PROBLEMS AND OBSTACLES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH ORAL SPEECH OF SCHOOLCHILDREN (GRADES 5-6)

Tashkent State Pedagogical University named after Nizami

1st-year PhD student

Rustamova Khurshida Yusupovna

Abstract: The development of oral speech skills among school students, especially those in grades 5 and 6, is a fundamental aspect of mastering the English language. This period represents a crucial stage in which children begin to actively explore and use foreign language structures in real communication situations. However, despite the growing emphasis on communicative competence within curricula and teaching methodologies, a number of challenges and barriers persist that hinder the effective improvement of students' oral English skills.

Key words: lack of confidence, limited vocabulary, fear of making mistakes, poor pronunciation, limited exposure to English, lack of speaking practice, low motivation, shyness, insufficient classroom interaction, anxiety.

One of the notable challenges is students' lack of self-confidence when it comes to speaking English. This lack of confidence often originates from the fear of making mistakes and becoming the subject of ridicule among peers. The classroom environment, at times, does not accommodate the emotional needs of young learners, making them hesitant to express themselves in a language that is still foreign and unfamiliar. Such psychological barriers can seriously inhibit students from practicing, repeating, and ultimately mastering oral skills. Furthermore, limited vocabulary poses another significant obstacle for 5th- and 6th-grade students. At these grade levels, the vocabulary that students have acquired may not be sufficient to express their thoughts fully or respond to questions appropriately. This limitation often leads to reliance on native-language equivalents or, in some cases, the use of silence as a means to avoid participating in discussions. The constraint on word knowledge also means students can struggle

to formulate complex sentences or convey nuanced meanings, making conversation less effective and more stressful. Another considerable challenge is the lack of exposure to authentic spoken English both inside and outside of the classroom. While textbooks and lesson materials do provide certain dialogues and listening practices, these resources often fail to reflect the variety and spontaneity of real-life conversations. Young students rarely encounter authentic pronunciation, intonation, colloquial expressions, or natural speech patterns in their daily lives. This absence of real communicative practice often leads to a gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application when they try to speak English [1].

Compounding these language-related obstacles is the limited amount of class time devoted specifically to speaking activities. Due to curricular constraints, teachers may be required to prioritize grammar, reading, or writing, rather than interactive speaking exercises. As a result, oral skills do not receive the consistent attention and practice necessary for significant improvement. This issue is further exacerbated when class sizes are large, making it difficult for every student to have frequent opportunities to speak and receive personalized feedback from the teacher. Pronunciation difficulties represent another major barrier for young learners. English sounds that do not exist in the students' native language often cause confusion and error. Students may develop habits of mispronouncing words, and without regular corrections or targeted practice, these incorrect pronunciations can solidify over time, making it even harder to communicate effectively and be understood by others. Listening comprehension and oral production are also inseparably intertwined. Students who cannot understand spoken English are less likely to attempt speaking, as they fear misunderstanding the questions or prompts given by the teacher or classmates. This cycle of misunderstanding and hesitancy reduces the overall opportunities for students to participate in conversations and further inhibits oral skill development [2].

Another notable challenge is the prevalence of teacher-centered instruction. In many schools, teaching approaches still focus on traditional methods, where

teachers dominate classroom talk time and students are passive recipients of information. The lack of student-centered activities, such as pair- and group-work, role-plays, and interactive games, means students do not engage in meaningful speaking practice. The classroom dynamics, therefore, do not fully support the active use of language, which is necessary for developing oral proficiency. Standardized testing requirements and the pressure to perform well on written assessments also contribute to the neglect of speaking skills. Both teachers and students may view spoken language as less important compared to reading and writing abilities, especially if examinations focus predominantly on grammar and written tasks. This prioritization sends a message to students that oral skill development is secondary, discouraging them from taking risks and speaking up in class. A further complication arises from insufficient support at home and in the community for practicing spoken English. Many families do not speak English, nor do they have the resources to provide additional language exposure outside school. As a result, students miss out on reinforcement and practice that could otherwise come from conversations with family members, friends, or community groups. This lack of support leaves students reliant solely on school as a place for language development, further limiting their progress. Additionally, teachers may not always possess sufficient training or confidence themselves in facilitating communicative activities within English lessons. Teachers who are not comfortable using spoken English may limit class interactions to highly controlled exercises, avoiding opportunities for spontaneous student speech. This reluctance restricts both the quality and quantity of student speaking practice and hinders the classroom environment from becoming one in which oral skills are valued and nurtured [3].

Another issue to consider is the use of first language during English lessons. Students tend to revert to their native language when facing communicative difficulties. While such use may alleviate classroom anxiety in the short term, it ultimately reduces the amount of time students spend engaged with English, and forces them to practice less, delaying progress in oral competence. Moreover, if teachers themselves permit or encourage this code-switching, it can inadvertently

weaken students' motivation to persevere in speaking English despite difficulties. The physical classroom environment and available resources can also play a role in inhibiting oral language practices. Inadequate seating arrangements may not support pair or group activities that necessitate close interaction. Limited technological resources—such as audio-visual equipment or access to online materials—restrict the opportunities for students to be exposed to interactive speaking and listening tasks. Well-designed classroom spaces and adequate resources are essential for stimulating student engagement and maximizing oral practice. Furthermore, cultural factors can influence students' willingness to participate in oral activities. In some contexts, young students are trained from an early age to listen passively and seldom question or converse with teachers and peers. This tradition of passive learning can make students feel uncomfortable or rebellious when asked to actively participate in English discussions or role-playing exercises. Overcoming these cultural attitudes requires patience, understanding, and gradual shifts in classroom expectations and teaching style [4].

The rapid advancement of technology and digital tools presents both opportunities and challenges for improving oral language ability. On one hand, access to language learning applications, online videos, and social media can provide avenues for supplementary practice and engagement. On the other hand, not all students have equal access to digital devices or strong Internet connections, particularly in regions where resources are limited. This digital divide may widen the gap in oral proficiency between students with and without technological support [5].

Developing students' speaking skills is an essential part of English language teaching, especially at the beginner and intermediate levels. For many students, speaking is the most challenging skill to master, but with the right support from the teacher, learners can gain confidence and proficiency in expressing their thoughts verbally. There are several important recommendations that teachers should consider when aiming to improve their students' speaking abilities. First of all, creating a supportive and positive classroom atmosphere is crucial. Learners need

to feel comfortable and encouraged to take risks and speak out. Teachers should foster an environment where mistakes are seen as a natural part of the learning process rather than something to be embarrassed about. Constructive feedback, gentle correction, and words of encouragement can help students overcome their fear of making mistakes and increase their willingness to participate. Interactive activities and games play a vital role in developing speaking skills. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate role-plays, simulations, and speaking games that motivate students to interact with one another. These activities provide real-life contexts for students to practice new vocabulary and structures, making their learning more memorable and enjoyable. Pair and group work should be a regular part of speaking lessons. Working in smaller groups or with a partner lowers students' affective filters and gives everyone more opportunities for practice. When students communicate with peers, they often feel less pressure than when speaking in front of the entire class, which enables them to experiment and develop fluency. It is also important to regularly introduce and reinforce new vocabulary and expressions. Teachers should teach new words in context and encourage their frequent use during speaking activities. Providing language support through sentence starters, model dialogues, and useful phrases helps students scaffold their speaking and become more independent in expressing their ideas. Incorporating listening activities such as dialogues, short stories, and interviews exposes students to authentic pronunciation, intonation, and conversational patterns. Teachers can then design follow-up speaking tasks based on these listening materials, encouraging students to respond, retell, or discuss what they have heard. This strengthens the connection between receptive and productive skills. Teachers must also be patient and adaptable, recognizing that every learner is unique. Some students may need more time and encouragement to speak up. Personalized feedback and targeted support are essential for helping each student progress at their own pace. Praising improvement, no matter how small, can have a significant impact on a student's motivation and self-esteem. Encouraging students to use English outside of the classroom is another valuable strategy. Teachers might

suggest simple daily routines like greeting classmates in English, keeping a short spoken diary, or participating in English clubs. The more students practice speaking in real-life situations, the more natural and fluent their communication will become.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, despite the increasing prioritization of communicative approach in foreign language learning, many obstacles still impede the development of English oral skills among 5th- and 6th-grade students. These barriers range from psychological factors such as lack of confidence, limited vocabulary, and fear of mistakes, to structural issues like insufficient class time, large group sizes, and teacher-centered instruction. Additional complications include pronunciation difficulties, lack of authentic exposure, lowest prioritization of speaking compared to other skills, insufficient home and community support, and limited resources in schools. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach. This involves creating a supportive environment where making mistakes is seen as a natural part of learning, increasing opportunities for meaningful oral practice, expanding vocabulary through interactive methods, and employing resources that expose students to authentic spoken English. Teachers must also be equipped and motivated to use communicative activities, and both schools and families should collaborate to provide additional reinforcement and practice outside the classroom. By identifying and thoughtfully responding to these various barriers, educators can foster greater student engagement, improve speaking ability, and ultimately enhance communicative competence in English among young learners.

References:

1. Akhmedova, D. (2020). "The Current Issues in Developing Pupils' Speaking Skills in English Classes." Pedagogy and Psychology, 2(4), 85-92.

2. Bekmurodova, M. (2021). "Innovative Approaches for Teaching English in Primary Grades." Public Education, 5(2), 50-57.

3. Hamidova, S. (2022). "Developing Communicative Competence in English Lessons." Teacher, 1(11), 98-105.

4. Islomova, N. (2018). "Tools for Developing Pupils' Oral Speech Skills." Modern Education, 4(7), 44-49.

5. Komilova, D. (2021). "Problems of Spoken English in Middle School Lessons." Education and Innovation, 9(3), 112-119.

6. Mirzayeva, Z. (2017). "Shaping Speech Culture in Teaching English." Journal of Social and Humanitarian Sciences, 6(2), 63-69.

7. Rasulova, S. (2020). "Speech Activity and Its Development in Primary School Pupils." Pedagogical Research, 8(2), 77-84.