

Fluency and accuracy in English language

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Плавность и точность в изучении английского языка

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Аннотация: в данной статье анализируется точность и плавность в изучении английского языка, этот вопрос обсуждался на протяжении многих лет. Некоторые формалисты утверждают, что изучение языка означает формы обучения и правила, некоторые активисты придерживаются иного мнения и утверждают, что изучение языка означает научиться использовать его.

Abstract: this topic of accuracy and fluency has been a controversial issue that has been discussed for many years. Although some formalists argue that learning a language means learning forms and rules, some activists take a different view and claim that learning a language means learning how to use a language.

Ключевые слова: подход, точность, беглость, язык, обучать.

Keywords: approach, accuracy, fluency, language, learning.

Fluency plus Accuracy Approach

Although the fluency-oriented approach seems so different from the accuracy-oriented approach, introducing some elements of accuracy in it is feasible. In fact, this view is shared by many EFL teachers. Ebsworth has found that the majority of teachers surveyed favor the judicious use of grammar for accuracy within a meaning-centered communicative approach (1998). Moreover, many EFL teachers have already been practicing this. Let's take a look at this example. "I went a movie." is a plausible answer by an EFL student to the question, "What did you do during the weekend?" From the fluency-oriented view, the teacher is expected to ask about the movie rather than to correct the sentence. However, the teacher is most likely to say, "Oh, you went to see a movie," instead of jumping to the question, "What movie did you see?" This type of natural reaction, known as consciousness rising, (Rutherford 1987) works as feedback from the instructor, reminding the speaker of errors in a positive way [1, p. 37].

Learners, however, may still need some other opportunities to become fully aware of their errors, for the instructor's reaction cannot be sufficient. One reason is that the instructor can seldom imply all the errors that should be corrected, especially when the learner is telling a long story. The instructor should restate only a limited number of errors; otherwise the learner's motivation to talk will be fettered. The other is that the learner may not have a chance to repeat the correct sentence if he wants to continue his story. As long as communication is the main purpose, to give up the topic for a repeating exercise should be avoided. For these two reasons, the instructor's natural response cannot always fulfill the necessity of error correction.

Since the instructor cannot give enough correction, it is necessary to seek other sources for feedback. One possible alternative in the EFL class is peer feedback. Peer feedback needs to be controlled properly by the instructor, for it, like corrections by the instructor, can be detrimental to the learner's motivation. First, the instructor must make sure that adequate amount of feedback is given to the learner. Too many corrections may discourage the learner, while too few corrections will fail to do the trick. Secondly, the instructor should see if feedback is given in an appropriate manner. The instructor must avoid introducing such direct corrections among learners as may cause undesirable tension in the classroom [2, p. 43].

As it is possible to add accuracy elements to communicative activity, so is it to add communicative elements to repetitive practice. Since the problem of repetitive practice is that monotonous repetition causes lethargy, what the instructor has to do is to create a circumstance to carry out real communication, in which the learner can find the meaning in repeating what has already been said. For example, at a party one must repeat self-introduction each time he/she meets new people. This is real communication, and the person is not likely to get tired of saying the same thing as long as he/she wants to meet more people.

The difficulty of introducing repetition in communicative work lies in how the instructor can build into repetitive communicative work the target language items that will be acquired. In other words, the learners should be able to carry out meaningful communication while they are repeatedly using the target language items that are yet to be fully acquired. For instance, those who have already experienced enough self-introduction will improve no further however many times they do the same self-introduction. To make them change the way of self-introduction without a proper reason may spoil the authenticity of communication. After all, target language

items should be provided only when the learner realizes the necessity of the particular items, otherwise communication will lose its authenticity [3, p. 26-28].

References

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