

UDC 811.111:37.091.3

DOI <https://doi.org/10.24919/2308-4863/77-2-44>

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FLUENCY AND ACCURACY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Teaching English to university students requires a balance between fluency and accuracy. Both aspects are crucial for effective communication, but they serve slightly different purposes and should be addressed appropriately in a university-level English course. The paper explores the importance of accuracy and fluency in teaching and learning English and emphasises they are both essential components of mastering a foreign language. Teaching both accuracy and fluency requires a structured approach that addresses students' academic needs and prepares them for real-world communication.

Within the scope of this paper, we focus on effective strategies for promoting and integrating fluency and accuracy in English language classrooms. Fluency and accuracy in language teaching are important since they complement each other. We believe it is necessary to foster fluency and accuracy in English language classrooms that result in higher levels of communicative competence. These two aspects help learners become effective communicators who can express themselves clearly and confidently while adhering to the linguistic norms of the language. The paper aims to provide the best ideas and effective practices to be implemented in an English language classroom: using authentic materials, providing constructive feedback, integrating task-based learning, and encouraging peer collaboration. The responsibility of every teacher is to develop a balanced and structured approach when every student gets a chance to work on fluency and accuracy. The teacher should provide constructive feedback that addresses both accuracy and fluency. By balancing the development of accuracy and fluency in English, university students can effectively communicate in academic settings and beyond, preparing them for future academic success and professional endeavours.

Key words: accuracy, fluency, feedback, the English language teaching.

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ПЛАВНІСТЬ МОВЛЕННЯ ТА ПРАВИЛЬНІСТЬ МОВЛЕННЯ У ВИКЛАДАННІ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ

Викладання англійської мови для студентів університету вимагає балансу між плавністю мовлення (fluency) та правильністю мовлення (accuracy). Обидва аспекти мають вирішальне значення для ефективної комунікації, проте служать децю різним цілям і мають належним чином розглядатися в курсі англійської мови на університетському рівні. У статті досліджується важливість правильності мовлення та плавності мовлення у викладанні та вивченні англійської мови і підкреслюється, що обидва аспекти є важливими компонентами оволодіння іноземною мовою. Навчання як правильності мовлення, так і плавності мовлення вимагає структурованого підходу, який відповідає академічним потребам студентів і готує їх до спілкування в реальному світі.

У рамках цієї статті ми зосереджуємося на ефективних стратегіях сприяння та інтеграції плавності та правильності мовлення на заняттях англійської мови. Плавність та правильність мовлення у викладанні мови важливі, оскільки вони доповнюють одна одну. Ми вважаємо, що необхідно розвивати плавність та правильність мовлення на заняттях з англійської мови, оскільки це сприяє підвищенню рівня комунікативної компетентності. Ці два аспекти допомагають студентам стати ефективними комунікаторами, які можуть висловлюватися чітко та впевнено, дотримуючись норм мови. Стаття має на меті надати найкращі ідеї та ефективні практики для впровадження на заняттях англійської мови: використання автентичних матеріалів, надання конструктивного зворотного зв'язку, інтеграція навчання на основі завдань, заохочення до співпраці. Відповідальність кожного викладача полягає в тому, щоб розробити збалансований і структурований підхід, коли кожен студент отримує можливість попрацювати над плавністю та точністю мовлення. Викладач повинен надавати конструктивний зворотний зв'язок, котрий стосується як правильності мовлення так і плавності мовлення. Збалансовуючи розвиток плавності та правильності мовлення, студенти університету можуть ефективно спілкуватися в академічному середовищі та поза його межами, що готує їх до майбутнього академічного успіху та професійної діяльності.

Ключові слова: плавність мовлення, правильність мовлення, зворотний зв'язок, навчання англійської мови.

Introduction. Teaching English to university students requires a balance between fluency and accuracy. Both aspects are crucial for effective communication, but they serve slightly different purposes and should be addressed appropriately in a university-level English course. Teaching both accuracy and fluency requires a structured approach that addresses students' academic needs and prepares them for real-world communication. By pr

There has been much discussion about these two aspects in the field of second language acquisition, with arguments supporting either one or the other.

The purpose of the article is to demonstrate the importance of accuracy and fluency in teaching and learning English and emphasise they are both essential components of mastering a foreign language. Within the scope of this paper, we focus on effective strategies for promoting and integrating fluency and accuracy in English language classrooms. Fluency and accuracy in language teaching are important since they complement each other. Accuracy brings fluency and fluency brings further accuracy (Dincer, 2012). These two aspects help learners become effective communicators who can express themselves clearly and confidently while adhering to the linguistic norms of the language. By balancing the development of accuracy and fluency in English, university students can effectively communicate in academic settings and beyond, preparing them for future academic success and professional endeavours.

Main Layout. *Accuracy* in teaching English refers to the ability to use correct grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, and pronunciation when communicating in the English language. It emphasises producing language that adheres to the accepted rules and conventions of the language, resulting in clear and precise communication. Accuracy involves using the appropriate verb tenses, sentence structures, word forms, and word choices to convey thoughts and ideas accurately.

In an educational context, accuracy is a fundamental aspect of language learning and teaching, alongside fluency. While fluency focuses on the smooth and natural flow of communication, accuracy ensures that the content is grammatically correct and free from errors. Teaching accuracy involves providing students with explicit instruction on grammar rules, vocabulary usage, and proper pronunciation. It also involves giving students opportunities to practice and apply their knowledge in written and spoken tasks, while receiving feedback and corrections to improve their language accuracy over time.

Many English language exams pay a lot of attention to accurate use of language, and accuracy

is crucial in written communication such as emails, reports, essays. Inaccurate writing can lead to misunderstanding, and can reflect carelessness, a lack of attention to detail, and general incompetence (Chong, 2019). Accuracy is the basis of fluency while fluency is a further improvement of a person's linguistic and communicative competence. They are closely connected and inseparable (Shen, 2013). English proficiency is defined not only by the level of fluency but also the level of accuracy. Students can be pretty fluent in using the language and still make a lot of mistakes which may lead to misunderstandings in communication (Chog, 2019).

Fluency refers to the ability to communicate smoothly and effectively without unnecessary pauses or hesitations. This involves developing students' speaking and writing skills to express their thoughts and ideas coherently. Although there are no widely agreed-upon definitions of language fluency, it is often described as the ability to produce language on demand and be understood. Fluent language users can access language knowledge and produce language unconsciously, or spontaneously. They are expected to produce language in real time without unusual pauses, false starts, or repetitions, though some of these are elements of natural speech. The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for English language teachers presents a comprehensive conception of language proficiency and provides a clear description of range, accuracy, fluency, interaction, and coherence as qualitative aspects of spoken language use.

Fluency is a critical aspect of language proficiency as it reflects a higher level of command of a language. "Achieving fluency requires practice, exposure to the language, and ongoing development of language skills through immersion, conversation, reading, and writing" (Klingner, 2024). It is highly regarded both in academic and "real-world" contexts (McCarthy, 2009). Fluency may give you an advantage in the labour market, as employers are more likely to choose applicants who demonstrate the best command of the language. This may lead to better job prospects and easier access to further education in a foreign country (McCarthy, 2010).

Here are some strategies to teach fluency:

Speaking skills:

Conduct discussions, debates, group activities and role-plays that require students to express opinions and defend arguments. These activities encourage students to think on their feet and respond quickly, improving their spoken fluency. Develop fluency by setting up activities with time limits or in pairs/groups where students need to react and respond

spontaneously. Students can simulate real-life situations like job interview or customer service interactions in a role-play. Class discussions about current events or thought-provoking topics encourage students to express their ideas, actively listen to others, and engage in meaningful exchanges (Kumar, 2023).

Language Games: Introduce language games that encourage spontaneous language use, such as word association, story building, and improvisation. These games make learning enjoyable and foster linguistic creativity.

Listening Skills:

Create real-life contexts: incorporate authentic materials such as videos, podcasts, news articles, academic lectures and interviews. These materials expose students to natural language usage and different accents, helping them become comfortable with real-world communication. Develop listening comprehension through activities like note-taking, summarizing, and discussing main ideas. This approach enhances students' fluency while reinforcing accuracy through exposure to correct language forms.

Reading Skills:

Teach strategies for efficient reading comprehension, such as skimming, scanning, and inferring meaning from context. Discuss academic texts to help students understand complex ideas and arguments.

Writing skills:

Use timed writing tasks to encourage students to think and write quickly. This can help them overcome the tendency to overthink and become more confident in their writing abilities.

Accuracy refers to using correct grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. While fluency focuses on fluid communication, accuracy ensures that the communication is clear and precise.

Here is are some strategies to teach accuracy:

Grammar and Syntax:

Provide targeted grammar lessons that address common mistakes university students make. Focus on essential grammar rules and structures that improve writing and speaking accuracy. Give explicit instruction on grammar rules relevant to academic writing and speaking. Use exercises such as gap fills, error correction tasks, rephrasing, and sentence restructuring to practice grammar in context. Encourage students to analyse and apply grammar rules in their own writing and speaking.

Vocabulary Building:

Introduce a variety of vocabulary words and phrases relevant to academic contexts. Teach synonyms, antonyms, idiomatic expressions, and specialized terminology to enhance their language

repertoire. Teach academic vocabulary relevant to their field of study. Include strategies for learning and remembering new vocabulary, such as word maps, collocations, and contextual usage.

Pronunciation and Intonation:

Focus on clear pronunciation and word stress patterns important for academic presentations and discussions. Practice intonation to convey meaning and emphasize key points in presentations. Incorporate pronunciation drills and exercises to help students articulate sounds correctly. Clear pronunciation improves oral communication and enhances their overall language proficiency.

Writing Skills:

Introduce academic writing conventions, such as formal tone, structure (e.g., essays, research papers), and citing sources. Provide feedback on organization, coherence, and cohesion in written assignments. Assign writing tasks and encourage students to proofread and edit their work for accuracy. This helps them develop the skill of self-correction, which is essential for improving their writing quality.

Error Correction and Feedback:

Provide constructive feedback on students' written and spoken work, focusing on common errors. Encourage them to learn from their mistakes and avoid repeating them.

Harmer stresses the need to make a clear distinction between accuracy and fluency in feedback during oral work (2011). During communicative activities generally, the teachers should not interrupt students in mid-flow to point out a grammatical, lexical or pronunciation error, since it interrupts the communication. Teacher's intervention in such circumstances can raise stress levels and stop the acquisition process. Teachers usually do not correct errors in fluency-based tasks, such as open-class discussions, when learners are expected to make longer and more complex statements and require more concentration (Harmer, 2007).

The approach that has gained popularity in recent years and can be beneficial in fluency-based tasks is delayed error correction. It is a technique used in teaching English as a second language where the teacher waits to correct students' errors until later, rather than immediately correcting them during class.

Delayed error correction allows for a more natural flow of communication in the classroom, as it reduces the number of interruptions and corrections made during class time. This can help to maintain a positive and engaging classroom atmosphere, allowing students to focus on what they are learning. It helps to maintain the student's motivation and confidence while still addressing the error (Lutsiv, Sabat, 2023).

We believe in a holistic approach where fluency and accuracy are integrated into English language teaching, at different stages in the learning process. A lesson could start with a focus on accuracy through explicit grammar instruction and drills, followed by fluency-based activities like role-plays or discussions (Lightbown, Spada, 2021). Timing and contexts are also crucial in deciding whether to focus on fluency or accuracy. Early stages of learning may benefit from accuracy more, whereas advanced learners might need to shift towards fluency to polish their communication skills.

To effectively integrate accuracy and fluency in English language classrooms the teacher should design activities that incorporate language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) to simulate real-world tasks, provide constructive feedback that addresses both accuracy (grammar, vocabulary) and fluency (clarity, coherence), use authentic texts and multimedia to expose students to natural language use and academic discourse, and encourage peer collaboration and feedback to practice language skills in a supportive environment. Well-designed peer work allows students to receive immediate feedback on their performance which may result in more fluent speech.

Conclusions. Teaching both accuracy and fluency in English to university students requires a balanced approach that addresses their academic needs and prepares them for real-world communication. Accuracy is the basis of fluency while fluency is a further improvement of a person's linguistic and communicative competence. They are closely connected and inseparable (Shen, 2013). It is necessary to foster fluency and accuracy in English language classrooms that result in higher levels of communicative competence. The responsibility of every teacher is to develop a balanced and structured approach where every student gets a chance to work on fluency and accuracy. A teacher needs to design materials according to students' language proficiency levels and academic goals, and foster intrinsic motivation by connecting language learning to students' academic and career aspirations. By implementing effective strategies that promote both fluency and accuracy and providing constructive feedback, teachers can create a supportive atmosphere that encourages students to communicate their ideas without fear of making mistakes.

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