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STORYTELLING IS A POWERFUL TOOL IN ELT FOR DEVELOPING STUDENTS' SPEAKING COMPETENCY

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Saparbaeva Nazigul Jamilovna

Teacher at school №3, Taxiataash, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

The article emphasises the value of storytelling for cultivating speaking competence and how to apply successfully these tactics while teaching.

KEYWORDS

Technique, storytelling, communication, narrating.

INTRODUCTION

The development of speaking abilities is seen as the most difficult component of language learning. Speaking requires instantaneous input, spontaneous engagement, and real-time processing, unlike other language skills like reading or writing. Because spoken communication is dynamic, both teachers and students face particular difficulties. Thus, creative instructional approaches and techniques are necessary to create an atmosphere that supports the development of speaking proficiency. The fundamental changes

currently being implemented in our nation's continuous education system are making it more difficult to create the conditions required for young people to acquire a foreign language, engage in communicative activities in it, employ strategies that show proficiency in communication, and express themselves flawlessly in any foreign language. Encouraging students to think and talk well in a foreign language is also vital. This article explores the many methods, also gives information about storytelling

techniques that may be used to help pupils improve their speaking abilities when teaching English. Speaking is a kind of speaking action in which an idea is spoken aloud. One of the main speech tasks is speaking, which is a necessary ability for oral communication. It has to do with the mental process of concept expression. First and foremost, students need to be inspired to cultivate the intention to communicate. The speaker then chooses suitable vocabulary or grammatical constructions from memory, usually drawing on the easily accessible information in their mother tongue. Speaking is ultimately the process of articulating a thought and giving words a proper pronunciation, or employing language in spoken communication. One of the linguistic abilities that are gained throughout language acquisition is speaking. One of the four language skills is speaking, along with listening, reading, and writing. It is the oral manner in which humans convey words. In English Language Teaching (ELT), storytelling has proven to be an influential method for enhancing speaking skills. This engaging approach not only makes learning more captivating but also greatly increases students' confidence and fluency. By integrating narrative activities into the curriculum, educators can leverage the diverse advantages of storytelling to create a more effective and enjoyable language learning environment.

Speaking is often an undervalued skill, possibly because almost everyone can speak and thus we tend to take it for granted. However, speaking deserves as much attention as literary skills, both in our first and second languages. The four skills are interrelated, and speaking is often considered difficult for EFL learners to master because students have to acquire other language components such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency in order to be proficient English speakers. Thus, they can become nervous, be afraid of making mistakes, and lack confidence [4:159-182].

In the following strategies for raising English language learners' speaking proficiency abilities will be discussed.

Storytelling. According to Stanley and Dillingham [7], storytelling is an engaging oral activity that captivates audiences by evoking multi-sensory emotions through narrating events in a story. It includes improvisation, facial expressions, and body movements to enhance the storytelling experience.

Fikriah [2:87-101] stated that storytelling builds confidence, develops language skills, encourages speaking and listening fluency, and increases motivation and interaction for the students. Employing the storytelling method makes the learning process more enjoyable for students. Not only do they develop language skills, but they also gain knowledge of

history, information, science, and more through this engaging approach.

One of the most effective ELT strategies for improving students' speaking proficiency is the narrative technique. It gives pupils a sense of purpose and rich context, boosts their self-esteem, and enhances their language proficiency all at once. The use of storytelling into language instruction provides a vibrant and participatory method that develops a stronger cultural and emotional bond with the language while also improving speaking abilities.

There is a variety of types of stories, for example, fairytales, folktales, fables, fiction, legend, short stories, written stories, picture-based stories, and personal stories among others [1]. One of the most important goals of Storytelling is to acquire vocabulary and grammar implicitly and as a result to produce language effectively. Khodabandeh in his research found that this goal can be achieved. He also said that students significantly improved their English-speaking skills [3:24-36].

Undoubtedly, nowadays the use of media is a crucial tool for the application of storytelling with high school students. This digital era allows both teachers and students to have access to a variety of technical devices, virtual platforms, videos, games, and music which can help us to facilitate our teaching-learning process. Digital storytelling is telling stories but using

technology to enrich the exposition or delivery of stories through visual and auditory aids to motivate and engage students in EFL/ESL learning [6:1541-1544]

However, Normann [5] states, the story and not the technology should be at the center considering that language is the key point. Digital storytelling is a learner-centered process allowing students to interact and produce language genuinely as part of the learning process and especially to improve their speaking skills to communicate and be part of our nowadays society. Thus, the results of the research were positive with the implementation of this method, since Razmi found that learning through digital storytelling has two purposes: it becomes personal, friendly engaging, and artistic, and it also benefits students to improve their linguistic skills to express their opinions using digital narratives for an audience.

In the following paragraphs we will look through the role of storytelling in language learning. Storytelling taps into our intrinsic appreciation for narratives. From ancient legends to contemporary novels, stories have been integral to human culture. In the educational setting, storytelling turns abstract language concepts into engaging and memorable experiences. This approach aids students in grasping and retaining new vocabulary, grammatical structures, and idiomatic expressions more effectively. Fostering confidence through narrative exercises is also key benefit of storytelling. It is a capacity to build students'

confidence in their speaking abilities. When learners create and share their own stories, they engage in a creative and low-pressure activity that allows them to experiment with language freely. This supportive environment encourages students to take linguistic risks, which is essential for developing fluency. Storytelling compels students to use language in a lively and expressive way. As they tell their stories, they practice forming coherent sentences, employing a diverse vocabulary, and using proper intonation and emotion. These practices enhance fluency and lead to more natural speech. Additionally, storytelling often involves interacting with peers, whether through group storytelling or storytelling circles, which further improves conversational skills.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, storytelling has been emphasized as a valuable technique in English Language Teaching (ELT). By involving students in narrative-based activities, storytelling boosts their confidence and fluency in speaking. It encourages creative self-expression, thereby improving their linguistic and cognitive abilities. The immersive nature of storytelling, which involves visual, auditory, and kinesthetic components, ensures that learners remain highly engaged and motivated. Storytelling emerges as a powerful and transformative method in English Language Teaching, providing numerous advantages for improving speaking skills. Through narrative

activities, educators can cultivate a dynamic and engaging learning atmosphere that enhances students' confidence, fluency, and creative thinking.

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