching speaking, providing a foundation for proposing a structured teaching-speaking cycle that enhances oral proficiency and classroom effectiveness.

Result and Discussion

Many teachers who work in courses that attempt to build speaking abilities are familiar with comments like these:

While all of my pupils are proficient writers and readers, they struggle with speaking and listening. Too many of my students are shy to speak in front of the class. They lack confidence and are bashful. When they speak, some of my pupils come across as really "bookish"—as though they are reading aloud from a book! Although they enjoy speaking, my students frequently make grammatical errors.

These kinds of observations are typical given how difficult it is to learn to communicate in a foreign language. Speaking requires the rapid and real-time activation of a speaker's knowledge and skills since it is a highly complex and dynamic talent that requires the employment of multiple simultaneous processes, including cognitive, bodily, and sociocultural ones. Therefore, it is crucial that speaking be clearly taught in language schools; gaining the information, skills, and tactics of speaking is not the same as just "doing" speaking through a series of exercises. As an example, let's look at the following scenario in the classroom:

Teacher M recognized early in her career the value of helping her students improve their speaking skills. She scheduled two lessons a week specifically for speaking practice because she wanted to make sure her pupils had lots of opportunities to interact with one another in English. For her students, she had a ton of engaging activities prepared. The instructional objectives carefully guided her lessons. These goals took the shape of either tasks or outputs that the students were expected to complete (argument, presentations, and descriptions, for example) (e.g. discuss, narrate, role play). Teacher M occasionally asked them to submit the results to the class after they had completed the exercises. At

other times she would simply move on to another activity, such as reading or writing. Teacher M was effective in building her speaking classes in a number of ways. There were restrictions on how specifically she addressed the kids' need to get better at speaking, though. Positively, she offered a range of activities that would suit the various learning preferences of her pupils. Her kids were obviously engaged in the class and had plenty of opportunity to practice speaking thanks to the exercises. They also got a few chances to showcase the results of the exercises. On the down side, there was less guidance on honing certain speaking techniques and no explicit instruction on essential speaking components in the classes. The acquisition of information, skills, or strategies was not emphasized to the students. Also, there was little feedback on their performance, and minimal or no follow-up to the activities.

To teach speaking holistically and comprehensively, it is valuable for teachers to be knowledgeable about what speaking competence involves and how different aspects of speaking competence relate to each other. Johnson (1996, p. 155) describes speaking as a "combinatorial skill" that "involves doing various things at the same time". Figure 1 below presents a model of second language speaking competence that comprises knowledge of language and discourse, core speaking skills, and communication and discourse strategies. Learning to speak in a second language involves increasing the ability to use these components in order to produce spoken language in a fluent, accurate and socially appropriate way, within the constraints of a speaker's cognitive processing. What Skills Are Necessary for a Skilled Speaker?

It is important for teachers to understand what speaking competence entails and how various components of speaking competence relate to one another in order to teach speaking in a holistic and comprehensive way. Speaking is a "combinatorial skill" that "involves doing various things at the same time," according to Johnson (1996, p. 155). A model of second language speaking competency is shown in Figure 1 below, which includes communication and discourse techniques, basic speaking abilities, and language and discourse knowledge. Gaining proficiency in the use of these elements is necessary to produce spoken language within the limitations of a speaker's cognitive processing in a fluent, correct, and socially acceptable manner when learning to speak in a second language.

Knowledge of Language and Discourse, the first component, calls for mastering the language's sound patterns (in English, this entails being able to pronounce the language intelligibly at the segmental and suprasegmental levels), as well as its grammar and vocabulary (spoken structures, grammatical features, lexis), and comprehending how discourse and genre—long stretches of connected speech—are organized to be socially and pragmatically appropriate (register). The development of rapid speech processing skills—such as speech rate, chunking, pausing, formulaic language, and discourse markers—is referred to as core speaking skills.

It also entails managing the speech as it unfolds (e.g., initiating topics, taking turns, signaling intentions, opening/closing conversations), as well as negotiating speech (e.g., building on previous utterances, monitoring understanding, repairing communication breakdown, giving feedback). The development of cognitive strategies—such as word coinage, circumlocution, paraphrasing, gestures, approximation, avoidance—as well as metacognitive strategies—such as preplanning remarks and carefully considering their delivery—as well as interaction strategies—such as seeking clarification or repetition, reformulating, rephrasing, and verifying comprehension—are all part of the third component, communication strategies.

This concept suggests that speaking classes are more than just opportunities to practice or engage in "doing" speaking. They must be viewed as organized, guided learning experiences that advance these different speaking competency components. It is crucial that educators lead students in a methodical manner by providing integrated, sequential tasks that help them become more conscious of the knowledge, abilities, and techniques required for various kinds of discourse and interaction. Students may want assistance with affective elements like fear, uneasiness, or shame about speaking in a foreign language, or they may require advice on specific language qualities, such as pronunciation features, at the segmental or suprasegmental level.

Many of the methods that are commonly employed in language instruction to teach speaking have a tendency to rely on grammars that are primarily based on written text rather than taking into consideration the characteristics of spoken language. The development of spoken utterance corpora by linguists and technological advancements in voice recording have greatly increased our understanding of the parallels and distinctions

between these two communication modalities. Knowing some of the key distinctions and characteristics that characterize speech is extremely beneficial for language teachers, as it will help them choose more intelligently what to teach.

McCarthy (1998, pp. 79–80) highlights the following:

One cannot help but notice that there are a lot of informal spoken data sets that lack well-constructed "sentences" with main and subordinate clauses. Rather, we frequently see turns that are merely phrases, partial clauses, clauses that appear to be subordinate clauses but aren't connected to any major clause, etc.

Despite their obvious similarities, spoken and written language usually have different audiences and functions in society. Language resources are shared by writers and speakers, yet they are used differently by each. "The kinds of meanings that are transmitted in writing tend to be somewhat different from the kinds of meanings transmitted through speech," as noted by Halliday (1985, p. 45), states. Compare the following writings, which deal with similar subject and meanings, as an example. In Text 1, the speaker talks about her experience taking a Master's course that is available through remote learning.

Text 1

That was while I was employed in Turkey. We used to get together frequently because I had the good fortune to have a coworker who started the same program as me.Or as frequently as twice a week, and we would get together to discuss our discoveries. Since our learning processes differed as well, we sort of made up for each other.

Text 2 provides an example of how this information could be written down.

Subsequently, I worked in Turkey, where I was lucky to work alongside a colleague who started the program at the same time as me. We compared findings during our weekly meetings. We complemented one another because we had different learning styles.

The way the meanings are "packaged" in these two texts varies noticeably in a few key ways. Since speech is created on the fly, it exhibits specific linguistic patterns that are uncommon in written texts. A summary of some of the most significant distinctions between written and spoken language may be found in Table 1. It is crucial to remember that these distinctions generally characterize these differences: writing and speech can be more or less written or spoken depending on the topic, the sociocultural setting, the

relationships between the writer and listener, the distance in space and time from the phenomena, events, or actions that are the subject of meaning, and other factors.

Speaking motivation from a social and functional perspective is another important realization for language instructors who instruct speaking. Speech is classified into two categories: pragmatically motivated speech and interpersonally motivated speech (Brown and Yule, 1983). In order to get things done in daily life, pragmatic or transactional communication refers to the exchange of products and services or information (such as finding out about a job or phoning an ambulance). Conversely, the fundamental goal of interactional or interpersonal discourse is to establish and preserve social bonds (e.g., speaking with friends or relatives, making small talk).

Teachers can utilize these distinctions to determine which primary types of interactions are crucial for their students, which makes them beneficial. It would be odd for business meetings, for instance, to exclude interpersonal discourse, even when the primary goal is transactional. In reality, however, the majority of spoken exchanges combine both social and functional reason. Nonetheless, these components would be limited by the speakers' cognizance of the primary objective of completing the task at hand as well as the customary, more structured roles and connections amongst the speakers.

Comparably, a casual chat among friends, which is mostly interactional, may include moments where the goal is transactional, like seeking clarification on a technical issue or haggling over the cost of the commodities being traded. The interpersonal relationships between speakers inherently influence the language they choose to use because spoken language prioritizes these relationships in a manner that written texts typically do not. In evaluating their differences or similarities, speakers consider their emotional or affective distance or proximity, status or expertise, and frequency of regular contact.

Expanding on a few of the previously mentioned ideas. I'll now go over a teaching-speaking cycle (Goh and Burns, 2012, p. 153) that can be used to organize a coherent, well-organized set of speaking exercises (Figure 2). The model seeks to emphasize many important ideas that educators can use to mentor their students:

- Develop fluency in the expression of meaning; Apply a variety of speech-enabling abilities; and Apply grammar flexibly to generate a wide range of utterances that can accurately represent meaning

- Employ language structures and terminology that are appropriate for their speaking needs.
- Recognize and apply language and social rules of speech in a variety of situations.
- Manage and self-regulate their own speaking growth;
- Use appropriate oral communication and discourse tactics;
- Raise understanding of genre and genre structures;
- Raise metacognitive awareness about L2 speaking

(Goh & Burns, 2012, pp. 151-152)

1. Direct students' focus toward speaking

The first step is to increase speaking-related metacognitive awareness for two key reasons:

a) to motivate students to make plans for their general speaking growth

Prompts are provided to learners to help them reflect on what speaking requires of them and how they can get ready for it.

b) to get students ready for a particular speaking assignment

Here, the speaking activity that has been scheduled for the teaching cycle is the main emphasis of the prompts. Learners get ready by becoming familiar with the task's objectives and thinking through the approaches they'll need to finish it.

Example of a task

It is beneficial to take some time to consider your own educational journey. Here are a few easy questions to get you started. Write a brief reply to each one.

- What is the primary motivation behind your English language learning?
- What aspect of learning English do you find most enjoyable? What is it that you dislike?
- Do you experience anxiety or nervousness when speaking English?
- What are three areas you would like to work on to get better at speaking?

Contribute ideas and/or direct planning

Language learners often experience significant nervousness while speaking in a second language, thus it's critical that teachers support their students throughout this speaking

activity by providing them with ample time to prepare their remarks and delivery. This preparatory phase serves the following purposes:

- introducing or teaching new language
- making it possible for students to rearrange their growing linguistic knowledge;
- bringing their prior linguistic knowledge to life;
- recycling certain language elements and reducing processing burden; and
- encouraging students to understand problems in increasingly complex ways.

At this point, learning is scaffolded to suit the needs of the speaking task. Scaffolding, according to Maybin, Mercer, and Steirer (1992, p. 188), is "not just any assistance which helps a learner accomplish a task." A student will be able to perform a task with assistance that they would not have been able to handle on their own, and the assistance is meant to move the learner closer to the point of competency where they would eventually be able to finish such a task independently.

This phase's goal is to give students a situation in which they can practice speaking by assigning them a communicative assignment. The assignment should motivate the students to use their language knowledge, abilities, and tactics to convey meaning. Put another way, this cycle's level promotes learners to express themselves fluently without having to focus too much on form precision. Because Stage 2 involved individual or teacher-guided pre-task planning, this stage ought to be easier for the students.

The goal of the cycle's fourth stage is to give students the chance to become more accurate language users and to use their abilities and strategies more skillfully. During this phase, the instructor calls the students' attention to specific areas of the finished fluency exercise that require improvement. The components may consist of vocabulary as well as linguistic elements including syntax, text structures, and pronunciation.

1. At this point, students repeat the speaking challenge or tasks from Stage 3. Stage 4 has given learners the opportunity to analyze and practice specific language items or skills, which is what separates Stage 3 from Stage 5. They can therefore use this knowledge to improve their performance. One way to complete repetitions would be to:1. Repeat certain portions of the initial task
2. Completing the task again
3. Asking pupils to switch partners or groups

4. Presenting a fresh assignment that is comparable to the one they have just completed. For example, rather than providing instructions on how to prepare your favorite dish, students could provide instructions on a subject of their own choosing, allowing them to practice a procedural genre once more.

In stage six, students are encouraged to monitor and assess the knowledge they have gained from earlier stages in order to self-regulate their learning. It is possible to reflect alone, in couples, or even in small gatherings. For students who may be experiencing stress or anxiety and believe they are alone in their feelings, both individual and group reflection can be cathartic.

Different forms of metacognitive knowledge should direct learners' reflection, which can concentrate on one or more of the following topics:

• their informal evaluation of their performance and talents; the needs of the speaking tasks that they are aware of; the techniques that are helpful to meet the demands of the task;

• their performance in areas that need improvement;

• their strategies for enhancing particular areas; and

An example of several general contemplation prompts is provided below. They can serve as headers for student notebooks or as a handout for students to fill out. In order to chronicle their experiences studying a foreign language, teachers can also urge their students to launch their own written or audio blogs.

Example prompts for learner reflections on learning

Considering My Speaking Performance 1) I learned how to accomplish the following in spoken English throughout this week's lessons: 2) I also picked up the following helpful expressions that will enable me to communicate more clearly when I speak: 3) My thoughts on this week's lessons are as follows: A. I'm sure I can do this again. B. I'm not sure I can do this again. C. I'm still not sure what I should say or do in this kind of circumstance. (Put a tick√ next to the sentence that best describes how you feel right now.	Your teacher's / classmate's response:

- The teacher gives students feedback on how they performed in previous phases of the Teaching Speaking Cycle in this last step, such as:
- evaluations or remarks on a specific student's abilities and performance based on observation sheets utilized for the speaking job
- exchanging written observations and remarks from individual learners about one other's development and accomplishments
- written comments in students' journals;
- aggregated remarks from the instructor based on written reflections from the class;
- informal evaluations and comments on students' blogs

It is not intended for the cycle that was just presented to be finished in one or two lessons. It is a comprehensive method that may be used to introduce and expand speaking techniques and skills over the course of multiple courses or even a unit of study. For instance, a cycle can have a sequence of classes centered around a particular subject or theme.

Conclusion

The cycle is relevant to teachers because it helps them plan each component methodically and provide resources and tasks that are appropriate for students at various learning stages. It also considers activities that pique students' cognitive and affective interests.

Stated differently, it highlights the subsequent elements:

1. When teaching speaking, the roles that the teacher, the student, and the materials each perform should be highlighted.

2. The primary goal of speaking assignments is to assist students in gaining the fluency of proficient speakers, whose meaning is conveyed with little hesitation and in a way that is suitable for the message's intended social context. This is accomplished by correct language and discourse patterns; - suitable speech-enabling abilities; and - successful communication techniques.

3. Because pre-task planning and task repetition can lessen cognitive burden during speech processing, they can improve learners' speaking performance.

Learning entails picking up important knowledge and committing it to long-term

memory. Teaching speaking so involves a lot of activities that draw students' attention to language, skills, and methods.

To address emotional and other cognitive demands of learning to speak a second language, educators must design activities that support learners in gaining metacognitive understanding and self-regulation of their speaking and learning processes.

Teachers can handle all of these issues and give students helpful scaffolding as they work on speaking assignments by organizing their lessons in accordance with the phases of the Teaching Speaking Cycle. In addition to practicing meaning expression with their current language resources, learners will receive immediate feedback and direction from their teachers to enhance their performance.

Teaching speaking is a vital part of language education, yet it remains a challenge for many English teachers. The proposed teaching-speaking cycle offers a structured approach that systematically develops speaking competence. By emphasizing key components and providing a sequential strategy, this cycle supports effective instruction and helps organize speaking activities to enhance learners' communication skills.

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