



COGNITIVE-BASED DEVELOPMENT OF SPOKEN ENGLISH SKILLS IN HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION

Anora Nasimovna Ismailova

Iskhokhon Ibrat Namangan State Institute
of Foreign Languages 2nd-year Master's
student in Linguistics (English)

Abstract: Developing strong speaking skills in English is essential for high school students as they prepare for academic and real-world communication. This paper looks at how using a cognitive approach helps develop spoken English by focusing on mental actions like attention and memory. These given insights offer practical ways to improve spoken English instruction, helping students gain confidence and competence in communication.

Keywords: cognitive approach, spoken English, high school education, working memory, metacognitive strategies, cognitive load theory.

Cognitive approaches offer a clear framework to see how high school students learn spoken English. They emphasize thinking processes like focusing attention on new words and recognizing patterns. These methods differ from traditional ones that just use repetition. Instead of passive copying behavior from learners these theories regard them as active participants who understand and arrange new information. For instance, rather than just practicing phrases over and over, students learn spoken English by connecting new words and grammar to what they already know, which helps them remember and use the language more naturally. Ellis explains that students are constantly building mental maps of the language, relating new ideas to past knowledge helps students remember and use spoken



English more easily¹. Cognitive approaches to learning languages provide useful insights and strategies for improving spoken English skills. These methods help create more focused and effective language teaching in high schools. By grasping cognitive techniques in language learning first steps are taken towards understanding how working memory aids in developing spoken English.

Working memory is crucial for high school students to develop spoken English skills. It serves as a mental workspace where they store and use information temporarily. This ability is essential when speaking in real-time. When trying to speak English fluently say several things. They need to remember vocabulary and grammar while keeping their main idea clear. According to Baddeley, the phonological loop within working memory helps with language learning and smooth speech². Many students struggle to manage these requirements during fast-paced conversations that require quick thinking and speaking. Teachers can use classroom activities like repeating long sentences or having quick debates. These activities help students improve their ability to manage information while speaking. Focusing on working memory during English lessons helps teachers support students in building real spoken fluency. This approach leads to strategies that help students improve how they speak. Knowing how working memory aids spoken English development lays the groundwork for exploring ways to boost oral communication skills.

Metacognitive strategies are key tools for improving oral communication in high school students learning spoken English. Techniques like self-checking and planning help them take charge of their speaking and boost their language skills. For example, Goh explains that learners who use metacognitive strategies can recognize their weaknesses in

¹ Ellis, N. C. (2008). The dynamics of second language emergence: Cycles of language use, language change, and language acquisition. *The Modern Language Journal*, 92, 232–249.

² Baddeley, A. (2012). Working memory: Theories, models, and controversies. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 63, 1–29.



speaking and take steps to fix them³. By thinking about their speaking before, during, and after a task, students are able to set goals, check their progress, and change their methods if needed. This process builds their confidence and improves their fluency over time. Integrating metacognitive strategies into spoken English classes gives students valuable tools for developing language skills throughout their lives, paving the way for scaffolding and other supportive techniques.

Using scaffolding and Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in spoken English lessons helps high school students learn language more effectively. Scaffolding involves giving students support while they learn new skills and slowly reducing assistance as they improve. In speaking classes teachers can show conversation techniques guide practice dialogues or provide sentence starters to encourage speaking. Vygotsky explains that working together helps students do things today that they'll be able to do alone in the future, showing how collaboration moves learning forward⁴. For instance, a teacher might match a student who is shy about speaking with a classmate who is more comfortable, so both can practice and improve within their ZPD, leading to stronger speaking abilities. When teachers gradually reduce their support – a technique called “fading” – students actually learn to use speaking strategies on their own. By using scaffolding and understanding the Zone of Proximal Development, spoken English lessons can better meet students' needs and build their confidence in speaking.

Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) helps high school teachers create effective speaking activities. CLT highlights that learners' working memory is limited. Therefore, teachers should design speaking tasks carefully to avoid overloading students. For instance, breaking complex speaking tasks into manageable stages allows students to focus on language

³ Goh, C. C. M., & Burns, A. (2012). *Teaching speaking: A holistic approach*. Cambridge University Press.

⁴ Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society* focuses on how our minds grow and develop complex thoughts. Harvard University Press.



production without excessive mental strain. In the context of spoken English, teachers can scaffold discussions, use visual aids, or provide sentence starters to lower unnecessary cognitive demands. By applying these principles, educators empower students to practice spoken English with greater confidence and accuracy. While some educators believe that real-life, unstructured speaking tasks best prepare students for authentic communication, overloading cognitive resources can hinder fluency and confidence. Evidence shows that when instructional load is managed, students gradually internalize language structures and perform more spontaneously in later stages of learning. In summary, Cognitive Load Theory underscores the importance of instructional design in spoken English activities, providing a foundation for interactive classroom techniques that further engage learners and enhance their communicative abilities. Learning how cognitive load theory relates to speaking activities leads us to explore practical interactive classroom techniques.

Interactive classroom techniques are crucial for improving high school students' spoken English skills. Research highlights that activities like role-playing and debating enhance real communication while engaging students' minds. Swain notes that group talks make learners think more about language and improve their fluency⁵. These methods let teachers link new words to real-life situations. This approach aids students in remembering words and practicing them in conversations. Ultimately, bringing cognitive strategies into classroom interactions builds a strong foundation for using practical tools that support students' growth in spoken English.

In summary, using cognitive approaches to help develop spoken English in high school classrooms is a key way to improve how students learn and use the language. Cognitive theories show how language learning occurs and highlight why mastering spoken

⁵ Swain, M (2000). The output hypothesis and beyond: Mediating acquisition through collaborative dialogue. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 97–114). Oxford University Press.



English is crucial for students. Teachers can simplify this learning by focusing on strategies such as boosting memory skills and using metacognitive tools while offering support through scaffolding. Planning speaking tasks with cognitive load in mind and including interactive activities also boosts student confidence. These methods enable educators to help students excel in spoken English and prepare them to communicate effectively in today's world.

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