

ACTIVE LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES IN PROMOTING STUDENTS' FLUENCY AND ACCURACY RELEVANT TO THE AGE, NEEDS, LEVEL AND GOALS

The purpose of this research is to outline which strategies to choose in order to help students to attain reasonable fluency and a high level of accuracy within acquiring foreign language. It is for sure the goal of most language teachers and students.

Accuracy and fluency are the two factors which determine the success of English language students in the future. Whether to focus on accuracy or fluency is the main problem faced by language teachers today. Accuracy refers to the ability of the learner to produce grammatically correct sentences. The learner should not only know correct grammatical rules of the language but also be able to speak and write accurately. Fluency refers to a level of proficiency in communication. It is the ability to produce written and spoken sentences with ease, efficiency, without pauses or a breakdown of communication.

We choose content, techniques and methods to use at each lesson. But sometimes teachers feel uncertainty choosing between accuracy or fluency based activities. The question is: which is more important? If the activities are too fluency-based you risk having your students disregard with the proper use of structures. On the other hand, if the activities are too accuracy-based they might need too much time to get ready for communication. In order to understand which of them is of greater importance we should define clearly the goals of learning and the stages of every particular lesson.

The main goal of foreign language teaching is to develop students' communicative skills and their language competence. We teach them to use language structures and vocabulary in order to communicate in culturally appropriate ways. That is, language structure is at the core of SL competence, communication is the use to which language structure and vocabulary are put, and this is done in a cultural context whether in a local- or a remote-SL classroom (this being necessarily make-believe, culturally) or in the actual environment. We see that grammar (structure and vocabulary) and producing speech, so that accuracy and fluency are closely related [3]. Neither of them can be produced without the other. Teachers should not over emphasize on accuracy or fluency because learners can lose their confidence in learning one of them. But sometimes fluency should prevail over accuracy and vice versa. There are a lot of ideas as for the choice of accuracy-fluency activities which are relevant to students' age, their level and needs.

Firstly, we must take into consideration students' age range. As we all know, the techniques and activities we choose, resources we use should be appropriate to students' age. The choice of dominating activities (fluency or accuracy) depends on the age of students. Fluency must be dominant for beginners due to their psychological peculiarities. Over correcting and focusing too much on accuracy does not encourage students to learn to communicate. Students need to feel relaxed about language learning and feel they are capable of more. This does not mean mistakes should be ignored but

they may need to be addressed individually at once or later, after finishing the task. Whenever a pupil is trying to tell you something, accept whatever he or she says – mistakes as well. Constant, direct correction is not effective and it does not help to create a productive class atmosphere. Correction has its place when you are working on guided language exercises, but not when you are using the language for communication. [4, c. 10]

Secondly, we consider our students' level. We set different goals at different stages of studying. Students possessing more advanced levels of language knowledge should be offered more fluency-based activities because they are taught to communicate. The more students know and are able to use, the more they are able to become fluent. When students communicate fluently they feel comfortable using the language and they can be understood by others. This does not mean that there are no mistakes in their communication, but those mistakes do not affect what they are trying to get across. Accuracy must be essentially present on higher educational levels. The reason for this is that accuracy refers to the correctness of the language being produced. But if students focus too much on accuracy, it doesn't mean they can be fluent.

Thirdly, we should ascertain what part of the lesson it is. Each lesson is divided into parts depending on teaching goals. We usually begin with introducing something new, like vocabulary, structures or even expressions. After that, students move on to practice what they have learned. The introduction phase is the time when students need to be more accurate. At this stage the teacher focuses on what is correct or incorrect and becomes sure that students are ready to use what they have learned. As we get to practice students need more control over what and how they say things. At this stage fluency becomes more essential.

It's important to take up specific student needs. Being at different levels students may have very different needs. This is why we often ask our students why they are learning English. Their needs are very important when we choose appropriate tasks for the lesson. In most cases, adult students need to learn to communicate. Communicative competence refers to the ability of a speaker to communicate effectively in the language. This ability is based on more than just grammatical knowledge. The objective is to be able to communicate effectively.

The choice of learning strategies and classroom activities depends on the pupils' age psychological characteristics. In order to keep learners' attention it is important not to overload children and choose active learning strategies which will wake our pupils up, make them move about, create movement and/or noise.

Active learning is a process whereby students are engaged in activities, such as reading, writing, discussion, or problem solving that promote analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of class content. Cooperative learning, problem-based learning, and the use of case methods and simulations are some approaches that promote active learning. [5]

Active learning is generally defined as any instructional method that engages students in the learning process. In short, active learning requires students to do meaningful learning activities and think about what they are doing. While this definition could include traditional activities such as homework, in practice active learning refers to activities that are introduced into the classroom. The core elements of active learning are students' activity and their engagement in the learning process. Active learning is often

contrasted to the traditional lecture where students passively receive information from the instructor.

Students' commonsense takes its place here. There are complexities that make challenging, as they say "easier said than done". Active learning is the same as doing something, not just thinking about it.

It's important to understand the shift from passive to active forms of learning

Passive Learning → Active learning

Listening to the instructor

Looking at the occasional overhead or slide

Reading (when required) the textbook

Simulations

In-class writing

Demonstrations

Group or team discussion

This shift is described in a model of Bloom's Taxonomy. It can be summarized (from *lowest* level to *highest*) as follows:

Remembering (*Lowest Level*) - All learning starts with memorizing. For example, before learning how to read and write the English language, we need to memorize the English alphabet.

Understanding – Having memorized the alphabet, we need to understand the way letters come together to form words.

Applying - Can we combine words in different ways to form sentences and express thoughts?

Analyzing - Spotting differences. Comparing and contrasting.

Evaluating - Arguing and appraising. Having completed analysis, can we make conclusions?

Creating (*Highest Level*) - Having mastered all the above mentioned levels, can we move ahead? Can we create our own new points of view?

Active learning instructional strategies include a wide range of activities that share the common element of involving students in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing. Active learning instructional strategies can be created and used to engage students in (a) thinking critically or creatively, (b) speaking with a partner, in a small group, or with the entire class, (c) expressing ideas through writing, (d) exploring personal attitudes and values, (e) giving and receiving feedback, and (f) reflecting upon the learning process. It should also be noted that active learning instructional strategies can (a) be completed by students either in-class or out-of-class, (b) be done by students working either as individuals or in group, and (c) be done either with or without the use of technology tools. When an instructor employs active learning strategies, he or she will typically (a) spend greater proportion of time helping students develop their understanding and skills (promoting deep learning) and a lesser proportion of time transmitting information (i.e., supporting surface learning). In addition, the instructor will provide opportunities for students to (a) apply and demonstrate what they are learning and to (b) receive immediate feedback from peers and/or the instructor.

The concept of active learning, that is increasing students' involvement in the learning processes, is an indispensable technique for increasing the effectiveness of teaching. In many cases, active learning can be employed without any increased costs and with only a modest change in current teaching practices. It is low risk with high return. [2]

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