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CLASSROOM INTERACTION PATTERN: PAIRWORK

Taking into consideration the context of ELT, classroom interaction can be performed by different student groupings like individual work, pair work, group work, and whole class work. Different interaction patterns can support the aims of different kinds of activities. Changing different ways of working in the classroom can help vary the lesson's pace as well as choosing an appropriate pattern can help achieve learning aims [4]. The mentioned interaction patterns are chosen and combined by the teacher depending on the lesson's type, learning preferences, students' needs, teacher's approach and other factors. Although, it is a well-known fact that whole-class instructional methods and individual work are the most commonly used in teaching [2, p. 7]. Many teachers consider these interaction patterns to be the most essential ways of working in the classroom, whereas in contrast modern approaches emphasize that without other kinds of interaction, students are deprived of many useful motivating opportunities for using and learning new foreign language. That is why the usage of pair work has a great value in ELT and particularly in ESP.

In our thesis, we will consider pair work as a type of a classroom interaction, highlight its advantages, disadvantages and the ways of their overcoming, demonstrate its usage in the context of ESP lesson.

The term “pairwork” means a work that is done by two people working together when they are learning something, such as a language [5]. Open or public pairs are used to perform a very common form of classroom interaction, where two people are speaking and everyone else is listening. Open pairs can be created in two ways: between a teacher and a certain student, and between two students when both talk to each other in front of the rest of the class. The former way is used in the following situation: during the warm-up activity (*T: What electronic devices do you use at home, John? S: Well, at home I usually use my PC and tablet.*), checking the comprehension of the work done (*T: When did the first personal computer appear, Sam? S: Personal computers are supposed to appear in the late 1970s.*), checking understanding of the task (*T: Who can tell me what you have to do? Anna? S: We have to discuss with our partners the spheres of application of personal computers.*), etc. The latter way is applied when the teacher models and instigates a certain situations for students' cooperation. An interesting variation on the open pair, is the so-called ‘melee’ or ‘mingle’ activity, where the whole class operates on

an open pair basis with everyone else in the class [3]. Essentially, students walk round the classroom from one partner to another asking and answering questions (*S1: Hello! What year are you in? S2: Hi! I'm the first year student. And what about you? S1: This is my first year of studying as well.*). At a more advanced level, all the students might have cards with the certain information or questions, which will lead them to find the right person who knows the answer. Consequently, they must talk to as many partners as possible until they get the correct response. To make students move further the teacher claps his hands or turns on the music signal, announcing the time limit.

A closed pair work is an essential interaction pattern, which is widely used in the modern teaching approaches and methods. This is not surprising because this pattern possesses many advantages, highlighted by many teachers and methodologists. A closed pair work increases the amount of speaking time any one student gets in the class, it encourages learner independence, allowing students to work without the necessary guidance of the teacher [1, p. 165]. In pair activities, learners get the opportunity to interact with his/her partner. Every student involved can share his ideas, knowledge, and information to solve a problem or to complete a task. The participants learn from each other, they remind and repeat the acquired knowledge from the profession-oriented subjects. Low-level students are able to improve their skills with the help of high-level students.

From the teacher's point of view, there are also a lot of benefits, and the main is that the teacher takes the role of a facilitator, assistant and observer, not the role of the teacher itself. This type of interaction pattern is relatively quick and easy for the teacher to set up. It allows teachers time to work with one or two pairs while the other students continue working, students focus on communicating with each other and they share the responsibility for the activities they perform in a pair, i.e. deciding on the correct answer to questions about a reading text [1, p. 165].

However, there are some possible problems in the use of pair work activities, particularly in the big groups. Noise is supposed to be one of the most complicated factors, which every teacher has to cope with, choosing the pair work interaction. To prevent the noise, the teacher should set strong and clear guidelines about classroom behavior from the beginning, use a "quiet signal" to maintain control. It can be a raised hand or a clap, etc. In addition, the teacher always should be ready to deal with early and late finishers. For example, the members of the fast pairs can be assigned as the "teacher's helpers" for other groups. They can help low-level students or late finishers to complete the task, to make corrections or to expand the ideas. Another possible disadvantage is that working in pairs most students are tend to use their mother tongue and very soon, they get bored. In this case, the teacher should be strict about speaking in English only. He is able to provide incentives for those students who only use English in the classroom, i.e. extra points. Besides, the teacher has always to keep in his mind students' needs, and to create the activities related to real-life situations, satisfying students' interests and their professional needs. When this occurs, learners will never be bored and will always complete the activities. One more challenge that quite often happens during the pair work interaction is

when learners don't like each other and they are both limited to only one person they should cooperate with. Well, the teacher should create pairs according to friendship or streaming. The last but not the least disadvantage might be different levels of knowledge within one pair, and as a result, the one student is most likely to become a leader, whereas the other learner will be passive. We suggest this weakness to transform in a strength, i.e. low-level students are able to improve their skills with the help of high-level students. So, as we can see some of disadvantages can be reduced, moreover they can be changed into benefits by means of certain teaching approaches and methods.

In conclusion, pair work has undoubtedly many benefits from the ELT process point of view. It provides students a lot of opportunities to practice foreign language applying their profession-oriented acquirements into English. Moreover, students focus on interaction and communication with each other, which follows from the fact that pair work activities are student-centred by the definition. Pair work interaction is a unique type of working activity, which helps a conscientious, responsible and dedicated teacher to increase students' satisfaction, self-confidence and motivation, in other words to turn a boring uninteresting lesson into an entertaining teaching process with students at its centre.

References:

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