

Approaches to teaching verbs of speech activity in English and Uzbek: a comparative methodological study

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Abstract: This article explores the role of verbs of speech activity in language teaching, focusing on methodological approaches for English and Uzbek languages. Verbs of speech activity, such as "speak," "say," "tell," "ask," etc., play a pivotal role in forming meaningful communication, as they mediate the transmission of messages, convey speech acts, and influence the interpretation of discourse. This study analyzes various teaching methodologies, compares differences and similarities between the two languages, and offers pedagogical strategies for effectively integrating verbs of speech activity into language instruction.

Keywords: Verbs of speech activity, language teaching methodology, English language, Uzbek language, communicative competence, comparative analysis.

Introduction: Verbs of speech are crucial elements of language, reflecting the way individuals convey messages, seek information, or express opinions. They represent a broad category of verbs that describe communicative actions, including say, tell, ask, speak, explain, argue, and complain. These verbs not only carry literal meanings but also provide insight into the social dynamics of communication. Teaching them is essential for developing students' ability to convey precise meanings, interpret subtleties in conversation, and adapt to diverse communicative contexts. Despite their importance, effective strategies for teaching these verbs are often underexplored in the literature. This paper aims to bridge this gap by presenting several approaches to teaching verbs of speech in English.

Before discussing practical teaching approaches, it is important to explore the linguistic features of verbs of speech. These verbs often function as reporting verbs or speech act verbs. In syntax, they commonly govern indirect speech or direct speech constructions (e.g., "He said that he would come" vs. "He said, 'I will come'"). Semantically, they imply different types of communication—asking is different from telling, which in turn differs from promising or advising. The distinction between direct speech and indirect speech,

as well as the use of appropriate verb forms, is a key element in teaching these verbs.

Several pedagogical approaches have proven effective in teaching verbs of speech in English. These can be categorized as follows:

Contextualized Teaching:

Context is critical when teaching verbs of speech. Instead of presenting verbs in isolation, educators should introduce them through context-rich scenarios. Role-plays, dialogues, and stories are excellent tools for helping students understand how speech verbs function in real-world communication. For example, students can be asked to reenact a conversation where one person requests information using ask, while another explains using explain. Contextualized exercises help learners grasp not only the meaning but also the nuances of the verbs—such as the

Task-Based Learning (TBL):

Task-based learning, where language is taught through meaningful tasks, is an effective method for teaching verbs of speech. In this approach, students are encouraged to perform real-life tasks, such as making inquiries in a restaurant or giving directions. The tasks naturally integrate verbs of speech into students' active

language use. For example, a task in which learners simulate a news interview can incorporate verbs like interview, question, respond, and clarify. TBL also encourages fluency, as students are more likely to use a variety of speech verbs during the execution of tasks.

Explicit Instruction on Speech Act Theory:

Incorporating the principles of Speech Act Theory into lessons can significantly enhance students' understanding of verbs of speech. This theory posits that speech is not just about transmitting information but also performing an action. Verbs like promise, threaten, suggest, and apologize can be explored in terms of the illocutionary force they convey (i.e., the intention behind the utterance). By discussing the different illocutionary acts teachers can deepen students' understanding of how these verbs impact communication and shape interactions.

Grammar-Translation and Focus on Form:

Although communicative methods dominate modern language teaching, traditional grammar-translation techniques can still be useful when introducing the grammatical forms associated with verbs of speech. Focusing on syntax and the structure of direct and indirect speech (e.g., He said he was coming vs. He said, "I am coming") is vital for students who need to develop proficiency in formal writing or academic English. Teachers should carefully explain the grammatical rules that govern the use of speech verbs, such as tense changes in reported speech or the selection of the correct reporting verb in different contexts (e.g., ask vs. inquire).

Interactive and Technology-Enhanced Learning:

Digital tools such as online quizzes, language apps, and video-based learning platforms can help reinforce the use of speech verbs in an interactive way. These tools provide immediate feedback and allow learners to practice speech verbs in a variety of simulated contexts. For example, platforms like Duolingo and Babbel incorporate various speech act-related exercises, such as asking for directions or making requests, into their curricula. This helps learners gain confidence and familiarity with the use of speech verbs in dynamic, real-time interactions.

To assess students' proficiency with verbs of speech, teachers can employ both formative and summative assessment methods. Formative assessments may include peer feedback during role-playing exercises, quizzes, and group discussions. Summative assessments, such as writing assignments, oral exams, and tests, can evaluate students' ability to correctly use these verbs in context. In particular, tasks that require students to report on or paraphrase information using

indirect speech can be a useful assessment tool. Despite the clear importance of verbs of speech, there are several challenges in teaching them. One issue is that some speech verbs have multiple meanings and functions, depending on context. For example, ask can refer to a request ("I asked him to leave") or to a question ("I asked him what time it was"). Additionally, cultural differences can influence how these verbs are used. For instance, the use of complain or insist might be more or less direct depending on the cultural background of the speakers. Teachers need to be mindful of these subtleties when teaching.

The teaching of verbs of speech is a critical area of language instruction that helps students enhance their communicative competence. Through a variety of approaches—contextualized teaching, task-based learning, explicit instruction on speech acts, grammar-translation methods, and interactive technologies—teachers can provide students with the tools they need to use these verbs effectively in both spoken and written English. By addressing the challenges of ambiguity, cultural differences, and syntax, educators can facilitate a deeper understanding of how language functions in real-world communication. Verbs of speech activity are central to language use, playing a key role in communication. In both English and Uzbek, these verbs help construct meaningful statements, questions, requests, and commands, thus functioning as linguistic tools for interaction. Understanding how to teach these verbs efficiently is essential for learners to develop functional communicative competence. However, teaching methodologies may differ across languages due to the structural and cultural distinctions between English and Uzbek. This paper aims to provide a comparative analysis of the approaches to teaching verbs of speech activity in these two languages, offering insights for language educators on best practices for teaching speech verbs in multilingual classrooms.

The Role of Verbs of Speech Activity in Communication

Verbs of speech activity are verbs that express a communicative function. They are fundamental for understanding the speech act theory, which suggests that speaking is an act that can perform different functions: assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. Verbs such as "speak," "say," "tell," "ask," "warn," and "advise" represent different speech acts and contribute to the organization and interpretation of discourse. These verbs are integral to the production and understanding of both written and spoken language. In English, verbs like "ask" and "say" serve distinct functions, with their syntactic usage regulated by rules of grammar. For example, in English,

the verb "ask" is frequently used in questions, while "say" is used to introduce direct speech. In contrast, Uzbek demonstrates a greater reliance on verb forms that carry nuances based on the politeness level, social hierarchy, and formality of the conversation.

Methodological Approaches to Teaching Verbs of Speech Activity in English and Uzbek

English Language Teaching. In English, the approach to teaching verbs of speech activity often incorporates communicative language teaching (CLT), task-based language teaching (TBLT), and the direct method. These methods emphasize the practical use of language in real-life situations and encourage learners to use verbs of speech activity to perform a range of communicative tasks.

CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) CLT focuses on enabling students to use language effectively in diverse communicative contexts. In teaching verbs of speech activity, instructors may create role-playing exercises where students take on different personas and engage in conversation using speech act verbs. These activities can range from casual conversations to formal discussions, with students practicing "asking," "telling," "questioning," and "advising."

TBLT (Task-Based Language Teaching) TBLT focuses on real-world tasks, where learners engage in activities such as making requests, giving instructions, or narrating stories. Through this approach, learners are exposed to verbs of speech activity in authentic contexts, allowing them to develop both linguistic and intercultural competence.

Uzbek Language Teaching

Uzbek, as an agglutinative language, presents a different set of challenges when teaching verbs of speech activity. The structure of Uzbek verbs includes various suffixes that indicate formality, respect, or politeness, which is an essential component of speech act verbs in the language. The grammatical construction of Uzbek sentences using verbs of speech activity requires a deeper understanding of pragmatic and cultural context.

Traditional Grammar-based Approach In Uzbek, language instruction traditionally emphasizes grammar rules. Learners are taught speech verbs in accordance with their formal and informal contexts. This method often focuses on sentence construction, morphological features, and the syntax of verbs of speech activity. However, this approach may not always foster communicative competence as effectively as communicative approaches.

Contextual and Sociocultural Approaches. Uzbek language instruction also benefits from a focus on

sociocultural understanding, especially in regard to the use of honorifics, polite forms, and cultural conventions when expressing speech acts. Teachers introduce students to speech verbs in a variety of social situations, teaching how to differentiate between informal and formal speech.

Comparative Analysis of Methodological Approaches

Common Approaches Both English and Uzbek language teaching share some commonalities, such as the importance of context-based instruction and the use of authentic materials. In both cases, language teachers rely on methods that encourage interaction and practice of speech verbs in situational contexts, ensuring learners gain exposure to a range of communicative functions.

Differences The key differences lie in the structural and pragmatic aspects of the two languages. In English, there is a stronger reliance on word order and syntax to convey meaning, whereas in Uzbek, morphological changes to the verb form play a more prominent role in distinguishing politeness and formality. Moreover, English teaching often prioritizes fluency and pragmatics over formality, while Uzbek language teaching places a heavy emphasis on mastering formal and informal registers due to cultural norms. Both English and Uzbek teachers can benefit from incorporating pragmatic teaching methods that emphasize the social and cultural contexts in which speech verbs are used. This would help learners understand not only the linguistic function of the verbs but also their sociocultural relevance in different contexts. Both English and Uzbek classrooms can enhance the teaching of verbs of speech activity by integrating more task-based learning, role-plays, and real-life simulations. By engaging in practical exercises, learners would better understand the functional and contextual use of speech verbs.

Verbs of Speech Activity in English

In English, verbs of speech activity are typically classified based on the type of action they describe. Some common categories include:

1. **Verbs of Saying:** These include verbs like "say," "tell," "state," "declare," "mention," and "report."
 - o Example: "She said that she was going to the store."
 - o Example: "He told me the news."
2. **Verbs of Asking:** These include "ask," "inquire," "question," and "interrogate."
 - o Example: "She asked him if he had seen the movie."
3. **Verbs of Requesting:** These are verbs like

"request," "demand," and "beg."

o Example: "He requested a meeting with the manager."

4. Verbs of Suggestion and Advice: These include "suggest," "advise," and "recommend."

o Example: "She advised him to stay home."

5. Verbs of Commanding: Verbs like "order," "command," "direct," and "demand."

o Example: "The teacher ordered the students to complete the assignment."

6. Verbs of Argument: These include verbs like "argue," "debate," and "dispute."

o Example: "They argued over the best course of action."

Verbs of Speech Activity in Uzbek

The Uzbek language also has a rich set of verbs to describe speech activities, although the grammatical and syntactic structures differ from English. Here are some categories of verbs of speech in Uzbek:

1. Verbs of Saying: These verbs include "aytmoq" (to say), "deb aytmoq" (to say that), "ta'kidlamoq" (to emphasize), and "bildirmoq" (to inform).

o Example: "U aytdiki, u do'konga boradi." (She said that she was going to the store.)

o Example: "U ta'kidlab aytdi, u ishga bormaydi." (He emphasized that he was not going to work.)

2. Verbs of Asking: These include "so'ramoq" (to ask), "so'rov qilmoq" (to inquire), and "suramoq" (to request).

o Example: "U so'radi nima uchun kechikkanini." (She asked why he was late.)

o Example: "U so'rov qildi yangi kitobni topishni." (He inquired about finding the new book.)

3. Verbs of Requesting: In Uzbek, "iltimos qilmoq" (to request), "talab qilmoq" (to demand), and "so'ramoq" (to ask, request) are common.

o Example: "U meni iltimos qildi yordam berishni." (He requested me to help.)

4. Verbs of Suggestion and Advice: These include "maslahat bermoq" (to advise), "taklif qilmoq" (to suggest), and "yo'l ko'rsatmoq" (to guide).

o Example: "U maslahat berdi menga kutish kerak." (She advised me to wait.)

o Example: "U taklif qildi yangi filmni tomosha qilishni." (He suggested watching the new movie.)

5. Verbs of Commanding: These include "buyurmoq" (to order), "topshirmoq" (to command), and "majbur qilmoq" (to force).

o Example: "U buyurdi talabalar ishni tugatishni." (He ordered the students to finish the task.)

o Example: "U majbur qildi uni ishga borishga." (He forced him to go to work.)

6. Verbs of Argument: These include "bahslashmoq" (to argue), "munozara qilmoq" (to debate), and "nizolashmoq" (to quarrel).

o Example: "Ular bir-birlari bilan bahslashishdi." (They argued with each other.)

o Example: "Ular har doim munozara qilishadi." (They always debate.)

CONCLUSION

Verbs of speech activity are essential elements in both English and Uzbek, shaping the way individuals communicate, express intentions, and interpret speech. The differences in teaching methodologies between the two languages stem from structural and cultural variations, but both languages benefit from communicative, context-based approaches that integrate pragmatic understanding. By embracing diverse pedagogical strategies, educators can enhance their students' comprehension and use of verbs of speech activity, helping them achieve greater communicative competence in both languages.

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