
THE IMPORTANCE OF SPEAKING SKILLS IN DEVELOPING COMMUNICATION COMPENSATION STRATEGIES AMONG HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

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Abstract:

This article explores the significance of speaking skills in enhancing communication compensation strategies among university students. Speaking is a crucial component of language acquisition, allowing learners to overcome linguistic barriers, reduce misunderstandings, and express ideas clearly. The paper analyzes the role of speaking in academic and social communication, effective classroom methodologies, and international experiences. It also presents scientific findings showing that well-developed speaking skills directly impact students' academic performance and confidence in interpersonal communication.

Keywords: Speaking skills, communication compensation, higher education, language learning, interactive methods, communication strategies, academic success.

Introduction

In the context of modern education, communication skills—particularly speaking—have become essential for students' academic and social development. Higher education institutions are not only responsible for imparting theoretical knowledge but also for developing students' ability to express themselves effectively in various settings. Speaking skills allow learners to actively participate in discussions, clarify their viewpoints, and compensate for gaps in their language knowledge. This ability is vital for academic presentations, group work, and professional communication after graduation.

Communication compensation strategies refer to the methods learners use to overcome difficulties when facing language barriers. These include paraphrasing, using gestures, employing synonyms, simplifying language, or seeking assistance from interlocutors. In higher education, especially among multilingual learners, these strategies are critical for maintaining effective communication in lectures, seminars, and informal interactions. Well-developed speaking skills strengthen a student's ability to implement compensation strategies. When students are confident speakers, they can rephrase ideas on the spot, use appropriate intonation and facial expressions, and adapt their language

to suit the context. This adaptability ensures that communication remains effective even when vocabulary is limited or misunderstandings arise.

Practical Methods for Developing Speaking Skills;

Several interactive methods can enhance students' speaking abilities:

Role plays that simulate real-life communication scenarios.

Debates and discussions to foster critical thinking and persuasive speaking.

Presentations and group projects that encourage structured and confident speech.

Self-evaluation through audio/video recordings to recognize and correct errors.

Speaking skills extend beyond the classroom. In society, individuals are often judged by their ability to articulate thoughts. Graduates who can express themselves clearly are more likely to succeed in job interviews, lead teams, and build professional networks. Thus, improving speaking skills is a fundamental investment in students' future social integration and career prospects.

Educational systems in countries like the USA, UK, Germany, and Singapore emphasize public speaking from an early stage. These systems integrate speaking-focused tasks into curricula, ensuring students become confident communicators. Uzbekistan's higher education sector can benefit by adopting such models through more speaking-oriented lesson plans and teacher training.

Recent research indicates that students with strong speaking skills perform better in oral exams, group discussions, and even written tasks. Their ability to use communication compensation strategies enables them to stay engaged and overcome obstacles in various learning situations.

Types of Communication Compensation Strategies and Their Psycholinguistic Basis: communication compensation strategies are generally divided into two categories: linguistic compensation and paralinguistic compensation. Linguistic strategies include using synonyms, simplifying expressions, asking clarifying questions, or reformulating speech. Paralinguistic strategies involve gestures, body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice. When language learners use these strategies, psycholinguistic processes—such as encoding thoughts quickly, selecting appropriate words, and adapting them to the context—are activated (Celce-Murcia, 2001).

Speaking skills play a decisive role in the effective use of these strategies. That is, confidence in pronunciation, proper use of pauses and stress contribute to successful compensation. Psycholinguistic research shows that effective application of these strategies depends on the learner's working memory, vocabulary size, and self-monitoring ability (Nation & Newton, 2009)

Overcoming Speech Blocks through Speaking Skills

Language learners, especially in academic spoken communication, often experience "speech blocks." In such cases, the learner knows what they want to say but cannot recall the exact word or phrase. A student trained in speaking strategies can continue expressing their thoughts using synonyms, descriptive phrases, or contextual clues.

For example, if a student forgets the word "environment," they may say "the place where we live and have nature" instead. This helps maintain the flow of communication and

keeps the listener engaged. Speaking exercises aim precisely to avoid such breakdowns in communication (Thornbury, 2005).

Creating Communicative Environments to Develop Strategies:the successful development of compensation strategies depends not only on language classes but also on exposing students to real-life communication. For example:

Simulation activities (e.g., interviews, conferences, discussions) allow learners to apply strategies in complex scenarios.

Interactive online platforms (Zoom, Google Meet) enable communication with international students in real-time, enhancing strategy use.

Campus events, such as debate clubs, open mic nights, and academic forums, encourage students to speak and use various strategies actively.

Through such environments, students learn not just grammar but also how to overcome communication barriers.

Effective Methods for Teaching Compensation Strategies:foreign experience shows that explicitly teaching compensation strategies yields positive results. For example:

Awareness-raising sessions are held at the beginning of lessons to introduce various strategies.

Strategy-focused tasks require students to apply a specific strategy (e.g., describe using gestures or synonyms).

Speech analysis and revision involve students recording and analyzing their speech for strategy use.

Portfolios allow students to track and reflect on the strategies they use.

These methods help students to consciously select and apply strategies until they become automatic in various situations (Goh & Burns, 2012).

Cultural Differences in Speaking and Compensation Strategies:speaking is not only linguistic but also culturally contextual. For instance, in some cultures, pauses signal thoughtfulness, while in others they are perceived as discomfort. Teaching compensation strategies must take such differences into account:gestures – Bowing is respectful in Japan but may imply submission in other cultures.

Simplification – Speaking too simply might not be appropriate in academic settings.

Asking for help – Some learners feel uncomfortable seeking clarification due to cultural norms.

Considering these factors increases the success of communicative interactions.

Psychological Impact of Speaking Skills in Interaction

Speaking skills affect not only academic performance but also students' psychological state.

For example: Self-confidence – A student who can express themselves feels more active and included in society.

Reduced anxiety – Learners who know compensation strategies are less afraid of speech breakdowns.

Initiative in conversation – Skilled speakers can lead discussions, ask questions, and steer conversations.

Psychological approaches (such as training for speaking anxiety) can further strengthen the use of compensation strategies (Harmer, 2007).

Language Proficiency and the Effectiveness of Compensation Strategies

The way compensation strategies are used differs between students at beginner (A1–A2) and advanced (B2–C1) levels. Beginners rely more on basic expressions and gestures. Advanced learners, however:

Use terminological synonyms (e.g., “diminish” instead of “decrease”),

Express their ideas using multi-layered sentences,

Apply pragmatic rules (e.g., adjusting speech according to the listener’s status).

Therefore, improving speaking skills alongside general language proficiency enhances the quality of strategy use.

Developing Speaking and Compensation via Digital Technologies

Modern technologies offer effective tools for improving speaking skills:

AI-based platforms (e.g., ELSA, Duolingo Speaking): Analyze pronunciation and intonation in real time.

Simulation software (e.g., virtual speaking rooms): Enable learners to practice dialogues in different roles.

Recording and reflection apps (e.g., VoiceThread): Allow students to listen to and analyze their own speech for strategy usage.

These technologies support teachers and allow learners to practice independently.

Such findings underline the need to prioritize speaking instruction across disciplines.

In conclusion, speaking skills play a central role in developing communication compensation strategies for higher education students. These skills empower learners to overcome linguistic limitations, enhance academic performance, and engage meaningfully in social and professional environments. Therefore, universities should place greater emphasis on interactive speaking methodologies and create environments where students can practice and improve their oral communication abilities.

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