THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF DESIGNING THINKING METHODS IN DEVELOPING STUDENTS' ORAL SPEECH

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Annotation: This article explores the theoretical foundations underpinning the use of design thinking methods in developing students' oral speech competence. It first reviews classical and contemporary theories of creative thinking, human-centered design, and communicative competence, then examines how design thinking phases (empathize, define, ideate, prototype, test) can be applied in oral speech pedagogy. The study argues that integrating design thinking fosters learner autonomy, iterative refinement of speech, and deeper engagement. Finally, practical implications and directions for future research are suggested.

Keywords: design thinking, oral speech, communicative competence, learner autonomy, iterative pedagogy, creative thinking, human-centered design.

Oral speech competency is a primary aim in language education, and it includes not just grammatical accuracy but also communication efficiency, spontaneity, and flexibility. Traditional techniques frequently emphasise drills, repetition, and teacher-led correction, which may restrict learners' inventiveness and response. In contrast, design thinking-a human-centered, iterative, and solution-oriented approach-provides a potential theoretical lens for reconsidering how we teach and scaffold oral speech development (von Thienen et al., 2018; Guaman-Quintanilla, 2025).

This research attempts to define the fundamental basis of design thinking methodologies and investigate their use in improving the oral communication abilities of learners. It specifically addresses the following questions.

1. Which theoretical traditions influence design thinking as a methodology?

2. How might design thinking stages be used to oral speech pedagogy?

3. What advantages and disadvantages result from applying design thinking to improve verbal competence?

Theoretical foundations of design thinking include creative thinking and early influences.

Design thinking originated in imaginative problem-solving conventional wisdom. In the 1950s, John E. Arnold's Creative Engineering seminars established the idea that creativity could be taught (von Thienen et al., 2018, p. 14). [Arnold, 1959]. Arnold proposed that creative thinking included reframing challenges, investigating numerous viewpoints, and accepting uncertainty (von Thienen et al., 2018, p. 15).

Following Arnold, Robert H. McKim proposed a need-based design theory that prioritised human needs and value creation (von Thienen et al., 2018, p. 20) [McKim, 1959]. According to McKim, design is ultimately information regarding meeting human wants in context, and designers should iteratively enhance their offerings while paying great attention to consumers' actual interactions with them.

Human-Centered Design and Empathy. Human-centeredness, or sympathy, is a basic element of design thinking that involves intimately understanding the user's or community member's point of view (Plattner et al., quoted in Guaman-Quintanilla, 2025). This theoretical perspective is consistent with constructivist and humanistic pedagogies, which place an emphasis on individual student agency, previous interactions, and comprehension co-construction.

In the context of education, Guaman-Quintanilla contends that design thinking may be defined as a constructivist learning paradigm in which students actively produce, test, and revise their own artefacts (Guaman-Quintanilla, 2025, p.

4. This reflects both Dewey's experiential learning and Piaget's active knowledge production.

Communicative Competence and Oral Speech Theory. To place the importance of design thinking in spoken language pedagogy, someone must first investigate competence in communication theories (Hymes, 1972) and speech act theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). According to Hymes, successful speech necessitates not just formal grammar skill but also sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence.

Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory provides additional insight: oral speech develops through social contact and the zone of proximal development, mediated by more proficient interlocutors (Vygotsky, 1978).

Thus, incorporating design thinking must be sensitive to students' zones of possibility of growth and provide built up assistance.

Furthermore, Qurbonova (2023) in Theoretical Foundations of the Development of Oral Speech Skills notes that speech training typically combines linguistic, communicative, and methodological components, and emphasises that learners might have difficulty with "language clichés" or deeply embedded errors (p. 19). [Qurbonova; 2023].

3. Design Thinking and Oral Speech Pedagogy:

a) Empathise with the learner's needs. During this phase, teachers and students collaborate to identify the learners' speaking issues, goals, and audience expectations. Interviews, questionnaires, and learner reflections are useful techniques for identifying pain sites (Dikgomo & Ackerdien, 2025, p. 3). For example, a student may suffer with hesitancy or lack of coordination in talks, which becomes a design "problem" to solve.

b) Define/articulate the challenge. After accumulating empathetic facts, learners create an unambiguous problem statement, such as "How can I deliver a persuasive 5-minute

speech fluently and with enthusiasm?" This parallels the "How Might We" frame in design thinking (von Thienen et al., 2018, p. 22) [McKim, 1959]. Defining the challenge helps concentrate following ideas.

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