Effect of the Role of Teacher in EFL Teaching through Interactive Approach at Public Sector Schools

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---**Abstract**---
The idea of a teacher in the guise of a friend, mentor, guide, inspiration, source of knowledge, and a role model is not the product of modern thought rather; it has been there for centuries. However, expecting the incarnation of this idea in all the modern teachers and especially the teachers of EFL classes is becoming the need of the hour as the methodology of teaching English is no more lecture oriented through and through, rather it's become imperative for the teachers to follow the interactive mode of teaching in order to teach and enhance communicative competence of learners of English as Foreign Language, and also to maximize the effects of their teaching. In response if a teacher wins respect, love and prestige from students then nothing like that. These are the findings of the study based on the responses of 200 public sector secondary school students who feel that there is a marked difference between the interactive and traditional (teacher centered) teaching in an EFL class at secondary level. To them the person responsible for such environment in the class is no other than the teacher. Interactive teaching may be called the second name of friendly teaching in Pakistani context where teachers traditionally follow teacher-centered teaching in EFL class that offers little room to students to learn English language actively. The subjects favor interactive teaching in EFL class and friendlier way of teaching English language is better for learning English language skills. The study recommends the adoption of interactive mode of teaching in all EFL levels especially at the public sector schools.

Key words: *EFL (English as a foreign language), Interactive, communicative competence, teacher centered*

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I.   Introduction

Although teachers of English as Foreign Language (EFL) have been made to get knowledge of updated trends in their field under the auspices of public sector teacher training programmes in Pakistan, raising awareness of the teacher's role in creating conducive learning environments has not traditionally been considered an important component of them. Teachers play a highly significant role in creating motivating learning environments by incorporating into their teaching a number of conscious and proactive motivational strategies (Brophy, 2004; Dörnyei, 2001) and thus making a "motivational teaching practice". (Dörnyei, 2006) Being a developing country Pakistan needs teachers of English language who could carry on the important business of transferring knowledge and skills of English language to students in such a way that they could be able to use the same knowledge and skills in their future social and professional life.

It means teacher appears to be a responsible person who is to ensure learning in educational conditions in EFL class in Pakistani context where majority of students come from non- English speaking environment having very little proficiency in English. The public sector secondary schools, in Pakistan in general and Punjab in particular, are over burdened and students as well as their parents look to the teachers for the proper learning of English language because their own language is primarily Punjabi, and English is not used at homes exclusively. The parents also don't have the sufficient means to send their children to private sector schools where special efforts are made for the teaching of English language; learning environment, curriculum and teaching methods, etc. On the other hand public sector schools face enormous administrative and logistic problems which leave a lot on the teachers to take special measures for making the students learn and enhance proficiency in English language for practical use. The schools themselves appear non-supportive for students because there exists the problem of medium of instruction, Urdu or Punjabi, which leaves a little room for students to learn English language with full devotion and actively.

There is a famous saying," Give me a fish and I eat for a day, teach me to fish and I eat for a life time". This may be the exact job of a teacher teaching English in EFL class in Pakistani context. "A good teacher is one who can express his/her point of view clearly, who can understand a child's problem, who is ready to help at any time, who knows what is right and what is wrong; a teacher who is very hardworking and friendly too who can light the future of child" (Barger: What makes a good teacher, ¶ 45).

Despite having administrative or logistic problems in our country in education sector the most important person in such circumstances is the teacher who can change hell into heaven through his interactive teaching in and outside the classroom to ensure the learning of English language. The motivated English language teacher having friendly /interactive behaviour in the classroom is supposedly messiah for students to develop liking for the learning of English language on one hand and use it in social and academic life on the other. But still there is no denying of the fact that "institutional resistance" (Vieira, 2003) as the major factor negatively affecting the possibility of sustained change in the teachers' role in EFL.

Despite these constraints, it becomes imperative for a language teacher to play the role of a facilitator in teaching foreign language, but it is felt that motivated and interactive English language teachers make the job easier both for themselves and the learners. Interactive teaching is a two way process wherein the teacher modifies his or her approach in response to the needs of the learner(s). The interactive teacher is keenly aware of the learners and their different learning styles. All good teachers are interactive teachers. It is not possible to teach effectively without interaction. Interactive learning is also a two way process but the learner may be interacting with the teacher, with peers, with resources or with all three (Technology for E-Learning, ¶ 1).

Learner-centered teaching does not mean to play down the role of the teacher; rather, it highly values the role of teacher in that the classroom teacher can encourage the students through negotiations, which allow the students to be aware of the direction their learning is taking, and therefore take more interest and become more involved in what they are doing. The role of the teacher consequently shifts from that of instructor towards that of facilitator, thus playing an even more important role in developing students' positive affective state (Lei, Q., 2007). While adopting the interactive approach, the teacher creates a secure psychological environment in which the learners are more independent, hence they learn non-defensively and effectively.

Study question

The paper aims to find out to what extent the interactive teaching of the English language teachers generate liking for English language and promote learning of English language among the students at secondary level in the public sector schools.

Review of Literature

The first thing to realize about interactive teaching is that it is not something new or mysterious. If you are a teacher and you ask questions in class, assign and check homework, or hold class or group discussions, then you already teach interactively. Basically interactive teaching is just giving students something to do, getting back what they have done, and then assimilating it yourself, so that you can decide what would be best to do next (What is interactive teaching ¶ 4). Unfortunately in our society there are still many foreign language teachers who often walk through their teaching. They usually pay little attention to the development of the teaching quality, seldom communicate with students, and teaching result is of course not good. Such kind of teaching attitude not only reduces teachers' prestige, but also hurts students' enthusiasm in learning (Lei, Q., 2007).

There is general agreement among educators that a comfortable, non-threatening atmosphere encourages individual creativity; therefore, reasonable physical comfort should be a continuing consideration in the conduct of a course. Small details, such as making sure that the students' seats are facing the visual display you will use during the lecture, can be very important in reducing student fatigue and distraction. Students learn best when they are actively involved in the process. Researchers report that, regardless of the subject matter, students working in small groups tend to learn more of what is taught and retain it longer than when the same content is presented in other instructional formats. Students who work in collaborative groups also appear more satisfied with their classes (Beckman, 1990; Chickering and Gamson, 1991; Collier, 1980; Cooper and Associates, 1990; Goodsell, Maher, Tinto, and Associates, 1992; Johnson and Johnson, 1989; Johnson, Johnson, and Smith, 1991; Kohn, 1986; McKeachie, Pintrich, Lin, and Smith, 1986; Slavin, 1980, 1983; Whitman, 1988).

But it is possible when the teacher himself/herself is friendly, treats students as independent learners and equal partners in classroom proceedings. Various names have been given to this form of teaching, and there are some distinctions among these: cooperative learning, collaborative learning, collective learning, learning communities, peer teaching, peer learning, reciprocal learning, team learning, study circles, study groups, and

work groups. But all in all, there are three general types of group work: informal learning groups, formal learning groups, and study teams (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991). All this may depend on the teacher that how he/she approaches the students in the classroom to ensure the proper learning of English language skills. Interactive teaching ultimately enables the teacher to consider his/her students as partners in learning process and all attention are focused on them by ignoring himself/herself. (Boothe, 2000) says that I plan to use cooperative learning as a means to promote interaction among students. This will allow students time for social interaction and enable them to develop confidence in their language skills

As an English teacher, he/she should focus on the "learner-training" during the teaching process, in order to make the learner understand the meaning of the group work and know how to participate positively. Interactive approach encourages students to communicate from the very beginning of a lesson, which is learner-centered; teachers' techniques should contribute to the students' intrinsic drives; teachers help students in any way that motivates them to work with the language (Gou-chen, J. and Ming-li, W., 2008). The teacher seems to be very conscious of the seating arrangement of the class when he/she is desirous to teach interactively. Where possible, varying the seating arrangement for different teaching methodologies can also be effective for increasing student participation (Martinez, 1996; and A Discussion of a Positive Learning, ¶4-8). This may be possible when the teacher is motivated and determined to achieve set objectives which are also dependent on the friendly behaviour even when classrooms are fully equipped with the required teaching aids.

The motivated language teacher's first responsibility could be to create such environment where learning may happen without any disturbance. Motivation is defined as "some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something" (Harmer, 2001:51). As stated by Brown (1994:152), motivation is a term that is used to define the success or the failure of any complex task. Steers and Porter (1991:6) deal with three matters while discussing motivation:

- what energises human behavior,
- what directs or channels such behavior and
- how this behaviour is maintained or sustained (Suslu, 2006).

Motivation in teaching/learning process plays a pivotal role in the enhancement of English language skills. Motivation is talked about in L2 learning in terms of two types of favourable motivation - *integrative* and *instrumental* motivation, introduced by Lambert (1972) and Gardner (1985) in a series of books and papers:
When the teacher is motivated and teaches interactively he/she is able to:
1. Keep looking at the students in order to gauge from his/her body language what s/he thinks about his/her lesson.
2. Speak in the foreign language to the students in the class about how the lesson is progressing.
3. Go up to the students and encourage them to get up and move around the class.
4. Ask the students to go and help someone having difficulties understanding instructions/classroom proceedings.
5. Ask students unexpectedly to come and do something in front of the class.

Interactive teaching not only focuses on students' learning inside the classroom but also puts great responsibility on the teacher outside the classroom. Outside the classroom, a role emerges for the teacher, that of the proficient English language user. As a proficient speaker of English, the teacher can provide a valuable model for students that they may not get from their peers. Teachers can also provide students with valuable feedback regarding their language that they are also not likely to get from their peers. As feedback that students receive from their English proficient peers may be rather critical and harsh, the teacher's contributions are helpful and timely.

Outside the classroom, interactions between mainstream teachers and students usually focus on the message rather than the form of language, making the situation more conducive to the development of communicative skills used in informal interpersonal relations (Proficient Language User, ¶ 1). In order to foster acceptance, self-confidence, learning, and achievement, teachers of ESL students need to make the classroom a haven for children, create meaningful learning situations for their students, and never give up on them (Thompson, 2000).

Figure. 1
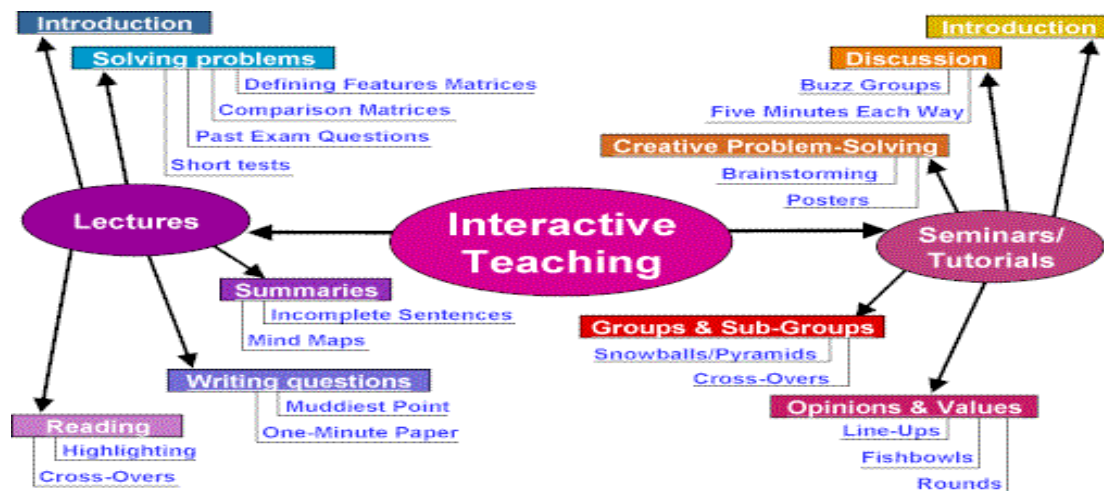
(Courtesy: Interactive Teaching: Key Concept Map)

Moreover interactive teaching generates sense of enquiry among the learners because while talking and sharing with teacher and peers they proceed from dependence to independence. As an approach it helps students "*convert information and data into useful knowledge*" (Exline, 2002). Further, when adopted as a teaching method it differs from traditional teaching methods in that the emphasis is not only on the transmission of discipline related knowledge (the curriculum) but when employed effectively, seeks to set this knowledge into a wider conceptual framework and also places an emphasis on the development of skills required for the processing of information (Exline, 2002).

Methodology

The study is descriptive and has been conducted on the students of twenty public sector (male/female, urban/non-urban) secondary schools in one of the districts of the province of the Punjab, Pakistan. The questionnaire (Annexure-A) was administered on two hundred students of grade X. The quantitative data was analyzed for findings and discussion to draw conclusion.

Conclusion

Famous Confucius says, "Teaching tirelessly" is the ideal condition of being a good teacher. This means teachers' sense of commitment to their profession can bring about and sustain a positive change in the life of foreign language learners especially at such a crucial age when they are neither included in adult learners nor children i.e. secondary school level. It is surprising to know the awareness and concern of the learners at this level for their lack of communicative competence. The results of the study show that majority of the respondents feel that their teachers do not conduct EFL class in an interactive way; however, they are of the opinion that this method pays a lot to gain confidence in and outside the classroom especially in the learning and use of English language.

The results further throw light on the importance of interactive method in the teaching of English language which is felt badly by the respondents because they seem conscious of the role it can play in the learning of English language. Interactive method of teaching brings life not only to the classroom environment but furthers the learning and use of English language both in social and academic situations as opined by the respondents. The results reflect that interactive teaching method is the most convenient and conducive for the learning of English language both for the teacher and the taught because it enables the students to become independent learners in the learning and use of English as a foreign language.

The respondents felt that generally the behaviour of teaching in the class is that of "forced-feeding" where teachers teach the knowledge and students passively, inactively take the notes to cram later for getting through exams. This practice no way improves their competence in English language in and outside the learning environment. Though interactive teaching is all about giving students something to do, giving the feedback on what they do and sharing this with them so that they themselves know what areas in their learning need more concentration, as English teachers, they should focus on the "learner-training" during the teaching process, in order to make the learners understand the meaning of the group work and know how to participate positively. Interactive approach encourages students to communicate from the very beginning of a lesson,

which is learner-centered; teachers' techniques should contribute to the students' intrinsic drives; teachers help students in any way that motivates them to work with the language (Gou-chen, J. and Ming-li, W., 2008).

As the study was limited to only few students of one district in Punjab, Pakistan, the results may not be widely reflective of what the learners in other areas of Pakistan think about interactive teaching, still the importance of this new approach and its proper use by the committed teachers cannot be undermined. In the presence of various constraints like administrative, institutional resistance, limited syllabus, overcrowded classes and overburdened timetables, committed teachers may still be found. All they have to do is to channelize their commitment by taking interactive teaching as an approach not a method. It does not confine them to a fixed pattern of teacher, rather gives room to exercise greater control on the activities of learners.

There are many ways to make teaching interesting and interactive. The element of surprise, for instance, frequently adds joy to class. Well-chosen pictures, cards, and other visual aids, as well as realia in general, are usually of great help. The use of music and sounds can also do the trick. Teachers can have students sing songs in different rhythms or tones of voice, for instance. It is always a good idea to have students change seating arrangements, work in groups, and complete short activities. They may assign activities to students in which they must walk around and use body language and mimicry to express themselves and their feelings (Tosta, A.L., ¶8). All these strategies will help the class to be more dynamic, interesting, motivating and therefore, more interactive. This is where teachers' personality comes into lime light as there is no other source and resource that can do this job.

Recommendations

In the light of findings of the study the following recommendations are made:
1. Teachers should adopt interactive and friendly approach while teaching English language.
2. Maximum classroom proceedings should be held in English language.
3. English language teachers should also promote interactive methodology outside the classroom to promote English language and independence in the use of English language.
4. English language teachers' conduct should be polite to attract students towards the learning of English language.
5. Ample time should be given to collaborative learning in the classroom.
6. EFL class should be activity based so that students' sense of inquiry may be enhanced.
7. English language teachers should have friendly behaviour in and outside the classroom.
8. Classroom seating arrangement should be different during the teaching of English language.
9. English language teachers should allow students to share their life with them.
10. English language teachers must promote independent learning of English language in and outside the classroom.
11. Institutional support to teacher in terms of freedom in adopting interactive approach and employing variety of activities and teaching resources should be encouraged.

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Sr. No	Question	Sometimes	Occasion ally	Not at all	Always	Quite often
1	Does your teacher share your problems?	20	10	160	5	5
2	Does your teacher speak gently in and outside the classroom with you?	10	10	175	2	3
3	Does your teacher support you to speak English language?	5	5	180	5	5
4	Does your teacher appreciate you even when you use wrong English?	10	15	170	3	2
5	Does your teacher greet you in English language in and out side the classroom?	7	10	180	1	2
6	Does your teacher use threatening words when you are unable to work properly?	6	2	2	185	5
7	Does your teacher use harsh words when you do not complete assignments?	10	5	5	175	5
8	Do you think soft spoken teachers are better than harsh ones?	2	2	3	190	3
9	Do you think the kind behaviour of your teacher has, encourages you to learn English?	1	1	1	195	1
10	Do you think students like friendly teachers?	1	1	1	195	1
11	Do you think friendly behaviour of your teacher helps you learn English language in the class?	5	3	2	180	10
12	Do you think teacher's nice behaviour assists all students to use English in the classroom?	5	3	2	185	5
13	Do you think students get confidence from the interactive/ friendly behaviour of teachers?	1	1	1	195	1
14	Do you think interactive/friendly teachers are better than rude ones for the teaching of English language?	5	5	5	180	5
15	Do you think when language items are taught in interactive/friendly way you understand them to use in and outside the classroom?	10	5	5	175	5
16	Do you think for the teaching/learning of English language interactive approach of teacher plays an important role?	5	3	2	185	5
17	Do you think English language is learnt effectively when taught in a collaboratively way?	10	5	5	175	5
18	Do you think that you learn communication skills quickly when used by your teacher himself/herself in the classroom?	5	3	2	185	5
19	Do you think interactive way of your teacher makes you good learner of English language?	10	2	3	180	5
20	Do you talk about the interactive/friendly behaviour of your teacher with your family and friends other than classmates?	1	1	1	195	1