

DRAMA-BASED METHODOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILLS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Keywords: drama-based methodology, speaking skills, communicative competence, foreign-language anxiety, process drama, Embodied Communicative Spiral.

Introduction. The communicative aim of contemporary language education stands in sharp contrast to the reality of many English lessons in Uzbek secondary schools, where grammar-translation routines still dominate and spontaneous oral production receives little classroom time. Although national policy aligns learning outcomes with the Common European Framework of Reference and expects demonstrable communicative ability, pupils in grades 7 and 8 commonly accumulate passive knowledge of grammar and vocabulary yet remain hesitant, and often anxious, when required to speak. Drama-based methodology is widely regarded internationally as one of the most effective means of generating purposeful, emotionally engaged speech, but it remains markedly under-used in the Uzbek context. This study aims to develop and theoretically justify a structured, curriculum-integrated drama-based methodology for developing the speaking skills of secondary-school learners, and to propose a design for its empirical validation.

Methods. The study combines two complementary methods. First, a structured synthesis of international empirical research on drama-based instruction and second-language oral performance was conducted in order to establish the size of its effects and the conditions under which they occur. Second, drawing on this evidence and on the sociocultural and output-oriented theories of language acquisition, a drama-based instructional model, the Embodied Communicative Spiral (ECS), was designed for large, mixed-ability state-school classes. The model organises dramatic activity into a recurring three-phase cycle: de-inhibition, in which warm-ups, language games and mime lower foreign-language anxiety; enactment, in which role-play, improvisation and process drama generate negotiated, "pushed" oral output; and reflection and transfer, in which debriefing and the recycling of language into fresh contexts

consolidate what has been gained. To test the model, a pre-test/post-test quasi-experiment with a non-equivalent control group is proposed for grades 7 and 8 (CEFR A1+/A2) at School No. 7 in Chirchiq, Tashkent region, using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale and a three-dimension analytic oral rubric covering fluency, accuracy and range, and communicative delivery.

Results. The evidence synthesis yields a consistent pattern. A meta-analysis of forty-seven studies reports a significant positive effect of drama-based pedagogy that is strongest when the work is teacher-led, curriculum-integrated and sustained beyond five lessons, and a recent systematic review of process drama confirms reliable gains in speaking among the language skills. Intervention studies document measurable improvement in rated oral fluency, in spontaneity and willingness to communicate, and in the oral communication of secondary pupils, together with reduced speaking anxiety as measured on the FLCAS. On this basis the ECS is advanced as the study's principal methodological result: a single, theoretically grounded architecture that couples affective and linguistic gains, so that across a teaching unit the cycle "ratchets" speaking proficiency upward as anxiety falls. The proposed validation advances three working hypotheses: that learners taught through the ECS will achieve greater gains in oral fluency and communicative delivery, a larger reduction in foreign-language anxiety, and more durable vocabulary retention than peers taught through conventional instruction over the same period.

Discussion. For the Uzbek secondary context the contribution is twofold. The ECS reframes drama not as occasional entertainment but as a disciplined, curriculum-integrated methodology whose phases map directly onto lesson staging and onto the very conditions that the international evidence identifies as decisive. It also responds to the specific obstacles of large, mixed-ability and examination-driven classes by giving anxiety reduction the status of a structural opening phase rather than an incidental warm-up. The principal limitation is that the empirical design is at this stage proposed rather than executed, so its conclusions are analytically rather than statistically warranted; full implementation across several sites, with longitudinal measurement, is the necessary next step. Even so, the model offers teachers a replicable, low-resource framework for turning learners' dormant linguistic knowledge into confident speech, and it provides a clear, falsifiable basis for subsequent classroom research. In sum, the Embodied Communicative Spiral is offered as a coherent and testable methodology for developing speaking skills in Uzbek secondary English education.

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Ishtirokchi anketasi

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Ilmiy darajasi, ilmiy unvoni	Yo'q
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