HAMORA – CAN YOU PLEASE REPEAT THAT IN ENGLISH?

Correction And Encouragement In A Hebrew Language Class

Laliv Gal
JCDSRI, Providence
DeLeT/MAT cohort 8, Brandeis University
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My Research Question

How do I respond to students’ mispronunciations of Hebrew and how does it affect my students?
The Context

- Research during my internship in JCDSRI

- Data collection
  - Third grade Judaic studies/Hebrew lessons
  - First grade Judaic studies/Hebrew lessons
What Do The Students Think?

- When are students comfortable interacting in Hebrew?
- What barriers do students experience when trying to interact in Hebrew?
What helps you most to speak Hebrew?

- 5: when I have to describe a picture
- 2: when I answer a question that the teacher asks about a picture
- 2: when I answer the question about how I am feeling during morning meeting
- 1: when I see vocabulary words in the classroom
When and with whom do you feel most comfortable speaking Hebrew?

- 3 with a teacher at school
- 3 with friends
- 1 to myself silently
- 3 with different family members
- 1 with my family because they won’t correct me in a harsh way
As a result, I began to focus on

1. How I corrected the students’ mispronunciations

2. what it means to have a comfortable environment for communicating in Hebrew
Five Categories Of Practice Emerged

1. Immediate Corrections
2. Positive Feedback
3. Recasts
4. Asking Questions
5. Response to Students’ Use of English
Immediate Corrections

- I corrected students’ pronunciation immediately, before they finished a sentence.

Delpit (2006): immediate correction can cause a mental block within students.
Positive Feedback

- Other teachers gave positive feedback even when the pronunciation was not accurate, while I sometimes did not provide any feedback.

Lyster and Mori (2006): Corrections need to be done in a positive way that acknowledges the correct part of students’ expression.
Recasts

“The teacher repeats the input in context and does not directly indicate the wrong part of it: the teacher implicitly reformulates the student’s utterance” (Lyster and Mori, 2006)

- Other teachers used recasts often, I rarely used them
Asking Questions

- My questions were longer, more complicated, contained new vocabulary
- My questions did not provide opportunity to share personal interests

Delpit (2006): when teachers construct questions in a way that promotes personal sharing the students are more willing to respond
Response To Students’ Use Of English

- I told the students I expect them not to use English
- The first grade teacher used personal manner
- The third grade teacher suggested a community of Hebrew speakers
Me: Ok third grade. From now on we don't say "Hamman tash". We say OZNEI HAMAN (in Hebrew).
For Future Thought

There is a connection between correcting students’ pronunciation and the level of their confidence to communicate in Hebrew.

My question now:
- When and how is the best way to correct students?
Special Thanks

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