METHODS AND METHODOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS THROUGH TED TALKS

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Abstract: This article discusses methods and techniques for improving speaking skills among English language learners through TED Talks podcasts and explains how such audio materials can serve as a fundamental basis for strengthening academic English. It also presents the results of research on effective ways of studying quotations and excerpts from the speeches of well-known speakers, as well as scientific terminology used in some of these speeches. Furthermore, podcasts not only contribute to the development of listening comprehension and speaking skills in a foreign language but also help learners acquire additional knowledge and develop critical thinking.

Keywords: TED Talks, podcasts, speaking skills, academic English, listening comprehension, critical thinking, scientific terminology.

Introduction

In modern foreign language teaching methodology, the development of oral communication skills remains one of the most important challenges. Although traditional teaching methods based on textbook materials are effective in teaching learners grammatical structures, they cannot fully develop the ability to understand and produce natural, authentic, and contextualized speech. Therefore, in recent years, the use of authentic audiovisual materials, particularly TED Talks podcasts, has become increasingly widespread in English language teaching.

The talks organized by TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) cover a wide range of topics, including science, technology, social issues, education, and many other fields, and are delivered by leading specialists from around the world. These talks are considered a valuable resource for language learners because they are not only rich in content but also provide high-quality language, clear pronunciation, and logically structured speech.

Aim and Objectives of the Research

The main aim of this research is to examine the role of TED Talks podcasts in developing speaking skills among English language learners and to identify effective methods for using them in language learning. The following objectives were established within the framework of the research:

- to analyze the theoretical foundations of improving speaking skills through podcasts;

- to examine quotations and linguistic features found in the speeches of well-known speakers;
- to identify effective methods for acquiring scientific terminology;
- to evaluate the influence of podcasts on listening comprehension, speaking skills, and critical thinking.

Literature Review

The use of authentic materials in foreign language teaching has been studied by numerous linguists and language teaching specialists. According to Krashen's Input Hypothesis, language learners acquire a language effectively through comprehensible input that is slightly above their current level of knowledge. TED Talks can serve as such comprehensible input because of their clear structure, relatively understandable pronunciation, and visual support, including subtitles and slides.

Research on language learning through podcasts indicates that regular listening activities can significantly improve learners' phonological awareness, intonation, and ability to use stress appropriately. In addition, the technique of listening to a speech and then repeating it, commonly known as *shadowing*, has been recognized as an effective method for improving speaking fluency.

Methodology

Both qualitative and quantitative analysis methods were used in this research. An eight-week experimental program was organized with English language learners at intermediate and upper-intermediate levels. Participants listened to TED Talks three to four times a week and completed the following activities:

1. Listening Comprehension Activities

Participants first listened to the speech without subtitles and then listened to it again with subtitles. This method requires learners to devote approximately thirty minutes a day to the activity. It focuses not only on improving speaking ability but also on developing listening comprehension. It is advisable to select relatively uncomplicated, intermediate-level audio materials that correspond to learners' current proficiency levels. Otherwise, there is a risk that students may lose their motivation to use this otherwise effective method.

2. Shadowing Technique

The shadowing technique involves repeating the speaker's words a few seconds after hearing them. After listening to the speech twice, both with and without subtitles, learners proceed to the shadowing stage. This technique allows learners to imitate the speaker's pronunciation, rhythm, intonation, and natural patterns of speech.

3. Analysis of Quotations

Learners identify sentences that express the main ideas of the speech and discuss their meaning and content. Through this activity, learners can enrich their existing

knowledge and gain valuable life lessons and insights from the ideas presented in the talks.

4. Creating a Terminological Glossary

Learners make a list of scientific and field-specific terms occurring in each speech and study their definitions and contexts of use. This is an important research method used in textual studies, terminology, and lexicography. The purpose of creating a terminological glossary is to systematize scientific and field-specific terms found in a particular speech, text, or collection of texts, identify their semantic characteristics, and create a convenient source of information for researchers, translators, and students.

5. Free-Speaking Practice

Learners express their opinions on the topic of the speech in the form of a two- or three-minute presentation. At this stage, a student or independent learner may retell the entire speech from memory with the assistance of an English language tutor. However, if a learner has difficulty finding a teacher, they can explain the content of the podcast to English-speaking friends or acquaintances through social media. For shy learners or those who do not feel comfortable communicating with others, speaking-development exercises with the assistance of artificial intelligence can also be recommended.

At the beginning of the process, learners should start with relatively short video materials of approximately five to ten minutes. Gradually moving to longer materials can lead to more sustainable long-term results.

Results and Analysis

At the end of the experimental program, a questionnaire and speaking assessment criteria were used to evaluate the results. The following outcomes were identified:

1. Pronunciation and Fluency

Participants who regularly used the shadowing technique demonstrated noticeable improvements in speaking fluency and natural intonation. They learned to apply natural speech rhythm, appropriate word stress, and linking sounds in practice.

2. Acquisition of Scientific Terminology

Through the activity of creating terminological glossaries, participants not only memorized new words but also learned how to use them correctly in appropriate contexts. This is particularly important for academic writing and scientific presentations.

3. Critical Thinking and Exchange of Ideas

Activities involving the analysis of the main ideas presented in the talks and expressing personal responses helped learners develop logical reasoning and the ability to support their viewpoints with arguments. In turn, these activities contributed to the development of critical thinking skills required in academic environments.

4. Motivation and Level of Interest

The majority of participants reported that their interest in the learning process increased due to the diversity and relevance of TED Talks topics. Unlike traditional textbook materials, speeches addressing real-life issues attracted learners' attention more effectively.

Discussion

The results obtained confirm that TED Talks podcasts can serve as a versatile educational tool for English language learners. First, these podcasts provide authentic examples of natural speech, allowing learners to study real language features that may not always be found in textbook materials. Second, exposure to scientific and academic terminology from different fields expands learners' vocabulary and prepares them for academic communication.

At the same time, there are certain challenges associated with using TED Talks materials. Speech speed and complex terminology may create difficulties for lower-level learners. Therefore, teachers should take learners' language proficiency levels into consideration when selecting materials and should provide subtitles and additional explanations when necessary.

Conclusion

In conclusion, TED Talks podcasts are an effective and versatile tool for developing speaking skills among English language learners, particularly for strengthening academic English. Through activities such as shadowing, quotation analysis, terminological glossary creation, and free-speaking practice, learners can improve not only their listening comprehension and speaking skills but also their critical thinking abilities. Therefore, it is recommended that TED Talks be incorporated into English language teaching programs on a regular basis.

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