Speaking Competence and Its Components: A Review of Literature

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Abstract
This paper covers the importance of speaking skills in a modern globalized world in which increasing number opportunities for communication have led the EFL teachers to invest on speaking competence more than ever in language teaching history. To this end, the paper reviews the aspects of speaking competence along with two inseparable aspects speaking skill development, fluency and accuracy.

Introduction
Most learners of English nowadays need to be able to communicate with other people in the language. Speaking is not always their top priority, and, for many learners, reading and writing may be of more importance. However, even academics and businessmen whose main interest in English is for reading and writing reports may need, on occasion, to explain their ideas and thoughts, or simply to make polite conversation, in English.

Learners of English as a foreign language, in countries where English is not widely spoken outside the classroom, often build a substantial knowledge about the language through study of its grammar and vocabulary, but have difficulty in developing oral proficiency because they lack exposure to the language, and experience using it. For such learners, fluency is perhaps the major speaking problem they face. Their speech tends to be slow, hesitant, and full of repetitions and self-corrections (Schemitt, 2010). This is likely to try the patience of listeners, especially those who are unused to learner-English. It also places more strain on the speakers themselves than would effortless, automatically processed and fluent speech. Oral fluency is therefore an important, but elusive, objective for many foreign language learners.

Along with speaking fluency, oral accuracy has been the focus of foreign language teaching methods so far. Along with accuracy based methods such as audio-lingual method, the debate on the importance of accuracy in communicative language teaching era has been reflected in many studies in speaking and has been a key element in the definition of communicative competence.

Speaking Competence
One of the most important goals of teachers is that to enable learners to use English for communication. According to many theories speaking skill can be improved by games, role play, etc. which evidence shows that speaking should happen in activities and in a group. Students have a lot of problems at their primary level they want to speak but when they go to class as they do not feel learn thing (Chastain, 1988). Students are able to convert their thought and their speaking. Every learner could not understand none native speaker not at all. For improving second language skill, you should practice more. First students improve their general vocabulary and after that they should listen to simple sentence to complex sentences. Students should read simple story and sometimes memorize it. With listening and speaking student should be more confident (Chastain, 1988).

When you read a book, story and magazines aloud, it can help you more. When you practice, your fluency would be better too. According to Hedge the term fluency has two meanings: the first which is the ability to link unit of speech together with facility and without strain or in opportunities slowness undue hesitation and purpose a second, more holistic sense of fluency that of natural language use which is likely to take place when speaking activities focus on meaning and its negotiation when speaking.
strategies are used and when over correction is minimized (Hedge, as cited in Celce-Murica, 2001, p. 104). We should encourage students to take responsibility of their own learning. We do not encounter learner with heavy enforcement, they should encounter with simple enforcement and then do complex. In this article a learner mean children and adult. Another important factor is that the learner better to participate in group and setting up a conversation, then student should participate in discussion in a group (Celce-Murica, 2001). The conversation between students and the teacher should be based on classroom observation data.

Some teachers have problems with students that do not participate in classroom and are always silent, in countries like China and Japan, in this situation teacher should encourage student to participate in for example use pictures, role play, etc. (Wenli, 2005). Others said the teacher should prepare good environment for students for example classrooms should be in low anxiety and high motivation (Flower & Miller).

A lot of learners have a big problem with grammar. In Grammar Translation Method and Audio Lingual method emphasize grammar. Audio Lingual method was better than Grammar Translation Method. Evidence shows that teacher should correct student grammatical errors and avoid any bad habit formation. Grammatical knowledge is necessary and facilitates acquiring speaking skill, but somebody says meanings are more important than grammar. According to them communication is based on meaning (Chastain, 1988). Some teachers encourage student to interact with others and student can communicate in real situation, also learner should know the purpose of speaking, what is speaking, where to speak, and how to speak.

Factors Affecting Learners' Speaking

Cognitive Factors

According to Levelt (1989), the speaking processes include conceptualization, formation, and articulation. Conceptualization deals with what information can be selected to express the meaning. Formulation needs the speaker to figure out what proper words to use in appropriate grammatical structure. And articulation requires the speaker to produce the speech with his articulatory organs. Since all the three processes happen simultaneously, it is possible for learners to make mistakes especially in face-to-face communication. Therefore their speaking maybe filled with "hesitation, false-starts, grammatical inaccuracies, and limited vocabulary" (Hughes, 2002, p. 77). Besides, human's mind is a "limited capacity processor" (McLaughlin & Heredia, 1996, p. 214). So it is not easy to focus on everything at the same time. Over-focus on accuracy may cause the lack of fluency, and too much emphasis on fluency may lead to the lack of accuracy (Skehan& Foster, 1999).

Linguistic Factors

The correct use of language form is important for learner's oral proficiency (Saunders & O'Brien, 2006). Linguistic factors include several features like pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Pronunciation plays an important role in intelligibility (Goh, 2007). Mispronouncing a single sound or various uses of stresses and intonations cause the learner's misunderstanding. In addition, grammar acts a key role in learning the structure of English. But learning the accurate use of grammar is one thing, correctly using it in one's speech is another. It is rather difficult EFL learners to transfer the correct grammar to their speaking (Larsen-Freeman, 2001).

Vocabulary is essential for EFL learners, it acts like bricks to a building. If the receptive vocabulary is rather limited, learners can hardly put the "receptive vocabulary knowledge into productive use" (Nation, 2001, p. 129), so it is necessary for EFL learners to store a wealth of vocabulary in their long-term memory. In addition, the ability to remember words from one's mind may cover the speaking fluency (Levelt, 1989).
Affective Factors
Both anxiety and self-restriction have an influence on learner's oral proficiency. Anxiety is the affective factor that "most pervasively obstructs the learning process. Worrying about being "wrong, stupid, or incomprehensible" (Brown, 2001, p. 269) completely influences learners' speaking performance. Most of EFL learners are nervous in class, especially when they are asked to speak in class without any readiness. “Too much nervousness makes learners tongue-tied or lost for words” (Shumin, 2002, p. 206) and completely affects their achievement in foreign language classroom. Since risk taking is viewed as an essence for "successful learning of a second language" (Brown, 2007, p. 160), EFL learners should be motivated to speak bravely in order to promote their speaking competence gradually. Because "motivation is probably the most important factor that educators can target in order to improve learning" and "the expenditure of effort to accomplish results".

Factors of Speaking Effectiveness
Hymes (1971) believes that L2 learners need to know not only the linguistic knowledge, but also the culturally acceptable ways of interacting with others in different situations and relationships. His theory of communicative competence consists of the interaction of grammatical, psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, and probabilistic language components. According to Hymes's theory, Canale and Swain (1980) suggest that communicative competence consist of grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence which reflect the use of linguistic system and the functional aspects of communication respectively.

Grammar
"Grammatical competence is an umbrella concept that includes increasing expertise in grammar (morphology, syntax), vocabulary, and sounds of letters and syllables, pronunciation of words, intonation, and stress" (Scarcella& Oxford, 1992, p. 141). To understand meaning, EFL learners need to have enough knowledge of words and sentences: that is, they must figure out how words are segmented into various sounds, and how sentences are stressed in particular ways. So, grammatical competence helps speakers to use and understand English language structures accurately and immediately, which facilitates their fluency (Richards &Renandy, 2002).

Discourse
EFL learners should develop discourse competence through international relationships. The rules of cohesion and coherence should be applied in each discourse, whether formal or informal to hold the communication together in a meaningful way (Richards &Renandy, 2002, p.217). In communication, both the production and comprehension of a language require one's ability to perceive and process stretches of discourse and to formulate representations of meaning from referents in both previous sentences and following sentences (Richards &Renandy, 2002, p. 217). Thus, effective speakers should acquire a large repertoire of structures and discourse makers to express idea; show relationships of time, and indicate cause, contrast, and emphasis (Scarcella& Oxford, 1992, p.141).

Sociolinguistic Factors
To know the knowledge of language is not enough for EFL learners to speak effectively and appropriately. They should be familiar with the culture of the native speakers to enable to use target language which is socially and culturally acceptable by native users. To achieve to this goal, it is imperative to figure out the sociolinguistic side of language which enables learners distinguish appropriate comments, how to ask questions during interaction, and how to respond nonverbally according to the aim of the talk (Richards &Renandy, 2002). Therefore, "adult second language learners must acquire stylistic adaptability in order to be able to encode and decode the discourse around them correctly".
Strategy
Strategic competence means the ability of appropriate use of language. It can refer to "the ability to know when and how to take the floor, how to keep a conversation going, how to terminate the conversation and how to clear up communication breakdown as well as comprehension problems" (Richards & Renandya, 2002, p. 218). In addition, strategic competence, is "the way learners manipulate language in order to meet communicative goals". Further, it can be the ability to make up for faulty knowledge of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse rules (Berns, 1990).

Interaction
Spoken language usually has two functions: interactional and transactional. The essential goal of the former is to keep social relationships, but that of the latter is to pass information and ideas. Because, much of our daily communication are interactional; being able to interact is imperative. Thus, language instructors should facilitate learners with meaningful communicative situations about proper topics by applying learner-learner interaction as the key to teach communicative language (Richards & Renandya, 2002). "Communication drives essentially from interaction" (Rivers, 1987, p. xiii). Classroom communication includes meaning-focused activity and learners can learn how to listen and talk to others, how to negotiate meaning in shared context both verbally and non-verbally with the help of teacher (Richards & Renandya, 2002, p.218). Nunan (1989), claimed in designing activities, teachers should consider all the skills conjointly as they interact with each other in natural behavior, for in real life as in the classroom, most tasks of any complexity involve more than one macro skill.

Accuracy and Fluency
As far as accuracy and fluency are concerned, different scholars have given different definitions. For example, Ellis (2009) holds that fluency means the capacity to use language in real time, to emphasize meanings, possibly drawing on more lexicalized systems, and accuracy means the ability to avoid error in performance, possibly reflecting higher levels of control in the language as well as a conservative orientation, that is, avoidance of challenging structures that might provoke error. Nation (1991) defines fluency as the ability to get across communicative intent without too much hesitation and too many pauses to cause barriers or a breakdown in communication (Lan, 1994). Others define accuracy as the use of correct forms where utterances do not contain errors affecting the phonological, syntactic, and semantic or discourse features of a language (Lan, 1994). But in generally, accuracy refers to the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences while fluency refers to the quality or condition of being able to speak or write a language or perform an action smoothly, accurately and easily, which includes the ability to produce written and/or spoken language with ease, the ability to speak with a good but not necessarily perfect command of intonation, vocabulary, and grammar, the ability to communicate ideas effectively, and the ability to produce continuous speech without causing comprehension difficulties or a breakdown of communication. In other words, accuracy emphasizes precision or exactness and is often emphasized in formal instruction, language acquisition, grammar competence and grammar-translation method, while fluency describes a level of proficiency in communication and is frequently stressed in procedural skill, expression proficiency, lexical phrases, social interaction, necessary topics and discourse. Accuracy is the basis of fluency while fluency is a further improvement of a person's linguistic competence and a better revelation of his/her communicative competence. They two are so closely related that they are inseparable.

Language immersion programs, in which all or part of subjects in school is taught in the target language, are recognized as one of the most successful language methodologies. However, a weak point in terms of accuracy has been reported in that immersion students become quite fluent but their spoken language is often far from accurate (Swain and Lapkin 1995, Hammerly 1987, 1991). Additionally, the two aspects, fluency and accuracy, are important criteria in foreign language proficiency tests such as
ACTFL or SST. It shows that language teachers should foster their learners’ ability while being mindful of fluency and accuracy.

In order to decide the fluency level of a learner’s English, the following five factors were analyzed in the research. The factors were decided based on the criteria for fluency in some standardized tests such as ACTFL (Breiner-Sanders et al. 2000) and SST, and recommendations from a previous research (Nakano et al. 2001).

1. The total number of words spoken in a fixed time.
2. The number of silent pauses for thinking.
3. The number of repetition of words, phrases or clauses.
4. The number of repair or reformulation for correction.
5. Mean length of utterance (MLU).

Though the criteria for defining accuracy in most standardized tests include factors such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, sociolinguistic competence or pragmatic competence, grammatical errors were the main factors in deciding the level of accuracy for this research. Considering the fact that grammatical instruction has been the mainstream in English education in Japan, it is important to investigate the learners’ accuracy under the instruction of communication based lessons. The word usage and sentence structure were considered as grammatical understanding, but pronunciation was excluded because it is quite difficult to sort out correct pronunciation due to the variety of accents. The frequency and kinds of errors were also investigated to know the learners’ situation.

Balancing Accuracy and Fluency
To keep a balance between accuracy and fluency in an English classroom teaching, we can employ the following methods.

Combining Communicative Approach with Other Methods
Nowadays, with greater importance being attached to English learners' communicative competence, which involves principles of appropriateness and a readiness on the part of the learner to use relevant strategies in coping with certain language situations, communicative approach has been advocated and is being practiced in college English teaching. But with the passage of time, we have found that no single teaching method can deal with everything that concerns the form, the use, and the content of the target language and that appropriate grammar analysis and limited utilization of translation from or to the target language (English) are still an indispensable part of teaching. Vocabulary work and pattern drills are still good ways of familiarizing students with sentence structures and thus can help them acquire linguistic competence, which, involving the spontaneous, flexible, and correct manipulation of the language system, is the basis on which English language skills get improved.

So we had better combine communicative approach with other methods in our classroom teaching. In this way students can not only acquire a solid knowledge of the English language but also better their English language skills. To combine the two methods well, we need to make the language situations and language material as realistic as possible or make English teaching partly communicatively oriented so as to help students acquaint themselves with appropriate language usage instead of just teaching grammar and drilling grammar patterns as we used to. That is to say, while practicing linguistic competence, classroom activities such as role playing, simulations, and real-life interactions should also be organized to provide as much practice as possible for students to develop their communicative competence.

Encouraging Interaction
To what extent should one make efforts to encourage the non-English majors to make spontaneous and unsupervised peer-interaction in English? The answer is we must be cautious. Although students can acquire the second language through classroom communication or interaction, the unsupervised or
unguided peer-interaction in EFL contexts will undoubtedly expose them to a large number of wrong forms.

If they practice their spoken English in this way for a long time, they may speak some classroom pidgin, a language made up of two or more languages. Fluency will be emphasized at the expense of accuracy. To avoid it, we had better encourage guided peer-interaction by offering students some hints before and during the whole interactive activity. We can remove the linguistic props of already formulated structures as soon as possible so as to provide a balance between activities focused on linguistic forms and those focused on language use to help learners achieve autonomy.

Besides encouraging guided peer-interaction, we had better encourage more student-teacher interaction in and after class. Teachers, usually with rich English knowledge and strong English skills, can act as models as well as guides to students. With teachers’ imperceptible correction of mistakes and with their occasional encouragement, students will gain confidence and be bold enough to speak more and gradually they can express themselves effectively.

**Transferring Teachers’ Roles**

With more and more attention being focused on improving students' communicative competence, the roles teachers have to play must be redefined. The best teachers are usually the ones who impart an attitude or an orientation related to the acquisition of mental abilities, or who are associated with the particular values that one finds personally motivating and inspirational. Specifically speaking, we teachers should take on the following roles in modern English classroom teaching.

First, instead of being the dominating authority in the classroom, we must become learning facilitators to facilitate the communicative process between all participants in the classroom and between these participants and the various activities and texts (Breen & Candlin, 1980), giving guidance and advice when necessary. We should also act as interdependent participants within the learning-teaching group (Breen & Candlin, 1980), which means that we need to perceive students as having important contributions to make, and then we must continually seek potential and exploit and actively share the responsibility for learning and teaching with them. We must realize that any unnecessary intervention from us may prevent them from becoming genuinely involved in the activities and thus hinder the development of their communicative skills. However, this does not necessarily mean that we should be passive observers. Instead, we should develop students' potential through external direction and help them develop their distinctive qualities.

Second, just as we want students to be life-long learners, we teachers must exhibit a passion for learning, a desire and an aptitude to continue discovering new knowledge and exemplify by constantly refreshing our knowledge and skills to keep abreast with the latest developments in our area of specialization.

Third, to keep pace with the times, we teachers also need to be creative and innovative in integrating our teaching with thinking and learning processes. Teachers must give students more opportunities for expression and provide an environment where creativity can flourish. And we must encourage students to question and to express their thoughts freely so that they will have inquisitive minds.

Besides, because the dynamics of society and industry are changing very fast and whatever knowledge and skills one acquires today may not be relevant tomorrow, teachers need to remain sensitive and receptive to changes and to be able to anticipate further changes that may come their way. And at the same time teachers must inculcate in our students a mindset for adapting and receiving changes to prepare them for the changing need of society (Breen & Candlin, 1980).

In a word, in addition to imparting knowledge, teachers need to be in the best positions to determine the most effective teaching methods to bring out the best in each student. For this purpose, on the one hand, teachers need to recognize learning as an interpersonal undertaking over which no single person can have full control, and realize that there will be differences between ongoing learning processes (Breen & Candlin, 1980). Teachers have to accept the fact that different learners learn different things in different
ways at different times and that some learners may enter periods when it seems that little or no progress is being made and that sometimes learning is typified by silent reflection. On the other hand, we should continually develop new skills and embrace new ideas to bring a fresh perspective to every lesson and to inspire in our students a love for learning and passion for their subject; we should motivate students to always make full use of their time, talents and abilities; we should develop students as individuals according to their talents and abilities (Breen & Candlin, 1980). In other words, to help students fit in with the needs of the society, we should work as organizers of resources and as resources; as guides and managers of the classroom procedures and activities and as researchers and learners, with much to contribute in terms of appropriate knowledge, abilities, and actual and observed experience in the nature of learning and organizational capabilities (Breen & Candlin, 1980).

**Teachers’ Repertoire**
Teachers should know something about linguistics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, education and so on, and be able to demonstrate the target language with enough accuracy, but they are also expected to know a variety of teaching methodologies, correct ways to research, and some basic principles of testing. They must realize that it is obligatory for us teachers to adopt different methods when dealing with different teaching materials and when faced with students with different levels of English proficiency. To achieve the purpose, they must enrich their knowledge of English and improve their English skills.

**Considering Accuracy and Fluency Equal**
As is mentioned above, accuracy and fluency are so closely related that they are inseparable. Skehan (1996) proposed that because learners have a limited capacity of attention, there could be trade-off effects between accuracy and fluency. That is, when attention is paid to accuracy, fluency is likely to suffer and vice versa (Patanasorn, 2010). So attaching equal importance to both accuracy and fluency exercises is a must.

Accuracy exercises encourage a thoughtful use of language and the information is intended to help students understand how English works, while fluency exercises invite them to take the parts of different characters when roleplaying and to continue a dialogue in their own way, that is, the fluency exercises encourage free expression. Doing accuracy exercises does not mean 100% error-free, but a high degree of accuracy is required, and as a result, students are encouraged to make as few errors as possible and to manipulate the language as spontaneously and flexibly as possible. Generally speaking, soon after the students have mastered the language forms, they ought to be given intensive fluency practice, which is directed at inviting them to express themselves freely without being at all concerned about 100% accuracy. At this stage, teachers should not only tolerate students’ errors and encourage them by emphasizing that error-making is a natural and common practice in the learning of a foreign language, but also assess their performances at the end of each fluency practice so that they can realize their own weaknesses and become more and more conscious of their errors. In this way, accuracy and fluency, which are interdependent, can be practiced almost simultaneously.

But when assigning accuracy and fluency exercises teachers had better keep in mind the following: For one thing, they had better assign exercises that need the knowledge with which students are familiar, because it is found that the personal task which is based on information well known to learners allows them to be more fluent in their performance.

For another, they had better give students more planning time. With regards to planning, it has been suggested that providing learners with more planning time prior to conducting the task helps learners produce more fluent and complex language (Patanasorn, 2010). Generally, the more planning time they are given, the more familiar they will be with the inherent structure of discourse and as a result, the more accurate and fluent they will be in their performance, because familiarity with content and opportunity to plan help lessen the load of information processing which allows learners more attentional resources to
focus on formal aspects of language as well as help them to become more fluent in their performance (Patanasorn, 2010).

Conflict of interest
The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References


