Effective methods of using authentic materials in forming speaking competence

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ANNOTATION: *This topic explores the use of authentic materials, real-world texts, audio, and video, as a powerful tool for developing speaking competence in language learners. Furthermore, this topic also serves for knowing the various effective methods of utilizing authentic materials to enhance speaking competence in language learners.* **Keywords.** *Authentic materials, Speaking competence, Language learning, Second language acquisition, Communicative competence, Oral communication skills, Language instruction, Fluency and accuracy, Real-world materials, Interactional competence.*

Introduction. When we speak our native tongue (or L1), we do not always understand things, either. Sometimes we need to ask to repeat a question, other times we want a clarification on a concept or vocabulary word, and sometimes we want the speaker to rephrase what they are saying. These are all strategies your students already have. Now it is a matter of transferring them into their second language learning. In one of my blog posts, I shared a self-assessment sheet that I have my beginners fill out at the end of each week. In it, there is a section, where they have to reflect on what they did if they could not understand what the speaker was saying. This allows them to see that they already have the tools and makes them feel more empowered. [1]

To make the conversation more authentic, have the students choose the topics they would like to talk about. Whenever the students have something they are interested in or passionate about, the motivation to speak is there. Half of your work as a teacher is already done! Students could work in groups to brainstorm the topics they would like to talk about and make a list either on an index card or a

piece of paper. You now have ideas for your next speaking lessons. It is important to note that while controversial topics such as political elections, or same-sex marriage are great for generating discussion and learning persuasion, not all students can handle mature topics like this. Always consider their age, cultural backgrounds, and interpersonal skills before assigning a controversial topic. Assessing fluency and accuracy in speaking presents unique challenges for language educators. Fluency refers to the ability to speak smoothly and coherently without hesitations or pauses, while accuracy pertains to the correctness of language use in terms of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Assessors must strike a balance between evaluating fluency and accuracy, recognizing that overly focusing on accuracy may impede fluency, while prioritizing fluency may overlook linguistic errors. Additionally, assessing fluency and accuracy requires careful consideration of learners' developmental stage, language proficiency level, and the complexity of the speaking task. [2] The speaking lessons focused on topics encountered and/or discussed in everyday life, including personal interests, sports and recreation, world cultures, movies, social life, friendship, and technology. Of the 60 participants, 30 students were in the experimental group and the other 30 were in the control group. The participants had taken an English placement test before attending the general English course and both groups were placed at CEFR B1 Threshold Level. [3]

While it is a bit of an exaggeration, students clearly feel that classroom-based speaking practice does not prepare them for the real world. Why do students so often highlight listening and speaking as their biggest problems? Partly because of the demands of listening and speaking and partly because of the way speaking is often taught. It usually consists of language practice activities (discussions, information-gap activities etc.) or is used to practice a specific grammar point. Neither teaches patterns of real interaction. So what can we do in the classroom to prepare students for real interaction?

What do students need?

• Practical suggestions

• What language should I teach?

• How do I get students to use new language

• Further reading.

What do students need?

• Practice at using L1 (mother tongue) strategies, which they don't automatically transfer.

• An awareness of formal / informal language and practice at choosing appropriate language for different situations.

• The awareness that informal spoken language is less complex than written language. It uses shorter sentences, is less organised and uses more 'vague' or non-specific language.

• Exposure to a variety of spoken text types.

• The ability to cope with different listening situations. Many listening exercises involve students as 'overhearers' even though most communication is face-to-face.

• To be competent at both 'message-oriented' or transactional language and interactional language, language for maintaining social relationships.

• To be taught patterns of real interaction.

• To have intelligible pronunciation and be able to cope with streams of speech.

• Rehearsal time. By giving students guided preparation / rehearsal time they are more likely to use a wider range of language in a spoken task.

Create a lesson plan with basic, relatable topics. Before you start teaching any new lessons, first decide what you want to focus on. Take out a blank sheet of paper or open up a document in a word processor to begin creating a list of important topics to cover. Focus on easy lessons, like pronunciation and phonics skills, basic vocabulary, simple verb tenses (past/present/future), and easy sentence structure (simple and compound sentences).

Conclusion. The use of authentic materials is a highly effective method for developing speaking competence in language learners. By exposing students to

real-world language in context, authentic materials help learners to develop fluency, accuracy, and communicative competence. Incorporating authentic materials into language instruction can enhance students' oral communication skills and promote interactional competence. Educators should continue to explore innovative ways to integrate authentic materials into their teaching practices in order to effectively support the development of speaking proficiency in second language acquisition.

References.

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