Teaching Elementary ESOL Students through the Silent Period

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Cobb County School District (CCSD), Georgia. Total student population of 113,151. Total English Learner population is 17,789 in 2016-2017 (16%).

77.47% increase of CCSD’s ELS from 2011-2012 to 2016-2017.
Presentation Focus: “Silent ESOL” Group

- In 2016-2017, 433 newcomers out of 2,223 newcomers in ES had the following W-APT scores of 0-2.
  - Zero Composite = 111
  - Level 1 = 265
  - Level 2 = 57

- There were 544 out of 1,748 Kindergarten with a combined score in the Speaking and Listening domains below 2 on the W-APT.
  - Level 1 = 252 score 0-10 low
  - Level 2 = 292 score 11-18 mid
Presentation Focus: “Silent ESOL” Group

- Of newcomers in 2015-2016, 1,168 out of 2,010 newcomers had scores of Levels 1 and 2 in Spring 2016 (after 7 months in program) on ACCESS.

  - 764 were Level 1 (>= 1.0 and <2.0) on the CPL
  - 404 were Level 2 (>=2.0 and <3.0) on the CPL

- Of 2,010 newcomers in 2015-2016, 889 got the following ACCESS scores in Speaking
  - 467 were Level 1 (>= 1.0 and <2.0)
  - 422 were Level 2 (>=2.0 and <3.0)
Theoretical Framework of Importance of Shortening the Silent Period of ELs and How

Argument: **Speaking is a crucial part of the language learning process.**

- Krashen’s (1977) input hypothesis of second language acquisition theory states through listening, a language learner will **naturally** learn to speak a second language.

- Swain (1985) argues that comprehensible input must be coupled with comprehensible output (CO). Language Learners must be able to speak comprehensibly to generate interaction which promotes language production.

- The comprehensible output (CO) hypothesis states that we acquire language when we attempt to transmit a message but fail and have to try again. Eventually, we arrive at the correct form of our utterance, our conversational partner finally understands, and we acquire the new form we have produced. Swain (1985) does not claim that CO is responsible for all or even most of our language competence. Rather, the claim is that “sometimes, under some conditions, output facilitates second language learning in ways that are different from, or enhance, those of input” (Swain and Lapkin, 1995, p. 371)

- Social Interactionist Theory supports the important roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in language learning. **Social Interactionist theory** is an explanation of language development emphasizing the role of social interaction between the developing child and linguistically knowledgeable adults. It is based largely on the socio-cultural theories of Soviet psychologist, Lev Vygotsky.
Zaremba (2006) hypothesizes that, of the four language domains, speaking seems to be the most important skill required for communication.

Lomba (2012) believes speaking needs to be targeted. He subscribes to the idea that having language expectations and targeting L2 speaker’s participation in speaking will increase students’ vocabulary, thereby eventually would be willing to participate in conversations.

Effective instructors teach students speaking strategies -- using minimal responses, recognizing scripts, and using language to talk about language -- that they can use to help themselves expand their knowledge of the language and their confidence in using it. These instructors help students learn to speak so that the students can use speaking to learn.

http://www.nclrc.org/essentials/speaking/stratspeak.htm
Jumping

Excitement

Activities

Silent
We are jumping with excitement because we are leaving with fun activities to use with our English Learners during the silent period.
Ice-Breaker Activity: Helium Stick

- Helium Stick - a trust building game for kids, allows students to develop trust and build confidence among friends and peers. Informative for the teacher.
  - Students stand in a circle
  - Students hold out their hands parallel to the ground while sticking out their index fingers.
  - Teacher places an object on their index collective fingers (e.g. hula hoop, stick).
  - Students lower the object to the ground without losing finger contact with the object.
    - Students will find themselves formulating strategies as they collectively work to place the object on the ground while each student’s fingers stay in contact with the object.
What is your first reaction when you are in an unfamiliar situation or a situation where you lack the “know how?”
During the Silent Period (Pre-production Stage) students learn to . . .

- choral read and Total Physical Response (TPR)
- respond to pictures and other visuals
- listen attentively and may be able to copy words from the board
- benefit from a “buddy” who speaks their language
- understand and duplicate gestures and movements to show comprehension
- may have up to 500 words in their receptive vocabulary
What would help the speaking process?

Comprehensible Input
- Opportunities to practice language at their level of English language proficiency
- Practice with English-speaking peers

- Cooperative learning allows for comprehensible input and output
  - Small group – teacher can adapt the lesson to the listener’s needs
  - More opportunity for oral practice and repetition of content information
  - Talk is center to what is happening at the moment where corrective feedback are immediate and non-judgmental
Provide Clues to Meanings

Use drawings, dramatic gestures, actions, emotions, voice, mime, photographs and visual materials to provide clues to meaning.

If necessary, repeat your actions using the same simple structures and actions.

Simplify your message as much as possible breaking it into smaller, manageable

Make sure the student's attention is focused.

Don't insist, however, that students make eye contact with you when you are speaking to them. This is considered rude in many cultures.

Be an Active Listener

Give full attention to your newcomer and make every effort to understand his / her attempts to communicate.

Talk in a calm, quiet manner.

Demonstrate your patience through your facial expressions (smile) and body language.

Give your EL students extra time to respond.

Encourage new learners of English to act out or to draw pictures to get their meaning across if they are not ready to speak.

Don't jump in immediately to supply the words for the student.

If the student's response is heavily accented, correct by repeating the words correctly.

Resist the urge to over correct.

Modify Your Speech

Talk at a slow-to-normal pace, in short sentences.

Use a pleasant tone

Use simple sentence structure (subject-verb-object) and high-frequency words

Use names of people rather than pronouns.

Pause after phrases or short sentence Avoid using the passive voice and complex sentences.

If you have something important to convey, speak one-on-one to the newcomer rather than in front of the class.

Ask simple yes/no questions so that newcomers have an opportunity to respond.

Accept one-word answers or gestures.

Check Comprehension Frequently

Don't ask "Do you understand?" unless you have taught it. This is not a reliable check since many students will nod "yes" when they don't really understand.

Teach the phrases (or have a bilingual volunteer teach them) I don't understand, "Slowly, please," and "Please repeat."

Write down messages so students have a visual as well as auditory input.

Make a list of phrases you want your student to learn and to understand.

Ask a bilingual volunteer to work with the student on those phrases.

Two-Way Information Gap Activity (Intermediate Level)

Student A: Read the story to your partner. When you find a blank ______, ask your partner for help.

Student B: Listen to the story. Help your partner with words on the list.

Vocabulary

1. England 2. 1620 3. The Mayflower Compact

The Pilgrims came from (1) _______. They came on the ship, the Mayflower, in the winter of (2) _______. Before these immigrants landed on shore at Plymouth Rock, they signed a document to form a simple government called the (3) ___________________.

Now, take turns reading the entire story.

Student B: Read the story to your partner. When you find a blank ______, ask your partner for help.

Student A: Listen to the story. Help your partner with words on the list.

Listening and Speaking

Listen then read along – practice intonation, fluency, sequence, confidence, pronunciation, comprehension, individual, with partner

http://www.enfact.com/beginenglish.htm

Cloze

The book is in the library. Jodi ____ to the library. She wants to borrow it. She uses her card to check it out. She takes the book back home. She sits on the couch. She reads the first page. It is good. She reads twenty more _____. It is not that good anymore. Jodi returns the book.

The book is in the library. Jodi ___ to the library. She wants to borrow it. She uses her card to check it _____. She takes the book back home. She ___ on the couch. She reads the first ___. It is good. She reads twenty more ___.

Beyond lyrics? Try reading aloud audio passages

Library

The book is in the library. Jodi goes to the library.

She wants to borrow it. She uses her card to check it out. She takes the book back home. She sits on the couch. She reads the first page. It is good.

Library

Vocabulary


March 2017, Seattle 2017 TESOL - Chandler, Polomario, and Maznatis
Speaking Domain: Activities for ELs

Let’s talk about . . .

Pre-activities
- Tic-Tac-Toe
- Memorization
- Count Down

Lyrics

Reader’s Theater
- Differentiate with
- Audio Passages
- Alternatives
- Variations
- Two-Way Information Gap

Balloon Truth or Dare

Students will relax and have fun participating in a comfortable nonthreatening setting.

March 2017, Seattle
This is a ________.
These are ________.

Adaptable
Singular
Plural
Proficiency level
Word bank
Subject
Vocabulary
Tasks
Interchange items / cards

chips
Pre-Activity: Short on Time, Long in Content?

**Goals**
- Practice speaking skills: asking / giving information / opinions, agreeing / disagreeing, speculating / telling a story.
- Identify key vocabulary.
- Practice reading skills by scanning a text for key points.
- Generate interest in the movie/song clip.

**Remember**
- Short time limits
- Offers variety and fun
  ...too much of a good thing (don’t overuse)
- Make sure it’s appropriate for learning style and lesson
- Purpose is to encourage speaking skills
- Motivator and confidence booster

**Building Background**
Pre-Activity

Read/study the passage for 10 seconds.
Be prepared to write words you remember.
Focus on key words like nouns and verbs.
You will have 20 seconds to write what you remember.
Now take about 1 minute to compare your list with a partner and add any additional words from your partner to your list.
Finally, as a group we will share our words to create a class list.
We can now sort, cluster, or order the words from our master list as to any connections or order the words may have.

Times can vary.
Moana Waialiki is a sea voyaging enthusiast and the only daughter of a chief in a long line of navigators. When her island's fishermen can't catch any fish and the crops fail, she learns that the demigod Maui caused the blight by stealing the heart of the goddess, Te Fiti. The only way to heal the island is to persuade Maui to return Te Fiti's heart, so Moana sets off on an epic journey across the Pacific. The film is based on stories from Polynesian mythology.
• **Study the lyrics and vocabulary**
In addition to digesting the content, it’s also important for the student to review the vocabulary on a regular basis. Break the song down, word by word, and try to master each word so that it’s a part of their vocabulary. Regardless of your students’ singing ability, encourage them to sing out loud to the music. This forces the mouth to adopt the right shapes and move with the rhythm of the song.

• **Try to sing from memory**
After practice, the next step would be to sing without looking at the lyrics. Notice how words from everyday speech improve.

• **Periodically review**
The student doesn’t have to completely learning one song before moving to another. And then after enough time passes, they can go back to the first song “spaced repetition.” More effective than trying to learn it perfectly all at once.

• **Find new music that builds on top of what you’ve learned**
This may be challenging for teachers to find the song(s) and students to build on prior knowledge. Each new song should have the right balance of totally new vocabulary and in progress vocabulary. This right level of overlap keeps the student motivated, and also naturally reinforces the previous learning.
So what I believe you were trying
to say
is "thank you."
"Thank you"? You're welcome.
What? No, no, no.
I-I didn't... I wasn't...
Why would I ever...
(chuckling): Okay, okay.

I see what's happening, yeah

You're face to face with greatness
and it's strange

You don't even know how you feel
It's adorable

Well, it's nice to see that humans never change
Open your eyes (shrieks)
Let's begin
Yes, it's really me
It's Maui, breathe it in
I know it's a lot
The hair, the bod
When you're staring at a demigod
What can I say except you're welcome?
For the tides, the sun, the sky?
Hey, it's okay, it's okay-- you're welcome
I'm just an ordinary demi-guy
Hey, what has two thumbs and pulled up the sky
When you were waddling yea high?
This guy
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79DijltQXMM
Brushing Teeth
She walked into the bathroom. She took the cap off the tube of toothpaste. She squeezed some toothpaste onto her toothbrush. She turned on the cold water. She brushed her upper teeth and spit out some toothpaste. She brushed her lower teeth and spit out some more toothpaste. She rinsed out her toothbrush. She put the toothbrush back into the toothbrush holder. She put some water into a cup and rinsed out her mouth. She spit out the water and walked out of the bathroom.
Variation in Reader’s Theater for ELs

Turn lyrics from a song to a Reader’s Theater

- Combine language domains; listening, speaking, reading, and writing

Any other ideas?

- Please share an activity you tried to support ELs through the silent period

Student can write scripts
- Memorization
- Peer Interaction
- Diversity in Subject Matter
- Performance Opportunities
- Excitement in Performance

Entertaining and engaging means of improving speaking, fluency and enhancing comprehension
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The Pilgrims came from (1) ___________. They came on the ship, the Mayflower, in the winter of (2) ________. Before these immigrants landed on shore at Plymouth Rock, they signed a document to form a simple government called the (3) _______________________.

Now, take turns reading the entire story.

Student B: Read the story to your partner. When you find a blank ________, ask your partner for help.

Student A: Listen to the story. Help your partner with words on the list.


The Pilgrims had a difficult time because many were sick from crossing the (1) _______________, the weather was very cold, and they had only a little food. Native Americans including (2) _____________ and (3) ____________ helped the immigrants by giving them food and advice.

Now take turns reading the entire story.
Balloon Truth or Dare

- This activity allows students to relax and have fun participating in a comfortable nonthreatening setting. Encourage, but don't force.
- Have an outgoing student go first and have the shy students be somewhere in the middle (lessen anticipation).
- Slight twist from classic truth or dare.
- Students choose whether they want a personal question (a truth) or to do something silly (a dare).
- The teacher should select student-friendly items for this activity by adapting the statements using vocabulary and grammar at the level being taught.
  - Write down on small strips of paper dares that most students probably would be willing to do and questions most would be willing to answer.
  - Take the strips of paper with the truths and dares and put them inside flat balloons.
  - Blow the balloons up and scatter them around the room.
  - You may want to have the truths in red balloons and the dares in blue balloons. Or, you can have truths and dares all mixed up.

Once class starts, each student picks a balloon and pops it to reveal the truth or dare.
1. What did you look like when you were a teenager years old?
2. Dance a memorable dance.
3. When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up?
4. Sing a song / chant you learned on school, solo.
5. Who is your favorite musician?
6. Pretend like you’re riding a horse.
7. What is the best thing about your life right now?
8. Snore or snort.
9. If you could live anywhere in the world, where would you live?
10. Make a sound like a chicken.
Thank you for joining our presentation
References


Krashen (1977) input hypothesis of second language acquisition theory states through listening, a language learner will naturally learn to speak a second language (natural approach).


