Task-based learning for pronunciation

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to create a task-based model for L2 learners to reach native-like pronunciation using technology. The model is based on three major principles. Firstly, language-learning system is that it need to give learners an opportunity to make sense for themselves. Secondly, Build up the modified 3Ms (Meaning Making Mechanisms), (Lian, A.P. 2000) which is operating in the heads of each and every human being as they go about their daily lives. Thirdly, learners must engage reality as it presents itself to them in the course of this engagement and through the means that are available learners interrogate reality in order to achieve the goal they want to achieve. Against the background of these statements, this paper seeks to establish a task-based model that would assist in teaching pronunciation and explore the ways in which technology could be used in providing practical solutions implied by these principles. A technological program, which is a part of the model, will be presented in the end.

Principles

1. Language-learning system
A fundamental principle for constructing a language-learning system is that it needs to give learners an opportunity to make sense for themselves, in the context of their internal logical and representational systems, of the new communicative world with which they are trying to engage. (Lian, 2000)

2. The 3Ms (Meaning-Making Mechanisms) & B.I.M (Bumping, Interacting, Moderating)
If learners were put in a new environment, they would start to Bump with the new world with which learners are not familiar or even do not know at all. Here, learners would experience some problems. To solve these problems learners must Interact and Moderate while they try to put their former knowledge (or history) into a new situation and compare and contrast all their information, which is relevant.

As Lian, (1996) has said this process will not necessarily enable the learner to perform the whole interaction, rather, it would provide a small but significant platform of stability on which to build new understandings i.e. new relationships. Through this process, learners will develop their ‘Meaning-Making Mechanisms’ (Lian, 2000).

3. Authentic task- Radio Program
The reason why a radio program has been chosen is to teach second language to learners using an authentic method not contrived for the purpose of teaching. Lian.A.B (2001, in the class) defined the criteria of authentic task that you engage reality as it presents itself to you in the course of this engagement and through the means that are available you interrogate reality in order to achieve the goal that you want to achieve.

On these views, using a radio program as a task-based methodology is an authentic methodology.

Strategies for radio program

1. “One-stop learning”
Once learners come into this learning place, they should not need to move to other places to solve problems they may encounter there. This place can be named “one-stop learning”. In other words, almost all necessities are provided, which saves time and prevents learners from losing interests. Hence, the program seeks to provide all facilities such as watching videos, listening, speaking while recording learners’ voice, and dictionary etc.

2. Learner-centred approach
The major point of a learner-centred approach is that the understanding of the learner and the learning needs which are necessitated by the differences between learners. “One learns by engaging the world.”

The principle is as follows. Nobody knows anything; therefore all knowledge is social i.e. constructed against the principle that historically, and not logically, makes sense.
So, learners do task which is anything that arises in response to reality and in order to affect reality (Lian A.B., 2001) and learner himself or herself engage in reality not teacher engage in it.

3. Self-directed learning
One of the premises of this model is pursuing the self-directed learning. Self-directed learning has been described as "a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others," to diagnose their learning needs, formulate learning goals, identify resources for learning, select and implement learning strategies, and evaluate learning outcomes (Knowles 1975).

4. Providing diversity to learners
The major reason that the language is not simple but complicated is because a complicated world makes language. The second major reason is different language groups, which belong to a large society is different at least slightly. Moreover, language has different shapes according to different type of groups-their division criteria might be generation, social level and gender etc even in one language using country. Hence the database is required to be diverse.

Model of task-based Program

It requires four periods of five weeks.
First week, students select a topic (mean) through negotiation between learners and their feeling of reality, and form a group according to their task e.g. parody, interview and news.
Second week, students make a script while accessing the various relevant authentic resources which teacher provided or from the outside world and collect data.
Third week, the teacher needs to teach pronunciation in various ways with technological support.
Fourth week, the class needs final pronunciation correction before broadcasting their program.
Fifth week, students evaluate the program with feedback from various sources such as peers, teacher, audience etc. After one term is finished, the process is repeated with different topics and rotated the roles among learners

One of the technological program
1. To make the model seems like real world it was devised for learners to be able to hear the sound faster or slower.
2. Rather than clear recording, some noise is included a background for making the environment more like the real world. Listening to perfect, clear sounds without noise is impossible in real world.
3. Providing scripts synchronised with the screen and sound helps learners to catch up the speed, emotional situation and body movement of authentic text.
4. Teaching intonation and rhythm as well as sounds at the same time and with meaningful sentences.
5. Providing a database, which is able to make learners access as many various resources as they need.

Conclusion

The current paper has established a pronunciation-teaching model using an authentic task, a radio program, suggesting technology program for its implementation. Achieving native speaker pronunciation must be a goal of all second language learners. Also, it is perhaps the most difficult goal. Although it is not easy for a single model to cover the theories, learners need to have a model in learning L2 area. Hopefully, the suggested model and program will make a small contribution to help learners achieve native-like pronunciation.

References