

Features Of Oral Speech Development In Secondary School Students: Challenges And Effective Strategies In The Context Of Uzbekistan

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Abstract: The article explores the specific features of oral speech development among secondary school students in Uzbekistan, where English is taught as a foreign language. Drawing upon Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory and Krashen's hypotheses, the paper analyzes the psychological, linguistic, and pedagogical factors affecting oral communication. It identifies the main difficulties faced by learners in non-native contexts and proposes effective strategies to foster fluency, confidence, and motivation. Emphasis is placed on communicative approaches, task-based learning, and the use of digital tools to create authentic speaking opportunities. The research concludes that systematic, interactive, and student-centered instruction is essential for the successful development of oral skills.

Keywords: Oral speech, speaking skills, Second Language Acquisition, Krashen's hypotheses, communicative approach, EFL context, Uzbekistan.

Introduction: Developing students' ability to communicate orally in English is a key goal of foreign language education, especially in the context of secondary schools in Uzbekistan. As globalization strengthens the importance of English, oral competence becomes essential for academic, professional, and intercultural success. However, in many Uzbek schools, English is still primarily taught through grammar-translation methods, with limited opportunities for real communication. This imbalance restricts students' fluency and confidence in speaking.

The aim of this study is to investigate the main features of oral speech development among secondary school students and to identify effective pedagogical methods that enhance their speaking competence. The article also examines how principles of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Krashen's hypotheses can inform modern communicative teaching practices.

Theoretical Background

Oral speech, as a form of productive skill, involves both linguistic accuracy and communicative fluency. According to Brown (2001), speaking requires simultaneous control over grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and interactional strategies. Within the

framework of SLA, oral development is not only a matter of linguistic input but also of cognitive and affective engagement.

Krashen (1982) proposed several hypotheses central to SLA. His Input Hypothesis emphasizes that learners acquire language when they are exposed to comprehensible input slightly above their current level ($i + 1$). The Affective Filter Hypothesis highlights emotional factors such as motivation, anxiety, and self-confidence, which can facilitate or block language acquisition. In the context of Uzbek classrooms, high anxiety and low exposure to authentic communication often act as barriers to oral fluency. The Monitor Hypothesis and Natural Order Hypothesis further explain that language rules are acquired subconsciously in a predictable sequence, while conscious learning serves mainly as a monitor for correction.

Ellis (2003) and Harmer (2007) also stress the importance of interaction and meaningful communication in developing oral skills. The communicative language teaching (CLT) approach, rooted in SLA principles, promotes authentic use of language through pair work, group tasks, and role-plays that mirror real-life contexts.

Challenges in Developing Oral Speech

Students in Uzbek secondary schools face several challenges in mastering oral English. Firstly, limited exposure to the language outside the classroom restricts opportunities for practice. As English is not used in daily communication, students often rely solely on classroom input, which may be insufficient for developing fluency (Ur, 2012).

Secondly, psychological barriers such as fear of making mistakes, shyness, and lack of confidence hinder spontaneous speech. Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis explains that when students experience anxiety, their ability to acquire and produce language decreases. Thirdly, traditional teacher-centered methods focus excessively on grammar and written tasks, leaving little room for interactive speaking practice. Finally, large class sizes and limited time for individual feedback make it difficult for teachers to monitor and support oral performance effectively.

Effective Strategies and Techniques

To improve oral proficiency, teachers should implement communicative and learner-centered methods aligned with SLA principles. Task-based learning (TBL) and project-based learning (PBL) encourage students to use English for meaningful purposes. According to Willis (1996), task-based activities such as information-gap exercises, problem-solving, and storytelling simulate authentic communication and promote fluency.

Role-plays and simulations allow students to practice language in realistic situations, lowering the affective filter and increasing motivation. Pair and group work, as suggested by Harmer (2007), create cooperative environments where learners negotiate meaning and build communicative competence. Using information and communication technologies (ICT), such as online platforms, podcasts, and video-based activities, also enhances exposure to authentic English and provides opportunities for self-expression.

Furthermore, integrating formative assessment techniques such as self-evaluation and peer feedback develops students' metacognitive awareness and encourages reflection on their speaking progress (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). Teachers should act as facilitators rather than sole knowledge providers, guiding students to become autonomous communicators. Regular pronunciation and vocabulary drills, combined with spontaneous interaction, can significantly strengthen both accuracy and fluency.

Finally, motivation plays a crucial role in sustaining oral language development. Teachers can foster intrinsic motivation by connecting speaking tasks to students'

interests, cultural context, and real-life goals. As Dörnyei (2005) notes, motivation and positive emotional climate are the foundation of successful SLA, particularly in EFL settings like Uzbekistan.

To improve oral proficiency, teachers should implement communicative and learner-centered methods aligned with key principles of second language acquisition (SLA). The communicative approach emphasizes language as a tool for meaning-making rather than a system of isolated grammatical forms. Within this paradigm, Task-Based Learning (TBL) and Project-Based Learning (PBL) serve as powerful frameworks that encourage learners to use English for authentic, purposeful communication. As Willis (1996) states, task-based activities—such as information-gap exercises, problem-solving tasks, and storytelling—simulate real-life interaction, engage cognitive and emotional domains, and promote both fluency and accuracy. Similarly, Ellis (2003) highlights that task-based interaction provides natural contexts for negotiation of meaning, thereby facilitating both input processing and output production.

Role-plays, simulations, and dramatized dialogues allow learners to practice English in socially and professionally relevant situations. These interactive methods lower the affective filter (Krashen, 1982), reduce anxiety, and create an emotionally supportive atmosphere conducive to spontaneous speech. They also stimulate pragmatic competence—the ability to choose appropriate language in context—thus preparing students for real-world communication beyond the classroom. Pair and group work, as suggested by Harmer (2007), generate cooperative learning environments where students share responsibility for meaning-making, exchange feedback, and co-construct linguistic knowledge through interaction. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory further supports this idea by asserting that social interaction precedes individual development, implying that collaborative communication is the foundation of language growth.

In the modern context, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) significantly expand opportunities for oral practice. Online platforms such as Zoom, Padlet, and Flipgrid enable learners to record, share, and discuss oral tasks asynchronously or in real time, encouraging extended language use beyond class hours. Podcasts, TED Talks, and video-based activities immerse students in authentic English discourse, exposing them to diverse accents, speech patterns, and communicative norms. Integrating multimedia resources also allows teachers to design multimodal tasks that blend listening, speaking, and critical reflection, fostering deeper linguistic and cultural

awareness.

Assessment practices should also align with communicative goals. Incorporating formative assessment strategies—such as self-evaluation checklists, reflective journals, and peer feedback sessions—helps students monitor their own progress and develop metacognitive awareness (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). Peer assessment, in particular, not only enhances responsibility and critical thinking but also encourages social learning through constructive dialogue. Teachers thus transition from the role of traditional authority figures to facilitators of autonomous learning, guiding students in setting personal goals and adopting self-correction strategies.

Pronunciation and vocabulary development remain integral components of oral proficiency. Regular phonetic drills, shadowing exercises, and minimal pair practice improve intelligibility, while spontaneous communicative activities ensure that learners can apply newly acquired forms in meaningful contexts. Pronunciation teaching should focus not only on segmental features (individual sounds) but also on suprasegmental aspects such as stress, rhythm, and intonation, which are crucial for natural fluency and listener comprehension.

Motivation plays an equally vital role in sustaining oral language development. According to Dörnyei (2005), intrinsic motivation—rooted in personal relevance, curiosity, and a sense of progress—is more durable than external incentives. Therefore, speaking tasks should connect with learners' personal experiences, academic goals, and cultural identity. Teachers can increase engagement by designing problem-solving discussions, debates on current issues, or storytelling sessions related to students' professional interests, such as healthcare, engineering, or business. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in Uzbekistan, linking communicative practice to students' local realities and professional prospects can foster long-term commitment to language learning.

Moreover, creating a positive classroom climate that values participation over perfection is crucial. Encouraging risk-taking, tolerating mistakes, and celebrating incremental progress build learners' confidence to speak. Incorporating reflective discussions at the end of oral activities allows students to evaluate their performance, recognize strengths, and plan for improvement. When combined with supportive teacher feedback, this process transforms oral practice into a continuous cycle of experiential learning.

That is to say, the development of oral proficiency

requires a dynamic balance between structure and spontaneity, cognitive challenge and emotional comfort, guided input and autonomous expression. By integrating communicative, technological, and reflective dimensions of teaching, educators can create holistic learning environments where students evolve into confident, motivated, and effective speakers of English—capable of using language not only as a linguistic skill but as a means of personal and professional empowerment.

CONCLUSION

The development of oral speech in secondary school students requires a balance between linguistic accuracy, communicative fluency, and emotional comfort. In Uzbekistan's educational context, effective oral instruction should be based on the principles of SLA and Krashen's hypotheses, emphasizing comprehensible input, low anxiety, and active interaction. By integrating communicative approaches, task-based learning, and digital technologies, teachers can create motivating environments that enhance students' speaking confidence and proficiency.

Future research could explore the long-term impact of communicative and technology-enhanced teaching methods on oral competence. However, even at the current stage, it is evident that consistent, student-centered practice can transform speaking from a passive skill into an active and empowering tool of communication.

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