MIND MAPPING AS AN INNOVATIVE STRATEGY FOR TEACHING SPEAKING TO A2-LEVEL ENGLISH LEARNERS

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Abstract: This thesis explores the application of mind mapping as an innovative pedagogical strategy for teaching speaking skills to A2-level English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. At the elementary and pre-intermediate stages, students frequently struggle with limited vocabulary, grammatical constraints, and a lack of organizational framework for spontaneous speech. This research highlights how visual structuring tools help learners brainstorm ideas, sequence thoughts logically, and build confidence during oral production. The findings indicate that integrating mind maps into A2-level classrooms significantly enhances communicative fluency and reduces cognitive overload.

Keywords: mind mapping, A2-level learners, speaking skills, EFL instruction, visual strategy, vocabulary acquisition, communicative fluency, pedagogical innovation.

Introduction

Teaching speaking skills to A2-level (elementary/pre-intermediate) English learners presents unique challenges for educators. At this proficiency stage, students possess a restricted vocabulary and basic grammatical structures, which often makes expressing thoughts in real-time conversation daunting. Traditional speaking tasks can trigger high levels of anxiety and frequent hesitations because learners attempt

to translate linearly from their native language while simultaneously searching for appropriate target vocabulary.

To overcome these barriers, modern language pedagogy emphasizes the use of visual and cognitive frameworks that simplify information processing. Mind mapping serves as an effective graphical tool that bridges the gap between thoughts and verbal expression. By organizing concepts into visual branches and keywords, A2-level learners can structure their ideas before speaking, leading to more coherent and confident oral performance.

Main Body

A2-level learners operate within a restricted linguistic range, meaning their working memory is heavily taxed when trying to formulate extended utterances. Unlike advanced learners who can spontaneously manage discourse, elementary students often freeze or produce disjointed sentences. Mind mapping alleviates this cognitive burden by providing a spatial representation of a topic, allowing students to visualize conceptual links rather than memorizing rigid scripts.

A major obstacle in elementary speaking is active vocabulary retrieval. Mind maps encourage semantic clustering by grouping words around a central theme (e.g., hobbies, travel, daily routines) with relevant adjectives and verbs. This visual association helps A2-level learners activate related lexical items quickly, enriching their spoken output beyond simple, repetitive sentence structures.

At the A2 level, students struggle with discourse organization-knowing how to start, elaborate, and conclude a short talk. A mind map acts as a natural roadmap for speech production. By following branches from main ideas to supporting details, learners naturally adopt logical sequencing, which directly improves the structural coherence and flow of their oral presentations or dialogues.

Implementing group or pair-based mind mapping fosters a low-anxiety interactive environment. When A2 learners co-create visual maps together before a speaking task, they share vocabulary and brainstorm ideas collaboratively. This peer

support minimizes individual performance pressure and encourages active verbal participation through scaffolded communication.

Modern digital platforms (such as MindMeister, XMind, or Miro) offer interactive ways to introduce mind mapping into language lessons. Digital tools allow learners to embed images, color codes, and hyperlinks into their maps, making vocabulary acquisition more engaging. For A2-level students, these multi-sensory aids reinforce memory retention and make language practice more dynamic and enjoyable.

Conclusion

In conclusion, mind mapping functions as a powerful innovative strategy for teaching speaking to A2-level EFL learners. By transforming abstract linguistic concepts into structured visual networks, it reduces cognitive load, aids vocabulary retrieval, and gives elementary students the confidence needed for oral communication.

Systematically integrating mind mapping into elementary language curricula transforms traditional speaking lessons into creative, organized, and interactive experiences, ultimately accelerating students' transition toward communicative independence.

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