

Role of Classroom Interaction in Reducing Anxiety of Young Learners

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Inspiring Excellence

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Abstract

The aim of this report is to find out the role of classroom interaction in reducing language anxiety among the young language learners. It is believed that language anxiety obstacles the natural flow of learning the language of young learners. Through this report, I will try to show how language anxiety obstacles language learning and also what role classroom interaction plays in reducing this language anxiety among the young learners to accelerate learning. This report also includes my classroom observation to find out the role classroom interaction among teachers and learners. The result of my observation is presented in a descriptive manner. Charts, graphs and pictures were included where necessary.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Contemporary language teaching and learning put a remarkable importance on effective classroom interaction among the learners and the teachers. The interaction may occur in various ways such as teacher-learner, teacher- learners/group of learners, learner-learner or learners-learners. The purpose of organizing various types of interaction is to accelerate language learning especially second language learning because second language learning is a very intricate process. It is very dissimilar with first language learning that we learn subconsciously. In learning a second language, the learners have to face a number of impediments. Language anxiety is such an impediment and perhaps one of the most complex phenomena that the learners experience. It is generally believed that language anxiety negatively affects the learning of a second language. Through this paper, the sources of language anxiety will be identified and it will be shown how language anxiety obstacles language learning and to what extent classroom interaction can reduce language anxiety to accelerate learning. This paper is based on my experience of my internship where I focused on the relationship among the variants such as interaction, anxiety, reduction of language anxiety and acceleration of learning. This paper has been divided into three parts. At the first part, I have defined, classified and made relationship among different variants such as interaction, classroom interaction, language anxiety, and its sources in language teaching in the classroom. I also have discussed how classroom interaction can be useful in reducing language anxiety to accelerate learning. In the second part of my paper, I have described my experience of internship classroom teaching and observation. And finally, I have presented the outcome of my classroom teaching and observation in the “Findings and

Discussion” section. I have used graphs and charts where they were useful to explain the findings.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Interaction & Classroom Interaction

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (7th Edition) defines the verb “to interact” as “to communicate with somebody especially while you work, play or spend time with them.” There is one more meaning which would be more beneficial to explain this paper. The second meaning is, “if one thing interacts with another, or if two things interact, the two things have an effect on each other.” Brown (2000) pointed to interaction as “the heart of communication” and it is what communication is all about. Moreover, we send messages, we receive them, we interpret them in a context, we negotiate meaning, and we collaborate to accomplish certain purposes. And after several decades of research on teaching and learning languages, we have discovered that the best way to learn to interact is through interaction itself (Brown, 2000, p.165)

“Classroom Interaction”, on the other hand, bears, more or less, a similar meaning to the word interaction. The only difference is where interaction can take place among any people, classroom interaction takes place among the learners and the teachers in different forms. In 1986, Richards and Rodgers opined that a teacher has two main roles; the first one is to facilitate the communication process between all participants in the classroom and between these participants and the various activities and texts, the second role is to act as an independent participant within the learning-teaching group. Gower (1995) stated different types of classroom activities that the teacher can arrange in a language classroom. Some of the activities are whole class discussion,

pair work, group work, individual work etc. They put importance on these activities in proper way to accelerate learning in the classroom.

2. 2 Different Types of Classroom Interaction

In classroom, there are learners and a teacher. Interaction takes place among them in different ways. Interaction is a two-way process among the learners and the teacher. Brown (2000) suggested the following types of classroom interactions based on who take part in the interaction,

- (a) teacher – learners,
- (b) Teacher – a learner / a group of learners,
- (c) Learner – learner and
- (d) Learners – learners.

The organization of the process of interaction depends on who are the participants and who is interacting with whom. The above mentioned organization of interaction in the classroom can be broadly categorized into two major types.

2. 2. 1 Learner – Learner Interaction

Bowers (1962), Baker (1992), Kees (2001) have illustrated the role of learner -learner interaction and other aspects of classroom interaction. However, learner –learner interaction occurs only among or between the learners. In such type of classroom interaction, teacher plays the role of an observer in the class. He lets the learners discuss on a specific topic and come with their own opinion (Brown, 2000, p 165). Again, learner- learner interaction can be of two types. Two learners can make a pair to solve the problem. They are supposed to discuss with each other and come up with their solution. Another is, they are told to make groups of five or ten learners

and they discuss a topic with one another and the group leader comes up with the result of their discussion.

2. 2.2 Teacher- learner Interaction

The teacher initiates the interaction, the learners respond to it and the teacher gives feedback finally. In 2006, Kumaravadivelu opined that effective teacher-learner interaction is very important in language learning. If the teacher thinks himself an authoritative person and behaves as such, then it will be difficult for the learners to participate spontaneously in interactive activities in the language classroom. Language learning is a collaborative function of the teacher and the learners. The teacher should facilitate negotiated interaction among the teachers and the learners (p. 203).

2. 3 Language Anxiety:

MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) refer to language anxiety as a type social anxiety as it is derived from the process of applying communicative language teaching approach in language classroom. Gass and Selinker (1994) also refer to language anxiety as a social anxiety occurs among the language learners as a result of facing communicative language teaching in the classroom. Anxiety has been found to interfere with many types of learning and it is also logical to imply that it also interferes with second language learning. In 2002, Eleni illustrated the concept of language anxiety in the language class based on the two previously published model by Bandura (1991) and Pekrun (1992). These models are consecutively known as EVTA (Expectancy- Value Theory of Anxiety), and Theory of Self -Efficacy. Furthermore, anxiety has been defined as the subject feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system (Horwitz,2001, p.113, mentioned in Humphries, 2007).

2. 4 Sources of Language Anxiety

Brown (2000) discussed some important sources of language anxiety in language classroom. According to him, low self-esteem and competitiveness are believed to be responsible for language anxiety among the learners. Competitiveness creates anxiety when learners compare themselves with others or to an idealized self-image. Similarly, the degree of self-esteem also refers to the degree of anxiety. Moreover, Eleni (2002) stated that when learners face any threatening situation on the way of learning language, there can be an adverse effect on learning. Because, highly anxious individuals are often in a state divided attention resources and so their ability to concentrate and be successful at learning tasks is hampered (p.329). Hughes (2003) expressed the importance of taking test. According to him tests are the measurement of whether the learners are learning the language or not. But the problem is with the testing format. If the test format is not appropriate to the learners, it might create language anxiety. For example, if a teacher follows communicative approach of teaching in the classroom and then sets question of deductive grammar rule, it might create language anxiety among the learners. Wright (2005) refers to other sources of personal and interpersonal language anxiety. Some of them are communication apprehension, social anxiety, and anxiety specific to language learning. Again, some constructs such as speech anxiety, shyness, stage fright, embarrassment, social evaluative anxiety are also personal and interpersonal sources of anxiety.

2. 5 Effects of Language Anxiety on language Learning:

A noticeable number of studies have been done to explain how and to what extent language anxiety affects language learning. Though most of the researchers agreed that language anxiety badly affects language learning but opposite statements are not difficult to find. Some would rather say it is a controversial or unresolved issue. But, in case of second language

learning (but not first language) language anxiety may impede the production and achievement of the language. As mentioned before that language anxiety mainly affects the listening and speaking skills, by referring language learning, these two skills will be focused here.

It is seen that many learners state that language anxiety lead them to frustration and sometimes, even to anger towards the target language and its culture. And it is natural that if someone is stressed to learn or do something whatever the subject is (such as mathematics, science etc.), s/he will get frustrated and even angry. As a result, s/he might be reluctant to learn it or do it. So, learning will be impeded. Besides, evaluation is important in language class. Write (2005) has discussed the importance of evaluation in every language class. According to him, “...., we need to evaluate the learning before the lesson ends, so that we can modify our plans for tomorrow” (p.84). But putting more importance on negative evaluation in the classroom leads the learner to be anxious about learning and the learner who experiences negative evaluation in the class is supposed to be demotivated in learning the language better in future. Thus learning can be badly affected by language anxiety. Beside negative evaluation, there are many activities in the classroom that create language anxiety and decelerate language learning.

Some of the SLA researchers such as Brown (2000), Eleni (2002) and Hughes (2003) through their studies on language anxiety, show that language anxiety does not affect first language (L1) learning. They explained further that the learner in case of learning L1 are not aware of learning, so there is nothing to be anxious. But in case of second language (L2) learning, they are dealing with something they don't know about. And when they are to converse in a language that they do not know, it is natural that the learners get anxious and worried and cannot perform even to what extent they are able to perform. So, learning decelerates. From the study of other researchers like MacIntyre and Gardner (1989), Bandura (1991), Pekrun (1992),

and Gass and Selinker (1994), it is seen that learners experiencing greater level of anxiety would make more mistakes in sentence correction especially if they are speaking in a language they are not fully confident in using. It is also seen that language anxiety affects the performance of not only primary level learners but also advanced level learners. In a word, in case of learning a second language, language anxiety impacts badly for all levels of learners.

2. 6 Classroom Interaction versus Language Anxiety

There are a huge number of suggestions that have been given by SLA researchers and language teachers to reduce language anxiety among the learners. Teacher – learner interaction in the classroom can raise or reduce the language anxiety among the learners. Ellis (1985) discussed the importance of input and interaction in the rate and route of success. He claimed that though interaction hardly affects the route of success in language learning it strongly affects the rate of success. Littlewood (1981) suggested the following roles of a teacher in an interactive classroom. These are: (a) A teacher should be a general **overseer** of learning to coordinate the activities in the classroom, (b) he has to be a **manager** of the classroom to be responsible for grouping activities into lessons and for their overall organization, (c) he has to be an **instructor** in the class to present new items and to control, evaluate and correct learners' performance, (d) he has to be a **consultant** or **advisor** for the learners to help them if necessary and monitor their activities and finally, (e) sometimes, he has to be **co-communicator** in the learning activities to encourage the learners in their learning activities. Harmer (2001) also suggested many other roles of teacher in an interactive classroom such as controller, organizer, assessor, prompter, participant, resource, tutor, observer, performer and provider of comprehensible input etc. Avoiding the role of a teacher, who is always an authoritative person, the teacher should take the above mentioned roles in the language classroom. If the learners feel free with him, they will be

motivated and it will accelerate their learning. According to Brown (2000) the most important key to creating an interactive language classroom is the initiation of interaction by the teacher (p.169).

Chapter 3

Classroom Observation

I observed several ESL classrooms at Yale International School. The students were from primary level (standard 4) and their proficiency level is novice high. The number of students in the class is 30. The school is situated at Uttara-Sec 3, Dhaka. The class meets five times a week on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

3.1 First Class

The 1st class that I observed was an English Language class. It was a communicative course in English. The name of the book was “English Junction Course Book (E.J.C. B)”. The lesson that was taught by the teacher was „The Big Guest“ by Shankar (a short story). The teacher started the class by asking students some questions like- a. How do we treat guests? What do we do to make them feel comfortable? b. If you had a baby elephant as a guest in your house, what would you do to take care of it? The teacher asked all these questions to students because she wanted her students to actively participate in the class. The teacher also wanted to elicit information out of the students. The teacher then read out the story to students and made the students understand. The teacher used several real life examples to make students understand the difficult vocabulary items introduced in the text and also gave students the opportunity to clear their confusion by asking questions in the middle of the class. The teacher wanted students to perform one activity in the class. The teacher wrote the instructions on the white board that every student has to come and give one real life example with the new vocabulary words learned. The teacher wrote the instructions on the board because he wanted to give students visual or written clues about the activity. The teacher also demonstrated the activity to the students by

giving one real life example. Teacher believed that showing what to do is more effective than telling what to do.

3. 2 Second Class:

In the second class the teacher gave students another activity from the same text. This time the teacher broke the instructions down for student's better understanding. The teacher divided the activity into a series of steps and gave instructions for each step. One example-The teacher wanted the students to role play several characters from the short story. To do the activity the teacher first divided the activity into a series of steps and also gave instructions for each step. The teacher first told the students to change their sitting arrangement which was required before the role play. The teacher also told students about the characters that they are going to role-play and told them to get mentally prepared. Finally, the teacher divided the students into pairs and told them to perform the activity.

3. 3 Third Class

In the third class the teacher came up with a new lesson. The name of the lesson that was taught in the class was "Robin Hood" by H W Longfellow (a short story). The teacher first showed different pictures of super heroes. The teacher then asked students who are these characters? Are they good people? Do they help other people? The students were interested as it was a story about superheroes. The teacher then read the story to the students. The teacher then gave students some instructions to perform one activity in class. The teacher didn't want the whole class to perform the activity so she targeted her instructions instead of giving complete instructions to the whole class when the instructions don't concern everyone. For example- The teacher gave every student a playing card from a deck of cards that had only has two suits. After

everyone had a card, they must go find the other person that had the same card (a person with a 3 finds the other person with a 3 etc.). If there were an odd number of students, the Teacher should work with a student rather than have a group of three. The teacher then told the students that all the fours are going to read separate paragraph from the short story and give one suitable title for the short story.

3. 4 Fourth Class

The next class was a language class and the class focused on creative writing. When the teacher entered the class she tried to establish rapport and also wanted to motivate students. The teacher wanted to create a relaxed atmosphere for the students. The teacher asked one student what you did on Friday. The teacher asked the question because she wanted to elicit real experience and opinion from the student rather than relying on fictional situations and characters to illustrate and practice language in the classroom. The teacher also cracked some jokes to make the classroom atmosphere more relaxed for the students. In the class the teacher first wrote the topic “water pollution” on the board. The teacher then asked students several questions about water pollution. The teacher then divided the class into four small groups and told them that they will have to brainstorm among themselves and write one short paragraph on water pollution. The teacher gave them word limits (100-150) and also told them to exclude articles and prepositions while counting the words. The focus of the teacher was to teach them creative writing along with some grammatical elements. When the students were engaged in the activity the teacher tried to monitor them discreetly.

3. 5 Fifth Class

The fifth class was also a language class and the book that was followed in the class was E.J.C. B (English Junction Course Book). The lesson that was taught from the book was

“Humpty Dumpty Sat on a wall”, a short story by Lewis Carroll. In this class teacher wanted to focus on some grammatical aspects like prepositions and conjunctions. The teacher first explained the short story to the students and then told the students to find out prepositions and conjunctions used in the short story. The teacher started and finished the activity in a disciplined way, for example- the teacher discreetly monitored the activity and gave them a time limit to finish it. The teacher also gave effective feedback to the students after finishing the activity.

3. 6 Sixth Class

The sixth class was an English Language class. I saw the teacher following a course book to teach students. The name of the book was English Junction Course Book (E.J.C. B). The lesson that was taught by the teacher was „A Pot Full of Wisdom“ (a short story). It was a reading material from the course book. The teacher started the class by asking students some puzzles like- a. There is a green house. Inside the green house there is a white house. Inside the white house there is a red house. Inside the red house there are lots of babies. What is it? b. Can run but cannot walk; sometimes sings but never talks; lacks arms but has hands; has no head but has a face. What is it? c. A little pool has three walls around it. The first is white and soft, the second is brown and hard, the third is brown and grassy or green and wooden. What is it? The focus of the teacher was to give students some ideas about the topic by giving them some puzzles to solve. The teacher also wanted to test student’s intelligence by giving them the puzzles. The teacher thought students will brainstorm among themselves to find the answers of the puzzles. The teacher wanted the class to be as communicative as possible by giving students chance to choose pairs according to their own will. The teacher also instructed students to read the story (“A Pot Full of Wisdom?”) in pairs to make the class more communicative. The article (Material 1) provided by the teacher serves as the main material for the lesson. The teacher described about

“Modal Verbs in English” in class. The teacher wanted to give students some ideas about modal verbs (special groups of auxiliary or helping verbs). The teacher wanted her students to understand that modal verbs are special groups of auxiliary or helping verbs. The teacher also told students that we use modal verbs before other verbs to express meanings (ability, possibility, permission, necessity, obligation, etc.). Teacher demonstrated to the students by giving examples like:

Rules	Examples
1. The modal verb “ must ” is used to express Necessity.	We must finish the task at once.
2. The modal verb “ can ” is used to express Ability.	I can ride a bicycle but I cannot ride a scooter.
3. The modal verb “ can ” is used to express Permission.	You can join us if you want

To make the activity more communicative the teacher divided the students into 6 pairs and told them that every pair has to make 5 sentences with the underlined modal verbs from the story (“A Pot Full of Wisdom”). The teacher also gave students worksheets (material 2) and told students to use modal verbs (auxiliary or helping verbs) before other verbs to make sentences that will express meanings (ability, possibility, permission, necessity, obligation, etc.). The teacher gave students another activity. The teacher wanted students to focus on the underlined vocabulary item **take** in the story (“A Pot Full of Wisdom”). The Teacher explained to the students that they

will be learning how to use the new vocabulary item **take** with different phrases and phrasal verbs to have different meanings. The teacher gave students some examples like

1. **Take**- notice of (pay attention to)
2. **Take** ill- (become unwell).
3. **Take**- credit for (receive praise for doing something).
4. **Take**-pity on (feel sorry for).

The teacher also told students about Phrasal verbs with TAKE: "take to", "take in", "take after".... The teacher wanted to give students some ideas about what phrasal verb is (a phrasal verb is a verb and a preposition when put together can have different meanings). The teacher also wanted to show students how different prepositions are put together with the verb **take** to have different meanings. The teacher gave students a worksheet as (material 3) and told them to complete sentences with the right phrase with **take**. Students had to use reading the sub-skill scanning to do the activity. Students used the sub-skill scanning to find the vocabulary item **take** from the text. The teacher designed the activity in such a way that the students got the chance to do exercises by writing single words phrases, sentences, etc. in response to very tightly focused tasks with limited options and limited opportunities.

3. 7 Seventh Class:

In the seventh class the teacher came up with another lesson ("A Pot Full of Wisdom"). As, the students are already familiar with the reading material the teacher started the class by giving students another activity. The focus of the teacher was to give students a set of questions from the story (A Pot Full of Wisdom) so that they can find the answers of the questions by

using the reading sub-skill scanning. The teacher provided students with worksheets (a set of questions) as material 4. The teacher designed the activity for guided writing purpose. The teacher provided the students with samples, models, useful language items, advice to do the writing activity. So, it can be considered as guided writing activity. To make the activity more communicative the teacher told the students to do the activity in small groups, (3-4) members in each group. The teacher gave students another activity. The teacher told students to focus on the underlined vocabulary item **look**. The teacher divided the students into 4 small groups and told them that they will brainstorm among themselves and finish sentences with the right phrase with **look**. The teacher already gave students notion about how to use a vocabulary item with different phrases and phrasal verbs to have different meanings. The teacher provided students with worksheets as (material 5) and told them to finish sentences with the right phrase with **look**. Students had to use reading the sub-skill scanning to do the activity. Students used the sub-skill scanning to find the vocabulary item **look** from the text. The teacher designed the activity in such a way that the students got the chance to do exercises by writing single words phrases, sentences, etc. in response to very tightly focused tasks with limited options and limited opportunities.

3. 8 Eighth Class:

The eighth class that I observed was a language class and the class focused on creative writing. When the teacher entered the class she tried to establish rapport and also wanted to motivate students. The teacher wanted to create a relaxed atmosphere for students. The teacher asked one student, how was your weekend? The teacher also asked the student, what you did on your weekend. The teacher asked the questions because she wanted to elicit real experience and opinion from the student rather than relying on fictional situations and characters to illustrate and practice language in the classroom. The teacher asked students about their hobbies. Students

were really interested in talking about their hobbies with their teacher. After establishing rapport and creating a relaxed atmosphere for students the teacher wrote the topic “„Eid” on the board. The teacher then asked students several questions about „Eid”. The teacher then divided the class into four small groups and told them that they will have to brainstorm among themselves and write one short paragraph on the religious festival „Eid”. The teacher gave them word limits (100-150) and also told them to exclude articles and prepositions while counting the words. The focus of the teacher was to teach them creative writing along with some grammatical elements. When the students were engaged in the activity the teacher tried to monitor them discreetly.

3. 9 Ninth Class

The ninth class that I observed at Yale international School was a language class and the book that was followed in the class was E.J.C. B (English Junction Course Book). The lesson that was taught from the book was (“Wait a While, Crocodile”) an article. In this class teacher first told students to look at some pictures and told them to narrate the well-known story in class. The teacher wanted to elicit information out of the students by asking them to narrate a story. The teacher read the story to students. The teacher also divided students into 4 groups and told them to find answers of some questions given to them. The teacher divided students into groups to make the activity more communicative. The teacher also wanted to focus student’s attention on some grammatical aspects like transitive verbs and intransitive verbs. The teacher first gave examples of transitive and intransitive verbs to students. The focus of the teacher was to teach them grammar inductively by giving examples first. The teacher then gave students another activity. The teacher gave students a worksheet and told them to Identify the verbs in these sentences and say whether they are transitive (T) or intransitive (I). The teacher started and finished the activity in a disciplined way, for example- the teacher discreetly monitored the

activity and gave them a time limit to do the activity. The teacher also gave effective feedback to the students after finishing the activity.

3. 10 Tenth Class

The tenth class that I observed was an English Language class. The name of the book that was followed in the class was English Junction Word Book (E.J.W. B). The lesson that was taught by the teacher was “Why the Raven is Black”, a folktale. The teacher was prepared with her lesson plan before starting the lesson. The teacher prepared her lesson plan according to the proficiency level of her students (Novice High- Intermediate Low). The teacher also prepared the lesson objectives in her lesson plan. As a result of this lesson students will be able to-

1. Give appropriate answers to questions from the text by using the reading sub-skill scanning.
2. Choose right words to complete sentences by using quantifiers.
3. Use demonstrative pronouns, demonstrative adjectives, articles and quantifiers to complete sentences.

The teacher also prepared the procedure part (what teachers and students do) in her lesson plan. The teacher divided her lesson plan into several parts- (Introduction, Engagement, Presentation, Practice, Practice, Break, Production, Review and closing). The teacher gave time limit, materials, focus for each and every part of the lesson plan. The teacher also prepared the rationale part in her lesson plan. The teacher taught according to the lesson plan. The teacher first started the class by asking students some questions about the topic which was related with their real life. The focus of the teacher was to elicit information out of the students about the topic. The teacher did accordingly what she mentioned in her lesson plan for the introduction part. In the engagement part the teacher gave every student a chance to choose their partner with

whom they will perform reading activities and tasks in the class. The teacher told students to read the story “Why the Raven is Black” in pairs. The teacher then gave students a set of questions in a worksheet.

Answer the following language in your own words.

1. Why did people live in darkness?
2. How did Raven look?
3. What did he change himself to?
4. What did Raven do with the sun, the moon, the stars, fresh water and fire?
5. How did he drop the fire?
6. Why is Raven a dark black bird?)

The teacher told students to find the answers of the questions from the text by using the reading sub-skill scanning. The teacher gave students time limit to do the activity. The teacher did accordingly what she mentioned in her lesson plan for the engagement part. The teacher also gave students chance to do exercises in the engagement part. In the presentation part the teacher gave students notion about quantifiers by giving real life examples. The teacher then told students to choose right words to complete sentences by using quantifiers in the practice part. The teacher provided students with a worksheet and told students to do the activity in groups. To make the activity more communicative the teacher told the students to do the activity in groups. The teacher did accordingly what she mentioned in her lesson plan for the presentation and practice part. The teacher again told the students to read the story “Why the Raven is Black”. The teacher again told students to make small groups (3-4) members. The teacher then gave students notion about demonstrative pronouns, demonstrative adjectives, articles and quantifiers

by giving real life examples. The teacher told students to use demonstrative pronouns, demonstrative adjectives, articles and quantifiers to complete sentences. The teacher gave students a worksheet to do the activity. The teacher also gave students time limit to do the activity. The teacher designed the activity in such a way that the students got the chance to do exercises by writing single words phrases, sentences, etc. in response to very tightly focused tasks with limited options and limited opportunities. The teacher did accordingly what she mentioned in her lesson plan for the practice part. The teacher then gave students 5 minutes' break. After the break the teacher told students that their new group project will be to read a short story and finish a worksheet. The teacher gave students a worksheet where they will have to complete sentences with a, an, the, that, these, those, some, many and much. After that, teacher wrote down the homework for the next class on the board. Teacher asked students to tell one thing that they did in class that day to review the class. Teacher also told the students that if they had any questions about the lesson they can ask him. The teacher did accordingly what she mentioned for the procedure part in the lesson plan.

3. 11 Eleventh Class

The eleventh class that I observed was a language class and the class focused on creative writing. When the teacher entered the class she tried to establish rapport and also wanted to motivate students. The teacher wanted to create a relaxed atmosphere for the students. The teacher asked one student where you went with your family for vacation. The student replied that he went to china with his family. The teacher liked the student's response and decided that today's creative writing topic will be "My China trip". The teacher asked the question because she wanted to elicit real experience and opinion from the student rather than relying on fictional situations and characters to illustrate and practice language in the classroom. The teacher also

cracked some jokes to make the classroom atmosphere more relaxed for the students. The teacher also called a student by name to clean the board. In the class the teacher first wrote the topic “My China trip” on the board. The teacher then gave students important information about china. The teacher then divided the class into five small groups and told them that they will have to brainstorm among themselves and write one short paragraph on “My China Trip”. The teacher told students that there should be paragraphing (Introduction, body, conclusion). The teacher gave them word limits (100-150). When the students were engaged in the activity the teacher tried to monitor them actively. Active monitoring is really very helpful for a successful classroom activity to take place. Active monitoring is when the teacher is more visible and allow students to be more aware of his or her presence and of the possibility of calling on the teacher for help and advice. If a teacher is walking around, listening to different groups and giving advice and correction then it can be called as active monitoring.

3. 12 Twelfth Class

The twelfth class was again an English Language class. The name of the book that was followed in the class was English Junction Course Book (E.J.C. B). The lesson that was taught by the teacher was “My Friend, the Mouse” a short story by Robert Fontaine. The teacher first showed students a picture and asked them several questions (like-1. What do you see in the picture? 2. What is the little boy holding in his hands? 3. What is his mother asking him to do?) to elicit information out of them. The teacher then read the story for student’s better understanding. The teacher also focused the student’s attention on the underlined vocabulary items in the short story. The teacher gave students some real life examples so that they can understand the meaning of the new vocabulary items. The teacher wanted students to do one activity from the course book. In the first activity the teacher wanted students to find out the

answers of the questions from the short story “My Friend, the Mouse”. The teacher wanted students to use the reading sub-skill scanning to do the activity. The teacher also wanted students to write the answers of the questions to practice the writing skill as well. The teacher gave students another activity. In the second activity the teacher gave students a paragraph with some missing information from the short story “My Friend, the Mouse”. The teacher gave this activity from the course book. The teacher told students that they will have to complete this short form of the story by using the reading sub-skill skimming.

3. 13 Thirteenth Class

The thirteenth class that I observed was an English language class. The name of the book that was followed in the class was English Junction Grammar Book (E.J.G.B). The lesson that was taught by the teacher was “The Simple Past and the Past Continuous Tenses”. When the teacher entered the class she tried to establish rapport and also wanted to motivate students. The teacher wanted to create a relaxed atmosphere for students. The teacher asked students several questions about their personal life, like- the teacher asked one student about her favorite TV show. At the beginning of the class the teacher told students to read a passage. After the students finished reading the passage the teacher focused their attention to the verbs in color. The teacher told students that the verbs in color are in the simple past tense and they express actions that happened in the past. The teacher then gave students several examples to make it more clearly to them. The teacher also told students to do one activity from the course book. In the first activity the teacher told students to complete some sentences with the simple past tense forms of the verbs in the box. When the students were doing the activity the teacher monitored them discreetly. The teacher gave students another activity from the course book. In the second activity the teacher wanted students to complete a paragraph with the simple past tense forms of

the verbs in the brackets. While doing the activity the students made several mistakes so the teacher decided to monitor them actively during the activity. When the students were done with the second activity they became restless and started to talk among themselves. The teacher then raised her voice to focus the student's attention.

3. 14 Fourteenth Class

I observed another class. It was an English language class. The name of the book that was followed in the class was English Junction Grammar Book (E.J.G. B). The lesson that was taught by the teacher was the present perfect tense. The teacher started the class by telling students to read one short paragraph. After students finished reading the paragraph the teacher focused the student's attention to the verbs in color in the paragraph. The teacher told students that the verbs in color are in the present perfect tense. The teacher also told students that they talk about actions in the past without stating the exact time of each of the actions. However, the results or effects of the actions can be seen in the present. The teacher also gave some examples for student's better understanding. The teacher then told students to do one activity from the course book. In the first activity the teacher told students to complete some sentences with the present perfect tense forms of the verbs in the brackets. The teacher actively monitored the activity. The teacher gave students another activity from the course book. In the second activity the teacher told students to tick the correct forms of the verbs in some sentences. The teacher also actively monitored the activity.

3. 15 Fifteenth Class

In the fifteen class the teacher focused on communicative teaching. He followed the activities from the same book he used earlier. The name of the book was English Junction

Course Book (E.J.C. B). The first lesson that was taught by the teacher was Charlie's Daily Dose of Sunshine by Anne Lawton (a short story). The teacher started the class by asking students some questions like- Do you have a pet? If yes, share some interesting things about it in class. If no, why don't you have a pet? The teacher also asked the students would you like to have one. Why? The teacher asked all these questions to students because she wanted her students to actively participate in the class. The teacher also wanted to elicit information out of the students instead of directly introducing them with the topic which was related to pet. The teacher then read out the story to students and made the students understand. The teacher used several examples to make students understand the difficult words introduced in the text and also gave students the opportunity to ask questions in the middle of the class. If one student was not able to understand any difficult word, the teacher gave real life examples to make the student understand better. Here the students are getting the opportunity to learn new vocabularies. The teacher roamed around the class and asked students meaning of different words to make sure that the flow of interaction is maintained throughout the class. As it was a beginner level class and the students were from standard 4 the teacher tried her level best to make the students actively participate in the class. The teacher used facial and hand movements in the class and told her students to do the same like-the students acted out belly laugh with the use of facial and hand movements. The teacher injected her own voice while telling the story so the students can understand that while telling a story he/she can inject his/her own voice in the story.

3. 16 Sixteenth Class

In the next class the teacher asked students several questions like who is the narrator of the story, how many characters are present in the story and also told the students to narrate the story in his or her own voice. The teacher then divided the class into 4 groups and told the

students to give the best possible answers of the questions which were given in the text. The teacher told that the best answer will be taken from one group with some correction from the teacher. Here both the teacher and students are interacting among themselves in the classroom equally. As stories are often told using past tense the teacher tried to focus the student's attention on how to use past tense effectively while narrating a story in his or her own voice. The teacher also gave an interesting task to the students like-the students had to form some questions using to do verb-do, did, does along with the helping verb has, have, had in past tense from the story. The teacher divided the students into 5 groups to do the task. As the students have already read the text and they were familiar with the question pattern it was easier for them to form questions by themselves.

3. 17 Seventeenth Class

The next class was a language class and the class was basically focused on creative writing. After entering the class, the teacher was silent for a certain period of time so that the students get the opportunity to get settled for the class. The teacher then tried to make eye contact with the students to get the students attention towards her. As we all know that eye contact is really very important to establish rapport between students and teachers. The teacher first wrote the word "My New Campus" on the board. The teacher then told the students to say something about their new campus where their class was recently shifted. The teacher then made effective eye contact to make sure that the students have understood what they are supposed to do and what is going on in the class. The teacher then told the students to look around the class and tell about their classroom arrangement like-the open space available in their class, how many rows are there for the students to sit. Many students responded and told several things about their classroom arrangement. The teacher then told the students to think about the facilities they had in

their previous campus and compare them with their new campus. The students eventually came up with some ideas then the teacher told them to use those ideas and form a paragraph. The teacher gave them word limits (100-120) and also told them to exclude articles and prepositions while counting the words. The focus of the teacher was to teach them creative writing along with some grammatical elements. Some students were not listening to teacher so the teacher changed the sitting arrangement for some students. There were some students who faced difficulties understanding the structure of writing a paragraph. The teacher then wrote the structure of paragraph writing on the board. The teacher also gave a disciplinary lecture to keep the students attentive on the class. The teachers and students were only allowed to use target language in the classrooms and all the lectures and instructions were given in the target language which is English.

3. 18 Eighteenth Class

The eighteenth class was a language class and the book that was followed in the class was E.J.C. B (English Junction Course Book). The lesson that was followed from the book was “Charlie’s Daily Dose of Sunshine” a short story that the teacher has already finished reading and explaining in the first two classes. Now the teacher wanted to focus on some grammatical aspects of the short story like-Determiners, Articles. The teacher used some real life examples to make students understand about determiners and articles and also gave students an activity from the course book. The teacher roamed around the class to monitor the activity performed by the students. The teacher was successful in both starting and finishing the lesson.

3. 19 Nineteenth Class

The nineteenth class that I have taken was an English Language class. The name of the book that was followed in the class was English Junction Course Book (E.J.W. B). The lesson that was taught by me was “Why the Raven is Black” a folk tale. Students already had notion about the short story in the previous class. So, I started the class by giving students notion about some grammatical items. I first wrote a, an, the on the board. Then I asked students what are these grammatical items called. The students replied these grammatical items are called articles. Then I gave students notion about definite article and indefinite article. I tried to give students notion about the grammatical item inductively. I also asked some students to give some of their own real life examples by using appropriate articles so it would be better for rest of the students to understand. After that I gave students some notion about another grammatical item demonstrative pronouns (this, that, these, those). I explained to the students what demonstrative pronouns are and how to use different demonstrative pronouns in different situations. I asked two students to give some real life examples by using appropriate demonstrative pronouns. I gave students notion about another grammatical element quantifier (some, many and much). I gave students some of my own real life examples for student’s better understanding. Then I gave students one activity to perform from the course book. In the first activity the students had to complete some sentences with a, an, the, this, that. These, those, some, many, much. I gave students the activity because I wanted them to read the sentences carefully and use appropriate articles, demonstrative pronouns and quantifiers to complete sentences. I gave students another activity where I told them to choose the right words to complete sentences. In the second activity I wanted students to use appropriate quantifiers to complete sentences. I gave students the activity because I wanted them to use their writing skills for this activity.

3. 20 Twentieth Class

I took an English language class. The name of the book that I followed in the class was English Junction Course Book (E.J.C.B). The lesson that was taught by me was “The Happy Man’s Shirt”. When I entered the class I tried to establish rapport and also wanted to motivate students. I wanted to create a relaxed atmosphere for students. I asked students several questions about their personal life, like- I asked one student about her favorite TV show. At the beginning of the class I wrote the name of the topic on the white board. Then I asked students several questions to elicit students from the students about the topic. I also tried to establish eye contact to get students focused on the topic. After I finished reading the story to students I tried to focus their attention to the vocabulary items in bold from the text. I gave students some real life examples to make them understand the meaning of different vocabulary items. I told some students to give some of their own real life examples of different vocabulary items. While some students were giving some of their own real life examples I tried to monitor the class actively so the rest of the students don’t get the chance to talk among them. After that I gave students some notion about how to make a short story. In the end I gave students appropriate feedback and finished the class by giving them homework for the next class.

Chapter 4

Discussions & Findings

The most remarkable thing about my classroom observation is that the teacher started most of his classes with some easy going questions, and the purpose was to make the students free and comfortable and to become relaxed while learning because as Eleni (2002) mentioned when the learners face any threatening situation such as difficult questions, face threatening questions, these may have negative effects on learning. So the teacher was well aware of it. Moreover, in most of the class the teacher initiated interaction, which is, according to Brown (2000), “the most important key to creating an interactive language classroom.” The teacher was successful in giving proper instructions to students while performing activities in class. This short instructions and simple language that the teacher used to describe activities in class was really very helpful for students. The teacher also wanted to give students visual or written clues while giving instructions. The teacher demonstrated the activity for students to understand better. By giving demonstration the teacher made the activity less complicated for students. In another activity (in the second class), the teacher broke the instructions down for student’s better understanding, and by breaking the instructions down the teacher really helped students understand the series of steps required for the activity. The teacher targeted her instructions instead of giving complete instructions to the whole class. The teacher didn’t want the whole class to perform the activity so she targeted her instructions instead of giving complete instructions to the whole class. The teacher also did a very good job in managing the class properly. The teacher tried to establish rapport in the class which is very helpful to establish a friendly atmosphere. Creating rapport with the learner is a good way of teacher -learner

interaction. Through this, the teacher can reduce the anxiety or apprehension which write (2005) believes to be sources of language anxiety among the learners. The teacher cracked jokes in some classes to get students' attention and also to establish rapport. The teacher often divided the class into small groups which is a very good technique for students to brain storm among themselves. The teacher also wanted to make the class more communicative by dividing them into groups. The teacher also discretely monitored the class during the activity. I think discrete monitoring is really very helpful for students. Discreet monitoring is really very helpful for a successful classroom activity to take place. If the teacher wants to maintain a presence in the room, but do not want to offer help overtly to the students then it can be called as discreet monitoring. The main aim of discrete monitoring is the students know that the teacher is present in the class and watching over their activity without overtly offering help.

The teacher sometimes let the students solve puzzle. This activity creates a lot of curiosity and enthusiasm among the students. This type of activity helps the learners to be anxious free inside the classroom, and also useful as a creative activity in the classroom. The teacher used the teaching materials in the same class to handle the relationship between grammar and communicative function. At the same time, the teacher continues with the activities that help the students to remain less anxious and friendly inside the classroom. The teacher did a very good job by fulfilling all the lesson objectives mentioned in her lesson plan. The teacher was successful in giving proper instructions to students while performing activities in class. The short instructions and simple language that the teacher used to describe activities in class was really very helpful for students.

After the tenth class I talked to the teacher and the students. I asked teacher about his starting the class with asking real life questions to the learners. The teacher replied that many of

the learners are not frank enough to speak in the class; this activity helps them to be more comfortable with the teacher. This feeling comfortable to interact with the teacher helps them to become less anxious and they can learn better when they feel less anxious. He also shared that the interactive activities that he performs in the class reduces the learning anxiety among the learner, and thus they learn better. That is why he sometimes cracked jokes, sometimes, asked question about holidays, sometimes, and told them to share personal stories. These all are interactive activities that help to create a relationship among teachers and learners and to reduce language anxiety among the learners.

There were a number of classes on creative writing class (class four, eight, eleven and seventeen). The questions in these classes were related to the vacation of the students. The students took part happily in sharing their enjoyable vacation with the teacher. This type of interactive activity also reduces anxiety in the classroom from the learners. The teacher told a story and motivated the learners to practice writing following the process of creative writing. The teacher selected writing topics in such a way that motivates the learners to write spontaneously. The following to classes were grammar teaching class. The teacher taught the rules but while giving them task to solve he gave them opportunity to discuss with the one another. This learner-learner activity is also useful in language classroom to reduce anxiety and perform better.

The teacher did a very good job by providing students with activities which helped them to practice both reading and writing skills (along with the sub-skills). The teacher was also successful in giving proper instructions to students while performing activities in class. The short instructions and simple language that the teacher used to describe activities in class were really very helpful for students. The teacher thought that by using the reading sub-skill (scanning),the students will be able to find specific piece of information from the text which will help them to

give appropriate answers to the questions. The teacher also wanted students to use their writing skills to write the answers of the questions. The teacher gave students the activity for guided writing purpose. In the activity the teacher chose materials for students and allowed them to make different language choices, although these choices were fairly limited. The teacher gave students enough opportunity to interact in classes that made them feel more confident about themselves. The teacher also helped the students to maintain a low affective filter in classes by giving them freedom to express their thoughts and opinions. The teacher also used proper eye contact and voice to keep the students focused in their classroom activities.

At the last part of my observation, I took two classes (class nineteen and twenty). From the experience of the last two classes that I had taken, I can say that I was satisfied while giving students reading and writing activities which helped them to practice both reading and writing skills. I think I was also successful in giving proper instructions to students while performing activities in class. I was also satisfied that I was able to manage the class properly. The experience that I gather from these two classes is that the students want their teacher to be friendly. With friendly teacher and relaxed classroom environment, the students feel easy to interact and to perform activities given by the teacher. And, there are a number of classroom activities that create teacher-learner and learner-learner interaction in the classroom. This type of interactions has a tremendous role in reducing language anxiety from the learners and thus the learners learn better in the classroom. I myself made a comparison between the first and last class of these twenty classes. I remember, at the beginning, only a few learners were interactive, but, teacher's interactive and rapport building activities assist the learners to become less anxious. The teacher increases interaction in the classroom and the learners slowly started joining the activities. And, at the end of the twentieth class, most of the learners were interactive.

They become interactive because they were less anxious. So, it can easily be inferred that it is teacher's interactive classroom activities that reduce the anxieties from the learners.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Language anxiety as well as other affective filters impedes or decelerates second language learning. So, it is necessary to reduce language anxiety to accelerate or to become successful in language learning. There are many theoretical and practical strategies that the teacher follows to reduce language anxiety inside the classroom. Classroom interactions both teacher-learner and learner-learner interactions play a tremendous role in reducing language anxiety among the learners. The teacher should be the initiator of interaction in the classroom and thus learners will feel free to come up with response. This type of interaction is very useful to stimulate and encourage learners to learn the target language. If various types of interactive activities can be executed in the classroom successfully, the learners will feel less anxious and more comfortable to interact by using target language in the classroom. Thus, learning a language will be accelerated.

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