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STRATEGIES FOR EMPOWERING STUDENTS' SPEAKING ACTIVITIES

У статті висвітлено стратегії заохочення іношомовного мовлення студентів. Проаналізовано досвід у цьому аспекті провідних методистів, а також запропоновано низку завдань, що корелюють з духовними потребами студентів, а отже, сприяють розвитку навичок говоріння.

Ключові слова: розвиток навичок говоріння, іношомовне мовлення, заохочення, духовно зорієнтовані приклади, духовні потреби студентів.

В статье представлены стратегии поощрения иноязычной речи студентов. Проанализирован опыт в этом аспекте ведущих методистов, а также предложен ряд заданий, коррелирующих с духовными потребностями студентов, а следовательно, способствующих развитию навыков говорения.

Ключевые слова: развитие навыков говорения, иноязычная речь, поощрение, духовно сориентированные примеры, духовные потребности студентов.

Strategies for students' foreign-language speaking encouragement are elucidated in the article. The leading methodologists' experience in this aspect is analyzed. A set of tasks that correlate with students' spiritual needs, and therefore, promote the development of speaking skills is suggested.

Key words: development of speaking skills, foreign-language speaking, encouragement, spiritually focused examples, students' spiritual needs.

What does empowerment mean? Let's look to the origins of the word *power*, which comes from the Latin root meaning "to be able." Personal power can be defined as the ability to be who you really are. The *empowerment* of a person or group of people is the process of giving them power and status in a particular situation. *To empower* means to make (someone) stronger and more confident, especially in controlling their life and claiming their rights.

Looking down that path brings one to the idea that empowering students' speaking activities can be defined as *creating safe, secure emotional and physical environment within the class, in order to ensure participation of everyone in speaking process.*

Many of us have witnessed classrooms where students are automatons who are told what to do and when to do it day in and day out, never making decisions for themselves. These classrooms seem dark and grey no matter how bright the posters on the wall may be. In contrast we have witnessed classrooms where students are engaged in their own learning, they make dozen of choices each day mostly because they are not forced to read texts in which they have no interest. When asked why it works, we've found that the research is often not readily available or on the tips of our tongues. With this text, we hope to partially serve this need.

The **objective** of the proposed article is to find out the main strategies of empowering students' foreign language speaking and demonstrate a number of effective speaking promoting tasks.

The theoretical background of students' speaking activities has been the topic of scholarly discussions of such researchers as I. O. Zymnia (І. О. Зимня), V. H. Kostomarov (В. Г. Костомаров), O. M. Leontiev (О. М. Леонтьев), T. M. Panasenko (Т. М. Панасенко), O. O. Potebnia (О. О. Потебня), T. V. Riadova (Т. В. Рядова), A. A. Shahmatova (А. А. Шахматова), T. Bigelow, R. Carter, D. Wilson and others. In spite of this, there is no consensus on this issue.

Getting students to speak in class can sometimes be extremely difficult. Frequently, the problem is the natural reluctance of some students to speak and to take part. In such situations the role of the teacher is crucial. Remembering my own worry to speak being a student, I began to seek the solution of this problem and finally discovered that there is a number of things we can do to help us and our students feel more confident about using foreign language.

In his book on empowering students by giving them a choice of what to learn, *Terry Patrick Bigelow* suggests worthwhile, in my view, principles for teachers who are interested in making students speak fluently [2, p. 20-35].

Firstly, students need to know that they come to a safe place where experimentation is encouraged and both success and failure lead to learning.

Secondly, educators must not be afraid to admit their speech mistakes or inability to translate the new word. The author lays the stress on the fact that teachers who show themselves to be superhuman and unable to make a mistake set their students up to believe them to be gods of English instead of a fallible humans that they are [2, p. 26]. Undoubtedly, it leads to students' uncertainty and fear to express their thoughts.

Besides, to get students participate in foreign-speaking process the teacher should provide materials that engage their minds, are connected with their world, and respond to their spiritual needs.

Jeremy Harmer, the author of a really rewarding book on English language teaching [4] suggests a set of ways to promote students' speaking:

- **Preparation:** the scholar describes the value of planning and rehearsal for speaking success. In particular, he provides the example of David Wilson [5], who trying to use German while living in Austria found out, that before going to a restaurant it was much better to spend some time outside the restaurant, reading the menu and rehearsing (in his head) what he was going to say. Then, when he went in and placed his order, he did it fluently and without panic.

It should be noted, that a lot of speaking is made up of fixed phrases such as *Catch you later, Back in a sec, Can I call you back in a couple of minutes?* etc. Students need to be aware of what real conversation looks like and we as educators should provide them with the most popular fixed phrases, functional sequences and adjacency pairs (*Do you fancy a coffee? – Yes, please (No, thank you).*)

- **The value of repetition:** repetition has many beneficial effects. Each encounter with a word or phrase helps to fix it in the student's memory. Last autumn I attended the presentation by David Evans at seminar on methodology in

L'viv. Speaking about words and memory, he emphasized that according to the latest research in order to remember a word one needs to take at least six encounters with it. This can be accomplished by using rather simple strategy:

Learning a word:

hear it → read it → say it → write it → picture it → mime it → sing it → rhyme it → define it → make it personal → associate it → group it → change its context → investigate it → change its form → translate it.

• **Big groups, small groups:** a major reason for the reluctance of some students to take part in speaking activities is that they find themselves having to talk in front of a big group. A teacher can avoid this by making sure that they get chances to speak and interact in smaller groups, too.

• **Topics of interest.** By choosing materials that correlate with students' contemporary needs, learning becomes relevant, meaningful, and purposeful.

We suggest spiritually focused parables and a set of exercises as engaging and worthwhile way to awaken students' consciousness and help them grow in their capacity to use the English language [1, p. 59-63].

WHAT IS IMPORTANT

A young boy watched as his father walked into the living room. The boy noticed that his younger brother, John, began to cower slightly as his father turned up. The older boy sensed that John had slipped up somewhere. Then he saw from a distance what his brother had done. The younger boy had opened his father's brand new hymnal and scribbled all over the first page with a pen.

Staring at their father fearfully, both brothers waited for John's punishment. Their father picked up his prized hymnal, looked at it carefully and then sat down, without saying a word. Books were precious to him; he was a minister with several academic degrees. For him, books were knowledge.

What he did next was remarkable. Instead of punishing his brother, instead of scolding, or yelling, his father took the pen from the little boy's hand, and then wrote in the book himself, alongside the scribbles that John had made. Here is what that father wrote: "John's work, 1959, age 2. How many times have I looked into your beautiful face and into your warm, alert eyes looking up at me and thanked God for the one who has now scribbled in my new hymnal. You have made the book sacred, as have your brother and sister to so much of my life." "Wow," thought the older brother, looking up to his father, "This is punishment?"

Since that time, the hymnal has become a treasured family possession. It is tangible proof that their parents love them. It taught the lesson that what really matters is people, not objects; patience, not judgment; love, not anger.

That's how wise parents put up with their children, look up the situation and put them onto the way of Love.

(Unknown author)

I. Study the phrasal verbs from the text.

Turn up – appear.

Slip up – make a mistake.

Stare at – look carefully at something or somebody.

Put up with – to accept unpleasant behavior or unpleasant situation even though you don't like it.

Put somebody onto something / somebody – to tell somebody about something that can help them, often something or somebody they didn't know about before.

Look up the situation – improve the situation.

II. Fill the gaps with the phrasal verbs from the text.

1. Things were bad last month but everything this month.

2. The girls prepared dinner for their father. They were really happy when their father in the kitchen.

3. What's wrong with these numbers? Has an accountant somewhere?

4. She her son, whom she hadn't seen for 10 years. He his Mum, whom he deeply respected and loved.

5. He needs some time to this unpleasant situation.

III. Answer the questions to the text: How does the story start? Why did the boys stare fearfully at their father? What did the younger brother do? What did the books mean to their father? What was the punishment? Why has the hymnal become a treasured family possession? What did your parents do or say when you spoiled some things in childhood? What will you do or say when your children spoil some things in future?

IV. Role-play

Dramatize the following situations using the active vocabulary. a) Your son/daughter is having trouble with his/her schoolwork. Discuss this with him/her; b) You feel your child is hanging around with the wrong kind of crowd. Talk to him/her about this;

We have classroom tested these activities and must admit that lively discussions of spiritually focused parables is a powerful evidence of students' concernment in moral issues. Undoubtedly, it promotes their speaking skills, since the texts are enriched with fixed phrases, idioms and phrasal verbs. Moreover, each of these can be a life lesson for those who are not only to be fluent speakers, but educators whose core mission is instilling in pupils what makes them spiritually mature personalities.

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