

# Using SOLO Taxonomy in Developing Oral Fluency and Self Confidence of the First Year Prep Stage Students

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## **Abstract:**

*The current study is mainly intended to develop the EFL oral fluency skills and self-confidence of the preparatory stage students through the structure of observed learning outcome ( SOLO taxonomy). Accomplishing this purpose, the present study followed the pre-post, quasi-experimental-control group design. The researcher used two groups; experimental and control groups. Conducting the current research , a number of forty EFL first preparatory stage students from AL Nasseriya prep school, East Zagazig Directorate, Sharkia Governorate, Egypt, was randomly allocated in two groups , twenty students for experimental group and twenty for control group, characteristically managed a pre – and post – testing technique for the purpose of data gathering and analyzing .The researcher designed EFL oral speaking test to measure EFL oral fluency skills and self-confidence scale to measure the dimension of self-confidence according to their gradual development by using SOLO Taxonomy before and after the treatment . Generally the current study was conducted over a period of ten weeks, along 20 sessions for pre test, applying the gradual steps of the SOLO on oral fluency skills and self-confidence. Finally ,the results of the study approves that the structure of observed learning outcomes (SOLO Taxonomy ) is effective in developing the EFL oral fluency and self-confidence of the preparatory stage students ,also it has clear and noticeable effect on their motivation to speak and talk orally .*

**Keywords:** SOLO Taxonomy, EFL oral fluency skills, self-confidence

## **I. Introduction:**

Language, especially speaking is considered the main skill in producing language. It expresses the ability of oral communicative competence and proficiency, so speaking is fundamental and expresses two types of information to the listener, the semantic and phonologic ones.

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Ability to inform, persuade, and direct, Business managers, educators, military leaders, lawyers and politician, among others ,seeks to develop their speaking skills to such a level that they are transformed into master communicators ” “ Ability to benefit derivatively. Well-developed verbal skills can increase one’s negotiation skills. Self-confidence is improved”(Gillis.G, 2013).

A Speaker has to be able to anticipate and produce a specific discourse situation. Despite the importance of speaking, it’s considered the most neglected skill. Speaking a language is especially difficult for foreign language learners, because it requires the ability to use the language appropriately in social interactions and to recall the various amounts of vocabulary he has been taught before.

“The ability to speak fluently is still essential for most users of English: for functioning either in a face to face events such as conversations, lectures and presentations, lessons or interviews, or in distance communication such as telephone or computer-mediated conversations, webinars or conferencing.” (Gillis ,2013).

\*According to **Gorkattseva, Gozhina, Nagelb (2015)**, competence (the ability to interact verbally) is regarded as a natural outcome of language teaching and learning. One of the major characteristics of communicative competence is fluency. Oral fluency is a specific feature characterizing the level of speaking skills which manifests itself in the learner's ability to speak freely, without unnecessary pausing and with the prosody of speech, syntax and vocabulary range comparable with those characteristics of the speech of a native speaker,

Also to speak fluently, students need to have self-confidence. Many researches made a correlation between speaking of L2 and self-confidence. One of those was for **Ismail (2015)** who stated that Self-confidence has key characteristics to start any action especially for speaking in L2. Among all other language skills, speaking is an exclusive place to have effective communication, and self-confidence is one of the facilitators to start a conversation. In this regard, this study aims to find out whether there is a relationship between self-confidence and speaking skill achievement in speaking courses for fluency of the preparatory students attending both the English language teaching department and Literature.

.Teachers in EFL classrooms face difficulties in teaching spoken language and how to deal with oral practice and speaking tasks. The problem is observed through the teaching of language in classes, in the real and current field, the recent graduates from preparatory and secondary stages and even from faculty of education and through the opinion of other teachers and supervisors. They confess that there is a great problem in the outcomes of speaking and oral fluency especially. Students can’t speak well semantically and phonologically. For **Gorkattseva, Gozhin& Nagel (2015)**, pointed to the problem of enhancing fluency by using the connection between cognition and communication. For grade one preparatory stage many teachers see that it is the grade that connects the previous with the following stages. Also, students of this grade have a good amount of vocabulary and structures that could help them to master their language and show good competence in pronouncing and speaking to words.

SOLO (structure of observed learning outcomes) provides a structured framework for students to use and to improve their learning. It encourages students to think about where they are currently with their learning and what they need to do to have progress. It has five stages Pre structure / uni structure / multi structural / rational /

extended abstract). So we can build on these stages for improving oral production of (oral fluency). These stages help students gradually to command their language and speak fluently.

\*\*\*As the researcher mentioned Previously, **Rossiter, Derwing, Manimtim & Thomson (2010)** assured that in this way using SOLO Taxonomy, we can master speaking to the top and scaffold the bottom. And also for **Richard & Rodgers (1986)** SOLO Taxonomy could be a total physical response technique (TPR) because it is considered as a method that depends on approach and design. The design depends on psychological (self-confidence) and linguistic techniques.

The SOLO Taxonomy is based on the study of outcomes of academic teaching. SOLO is short for "Structure of the Observed Learning Outcome" and the taxonomy names and distinguishes five different levels according to the cognitive processes required to obtain them: "SOLO describes a hierarchy where each partial construction [level] becomes a foundation on which further learning is built" (**Biggs, 1995**). SOLO can be used to define ILOs "intended learning outcomes" forms of teaching that support them, and forms of assessment that evaluate to what extent the ILOs were achieved **Brabrand & Dahl (2009)**. It is developed aiming .research-based university teaching as the research activities behind it ultimately converge on real research (i.e. on the production of new knowledge) at its fifth and highest level. The five levels are as follows, in increasing order of structural complexity (**Biggs & Collis, 1982, 2003, 2007**)

*\*\*SOLO 1: "The Pre-Structural Level"*

Here the student does not have any kind of understanding but uses irrelevant information and/or misses the point altogether. Scattered pieces of information may have been acquired but they are unorganized, unstructured, and essentially void of actual content or relation to a topic or problem.

*\*\*SOLO 2: "The Uni-Structural Level"*

The student can deal with one single aspect or oral sentence and make obvious connections. The student can use terminology, recite (remember things), perform simple instructions, paraphrase, identify, name, etc.

*\*\*SOLO 3: "The Multi-Structural Level"*

At this level, the student can deal with several aspects or sentences but these are considered independently and not in connection. Metaphorically speaking; the student sees the many trees, but not the forest. He could enumerate, describe, classify, combine, apply methods, structure, execute procedures, etc.

*\*\*SOLO 4: "The Relational Level"*

At level four, the student may understand relations between several aspects and sentences and how they might fit together to form a whole. The understanding forms of many sentences in dialogues or lectures to be spoken well, thus have the competence to compare, relate, analyze, apply theory, explain in terms of cause and effect by expressing his thoughts fluently, etc.

**\*\* SOLO 5: "The Extended Abstract Level"**

At this level, which is the highest, a student may generalize structure beyond what was given, may perceive structure from many different perspectives, and transfer ideas to new areas. He may have the competence to generalize, hypothesize, criticize, theorize, and persuade using his spoken thoughts fluently, etc.

The oral progression is moving up through the SOLO levels. Surface learning implies that the student is confined to action at the lower SOLO levels (1-2-3); whereas deep learning and fluency imply that the student can act at any SOLO level (1-5), including the higher levels (4-5). As we move up the SOLO hierarchy, we first see quantitative improvements as the student becomes able to deal with first a single aspect (from 1-2) and then more aspects (from 2-3). Later we see qualitative improvements (from 3-4) as the details integrate to form a structure between spoken sentences; and (from 4-5) as the structure is generalized and the student can deal with information that was not given. For these reasons, levels 2 and 3 are sometimes referred to as quantitative levels; levels 4 and 5 as the qualitative.

**Purpose of the study:**

This study aims at:

1\* Enhancing EFL first year prep stage students' self-confidence to speak the language fluently by the use of SOLO Taxonomy.

2\* Enhancing EFL first year prep stage students' oral fluency by the use of SOLO Taxonomy

**Study problem:**

According to the previous experience of the researcher; observation of students; specialists' views and the researcher's visits to various classes inside schools in East Zagazig Zone, Sharkia administration, the researcher noticed that there is low level of speaking, especially for oral fluency among students of prep stage (the 1st year), The outcome of the skill is not as desired for the aim of the educational system and the goal of TEFL.

**Questions of the study:**

The present study was an attempt to answer the following main question:

How could oral fluency be developed among the first-year students by the use of SOLO Taxonomy?

The following sub-questions could be derived from the above-mentioned question?

1\* What is SOLO Taxonomy?

2\* How effective is using SOLO Taxonomy in developing speaking?

3\* How effective is using SOLO Taxonomy in developing oral fluency?

4- How effective is using SOLO Taxonomy in developing self-confidence

### **Significance of the study:**

This study may help:

#### **1\* Students**

\*To enhance students' level of oral language production.

\*To enhance students' self-confidence to speak foreign languages.

#### **3\* Teachers**

\*To attract students to learn easier than before.

\* To build on different levels of students' learning to reach the desired outcome.

\*To benefit the teachers of other languages to use this new method.

#### **4\*Specialists:**

To provide specialists with a new method to achieve the aimed outcomes.

### **Instruments of the study:**

For achieving the main goal of the current study the researcher used:

- a) A pre-post EFL oral fluency Skills test, to measure the students' oral fluency development, discourse competence, pragmatic, before and after the experiment.
- b) Observation checklist scale to measure the students' self-confidence dimensions before and after the experiments to illustrate the effect of using SOLO Taxonomy.

### **Delimitation of the study:**

\* This study was delimited to

1- A sample of the 1st year general preparatory stage (40 students; 20 for the control group and 20 for the experimental group), because it's considered the beginning of the new prep stage and a base of the following years. Also, it's a year of connection of primary stage and prep one. The researcher found that they had a low achieving level of oral fluency.

2-Developing speaking skill especially oral fluency which are necessary and appropriate for the first year preparatory students, which are determined by the jury members.

3-Developing self-confidence through SOLO Taxonomy levels.

### **Procedures of the study:**

To achieve the aim of the study, the following procedures were adopted:

1- Reviewing the relevant literature and previous studies related to using SOLO Taxonomy, oral fluency and self-confidence.

2-Preparing a list of EFL oral fluency skills needed for 1<sup>st</sup>-year prep stage by consulting the experts to select the most appropriate ones to be developed.

3-Constructing pre-posttest and submitting them to jury members to identify their importance and validity.

4- Preparing a self-confidence questionnaire of oral fluency and submitting them to a jury of specialists to identify the most important dimensions.

5-Constructing self-confidence scale and submitting them to the jury members to identify their validity.

6-Designing a model of session based on using SOLO Taxonomy, intending to enhance the identified EFL self-confidence and oral fluency and validating the content by submitting it to a jury of the specialist.

7-Selecting a sample of 1<sup>st</sup>-year preparatory school EFL students and identifying how far is their oral fluency.

8- Pre administrating the oral fluency test and the self-confidence scale to the group to identify the real standard of students concerning the previously identified skills.

9- Teaching the group by giving them tasks developed according to the levels of SOLO Taxonomy, tasks related to the previous taught topics .

10-Post administrating the oral fluency test and self-confidence scale to the experimental sample.

11- Finding out the result of the pre-test and post-test.

12- Comparing the results of both administrations

13- Collecting and analyzing the data using SPSS.

14- Presenting the study results, discussion, and interpretation.

15- Providing a conclusion, recommendations, and suggestions for further

### **Results of the study:**

Ultimately, the general results of the current study confirm that:

a) The quasi-experimental group outperformed the control group in the post-test of overall oral fluency test and its sub-skills.

b) There would be statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the quasi- experimental group in the pre-post test of overall oral fluency skills favoring the post-test.

c) The Structure of observed learning outcome(SOLO Taxonomy )is effective in developing the EFL oral fluency skills of the first year preparatory stage students.

d) The Structure of observed learning outcome(SOLO Taxonomy has clear effect on developing the students' self-confidence.

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