

A Genre-Based Approach to the Teaching of Pronunciation

Authors : Marden Silva, Danielle Guerra

Abstract : Some studies have indicated that pronunciation teaching hasn't been paid enough attention by teachers regarding EFL contexts. In particular, segmental and suprasegmental features through genre-based approach may be an opportunity on how to integrate pronunciation into a more meaningful learning practice. Therefore, the aim of this project was to carry out a survey on some aspects related to English pronunciation that Brazilian students consider more difficult to learn, thus enabling the discussion of strategies that can facilitate the development of oral skills in English classes by integrating the teaching of phonetic-phonological aspects into the genre-based approach. Notions of intelligibility, fluency and accuracy were proposed by some authors as an ideal didactic sequence. According to their proposals, basic learners should be exposed to activities focused on the notion of intelligibility as well as intermediate students to the notion of fluency, and finally more advanced ones to accuracy practices. In order to test this hypothesis, data collection was conducted during three high school English classes at Federal Center for Technological Education of Minas Gerais (CEFET-MG), in Brazil, through questionnaires and didactic activities, which were recorded and transcribed for further analysis. The genre debate was chosen to facilitate the oral expression of the participants in a freer way, making them answering questions and giving their opinion about a previously selected topic. The findings indicated that basic students demonstrated more difficulty with aspects of English pronunciation than the others. Many of the intelligibility aspects analyzed had to be listened more than once for a better understanding. For intermediate students, the speeches recorded were considerably easier to understand, but nevertheless they found it more difficult to pronounce the words fluently, often interrupting their speech to think about what they were going to say and how they would talk. Lastly, more advanced learners seemed to express their ideas more fluently, but still subtle errors related to accuracy were perceptible in speech, thereby confirming the proposed hypothesis. It was also seen that using genre-based approach to promote oral communication in English classes might be a relevant method, considering the socio-communicative function inherent in the suggested approach.

Keywords : EFL, genre-based approach, oral skills, pronunciation

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