BREAKING THE WALL OF SILENCE BETWEEN EFL TEACHERS AND EFL STUDENTS (THE ROLE OF CLASSROOM INTERACTION)

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Abstract: *To expand the line of research investigating so as to break the ice of silence between English as Foreign Language 'EFL'' instructors and their students; the present research sought to test a structural model of classroom interaction through the use of communication skills and techniques in introducing English as a Second Language 'ESL' to FL learners who are emanated from different specialties such as the students of Economics, Commerce and Management Sciences. Among the various stakeholders in any educational system, teachers should be considered as key figures, having the potential to impact the success/failure of students, and the system as a whole. Thus, the purpose of the extended paper is to help both English for Specific Purposes 'ESP' lecturers and EFL Learners to create a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom, and to enable them to break the wall of silence between each other through the use of some useful methods in the reinforcement of the educational process.*

Keywords: *EFL, classroom interaction, communication skills, teaching methods.*

1. Introduction

People learn languages everyday; however the reasons for doing so are varied. To learn a language is no longer something can be done at school and forgotten in the work place. To learn a language is necessary for a number of reasons and purposes such as, work career, study or research, travel, culture or maybe studying abroad. A Foreign language 'FL' facilitates mastering the higher forms of native tongue. FL serves as lingua franca so their learners are not supposed to become bilinguals. English nowadays seems as one of the most significant foreign language that should be learned because learning an additional language and English in particular may opens a number of doors to a lot of opportunities.

Nevertheless, many of the ESP lecturers are facing some tribulations in the way of transmitting information to Non-English students from different specialties. In this context, a lot of EFL teachers agree on the fact that EFL learners are keeping silent in the classes most of the time because they do not dare to express themselves in another language rather than their mother tongue, the thing that makes the teacher has a hard task to create a comfortable zone in his classroom; full of motivated students. Moreover, a lot of researchers and linguists view that the study of Second Language Acquisition 'SLA' is an increasingly interdisciplinary field that draws on various branches of linguistics as well as cognitive psychology, educational research, sociology, and neurology to explain exactly how second languages are learned by different persons in different contexts, and to explain the biological, cognitive, and social mechanisms underlying these phenomena.

Thereon, this paper highlights some of the significant tools which facilitate the process of both teaching and learning English as a Second Language 'ESL'.

2. Oral Expression as an Affective Module in the Classroom

Speaking in a foreign language is almost a difficult task but it is not impossible, and here, the implement of Oral Expression 'OE' course considers as the principle module for the students to express their abilities in practicing English Language because language is a practice

and practice is mastery. Oral Expression, in this process, is the ability to express wants, thoughts, needs and ideas meaningfully using suitable syntactic, pragmatic, semantic and phonological language structures. In Oral Expression module, speaking should be given more magnitude and time. Besides the numerous of other English modules that are taught to FL learners, OE educators are invited to take into account a set of elements that can be likely to promote success in the learning/teaching procedure.

Generally speaking, learners in OE ask to share experiences, topics, what they feel and so on. So standing in front of a group and presenting a talk can be daunting for even the most confident student, in the light of that, professors and scholars from New York in Buffalo like, Woodward, Haskins. G, Schaefer. G and Smolen. L, created the **LET'S TALK** approach which is a different approach to oral language development where the learners are able to work together. For example, learners are given three to two minutes to think about any topic after that they will choose one topic and discuss it. This activity will create a good atmosphere in the classroom where all feel they are really could talk in another language and enjoy the opportunity to speak unremitting. As it is obvious, language is a set of skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) these four skills are overlap, they complete each other. Speaking is a productive skill used by people in order to communicate with each other. Many language researchers regarded the speaking ability as the measure of knowing a language. Harmer (2001) views that the speaking skill is the ability to speak fluently presupposed not only knowledge of language features, but also the ability to process information and language on the spot (269). This quotation shows that speaking skill is not related to the knowledge of language features but it needs the ability to apply this knowledge in speech; that is how well the individual can use it and not only how much he knows about it. Furthermore, the speaking skill has a neglected skill in FL classroom. What is more, the CLT (Communication Language Teaching) places more emphasis on being understood more than taken for a native speaker of English. The CLT gives a particular importance to the speaking skill and provides a meaningful practice for learners. It believes in the necessity of communication and negotiation of meaning. Therefore, it is advised to teach and develop the students' speaking skill.

3.   Difficulties Facing the EL Students in the Classroom

As anyone who learns English as a foreign language 'EFL', he/she will face some complications among their learning process which may block the principle of participation in the classroom. Thereon, a lot of students share the same point that the obstruction which immobilizes them from being motivated during learning a second language is due to three main reasons which are:

- **The Teacher**

The teacher is considered as the first and main cause who either makes students active or inactive and this is owing to many reasons such as the severest of the teacher who imposes orders and takes the authority of a leadership rather than a facilitator of a language who is supposed to follow his students from time to time. As a result, the learner will find himself in a close box where he feels uncomfortable to show his ability of speaking freely and sharing thoughts in a foreign language. Also, the action of correcting the spelling, grammar and pronunciation mistakes of the students by the educator will obliterate the self-esteem of learners to participate during the lecture of Oral Expression because the latter, automatically, will not be energetic in the classroom since both the teacher and lectures of free talk are monotonous.

Like every other aspect of classroom management, it is possible for every teacher to have an idea about the necessary strategies and techniques to build a good relationship with their students. Besides, the connection between the lecturer and the student has a strong impact on the character of the human first and the society as well; if teachers of FL know how to deal correctly with their students, be honest in their work as facilitators of a language and educators, automatically, EFL students will admire to learn the module of that teacher and feel both active and motivated. As a result, they will study with big desire and find themselves ready to accomplish their learning process in order to become successful students in their studying career, as well as, good citizens.

- **Afraid of Making Mistakes**

Learners are psychologically anxious of making mistakes or even errors because they believe that this thing is something dreadful and brainless in the eyes of their teacher and classmates. This feeling may slow down and stop the learning process; however, learners of a FL should know that mistakes are part of the learning procedures; learners learn from their mistakes because when they make mistakes it means that learning is taking place.

- **Anxiety**

Anxiety is a physiological, behavioral and psychological response; it may include bodily reactions such as rapid heartbeat, muscle tension, queasiness, dry mouth or sweating. It also can interrupt the ability to act, express the self, or deal with a certain everyday situation. Anxiety is one of the difficulties that face both the English language students and lecturers in the classroom. In teaching speaking mainly in Oral Expression the teacher is asking his students to perform and speak up in front of their colleagues. As a result, many students will be anxious during these activities. Hence, there are many other reasons that threaten the FL students and sometimes even the ESP teachers. Consequently, both of them have to avoid these problems by working together; moreover, humanistic aspect of the teaching profession compels any teacher to be a friend among learners so as to establish confidence and the adequate environment for education. Teachers have both the power and responsibility to counter the development of anxiety by building self-assured through creating helpful situation for language acquisition.

4. Techniques in Teaching Oral Expression

Oral Expression module is a fundamental course for EFL learners and one of the basic linguistic skills where it gives the chance to students from different specialties to build their self-confidence, develop their communication competence through the four language skills such as, *Vocabulary, Fluency, Grammar and Pronunciation*. Therefore, the method of classroom interaction has no specific programme in the sense of that each teacher applies his techniques and methods in order to teach this module. Hence, there are several techniques using by teachers such as:

- **Games and Role Playing Activities**
In this activity, the teacher asks his students to read a dialogue for more than one time so as to make them understand and be able to get some ideas. Therefore, the teacher can observe their competence and examine their pronunciation throughout speaking. The use of games in the classroom provides many advantages and encourages the learners to contribute, sharing and exchanging ideas, and become more energetic. One source of games is puzzle, when a teacher brings a puzzle in the classroom he will create a challenge between students, and they will be capable to talk and not remain shy and silent.

- **Minimal Pairs**

In phonology, minimal pairs are pairs of words or phrases in a particular language; spoken or signed that differs in only one phonological element, for instance, a phoneme (smallest unit of speech distinguishing one word (or word element) from another), chroneme (a basic, theoretical unit of sound that can distinguish words by duration only of a vowel or consonant) or toneme (a phoneme consisting of a contrastive feature of tone in a tone language). It is a useful exercise to practice pronunciation techniques, minimal pairs are two words belonging to the same language and differentiated only by one speech sound. For example: Li**f**e → li**v**e, ri**c**e → ri**s**e, **p**en → **t**en.

- **The Oral Story Telling**

For this aspect, students may listen to a story recorded by a native speaker of a specific FL, for instance, 'English language' and then, the lecturer will give them the chance to speak and express their thoughts and ideas. Afterward, they will be asked to give a summary to the story by repeating it with their own style. Thereon, the role of the teacher as a storyteller here is to pick the story which is closer to them as you can, keep it concise and precise pare down to the heart of the story, stimulate their senses so they feel the story and live it literary, depict the characters and settings, and help them to be compassionate toward with the character's feelings.

- **The Use of Songs and Poems**

In oral expression module it is helpful to use songs because students need to sing and to have fun from time to time, when a teacher selects songs which are understood by his learners, they will enjoy find it easy to memorize the words of a given song. In another word they will improve the language skill, and they will break the ice in the class especially when the students do not know each other. Poems, like songs, since poetry is often spoken, repeated, deal with, they are acted as an effective tool for practicing a language. So the role of the teacher in this perspective is to provide a poem which is appropriate to the level, age and the interest of learners. Likewise, learners will be more aware about the grammatical structures. Poems, here, are considered an important aspect to be taught. Once a poem or even a song has been learned they will remain in the reminiscence of listeners and readers i.e., learners. Musical materials can offer an enormously rich, enjoyable and authentic context for FL learners.

- **The Role of Motivation in Breaking down the Ice of Silence**

In many educational systems throughout the world, the primary aim for learning a foreign language is to build communication potential. Motivation in this context plays an essential role in the classroom reaction, if both the teacher and learners are motivated the learning process will be active. Moreover, motivation is the way that led to the success. Harmer (2001) states that **"motivation is some kinds of internal derive that encourages somebody to pursue your course of action"** (3). Accordingly, motivation is to do the best thing, learners are influenced by a variety of motivations which will affect such things as anxiety or attitude. The lecturer has to facilitate the task of learning; he has to choose simple words and various ways to assist the learning process. He needs to encourage his students to be active by using the following steps that represent the major motivations for learning English as a foreign language:

a. Motivation helps the learner to be able to interact with foreigners while travelling abroad.

b. To be able to face the anxiety

c. To read and participate in FL so easily and without being afraid of making pronunciation mistakes

d. To be able to attend and participate in international conferences.

e. Being capable of reading English literature and understand its meaning.

In the light of this, being fluent in English as Second Language (ESL) or as a Foreign Language means being able to keep the language coming in interactive speaking activities namely in OE course where most lecturers are trying to involve their students to be motivated by exchanging opinions regardless to mistakes, fails or even do repetitions as long as they are able to keep talking freely; because the success is to move from fail to fail without losing motivation.

- **The Role of Materials**

Successful educator has always taken a positively critical approach so as to develop his work by using his own and other experts' experience. Teaching materials have a great influence in both teaching and learning ESL. Its contain a immense position in building conversations in the classroom, in addition to this, the use of materials which include pictures, showing movies, poems, books, songs, data-show, Google meet, PowerPoint, etc, help the ESP teacher to prompt his class particularly in the section of Oral Expression. These materials may assist to involve learners in positive way and to create a means of communication and negotiation inside the classroom.

5. Conclusion

Interaction in the classroom is considered as a fundamental pillar in the process of teaching the language to the student, as well as in mastering that language. Of course, this is due to the fact that speaking skill is one of the first and most significant means of communication that people has gained since ancient times in his daily, practical and personal life to secure his basic needs. In the light of that, education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights. It shall promote understanding and confidence between the ESP teacher and his students in order to broaden their knowledge and learn something they really understand and enjoy learning it. The purpose from this paper is to highlight the importance of Oral Expression module in the process of interaction during the classroom and as a key course in building confidence between students themselves. However, the difficulties that face both ESP teachers plus the learners of EFL in the classroom can be expunged through the implementation of the educational materials such as the value of motivation and speaking in breaking the wall of silence between EFL teachers and their students who may derive from different fields. From this paper, one may understand that a successful learner of ESL is confident in his ability to learn, he has a self-reliant, motivated and passionate, aware of what he wants to learn, unafraid of making mistakes, a good risk taker, willing to take responsibility for his own learning. In the same stream, an effective ESP teacher is the one who tells, explains, demonstrates and inspires.

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