Fluency and Accuracy in The EFL Oral Expression and Comprehension classroom

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ABSTRACT

Speaking the target language is often defined by both EFL students and teachers as the principle objective of language learning. However, all foreign language teachers recognise that, this is in fact, one of the most difficult skill to develop, giving that the aim of speaking is hindered by many factors resulting in most being reticent and unforthcoming when asked to speak the target language. Thus, EFL students may have difficulty in speaking fluent and accurate English. The present research took place at Djillali Liabes University of Sidi Bel Abbes (Algeria), exactly in English as a foreign language oral classes. It aims at analysing learners' attitudes in the EFL oral expression and comprehension classroom as well as to detect whether the focus on accuracy could hinder the practice of oral communication as well as cause problems in learning..Thus, both classroom observations and an interview were chosen as tools for data collection. Since the aim of language learning is to enhance EFL learners' oral proficiency, this paper aims to highlight the value of both fluency and accuracy in the EFL oral expression classroom, for the latter to be reached.

Keywords: Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL); Foreign Language Learning (FLL); Oral expression and Comprehension classroom, Fluency and Accuracy.

1. Introduction

In this section, provide an adequate background of the study and add the current researches to show the gap of the research. The section headings are arranged by Numbers, bold and 12 pt Corbel, single spacing. The paragraphs should be single-spacing. The spacing, before or after, is 6pt. In this section, provide an adequate background of the study and add the current researches to show the gap of the research. The section headings are arranged by Numbers, bold and 12 pt Corbel, single spacing. The paragraphs should be single-spacing. The spacing, before or after, is 6pt.

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in learning. Thus, both classroom observation and an interview were chosen as tools for data collection.

2. Method

2.1 Finding and Discussion

During classroom observation held by the researcher, different Classroom activities were adopted such as classroom discussion, learners' presentations, simulations and dialogues, group discussions. Generally when dealing with debate in the oral expression classroom, learners used to sit in a U shape arranged by classroom tables and chairs in order to be able to face each other and the teacher. This kind of seating arrangement was suitable for giving the opportunity to each learner to participate. In doing this activity, a topic of discussion was a very necessary and the only element that could generate a classroom discussion in a well-structured manner.

In doing classroom discussion, the teacher often asked learners to respond to certain questions related to the general topic or ideas that were emerged as part of whole-class interactions. For the responses, learners were randomly selected regardless of their seating, gender or origin to make sure that they all got represented in the interaction process and did not feel that their contribution was unworthy(Arnold, 2010).

During classroom discussion, learners also used to help each other in anything they needed, especially when trying to address the teacher. If any learner happened not to remember a word, his/her friends supported him or her to say the correct answers. This could demonstrate the interactional collaboration among learners during strategy training (Siti, Nick, Melor, 2010) since the responsibility of learners to be supportive of others was essential and required to be reciprocal.

In doing oral presentations, learners used to be asked to prepare a topic assigned to them and to present it in class. This activity was fruitful in increasing learners' oral presentation skills. Learners used to make formal oral presentations. Each presentation was followed by a question/answer period, and concluded by the teacher's comment. After learners' reading of a topic related to the text, for example an article, they could pick up a concept for discussion. Their discussion could dwell on expanding the practical meaning of the concept, finding solution to a problem or bringing up innovative thoughts to the topic. The use of oral presentations aimed to foster learners' critical thinking with the support of reading articles and then discussing them in class in an active environment. This could confirm with Crone's view of discussion in an active learning environment as being preparing learners to be critical thinkers and in turn less passive(Crones, 1997). This activity seemed to be of great interest to help learners develop such a way of thinking that would enable them to successfully maintain oral interactions with people of all walks of life.

As for group/pair work, learners were firstly asked to form groups of three to five members or to form pairs. It was considered as a first stage of handling the latter whether be group discussion, pair dialogue or simulation. As a part of assigning group roles, learners were required to interact with their friends the selected topic and then to perform individually the

discussed elements to the teacher. The teacher often walked around the class to monitor learners' interactions. The teacher used to be careful to insure that all learners were up to the task. Simultaneously, learners were supported by their teacher with the provision of both encouragement and language help.

Moreover, in the process of achieving group/pair activities, the teacher used to ask learners to pay attention to each others' mistakes, as well as provide opportunities for learners with low academic performance to work with their peers. This was helpful to promote leadership and cooperation among them. Organizing learners in both pairs and groups seemed very interesting since learners would have the same mindset on how to approach the task and which in turn allowed them to complete it more efficiently. This made it possible to keep any one from feeling singled out as well as establishing interrelationships, help and understanding among learners.

The results of the interview showed that the objective that teachers wanted to achieve in teaching oral expression was to make their students able to speak English fluently. They all assume that their major task is to facilitate interaction and communication and this can be reached by establishing a good relationship with students. Helping students to develop strategies in order to communicate in the target language is another major goal as claimed by four teachers.

As for the nature of interactions, both fluency and accuracy were favoured by the teacher. The aim of the teacher from giving this equal interest to both fluency and accuracy was to make learners communicate freely and at the same time be interested to avoid all what could distort the meaning of what they wanted to say, such as the inappropriate production of grammar and pronunciation. The latter was generally caused by learners' poor ability to adequately pronounce or even grammatically structure their language even before producing it. The teacher used to raise learners' awareness to this issue to adopt it, so that to become able to speak the language properly from their first year of learning English in the university. Fluency was favoured to help learners engage in meaningful interactions as well as to maintain an ongoing communication, whereas accuracy was encouraged to make learners accustomed with speaking comprehensibly.

3. Conclusion

Language is the key to our basic communicationsand is the one that allows us to learn from one another, to share experiences and express our needs. Accuracy and Fluency are two factors which can determine the success of English language students in the future. Essentially accuracy is the ability to produce correct sentences using correct grammar and vocabulary. On the other hand, fluency is the ability to produce language easily and smoothly. Thus, in the EFL oral expression classroom, it is important for EFL teachers to adopt the idea that too much bias one way or another is not good. Accuracy without fluency is not useful in the same way that fluency without accuracy is also not useful. A good mixture – biased towards the needs of the student – is the ideal way to go.

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