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INTERACTIVE METHODS FOR DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILLS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract: The development of speaking skills is one of the main objectives of teaching English as a foreign language in primary school. Speaking enables young learners to express their thoughts, communicate with others, and use the language in real-life situations. However, many primary school students experience difficulties in speaking because of limited vocabulary, lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and insufficient practice. This article discusses the importance of interactive methods in developing speaking skills among primary school students. It focuses on the use of role plays, educational games, pair and group work, picture-based activities, storytelling, question-and-answer tasks, information-gap activities, songs, and technology-based exercises. These methods create an active and supportive learning environment and encourage students to participate in communication. The article also highlights the important role of the teacher in organizing interactive activities and motivating young learners. The use of interactive methods can increase students' confidence, motivation, vocabulary, fluency, and overall communicative competence.

Keywords: speaking skills, primary school, young learners, interactive methods, communicative competence, role play, educational games, pair work, group work, language learning.

Introduction: Speaking is considered one of the most important skills in learning a foreign language. The ability to communicate orally allows learners to express their ideas, feelings, opinions, and needs. In primary school, the development of speaking skills is especially important because young learners are at the beginning of their language-learning journey. At this stage, students need to develop a positive attitude toward English and gain confidence in using the language.

Traditional teaching methods often focus mainly on memorizing vocabulary and learning grammatical rules. Although vocabulary and grammar are essential components of language learning, students also need regular opportunities to use the language in meaningful communication. Interactive methods provide such opportunities by involving learners actively in the educational process. Through communication, cooperation, games, and creative activities, students can practice English in a natural and enjoyable way. Interactive methods are particularly effective for primary school students because children learn best when they are actively involved in the lesson. They are naturally curious, energetic, and interested in games and creative activities. Therefore, teachers should use methods that correspond to the psychological and educational characteristics of young learners.

Speaking is one of the most important language skills that primary school students need to develop when learning English. The ability to express thoughts, communicate with others, ask and answer questions, and participate in simple conversations helps children become confident language users. However, developing speaking skills can sometimes be challenging because young learners often have a limited vocabulary, insufficient knowledge of grammar, fear of making mistakes, and lack of confidence. Therefore, teachers should create an active, supportive, and

enjoyable learning environment in which students can practice speaking naturally. One of the most effective ways to achieve this goal is the use of interactive teaching methods.

Interactive methods are teaching approaches that actively involve learners in the educational process. Unlike traditional lessons, in which students mainly listen to the teacher and repeat information, interactive learning encourages them to communicate, cooperate, discuss, solve problems, and express their own ideas. These methods are especially suitable for primary school students because children learn more effectively when they are actively involved in games, communication, movement, and creative activities. Interactive activities can transform an ordinary English lesson into an interesting and meaningful experience.

One of the most popular methods for developing speaking skills is role play. In role-playing activities, students imagine themselves in different situations and act according to a specific role. For example, they can pretend to be a teacher and a student, a doctor and a patient, a customer and a shop assistant, or family members talking at home. Such activities provide students with opportunities to use new vocabulary and grammatical structures in meaningful situations. Role plays also help children overcome their fear of speaking because they focus on the character and the situation rather than on their own mistakes. As a result, students become more confident and willing to communicate.

Games are another effective interactive method for developing speaking skills in primary school. Young learners naturally enjoy playing, and educational games can increase their motivation and interest in learning English. Games such as “Guess the Word,” “Hot Seat,” “Find Someone Who,” and “Describe and Guess” encourage students to speak and listen actively. For example, in a guessing game, one student describes an animal, object, or person without saying its name, while other students try to guess the answer. This activity develops vocabulary, speaking fluency, listening comprehension, and critical thinking at the same time. Games also create a relaxed atmosphere in which students are less afraid of making mistakes.

Pair work and group work are also important interactive techniques. When students work in pairs or small groups, they have more opportunities to speak than in a teacher-centered classroom. They can ask each other questions, share opinions, describe pictures, complete dialogues, or solve simple tasks together. For instance, students can work in pairs to interview each other about their hobbies, favourite food, family, or daily routines. After the interview, they can introduce their partner to the class. Such activities not only improve speaking skills but also develop cooperation, respect, and communication abilities.

Picture-based activities are particularly useful for primary school learners because children often respond better to visual materials. Teachers can show students pictures and ask them to describe what they see. At the beginning level, students may use simple words and short sentences, such as “This is a cat,” “The boy is playing,” or “There are three apples.” As their language ability develops, they can create longer descriptions and even short stories based on a sequence of pictures. Storytelling activities encourage creativity and imagination while helping students organize their thoughts and use language more freely.

Modern technology can further support interactive speaking activities. Educational videos, digital flashcards, interactive presentations, and simple language-learning applications can make speaking practice more interesting. Students can watch a short video and discuss what they have seen, describe characters, repeat useful expressions, or create their own dialogues based on the situation. Audio and video recording can also help learners listen to their own speech and notice areas for improvement. However, technology should be used as a tool to support communication rather than replace direct interaction between students.

The success of interactive methods largely depends on the role of the teacher. The teacher should not only provide information but also act as a facilitator who organizes activities, gives clear instructions, encourages participation, and creates a positive learning atmosphere. It is important to remember that primary school students may be shy or afraid of making mistakes. Teachers should therefore respond to mistakes patiently and focus on communication rather than constant correction. Positive feedback, praise, and encouragement can significantly increase students' confidence and motivation.

Interactive methods also make it possible to involve students with different levels of language ability. Stronger students can support weaker learners during pair and group activities, while each child can participate according to his or her individual level. Teachers can provide useful words, sentence starters, pictures, or model dialogues to help students express themselves. Gradually, as learners become more confident, these supports can be reduced, allowing students to speak more independently.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the development of speaking skills in primary school requires active, learner-centered, and communicative teaching approaches. Interactive methods such as role plays, educational games, pair and group work, picture descriptions, storytelling, question-and-answer activities, information-gap tasks, songs, and technology-based exercises provide young learners with meaningful opportunities to practice English. These methods make the learning process more enjoyable and reduce students' fear of making mistakes. They also contribute to the development of confidence, motivation, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and communicative competence. Through regular participation in interactive activities, students gradually become more active and independent users of the English language. The teacher plays a central role in organizing these activities and creating a positive learning environment where every student feels comfortable speaking. Therefore, the effective integration of interactive methods into English lessons is an important factor in improving the speaking skills of primary school students and preparing them for successful communication in the future.

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