

Converging Perspectives in Developing Oral Proficiency in an Adult English Language

Learner: A Case Review

Presenters: **Abby Preston** Graduate SLP

Faculty Sponsor: Marie Sanford

Text: **WORD COUNT: 402**

Oral proficiency in a new language is a critical marker of communicative success. Oral proficiency affects social, academic, business, and personal opportunities. Non-native English speakers have widely varying levels of English oral proficiency in native-speaker contexts. As these individuals embrace opportunities to enrich their involvement in new countries and cultures with non-native linguistic differences they often experience disadvantages in generalizing their oral practice skills. Because English Language Learners (ELL) may encounter difficulties discriminating among some English phonemes due to lack of exposure to meaningful contrasts of these sounds in their native language, their oral proficiency of English is often inconsistent (Glisan, et.al., 2013). Traditionally oral proficiency has been attained through controlled or staged environments. Theories and practices emphasizing this method have met with varying levels of achievement. This poster explores a successful approach to the generalization of oral proficiency by linking established learning strategies with the ELL's perspective, to affix self-reflection practices.

This poster illustrates a case review of an ELL's improved progress in the area of generalized oral proficiency of American English. The individual is a 29 year-old female, whose first language is Czech. As a student in the Czech Republic she studied the English language for five years. After earning a college degree, she came to the US on an academic visa and is currently a full time student at a community college. Her aspirations are to enter a healthcare profession. This individual sought accent modification services from a college speech-language and hearing clinic for the purpose of gaining oral proficiency for better career opportunities.

An intentionally designed plan for oral proficiency based on a protocol that incorporates the perspective of the ELL participant is described. Goal selection, intervention approaches, and plans for generalization were developed using participatory action research models (Riel, 2017). The principles of action research recognize that people learn through the active adaptation of their existing knowledge in response to their experiences with other people and their environment (McNiff & Whitehead, 2002). Allowing for explicit participation and collaboratively documenting the processes by which individuals carry out their generalization plans is foundational. Converging perspectives inform interventionists on how to promote meaningful alterations.

This poster demonstrates significant connections made through linking theory/strategies, evidence-based practices, combined with the perspectives and reflections of the learner. Jointly selected targets were constructed through a person-centered design involving an individual portfolio, learning preferences, and topics of personal importance. Significant improvements in generalization are presented.

References

- American Speech-Language Hearing Association. (2007). Scope of practice in speech-language pathology. Retrieved from www.asha.org/docs/html/SP2007-00283.htm.
- Derwing, T. M., & Munro, M. J. Second Language Accent and Pronunciation Teaching: A Research-Based Approach. *TESOL Quarterly*, 39, 379-397. Retrieved August 1, 2014, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3588486>

- Glisan, E.W., Swender, E., & Surface, E. (2013). *Foreign Language Annals*, Vol. 46, Iss. 2, pp. 264–289.
© 2013 by *American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages*. DOI: 10.1111/flan.12030
- Mc Niff, J & Whitehead, J. (2002). *Action Research: Principles and Practice* (2nd Ed.). Routledge and Falmer. London and New York.
- Riel, M. (2017). *Understanding Action Research*. Center For Collaborative Action Research, Pepperdine University (Last revision Jan, 2017). Accessed Online on 11/28/2018 from <http://cadres.pepperdine.edu/ccar/define.html>.