

Lecture 3 THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SUBJECT SLA

The plan:

- The teaching of foreign language communication

- Fluency and accuracy

- Communicative competence

In the modern world, the ability to communicate effectively in a foreign language is an essential skill for education, work, and intercultural understanding. The teaching of foreign language communication goes beyond grammar rules and vocabulary lists—it focuses on helping learners use the language naturally and meaningfully in real-life situations. Two important aspects of this process are fluency and accuracy. Fluency refers to the ability to speak or write smoothly, quickly, and with confidence, while accuracy means the correct use of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Balancing these two elements is one of the most important challenges in foreign language teaching.

Fluency is the ability to express ideas freely and effectively without frequent hesitation or interruption. It allows learners to participate in conversations, express opinions, and respond spontaneously. Activities that promote fluency include role-plays, discussions, storytelling, debates, and simulations. These types of tasks help students focus on communication rather than on language form. According to the communicative approach, fluency is developed through meaningful use of language in authentic contexts. When students are encouraged to speak without fear of mistakes, they gain confidence and begin to use the language more naturally.

Accuracy, on the other hand, ensures that communication is grammatically correct and clearly understood. It involves correct use of structures, vocabulary, pronunciation, and spelling. Accuracy is often developed through focused grammar exercises, controlled practice, and error correction. Without accuracy, fluency alone may lead to misunderstandings or incorrect language habits. Therefore, teachers must provide opportunities for learners to practice accuracy through activities such as sentence transformation, dictation, or guided writing. These exercises help students build a solid foundation of linguistic competence.

Achieving a balance between fluency and accuracy is a major goal of foreign language teaching. If the focus is only on fluency, learners may develop poor language habits and fossilized errors. However, if the focus is only on accuracy, communication becomes limited and unnatural. Teachers should design lessons that move from controlled practice to free communication. For example, after learning a grammar rule, students can use it in real conversations or role-plays. Corrective feedback should also

be provided in a supportive way, so learners improve their accuracy without losing confidence in speaking.

The teaching of foreign language communication has become one of the central aims of modern language education. In today's globalized world, learners are expected not only to know grammar and vocabulary but also to use the language effectively and appropriately in real-life situations. Developing fluency (the ability to speak smoothly and naturally) and accuracy (the correct use of language forms) are key components of this process. At the same time, the concept of communicative competence—the ability to use language appropriately in social and cultural contexts—serves as the ultimate goal of language teaching.

The development of SLA the second period began in the 1990s when the socio-cultural conceptual base of the communicative approach began to be intensively worked on. The communicative-orientated model of MFL teaching became viewed as allowing both the possibility of, and providing the means for, intercultural communication.

The teaching of foreign language communication required organization from the position of being it representing a dialogue of culture. The term 'intercultural communicative competence' (ICC) began to displace that of 'communicative competence', which emphasized the fact that the intercultural component was becoming the most important aspect of MFL teaching content and, therefore, that the authenticity of MFL teaching resources was now an extremely important requirement.

This is how the change in the theory of SLA occurred. It followed the review of teaching aims and led to a change in all the structural components of the MFL teaching method.

The subject content, technology and principles of SLA now had to be fully reviewed from the point of view of the primacy of the socio-cultural component of MFL content and with only the fundamentals of the linguistic-based system of language and speech being preserved.

This period is characterized by methodologists as a time of the complete reorientation of the conceptual base and content of a methodical conceptual-categorical system.

This was due to the cardinal changes in the aims and objectives of 'SLA that were taking place, namely, that the communicative-orientated approach of SLA as a means of communication' was giving way to the intercultural-communicative approach which had its own aims (the formation of a 'second language personality') and objective - 'the ability to use a MFL and as means for intercultural communication'.

Communicative Approach is essentially the rationale for language and the Communicative Approach seeks to develop those skills that enable students to meaningfully engage with each other.

The way towards communicative teaching has been a long and controversial one with advances and set backs.

The focus of attention was gradually shifting from the language as a systematic code to the language as a means of communication with the search for an effective method of instruction and consideration of the learner's personality.

Communicative language teaching is based on a number of typical features of the communication process.

Language learning is understood as learning to communicate through communication. The emphasis is put on the meaningful and motivated use of language by the people who communicate in order to achieve a certain goal.

Language for learning is derived from communicative experience in a variety of real world situations.

Fluency is put over accuracy. Interactive learning is encouraged as the way towards acquiring communication skills.

The learners are taught "negotiating the meaning", and "using communication strategies".

The champions of the communicative method were also correct in concluding that the ability to achieve verbal communication should be accomplished through the development of 'communicative competence'.

The idea of communicative competence started to develop with the construct of "linguistic competence".

Linguistic competence is understood as innate knowledge of language (Chomsky, N. 1986. Knowledge of Language: It's Nature, Origin and Use).

But linguistic competence is only part of what is needed for communication.

Communicative competence encompasses the knowledge of how to use the language in the real world.

- o Communicative competence encompasses the knowledge of how to use the language in the real world, without which the rules of grammar would be useless.

- o Communicative competence

Knowledge of the language Knowledge of how to use the language

Competence is not the same as ability. In order to be able to communicate, people need psycho-physiological mechanisms, i.e. communicative skills.

Communication is the process of interpersonal interaction and requires the knowledge of social conventions i.e. the knowledge of rules about proper ways to communicate with people.

In accordance with the social conventions, participants in communication perform communicative functions (to socialize, to inform, to persuade, to elicit information, to manipulate behavior and opinions etc), communicative roles (leader, informer, participant, catalyst, entertainer etc) (Ellis, R. 1994. The Study of Second Language Acquisition. OUP. P. 160).

In order to perform these functions a speaker needs more than just the knowledge of the language.

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In order to perform these functions a speaker needs more than just the knowledge of the language. In conclusion, effective foreign language teaching should strive for a balance between fluency and accuracy while promoting communicative competence. Teachers play a crucial role in creating meaningful, interactive, and culturally rich learning environments that encourage real communication. By integrating various teaching methods and focusing on authentic language use, educators can help learners become confident, accurate, and fluent communicators in the target language.

In conclusion, both fluency and accuracy are essential components of effective foreign language communication. Fluency allows learners to express themselves confidently and naturally, while accuracy ensures clarity and correctness. The role of the teacher is to create a balanced learning environment where students can practice

both aspects through meaningful and interactive tasks. By integrating activities that develop fluency and exercises that strengthen accuracy, foreign language teaching can help learners become competent and confident communicators in the target language.

Questions for discussion:

1. How can teachers balance the development of fluency and accuracy in foreign language communication?
2. What classroom activities best promote communicative competence among language learners?
3. Why is it important to focus on meaningful communication rather than only grammatical correctness in language teaching?
4. How can real-life communication tasks help students improve both fluency and accuracy?
5. In what ways does communicative competence reflect a learner's overall ability to use the language effectively in social and cultural contexts?