

FLUENCY VS. ACCURACY: WHY FOCUSING ON GRAMMAR CAN HOLD YOU BACK

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Annotation. Due to modern technologies, it has become easier for an individual to learn a new language than it used to be. However, despite all these developments on teaching strategies and technology, many new language learners still have issues mastering the target language fluency. It is primarily due to embracing traditional methods of teaching, which emphasize grammar instruction. This article explores why overreliance on grammar might hold learners back from being fluent speaker, and gives alternative, technology-enhanced approaches to language learning process.

Keywords: modern technologies, teaching strategies, technology, fluency, traditional methods, grammar instruction, overreliance on grammar, alternative approaches, technology-enhanced.

Annotatsiya. Zamonaviy texnologiyalar tufayli yangi bir tilni o'rganish avvalgidan ancha osonlashdi. Lekin, o'qitish strategiyalari va texnologiyalarda bo'layotgan rivojlanishlarga qaramay, yangi til o'rganuvchilar hanuz o'rganayotgan tillarida ravon gapirishda qiyinchiliklarga duch kelishmoqda. Buning esa asosiy sababi grammatikani ustuvor qo'yadigan an'anaviy o'qitish uslubiga tayanishdir. Ushbu maqola grammatikaga haddan tashqari e'tibor qaratish til o'rganuvchilarni ravon gapira olishdan qanday to'sib qo'yishi mumkinligini o'rganadi va texnologiyaga asoslangan muqobil yondashuvlarni taklif etadi.

Kalit so'zlar: zamonaviy texnologiyalar, o'qitish strategiyalari, texnologiya, ravonlik, an'anaviy metodlar, grammatika, ustuvor qo'yish, muqobil yondashuv.

Introduction. With the help of modern technologies, such as smartphones and computers, learning a new language has become an easy and at the same time enjoyable process. However, even with these technologies many students are failing to acquire their speaking skills and becoming fluent seems like an impossible goal for them. The core of this problem lies in the methods that educational systems use to teach students, which is grammar translation method. As the name suggests, this method mainly focuses on teaching grammar rules and memorizing translated vocabulary. Many schools, colleges and universities continue to rely on this method because it aligns with the traditional approach used for teaching other subjects. Grammar-translation method requires passively memorizing rules and vocabularies, without actively using them. As a result, students just learn language in theory, but struggle to use it in a real life conversations. In daily conversations there is no time to think carefully about

what tense to use and which phrase suits to a situation the best. Another major drawback of this method is fear of making mistakes. Since students are often expected to provide only precise, textbook answers, they become afraid of being judged for any deviations. This fear cause them to lose their willingness to speak. As Einstein once said, “A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new” (Einstein, n.d.). Language learners first need an environment where mistakes are seen as a part of the learning process— not something to be punished or feared.

Toddlers can be a clear example of how spoken language is acquired through imitating others, not through learning grammar. By observing parents and caregivers toddlers learn how to speak naturally. Because they experience spoken language in context, they are able to pick up vocabulary and sentence structures without being taught grammatical rules. They make countless errors, but with continuous practice they become proficient. This natural process highlights the value of communication in language acquisition, which the grammar-translation approach frequently ignores. Adults might find learning a new language to speak much more enjoyable and successful if they were taught in the same way as toddlers do— by speaking, listening, and making mistakes as much as they want without being judged for them. The importance of being open to making mistakes, as discussed above, is clearly supported by Elbert Hubbard’s quote: “The greatest mistake you can make in life is to be continually fearing you will make one” (Hubbard, 1927).

One of the most notable figures in the modern English teaching is A.J. Hoge, the founder of the learning system: Effortless English. His method focuses on learning through listening and speaking as opposed to traditional grammar based lessons. Hoge wants learners to pick up English the way babies learn—through real conversation, compelling input, and speaking practice learned naturally, not through explicit study. He also highlights how traditional methods kill students passion to speak in English, and the importance of being positive while learning language. There are plenty of techniques that language learners can use to acquire their target language. One effective method is the shadowing technique, where learners repeat native speakers’ speech immediately after hearing it, imitating their pronunciation and intonation. This helps develop fluency and builds confidence in speaking continuously. Additionally, learners can improve their pronunciation by learning to articulate each word clearly, just as native speakers do.

Another effective technique is very simple and easy to follow. In this method, learners try to speak in their target language without worrying about the mistakes they make. They use simple sentences to talk about themselves, their surroundings, daily life, and future plans. They are also encouraged to think in the target language. By practicing this daily, they gradually build fluency and learn to express their ideas more clearly. These are just a couple of techniques that help build speaking habits, but there are several other methods that can be really

helpful. However, each method and technique works differently for different people. For example, the shadowing technique may work for one student but not for another, and the same is true for other techniques. Choosing which technique to use, and creating new ones, depends on the learner's creativity.

The main aim of these techniques is to teach the language in a more active and enjoyable way. However, the grammar-translation method can also be effective when learners actively apply the knowledge they have learned, as it mainly focuses on accuracy. To become a proficient speaker, both accuracy and fluency are necessary. For someone who has already developed strong fluency, improving accuracy becomes relatively easy.

Conclusion. In general, fluency is like a flowing stream, constantly moving forward, even if the water is not perfectly clear. It emphasizes movement, connection, and speed. A fluent speaker keeps talking smoothly, even if they make small mistakes. Accuracy is like a still lake, calm and crystal-clear. Every word reflects precision, just like a lake reflects the sky. An accurate speaker may pause more often but chooses words carefully and correctly. For a new language learners, an excessive focus on accuracy can destroy their willingness to speak, as it often leads to a fear of making mistakes. A guiding principle that may benefit all learners is the notion that “fluency is built through practice, not perfection.” This perspective encourages consistent use of the language and helps reduce anxiety associated with errors, ultimately supporting the development of communicative competence. Even native speakers occasionally make mistakes. Language exists primarily for the communication of ideas. Therefore, errors should not be regarded as failures. What truly matters is the effective expression of ideas and clear understanding between individuals.

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