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DEVELOPING COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE

It is absolutely obvious that knowing a language differs considerably from being able to speak it. Speaking a language presupposes more than the ability to form grammatically correct sentences and then pronouncing them correctly. Speaking is interactive, linear and hence it has no time for detailed planning. In these circumstances, spoken fluency requires the capacity to sort out lexical chunks. And the nature of the speaking process means that the grammar of the spoken language differs significantly from the grammar of the written language. Consequently, speaking represents a real challenge to most language learners. It is a skill, and as such needs to be developed and practiced independently of grammar. Shortage of opportunities for practice is believed to be an important contributing factor to speaking failure. And by practice is meant not practice of grammar and vocabulary but practice of interactive speaking itself.

How does L2 speaking differ from L1 speaking? Like L1 speakers, L2 speakers produce speech through a process of conceptualizing, then formulating, and finally articulating during which thay are self-monitoring. However, L2 speakers' knowledge of the second language, including its grammar and vocabulary, is not extensive. The process may be complicated by the tendency to formulate the utterance in their mother tongue and then "translate' it into the second language. Furthermore, L2 speakers try to be accurate and strive to avoid making mistakes, which in its turn leads to lack of fluency in terms of speed [1, p. 28].

According to S. Thornbury, rather than 'computing' each utterance using a relatively slow rule-based system, it seems more effective to use a variety of strategies to get the message across. The successful use of such strategies in order to communicate in a second language is called strategic competence [1, p.28].

Strategic competence is achieved by means of what are called communication strategies. Some commonly encountered communication strategies are:

1)   Circumlocution, e.g. *I get a red in my head (=shy);*

2) Word coinage, e.g. such as *vegetarianist* for *vegetarian*;

3) Approximation: using an alternative, related word, such as using *work table* for *workbench*;

4) Using an all-purpose word, e.g. *stuff, thing, make, do*;

5) Paralinguistic: using gesture, mime, and so on, to convey the intended meaning.

To sum it up, the difficulties that the learner of a second language may encounter break down into three main areas:

1) Knowledge factors: the learner doesn't know aspects of the language that enable production;

2) Skills factors: the learner's knowledge is not sufficiently automated to ensure fluency;

3) Affective factors: lack of confidence or self-consciousness, which might inhibit fluency.

Therefore, learners compensate for their insufficient knowledge of the language by using communication strategies.

Literature:

1. Thornbury, S. How to teach speaking / Scott Thornbury. – Longman, 2001. – 156 p.

2. Richards, J.C. Teaching listening and speaking: from theory to practice / J.C. Richards. – Cambridge University Press, 2008. – 45 p.