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### **IMPROMPTU SPEAKING — AS ONE OF THE WAYS OF ORGANIZING STUDENT CENTERED LEARNING**

Мақола импровизацион (бадиҳа) нутқ моҳияти ва уни талабаларган йўналтирилган таълимни ташкил этишга таъсирини ўрганишга бағишланган. Унда импровизацион нутқнинг ўқитишда талабалар фаоллигини оширишдаги ижобий таъсири кўриб чиқилган. Мазкур усулнинг талабалар нутқи ҳамда фикрлаши тезлашувини кучайтириши таъкидланади.

Статья посвящена сущности импровизированной речи и ее влиянию в организации преподавания, центрированного на студента. В статье рассматривается положительное влияние импровизированной речи на повышение активного обучения студентов. Кроме того, в статье подчеркивается, что данный тип речи улучшает беглость речи студентов и их мышление.

The article is devoted to the essence of impromptu speaking and the way how it can organize student centered learning. It considers the positive impact of impromptu speaking on the enhancement of students' active learning. Moreover, the article emphasizes the improvement of students' speaking fluency and thinking via this type of speaking.

**Калит сўзлар:** импровизация қилинган нутқ, талабага йўналтирилган таълим, фаол таълим, олдинги билим, схемани фаоллаштириш, равон нутқ, амалиёт.

**Ключевые слова:** импровизированная речь, преподавание, центрированное на студента, активное обучение, предшествующие знания, активация схемы, беглая речь, практика.

**Key words:** impromptu speaking, student centered learning, active learning, prior knowledge, schema activation, speaking fluency, practice.

Education-related theories considerably affect the development and improvement of teaching and learning processes. The teaching and learning theories are interrelated and interconnected with each other, because effective teaching provides sufficient educational environment for students' active learning. As S. Wilson and P. Peterson claim, 'good teaching requires teachers to create and

use, expand and reject, construct and reconstruct theories of learning and teaching' (6, p.14). The way a teacher implements the theories into practice is of great importance. Due to the fact that learning is an active process, the use of theoretical principles through practice efficiently influence students' understanding and construction of new information on the basis of prior knowledge and lead to intended learning outcomes. According to J. Biggs and C. Tang, three common theories of teaching exist:

Level 1. Focus: what the student is;

Level 2. Focus: what the teacher does;

Level 3. Focus: what the student does.

The last level is considered to be the most significant student-centered model of teaching, with teaching supporting learning (1, p. 20).

The use of impromptu speaking (a method of speaking with little or no immediate preparation targeted at development of spontaneous speaking fluency (S. E. Lucas, (4)) enables a teacher to concentrate mainly on what students do. Impromptu speaking can motivate students to produce an organized speech in a limited time period using main points and supporting details from their own observations, prior knowledge and experiences. The impromptu speaker explains his or her own view of the topic using appropriate vocabulary and non-verbal language.

The advantages of Impromptu speech are vivid in gradual development of students' speaking fluency, thinking and listening skills. Moreover, they can be demonstrated in developing a quick way of organizing the thoughts, increasing the awareness of the topic and discussing ideas in depth. Practicing impromptu speaking leads to improvement of speech fluency whenever it occurs in an enjoyable and friendly academic environment. When we teach a new topic, we use impromptu speaking for the whole group encouraging students to speak spontaneously on the definite topic. This method gradually develops students' ability to express their opinions fluently, listen to each other's views on the topic and organize ideas to come to relevant conclusions. Though the students are engaged in individual learning process (they think and respond to a question individually), they learn from each other. To avoid repetition of ideas they must listen to their group mates' opinions, which contributes to the development of listening skills and improvement of their comprehension of different concepts related to the lesson. This way of starting a new topic enables us to be aware of their prior knowledge and smoothly align it to the new information.

This process of learning is important and clearly demonstrated in the theory of constructivism. This theory emphasizes the view that students construct their knowledge via active and participatory learning. L. Cohen *et al.* define

constructivism as ‘a theory which regards learning as an active process in which learners construct and internalize new concepts, ideas, present and past knowledge and experiences’ (2, p. 167). Students learn best when they construct own understanding themselves. Therefore, we consider that the use of impromptu speaking can engage students in constructing knowledge actively rather than receiving it.

It is necessary to underline that cognitivism as one of the forms of constructivism concentrates on relationship between thinking and active learning. The primary ideas of Piaget formed the notion of cognitive development, accentuating that active learning on the basis of prior knowledge leads to the development. This can be better represented by the schema theory, created by cognitive psychologists. A. Pritchard describes schema theory as a framework with a considerable number of knowledge units which are connected with each other (5). As he emphasizes, new schemas are regularly created, whereas existing schemas are constantly updated. It is a fact that learners have their existing schemas before starting an unfamiliar topic, and whenever new learning occurs, a new schema is created. In our classes we regularly apply most of the principles of cognitive constructivism. Specifically, in Basics of English for Academic Purposes, Level 2 (BEAP2) classes before teaching *Summary Writing* we elicit from students what they know about writing. Certainly, we use an impromptu that enables us to realize students’ background knowledge. Only after that, we are sure that they are able to obtain new information. When they learn how to write a summary, we involve them into the next type of writing, *Academic Essay Writing*, which occurs gradually considering the schema activation among all students. In this process, the schema is organized constantly to incorporate new information. In our teaching practice we consider the process of adaptation to new units of knowledge among students. Specifically, when we teach English for Academic Purposes (EAP) we acknowledge the fact that students coming into classes have definite background information. For example, before creating a new schema about academic essay writing, we use impromptu speaking method to review what is already known about this type of writing. Because, the fact that they pass IELTS to enter Westminster International University in Tashkent (WIUT) gives a priority to think that they know what essay writing is. Whenever we enable them to gain new material on academic essay writing and writing argumentative essays, we add new information to the existing model and after a sufficient practice equilibration occurs in students’ minds which results in eliminating the conflict between new and existing knowledge.

The learners’ interaction with each other and communication with a teacher are momentous to make learning more productive, positive and enjoyable.

Consequently, this principle indicates the significance of considering the learner's current level of understanding and according to it to plan and organize the new material teaching. The teacher's role is to provide learners with the material appropriate to their level. When we teach EAP, impromptu speaking helps us to see the students' current and potential level of development and create an appropriate level for their learning. For instance, alongside with other necessary skills to create an argumentative essay, coherence and cohesion take a weighty place, because the former is responsible for logical connection and the latter for – smooth development of ideas. Impromptu speaking in the classroom enables us to set the communication with the students and know their level of knowledge. When they learn the main principles of coherence and cohesion, they are given the task to analyze the sample essay to see how cohesion and coherence are achieved, and afterwards to work on making ineffective paragraphs coherent and cohesive. In the classroom, they share their opinions on the ways they worked on the essay paragraphs' cohesion and coherence. Impromptu speech can enable them to be aware of their own level of actual development and realize the potential level of further development. Finally, students are able to use cohesion and coherence to write an argumentative essay.

A student-centered approach is central to active learning because it encourages students to take a deep approach to study. In student-centered model 'learning is recognized as an active dynamic process in which connections (between different facts, ideas and processes) are constantly changing and their structure is continually reformatted' (R. Di Napoli, 3, p. 3). These connections are encouraged through communication. As R. Di Napoli emphasizes, 'students come with their own perceptual frameworks' (3, p. 3), we implement impromptu speaking into teaching to create a link between the prior and new knowledge.

The considerable influence of utilization of impromptu speaking in classrooms can be observed in enhancing students' oral expressions. Many university students who learn English find speaking as the most challenging aspect of using language in academic environment. Moreover, they find the process of being engaged in an impromptu more difficult than presenting prepared speeches. They state that they feel the lack of academic speaking skills and confidence. Using impromptu speaking as an organizational skill during warm-up activities, big group discussions or individual deliveries can improve students' ability to talk in front of the audience gaining fluency and confidence. Students become better in speaking through the guidance and practice. Therefore, it is necessary to guide students through the stages of giving an impromptu speech. Moreover, the process of practicing these steps by giving repeated impromptu speeches can lead to positive results. It should be highlighted that the purpose of spontaneous speaking can be to

inform, persuade or entertain. The impromptu speech structure can be the same as in prepared speech: an introductory sentence, main supporting sentences, detail supporting sentences and an ending sentence. The guidance stages can include topic examination, purpose consideration, prior knowledge reliance and an outline preparation. Due to the fact that impromptu speech is a considerably flexible activity for teachers, the rules of practicing this type of speaking may vary. Initially, it is vital for speakers to understand the topic. While examining the topic, they should focus on what exactly they want to speak of, what key words can be, whether for or against the stated idea, and what their opinions are. The focus may vary according to the topic of the lesson. The consideration of the purpose may take into account the purpose of the current class or event. Whenever the speakers rely on their prior knowledge, they can support their speech with different types of evidence. Finally, quick organization of an outline (if some time is allocated) enables speakers to be cohesive in delivering their thoughts to an audience effectively. Appropriate organization of an impromptu in the classroom helps us to facilitate active learning, encourage the participation of all students and stimulate the development of autonomous learning. Moreover, students become more productive in thinking and fluent in speaking by using their impromptu speaking skills in a student centered learning environment. In conclusion, impromptu speaking can become one of the effective ways of achieving student-centredness.

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