

## **THE FORMATION OF SPONTANEOUS SPEECH SKILLS IN ENGLISH**

### **ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ НАВЫКОВ СПОНТАННОГО ГОВОРЕНИЯ НА АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ**

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*Introduction.* One of the most urgent issues in teaching foreign languages is to develop students' spontaneous speech skills. Methods of teaching English as a foreign language, though the latter is the most common in a majority of countries, still have not produced a unified, universal approach to the problem. On the one hand, the practical use of any language as means of communication is the main indicator of spontaneous speech skills formation and of language proficiency in general. On the other hand, the majority of students, studying English at a professional level, are rarely distinguished by their ability of natural, relaxed speaking. The contradiction marked makes us identify flaws and the tiniest imperfections teachers make in the process of students' training.

At Practical Course of English the main attention is paid to reading and translation of topical texts and to mastering the lexical and grammar material determined by speech situation. Less often it's paid to listening and very rarely – to spontaneous speech. It's obvious that these kinds of speech activities, alternating in a certain way, anyhow will contribute to

development of unprepared speaking. However, only a system of exercises chosen in a proper way will result in development of speech skills and abilities necessary for spontaneous communication in a foreign language. The quality analysis of students' skills and abilities in the field of oral communication testifies to the need of improved methods for the development of spontaneous speaking in a foreign language.

*Body.* Beginning to work on the development of speaking skills, a teacher should produce the algorithm of pedagogical technologies' usage that would lead a student to the achievement of the expected result, and, exactly, to the ability to react quickly to situation-based changes of nature of communication in a foreign language. All of the chosen methods of working with language material at lessons should approximate students to real life situations. In connection with the foregoing, the purpose of this article is to show what types of speech activities exist and in what sequence they can be used for the development of spontaneous speech at Practical Course of English.

The first stage of speaking skills formation should comprise the introduction of specific phonetic, lexical and grammatical knowledge and their consequent activation. Then one should think over a system of exercises serving the assigned tasks. According to H.M. Kargina they can be as follows: "reproduction of unfamiliar text that has been listened to with the help of questions, pictures or outlines, retelling, stating the main idea or a synopsis of extracted paragraph in a concise form, asking questions on the text, translations; prepared oral presentations, reports, abstracting of the foreign text read fluently, content transmission with the help of slides etc." [1, p. 949]. The initial stage in mastering the skills of spontaneous speech should be a set of preparatory exercises for the introduction of lexical units and their further training: substitution, training and transformational drills.

The work with the text should begin with the definition of its type, detection of its keywords and structural parts, carrying out the discourse analysis, definition of the author's message, brief retelling. For instance, working at the topic "Choosing a career" students are offered to make an outline to the text "Ann Meets her Class", then to choose two-three key phrases for each of the items, based on which they are to retell the text not only from the part of the main heroine but from the part of any character suggested by a teacher. It may be not only the headmistress or one of children described in the text but also an unnamed third-party character – Ann's colleague, pupils' parent etc. Making dialogues using the key words is also an important stage of the work on the text – students are offered several key phrases which are not connected to each other and afterwards they are given

the task to insert those words into a spontaneous dialogue in a way the phrases compose a related text.

At the “textual” stage of the work students can compare grammatical structures, guess the meaning of new words by means of feeling for language, define speech patterns peculiar to different styles, find equivalents and synonyms, communicatively rich utterances. To implement an individual approach to students it is important not only to provide a thematic choice of a certain number of texts that would broaden their mental outlook but the difference in complexity degree of texts. Having trained spontaneous speech skills it’s necessary to emphasize students’ attention to the fact that to achieve any results one must not be afraid of making mistakes, since the latter are an indispensable part of the educational process. Working with new text may also contain unfamiliar lexical units and the most important thing here is to teach students the strategy of continuous reading. Reading something for the first time isn’t worth stopping because of the need of finding unfamiliar words in the dictionary.

It is important to form the awareness that we cannot always fully comprehend foreign speech and that for the first reading it is enough to understand the main idea of the text. Such approach removes the psychological barrier in learning a foreign language and forms an active personality, striving to obtain the necessary skills on one’s own. In the process of teaching spontaneous speech skills, it is established that a well-organized work on the analysis of the text contributes not only to widening of active vocabulary and mastering the certain grammar constructions but to increasing the range of communicative and creative abilities of students. A teacher can continue his/her work on the activation of lexical and grammar material on the topic by means of different activities aimed at the development of monological speech such as writing a new text from some keywords and sentences, writing essays on similar topics.

An important part of the preparation for spontaneous speech in a foreign language is making dialogues on the proposed situations. As A. Mkrtchyan writes, “a dialogue should involuntarily turn into discussion. Such a transition contributes to concentration of the audience’s attention to what is happening and to interest in the issue under discussion” [4, p. 138]. Moreover, it is dialogue and discussion that are the leading tools for interpersonal communication and properly chosen form of work with them is the key to the formation of communication skills in English in general. One ought to start working at this kind of activity with making easy dialogues aimed at developing receptive and reproductive skills and abilities. Usually students are offered to listen to a small training dialogue on a given topic with lexical material learnt. At the initial stage students should be able to distinguish the

most important and essential in the text, generalize the information, retell the plot of the dialogue omitting minor and insignificant facts which do not contribute to disclosure of the main idea and also to express their opinion about what was heard.

The next step should be making dialogues on the model, dialogues-overinterrogation, dialogues with cross-questioning, dialogues-conversations. Such a step-by-step transition will “contribute to calm perception, comprehension and development of expressed ideas” [3]. At the final stage of teaching dialogical speech it is necessary to start forming up a discussion that implies the desire of each interlocutor to defend his point of view, prove his case and to promote his ideas. A teacher should create a model of real speech situation in the way students would feel the need to express their thoughts; arrange a lively, intense and simultaneously uninhibited discussion. This form of work is the most effective for development of spontaneous speech skills and favourable to an adequate understanding of free speech by ear and to the ability of expressing one’s thoughts naturally using the relevant lexical and grammar material.

The bias in teaching spoken English towards spontaneity in the opinion of many modern researchers is impossible without the inclusion of game elements in the process of teaching. The game is a powerful tool in the hands of teachers, because only games can transform abstract and boring activities at classes into concrete and fascinating ones. As T.V. Lozovskaya observes, intensification of intellectual activity of students due to game elements is possible because of the fact that “human play is an initially motivated, meaningful activity, including both subject, theoretical, and mental one” [2, p. 5]. Moreover, the game is able to incorporate into itself that entire psychological context, which with the lapse of time can be transferred by students into a real communicative situation of live intercourse: typical for similar circumstances and atmosphere intentions, sensations and feelings.

The main difficulties teachers encounter in the course of formation of students’ communicative competence are related to lack of motivation, fear of speaking a foreign language, fear of being misunderstood, being exposed to criticism because of mistakes made, and also to inability to sustain the necessary duration of communication in a foreign language. The game creates necessary favourable atmosphere, is able to take into account individual abilities and qualities of students, allows insignificant “inclusions” in a native language which removes most of the above mentioned difficulties. Communicatively oriented teaching of English includes the use of different kinds of games but due to age group the most effective ones for students of higher educational institutions are role plays moderated in a way of discussions.

Such a game can be conducted in the form of session, debate and conference, the indispensable condition of which is the availability of at least two different points of view on the given problem. The activation of communicative side of intercourse through role play is possible due to students' attempts to overcome the language barrier and to their involvement in the interpersonal and intercultural space. As students role play the discussions they memorize new lexical units, drill grammatical constructions, acquire skills and abilities to carry out oral communication in a foreign language, learn new cultural data, form common skills in working with information.

A full-fledged game which favours the development of spontaneous speech skills in English is impossible without careful preparation. Before giving students this task a teacher needs to organize their speaking in a methodically correct way. For this purpose all the lexical and grammar material must be practiced beforehand, a teacher should define roles and positions of debate's participants, provide the choice of utterances which are oriented to attract listener's attention. Students are offered to determine the list of advantages and disadvantages for each of the points of view, take a certain side and prepare counterarguments to their opponents. During the game a teacher should ensure the meaningfulness of the statements put forward by students and summarize the results after the discussion. The alternative to game activity at lessons is the use of project method that allows to shift the focus from the exercises to active thinking of students, requiring possession of certain language skills.

Being involved into making projects students join in their own research experience, choose topics and ways for presentation of the material by themselves which activates in them a heightened interest in the facts being mastered. The project should include not only the search of problem solving but have the practical significance of the expected results. So, in the context of studying the topic "Choosing a Career" students' project activities can result in the development of their own CV and list of practical tips for applicants for a particular profession. The project method allows to integrate knowledge in various disciplines, provides students with critical thinking, helps to increase self-confidence and facilitates the formation of analytical skills which in turn favours the development of unprepared speaking skills.

Also the situation of real communication can be recreated in class by working with authentic material in the capacity of which one can use any visuals beginning with feature films and ending with commercials or any computer programmes including video. Alive foreign language culture, presented on the screen, brings students closer to the natural conditions of communication, gives them a clear idea of traditions and language realities of

English-speaking countries. H.G. Pavlenko speaks on the importance of using video in the process of formation of motivation among students: “When using films in class two kinds of motivation are developed: self-motivation, when the film itself is interesting, and the motivation which is achieved by showing that a student will be able to understand the language studied” [5, p.38]. The effectiveness of using videos in class will be determined by the second indicator when students by means of acquisition of faith in themselves will start to strive for self-improvement of their language skills and abilities.

The choice of film for presentation should correspond to the tasks of learning and to the level of linguistic grounding of students in the group. In this case a teacher should avoid a passive watching when students are not offered the tasks that enrich their language but are presented a usual demonstration of films. Such kind of activities, undoubtedly, can be useful but only as a tool of aiding providing the development of recognition of foreign language skills. To develop spontaneous speaking skills one needs to think over a set of exercises – tasks before, during and after viewing a film. At each stage, a number of goals are achieved. In the course of learning the topic “Choosing a Career” students are offered to watch the film “The Life and Adventures of Nickolas Nickleby” which depicts a life of a young man who went to teach boys in a rural orphanage. At the preparatory stage the vocabulary necessary for understanding the film is introduced, the regional and historical commentary is given, a number of questions on Ch. Dickens’ works are offered.

At the stage of watching the film the skills of recognizing English speech by ear are developed, students take notes, put down interesting phonetic, lexical and grammar units. At the third stage the film is used as the basis for the development of skills to build a statement in a foreign language. Students are suggested a number of tasks, oriented to control the understanding of the main content of the video: multiple choice tests, tasks for determination of the correct sequence of events in the film, exercises for substituting missed words in sentences. The final stage of work with video material implies the development of students’ creative potential and aims to improve the skills of spontaneous speaking in English. Students are offered to answer some questions dealing with controversial points in the theory of upbringing and education, to express their attitude toward main heroes of the film, their deeds.

*Conclusion.* The usage of authentic texts also furthers the mastering of grammar material, the most approximate to the natural utterance. It is known that English colloquial speech is significantly different from the normative one by its structural and semantic properties and by the active usage of

neologisms and colloquialisms. A traditional educational text is not able to convey the characteristics of live speaking, whereas an authentic text is characterized by a greater expressiveness and, therefore, by a greater simplicity. It is important to take these factors into account when teaching spontaneous speaking in English. The studying of the quality of students' skills in oral communication has shown that for the effective formation of spontaneous speech skills in English it is necessary to apply a whole system of communicatively directed exercises which contribute to the development of foreign professional competence of future specialists. The types of exercises and their consequence should be determined by a teacher according to the language material studied, individual abilities and personal qualities of students.

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