

classroom situations. They got permission from a number of teachers to stop their classes at some point, and asked the learners to write down what was in the forefront of their consciousness, at the moment they were stopped. They conducted the experiment at different levels with several classes and the results obtained revealed that on average only fifty percent of students wrote the topic of the lesson as an answer to the question. All this suggests that we teachers might expect only about half of any class to be paying attention at any one time. It may be interesting to find out why those fifty percent were not attending to what was happening in the class. Was it because of the teacher's lack of enthusiasm, the fellow learners insufferability, the dullness of the materials, or some outside factors.

Diary studies of researchers/learners have revealed that teaching methods, teaching materials and the pace of the class which often did not match the learners' personal agenda were some of the reasons for inattentiveness. Diary studies also revealed that problems external to the classroom often made it difficult to concentrate and was the cause of debilitating anxiety and therefore it interfered with classroom learning.

Anxiety, competitiveness, self-esteem, motivation and self-determination are other factors that influence the learners receptivity and their success or failure in language learning.

Conclusion

This paper has been an attempt to help the "would be teachers" understand some of the

features of the learners classroom lives. Such understanding may help all of us become more effective teachers. I have tried to indirectly emphasize the central importance of the teachers in the teaching-learning process. It is the teacher who by understanding what is happening in his/her own class can not only improve his/her way of teaching but can also contribute to research knowledge about how language classrooms work.

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also means that, the language students are exposed to in the classroom, is often unlike the language spoken by native speakers.

Another characteristic of teacher talk is the abundance of display questions in their speech. They use more display questions and fewer referential questions. It is interesting to note that the students in my own Teaching Practice classes-when they went to observe different classes-showed a preference towards the teachers who asked more referential questions in their teaching. The teachers also use more imperatives and more statements compared to native speakers using the language in natural situations.

Now that we have looked at some characteristics of teacher talk, we turn to learning strategies and try to find out what procedures learners employ to try to master the target language. The strategies they usually employ are repetition, use of formulaic expression, verbal attention getters, answering in unison, elaboration, anticipatory answers, appeal for assistance, request for clarification, and role play. One thing for teachers to keep in mind is that students' learning strategies may not always be parallel to teachers' teaching strategies and sometimes it may be at odds with each other. Students' diaries and self-reports show that some students prefer to be quiet and listen in order to learn, while the teachers believe that they will learn by speaking and answering questions. In fact one girl in my class reported that she subvocalized all the answers to the questions asked in class. Her performance in her written work was excellent but she rarely spoke in class. In some cases

learners wish to speak out but they are inhibited in doing so. In most classes in our universities usually girls show more feelings of inhibition in class than the boys.

Therefore, all we can say with confidence is that it is oversimplification to suggest that verbal interaction is the key to better learning and it will be a naive assumption that more verbal interaction will result in better competence.

Now we come to the issue of **receptivity** in the language classroom, but before reporting the research findings in this regard, let me define receptivity. Receptivity is not a common term in language pedagogy or even in classroom research. But here it means state of mind, whether permanent or temporary, that is open to the experience of becoming the speaker of another language. The opposite of receptivity would be **defesiveness** a state of mind in which the learner feels threatened by the experience of learning a second or foreign language.

A receptive learner is obviously an attentive learner, so it is interesting how **attention** in language classes has been studied. Although Krashen has suggested that language acquisition which occurs outside of conscious awareness is more effective than conscious learning, Newmark argues that language learning is a matter of getting and keeping the learners attention. Though attention is not an observable factor it is the key component which converts input to intake. But how is it possible to measure **attention** reliably and validly.

Cohan and Hosenfeld (1981) have tried to measure the level of learners' attention in

continuum. An example can be third person singular "S" in simple present tense that is a late learnt morpheme. So, there are a number of errors which are ignored by the teachers.

A problem arises here, the output of every learner serves as input to any other learner as well as the entire class. The auto-input hypothesis suggests that erroneous forms may serve as further input of the person who utters it. This may even result in replacing correct hypotheses with incorrect ones demonstrated by other students.

Some research has also shown that second and foreign language learners' perspectives differ on the desirability of error treatment. Learners have said that they want more error correction than is typically offered by their teachers. But they may react badly if they were overcorrected so the thing to do is to find a balance. Thus, answering the first question which was whether we should treat an error or we should ignore it is not a simple matter.

The second decision that has to be made by a teacher is when to treat an error. An immediate error correction will interrupt the flow of speech and will result in negative affective feedback. The classroom research is sparse on immediate, delayed or postponed feedback. So teachers as classroom researchers themselves must keep on trying different possibilities to see what happens.

The third question is who should treat an oral error, the teacher, the student himself/herself or the other students in the class. The point is that the student may be able to correct only his/her mistakes and not his/her errors. If peer correction is done then the learners may

be put on their defensive, i.e., they may not like receiving error treatment from their peers.

Research has also shown that "wait time" that is the length of time the teacher will wait after having posed a question will increase the number of correct answers up to fifty percent. This brief additional pause enables the students to respond correctly. This is compatible with Krashen's monitor hypothesis that suggests that learners can repair their mistakes on condition that they focus form and are given adequate time to process the output. Observation also revealed that teachers sometimes use error treatment as disciplinary action.

The next point to be touched upon here is classroom interaction. Observation of many different classes, both in content-area subjects and in language instruction, consistently show that teachers typically do between one half and three quarters of the talking done in the classroom. Of course, talk is one of the major ways that teachers convey information to learners and is one of the primary means of controlling learner behaviour. Since we teachers do so much talking, then it would be worth asking what our talk is like and how does it relate to the learners' gradual progress in the target language. One of the curious things about teachers' gradual progress in the target language. One of the curious things about teachers' talk is that we seem to be very skilled at judging the learners' level of competence and pitching the complexity of our own speech to the students' level of competence, so that they can understand. In other words, it seems that we try to keep our speech at "i+1" level which

questionnaires and oral interviews may not be reliable, the data collected can be used alongside the data collected from direct observation.

The problem with observation schedules and questionnaires is that they are usually prepared by researchers. They may lose insights that could be provided by participants themselves, i.e., the students and the teachers. To capture these sorts of insights, alternative data collection procedures are needed, which may come in the form of self-report. This is when participants are asked to record their experiences and perceptions.

There is a further tool that classroom researchers often utilize, and that is test data that enables them to discover whether effective learning has taken place. So the main tools of classroom research are observations, different types of self-report including diaries written by students and teachers and testing.

The classroom research that the researcher is going to report in this paper is the findings of observation and self-report.

Classroom research took momentum when it was realized that no global methodological prescriptions could be made. This was because the goals of the learners vary and many methods make the assumption that the needs and goals of the learners are identical and that what students need is simply "language" and that Method X is the best way to teach it. Moreover, researchers had studied different methods and had compared them to find out which one was more effective-as far as language learning was concerned, but their efforts had not yielded any conclusive results. Therefore, they came to the conclusion that

what happened in the classroom and the interaction between the teacher and the students was what really mattered.

One of the topics investigated in classroom research is the question of how teachers treat the oral errors of the students. Research shows that they do not treat all the errors that occur. The findings also reveal that the teachers have a wide variety of techniques available for the treatment of errors but they do not use all the available techniques. The observations also revealed the complexity of the decisions that the teacher has to make when faced with the problem of error treatment.

The first decision concerning error treatment is whether errors should be corrected at all. Many factors influence the decision-making process. For example, if the students have not been exposed to the form or the function involving the error before, to many teachers it may not seem fair to penalize their students with negative cognitive feedback. Research also revealed that non-native teachers sometimes are not able to treat those errors they cannot detract.

However, recent research on error gravity (the perceived seriousness of an error) has shown that native speakers who are not teachers are less severe in their reactions to learners' errors. On the contrary, non-native teachers of the target language are consistently more severe in their reaction to learners' errors than are their native speaking counterparts.

Another question which teachers face in deciding whether to treat an error or ignore it; is whether the error is within the learners' grasp in terms of his/her place in the interlanguage

Classroom

Research

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This is an attempt to explore some of the issues that have been studied in classroom centred research. Classroom centred research is a cover-term for a whole range of research studies on classroom language learning and teaching and the purpose of it is to try to understand what goes on in the classroom setting. Examples of the types of issues studied in this regard are how teachers respond to learners' errors, how interaction occurs in the classroom, the type of linguistic input provided in classroom settings and the feelings of teachers and learners at various points during or after lessons.

The data needed for describing classroom processes are collected in different ways. The first and the most obvious way is to develop a data base by direct observation. You can do this by sitting in the classroom and making notes. Of course, you would have a schedule of categories you would like to observe. For example, you may decide to discover whether boys speak more than girls in class or what type of questions the teachers ask, or what the pattern of interaction is in the class. Nowadays this can be done with the help of audio-recording or video-recording so that one could play back and make a thorough analysis of what went on in the classroom.

But direct observation is not always the most appropriate way of getting information,

because most students and teachers may change their behaviour in the presence of the observer. Of course, with the help of modern technology it is possible to video-record a class without the students and teachers realizing they were being recorded.

Furthermore, there are many other interesting aspects that are not observable. If, for example, we want to know what makes students anxious; this cannot be discovered by simply observing them? How can we discover the level of students' motivation by simply observing them. How can we discover the level of students' motivation by sitting at the back of the classroom and making notes?

The second way, the obvious alternative to direct observation, is simply to ask people to report what has happened to them and what they think about it. This is usually done with written questionnaires and oral interviews. Though the answers to this type of