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## DEVELOPING LEARNER'S SPEAKING SKILLS IN AN ONLINE CLASSROOM

### РОЗВИТОК НАВИЧОК МОВЛЕННЯ В УМОВАХ ОНЛАЙН НАВЧАННЯ

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The article focuses on planning and delivering effective speaking skills lessons in an online environment. The theoretical and practical approaches to planning and delivering effective English speaking classes online are discussed. Over the past time, teachers of all educational institutions are immensely forced to increase the use of technology in the teaching-learning process. The new teaching environment has brought new strategies and techniques to the classes. While teaching speaking can feel easier face-to-face in a number of ways, it is possible to adapt and teach speaking skills successfully online. The author studies the issue of the similarities and differences between face-to-face speaking lessons and online speaking lessons. The outline for an online speaking lesson with a detailed explanation of its elements is provided. The structure of the speaking class is viewed through the scope of its purpose and targeted speaking skills. The correlation between the activity, learning objective, and sought speaking strategy is presented. Practical ideas and suggestions for tools and activities to help learners develop speaking and pronunciation skills and improve students' productive skills are presented. It is also offered online resources for developing speaking skills and provided a detailed description of their features so the teachers may choose the ones which will best benefit their learners. The author also discusses the ways and means how the teachers can display and share the speaking materials with the class. Implementation of virtual tools helps develop students' speaking skills and requires knowledge and practice. Any tool and activity offered in the article allow both teachers and students of various language levels to improve their speaking class cooperatively and interactively.

**Key words:** online teaching tools, speaking activities, speaking skills, means of sharing speaking material, lesson outline.

Стаття присвячена актуальним питанням впровадження сучасних дистанційних освітніх технологій для вивчення англійської мови. Дане дослідження спрямоване на аналіз сучасних онлайн засобів для формування і вдосконалення навичок мовлення студентами вищих навчальних закладів. У ході дослідження автор конкретизує понятійний апарат навчання у форматі онлайн та оффлайн; виокремлює позитивні і негативні сторони навчання із застосуванням цифрових технологій у навчальному процесі в закладах вищої освіти; аналізує ефективність дистанційних технологій в контексті розвитку навичок мовлення. Детально охарактеризовані педагогічні шляхи впровадження мультимедійних засобів навчання під час вивчення іноземної мови як ключової умови фундаментальної підготовки кваліфікованого фахівця, орієнтованого на задоволення потреб сучасності. У статті подано детальний аналіз спільних та відмінних рис проведення занять, спрямованих на розвиток навичок мовлення в оффлайн та онлайн форматах. Автор статті пропонує план проведення онлайн заняття із детальним роз'ясненням його елементів. Такий підхід допоможе викладачам створити структуру заняття, яка може бути адаптована до будь-якої теми та рівня знань студентів. Ще одним важливим елементом для проведення онлайн заняття є способи відображення та обміну матеріалами для завдань із розвитку мовлення. Автор наводить практичні рекомендації та пропозиції передачі інформації, які були апробовані на заняттях зі студентами. Також пропонуються онлайн-ресурси для

розвитку навичок мовлення із детальним описом їхніх особливостей, що дасть змогу освітянам обрати ті, які найбільше відповідають їхнім потребам. У зв'язку з цим розвиток навичок мовлення під час вивчення іноземної мови розглядається як шлях до творчості, роботи в новому середовищі та з людьми різних культур.

**Ключові слова:** онлайн навчання, оффлайн навчання, навички мовлення, способи обміну матеріалами онлайн, структура онлайн заняття.

**Problem statement.** Over the past time, the spread of COVID-19 and the war outbreak in Ukraine has immensely forced teachers of all educational institutions to increase the use of technology in the teaching-learning process. New teaching environment fosters teachers to provide students with new learning approaches in a more meaningful and interesting manner and motivate them to learn while at the same time improving their language skills. Teaching speaking in an online environment has become one of the most effective types of classes. This is not surprising as the video/audio conferencing medium provides more productive conditions for speaking practice than other online tools. Developing learners' speaking skills in an online classroom requires thoughtful planning and the use of various strategies and resources. The students learn in different ways, and there are various approaches to learning which highlight different aspects of the process. Our analysis focuses on the effective ones to support and enhance speaking skills in an online learning environment.

**The latest research analysis.** We are not alone in our inquiry, as many scholars of teaching English as a second language have taken up similar investigations into training of teachers with the digital literacy [6; 7; 8], influence of digital media on language teaching [1; 3], and pronunciation [12; 13]. Speaking activities have widely been seen as the most demanding for learners. It may be because of the many characteristics unique to spoken language: reduced forms, contractions, vowel reduction, stress, rhythm, and the use of signpost transitions [3].

As teachers of English, we are particularly interested in studies exploring issues of developing learners' productive skills in online environment, namely speaking skills, so we explore that question here in greater depth [2; 9; 10; 12].

**Task statement.** The performed analysis of the literature on the subject of developing speaking skills in an online classroom has determined the goals and objectives of the presented article. The purpose of the article is to consider the set of theoretical and practical approaches to planning and delivering effective English speaking classes online. The corresponding analysis required: 1) to differentiate the main features of the online speaking lessons from the face-to face ones; 2) to identify the outline for the online speaking class; 3) to determine the ways of

giving the feedback to the students; 4) to suggest the online platforms and tools for developing speaking and pronunciation skills.

**The base material.** Speaking tasks are difficult for teachers as it is unclear how they can best facilitate online conversational lessons. In some ways, developing speaking skills online is similar to traditional face-to-face classes – a teacher can present information and interact with a group of people in real-time. In other ways, there are many aspects of online lessons that differ from face-to-face instructions.

One difference is the 'materiality' of the video conferencing environment [2]. It refers to how we experience the online environment and get things done, such as providing feedback or sharing resources. However, 'materiality' is not the only thing different about video/audio conferencing lessons. Teachers and students are also located in different physical spaces, which often means that students feel more relaxed and at ease, contributing to the effectiveness of speaking tasks. Learners who feel afraid to speak or raise their own issues in a physical classroom may often feel braver when participating from their safe place. The advantage of recording an online class helps with speaking and is crucial for feedback, consolidation, and correction. Students become more aware of themselves as speakers, and once they overcome the initial shyness, it helps them monitor their progress. This option is also helpful for teachers because they can concentrate on supporting the task, maintaining engagement and participation, and ensuring everyone is getting a fair chance to speak without worrying too much about correcting errors or grading performance [9]. The recording allows teachers to evaluate the output later and makes it easier to give targeted personalized feedback.

In addition to recording classes, teachers working online also may use the benefits of breakout rooms – the tool of most online educational platforms. They allow small groups of students to work independently on a task before reporting back to the whole class. The teacher can monitor and facilitate a discussion moving from one group to another in the same way as in the face-to-face environment.

When teaching an online speaking class, the most important things are lesson objectives, lesson framework, instructions, managing quiet and dominant learners, and providing feedback.

Lesson objectives. It's essential to have clear goals, and you should have a good reason for doing speaking activities. From a broad perspective, there are two main reasons for getting students to speak during a lesson:

- to give students practice of language items (vocabulary, grammar functions, etc.) – a language practice aim;

- to develop students' ability to speak fluently and interactively – a speaking fluency aim [12].

If the speaking activity is preceded by activities that present and give controlled written practice of grammar or vocabulary items, the speaking activity will have a language practice aim. If the speaking activity comes before a text (reading or listening) or involves speaking for speaking's sake, the task will have a speaking fluency aim. Speaking fluency activities often don't matter what vocabulary and grammar students use and whether it's accurate or not. The learning outcome is for students to gain confidence in speaking English.

Lesson framework. Frameworks for online speaking lessons are similar to those in face-to-face classes. First, the teachers develop some preparation work, do the speaking task itself, and then provide feedback.

Instructions. It would be best if the teachers are especially clear with instructions because of the distance in online teaching. When introducing an activity, they should grade their language, enunciate clearly and check that learners understand what to do. The tools of online platforms may add to the clarification of this. For example, the teachers can use the chatbox to type instructions, hands-up icons to make sure everyone's on track, images, and icons on the screen to back up and support the tasks. Overall, teachers need to stage things more carefully and pace things a little more slowly so that everyone knows what's happening when and why [9]. It is also essential to leave enough 'wait time' after a question is asked so that the learner has time to receive the question across the distance, think of an answer, and then produce the response.

Managing dominant and quiet learners. It is important to think about each student's personality and how digital learning may be easy or challenging for them. The structure of the lesson should help all students to speak and participate in the discussion. More reticent students need more processing time, opportunities to express their thoughts with one or smaller groups of students before sharing with the whole group, and a safe environment to express themselves. More outgoing, talkative students need time to get their voices heard and share the

excitement. Teachers can choose to mute or block certain students from speaking if they dominate the conversation and can use the chatbox and commenting features to balance student voices. Teachers can also use nonverbals and the hand features for students to share their answers.

Feedback. Providing actionable, encouraging feedback can be a little more difficult for teaching speaking skills online. But it can help structure future lessons based on the students' needs, allowing teachers to build a virtual relationship with them. To provide constructive feedback, the teachers may use the following techniques:

- use the students' current knowledge: use concise sentences, level-appropriate vocabulary, and don't overwhelm them by giving too much feedback at once;

- provide real-time feedback after the student finishes speaking: the most critical aspect of real-time feedback to remember is to let your student finish speaking before you provide verbal feedback. It is essential to wait for the student to finish speaking when you are in an online environment;

- nonverbal feedback can encourage the student: it is essential to give nonverbal feedback while they are speaking. Nonverbal feedback encourages students and lets them know you are actively listening, whether staying focused on your screen, nodding, smiling, or something else;

- ask the student to self-assess: asking them what mistakes they think they made or how they can improve their English skills encourages them to think about their own needs. When they explore their areas of improvement with the teacher, it helps identify knowledge gaps and understand what they need and want to focus on during their online lessons;

- use the chatbox to give personalized feedback to individual learners directly;

- use the whiteboard or a Word document to give whole class feedback.

Speaking practice is no longer something that can only be done in a lesson. Many digital tools allow learners to communicate outside the classroom and complete speaking tasks, both synchronously and asynchronously. Below are some of those tools that can benefit teachers in preparing classes for developing speaking skills and learners who want to improve their oral presentations themselves.

**Voki** is a free educational tool for teachers and students which has a paid version also. Students create an avatar and add voice by recording themselves speak or using text-to-speech (over 30 languages supported, hundreds of voices to choose from). A text-to-speech feature is a powerful tool for students' self-correction

and self-awareness while speaking. It can be used to enhance instruction, engagement, and lesson comprehension. Voki can be used in class (for student work), as an animated presentation tool, for student assignments, and as a virtual supervised discussion forum (Voki Hangouts). Students may create their speaking characters for developing presentations on various topics they study. On the one hand, they learn while developing a presentation, and on the other hand, it brings fun and creativity, which also boosts their speaking confidence. Teachers can direct this activity through assignments, presentations, and dialogue groups (Voki Hangouts).

**Flipgrid** is the video discussion tool that Microsoft designs to work specifically for teachers and students in a digital setting. It allows teachers to create “grids” to facilitate video discussions. Each grid is like a message board where teachers can pose questions, called “topics”, and their students can post video responses that appear in a tiled grid display. Grids can be shared with classes, small groups, or any collection of users interested in a common strand of questions. Topics can be text-based or include a resource such as an image, video, Giphy, emoji, or attachment. Students may respond via the Flipgrid app or website with any camera-enabled device or upload a previously recorded video. Responses can be 15 seconds to five minutes, and a maximum recording time can be set. Teachers can also allow students to record replies to classmates’ responses.

**Voice Spice** Learners record themselves speaking for free and share the link with you and other learners, e.g., via What’s app or Padlet. Voice Spice is an excellent tool for online foreign language classes or other courses requiring the sharing of voice messages. Students can quickly, easily, and accurately get audio feedback on pronunciation, grammar, etc., allowing them to easily record their practice lessons outside the classroom. No account or signup is needed, and recordings can be made from any browser. It can be as simple as recording a speech to doing a mock radio interview. Students are given their feedback for their recordings; reconvene and practice some more, and then record again. As a class, they listen to the new recording and comment on how students have improved and what they still need to add.

Technological advances have allowed online sources and smartphone applications to be developed for pronunciation, for learners with or without teacher involvement. The advantages of teaching pronunciation online are the following: students can see the teacher’s mouth clearly and perceive the physiology of the sound; in breakout rooms, learners can listen to each person more carefully;

online resources are easy to use throughout the class; feedback to learners can be more private and accurate (using the chat box tool, or by speaking to individuals in breakout rooms).

Various methods are used to teach pronunciation both in an online and face-to-face environment. Those, which are applied in an offline setting, can be efficiently used online. They include:

- naturalistic method – learners are exposed to the language for some time. Then, they are asked to repeat those sounds in the same pattern. This method is similar to that of the natural acquisition of a language. Speech shadowing is one of the famous techniques used in this method;

- phonetic transcription method is an age-old and time-tested method to teach pronunciation. In this, the learners are given a detailed description of the standard phonetic alphabet and the other pronunciation rules. It requires a lot of attention and hard work from the students, as learning the code is not so easy;

- minimal pair drills method. Minimal pairs are the pairs of words or phrases that differ in only a single sound. The teacher makes the students understand the basic patterns of every sound in the target language. Teacher selects the words which differ by a single sound, and these words are drilled continuously in the class to make them understand the difference in sounds;

- sentence drills or contextualized minimal pairs. At this level, students are made to listen to the sentences with words that sound similar but differ in their meaning. In this case, the students learn through context;

- vowel shifts and stress shifts drills. Drilling of the exercises in stress shifts and vowel shifts makes the students speak more appropriately, e.g., rid /rid/, read /ri:d/ – vowel shift; record /'rekɔ:d/, record /rɪ'kɔ:d/ – stress shift and vowel shift;

- reading aloud is a technique in which the learners are allowed to read a passage or poem with correct intonation and stress. Immediate correction prevents the learners from forming false notions on pronunciation;

- recordings – the learners are made to listen to the audio clips and are asked to record themselves. The students can listen to their own voice and correct themselves.

Modern software applications enhance teaching pronunciation skill. We have added only some of them to help teachers decide and tailor their tools to the individual students’ needs.

**Sounds Foundation Interactive phonemic chart** is a free interactive phonemic chart that

can help learners produce sounds in English. It is developed according to the main principle of the table of chemical elements by Dmitri Mendeleev: the position of an element in the periodic table shows how that element is made and how it behaves. The same is true of the Sound Foundations chart. For example, the rows and columns on the Sound Foundations chart provide information on the families of sounds with qualities in common; how a sound is made; with which parts of the mouth and articulatory mechanism it is made, and where it is made. The symbols on the table represent the 44 sounds used in British English speech, and a learner may click on each symbol to hear (Received Pronunciation).

**EnglishCentral** is one of the most effective web-based conversational English language learning platforms for desktop and mobile users. Learners listen to an original video, learn words and practice speaking using the library of over 15,000 engaging videos. They may record themselves copying what they hear and then listen back and compare. The platform focuses on helping users with spoken English, using proprietary speech recognition technology that “listens” to users’ speech and then scores it based on their pronunciation and syntax. They allow users to choose the content they love from a massive database of video content covering popular subject areas (e.g., travel, sports, politics, business, movies) and existing popular content (e.g., Obama’s speeches). It has some free content, but access to full content requires a subscription.

**BBC Learning English** offers free audio, video, and text materials to learners of different language level. It has a special series of Tim’s free workshop videos that can help learners with pronunciation. They show how native people speak English. It also has a free mobile application with daily updates of amazing and topical lessons, transcripts, and quizzes. Audio programmes can be downloaded without using text support. Then students may watch or listen again using the built-in transcripts and subtitles. Quizzes to test progress until the students get the result they want are also available.

But with the right tasks and the right level of support, students enjoy and appreciate the chance to practice speaking online. They find it satisfying and motivating, and it adds an extra dimension to the speaking skill – one that’s becoming more and more useful in the world beyond the classroom.

**Conclusions.** The paper focuses on teaching effective speaking skills to students in an online environment. The issue of the similarities and differences between face-to-face English lessons and online ones was discussed. The main features of lesson structure and tasks involved into each type of class were studied. Practical ideas and suggestions for tools, resources, and activities to help learners develop productive skills such as speaking and pronunciation were presented.

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## MODERN SEL TECHNIQUES IN AN EFL CLASSROOM

### СУЧАСНІ МЕТОДИ СОЦІО-ЕМОЦІЙНОГО НАВЧАННЯ ДЛЯ ВИКЛАДАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ЯК ІНОЗЕМНОЇ

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This article investigates the various Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) techniques that can be used effectively in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, the benefits they provide to both students and educators and the implications of incorporating SEL in language education. The abstract begins with a discussion of the current state of SEL and its role in education. According to research, SEL is beneficial in promoting students' social and emotional competence, resilience, and academic success.

The article discusses mindfulness practices, cooperative learning, emotional vocabulary development, and self-assessment strategies, which are all covered in depth. These techniques aim to improve students' self-awareness, self-regulation, interpersonal skills, and empathy, thereby creating a welcoming environment for language learning.

The advantages of implementing SEL techniques in the EFL classroom are numerous, as discussed in the following section. To begin, SEL promotes a positive learning environment that promotes risk-taking and participation. Educators can promote language learning confidence and reduce anxiety associated with language acquisition by addressing students' emotional needs. Furthermore, SEL techniques help students develop effective communication skills, which are necessary for language learning and cross-cultural understanding.

The abstract also looks into the impact of SEL on educators and their teaching practices. Teachers can improve their classroom management skills and adapt their instructional strategies to meet the diverse emotional needs of their students by using SEL techniques. The abstract also discusses potential challenges and limitations in implementing SEL in the EFL classroom, such as time constraints and the requirement for specialized teacher training. Finally, the abstract highlights the importance of a holistic approach to language education that includes not only linguistic proficiency but also emotional intelligence and social skills. It emphasizes the vitality of incorporating SEL techniques into the EFL curriculum to create an inclusive and empathetic learning environment.

**Key words:** Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), language education, SEL techniques, emotional intelligence, language acquisition, inclusive learning environment.

У статті досліджуються різноманітні методи соціо-емоційного навчання, які можна ефективно використовувати під час викладання англійської як іноземної мови у закладах вищої освіти, а також переваги соціо-емоційного навчання для студентів та викладачів. Розкрито сутність соціо-емоційного навчання та його ролі у сучасній вищій