**Chapter 4**

**Teaching Language as Communication among People**

**What Is the Main Goal of a Communicative Classroom? (Page 63)**

The primary goal of a communicative classroom is student development of communicative competence in English. At a basic level, this includes development of students’ ability to comprehend and produce written and spoken English in communicatively proficient and accurate ways. communicative competence has four interrelated components

1. Grammatical competence: knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology.

2. Sociolinguistic competence: sociocultural rules of use language in social contexts. For example, knowing how to give a gift using the appropriate cultural behaviors or knowing how to give and accept compliments based on the rules of the culture. Quite often sociocultural rules are connected to the functions of language (i.e., apologizing, requesting, asking permission).

3. Discourse competence: combination of grammatical forms and meanings for meaningful and appropriate context in both spoken and written language. For example, knowing when to laugh during a joke; knowing how and when to ask a question during a conversation; knowing how to organize ideas in an argumentative academic essay.

4. Strategic competence: verbal and non-verbal communication strategies for dealing with potential breakdowns in communications. For example, knowing how to explain directions by drawing a map; knowing how to ask someone to repeat what they said or show them you don't understand; being able to guess the meaning of words (in print or spoken) from the context; knowing how to write down thoughts in a note when verbal communications fail.

**How Do EFL/ESL Teachers Provide Opportunities for Students to Communicate in English?**

Some EFL/ESL classes are taught in a teacher-centered fashion. Recall Yoshi’s class. Interaction is dominated by the teacher who, for example , gives explanations , drills ,ask the majority of questions, and makes judgments about the students’ answers .

However, some teachers who aim at having a communicative classroom with what Littlewood calls **‘’precommunicative activities’’** the teacher isolates specific elements of knowledge or skill which compose communicative ability, and provides the learners with opportunities to practice them separately. Littlewood discusses two types of ‘**’precommunicative activities’’**

1. The first type includes **structural activities** focus on the grammar and lexicon(vocabulary)of English .

2-The second type includes **quasi-communication activities** focus on how language is used to communicate meaning .Quasi-communicative activities are often in the form of dialogues in which the students interact under highly controlled conditions.

**Illustrations of these two precommunicative activities** :The teacher goal was to teach students how to ask about food likes and dislikes.

**Lesson Plan for an Activity on Accepting and Refusing Food Level: Beginner, first year. Procedures:**

***NOTE( The following points from 1 to 7 are not to be memorized , page 66)***

1. Put pictures of food items on the wall or overhead. Use overlay with the each food item name. (or write name of food item under the picture)

2. Ask students to draw each item on a separate note card. Ask the students to copy the name of the food item on separate smaller piece of note card. Have the students match the food item and name.

3. Have the students turn over the drawings and labels. Ask them to mix them up and to play a matching game. They line up the drawings, face down. They do the same for the labeled names of each food item. The student turns over a food item drawing. Then, the student turns over a name. Do they match? (This can be done individually or as a game/context with teams of students).

4. Review the structure for count and non-count nouns. Also review the structure for offering something (Would you like....?)

Would you like some cake? coffee? tea? rice? pie? Would you like an apple? a banana? a piece of pie?

5. The teacher holds up or points to a food item and asks: "Would you like some cake?" The students shout out, "Yes" or "No". Then, the teacher holds up or points to a food item and asks individual students.

6. The teacher then hands out a dialogue that combines grammatical and vocabulary items and adds a little new language: A: Do you like cake? B: Yes, I do. A: Would you like a piece of cake? B: Yes. Thank you. A: How about something to drink? Do you like hot tea? B: Yes. Sometimes. A: Would you like some tea? B: No thank you. The teacher reads the dialogue out loud, has the students repeat if after her, and has the students practice it in pairs.

7. The teacher then gives out a handout. The teacher then instructs the students to put a check mark (v') next to any item the student likes and an X next to any item the student doesn't like.

**Communicative activities**, follow the pre-communicative activities, Littlewood labels functional communication activities. His purpose is to provide a chance for learners to "use the language they know in order to get meanings across as effectively as possible. Success is measured primarily according to whether they cope with the communicative demands of the immediate situation" (1981: 20). In these activities learners have to solve a problem, seek information to fill a gap, and make decisions about what is appropriate to say and do.

Even with beginners with limited English it is possible to do communicative activities. For example, with the activity for beginners I just did with you, it is possible to have the students put the handout away and to ask them about what they like or dislike and whether you would like some or not. Here's a sample conversation that might take place: Teacher: Holly, do you like fruit? Holly: Yes. I like apples. Teacher: I have an apple in my bag (points to bag). Would you like one? Holly. No thank you.

**-What makes a communicative classroom communicative?**

Factors contributing to making the classrooms communicative include :

1-Reduction in the centrality of the teacher.

2-An appreciation for the uniqueness of individuals .

3-Choices both in relation to what students say and how they say it .

As teachers we need to be sensitive to each individual’s background and affective state. To create atmosphere conductive to communication , we need to understand and accept each student as he or she is .

Also providing chances for the students to express themselves in meaningful ways contributes to a communicative classroom.Students need chances to listen to each other, express their ideas in speech and writing , and read each other’s writings.

**-What roles are native and near-native English-speaking EFL/ESL teachers expected to play? (Page 69)**

-Teachers play a variety of roles as EFL/ESL teacher :1-drama coach

2-puppet maker , 3-folk singer ,4- mime 5-error analyst 6-friend ,

7-language tester ,8-parent ,9-counselure , 10-photographer .

**-Roles related to English language ability:( Page 69)**

1-Language authority ,2-Cutural informant ,3-Model English speaker .

**-Roles related to the ability to create meaningful interaction:(Page 69)**

1-Need assessor , 2-Classroom manager ,3-Entertainer.

**-What are roles the teacher can play to promote interaction in the classroom? (Page 71 )**

1-Engineer the amount of classroom talk we do .

2-Manipulate our questioning behavior .

3-Controle the way we give instructions.

4-Orchestrate group and pair work .

5-Keep learners on task .

6-Make language comprehensible to students .

7-Handle affective variables of classroom life.

**-What problems do some EFL/ESL teachers face when teaching English as communication among people ? (Page 72 )**

**1-The Bandwagon Problem**

Bandwagon is a particular activity that has suddenly become fashionable or popular. This occurs when teachers jump on the latest methodological bandwagon. For this phrase ***to jump on a bandwagon*** Roget’s gives alternatives

‘’to float or swim with the stream ;to join the parade ; go with the crowed . So this means that bandwagons are the , trendy , the fashionable , and the most up-to-date in methods, materials, and techniques.

Bandwagons provide confidence, the company of others who believe in the same things , and useful techniques .Those who are new to teaching welcome a method that provides these things, This is only problematic if teachers cannot see beyond

The ‘in way’ of teaching. If we blindly follow a certain method just because it is said to be the best way to teach , we become impervious to other creative ways.

While bandwagons provide us with ideas about teaching possibilities, confidence,

Company, and techniques.

**2-The overly anxious problem**

There are reasons for teachers to think about why students are anxious :

1-Inability to pronounce sounds and words .

2-Not knowing the meaning of words or sentences .

3-Inability to understand and answer questions.

4-Reputation of the language class as a place for failure .

5-Peer criticism .

6-Not knowing or understanding course goals or requirements .

7-Testing , especially oral testing.

8-Previous unsuccessful language-learning attempts .

9-Encountering different cultural values and behaviors.

There are things we can do to reduce anxiety , for example, students do not need criticism on their language performance .When a student expresses an idea, we can listen to the student and paraphrase what he/she said . A positive, trusting relationship between the student and the teacher can reduce anxiety about being in a language classroom .

**3-The engagement problem (Page 74)**

Promoting interaction in the classroom requires the teacher to step out of the limelight and yield to the students so that they feel free to interact with the teacher and with each other. However, this is not easy for some teachers .As Wilga Rivers says : ‘ Never having experienced an interactive classroom, teachers are afraid it will be chaotic and hesitate to try .’Adding to this problem are students’ attitudes. Students quite often come into our classrooms with little experience in initiating and participating in interaction in English. To avoid this half-engagement problem , it is our responsibility to provide an atmosphere conductive to interaction .As teachers we need to show emotional maturity , sensitivity to the students’ feelings.

**Asst. Inst. Eman Ahmed Hasson Al Sa’ady**