

The Development of the Upper Secondary School Students' English Speaking Skill at Khon Kaen Sports School

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper was to present how the upper secondary school students at Khon Kaen Sports School could develop their English speaking skill according to the teaching-learning of English with emphasis on speaking. The writers also presented the principles and techniques of some language teaching methods applicable to Thai students so that foreign language teachers can apply them in their teaching. Moreover, the writers presented the contents and activities for the students at Khon Kaen Sports School, sample lessons, the methods of teaching and additional suggestions for the development of students' speaking skill.

Keywords: The development of English language speaking skill, the upper secondary school students at Khon Kaen Sports School, the methods of teaching English language speaking skill

Introduction

Academic services are considered important missions of the College of Asian Scholars. The Faculty of Education and Liberal Arts which is part of the College, thus, must follow what the College has designated its missions as services for local communities. The writers, responsible for the English Education Program are to offer services concerning the teaching-learning of English.

When we were contacted to arrange an English training program for students at Khon Kaen Sports School, we immediately held a meeting with the representatives from the sports school to discuss what needed to be done so as to prepare a workable and beneficial program despite time limit of eight days, three hours each, a total of 24 hours.

The Working Process

At that time, there were a foreign lecturer and four student-teachers from the

Philippines at the Faculty of Education and Liberal Arts. Thus, we decided to divide into two teams:

Team 1 included the Thai lecturers (the writers) preparing the content and teaching methods.

Team 2, the lecturer and student-teachers from the Philippines prepared supporting activities related to the content taught each day.

In terms of the content preparation, we were informed by the representatives from Khon Kaen Sports School that their students' background in English was below average. They could not communicate in English. Therefore, we decided to prepare them for the future use of English for communication. That is to say, we would help them develop their speaking skill so that they could communicate better with students from sports schools (from Brunei Darussalam, the Republic of Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Republic of Singapore) participating in the "Khon Kaen games 2019."

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Once we had the content prepared, we searched and studied the methods for “English for Communication” with emphasis on the speaking skill. We would present some of principles of the method and the teaching techniques to be applied by other English teachers.

The Methods of English Teaching

The Audio-Lingual Method

This method, sometimes called the Michigan Method, was introduced to the teaching of structural linguistics by Charles Fries at the University of Michigan in the United States of America. Later on, Skinner’s behavioral psychology was applied in teaching with the thought that the learners could learn from the conditions specified for learning.

The Essential Principles of the Method

1. The teacher must determine and believe that the learners should automatically be able to use the target language.
2. The teacher must lead the teaching-learning process. The teacher must be a good role model.
3. The learners should imitate the teacher on what they have heard, and should be able to respond immediately.
4. Vocabulary, sentence structures, and speaking should be introduced in the conversational patterns, from the simpler to the more difficult ones, with the emphasis on the pronunciation and grammatical patterns.
5. For the grammatical structure, the learners can learn from the samples given.
6. What is related to foreign cultural concerns can be found in the conversations e.g. the conversations on daily life.
7. Language skills are presented in order: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (specified in the conversation).

8. The language used in class is the target language, not the native language of the learners.

Teaching Techniques

1. Dialog Memorization

The learners listen to and read along the conversation silently. Then practice the conversation between the two partners:

- 1.1 The teacher and the whole class
- 1.2 Half of the class as A, and the other half as B
- 1.3 Pair work between Student A and Student B (after dialog memorization)

2. Backward Build-up Drill

If the sentences in the conversation are long, the teacher should divide each one into parts for the learners to practice one at a time. Let them practice from the end of the sentence to the front until they remember it all (the whole sentence). Try to encourage the learners to pronounce words native-like.

3. Repetition Drill

Let the learners quickly and correctly repeat after the teacher.

4. Chain Practice

Let the learners speak, one at time. The teacher may ask one student, and then let that student ask another student after giving the teacher the answer. Let the learners answer and ask questions like a chain. At the same time, the teacher can check each individual’s pronunciation.

5. Single-slot Substitution Drill

- 5.1 The teacher says one sentence from the conversation
- 5.2 The teacher says one word or phrase.
- 5.3 The learners repeat the sentence after the teacher. Then substitute the word or phrase the teacher said later in the original sentence properly.



6. Multiple-slot Substitution

The teacher gives several phrases to the students to properly substitute them in the dialog. However, the teacher should give one at a time for the students to replace a word or phrase in the dialog. The students may have to make some changes in the original sentence, e.g.a change concerning the subject-verb agreement. Then let the students say the new sentence.

7. Transformation Drill

The teacher gives one sentence for the students to change in to a new pattern. For example,

- 7.1 an affirmative sentence → a negative
- 7.2 an affirmative sentence → a question
- 7.3 an active voice → a passive voice
- 7.4 a direct speech → an indirect / reported

8. Question-and-answer Drill

- 8.1 The teacher asks questions, and asks the students to quickly respond.
- 8.2 Let the students practice asking questions.

9. The Use of Minimal Pairs

- 9.1 The teacher gives examples of minimal pairs with a different sound such as pill-peel, ship-sheep, chin-shin.
- 9.2 Let the students practice pronouncing each pair. (They can look for more word pairs, and practice pronouncing them together.)

10. Complete the Dialog

- 10.1 The teacher deletes some words from the dialog.
- 10.2 Let the students fill in the missing words, and practice speaking.

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

The concept of language for communication is that learners must have communicative competence. They must know what to say, to whom they must say, and when to say it. That is to say, they must know how to use the language appropriately.

The Principles of CLT

1. The teacher should help the learners communicate in the target language. Let them know that the language has a variety of forms and functions, and one can have different functions.
2. The forms of language presented to the learners should be from a simple one to a more difficult one. For instance, the language used in making a request should be from “Would you ... ? Could you ...?” to “I wonder if you would mind”
3. The teacher acts as the facilitator in a language class. Therefore, he or she should organize or set up situations in which the learners could use the language in communication.
4. While working on the activities organized, the teacher can also act as a consultant giving advice to the learners, checking their performance, and, if possible, joining their activities.
5. The teacher can note down the learners’ mistakes for later correction.
6. The learners should try to make others understand what they are trying to communicate as much as possible; they must be responsible for their own study as much as they can.
7. Principal activities to be prepared for the learners can be in three forms: the information gap, the multiple choice, and the feedback. For other activities, the teacher may supervise some games, role plays, or problem solutions.



8. The teacher supervises small group activities so that the learners can share ideas, express opinions, and have interaction with each other and the teacher.

9. The learners' native language (Thai) can be used, if necessary. However, if possible, try to use the target language (English) when explaining how to work on activities, assigning homework, to make them realize that English is the language to be used in communication, not a subject they have to study.

Teaching Techniques

1. Use the instructional media actually used in the society, e.g. something from the newspapers, weather forecasts, menus, schedules, or parts of texts.

2. Let the learners scramble the given words or phrases and put them into sentences. They may be about what they have seen or never seen before. The teacher can also let them put the given sentences into a dialog.

3. Have a variety of activities for the learners to work on, e.g. filling in the blanks, choosing the right answer, expressing opinions, and telling a story from a picture.

4. Let the students organize role plays. They can be small group or individual work, or they can be anyone or anything they would like to be.

The Direct Method

The fundamental concept of the Direct Method is that language is the medium used in speaking according to situations. The only means of communication must be the target language. In this case, it is English.

Principal Principles of the Direct Method

1. Pronunciation must be emphasized from the beginning.

2. In learning, vocabulary is more important than grammar.

3. The teacher is the one to lead classroom activities.

4. The teacher must use only English so as to make the learners relate their learning and think in English.

5. The learners must try to think and communicate in English in various situations, such as going shopping and doing some financial business at the bank.

6. The learners are like partners in the teaching-learning process.

7. The teacher supports the learners in learning how to use the language properly, both in speaking and writing according to the cultures of the English speaking countries, not showing off his or her knowledge about the language.

8. The learners can learn about the grammatical structure by observing how it is used in the dialog; it will not be directly taught.

9. To correct the learners' mistakes, the teacher should try to help them learn how to correct their mistakes whenever possible.

The Teaching Techniques

1. When new words are introduced, proper pronunciation of the words must be correct and clear accompanying the use of such words in sentences. That is, the teacher must properly pronounce the words, convey the meanings in English only. He or she may use gestures, media which can be found easily nowadays. There is no need to translate the words into Thai.

2. Let the learners say the sentences using the words taught.

3. During the questioning-answering session, let the learners answer the questions in complete sentences in order to offer them a chance to practice using the new words.

4. Provide the learners chances to ask questions in English. If they make mistakes, the teacher should ask the same questions properly, so the learners can repeat them and learn how to say them the way they should be.

5. The teacher asks each learner a question with correct grammar.

6. Let the learners ask their friends questions. However, the teacher must help correct them if they use incorrect questions or answers.

7. Activities for language practice may include fill-in-the-blanks practice, dictation, drawing a map or picture, and paragraph writing.

Desuggestopedia

The concept of Desuggestopedia is that learners must get rid of the fear that they cannot do it; they cannot accomplish their goal. That is, they must get rid of their negative attitudes or the barriers to learning a foreign language. What can help them succeed in doing that is fine arts.

Fundamental Principles of Suggestopedia

1. During the teaching-learning process, the teacher should support the learners with morale and encouragement to help them get rid of their fear of learning English. The teacher should help them feel relaxed, confident, and see that they can simply and naturally learn it.

2. Fine arts play an important role in brightening the classroom, making it delightful with pleasant atmosphere and classical or Baroque music.

3. The teacher is the classroom teacher whom the learners can trust and have confidence in.

4. Vocabulary is a must for the students to learn. Grammar is something they should know. However, the emphasis must be on the use of language for communication.

5. The interaction in class should be between the teacher and groups of learners at first. Later on, it can be between the teacher and an individual one. At the beginning, the learners do not have to give oral responses, or they can respond with some words they have learned. After they have learned more and more, they can give more oral responses.

6. In order to correct the learners' mistakes, the teacher must do it with a soft or gentle tone of voice.

7. The teacher can use the learners' native language (Thai), if necessary. He or she can translate difficult words or phrases for them.

The Teaching Techniques

1. To create brightening, delightful and pleasant atmosphere, the teacher could have colorful posters—with grammar, something which is in a range of the learners' interests, what is related to the dialogs taught, and the reading passages they are reading. The posters should be changed every two-three weeks, for the learners' can absorb what they have been learning and acquire peripheral learning.

2. The teacher can directly and indirectly reduce the learners' stressfulness via the sound of music and positive suggestions, give them mental support, confidence in themselves, and help them believe that they can definitely learn the language. For example, in teaching them a sample dialog, the teacher can follow the following steps:

2.1 The teacher reads the dialog in line with the music.

2.2 The learners listen to the teacher, read the dialog silently, and look at the translated versions while the teacher is reading.

2.3 The learners practice reading the dialog. If it is a long one, the teacher can assign them to speak/read as homework.



The teacher can organize some other relaxing activities, e.g. speaking/reading in terms of dramatization, playing language games, singing English songs, working on asking and answering questions, imaginative writing, role playing, and writing one's own dialog according to a given situation.

3. For dialog reading in class, the teacher may let each individual learner read or do group dialog reading dramatizing different moods suggested in the dialog such as the moods expressing sadness, anger, or joyfulness.

PPP/3P's: Presentation, Practice, and Production

Actually this method of teaching is practical and beneficial for the beginning level.

Fundamental Principles of PPP

1. For presentation, the teacher should arrange the context and situation appropriate for everyday language use.

2. The teacher must explain, demonstrate, or use instructional media that can help make the learners understand the meanings of words and sentence patterns with the words, e.g. pictures, genuine or materials, or electronic media, and gestures.

3. For effective practice, the teacher should let the learners listen to the words and sentences several times. Then let them pronounce the words and read the sentences aloud.

4. In terms of usage, the teacher should let the learners think of the sentence

patterns they have learned. Then speak out their own sentences based on those sample ones.

The Teaching Techniques

1. When presenting vocabulary, the teacher properly and clearly pronounce each word several

times and show each instructional medium to give the meaning of the word.

2. Ask the learners to repeat both the word and the sentence

3. Other new words can be presented in the same way.

4. Encourage the learners to use the words they have learned in sentences:

4.1 The teacher points to the genuine or the real object, and asks the learners to say the sentence. This can be done for the whole class to say it or individually.

4.2 Ask each learner to point to the thing and say the sentence.

Some Sample Contents and Exercises for Khon Kaen Sports School Students

The lessons offered at Khon Kaen Sport School were designed for the students to

1. learn how to use English more, and

2. communication in English better.

Each day of teaching, there were teaching materials, instructional aids such as a visualizer, PowerPoint, songs in English, video clips, lotteries, and fun activities e.g. games and dance at the end of each lesson.

1. Getting to know each other

(Since it was the first lesson, the teacher asked the students to say a word of greeting like "Hello/Hullo," or "Good morning" before introducing oneself.)

- I am _____ (Full name) _____.
- I'm _____.
- My name is _____.
- My name's _____.

(Tell the students to choose only one sentence and continue with the next sentences.)

- You may/can call me _____ (nickname)_____.
- I'm in grade _____.

(The teacher and assistants introduced themse/ves as examples. before letting the students introduce themselves.)

2. Greetings

- Hi/Hey. (to greet someone whom we know very well) (This should be noted that it is impolite to greet a forener this way. It sounds very rude.)

- Hello/Hullo. (a friendly way to greet someone)

- Good morning. (to greet someone in the morning)

- Good afternoon. (to greet someone after 12:00 noon or in the afternoon)

- Good evening (to greet someone after six o'clock in the evening) (It should also be noted not to say "Good night" when meeting someone even in the late evening.)

And if we have time to carry on a conversation, we can use the following phrases and sentences to respond to the greeting:

- I'm fine. Thank you. And you?
- Fine, thanks. And yourself?
- I'm good. Thank you. How about you?

Exercises

(1) Complete the dialog with proper words.

Tom: Hi, Mike. How _____ ?

Mike: Pretty _____, thanks.

And _____ ?

Tom: _____. It's my birthday today.

Mike: Oh, _____.

Tom: Thank _____.

(2) What would you say if ...?

a. someone says something to you, but you don't hear all of it

- Pretty good. Thanks. And you?

- I'm OK. How about you?

Sample greetings

(1) A: Hi. How are you?

B: I'm fine. Thank you. And you?

A: Fine. Thanks.

(2) A: Good morning. How's it going?

B: Pretty good. How about you?

A: I'm good. ...

3. Special expressions

- Excuse me./Pardon me. (before interrupting someone, or when someone says something to you, but you can't hear it all)

- Cheers. (to celebrate a special occasion, to propose a toast)

- Good luck. (as a blessing)

- Congratulations. (to show we are happy or pleased with someone's success)

- Happy brithday.

- Merry Christmas.

- Happy New Year.



b. a friend tells you he or she has got an A in English

c. you meet your friends on Christmas Eve

d. you see your friend on New Year's Day

Methods of Teaching

The teachers applied the fundamental principles and techniques of teaching from those presented earlier in this paper by applying what was applicable and appropriate for the students at Khon Kaen Sports School. In other words, the teacher did not use only one method of teaching; we mixed them into "Eclectic Method or Eclecticism."

1. Presentation Session

1.1 The teacher (the one to present the lesson) pronounced words, expressions, and sentences which sounded natural for communication in English as good role models for the students. Some Thai was used to help them have a better understanding of what was presented. Instructional aids were also used.

1.2 While the teacher was speaking or explaining each point, the students could read the text along silently, and they could read what was translated or explained in Thai (if any).

2. Practice Session

The teacher gave mental support to the students, explaining to them that if they wanted to be good at another language, they would have to practice, practice, and practice. (Practice makes perfect.)

2.1 The whole class repeated after the teacher. Next the students practiced in small groups with some help from the teacher. Then they did it in pairs.

2.2 The students presented the dialogs they had learned in class. The teacher

helped correct the mistakes, emphasizing that they could learn from their mistakes.

3. Practical Language Usage Section

The students worked on the exercises: filling in words to complete sentences, answering questions with short answers and complete sentences, writing their own dialogs imitating the sample ones, and the vocabulary they had learned.

4. "Let's have fun in our English class."

About 45 minutes each day, at the end of each class, the students would do fun activities related to the lessons taught such as singing English songs, dancing along the video clips, playing questioning - answering games, guessing games, and team games accumulating points for the last day of the course. The team with the highest points would receive a prize.

The Assessment of the Course

1. The results of the post-test revealed that its average score was higher than that of the pre-test. (The lowest pre-test score was points; the highest was 23 points. The average was 17.23 while the lowest post-test score was 18, and the highest was 31; the average was 23.25.)

2. Their speaking performance evaluated by the teachers and the student-teachers was at a very satisfactory level.

3. From the teachers' and the student-teachers' overall observation, the students could understand what they had to do, follow the instructions correctly, answer all the questions, and have a lot of fun.

Suggestions for the Students' Speaking Development

1. In teaching a foreign language, the teacher must help the students realize the importance of speaking along with other skills. Listening and speaking skills should go together. For reading, the students should be able to talk about what they have read. For writing, they should be able to write for speaking too. They should be able to organize their thoughts, so when they speak, they can speak fluently.

2. The students must be encouraged to speak regularly. The teacher may suggest that they find a buddy for the practice of speaking, or if they cannot find a partner to talk to, they can read something aloud as though they are talking to someone. In addition, they can listen to English media and practice pronunciation along those media which nowadays can be found everywhere.

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