



Students' Motivation and Attitude Towards Foreign Language Classroom Communication

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Content

- Rationale of the project
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Theory

- Foreign language (FL) acquisition and classroom communication (Hymes 1971; Swain 1985)
- **Willingness to Communicate in FL**
 - classroom climate and atmosphere, teacher's role, an abroad study stay (Clément, Baker, & MacIntyre, 2003; Lee, 2018; MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan; 2003)
 - individual characteristics (Yashima et al., 2016), e.g. students' self-evaluation of communicative competence (MacIntyre & Doucette, 2010; Halupka-Rešetra, Topalov & Knežević, 2018), self-reported communication apprehension or foreign language anxiety (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan, 2003; Yashima, MacIntyre, Ikeda & Ikeda, 2016) and students' motivation (Peng, 2007; Yashima, MacIntyre, & Ikeda, 2016)
 - classroom environment measured by teacher support, student cohesiveness, and task orientation (Khajavy et al. 2016; Peng and Woodrow 2010)



Aim

- The qualitative outcomes presented here are a part of mix-method research conducted with the focus on the students' willingness to communicate in a FL classroom, their reported level of FL anxiety, and their motives for communicating with their teacher.
- the role of classroom communication from the point of view of a learner
- RQ: How do selected students reflect their willingness to communicate in English lessons?
 - Are there different motives for joining
 - a whole-class communication,
 - small group communication or communication in pairs?
 - What motives do students state for
 - a whole-class communication,
 - small group communication or communication in pairs?



Sample

- 22 university students of general English courses (at different levels according to CEFR)
- four men and eighteen women studying at the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Science at the University of Jan Evangelista Purkyně in Ústí nad Labem in the Czech Republic
- selected based on their performance and interaction during the lessons within the term (extreme examples)
- heterogeneous classes, the average number of students in a course is fifteen
- the language courses run for 13 weeks with one teaching unit (105 minutes)



Semi-structured interview

- Question focused on
 - students' motivation and attitudes towards communication in a FL classroom at a university level,
 - their preference of particular language skill and classroom activities
- The data were gathered at the end of a semester (in autumn 2019, spring 2020 and spring 2021).
- Through the analysis based on open coding several relevant categories emerged:
 - the teacher's role,
 - the role of student's self-evaluation
 - student's emotions,
 - student's attitude towards the language,
 - classroom atmosphere.



Results

The fear of making a mistake: a barrier to classroom communication

„There are different types of teachers – the strict ones and then students are afraid to say anything and to actually make mistakes, say something incorrectly, and then there are teachers who approach it in a funny way, I would say, that it doesn't matter, that there is a mistake. One learns by mistake, don't we (smiling).“

„Well, according to me...it depends on the people in your class. My classmates at a secondary comprehensive school were good group, and when I made a mistake, so some people were laughing. Here (meaning the university) it would be out of the question, so. But sometimes a man may be afraid to make a mistake so that the others do not mistake him for being stupid.,“



Results

What motivates students to get involved into class communication?

- **Teacher**
 - Task
 - Learning context
- **Motives related to individual students**
 - To improve one's skill
 - To assure oneself
 - To help the others ...



What motivates students to get involved into communication with their TEACHER?

- **Traditional Initiation–Reponse–Feedback communication pattern**

„...the teacher should be more active, because we (students) are not so active as to respond to each other or to trigger a discussion, so the teacher should be the guide. ...it's the Czech character.“

- **Teacher's character and attitude**

„...I did respect him...on the other hand he was a kind of friendly and approachable.“

- **The need for information**

*„...it was because of credit requirements.“
„...it was about a course task.“
„Sometimes, when I am not sure,...“*

- **The need for relationship with the teacher**

„...because when nobody responds, her work may come in vain ... and she can get a good opinion of me, can't she (smiling).“

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Motives for joining in WHOLE-CLASS COMMUNICATION

TASK

„...I try, when I really know what to say, then I try (smile).“

„...an engaging topic, prepare for a discussion, plus questions maybe, leave some time for preparation and then go into it together.“

„...when there's a discussion about sth I'm keen on ... or when sb said sth I do not agree with ... that would be the impuls I'd say sth ...“

„...if there were just classmates and not the teacher ... I would not mind.“

CONTEXT

„And when I hear others' opinions then sth strikes me and I can add sth, and without that I would not think about anything to add.“

„I have to say our study group is fine here at uni. I know the girls and there's no such problem to speak in front of them ...“



Motives for joining in SMALL GROUP COMMUNICATION

IT'S PLEASING

„... I'm at ease, because I am with one person only and I don't speak in front of other fifteen people.“

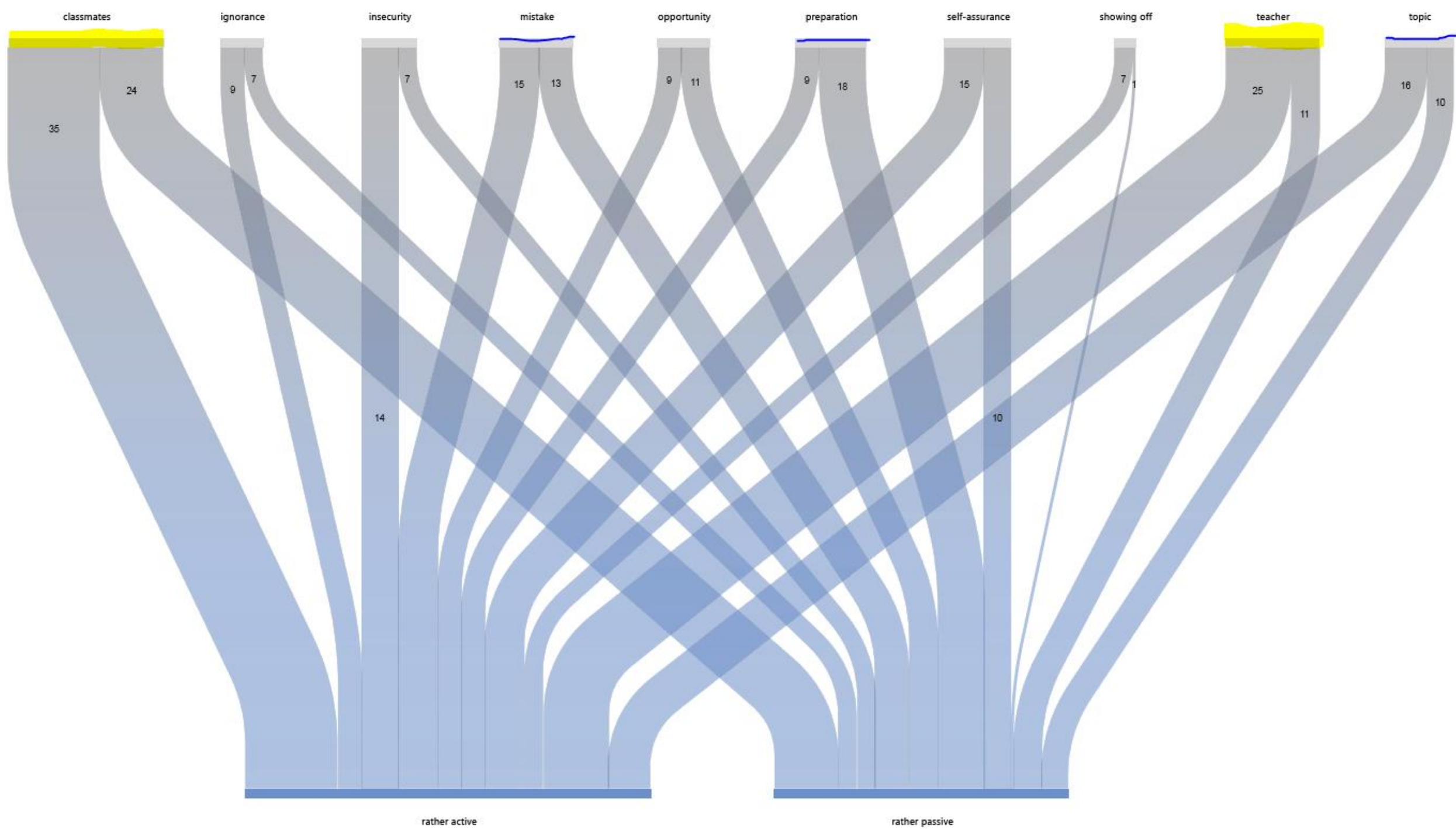
„It's probably sth different, there's only two of us, so it's kind of easier, I would say.“

„...and as I say, I assume that the person is on a similar level ... so I don't mind much.“

IT'S THE TIME TO SPEAK

„...and so I had to do sth ... 'cause there were fewer people ... so I had to do it.“

„Because there was the opportunity, somehow I had to express myself. When there are two of us it's not possible not to speak...“





Conclusions

- A teacher cannot influence students' learning history thus we have to focus on what a language teacher at a university level can do to facilitate classroom communication (W-C as well as small group).
- To mention the most significant
 - relevant topics and
 - teaching practise that allows students time to think about the content as well as form of their contribution,
 - the classroom atmosphere (group cohesiveness),
 - handling students' fear of making mistakes.



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