

The English language teacher as a communication supporter

Dorota Nowacka (School of English, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań)

The understanding of the teacher's behavior and the value of the climate he/she creates is a prerequisite for initiating discussion over effective foreign language communication. The teacher being the most substantial source of input in the language classroom should be conscious of the value that his/her positive behavior exerts on the didactic process. This assumption lays the ground for favorable learning conditions since students are more inclined to be attentive to those teachers who transmit positive behaviors. This stance carries far-reaching implications for the teacher's role in the classroom as it is the teacher who directs the process of communication and creates a vibrant learning environment.

There exists mutual dependence between the teacher and foreign language learners since the learners' primary aim is to develop communicative competence in the foreign language and the teacher strives at making the process utmost effective. To achieve this, the teacher remains open to the learners' needs and abilities, offers constant communicative support; most importantly, however, creates a climate of trust and respect in the foreign language classroom. Furthermore, the teacher's verbal messages which are based on interaction modification allow for undisrupted communication between the teacher and the learners, and as such encourage them to become active participants in the learning process. What is more, the teacher's non-verbal behavior has been found to significantly influence language learning since the utilization of positive non-verbal behaviors aids in creating a climate conducive to classroom communication.

Thus, the teacher's behavior in the communicative classroom should reveal a dynamic system of skills which encompass different competences, among which foreign language competence, psychological, pedagogic and methodological competences are of paramount importance. They equip the teacher with indispensable knowledge of students' cognitive and emotional development and allow the teacher to act appropriately in class situations, to draw conclusions, to cooperate and interact with students, thereby to create a learning experience which entails effective foreign language communication.

This paper will investigate the nature of pedagogic communication and the teacher's input in it. The overriding aim of this paper is to describe and analyze the teacher's endeavor to support the process of classroom communication and to establish favorable conditions which allow foreign language learners to communicate successfully both inside and outside the foreign language classroom.