

# **Using a dialogic teaching strategy to improve EFL Iraqi secondary school students speaking skill.**

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## **Abstract:**

The present study aimed at developing a sample of EFL Iraqi secondary school secondary school speaking skill through using a dialogic teaching strategy. 60 secondary school students represented both the experimental group and the control group. The study adapted the quasi-experimental design. The dialogic teaching strategy was administered to the experimental group besides a pre-post speaking skills test as the instrument used in the study.

The findings of the study showed that there is a statistically significant difference in favor of the experimental group when comparing the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in the post administration of the speaking test. The findings demonstrated that the dialogic technique was beneficial in enhancing the speaking ability of the population included in the study. Finally, a number of suggestions were made for additional research on the value of dialogic instruction for the various levels, and these were given in this section.

Key words: (dialogic, speaking skill, EFL) .

## استخدام استراتيجيات تعليم الحوار لتحسين مهارة التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لدى طلاب المرحلة الثانوية العراقية

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### الملخص:

هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى تطوير عينة عن مهارة التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في مدارس العراق الثانوية من خلال استراتيجيات تعليم الحوار. ٦٠ من طلاب المرحلة الثانوية يمثلون كل من المجموعة التجريبية والمجموعة الضابطة. طورت دراسة التصميم شبه التجريبي. تم تطبيق استراتيجيات تعليم الحوار على المجموعة التجريبية بالإضافة إلى اختبار مهارات التحدث قبل اللاحق كأداة مستخدمة في الدراسة. أوضحت نتائج الدراسة وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين متوسطي درجات المجموعة التجريبية والمجموعة الضابطة في الاختبار البعدي لاختبار التحدث لصالح المجموعة التجريبية. أظهرت النتائج فاعلية استراتيجيات الحوار في تحسين مهارة التحدث لدى العينة. وأخيراً تم تقديم عدد من التوصيات لمزيد من البحث حول أهمية تعليم الحوار للمستويات المختلفة

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** (الحوار، مهارات التحدث، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية).

Dialogue between instructors and students is an essential component of language instruction not only because it facilitates linguistic change between instructors and students but also because it fosters the development of a community of speakers and listeners who make intentional use of the target language.

Classroom engagement is one of the primary ways that young language learners gain the competences necessary to build target language abilities such as vocabulary knowledge and language awareness. This is true for the majority of young language learners (Chow, 2021).

The improvement of learning outcomes can be facilitated by the use of a pedagogical method known as dialogic teaching. This method encourages teachers and students to communicate with one another in a cooperative manner and to expand on the ideas presented by one another. It places an emphasis on identifying the dialogic process, which is characterized by the

participation of both students and teachers in the role of inquirers in dialogic exchange during the course of classroom engagement.

When dialogic teaching is incorporated into the curriculum, not only students but also teachers are able to engage in the formation of meaning, which helps both parties accomplish their educational objectives.

Students' oral language abilities are improved in a way that is completely natural thanks to this dialogic approach, which also turns students become active speakers and users. (Chow et al. 2010, cited in).

The discourse found in textbooks written in Standard English has inspired the development of a new approach of instruction known as dialogic teaching. Teachers, in their role as facilitators, build students' knowledge through the use of dialogic teaching.

Alexander (2006) offered five principles for dialogic classrooms, recommending that lessons should be structured in the following manner: collectively, reciprocally, supportively, cumulatively, and purposefully.

A number of research studies have indicated that using a dialogic teaching technique in content-based classes leads to excellent outcomes for the students in those classrooms.

It is applicable in the classroom setting of a foreign language, when the primary goal of the lesson is the acquisition of language skills. Students are given the opportunity to learn and develop their proficiency in foreign languages through collaborative discourse and group projects when they are taught using the dialogic teaching method.

According to LI and Wegerif (2014), oral educational traditions can be traced back to the origins of the dialogic educational model. Karatas et al. (2016) say that students in the

classroom have to perform orally in front of their classmates and that they need to take part in the classroom discussions. This finding is in line with what we just discussed.

Speaking is a talent that is taken for granted because it is considered to be part of everyday life. Before learners to successfully communicate verbally, they must first demonstrate mastery of a wide range of components of speaking, including vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and fluency.

In addition, the ability to communicate clearly and effectively is the talent that is most essential to the acquisition of a language.

The fact that many students do not yet possess the ability to speak verbally is a problem that persists at a high level. Speaking is an area that many students of English as a second language struggle with.

Stewart (2010) places a strong emphasis on the idea that teachers and their students are able to better understand one another and the world around them when they engage in communication.

Making vocal sounds is the act that we refer to as speaking. It means to articulate one's ideas and emotions through the use of spoken language. Speaking can range from being more of a casual conversation to a more academic presentation to a more formal address. The ability to effectively communicate relies on a number of talents, one of which is public speaking. These abilities assist the speaker in delivering their message in a manner that is persuasive to the audience.

The speaker gains numerous essential advantages, including the capacity to enlighten, convince, and guide audiences, as well as abilities that boost their job opportunities, when they are able to communicate effectively (2013).



He places a strong emphasis on the need of having strong speaking skills, not only for the success of one's work but also for the enhancement of one's personal life.

According to Buhari (2019), speaking has proven to be a more successful language skill than any of the other language skills. A proficiency in the target language is necessary for effective communication. Many people who are learning a foreign language place a high importance on perfecting their speaking skills, since this helps evaluate not only their achievement in language acquisition but also their competency in spoken language. Learning to speak is a skill that needs students to apply the knowledge and abilities they have gained in the classroom to the communication they will encounter in their everyday lives. Therefore, in order to improve their students' speaking abilities, teachers need to make use of a variety of new and innovative techniques of teaching speaking that are tailored to the various linguistic levels of their students.

According to Abdullah (2008), students learning English as a second language encounter numerous of the same issues that English language teachers and students do when it comes to teaching and speaking in an English language classroom. To begin, it is challenging for pupils to communicate in the foreign language that they are currently studying. Second, the atmosphere in which they are instructed will be detrimental to the growth of their public speaking abilities. Third, the methods of instruction that teachers use can inhibit students' capacity for verbal communication. The fourth point is that students and EFL learners have an uninterested attitude toward the English language. They feel uneasy about participating in classroom speaking activities due to their lack of experience. In the fifth place, there are psychological factors that could have an indirect influence on the speaking abilities of students.

Many researchers have indicated in their studies regarding the foreign language skills, particularly the speaking skill, that

pupils are unable to communicate in English owing to a lack of vocabulary and grammatical structures. This is something that was found by many researchers. They still are unable to construct complete phrases, which results in them speaking in their native tongue. Students frequently view making mistakes during public speaking as a frustrating experience, which is why many of them choose to remain silent in an effort to escape those settings. The five variables that contribute to these challenges in speaking are as follows: the assumptions and implicit attitudes that teachers have regarding the techniques of teaching speaking, the regulations that govern instruction and extracurricular activities, and the evaluation criteria.

Other academics have recommended that professors could engage their students in constructive learning environments in order to overcome these problems. These environments should allow students to feel safe enough to take risks, to trade roles and experiences, and to get constructive feedback.

Chow et al. (2021) conducted a study that explored the use of dialogic education as a means of enhancing English language learning among Chinese youngsters who had varying levels of English vocabulary. The participants in this study were from China. In the daily English classes, a dialogic intervention that would last for 12 weeks was put into place. According to the findings, students who were part of the experimental group that received dialogic instruction exhibited greater improvement in their expressive vocabulary knowledge on topics covered in the textbook. According to the findings, dialogic instruction in English as a second language (ESL) helps students improve their English language skills.

An English-listening and speaking class at a Thai university served as the setting for the classroom research that Jocuns (2021) carried out. In several of the classroom activities, a type of instruction known as dialogic teaching was employed to encourage pupils to speak more English.

The purpose of the study was to discuss students' reflections on classroom dialogic tasks and conduct an analysis of the dialogically that occurred between students while the activities were taking place in the classroom.

It was discovered that using a dialogic approach to teaching led to more talks not just between the instructor and the students but also between the students themselves.

Study has found several main benefits of dialogic teaching in aiding the language development of learners. Pointing out the effects of dialogic teaching on language acquisition demonstrates that these benefits have been identified through research.

It offers a useful method for scaffolding, which is beneficial to the linguistic competency of learners. In addition to this, it provides teachers with a rich metalanguage that may be used to improve students' linguistic awareness and engage pupils in the language that is being taught. By allowing for more involved exchanges between teachers and students, it can increase communication between the two groups. In addition to this, it gives educators the opportunity to use creative activities to encourage students' development of creative discourse. Several studies have pointed out how dialogic approaches to pedagogy provide students with more opportunities for engagement. (Garcia et al, 2020).

Alhasni (2014) conducted research to better understand the challenges that young learners encounter when communicating verbally. He discovered that the majority of challenges are brought on by elements such as language challenges and the utilization of one's mother tongue. Students' inadequate knowledge of vocabulary and grammar structures renders them unable of communicating in English. They are unable of forming complete sentences, and as a result, they frequently make mistakes while they are speaking in public, which causes them to become frustrated.

Halloush et al. (2020) conducted research to determine how applying dialogic teaching would affect the speaking ability of Jordanian students studying English as a foreign language in seventh grade. During the second semester of the academic year 2019, a sample was selected at random; there were two groups total, one of which acted as the experimental group and the other as the control group. The conventional approach was utilized in the instruction of the speaking ability for the control group, whereas the experimental group was instructed employing the dialogic program. According to the findings of the research, using a dialogic approach in the classroom was a significant factor in helping Jordanian students improve their speaking abilities.

In the English as a Foreign Language classroom, dialogic teaching has been reported to yield fruitful consequences.

Lin and Luk (2005) conducted research in Hong Kong regarding the increased utilization of English as a medium of communication. Teachers who participated with their students in collaborative conversations fostered creativity and encouraged their students to speak English. This, in turn, produced students who understood new vocabulary and were able to shorten the gap between themselves and the English language.

The purpose of the study conducted by Abdelwahab (2020) was to investigate the effect that utilizing dialogic teaching had on the critical thinking and meta cognitive awareness of English majors. The sample consists of 66 first-year English as a Foreign Language students at Zagazig University's Faculty of Specific Education.

In the study, participants were split into two groups: an experimental group and a control group. The researcher developed a pre-post critical thinking exam as well as a pre-post meta cognitive awareness scale. Both of these were used in the study. The findings showed that the experimental group had a higher



overall critical thinking and overall meta cognitive awareness than the control group did. This was the case for both of the categories.

Speaking is an integral component of human interaction that is frequently taken for granted. Speaking is a skill that requires mastery in a variety of areas, including pronunciation, fluency, comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary. These areas should all be learned.

## **Statement of the problem**

Based on the review of literature, and the researchers experience as a teacher of English, the problem of the study can be stated as follows: EFL Iraqi secondary school students need more improvement in their speaking skills, they lack some subs skills as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary that should be used correctly for communication.

Thus, the current study used dialogic teaching strategy to help improve the EFL speaking skill of the Iraqi students.

## **Questions of the study**

1. What is the current level of second year EFL secondary school Iraqi students speaking skill?
2. What are the characteristics of a dialogic teaching strategy that can improve EFL Iraqi secondary school students speaking skill?
3. To what extent do the dialogic teaching strategy improve the speaking skills of the Iraqi students?

## **Purpose of the study**

The current study aimed at:

1. Identifying the features of dialogic teaching strategy used to improve the speaking skills of the second-year secondary school students.

2. Investigating the effectiveness of using dialogic teaching strategy in improving the second-year students speaking skill.

## **Hypotheses**

The current study verified the following hypotheses

1. There is a statistical significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group and that of the control group on the pre-post administration of the speaking test in favor of the post administration.
2. There is a statistical significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group on the posttest administration of the speaking test.

## **Significance of the study**

The study is significant due to the following:

1. Using dialogic teaching strategy to develop EFL Iraqi secondary school students speaking skill.
2. Challenging students to develop their speaking skill.
3. Through using the dialogic teaching strategy teachers can elicit students every day common sense perspectives.

## **Delimitations of the study**

The present study is delimited to the following:

1. A sample of 70 secondary school EFL Iraqi students.
2. The first term of the year 2022.
3. Some dialogic teaching strategies to improve students speaking skills.
4. Definition of terms

5. According to Aladini (2020), speaking skill is a skill where people can express their feelings, ideas through interactive practice with the community members.

Dialogic teaching strategy is defined by AlBour (2020) as a process by which opinions are exchanged between the teacher and his students, and between the students themselves. It is a type of teaching that concentrates on collaborative learning. It helps students to view the text from different perspectives by adding different meaning to it.

## **Methods of the study**

### **Design of the study**

The present study adopted the quasi-experimental design using two groups an experimental and a control group. The experimental will be treated with the dialogic teaching strategies, while the control will receive the conventional method of teaching speaking.

### **Participants of the study**

The participants of the study are 60 EFL Iraqi students selected from Tikrit secondary school for boys. Two classes represented the experiment an experimental group and a control group.

### **Instruments of the study**

The following speaking pre-post test was designed to collect data for the study. The speaking skill test was designed to measure students speaking skills before and after the experiment.

The test was constructed following the Guide lines of the English Language curriculum in the secondary schools in Iraq. A three point analytical rubric to measure the levels of improvement in the three sub skills of the test.

## **Validity of the speaking test**

To ensure the validity of the speaking test, it was presented to a jury of eight specialists in the field of curriculum and instruction. Suggests for improving some items were carried out.

## **Reliability of the test**

To determine the reliability of the test the researcher used Cronbach's Alpha. The results showed that the speaking test is reliable at (0.83) which is a trusted value.

## **Treatment**

The dialogic strategy used is mainly called classroom and interaction between students and their teacher. It concentrated on spending more time on meaning full dialogues of student's choice to encourage meaningful discussion of oral topics.

It primarily aimed at students sharing a common goal to practice the language under the supervision of their teacher. It allowed them to pose questions and strive to make their points as clear as possible besides giving arguments to support their ideas.

The teacher then intervened to correct things and build on what the learners initiated. Both the learners and the teacher challenged the thinking of classroom members.

One of the strategies also used was linking their present activities to the past experience and modeling different ways of using oral language in speech.

## **Results and discussion**

The results of the study are reported in testing the hypotheses.

The first hypothesis proposed that there is a statistically significant difference in favor of the experimental group when



comparing the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group obtained from the administration of the speaking skill test.

To verify the first hypothesis the t test for independent samples was used. Table (1) presents the comparison of the groups on the speaking test.

Table (1) results of the speaking test for both groups.

Skills	Group	No.	Mean	SD	t-value
Pronun.	Exp.	35	2.70	.83	18.60
	Cont.	35	.73	.44	
Vocab.	Exp.	35	1.83	.383	12.32
	Cont.	35	1.00	.379	
Grammar	Exp.	35	2.90	3.5	25.83
	Cont.	35	1.77	.263	

Results in table 1 shows that the students speaking skill is below average due to lack of training in the speaking skill. This may be due to use of conventional methods in teaching and using the mother tongue instead of practicing the English language.

Testing the second hypothesis

The second hypothesis stated that there is a statistical significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in the post application of the test after the treatment. Table 2 presents the results.

Table (2) results of the speaking test for both groups after applying the treatment.

Skills	Group	No.	Mean	SD	t-value
Pronun.	Exp.	35	.93	490	11.78

	Cont.	35	1.82	.379	
Vocab.	Exp.	35	2.80	4.83	18.70
	Cont.	35	1.72	2.60	
Grammar	Exp.	35	509	3.79	16.31
	Cont.	35	3.72	2.33	

Results in table 2 illustrates that the estimated t-value is significant at the 0.01 level. This means that there is a statistical significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental groups on the post application of the test after applying the treatment. This indicates that the dialogic strategy was effective in developing secondary school Iraqi students speaking skill.

## Discussion

The study's findings pointed to a number of beneficial repercussions that might be linked to the use of the dialogic teaching technique. via means of engaging in conversations with one another and working in groups. Not only did the students acquire a new language, but they also assisted one another in expanding their knowledge and the ways in which they used that language. According to the findings of the research, children in dialogic classrooms have a supportive atmosphere, which allows them space to develop English in a manner that is similar to how students produce a language that is uniquely theirs.

The findings indicate that there was a substantial difference in the level of speaking ability between the experimental group and the control group as a direct result of the utilization of the dialogic teaching technique within the educational setting.

Dialogic teaching minimized the time spent in teaching and teacher talk to and increased the time allotted to students talk and interaction. Moreover the results of the study showed that students now have the opportunity to use new vocabulary in daily life routines in their extracurricular activities.

The students handled the English language orally which proved an indication of the effectiveness of the dialogic strategy.

The study is in agreement with that of Alexander (2008) who showed that dialogic teaching took advantage of speaking to stimulate and extend students thinking and develops their learning of the skills of the language. Besides the results of the study are in line with that of Halloush (2020) who reported that dialogic teaching aids in developing the language skills particularly the speaking skill.

### **Suggestions for further research**

- 1-Future research may experiment with the different language skills.
- 2-More research is needed on the reading skill to help develop vocabulary count and usage.
- 3-Further studies need to be conducted on a wider sample to see significant improvement as far as testing is concerned.
- 4-It is recommended that the use of dialogic teaching strategies help motivate and strengthens student involvement in the learning process.
- 5-More studies are needed to remedy EFL speaking apprehension in the different educational stages.

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