

**МІНІСТЕРСТВО ОСВІТИ І НАУКИ УКРАЇНИ
СУМСЬКИЙ ДЕРЖАВНИЙ УНІВЕРСИТЕТ
ФАКУЛЬТЕТ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ ФІЛОЛОГІЇ
ТА СОЦІАЛЬНИХ КОМУНІКАЦІЙ**



СОЦІАЛЬНО-ГУМАНІТАРНІ АСПЕКТИ РОЗВИТКУ СУЧАСНОГО СУСПІЛЬСТВА

**МАТЕРІАЛИ V ВСЕУКРАЇНСЬКОЇ НАУКОВОЇ КОНФЕРЕНЦІЇ СТУДЕНТІВ,
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HOW TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS

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Speaking is “the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts” (Chaney, 1998, p.13). Speaking is a crucial part of second language learning and teaching. Today’s world requires that the goal of teaching speaking should improve students’ communicative skills, because, only in this way, students can express themselves and learn how to follow the social and cultural rules appropriate in each communicative circumstance.

Now many linguists and ESL teachers agree that students learn to speak in the second language by “interacting”. Communicative language teaching and collaborative learning serve best for this aim. Communicative language teaching is based on real-life situations that require communication. By using this method in ESL classes, students will have the opportunity of communicating with each other in the target language.

Traditional classroom speaking practice often takes the form of drills in which one person asks a question and another gives an answer. The question and the answer are structured and predictable, and very often there is only one correct, predetermined answer. The purpose of asking and answering the question is to demonstrate the ability to ask and answer the question.

In contrast, the purpose of real communication is to accomplish a task, such as conveying a telephone message, obtaining information, giving directions, making suggestions, expressing opinion. In real communication, participants must manage uncertainty about what the other people will say. Authentic communication involves an information gap; each participant has information that the other does not have. In addition, to achieve their purpose, participants may have to clarify their meaning or ask for confirmation of their own understanding.

To create classroom speaking activities that will develop communicative competence, instructors need to incorporate a purpose and an information gap and allow for multiple forms of expression. However, quantity alone will not necessarily produce competent speakers. Instructors need to combine structured output activities, which allow for error correction and increased accuracy, with communicative output activities that give students opportunities to practice language use more freely.

Two common kinds of structured output activities are information gap and jigsaw activities. In both these types of activities, students complete a task

by obtaining missing information, a feature the activities have in common with real communication. However, information gap and jigsaw activities also set up practice on specific items of language. In this respect they are more like drills than like communication. With these activities, instructors need to be conscious of the language demands they place on their students. Sometimes we can brainstorm with our students when setting up the activity to preview the language they will need, eliciting what they already know and supplementing what they are able to produce themselves. Structured output activities can form an effective bridge between instructor modeling and communicative output because they are partly authentic and partly artificial. Like authentic communication, they feature information gaps that must be bridged for successful completion of the task. However, where authentic communication allows speakers to use all of the language they know, structured output activities lead students to practice specific features of language and to practice only in brief sentences, not in extended discourse.

Communicative output activities allow students to practice using all of the language they know in situations that resemble real settings. In these activities, students must work together to develop a plan, resolve a problem, or complete a task. The most common types of communicative output activity are role plays and discussions. In role plays, students are assigned roles and put into situations that they may eventually encounter outside the classroom. Because role plays imitate life, the range of language functions that may be used expands considerably. Also, the role relationships among the students as they play their parts call for them to practice and develop their sociolinguistic competence. They have to use language that is appropriate to the situation and to the characters. Students usually find role playing enjoyable. Discussions like role plays, succeed when the instructor prepares students first, and then gets out of the way.

Through well-prepared communicative output activities teachers can encourage students to experiment and innovate with the language, and create a supportive atmosphere that allows them to make mistakes without fear of embarrassment. This will contribute to their self-confidence as speakers and to their motivation to learn more.

SPECIFIC COLLECTIVE NOUNS

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