

EVALUATION OF TWO FACTORS ON BEGINNER LEARNERS' FLUENCY

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Abstract

Nowadays, in the light of progress in the world of science, technology and communications, mastery of learning international languages is a sure and needful matter. In learning any language as a second language, progress and achieving a desirable level in speaking is indeed important for approximately all learners. In this research, we find out how preparation can influence L2 learners' oral fluency with respect to individual differences in working memory capacity. The participants consisted of sixty-one advanced L2 learners including MA students of TEFL at Isfahan University as well as instructors teaching English at Sadr Institute in Isfahan. The data collection consisted of two phases: A working memory test (reading span test) and a picture description task, with a one-month interval between the two tasks. Speaking was elicited through speech generation task in which the individuals were asked to discuss four topics emerging in two pairs. The two pairs included one simple and one complex topic and was accompanied by planning time and without any planning time respectively. Each topic was accompanied by several relevant pictures. L2 fluency was assessed based on preparation. The data were then analyzed in terms of the number of syllables, the number of silent pauses, and the mean length of pauses produced per minute. The study offers implications for strategies to improve learners' both fluency and working memory.

Keywords: Fluency; Working Memory Capacity; Preparation; L2 Speech Production