

Why encourage children to do speaking?

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SPEAKING

Why encourage students to do speaking tasks?

There are three important reasons to encourage students to do speaking tasks: rehearsal, feedback and engagement. All of them will make students fond of the task.

- Rehearsal: doing role-play of different situation in normal life such as, shopping, asking information or acting as hairdresser or some other activities or jobs.
- Feedback: in all these tasks students have the opportunity of giving and receiving information.
- Engagement: if the teacher chooses an authentic material adequate for the students' aged and their interest, the speaking task will be enjoyable for them and engaged them.

What kind of speaking should students do?

This is an activate exercise; the issue should be interesting for the students, to motivate and encourage them, in the way they want to complete the task.

Prases in speaking acquisition:

- Silence period: silence period is also active process, while the children are in silence they could be thinking and internalizing the information. Later they use this information in oral activities.
- Formulaic language: formulaic language consists in a repetitive process of sentences that students memorize and then they repeat them. They think that they are able to speak a lot when really they only repeat the same sentences.

Difficulties:

- Vocabulary and grammar: The teacher presents and explains the new vocabulary in the way that students understand even from beginner's level to upper level.
 - a) Work in the same way in English and in their language. For example: possessive's family words.
 - b) Work the vocabulary with words that the students use in their context, mainly about pictures and television. Students are the main worker. Children will often naturally insert their native language when they can't find the words in English.
- Personality: The main difficult that students find when they study English is that they can't practise the language outside the classroom.

- Time for practise: The only time for practise a foreign language is in class, for that reason is so important the time we devote to speak activities in class. So as soon as possible, what mean after few days the whole class should be done in the foreign language, a part from the specific speaking task which depend on the pupils, knowledge, initial stages, formulaic language etc.
- Pronunciation: Several speaking activities are focus on pronunciation, such us: retelling a story which take care of chess, rhythm and intonation, pace and voice variation.
- Reading aloud: This can be practise trough same games as bingo and give the students the opportunity to read words or sentences aloud.
- Guessing games: Specially indicate to practise the pronunciation of specific structures.

Stages in speaking development:

- Presentation: The teacher starts giving the language to little children before they can speak by themselves, in the way that they understand without difficulties. We can use different techniques of present the language:
 - a) Patterns phrases.
 - b) Short dialogues.
 - c) Mime.
 - d) Interaction between teacher and students.
- Controlled practise: The students are active, are their work practise the language and the teacher only guide them and correct their mistakes. The main objectives are:
 - a) Vocalize.
 - b) Test the correct comprehension.
 - c) After you have understood the vocabulary, you have to practise and internalize it.
 - d) Drills.
- Guided practise: Guided practise is better to practise in pairs or groups. This task offer students the opportunity to choose. There are a lot of exercises in the text books such as “What’s the time?”, “chain work” and “role-play”. The teacher can use pictures, objects or miming to explain the meaning of the new words to the students.
- Free practise: In free practise students have to do the task without teacher’s help. Now they choose the vocabulary they are going to use. This is a bit difficult to the students; what the teacher has to do is use the same activities that in the guided practise he used, without telling them the vocabulary. Some activities could be: Line-ups, follow-up conversation and role-play.

What should teachers do during a speaking activity?

Teachers should get involved in the speaking but without being the protagonist and even he can speak, prompt and correct students in a sensitive way. If the teacher thinks he shouldn't participate, he can stand listening to the students' conversations.

How should teachers correct speaking?

Teachers while students are speaking, they should note down the students' mistakes and the things they have done well, because he interrupts the conversation, the dynamic breaks and they can't go on.

Types of activities:

- Role-play: they are small dialogues to practise a specific function or structure. In some role-plays students only repeat dialogues and in others, students replace key words. The class is divided in two groups: A and B, each one represent a part of the dialogue. Other way to do role-plays is doing the students listening to a tape and then in pairs they talk about the issue. The teacher checks the students' pronunciation and realistic role-play.
- Pair-work: there are two children; one of them has a number of elements that the other child hasn't got and vice versa. They have to complete the missing information that both of children don't have, without watching at the partner's plan, picture or information.
- Group-work: is necessary to explain this work with an example: the activity consists on giving to each child one picture (that they make a short story), so then, they have to describe what is in their picture without showing it, so when they have heard all the descriptions they have to decides the correct order of the pictures.

Important information

We think that listening and speaking are skills which only can be practised in class mainly because of the correction of the teacher, about pronunciation, intonation rhythm, stress etc. even when nowadays we can use the time properly for important help of computer.

