

Exploring the Balance between Fluency and Accuracy in Language Teaching Methodologies: A Comparative Analysis of PPP, TBL, CLT, and GTM

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Abstract: This paper delves into the balance between fluency and accuracy in language teaching methodologies, analyzing the approaches of Presentation Practice Production (PPP), Task-Based Learning (TBL), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and Grammar-Translation Method (GTM). While some methodologies prioritize fluency, others prioritize accuracy, leading to diverse learning outcomes. The paper advocates for a comprehensive approach that addresses both aspects effectively to enhance language teaching practices. Achieving a balance between fluency and accuracy is crucial for effective language learning, as overemphasis on one may hinder the development of the other. By adopting a holistic approach, language learners can develop both fluency and accuracy, thereby enhancing their overall proficiency. This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on language pedagogy and emphasizes the importance of balanced language instruction in achieving proficiency.

Keywords: Accuracy; Comparative Analysis; Fluency; Language Teaching Methodologies.

1. Introduction

Language teaching methodologies have undergone significant evolution over the years, driven by the quest to effectively balance the dual objectives of fluency and accuracy in language acquisition. The mastery of fluency, defined as the seamless articulation of thoughts, and accuracy, reflecting precision and correctness in language use, stands as a cornerstone in language pedagogy. This paper embarks on a comprehensive examination of prominent language pedagogies, notably Presentation Practice Production (PPP), Task-Based Learning (TBL), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), to meticulously dissect their treatment of fluency and accuracy. Despite the diversity in approaches, a prevalent observation emerges: an inherent imbalance often exists between these two critical components, resulting in divergent learning outcomes. This discourse underscores the imperative of achieving a harmonious equilibrium between fluency and accuracy in language education. By advocating for pedagogical approaches that holistically address both aspects, this paper endeavors to enrich the discourse on language pedagogy and advance more effective language teaching practices.

2. Literature Review

Complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF) can all be utilized to assess L2 performance and competency in an appropriate and thorough manner (Ellis, 2008). Housen and Kuiken (2009) argue that CAF are used as both performance descriptors and indicators of learners' proficiency in both oral and written evaluations of language learners. Hence, the markers of second language proficiency have been determined to be complexity, accuracy, and fluency (Skehan, 2009).

According to Hammerly (1991), in comparison to complexity and fluency, accuracy may be the most primitive, straightforward, and constant concept. Bryne (1979) contends that accuracy is the use of the accurate form of language in

which the utterance has little or no errors that impact the phonological, syntactic, semantic, or characteristics of conversation. Thornbury (2000) argues that accuracy is judged by how well the learner's output matches some external criterion, and the idealized output is that of a native speaker. The capacity to prevent presentational faults is referred to as accuracy (Ellis, 2009).

Hilton (2008) believes that fluency has traditionally been used in layman's terms to refer to a person's overall language ability. Fluency, according to Arevart and Nation (1991), is the capacity to convey communicative intents without too many pauses or hesitations, resulting in hurdles or disruptions in communication. The fluency is equivalent with language usage, and fluency activities are ones that emphasize message above form (Thornbury, 2000). Ellis (2009) claims that fluency is defined as the capacity to communicate in real time, highlight meaning, and maybe use additional lexical systems.

When teaching a second language, teaching methods should be aligned with students' goals, which are directly related to success in second language learning (Rubinfeld, Sinclair & Clément, 2007). In the early years, some educators recognized the importance of cultivating fluency and accuracy in their language teaching. According to Dodson (1967), in bilingual teaching, the purpose of language teaching is to ensure that learners have fluency and accuracy in spoken and written language. Language learners anticipate fluency and accuracy to be incorporated into their language learning process in recent years. English Language learners have the goal of being able to master English with a high degree of accuracy and fluency, this is because a substantial proportion of English language learners have a variety of English language learning needs, English language learners seek better-quality language teaching, while employers have increased expectations of their employees' English accuracy and fluency (Richards, 2005; Stillwell et al., 2010).

3. Between Pedagogies and Fluency and Accuracy

Among the several pedagogies, PPP is a model for

developing language skills, particularly speaking skills, and accuracy is prioritised in PPP development. As Criado (2013) argues that accuracy is emphasized in the Presentation-Practice-Production Model, and in the practice phase of PPP, there is some emphasis on activities aimed at achieving accuracy in order to achieve fluency in subsequent production activities. Furthermore, as stated by Wichadeeq (2017), the PPP model aims to move from accuracy to fluency, and the PPP model also focuses on form. That is to say, first, accuracy will be valued in the PPP model, and then after the emphasis on accuracy is completed, PPP will be transferred from fluency.

Foster and Skehan (1996) consider TBL as a pedagogical method in the field of language acquisition and learning that focuses on students completing meaningful tasks in a target language, with evaluations focused mostly on task results rather than language form accuracy. Contrary to the PPP model, TBL first emphasizes fluency and then shifts to accuracy. The goal of TBL is to integrate the four abilities of speaking, listening, reading, and writing, progressing from fluency to accuracy plus fluency (Hasan, 2014). As a result, both fluency and accuracy are developed in TBL, and language learners' proficiency could be fully developed.

In task-based contexts, successful performance on language learning tasks is categorized by Skehan (2009) into these three categories, first, the ability to use a language with complexity and higher level, and second, the ability to utilize a language with higher accuracy and ability to avoid language errors, third, the ability to use normal-speaking language and produce better fluency. In addition, regarding the detailed description of specific tasks, tasks based on concrete or familiar information and tasks that contain a clear structure have accuracy and fluency, in addition, interactive tasks have accuracy and complexity, and tasks that require information processing have a higher complexity, and post-task has and can improve accuracy (Skehan, 2003).

CLT is a learner-centered, meaning-based pedagogical approach to second language instruction that focuses on information understanding and production rather than the teaching or correction of language forms (Spada, 2007). According to Brown (2001), CLT is created so that students are pushed to utilize language in order to increase their communication skills in real-life settings. Therefore, CLT focuses on the fluent interaction of learners with others, and fluency is valued and widely used in CLT, and the emphasis on fluency comes at the expense of accuracy (Alakrash, 2021; Brown, 2001; Chambers, 1997; Ju, 2013). Furthermore, the concept of fluency in the CLT is getting increasingly detailed. As Brumfit (1984) argues that fluency was the most efficient functioning of the language system acquired by learners at that time. Whereas, according to Chambers (1997), fluency in CLT refers to the efficacy of language usage when working within the restrictions of restricted linguistic knowledge.

GTM is a translation-based method for teaching English, the key characteristic of GTM is that it concentrates on learning grammar principles and applying them to translation from one language to another (Bishop, Svensén & Williams, 1998). Unlike CLT, which mainly focuses on communicative competence, GTM primarily focuses on linguistic competence (Brown, 2001). In terms of fluency and accuracy, GTM mainly focuses on accuracy. As Prastyo (2015) argues, GTM aims to achieve the accuracy of learning English, in contrast to CLT's focus on fluency. It is not difficult to understand, as Kaharuddin (2018) argues, as a traditional

language teaching method, GTM mainly focuses on writing or reading, but does not pay enough attention to speaking and listening. For example, for an employee, it is more important that their employee can translate an accurate document than that they just translate a document quickly and fluently. Therefore, in the language teaching using GTM, accuracy is valued, and accuracy is therefore developed and supported in GTM.

4. The Balance between Fluency and Accuracy

Krashen (1981) pointed out that there are three types of language learners in L2: the first is for those students who need to be accurate yet can't communicate fluently because of it, and the second group is students who have acquired the majority of the language but do not know the rules or are terrified of making any mistake, and the third type includes students who blend acquisition and learning, as well as those who use rules in written and planned speech as well as fluency in spontaneous speech. However, Skehan and Foster (1999) argue that if language learners pay too much attention to accuracy when learning a language, it may lead to a lack of fluency, and an overemphasis on fluency may lead to a lack of accuracy. Specifically, in English writing, over-focusing on correct English restricts English language learners to only use sentence structures that they are confident they are correct, resulting in their inability to fluently write complex and diverse sentence structures (Hyland, 2003). Similarly, Skehan (1998) argues that, in terms of English language learners' spoken language performance, over-focusing on accuracy will limit students' fluent use of language for oral expression, and they only dare to use the language they are confident to express accurately, and they are afraid to perform fluently complex spoken language. Therefore, in language learning, if the fluency is excessively missing, that is to say, language learners are too entangled in whether the target language is accurately expressed when using the language, then they will not be able to fluently express their ideas through the use of target language. Conversely, if accuracy is excessively absent, that is, language learners put too much emphasis on developing their language fluency when learning the target language, they will have difficulty using the target language accurately when they have to. In addition, for language learners' communication objects, such as teachers, if language learners pay too much attention to accuracy or fluency, teachers will have communication barriers when communicating with language learners. For example, as stated by Thornbury (2000), most teachers would agree that there are certain children who have minimal fault in their language but are difficult to interact with since every word they use in communication is created through a tough procedure, in addition, another sort of student communicates quickly and fluently in the target language, but they are prone to making mistakes, resulting in incorrect language use and collocation, making this student's language difficult to grasp for their communication counterparts.

Therefore, as Skehan (1998) suggested, pedagogical principles need to promote balanced development and focus on complexity, fluency, and accuracy in order to make progress in all of these areas. However, in this article, we will focus on the balance of accuracy and fluency in the language classroom.

The goals of English language learning in China have

shifted as the context in China has evolved more favourable to the development of English teaching and learning. Chinese English learners feel that fluency and accuracy are becoming increasingly significant, and that they have a greater demand for fluency and accuracy. Shen (2013) conducted research on some Chinese college students with certain English language proficiency, and under the premise of balancing fluency and accuracy, found some methods to help Chinese English learners use the target language fluently and accurately in English classrooms. Shen conducted research on some Chinese college students with certain English language proficiency, and discovered some methods to assist Chinese English learners utilize the target language fluently and accurately in English courses under the concept of balancing fluency and accuracy. In order to maintain the balance between fluency and accuracy in the English classroom, Shen proposed five methods that can be applied to the language classroom, namely combining communicative approach with grammar-translation method, encouraging guided peer-interaction and student-teacher interaction, teachers' transferring their roles, teachers' equipping themselves with knowledge and appropriate teaching methods, and attaching equal importance to both accuracy and fluency exercises.

Regarding the method "Combining Communicative Approach with Grammar-translation Method", Shen (2013) believed that teachers should mix language education with real language circumstances and materials in order to successfully connect the Communicative Approach with the Grammar-translation Method, in addition, rather than merely using traditional patterns to learn grammar, teachers should employ communicative activities in the classroom to assist students become comfortable with correct language usage and to allow them to practice and enhance their communication skills. Addressing the method "Encouraging Guided Peer-interaction and Student-teacher Contact," Shen believes that peer-to-peer interaction should be promoted, in addition, the interaction between teachers and students in and out of class should also be encouraged, and teachers should use knowledge to guide student, and teachers should also correct students' errors and encourage students to dare to express and communicate in the target language. Concerning the technique "Instructors' Transferring Their Roles," Shen believes that, in addition to the role of imparting knowledge, teachers should be the best role in various scenarios, such as work as resource organizers and managers of classroom processes. Shen emphasizes that teachers should have wide range of knowledge to deal with varied teaching materials and students when it regards to the method "Teachers Equipping Themselves with Knowledge and Appropriate Teaching Methods." In terms of "Attaching Equal Importance to Both Accuracy and Fluency Exercises", Shen believes that teachers should perform related exercises or tasks based on the content that students are familiar with and should spend more planning time before performing related tasks.

5. Activities That Support Fluency and Accuracy

According to Richards (2005), there are activities that value fluency and activities that value accuracy; the former could perhaps reflect natural language utilization, and concentrate on facilitating communication, and then entail purposeful utilization language, generate unpredictable language and connect language usage to context, the latter

might mimic classroom language usage, concentrate on the production of accurate examples of language, practice language outside of context, practice brief language sample, does not need meaningful dialogue, and regulate language choice.

In order to support the accuracy and fluency of spoken English of Chinese English learners, Wang (2014) proposed pedagogical method including four stages, namely pre-speaking activities stage, while-speaking activities stage, post-speaking activities stage and extension practice stage. Combined with the method proposed by Wang, an activity about developing fluency and accuracy should be organized like this. During pre-speaking activities, first, learners are given enough planning time to plan what they decide to say, then, teachers help students to prepare by giving some background knowledge and key vocabulary for students to refer to, and then teachers can then play some relevant audio or video to motivate students. In the while-speaking activities stage, teachers can issue some speaking tasks to students, and students can exchange ideas in information-gap tasks to reduce the information gap with peers, and they can cooperate with each other through problem-solving tasks to solve some problems together, and students can discuss some specific topics in social monologues. During post-speaking activities, first, students notice some features they think about the target language, then learners can compare the target language with their own native language, and then students can integrate some features of the target language into their own language use as they see fit. Second, students can improve accuracy by assessing their own language output and self-repairing. Third, students can record their own language output, and teachers can give correct feedback to students through the recording. In the extension practice, students improve their fluency and accuracy by repeatedly practicing their speaking.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the exploration of language teaching methodologies underscores the nuanced interplay between fluency and accuracy in language acquisition. While various approaches prioritize either fluency or accuracy, the significance of striking a balanced integration of both cannot be overstated. An overemphasis on one at the expense of the other may compromise the holistic development of language proficiency. Thus, this paper advocates for the adoption of pedagogical strategies that judiciously cater to the cultivation of both fluency and accuracy. Such an approach holds promise for fostering comprehensive language proficiency, aligning with the multifaceted needs of language learners. As language pedagogy continues to evolve, maintaining a concerted focus on achieving equilibrium between fluency and accuracy remains paramount, ensuring optimal learning outcomes and empowering learners in their linguistic endeavors.

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