

Abstract 55

Role of Classroom Interaction on the Improvement of English Language Speaking Skill at the University of Jaffna

Devakumar Patrick

English Language Teaching Center, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka

patrickujaff@yahoo.com

The aim of this study is to explore a suitable technique in teaching speaking skill of English as a second language among the first year students of the Faculty of Science at the University of Jaffna. The participant observation technique was used to collect data as this is an Ethnographic study. Through the participant observation technique the performance of the students was rated using the number of hesitations and pauses, the number of words used per session, and the use of different structures. In teaching the skill of speaking, the teacher as a researcher initiated the task by speaking for five minutes at the beginning and at the end of the class in the form of pair work during each lecture. The participants were allowed to speak on the topic of their own choice. Here the researcher's use of the natural approach can be identified. In addition, the interactive nature of form focused communicative language teaching was adopted where the classroom techniques of language game and information gap were used. The students became comfortable with listening to their peers in pair work tasks rather than relying on the teacher. They were expected to take a greater degree of responsibility for their own learning. The students were also provided with multiple opportunities to use the second language. It was observed that after forty hours of teaching, ninety percent of the students developed fluency and spoke confidently in English.

Key words: language games, natural approach, pair work, second language, speaking skill