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## **THE USE OF HALFALOGUES TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS**

Teaching foreign language is a complex process. It includes development of four main language skills: reading, speaking, listening and writing. Much attention is paid to the development of students' speaking skills. Different methods and approaches are used by teachers to improve students' communicative abilities.

The aim of the given research is to analyse the main types of language activities that can be useful in developing the students' ability to express their ideas and messages in the correct and clear way; to introduce halfalogues and explain why they are useful for training students' communicative skills.

It is important to say that the ability to speak a foreign language depends on several factors, namely having extensive vocabulary and knowledge of basic grammatical rules, correct pronunciation of foreign words and so on. Let us have a look at some classroom activities which promote and strengthen students' speaking skills.

1. Brainstorming. Here we ask students to present their ideas on certain issues. The students think over the questions and try to express them in concise and understandable way.

2. Answering questions after reading the text, listening to audio, watching a video. Here the students should be able to find the right information.

3. Making reports and presentations. Of course, the teacher should explain the students about the complicated structure of a presentation. Taking into account the scientific nature of reports, it is essential to get the students acquainted with functional phrases and language clichés which are used for problem statement, presenting findings, analyzing surveys and questionnaires, functional phrases for expressing conclusions, linking phrases for moving from one topic to another in presentations.

4. Doing exercises where students have to give the definition of the term, explain what the idiom or proverb means, paraphrase an idea using synonyms, finish the sentence, make up a short story using the given words or collocations.

One more interesting communicative exercise is making “halfalogues” whole. To define simply, a “halfalogue” is a half of a dialogue. When we were on a bus or in a crowded place, or we could hear a person talking over the phone, we experienced a halfalogue. It is hard for people to ignore in public mobile conversation, it captures other people’s attention. The fact that we can’t hear the other speaker raises our interest in the ongoing conversation. Here we take into account “*the information gap*” which refers to the incomplete information and which provokes the interest of those who listen to it. Halfalogue activities hook the students with an incomplete listening text that engages their curiosity. The students then have to transform what they hear into a dialogue, through writing and, ultimately, speaking. One of the best ways to present a halfalogue is to stand in front of the class with your phone and act out a conversation yourself: ideally, broad range of utterances (questions, answers, short phrases, etc) should be used, so that it sounds natural. Be sure to include an assortment of useful expressions and functions such as:

- greeting an old friend (*Hey, Margaret! I haven't seen you for ages!*)
- changing the subject (*Well, anyway ..., Moving on ...*)
- asking for clarification (*Sorry, I'm not sure I understand.*)
- disagreeing politely (*That's a good point, but I'm not sure I see it that way.*)

- responding appropriately to good news (*Congratulations!*) and bad news (*I'm so sorry to hear that.*)

- making an invitation (*Would you like to meet for coffee on Friday?*) [1]

It is strongly recommended to use the phrases from the coursebook so that the students could have more practice with certain expressions. The teacher can act out the conversation on the phone or present it in the printed format. It is recommended to write these questions on the board: *What is the topic of the conversation?*

*What is the relationship between the two people? How would you describe the conversation (an argument, complaining about work, making a reservation)? What else can you say about the conversation?*

Then the students are called on to answer the questions on the board. Then, they are put into pairs and given each pair a copy of the worksheet. Their task is to complete the dialogue with their own ideas. Once everyone has finished writing, they should practise the dialogue [1]. Several variations can be suggested on the halfalogue theme. Here are the following activities which follow the format of a halfalogue:

- chunks review (the students are given the chunks that they have already learned and they have to incorporate them into a halfalogue;

- bare bones halfalogue (each student is given a worksheet with only the first and last utterances of the halfalogue. They must complete the dialogue adding both speakers' contributions);

- translated halfalogue (Perform a halfalogue for the class. The students are asked to translate it, and then transform it into a dialogue.

- Spontaneous halfalogue (the teacher can bring in a photo of someone talking on a phone, and show it to the class. Work together with the students to brainstorm a situation for a halfalogue. Ask them these questions: *Who is this person? Who is this person talking to? What is their relationship? What's the mood of the person on the*

phone? What adjectives might describe the conversation (flirtatious, bored, angry, etc)? The next step is to put the students into pairs to create the entire dialogue.

Also a halfalogue can be created by students themselves based on the photo, on the celebrity's interview, or on short scene from a movie, sitcom or soap opera, containing a dialogue that you think the class will find engaging.

Speaking skills are essential in foreign language mastering and teachers should pay enough attention to help students develop their communication skills.

#### REFERENCES

1. Houston H. (2019) Making 'halfalogues' whole *English Teaching Professional* (123), 43-44.
2. Developing Students' Speaking Skills [Electronic resource] Available at: <https://www.teach-this.com/ideas/developing-spoken-english>.