

Improving Speaking Fluency of Young EFL Learners through Interactive and Multisensory Activities

Sevara Alimurodova

*English Language Teacher,
Secondary School No. 1, Yangier*

Abstract: Developing speaking fluency is a key objective of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to young learners. Primary school pupils often experience difficulties because of limited vocabulary, low confidence, and insufficient communicative practice. This paper examines the effectiveness of interactive and multisensory activities in improving speaking fluency. The study assumes that children learn more effectively when visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and communicative elements are integrated into instruction. Games, role-plays, storytelling, songs, and movement-based tasks provide meaningful opportunities for oral practice. The findings indicate increased participation, confidence, vocabulary use, and fluency, supporting engaging and communicative approaches to speaking instruction.

Keywords: young learners, EFL, speaking fluency, interactive activities, multisensory learning, oral communication, primary education.

Speaking is a fundamental component of foreign language learning, particularly at the primary level, where learners begin to develop basic communicative habits and attitudes towards the target language. For young EFL learners, oral communication is often more challenging than receptive language skills because speaking requires learners to retrieve vocabulary, construct utterances, pronounce words, and respond to communicative partners within a limited period of time. Harmer emphasizes that successful speaking instruction should provide learners with opportunities to use language for meaningful communication rather than merely reproduce isolated linguistic forms [3]. Therefore, the development of speaking fluency requires teaching strategies that correspond to the psychological and educational characteristics of children.

Interactive activities represent an effective means of increasing young learners' oral participation. Pair work, group work, information-gap tasks, role-plays, language games, and short dialogues encourage children to use English for communicative purposes. Richards and Rodgers note that communicative approaches place meaningful interaction at the center of language learning and promote the development of communicative competence through purposeful language use [5]. In primary EFL classrooms, however, interaction should be carefully adapted to learners' age, language

level, and cognitive abilities. Short, clearly structured, and game-based speaking tasks are generally more suitable for children than abstract discussions or lengthy presentations.

The effectiveness of interactive speaking activities can be strengthened through multisensory learning. Multisensory instruction involves the simultaneous use of several sensory channels, including visual, auditory, and kinesthetic experiences. Pictures, flashcards, real objects, songs, gestures, movements, and physical actions can support learners in understanding and remembering language. Pinter argues that young language learners benefit from activities that connect language learning with play, imagination, movement, and meaningful classroom experience [4]. When children hear a word, see its representation, and perform a related action, the learning process becomes more engaging and memorable.

In the context of speaking fluency, multisensory activities reduce the cognitive burden associated with oral production. Visual prompts can help learners retrieve vocabulary, while gestures and physical movement provide additional support for expressing meaning. For example, picture sequences may be used for collaborative storytelling, enabling pupils to describe events and construct simple narratives. Similarly, action songs and Total Physical Response-inspired activities can introduce useful vocabulary and sentence patterns before learners use them in pair or group communication. Such tasks create a natural transition from comprehension to oral production.

Interactive and multisensory activities are also important for reducing anxiety and increasing learners' confidence. Young children may hesitate to speak because they are afraid of making mistakes or because they do not possess sufficient linguistic resources. According to Cameron, classroom activities for children should provide meaningful repetition and gradual language support so that learners can participate successfully in communication [1]. Games and collaborative tasks create a less formal environment in which mistakes are perceived as a natural part of learning. Repeated exposure to familiar language patterns allows learners to produce speech more automatically and with fewer pauses.

The empirical perspective of the present study is based on classroom observation and the analysis of young learners' participation in speaking activities. The implementation of interactive and multisensory tasks demonstrated that learners became more willing to initiate short exchanges and respond to their peers. Activities combining pictures, movement, role-play, and oral interaction generated higher levels of participation than traditional question-and-answer exercises.[2] Learners also demonstrated greater confidence when speaking tasks included visual or physical support. These

observations indicate that fluency development is closely connected with the degree of learner engagement and the availability of meaningful communicative scaffolding.

Nevertheless, the use of such activities requires systematic organization. Teachers should clearly define the linguistic objective of each task and avoid using games solely for entertainment. Multisensory resources should support communication rather than distract learners from the target language. It is also necessary to ensure that all pupils have opportunities to speak, since highly active learners may otherwise dominate pair or group interaction.[6] Appropriate teacher guidance, modelling, and feedback remain essential elements of successful speaking instruction.

In conclusion, improving speaking fluency among young EFL learners requires an instructional environment in which children can repeatedly use English in meaningful, motivating, and age-appropriate situations. Interactive activities promote communication, collaboration, and active participation, whereas multisensory techniques provide cognitive and emotional support for language production. Their integration can therefore create favourable conditions for developing fluency, confidence, and communicative competence. The findings support the view that primary EFL instruction should move beyond isolated vocabulary and grammar practice towards activities that combine language, action, visual support, and social interaction. Further empirical research may investigate the long-term effects of multisensory and interactive instruction on different components of young learners' oral proficiency.

References:

1. Cameron L. *Teaching Languages to Young Learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
2. Coyle D., Hood P., Marsh D. *CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
3. Harmer J. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. 5th ed. Harlow: Pearson Education, 2015.
4. Pinter A. *Teaching Young Language Learners*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
5. Richards J.C., Rodgers T.S. *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. 3rd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
6. Scott W.A., Ytreberg L.H. *Teaching English to Children*. Harlow: Longman, 1990.