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**THE USE OF ENGLISH PROVERBS AS A PEDAGOGICAL TOOL FOR
ENHANCING SPEAKING SKILLS IN EFL LEARNERS**

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Annotatsiya. Ushbu tadqiqot ingliz maqollarining chet tili sifatida ingliz tilini (EFL) o‘rganayotgan o‘quvchilarning og‘zaki nutq ko‘nikmalarini rivojlantirishdagi rolini o‘rganadi. Tadqiqot xususiy o‘quv markazida 14–15 yoshdagi B1 darajadagi 23 nafar o‘quvchi ishtirokida sakkiz hafta davomida amalga oshirildi. Maqollar haftasiga uch marotaba o‘tkazilgan speaking (gapirish) darslariga kommunikativ faoliyatlar — munozaralar, rolli o‘yinlar, hikoya tuzish, debatlar va fikr bildirish mashg‘ulotlari orqali tizimli ravishda integratsiya qilindi. Tadqiqot aralash metod (mixed-method) yondashuvidan foydalanib, IELTS Speaking oldi va keyingi test natijalari hamda sinf kuzatuvlari va yarim tuzilgan intervyular asosida ma‘lumotlar to‘plandi.

Natijalar shuni ko‘rsatdiki, maqollardan foydalanish o‘quvchilarning og‘zaki nutq ko‘nikmalariga sezilarli ijobiy ta‘sir ko‘rsatdi. Eng katta o‘sish lug‘at boyligida kuzatildi, ya‘ni o‘quvchilar yanada xilma-xil, kontekstga mos va ifodali so‘zlardan foydalana boshladilar. Shuningdek, nutq ravonligi yaxshilandi, o‘quvchilar kamroq ikkilanish bilan gapira boshladilar va fikrlarini yaxshiroq bog‘lay oldilar. Bundan tashqari, o‘quvchilarda ingliz tilida gapirishga bo‘lgan ishonch va faollik oshdi.

Sifatli ma‘lumotlar shuni ko‘rsatdiki, o‘quvchilar maqollarga asoslangan o‘qitishni qiziqarli, motivatsion va madaniy jihatdan boyituvchi usul sifatida qabul qilishgan. Ularning fikricha, maqollar yangi so‘zlarni eslab qolishni osonlashtirgan va speaking mashg‘ulotlarini yanada mazmunli qilgan. Tadqiqot xulosasiga ko‘ra, ingliz maqollari EFL speaking darslarida lingvistik va kommunikativ kompetensiyani rivojlantirishga yordam beruvchi samarali qo‘shimcha pedagogik vosita bo‘lishi mumkin.

Kalit so‘zlar: EFL, gapirish ko‘nikmalari, maqollar, lug‘at boyligi, ravon nutq, kommunikativ kompetensiya, IELTS

Аннотация. Данное исследование посвящено изучению роли английских пословиц в развитии навыков устной речи у учащихся, изучающих английский язык как иностранный (EFL). Исследование проводилось в течение восьми недель с участием 23 учащихся уровня B1 в возрасте 14–15 лет в частном учебном центре. Пословицы были систематически интегрированы в занятия по говорению, проводимые три раза в неделю, через коммуникативные виды деятельности, такие как обсуждения, ролевые игры, рассказывание историй, дебаты и задания на выражение мнения. В исследовании использовался смешанный метод, включающий количественные данные (пред- и пост-тест IELTS Speaking) и качественные данные (наблюдения и полуструктурированные интервью).



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Результаты показали, что использование пословиц оказало значительное положительное влияние на развитие устной речи учащихся. Наиболее заметное улучшение наблюдалось в расширении словарного запаса, поскольку учащиеся начали использовать более разнообразный и контекстуально уместный язык. Также улучшилась беглость речи, снизилось количество пауз и повысилась связность высказываний. Кроме того, учащиеся стали более уверенными и активными в устной коммуникации.

Качественные данные показали, что студенты воспринимают использование пословиц как интересный, мотивирующий и культурно обогащающий метод обучения. Они отметили, что пословицы помогают легче запоминать лексику и делают занятия по говорению более содержательными. В заключение исследование подтверждает, что английские пословицы могут служить эффективным дополнительным педагогическим инструментом для развития коммуникативной компетенции в обучении английскому языку.

Ключевые слова: EFL, навыки говорения, пословицы, словарный запас, беглость речи, коммуникативная компетенция, IELTS

Abstract. This study investigates the role of English proverbs in improving speaking skills among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The research was conducted over an eight-week period with 23 B1-level students aged 14–15 at a private language center. Proverbs were systematically integrated into speaking lessons conducted three times per week through communicative activities such as discussions, role-plays, storytelling, debates, and opinion-sharing tasks. The study adopted a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative data from IELTS Speaking pre-test and post-test assessments with qualitative data obtained through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews.

The findings indicate that the use of proverbs had a significant positive impact on learners' speaking performance. The most notable improvement was observed in vocabulary acquisition, where learners began to use more varied, contextually appropriate, and expressive language. Fluency also improved, as students demonstrated reduced hesitation and better coherence in speech. In addition, learners showed increased confidence and willingness to participate in speaking tasks.

Qualitative data revealed that students perceived proverb-based instruction as engaging, motivating, and culturally enriching. They reported that proverbs helped them remember vocabulary more easily and made speaking activities more meaningful. The study concludes that English proverbs can serve as an effective supplementary pedagogical tool in EFL speaking classrooms, enhancing both linguistic and communicative competence.

Keywords: EFL, speaking skills, proverbs, vocabulary acquisition, fluency development, communicative competence, IELTS

Introduction. Speaking is widely recognized as one of the most important yet challenging skills in foreign language learning. In EFL environments, learners often face difficulties in producing fluent and accurate speech due to limited vocabulary knowledge,

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lack of exposure to authentic language, and psychological barriers such as anxiety and low confidence. As a result, improving speaking competence remains a central goal in language education.

Modern language teaching approaches emphasize communicative competence rather than memorization of grammatical structures. Within this framework, authentic materials play a crucial role in helping learners use language in meaningful contexts. Among various authentic linguistic resources, English proverbs represent a unique category of fixed expressions that combine linguistic simplicity with cultural depth.

Proverbs are short, memorable, and metaphorical expressions that reflect cultural wisdom and everyday communication patterns of native speakers. Their formulaic nature allows learners to internalize language chunks, which can reduce cognitive load during speech production and support fluency development. Furthermore, proverbs often carry figurative meanings that encourage learners to think critically and interpret language beyond its literal form.

Despite their pedagogical potential, proverbs are not widely used in EFL speaking classrooms. In many cases, they are limited to reading comprehension or vocabulary memorization tasks rather than being integrated into communicative speaking activities. This creates a gap between knowledge of expressions and their practical use in oral communication.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effectiveness of integrating English proverbs into speaking instruction and to examine their impact on learners' fluency, vocabulary development, and speaking confidence.

Materials and methods

1. Research Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental mixed-method design using pre-test and post-test evaluation. The purpose was to measure changes in learners' speaking performance after exposure to proverb-based instruction.

2. Participants

The participants were 23 EFL learners aged 14–15 enrolled in an intermediate-level (B1) course at a private language center. All participants had similar English learning backgrounds, which ensured a relatively homogeneous sample.

3. Duration and Procedure

The intervention lasted for eight weeks. Speaking lessons were conducted three times per week. During each session, English proverbs were integrated into communicative speaking tasks.

The instructional activities included:

- Group discussions based on proverb interpretation
- Role-plays using real-life communicative situations
- Storytelling tasks incorporating selected proverbs
- Opinion-sharing and debate activities
- Problem-solving tasks requiring proverb-based reasoning

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Commonly used proverbs included:
“Practice makes perfect,” “Better late than never,” “Actions speak louder than words,”
“Honesty is the best policy,” and “Every cloud has a silver lining.”

4. Data Collection Instruments

Three instruments were used:

1. IELTS Speaking Test (Pre-test and Post-test)

Evaluating fluency, lexical resource, grammatical range, and pronunciation.

2. Classroom Observation

Monitoring learner participation, interaction, and speaking behavior.

3. Semi-Structured Interviews

Collecting students’ perceptions regarding motivation, learning experience, and effectiveness of proverbs.

5. Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed through comparison of pre-test and post-test results. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically to identify patterns in learner experiences.

Results

1. Speaking Performance Improvement

The results show clear improvement in learners’ speaking abilities after the intervention.

• Vocabulary

Development:

Learners demonstrated noticeable improvement in lexical variety and expression accuracy. They began using proverb-related vocabulary and more descriptive language.

• Fluency:

Students showed reduced hesitation and improved speech flow. Their ability to connect ideas became more structured.

• Confidence:

Learners became more willing to speak English during classroom activities and showed reduced anxiety.

• Pronunciation

and

Grammar:

Minor improvements were observed, particularly in intonation and sentence structure.

2. Classroom Observation

Observations indicated increased engagement and participation. Students were more active during proverb-based activities and showed greater willingness to contribute to discussions.

3. Interview Results

Interview responses revealed several key themes:

- Increased motivation and enjoyment
- Easier vocabulary retention
- Improved confidence in speaking
- Better understanding of cultural meanings



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- Preference for interactive learning methods

Discussion. The findings of this study support the effectiveness of integrating English proverbs into speaking instruction. The improvement in vocabulary and fluency suggests that formulaic expressions play an important role in language acquisition. Proverbs, as fixed lexical chunks, help learners retrieve language more efficiently during communication.

In addition, increased learner motivation indicates that meaningful and culturally rich content enhances engagement in EFL classrooms. The use of proverbs created a more interactive and less stressful learning environment, which contributed to improved speaking performance.

However, the study has limitations. The small sample size (23 participants) limits generalizability. Additionally, the eight-week duration may not fully capture long-term language development. Future studies should include larger samples and extended intervention periods.

Conclusion. This study concludes that English proverbs can be an effective supplementary tool in EFL speaking instruction. Their integration into communicative activities enhances vocabulary acquisition, improves fluency, and increases learner confidence.

Despite limitations, the findings highlight the pedagogical value of using culturally meaningful expressions in language teaching. Further research is recommended to explore their application in other language skills and educational contexts.

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