

## BARRIERS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' SPEAKING COMPETENCE

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**Abstract.** This article discusses the main problems that students face in the process of developing oral speech in English. In particular, psychological barriers to speaking, the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical exercises, the lack of a language environment, the ineffectiveness of teaching methods, and shortcomings in the assessment system are analyzed. The author emphasizes the importance of using a communicative approach, conducting regular practical exercises, and motivating students to overcome these problems. The article contains useful recommendations that will help develop more effective educational strategies in this direction.

**Keywords.** Speaking, psychological barriers, lesson process, encouragement, pronunciation, motivation.

**Introduction.** In today's globalization process, the need and demand for learning foreign languages is increasing significantly. Especially among the younger generation, interest and desire to learn English is becoming increasingly widespread. This process creates opportunities not only for personal intellectual development, but also for global education, scientific research, and competitiveness in the international labor market.

In the modern era of rapid development, the role of a foreign language, especially English, in the life of every specialist is incomparable. Today, regardless of the field of activity, every person is required to be able to communicate freely in English. This is important not only in practical activities, but also in scientific and academic fields. At the same time, the world's leading higher education institutions - such as Harvard, Oxford, Cambridge, Columbia, Johns Hopkins Universities - also require candidates to have excellent command of a foreign language first of all. This shows that mastering the English language is a necessary factor not only for personal development, but also for being internationally competitive.

The Resolution Number 34 “On Further Improving the System of Learning Foreign Languages”, adopted by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2022, marked a significant turning point in modern education policy. Based on this resolution, the process of teaching foreign languages, in particular English, was gradually introduced not only in higher and secondary specialized educational institutions, but also in preschool educational organizations, and became a mandatory component of education [5;54].

This indicates a systematic increase in attention to foreign languages in our Republic. As a result of these initiatives, representatives of the younger generation are actively striving to master foreign languages, especially English, communicate freely, and improve their academic and professional skills. This process contributes to their worthy place in the global labor market and expands their opportunities for studying at foreign universities.

In the process of learning English, four main skills - listening, reading, writing and speaking - play an important role. These skills are inextricably linked to fully mastering the language and being able to use it effectively in practice. Speaking, in particular, is the most difficult area for many language learners. This is because being able to speak freely and fluently requires not only correct pronunciation, but also a deep knowledge of grammar and a rich vocabulary. It is also important to express your thoughts quickly and clearly during communication, and to be able to use language units appropriately in different social situations. Foreign scholars Seaborne B., Ahmed, F., Lin, Y. emphasize that “Speaking is one of the basic language skills that students need to master. In the learning process, students should actively participate in oral speech in order to freely express their thoughts and communicate effectively”[6;89]. However, this situation is very rare, especially in schools located in remote areas. In such places, students cannot have sufficient language practice with the environment, which negatively affects the development of oral speech.

As Rachman (2017) points out, there are four basic skills in learning English: listening, speaking, reading, and writing[3;12]. Of these four basic language skills, speaking is the most complex and difficult to develop in a classroom setting. Developing this skill requires constant communication, interactive methods, and communicative approaches[1;45].

### **Problems in developing speaking**

In today’s era of globalization and rapid information exchange, being able to speak a foreign language, especially English, fluently is becoming a very important skill. It is becoming a necessity for anyone who wants to be successful in any field,

establish international relations, or study abroad. However, speaking is one of the most difficult and laborious skills in language learning. Unfortunately, many people encounter various obstacles at this stage.

**Psychological barriers: Fear of making mistakes.** One of the biggest obstacles to learning a foreign language is psychological barriers, specifically the fear of making mistakes. Many learners hesitate to speak, even when they have a sufficient vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. The main reason for this is the internal anxiety of "What if I make a mistake?" This fear, combined with a sense of shame, prevents learners from freely expressing themselves. Krashen (1982) identified such emotional barriers as one of the main psychological factors that negatively affect language learning.

The cultural environment and upbringing also affect this process. For example, in the Uzbek environment, children are often taught to be modest, gentle, and quiet. As a result, Uzbek students may encounter more internal barriers when learning a foreign language than their peers who speak Russian or other languages fluently. This reduces confidence in using the language as an active means of communication.

Therefore, when learning a foreign language, it is necessary to take into account not only linguistic, but also psychological and cultural factors. If students are explained that making mistakes is a natural process, through which learning can occur, they will feel freer and begin to engage in communication more actively.

**The gap between language knowledge and practice.** The formation of oral speech skills is not limited to the acquisition of grammatical knowledge alone. Elements such as sentence construction, coherent expression of thought, and correct pronunciation must simultaneously operate in a complex manner. Although most students have mastered theoretical grammar well, they cannot use this knowledge effectively in the process of practical communication. This is especially due to insufficient lexical reserve or uncertainties in pronunciation. In a study conducted by Rachman (2017), oral speech skills were also recognized as one of the most difficult language competencies to form in a classroom setting.

**Lack of environment: limited opportunities for practical exercises.** While theoretical knowledge is important in the process of language learning, real language skills are formed only through practical exercises. Unfortunately, in many schools, especially in remote areas, the natural environment for free communication in English is not enough. Students mainly master grammatical rules and vocabulary during the lesson, but they cannot apply this knowledge in practice and engage in real communication. This prevents the deeper development of language skills. As D.

Rahimova noted, “In the past, the method of some teachers was only to learn grammar and vocabulary by heart without activating them in real life. Therefore, students have difficulties and weaknesses in oral communication, because they cannot use them when they need to speak” [7;631]. Research by Seaborne et al. (2021) also highlights that the school environment has a significant impact on students' oral language development. Therefore, regular and contextualized practice is essential for fluent English language learning.

Learners should be in an environment where they can communicate in English on a regular basis, so that theoretical knowledge can be transformed into practical skills[8].

**Teaching methods: the need to move from traditional to modern.** If the teaching process is limited to only the teacher’s explanation and the student’s listening and writing activities, then the students’ opportunities to develop their speaking skills are sharply reduced. The communicative approach is the opposite, in which the student is at the center of the learning process: he actively engages in dialogue, expresses his opinion and asks questions. Unfortunately, this approach is not yet fully implemented in all educational institutions. As noted by Richards and Rodgers (2001), it is the communicative approach that is the most effective method for developing speaking skills in English[4].

**Encouragement and assessment:** writing, not speaking, gets a high score. Currently, most assessment systems are based on written knowledge and skills, and are carried out through tests, essays, dictations. This often leads to the neglect of oral speech. As a result, students show less interest in speaking. Especially in cases where writing during the lesson receives high marks, the actions of students who actively speak are not appreciated enough. Therefore, it is necessary to reconsider the assessment criteria in order to develop oral speech and increase motivation for it. Every small achievement, even if it is said in an unconvincing manner, every boldly uttered sentence should be encouraged. This serves to strengthen students' confidence in expressing their thoughts freely and freely.

**Conclusion.** Developing oral speech is not only about learning a language, but also about increasing self-confidence, communicating freely with the world, and forming a culture of freely expressing one's thoughts. Difficulties in speaking depend on psychological, methodological, linguistic, and organizational factors. By identifying them and taking a comprehensive approach, it is possible to increase each student's enthusiasm for learning a language. Learning to speak perfectly is a path that

requires time, effort, and constant practice. But at the end of this path, true freedom awaits you - the ability to freely express your thoughts in any language.

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