

Techniques to develop self-monitoring for teaching pronunciation

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1. Introduction

Most teachers today reject teaching pronunciation in a decontextualised and superficial way as when they have to give lessons or slots of lessons on sounds, stress or intonation. As a matter of fact, restricting pronunciation work to particular lessons is artificial, for every lesson is a pronunciation lesson. When the learners listen to their teacher or to a tape recording, they ask about some aspects of pronunciation that made them miss some parts of the recording or misinterpret what a speaker says; when they read a text and meet a new word, they ask about its pronunciation; when they talk, their teacher is expected to correct some aspects of their pronunciation that might cause unintelligibility; when learners take notes and find difficulty to spell a word, they ask about its spelling.

Hence, pronunciation work is present in every learning activity and every lesson. It is thus systematically integrated and cannot be dissociated from the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This means that the teacher has to do some pronunciation work each time he deals with a particular skill. In this workshop, we will show how teachers can focus on their learners' pronunciation problems while the latter are involved in speaking activities and how teachers can help them to develop self-monitoring.

2. Techniques to Develop Self-Monitoring

While speaking, learners are confronted with the task of choosing what to say, providing the appropriate words and grammatical structures. As a result, little energy is left to pay attention to how sounds come out. Moreover,

language teachers often find themselves in a dilemma, not knowing if they should interrupt learners in their speech to correct their pronunciation errors or not.. One possible solution to that is *the instant or action replay techniques* and *oral homework* proposed by Kenworthy (1987). These techniques can help learners shift from teacher monitoring to self monitoring by observing their own speech on one or two production points at a time and by developing a self rehearsal technique : talk to yourself and listen to yourself.

For Kenworthy (1987), teachers should play the role of facilitators and assist learners in their pronunciation, supply information, offer cues, constructive feedback, provide practice opportunities, support and encouragements. This is one way of helping learners become active participants involved in their learning process, self-involvement being considered by O'Malley and Chamot (1989) as the most successful learning strategy.

3. The Instant or Action Replay Techniques

These activities are designed to stimulate learners to discuss a subject, to give opinions, and to show agreement or disagreement.

1.1- The Instant Replay Technique:

In this activity, learners are tape recorded while involved in a speaking activity. At the end, they can listen to their speech and evaluate their performance with both their teacher and their class mates.

1.2- The Action Replay Technique:

After a speaking task has been done in class, the learners are asked to repeat what they said and to pay more attention to their pronunciation. The teacher can ask them to focus on specific areas such as the production of some sounds or stress. This technique is generally used for short exchanges or chunks of speech. As the learners have done the speaking task, they have already decided what to say. Therefore, more mental energy will be devoted to self-monitoring.

These two techniques can be used with pair work activities which are known for providing practice in communication skills and to be effective in large classes. Each learner has different information on a particular subject, and needs to listen effectively to his partner in order to understand what he is saying and to complete the activity. Another advantage of this type of activities is that learners can be asked to evaluate their partner's pronunciation.

Thus, they are guided to take responsibility, an important factor for developing self-involvement. Besides, identifying their partners' pronunciation errors can raise the learners' awareness. They come to realise that poor pronunciation may lead to communication breakdown and to the irritability of the listener. Not wishing to be at the origin of such effects, learners are motivated to improve their pronunciation and to overcome their difficulties.

Different types of pair work activities- role plays, simulations, dialogues, information-gap, discussions and conversations, and problem-solving- can be used as speaking activities that offer opportunities for introducing *the instant and replay technique*.

1- Role Plays:

Learners are given definite roles to play and are usually asked to assume a different name, background, age.

2- Simulation Exercises:

These are activities in which learners play themselves but are given a definite task to do or are put in a specific situation and asked to make appropriate responses.

3- One- Sided Dialogues:

Learners read a dialogue together but can only see their own part. These dialogues usually include opportunities for the learner to make his or her own responses.

4- Information-gap Activities:

Learners are asked to perform a task together. Both students are given access to half the information and by working together try to solve the whole.

5- Discussion and Conversation Activities:

These activities are designed to stimulate learners to discuss a subject, to give opinions, and to show agreement and disagreement.

6- Problem Solving Activities:

These are activities in which learners are asked to solve some sort of problem together. Usually, learners share 'clues' and then try to work together.

Some examples of these activities are found in Watcyn-Jones (1997).

7- Activity Two: Oral Homework

In this activity, learners are introduced to the idea of 'oral homework'; that is to say, homework which involves oral production instead of reading or written assignments. Assignments are prepared and rehearsed at home. In class, learners are heard and receive the feedback from their classmates and their teacher through pair work. Here are some topics that can be used for oral homework assignments:

- 1- Are you an easy person to live with? What are the things you do and don't do at home?
- 2- Imagine yourself relaxing in an ideal room.: What are you doing? What's the room like?
- 3- Which of these things can you remember?
 - learning to swim
 - smoking your first cigarette
 - using English for the first time
- 4- Think about something you had to do or were not allowed to do as a punishment.
- 5- Choose a holiday destination and imagine what kind of holiday it might be.
- 6- Think of yourself in five years' time. What will you be doing? What will you have done?
- 7- Think of something that has been in the news this week. Summarise the story.
- 8- What makes you angry? jealous? depressed? embarrassed? worried? excited? relaxed?

Choose two feelings and talk about a situation for each.

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