TEACHING SPEAKING TO FUTURE EFL TEACHERS: A STAGE-BASED METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

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Abstract. *Teaching speaking skills to future English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers requires a structured and pedagogically sound approach that goes beyond traditional communicative practices. This article proposes a stage-based methodological framework designed to systematically develop speaking competence among pre-service teachers. Drawing on contemporary theories of communicative language teaching, sociocultural learning, and reflective pedagogy, the study outlines key stages of speaking instruction, including awareness-raising, controlled practice, guided interaction, and autonomous production.*

The paper argues that future teachers need not only linguistic proficiency but also methodological awareness of how speaking skills are taught and assessed. Through an analytical review of relevant literature and classroom-based observations, the study demonstrates that a stage-based approach enhances fluency, confidence, and pedagogical competence. The discussion highlights the importance of scaffolding, feedback, and reflective practice in preparing future teachers for real classroom communication. The article concludes with practical recommendations for integrating stage-based speaking instruction into teacher education programs.

Keywords: *speaking skills, EFL teacher education, communicative competence, stage-based instruction, scaffolding, teacher training*

Introduction

Speaking is widely regarded as one of the most challenging skills to teach and learn in second language acquisition. Unlike receptive skills, speaking requires real-time processing, interaction, and the ability to adapt language to context. For future EFL teachers, mastering speaking is not only a matter of personal proficiency but also a professional necessity, as they are expected to model effective communication and facilitate interaction in their classrooms (Harmer, 2015).

In recent decades, communicative language teaching (CLT) has shifted the focus from accuracy-based instruction to meaningful communication (Richards, 2006).

However, despite this shift, many teacher education programs still lack a structured methodological framework for teaching speaking. Pre-service teachers often engage in speaking activities without fully understanding the pedagogical stages behind them, which limits their ability to replicate these practices in their future teaching.

This article addresses this gap by proposing a stage-based methodological framework for teaching speaking to future EFL teachers. The framework is grounded in both theoretical insights and practical teaching experience, emphasizing the gradual development of speaking skills through carefully designed instructional stages.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, conceptual research design based on literature analysis and reflective teaching practice. The methodology involves synthesizing theoretical perspectives from second language acquisition and language pedagogy with classroom-based observations in teacher education contexts.

The primary sources include key works on communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980), task-based language teaching (Ellis, 2003), and speaking instruction (Thornbury, 2005). Additionally, insights were drawn from classroom experiences with pre-service EFL teachers, focusing on how they develop speaking skills and pedagogical awareness over time.

Rather than relying on statistical data, the study follows an interpretive approach, aiming to construct a practical framework that can be applied in teacher training programs. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the processes involved in speaking development and teacher learning.

Stage-Based Framework for Teaching Speaking

1. Awareness-Raising Stage

The first stage focuses on developing learners' understanding of speaking as a skill. At this stage, future teachers are introduced to key concepts such as fluency, accuracy, interaction, and discourse competence. According to Thornbury (2005), awareness of how spoken language functions is essential for effective communication.

Activities at this stage include analyzing authentic dialogues, identifying discourse markers, and discussing features of spoken language. This helps pre-service teachers recognize the differences between spoken and written language and prepares them for more active participation.

2. Controlled Practice Stage

In the second stage, learners engage in structured activities that focus on specific language forms and functions. These activities provide a safe environment for practicing pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary without the pressure of spontaneous communication (Nation & Newton, 2009).

Examples include repetition drills, substitution exercises, and guided dialogues. While these activities may appear traditional, they play a crucial role in building linguistic confidence, especially for learners with lower proficiency levels.

3. Guided Interaction Stage

The third stage introduces more communicative activities that require learners to use language in semi-structured contexts. At this stage, the teacher provides support through prompts, role cards, and task instructions, ensuring that learners remain engaged while gradually increasing their independence (Ellis, 2003).

Typical activities include role-plays, information gap tasks, and problem-solving discussions. These tasks encourage interaction and negotiation of meaning, which are central to communicative competence (Long, 1996).

4. Autonomous Production Stage

The final stage focuses on developing learners' ability to communicate independently and fluently. At this stage, learners participate in discussions, presentations, and debates with minimal teacher intervention.

This stage reflects real-life communication, where learners must organize their thoughts, respond spontaneously, and adapt to different communicative situations. According to Harmer (2015), fluency development requires opportunities for extended speaking without interruption.

For future teachers, this stage is particularly important, as it prepares them to manage classroom interaction and model effective communication strategies.

Discussion

The proposed stage-based framework aligns with sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the role of scaffolding and gradual skill development (Vygotsky, 1978). Each stage builds on the previous one, ensuring that learners develop both linguistic competence and confidence.

One of the key strengths of this approach is its balance between structure and flexibility. While the framework provides clear stages, it allows teachers to adapt activities based on learners' needs and contexts. This adaptability is especially important in teacher education, where learners have diverse proficiency levels and learning styles.

Another important aspect is the integration of reflective practice. Future teachers are encouraged to analyze their own speaking performance and teaching strategies, which enhances their professional development (Farrell, 2015). Reflection helps them understand not only *what* works but also *why* it works, leading to more informed teaching decisions.

However, implementing this framework may present challenges. Large class sizes, limited instructional time, and assessment constraints can affect the effectiveness

of speaking instruction. Additionally, some learners may feel anxious about speaking, which requires careful classroom management and supportive feedback (Dörnyei, 2001).

Despite these challenges, the stage-based approach provides a practical and theoretically grounded solution for improving speaking instruction in teacher education programs.

Conclusion

This article has proposed a stage-based methodological framework for teaching speaking to future EFL teachers. The framework emphasizes a gradual progression from awareness to autonomous communication, supported by structured activities and reflective practice. The findings suggest that such an approach not only improves learners' speaking proficiency but also enhances their pedagogical competence as future teachers. By understanding the stages of speaking instruction, pre-service teachers are better prepared to design effective lessons and support their own students' communicative development. Future research could explore the application of this framework in different educational contexts and investigate its impact on long-term teaching effectiveness.

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