

THE ROLE OF WH- QUESTIONS IN TEACHING SPEAKING SKILLS AT SCHOOL

Nazarova Mukhayyo Khaydarovna

*English teacher of specialized school № 1 Chinaz district, Tashkent region,
Uzbekistan*

Abstract

This article is aimed to describe the importance of wh-questions while teaching speaking in English, in particular, how to express speaking ability, making questions and giving answers through guided WH-question. The guided WH-question are conducted in the form of WH-question by using the particular expression of asking and giving answer.

Key words: language development, wh- questions, speaking capacity, learning process

Introduction

The student's ability of speaking English as a foreign language aims to how well a student can do it. If the student cannot express his or her ideas, opinions or expressions clearly, people will think he/she is not fluent in English. On the other hand, people will think his/her ability of English is good when the student can express ideas, opinions or instructions fluently.

According to my experience of teaching English as a teacher at comprehensive school in my hometown Chinaz , I found that many students cannot speak English, even they are not able to express everyday simple sentences. They cannot answer the questions asked during the learning process. Based on the experiences above, I often try to teach them simple questions and then give them the same questions in order to improve the ability of student's English speaking, through giving them simple and short questions in everyday English. In daily learning activity, the students get the difficulties to make a written form. It is because all grammatical rules and developing ideas. The students often make grammatical mistakes in English usage when they are speaking, such as grammatical errors, language use,

and mechanics. And when the students have to do speaking task, they only think how to develop the ideas. Importantly, the main thing that I want to say is that, teacher should be more active for making students speaking English better every single day.

Main part

As Florez and Mary Ann (1999) state that speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and processing information. By speaking, students are not only required to be able to produce specific points of language such as grammar or vocabulary (linguistic competence). Asking and answering “Wh-” questions is a key part of language development. The questions used here are WH-Questions which consist of *what, who, where, when, why* and *how*. In guided WH-questions, the teacher guides the students by giving the students WH-questions. These questions guide the students to develop the ideas and organize them become a good text. Wilhelm (2007:39) states that, “students are able to develop their ideas using guided question”. The benefit of guided WH-questions technique in speaking English is enables students to encourage their thoughts or ideas which are expressed in English speaking with good grammatical rules. Children must be able to understand questions in order to have a conversation and pass on information to others. Starting to ask and answer “Wh-” questions is a milestone that most children start to reach between the age of 1 and 2 years, and they will continue to develop their receptive and expressive language in the lead up to school. Speaking is one of the language skills which very important in learning a language. According to linguists, “Speaking is an important form of communication in day to day life, but it is especially important to teach in school and university”. People use speaking form to communicate between one to other people.

What are “Wh-” questions?

“Wh-”questions are certain types of questions we ask to get information about different things and are used frequently every day at home and in the classroom:

- Who – asks about a person (eg. ‘who won the race on Saturday?’)
- What – asks about something (eg. ‘what is that?’)

- When – asks about a time (eg. ‘when do you finish work?’)
- Where – asks about a place (eg. “where are we going?”)
- How – asks about the manner, condition or quality (eg. “how does this work?”)
- Why – asks about a reason (eg. “why is the sky blue?”).

Why are they important?

It is important that children ask and answer Wh-questions, as they lay the groundwork for children to participate in conversations, demonstrate knowledge, and collect information about themselves and their world. Children learn Wh-questions in a sequence starting with more concrete questions about their immediate environment – eg. “What” is the earliest question mastered, followed by “Who” and “Where.” Finally, an understanding of “When” and “Why” develop, with “Why” being the most difficult to master.

Methods that can be handy for working with students

How can you help your students learn to understand and answer Wh-questions?

- Start with the easiest Wh- questions first (e.g. what) and then progressing to harder, more abstract questions (e.g. when)
- Working on only one question at a time to avoid confusion.
- Model answers to questions if your child is not sure how to answer them correctly (e.g. “What did you have for lunch today?”You had your sandwich and an apple’
- Provide multiple opportunities and repetitions of similar questions across different activities (e.g. asking “what” questions during book reading and using the same ‘what’ questions during a game of eye spy)
- Use visuals to represent different “Wh-” questions (e.g. you might have picture of different places for ‘where’ questions or pictures of people for ‘who’ questions)

Some of structures by Azar are given below (taken from Fundamental of English Grammar, Azar, 1992:144-154).

1. How often

It asks about frequency. The other ways of asking “How often” are how many times a day/a week/a month/a year.

2. How far

It asks about distance. The other ways of asking “How far” are how many miles, how many kilometers, and how many blocks.

3. How long

It asks about length of time. The other ways of asking “How long” are how many minutes, how many hours, How many days, How many weeks, How many months, and How many years.

4. How about

It asks about questions that refer to the information or questions that immediately proceeded. It is also used to make suggestions or offers.

5. How do you do

It is used by both speakers when they are introduced to each other in a somewhat formal situation.

6. How old

It asks about measurement of age.

7. How high

It asks about height of a thing.

8. How tall

It asks about height of a person.

Activities that can help build an understanding of Wh-questions: While reading simple storybooks with illustrations or pictures,ask your child questions like, “*Who* is this? *What* is he/she doing? *Where* is the child going? *When* will he/she come back? *Why* is he/she leaving?” Practice these types of questions, as well as saying the answer. Ask questions about your child’s day at school using Wh-questions. “*Who* did you sit with at lunch? *Where* did the class go for music time? *When* did you play outside? *What* did you eat for lunch? *Why* you brought home your books? Cut pictures from magazines/books. Make a Wh-question chart

with each type of question in a separate column. Show your child a picture and ask him/her to place the picture in the correct column. For example, you show the child a picture of a man – he/she puts the picture in the *Who* column. An apple – he/she places in the *what* column; a picture of a park – he/she places in the *Where* column.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is obvious that the importance of wh- questions in learning foreign language particularly, English language is great. It is suggested to teachers of English to explain the use WH-questions as a guide in speaking more detail, in order that the students understand what the purpose of each questions using WH, how they should answer, combine and develop them become good English speaking. To explain on how to use correct tense, grammar and mechanics in speaking to students.

References:

- Azar, Betty, Schramper, 2006 “*Basic English Grammar*” Prentice Hall Inc. United States of America.
- Azar, Betty, Schramper 1992 .“ *Fundamentals of English Grammar*”. Prentice Hall Inc. United States of America.
- Cox, Carole. 1999. *Teaching Language Arts: A students and Response-centered classroom (3rd Ed)*. London: Viacom Compan
- Derewianka, Beverly. 1990. *Exploring How Texts Work*. Australia: Primary Teaching Association.
- Elbow, Peter. 1980. *Speaking with Power: Techniques for Mastering the Speaking Process*. New York: Oxford University Press.