



## 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 principal objective of language learning. However, all foreign language teachers recognize that this is in fact, one of the most difficult skills to develop, given 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 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 to analyze 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.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Speaking the target language is often defined by both EFL students and teachers as the principal objective of language learning. However, all foreign language teachers recognize that this is in fact, one of the most difficult skills to develop, given 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 speaking fluent and accurate English.

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In the realm of English Language Teaching (ELT), achieving proficiency encompasses more than mere grammatical correctness; it entails a delicate balance between fluency and accuracy in oral expression and comprehension. This balance is particularly crucial in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, where learners grapple with not only linguistic intricacies but also cultural nuances and communicative effectiveness. The pursuit of fluency, characterized by smoothness and naturalness in speech, and accuracy, denoting grammatical precision and lexical appropriateness, stands as a perpetual challenge for both educators and learners alike.

The dynamics of EFL classrooms are multifaceted, influenced by various factors such as teaching methodologies, learner motivation, classroom interactions, and the socio-cultural context. Within this intricate landscape, understanding the interplay between fluency and accuracy is paramount for fostering effective language acquisition and communication skills. Despite their interconnectedness, fluency and accuracy are often approached distinctively in pedagogical practices, sometimes leading to imbalances that hinder holistic language development.

This research endeavors to delve into the nuanced relationship between fluency and accuracy within the EFL classroom setting. By examining how these two aspects manifest in oral expression and comprehension, this study aims to shed light on the challenges faced by both learners and educators in achieving a harmonious integration of fluency and accuracy. Moreover, the investigation seeks to explore potential pedagogical strategies and classroom dynamics that may facilitate the cultivation of balanced language skills among EFL learners.

Through a comprehensive analysis of fluency and accuracy in the EFL context, this research endeavors to contribute to the discourse surrounding effective language teaching and learning methodologies. By elucidating the complexities inherent in achieving fluency and accuracy, educators can refine their instructional approaches and tailor interventions that better address the diverse needs of EFL learners. Ultimately, this study aspires to advance the overarching goal of promoting communicative competence and language proficiency in the EFL classroom environment.

## **METHOD**

This research used a qualitative approach to gain in-depth insight into fluency and accuracy in oral expression and comprehension of English as a foreign language in the classroom. Data collected through direct observation in the classroom related to English language learning. This observation was focused on interactions between teachers and students, as well as between students and each other in communicative situations. Observational instruments were designed to record the level of fluency and accuracy in oral expression and comprehension of English. In addition, interviews with teachers and students can also be used to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences in learning English. The data collected were analyzed using content analysis methods to identify patterns in English fluency and accuracy in the classroom. This analysis was help in understanding the factors that influence the quality of students' oral expression and comprehension. The results of the analysis were interpreted to explore the relationship between fluency and accuracy in English language learning. Practical implications of the findings were also considered to provide insights that can improve the effectiveness of English language learning in the classroom. This research method provided an in-depth understanding of how fluency and accuracy play a role in the oral expression and comprehension of English in the classroom.

Thus, this research will provide a valuable contribution to the development of more effective learning strategies in the context of learning English as a foreign language.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During classroom observation held by the researcher, different Classroom activities were adopted such as classroom discussion, learners' presentations, simulations and dialogues, and 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 very necessary and the only element that could generate a classroom discussion in a well-structured manner.

In doing classroom discussions, the teacher often asked learners to respond to certain questions related to the general topic or ideas that 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 discussions, 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 read 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 the solution to a problem, or bringing up innovative thoughts on 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 Crone's view of the discussion in an active learning environment as 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 from all walks of life. As for group/pair work, learners were first asked to form groups of three to five members or to form pairs. It was considered as the 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 on 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 ensure 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 in promoting 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 which in turn allowed them to complete it more efficiently. This made it possible to keep anyone 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 favored by the teacher. The aim of the teacher in 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 that 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 of 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 favored to help learners engage in meaningful interactions as well as to maintain ongoing communication, whereas accuracy was encouraged to make learners accustomed to speaking comprehensibly.

## CONCLUSION

Language is the key to our basic communications and is the one that allows us to learn from one another, share experiences, and express our needs. Accuracy and Fluency are two factors that 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, EFL teachers need 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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