Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of English

Students' Attitudes towards Agentic Engagement in Learning and Classroom Interaction

Case Study: Master Students at the Department of English, Mohammed Seddik Benyahia University

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for a Master Degree in Foreign Languages Didactics

Submitted by: **Supervised by:**

Rima LAIB

Soumia BOUAKRIF   **Redouane NAILI**

Board of examiners:

Chairman: Ahcèn KERDOUN   Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel

Examiner: Amal BOUKHEDENNA   Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel

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2020

Dedication 1

I dedicate this work to:

My beloved parents for their endless support and love

My brothers for being always there for me

My lovely sisters for their encouragement and trust

To my little angel "Imad"

Simply, to my close family

Soumia

Dedication 2

This work is dedicated to the candles of my life: my lovely mother, and my thoughtful father.

To my beloved brothers "Oussama, Naim, Karim and Hicham".

To my lovely sisters "Fahima, Amina, and Fatima Zahra"

To the prettiest niece in the world "Sirine"

Ryma

Acknowledgements

Abstract

The study in hand explores students' attitudes towards agentic engagement in learning and interaction. Agentic engagement refers to the students' proactive involvement in a learning activity and being as centered as their teachers. It has been hypothesized that if students are aware of the importance of agentic engagement, they will act proactively and take initiation in learning and classroom interaction. To test this hypothesis, a questionnaire was administered to 100 students in master one and master two students at the department of English at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University. The results obtained showed that most students at the master level have shown that they are not very engaged in learning since they are not interested in preparing, suggesting, and adding information to enrich their lectures. In contrast, most of them are engaged in the process of interaction in the classroom. However, their initiative is linked to having the right answer, feeling confident, and feeling motivated in learning about the subject.

Keywords: agency, agentic engagement, classroom interaction

List of Abbreviations and Symbols

%: percentage

ALM: Audio-lingual Method

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

GTM: Grammar Translation Method

IRF: Initiation-Response-Feedback/Follow-up

L2 : Second Language

N : Number

P. Page

P.P. Pages

Q: Question

TL: Target language

n.d: no date

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General Introduction

Introduction

The process of making things happen, taking initiative and actions as well as controlling situations is called agency (Bandura, 2001). Accordingly, agentic engagement denotes students' own contribution in the learning process. In the context of learning English as a foreign language, students are more likely to be passive because methods of teaching are still generally teacher-centred, meaning that the teacher is the one who gives the instructions and controls the flow of the learning process. Teaching in modern times must highlight students' abilities through giving them the chance to control and manage their own learning. This way, they are more likely to be effective learners and can help each other to facilitate the learning processes. When students are considered as agents, they enrich the learning environment and interaction and their motivation for learning will increase.

1.Review of Previous Studies

Students' engagement in interaction, by taking active involvement in a learning setting, has been studied by many researchers. Early studies, however, focused on contributions of three types of engagement in the learning process; behavioural engagement, cognitive engagement and emotional engagement. Thus, the concern was studying the effect of students' behaviours on their learning, the cognitive strategies that they use in learning settings, and the their ' affective responses to learning activities. In contrast, agentic engagement, or student's active involvement in a learning activity and contribution to the flow of instruction, has a relatively recent history in research (Reeve, 2012). Numerous studies shed light on the importance of students' agentic engagement in classroom learning and teaching (Shernoff et al. 2003; Wang, & Eccles, 201, Reeve & Tseng 2011; Reeve, 2013; Reeve & Lee, 2014).

The role of behavioural, emotional and cognitive engagement in students'

achievement was studied by Wang and Eccles (2011). 1148 students of 23 public middle

schools in the U.S in different grades were examined through questionnaires containing

validated scales. The results revealed that behavioural engagement and cognitive engagement

were more commonly linked to academic achievement and educational aspirations in

comparison to emotional engagement. The authors concluded that all three types of

engagement may not be directly related to academic achievement due to students 'lack of

active participation and self-regulatory strategies. Moreover, though engagement was found

beneficial in learning, the researchers underscored the need for more active participation and

self-regulation, or agentic engagement.

As far as students' agentic engagement in classroom learning and interaction is

concerned, Shernoff et al. (2003) conducted a study in order to test to what extent students are

engaged in their classrooms and which modules they are likely to be more active in. 526 high

school students in different grades were examined through multiple tools like forms, likert-

type response scales, and logbooks. The results highlighted the balance between challenge

and skills, learning environment's control and the need of instruction. Students reported that

their non-academic courses were more intrinsically motivating. The researchers suggested

creating learning activities that support students' autonomy and provide an appropriate level

of challenge for students' skills to increase their engagement (as cited in Montenegro, 2017).

Agentic engagement was studied in relation to students' autonomy, self-efficacy,

relatedness, and performance (Reeve and Tseng, 2011). Using observation and a

questionnaire submitted to 365 high school students, the researchers confirmed the existence

of agentic behaviour as a type of engagement that correlates positively with students'

autonomy, self-efficacy, relatedness, and performance. A scale of five items, which is called

the Agentic Engagement Scale, was described and validated as the first measure for students' contributions.

Agentic engagement was found to be related to motivation in a study by Reeve (2013) which was conducted with high school students. The study refined the measure of agentic engagement and validated its relation to the increase in student motivation. Results of this study were confirmed by those of a longitudinal study by Reeve and Lee (2014) which attempted to predict changes in engagement and its effects on motivation. A questionnaire was administered to 313 Korean students from different grades during three months to test the reciprocal relation that exist between changes in students' classroom engagement and changes in their classroom motivation.

Based on the review of research, agentic engagement has been identified and measured by gathering behavioural observations and self-reports (Reeve, 2012). Most studies have shown the importance of agentic engagement in educational settings in that it helps students create a supporting environment for themselves and become active in participation, motivated and self-regulated.

2.Statement of the Problem

The issue of positioning students as agents in the learning process has not fully been examined and needs further explanation. Most modules in our university relies on teacher-centred rather than student-centred this means that students follow the teacher's instruction without taking initiative. As a result, agentic engagement is not a common phenomenon because either the conditions are not favourable for students to act agentically, or because students are not aware about the importance of agency. This is because opportunities for students' participation in learning and classroom interaction exist, and it is up for students to

seize them instead of blaming teaching for being responsible for making them less agentically engaged.

3.Research Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that if students believe in the importance of agentic engagement in learning, they will act proactively and take initiative in classroom interaction.

It is also hypothesized that if the teacher provides a supportive environment for students' agentic engagement, students will be more engaged in leaning and classroom interaction.

4.   Research Questions

The present study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do students engage in learning?

2. To what extent do students engage in classroom interaction?

3. Does current instruction encourage students to be agentically engaged?

4. Is there a relationship between students' agentic engagement in learning and their agentic engagement in classroom interaction?

5.The Aim and the Significance of the Study

This study aims to highlight the importance of agentic engagement, and the aspects that could improve learners' interaction and centredness. It also aims to identify the factors that contribute to improving the quality of learners' interaction and increasing their motivation. This research could be significant for EFL learners in terms of providing them with motivating techniques and ideas that focus on how to exploit the potential opportunities for learning, learner-centredness, autonomy, and interaction.

6.Means of Research

An online questionnaire was used as the research tool for gathering data about students' agentic engagement in learning and classroom interaction. It was answered 100 Master students at the University of Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia.

7.Structure of the Research

This dissertation is divided into three chapters: Two theoretical chapters and a practical one. It also provides a general introduction and a general conclusion.

The first chapter discusses the principles of classroom interaction, through defining it, highlighting its importance and its components. Next, it reviews the main patterns of classroom interaction and its main features in EFL classroom. Finally, it discusses the place of interaction in language teaching methods.

The second chapter provides an overview of agentic engagement. It starts by discussing various definition given to the term of agentic engagement, then provides a short historical background on the construct. Next, it defines the concepts related to agentic engagement and the factors that influence it. Last, it shows how agentic engagement can influence the different aspects of classroom interaction.

The third chapter is devoted to the practical part which presents the population and the sample selected for this study. Next, it describes the research tool used and provides the analysis and interpretation of the results obtained from the questionnaire submitted. The chapter ends with a conclusion that summarizes the main ideas and findings of the study.

Chapter One: Classroom Interaction in EFL Classes

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Chapter One

Classroom Interaction in EFL Classes

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to overviewing classroom interaction in the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language (EFL). It starts by providing a set of definitions of classroom interaction, then discusses its main types of as well as its components. Next, it presents and illustrates the major features of interaction in foreign language classrooms which are questioning, negotiation of meaning, feedback, turn taking and teacher talk. It also casts light on interactional techniques that can be used in the classroom. The chapter ends with a discussion of the place classroom interaction in language learning methods.

1.1. Definition of Classroom Interaction

According to Brown (2001), interaction is a term that is used to refer to the exchange of thoughts, feelings, and ideas; it is conducted by two or more people, and results in a mutual effect being produced in both communicators. Interaction, then, involves more than just putting a message together as it also means responding to other people in order to facilitate communication among them (Hadfield, 2008 as cited in Herliani,2016).

According to Kalantari (2009, 425), classroom interaction is the "interaction between teacher and students in the classroom". Brown (2001), pointed out to the fact that interaction is at the heart of communicative competence because when a learner interacts with another learner, he/she receives input and produces output. In support of the same claim, Nunan (1991) stated that language is acquired as learners actively engage and interact with each other to communicate in the target language (TL) (Brown (2001), and Nunan (1991), as cited in kalantari 2009). In particular, classroom interaction is a practice that improves the progress

of the two important language abilities which are speaking and listening among the learners.

Moreover, it is a tool that helps the learners to be sufficiently qualified to think critically and

share their perspectives with their peers (Adaba, 2017).

Dunkin and Biddle viewed classroom interaction as behaviour involving both verbal

and non-verbal means of expression in which non-verbal signals play a role as crucial as that

played by verbal language (Cited in Rex & Green, 2008, p. 572). By engaging in

reciprocal verbal and non-verbal actions in the context of the classroom, Adaba (2017) argued

that the learners' language skills are supposed to be developed (p.3)

Classroom interaction (CI) is important in the teaching and learning processes in a

language classroom. According to Walsh (2009), classroom interaction a central aspect of

teaching and learning. Its centrality can be seen in the cooperative work between the teacher

and students and among students themselves, where both of them contribute collectively in

the interactional process (Allwright and Bailey, 1994). Besides, interaction develops the

students' ability to produce ideas and concepts seen from someone else's point of view and

the ability to construct shared knowledge attempting to change their minds and critically

influence their own ideas (Mercer, 2000 as cited in classroom talk and teaching, n.d, p.2).

On the basis of the definitions mentioned above, we can consider that classroom

interaction is the process that engages both the teacher and students in collaborative work that

aims to share ideas and develop skills.

1.2. Types of Classroom Interaction

Classroom interaction occurs either between the teacher and the students or between

the students themselves, individually or collectively according to the interactional situation.

The two types of interaction, which are teacher-student interaction and student-student

interaction, are defined here, in addition to the initiation-response-feedback pattern.

1.2.1. Teacher- Student Interaction

This type of interactions takes place between a teacher and his/her student or many students at the same time. In this case, the teacher initiates a lecture and asks students to participate through teachers' questions and students' responses, turn giving and turn taking.

Teacher-student interaction influences student's skills and assists him/her to do well in the classroom and to relate to peers (Alderman, 2008 as cited in Anugerah, 2018, p. 5). This means that interaction with the teacher or classmates helps students to develop their listening and speaking skills. In addition, teachers who have positive interaction with their students create a classroom environment which is more conducive for learning that meets students' developmental, emotional and educational needs.

1.2.2. Student- Student Interaction

Student-student interaction in EFL learning refers to the interaction that occurs between a student and a student or between a group of students. In this case, the students themselves initiate the talk either by giving suggestions, asking questions, or even introducing concepts related to their course.

According to Johnson (1995), if learner-learner interaction is well-managed and organized, it will promote learners' cognitive development, their academic achievement as well as social skills through collaborative work. Moreover, Johnson (1995) claimed:

> Student-student interaction in foreign language classrooms can create
> opportunities for students to participate in less structured and more
> spontaneous language use, negotiate meaning, self-select when to participate,
> control the topic of discussion, and, most importantly, it draws on their own
> prior knowledge and interactional competencies to actively communicate with
> others. (p. 189).

That is to say, student-student interaction in EFL classes helps students to practice and develop the target language. It also gives them the chance to decide when to participate and what to discuss. This type of interaction, as well, enables students to use their previous knowledge and interactive abilities to communicate with others.

1.2.3. The Initiation-Response-Feedback Interactional Pattern

In EFL classes where the teacher is the one who takes control of the classroom discourse, the teacher usually initiates talk in the classroom by asking questions and giving the floor for students to answer, the students respond only to the teacher's questions and the teacher follows up students' responses by feedback related to form and/or the content of the students' utterances. This process is called Initiation-Response-Feedback/ Follow-up (IRF) and it represents a most common pattern of classroom discourse in teaching EFL. The following is an example of an IRF sequence:

T (I): Where was the picture taken? Yes, please?

S (R): In the aero plane.

T (F): In the aero plane. Good, yes. In the aero plane (Cullen, 2002, as cited in Noviana and Ardi,2015)

The three-part structure in the example above is based on a teacher's questioning or initiation move (I), the student's response (R) and it is followed up by a turn which is evaluative in its nature (F).

Walsh (2012) described the IRF as limited, controlled and dominated by the tutor as it reduces students' participation and restricts their creativity and language use. However, Wells (1993) indicated that this triadic pattern is neither completely good nor completely bad; its quality depends on the type of follow-ups the teacher uses to react to the students' performance (Cited in Hardman, 2016, p.7). This means that IRF is a pattern which is

controlled and guided by the teacher; it allows students to participate, but limits the way to do so.

1.3. Features of Classroom Interaction

Classroom interaction is a process of action and reaction in the classroom; it is characterized by a set of features including collaborative dialogue, negotiation of meaning, group discussion and co-construction.

1.3.1. Collaborative Dialogue

Collaborative dialogue is a kind of interaction that happens either between students or between students and teacher. In addition to these members, Johnson (2004) added that collaborative dialogue results also from the learner interaction with other members of the sociocultural environment including parents and friends (as cited in Yu,2008, p. 48).

Collaborative dialogue has numerous advantages for students since it is a student-centered instruction. The aim of collaborative dialogue, according to Swain (2013), is to engage speakers in problem solving and knowledge building. Similarly, Brook (1990, p.1) argued that collaborative dialogue helps students to obtain meaningful learning since it deals with problem solving. Furthermore, through dialogue, students become knowledgeable, strategic and self-determined, i.e. when students talk and interact with each another, they will have the chance to examine each other's points of view. Consequently, they acquire knowledge about several topics and issues. Also, students learn how to defend their views and respect others' opinions. Besides, through dialogue students will be self-determined in the way that they take their own decisions and distinguish between what is wrong and what is right. Furthermore, students will have the opportunity to involve in real tasks (Brook, 1990).

1.3.2. Negotiation of Meaning

According to Yu (2008), negotiation means "discussion to reach agreement" (p.48). This means that negotiation of meaning is an interaction which happens in order to reach certain ideas that suit all the participants. In classroom interaction, negotiation of meaning is the verbal exchange that occurs when speakers seek to prevent the breakdown of communication as participants in the negotiation attempt to produce and elicit language that is comprehensible to each other (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2008).

Ellis (1990) claimed that when learners face communicative problems and they have the opportunity to negotiate solutions to them, they will be able to acquire new language. Negotiation plays an important role in classroom interaction, according to Allwright(1984) Through it, students learn and retain more knowledge in interactive situations and achieve higher scores in learning a second language (L2) (as cited in Yu, 2008, p 49).

According to Long (1996) "negotiation for meaning (…) facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learning capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways" (Cited in Wright, 2016, pp.161-162). That is to say, negotiation of meaning helps learners to receive input and produce output, negotiate what is said to make it comprehensible, relate input to the inner learning capabilities and become selective by choosing what to focus on and what to say.

1.3.3. Co-Construction

According to He and Young (1998), "interactional competence involves the knowledge of language that is jointly co-created by all participants in interaction". That is to say, interactional competence encompasses students' knowledge and their capacity to engage appropriately in interaction in a given context by exchanging ideas and perspectives, and collectively attaching the knowledge acquired to the real-life context (As cited in Yu, 2008,

p.49). Co-construction helps students to learn from each other, exchange ideas and knowledge and improve their skills.

1.4. Components of Classroom Interaction

Classroom interaction is made up of multiple elements that allow negotiation of meaning between students and teachers. These are questioning, feedback, turn taking and teacher talk.

1.4.1. Questioning

Questioning is a common classroom interaction element used by the teacher; it guides students to interact with their teachers and involves them in conversation. According to Chaudron (1988), teachers' questions facilitate the use of the target language, simplify the meanings and correct ideas. Teachers' questions are considered as the primary mean through which teachers can attract learners' attention, encourage verbal responses, and evaluate students' advancement.

According to Long (1996), questions may facilitate interaction through establishing both the topic and who is expected to speak. Moreover, the nature of questions limits the students' responses length. This means that questioning is a method used by the teacher in order to create interaction in the classroom and also encourage students to perform their speaking skills in the TL. (as cited in Chaudron, 1988 p.126)

Galls (n.d) stated that more than a half of classroom talk is dominated by questioning and answering. As a result, questioning encourages students to share their responses with others and it is the best way for teachers to check students' understanding (as cited in Richard, 1992).

The activity of questioning and answering is considered as a form of communication which is used by the teacher to initiate an interaction through the questioning strategies. There

are three types of questioning techniques that are typical in the classroom settings which are: comprehension checks, clarification request, and elicitation.

1.4.1.1. Comprehension Checks

Comprehension checks are questions that aim at ensuring students' understanding of the discourse. They occur when the speaker tries to know whether students have received the message or not. The speaker may use expressions or comprehension checks such as ok? is it clear? And have you understood? (Sanchez García, 2010).

1.4.1.2. Clarification Requests

Clarification requests are important to develop classroom interaction. They are types of questions which occur when there is a failure in understanding. i.e. when the students misunderstand the message of the speaker and seek for a repetition using expressions like: could you please repeat? What do you mean by that? (Sanchez García, 2010).

1.4.1.3. Elicitations

Elicitations are one of the important techniques to attain a productive classroom interaction. Brulhart suggested that teachers should elicit students' answers through some interactional moves such as referential and display questions, or-choice questions, expansions, self-repetition questions, other-repetitions (as cited in Almohizea,2018, p.53).

Referential questions are questions to which the answer is not known by the instructor and he/she can gain various answers from it such as: why didn't you do your homework? On the other hand, display questions are those questions to which the answer is known by the teacher and are designed to elicit or display actual knowledge such as: what is the opposite of up? Or-choice questions are questions that have two possible answers, and they always contain the conjunction "or"; for example: do you want tea or coffee? Expansions represent teacher reactions to his/her student's responses through which the teacher provides

explanations, additions or correction, using words like; 'in other words', 'this means', etc. Self-repetitions occur when the teacher repeats part or all of his utterance or idea. While Other-repetitions happen when the teacher repeats the student's utterance (Almohizea, 2018, p.53).

1.4.2. Feedback

According to Chaudron (1988, p.132), "In any communicative exchange, speakers derive from their listeners' information on the reception and the comprehension of their message". That is to say, feedback plays an integral role in the process of learning since it provides learners with information about the appropriateness of their responses.

According to Cook (2000), feedback refers to the teacher's positive or negative evaluation on a student's response, i.e. Feedback may be positive to show appreciation and praise or negative to, correct verbal responses or nonverbal reactions. Feedback can be immediate, in which the teacher interrupts the student while talking to correct or to give a compliment, or postponed, in which the teacher waits for student to complete what he is saying to give him feedback or corrects him (as cited in Yan,2006). Moreover, Hedge (2000) stated that, receiving feedback either from teacher or from students in the classroom enables students to develop their knowledge about the target language and the use of it. So, feedback helps learners to improve and develop higher control of the TL.

Feedback plays an important role in increasing students' motivation and making them more active and engaged; that is to say, when students interact in the classroom and receive feedback, this leads them and other students to participate more and become involved in instruction and learning.

1.4.3. Turn Taking

Turn taking is a basic form of organizing conversation as it involves the exchange of turns and roles between teachers and learners and between learners themselves; it means to

speak or to act while no one else does, to pass the floor to another person, or to leave the turn (kasim, 2004, p.9). According to Schegloff (1987), turn-allocation techniques prepare to some extent what seems to be "a primordial place of sociality: direct interaction between individuals" (as cited in European Journal of Psychology of Education March 2008, 17). In classroom interaction, turn-taking is usually initiated by the teacher through asking questions or giving instructions while learners acquire or receive turns by responding to the teachers' questions or instructions.

1.4.4. Teacher Talk

In classroom interaction, teachers play a significant role in providing input, they are the ones who control the instruction, and carry out several communicative activities such as lecturing, asking questions, correcting, explaining and commenting as well as giving feedback; this is what is called 'teacher talk'. Richards (1992) pointed out that teacher talk represents a special variety of language that is characterized by simplifying vocabulary, grammatical structures, and pronunciation; Hence, "In trying to communicate with learners, teachers often simplify their speech, giving it many of the characteristics of foreigner talk and other simplified styles of speech addressed to language learners" (p. 471). Similarly, Qican, (1999) stated that teacher talk is a special communicative activity. Its goal is to communicate with students and develops students' foreign language proficiency; it is used in class when teachers are conducting instruction, cultivating students' intellectual ability and managing classroom activities (Cited in Yan, 2006, p.p. 5-6)

1.5. Interaction Techniques

EFL teachers usually use a variety of activities to make students engaged and involved in the instruction and to make the interactional process easier. The most common interactional activities are: group work, pair work and discussion. Tsui (2001) argued that language learners would participate more in classroom activities when pair work and group

work tasks are assigned. Such activities help students exchange information, share ideas to obtain comprehensible input, and interact easily.

1.5.1. Group Work

Group work is a student-centred way of teaching. It is a classroom activity where students work in teams to obtain knowledge and complete tasks through collaborative interaction. Working in groups helps students to be in an interactive environment where they encourage and help each other through sharing ideas and knowledge, giving feedback and correcting each other. It provides more opportunities for learners to initiate and control the interaction and helps in increasing students' motivation (Roney, 2010. as cited in Morris,2016).

1.5.2. Pair Work

Pair work involves two students in cooperating with each other in order to accomplish and solve a given task and reach its objectives. Harmer (2001) stated that pair work serves as "a way of increasing student participation and language use. It can be used for enormous number of activities whether speaking, writing or reading" (as cited in Belabed, 2017-2018). That is to say, pair work activities help in enhancing students' interaction and aid students in improving their level in the target language. Pair work is an important component of the communicative approach, and is also a form of collaborative learning that results in better comprehension and acquisition of more information. In this vein, Moon (2000) argued that pair work is a technique "to organize students in ways that will maximize opportunities for learning". (as cited in Mulya, n.d, p.79).

1.5.3. Discussion

In discussion, all students are supposed to participate, interact, and discuss a particular topic with each other and with their teacher as well to exchange ideas, opinions and give arguments. Harmer (2001) proposed discussion as a solution for students who feel

inhibited to give an opinion in front of the whole class. The creation of 'buzz groups' give those students a chance for quick discussions in small groups before any of them is asked to speak in public. Therefore, discussion in EFL classrooms fosters learners' interaction to develop their speaking fluency and overcome their inhibitions (as cited in Belabed, 2017-2018).

1.6. Interaction in English Language Teaching Methods

Presented below are some of the main teaching methods which are the grammar translation method, direct method, audio-lingual and communicative language teaching in order to explore the role and the place of classroom interaction in each method.

1.6.1. Grammar Translation Method

Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is the oldest method in teaching EFL; it was first used to teach ancient languages such as Greek and Latin. Students basically learn grammatical rules deductively then apply them through translating sentences and texts from the target language to the mother language and vice versa. GTM focused mainly on reading and writing with no emphasis on listening and speaking skills and used students' native language in the learning process. GTM is generally from teacher to student where the teacher is the main source of information which means that interaction between the teacher and students is minimal and sometimes absent altogether (Sanjaya, 2014).

1.6.2. Direct Method

The Direct Method, also called the Natural Approach, was developed as a reaction to GTM. It neglected the use of the native language and focuses only on the TL. This method was characterized by the focus on developing oral communication skills through teachers' questions and students' answers. The Direct Method is based on the communication between teacher and student using TL; that is to say, there is oral interaction in classroom either between teacher and his students or between students themselves (Abdullah ,2013)

1.6.3. Audio-Lingual Method

Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) is an approach of teaching FLs which is similar in many ways to the Direct Method, especially in that it is based on teaching the TL directly without using students' native language. Language structures are taught through repetition, replacement, restatement and imitation. In other words, the teacher acts or practices a dialogue or a conversation between two persons in the TL and students listen and try to mimic the teacher correctly. Consequently, when a teacher starts the dialogue students will take a part of the dialogue, which means that ALM provides for student-student interaction that is directed by the teacher (Freeman, 2011).

1.6.4. Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) refers to the recently widely-used methods by teachers in many countries today in EFL classroom. CLT intends largely to make the communicative competence become the main goal of language teaching process (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2011, pp. 114-115).

In CLT, students use the language rather than analyze it; they use it through communicative activities such as games, dialogues and role-plays and the teacher is supposed to open conversations in order to encourage students to communicate and interact with each other and exchange ideas and opinions. CLT values interaction in the classroom because it allows students to learn to use TL. Thus, in CLT, it is important to keep learners active in the classroom, which means that the amount of teacher talk should be reduced in order to give more time for learners to talk (Adaba, 2017).

Conclusion

This chapter dealt with interaction in EFL classrooms and defined classroom interaction as the process of action and reaction that happens between teacher and learners. Moreover, classrooms have been characterized by teacher-learner/s interaction and learner/s-learner/s interaction in addition to the IRF exchange. Classroom interaction plays an important role in developing students' target language through the use of different techniques; such as giving feedback, questioning, turn taking and teacher talk. The use of interactive features such as negotiation of meaning, collaborative dialogue, and co-construction allows learners to use the knowledge acquired in real-life situations, facilitate communication and develop their problem-solving abilities. Of all the approaches to language teaching and learning, CLT seems to be the approach that gives the most chances for students' interaction in authentic situations.

Chapter Two: Agentic Engagement in EFL Courses

Introduction

2.1. What is Agency?

2.2. What is Engagement

2.3. Definition of Agentic Engagement

2.4. The History of Agentic Engagement

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Chapter Two

Agentic Engagement in EFL Courses

Introduction

The current chapter explores the concept of agentic engagement in language learning and teaching. First, the various definitions given to the concept are presented. Next, light is shed on the historical background of agentic engagement as well as on the concepts of student voice, centeredness and autonomy which are related to it, with a special focus on explaining the difference between agentically engaged students and autonomous ones. The discussion ends with an analysis of the status of agentic engagement in features of classroom interaction.

2.1. What is Agency?

The success of the learning activity does not depend only on the teachers' plans and instruction, but also on the students themselves when the take actions and initiatives in the learning process. This is related to the concept of agency.

Ray (2009) defined agency as "an intentional act that leads to a particular outcome" (as cited in Teng, 2019, p. 67). According to Bown (2009), "Agency plays an important role in a learner's self-regulation, which is an important variable in the improvement of learning" (as cited in Teng, 2019, p.67). In other words, agency helps learners organize their learning efforts, thinking and planning and contributes to improve their learning experiences in order to reach success. Mercer stated that "agency is linked to an individual's initiative, motivation, volition, and effective control of learning" (as cited in Teng, 2019, p. 67); this is to say that individuals who are agentic are essentially motivated, initiative takers, consistent in their everyday practices and they control their own learning.

Agency is regarded as the ability to function appropriately, and to willingly contribute to the welfare of a given community by taking on roles in discussions about relevant topics. In this regard, Gao defined agency as "an individual's will to act as well as their capacity to act in sociocultural discourses" (as cited in Teng, 2019, p. 69). Furthermore, Lipponen & Kumpulainen stated that agency is "the capacity to initiate purposeful action that implies will, autonomy, freedom, and choice" (as cited in Teng,2019, p. 67). Agency, then, describes the process through which individuals intentionally make a change in themselves or their situations through their own actions. Agency also demonstrates that learners can create situations for learning and they do not feel restricted to the instruction they receive in classrooms. Agentic learners express their preferences in terms of specialties they want to further explore and study.

2.2. What is Engagement?

Kahn (1990) described engagement "as the harnessing of organizational members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances" (p.694). In this sense, engagement refers to one's performance in a work setting in ways that show their commitment to contribute effectively to individual and collective success. All types of activity or effort are appreciated whether they are physical, mental, or emotional.

Schaufeli et al. (2002) defined engagement as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related to state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption" (p. 74). In other words, engagement is the positive state of mind that is characterized by passion and hard work. Working hard and showing interest in work is a facet of engagement that is emphasized by Mackey and Schneider who held that "engagement means the involvement of oneself in the work role with a high energy to be present- minded in that work" (2008, p.14).

2.3. Definition of Agentic Engagement

Agentic engagement received a noticeable interest by the researchers in the field of education, and it was defined by several researchers. Agentic engagement refers to "the learner's constructive contribution into the flow of instruction they receive" (Reeve, 2013, p.579). Similarly, agentic engagement is seen as "the observable classroom event in which students constructively contribute to their learning and the instruction they receive" (Reeve 2013, p.579). The two quotes above highlight the importance spending efforts in order to take part in learning and teaching in the classroom.

An agentically engaged learner, according to Reeve (2013), is someone who consciously and deliberately takes part in his learning and explores all possibilities to learn and improve, as explained in the following quote:

> Agentically engaged learners may create self-supportive learning moments in the classroom by displaying their initiative and collaboration, which contributes directly to themselves (e.g., motivational support and achievement), and to the classroom environment itself (e.g., instruction, teacher - student communication) (Reeve,2013, p. 580).

That is to say, agentic students who can initiate in lectures, try to give hints, or talk about concepts related to their lesson are the ones who are truly agentically engaged because they are centered and active in the classrooms. These students generally encourage themselves regardless of whether they receive support from their teachers or classmates.

One of the noticeable definitions is that by Reeve (2013) in which he mentioned that "Agentic engagement is not only a pathway to academic progress, but it is also a student-initiated pathway to a more motivationally supportive learning environment" (p. 581), "it can be viewed not just as a student involvement but also as an ongoing series of interaction between student and teacher" (p.580). Shernoff et al. (2016) defined agentic engagement as

"the common interaction between the teacher and students" (as cited in Montenegro, 2017). This means that the concept of agentic engagement is inherent in interaction and it reinforces students' relationship with their teachers.

Based on the definitions above, agentic engagement can be viewed as willingness on the part of students to engage energetically in their classrooms, learn to take initiative, and be as centered as their teachers. It allows for better interaction in the classroom and contributes to higher achievement.

2.4. The History of Agentic Engagement

Agentic engagement is a concept which was introduced to assess and analyse educational downfalls and failures (Fredericks, et al, 2004). At the beginning, researchers claimed that the educational systems failed to reach some of its goals; for instance, they argued that traditional ways of teaching are kept in modern times and that students had to stand at the receptive end of instruction and learning without contributing to the learning and teaching processes (as cited in Maralani et al, 2018, p.1).

Suggestions to improve students' experiences and outcomes in educational institutions were suggested, including the introduction of the concept of engagement Behavioural, emotional, and cognitive engagement were the first three types suggested. Behavioural engagement focused on how learners can be active through suggesting successful behaviours in learning activities; emotional engagement has focused on how to best exploit students' emotions to manage their learning while cognitive engagement focused on the students' thinking skills and the strategies they should use in learning. Those three types of engagement, however, were directed or initiated by the teacher and the student's independent contribution or initiation of learning was not included as a major factor of success. Later, in 2011, the importance of the students' own interaction and engagement in a learning activity

was realised and described as agentic engagement (Reeve; 2012 as cited in Montenegro, 2017).

Agentic engagement, then, represents a different type of engagement which emphasizes the role of students' own contribution in the success of the learning process. It focuses primarily on the development of students' initiative and centredness in classroom interaction.

2.5. Concepts Related to Agentic Engagement

Engagement in learning is related to "students' interest, motivation, autonomous learning, school achievement, learning investigation" (Sharan & Chin Tan, 2008, p. 41). This means that the more students are interested in learning, motivated and autonomous, the more achievement they will realize. Some concepts which hold similarities to agentic engagement and help understand it better are explained here. These are student centeredness, and student autonomy and motivation.

2.5.1. Student Centredness

The term student centredness represents an approach where the focus is on the students instead of the teacher. In this case, learners start the questioning or introduce lectures without the teachers' instruction. This change which characterized the field of education began with the communicative approach to language teaching and learning which supported independent and responsible learners.

Jacobs & Renandya (2019) argued that student-centred learning contributes to improving students' learning skills because it develops "the students' own knowledge by communication, critical thinking, and problem solving" (p.13). In a classroom where the students are the dominants, teachers need to hear their voice, i.e. students ask for things they want to be taught about, as well as the method for teaching them. Consequently, this makes it

possible for learners and the teacher to plan the learning activities together based on the needs

of students and their levels. In such classes, multiple ways of teaching could be used,

relieving the teacher from the obligation to follow only one way of teaching. In this

alternative teaching method, lectures are generally based on the information given by the class

members. In addition, students interact with their peers, negotiate with them, and also

question each other given that the classroom environment shows that everyone is valued and

needed, and every idea could be covered in that lecture. Student-centred learning represents

the case that students as well as their teachers value the initiation and the enthusiasm for

learning, and also understand that knowledge is exchangeable between the teacher and

students in that they learn from each other (Jacobs & Renandya, 2019). These elements of

student centred learning are illustrated in the table below.

Table 2.1.

Elements of Student-Centered Learning (Jacobs & Renandya, 2019, p. 4)

Elements of student-centered learning	Brief explanation
Students and teachers as co-learners	Teachers do not pretend to know everything. Instead, teachers and students learn along with each other.
Student–student interaction	Students believe that they can learn from peers and develop the skills needed for learning together. Indeed, learning with peers constitutes a key mode of student learning.
Learner autonomy	Teachers act as guides on the side, as students learn how to become autonomous lifelong learners. Autonomous does not necessarily mean

	"alone." Instead, it means that students have control, and part of that control involves whether to learn alone, with peers, or with teachers and other experts.
Focus on meaning	The class does not use rote learning. Instead, students fully understand what they are studying and why they are studying it.
Curricular integration	Students appreciate the links between what they study one day in one class with other days in the same class and the same day in different classes. Plus, they see the links between what they learn and their lives and the lives of others beyond the classroom.
Diversity	Teachers and students plan learning activities with the needs of all students in mind, and the class appreciates the benefits of learning with diverse students and teachers.
Thinking skills	The class goes beyond the information given, as they elaborate on the ideas and information they encounter. Students and teachers apply, elaborate on, expand on, modify, analyze, and synthesize while learning.
Alternative assessment	Assessment expands beyond multiple-choice, true–false, and short answers. Students take part in the assessment process, via self-assessment and peer assessment, as well assessment of teachers, materials, and education institutions.
Learning climate	The class cooperates toward an atmosphere in which all are appreciated and supported, and, as a result, all are willing to take risks.

Motivation	Rather than extrinsic motivation dominating, the class strives to promote intrinsic motivation, where everyone is a motivator of their individual self, their peers, and their teachers.

The table represents the elements of student-centred learning, and shows how teachers and students are both learners in that they can learn from each other. Teachers guide their students in order to take initiation during the lectures, and to be able to be centred in the classroom. Students focus on the things they are learning because they already have ideas about them, they share things they want to learn with their teachers in order to be learn more about them. Concerning assessment, students together with teachers plan activities and discuss criteria of assessment. In such classes, every student cooperates with apparent motivation, everyone is intrinsically motivated i.e. motivating his/her individual self, and all the members are appreciated and valued.

Agentic students and centred ones share many similarities including the focus on the centeredness of students in the classroom as well as the fact that students are motivated, initiative takers, and active in their classrooms.

2.5.2. Student Autonomy

Learner autonomy has a recent history in EFL education as it evolved with developments in language teaching which responded to learners' needs. An autonomous learner seeks to enrich his/her own needs in order to fulfil the learning objectives.

The word "autonomy" consists of two parts: 'Autos', meaning self and 'nomous', meaning rule or law, and is used to refer to a state of being "self-ruled or self-governed" (Boud, 1981, as cited in Teng, 2019, p.2). Holec (1981) defined learner autonomy as "one's ability to control, manage his/her own learning", (as cited in Teng, 2019, p. 2). He also listed the elements of learner autonomy as "determining the objectives, defining the contents and

progressions, selecting methods and techniques, monitoring the procedure of acquisitions, and evaluating what has acquired" (as cited in Teng,2019, p. 3). Littlewood (1999) argued that "an individual's ability to establish personal agendas for learning was regarded as a characteristic of an autonomous learner" (as cited in Teng,2019, p. 3). This implies that learners who want to set the objectives of their learning, as well to indicates what they want to be taught about are autonomous learners. In other words, students show that they are proactively autonomous rather than not reactively autonomous. By definition, proactive autonomy refers to learners who are able to determine their learning objectives, select appropriate learning methods and techniques, and then, be able to evaluate what they have learned. By contrast, reactive autonomy refers to learners that do not create their own directions and await instructions by teachers (Teng, 2019, pp.2-5).

Autonomy and agentic engagement are two closely related terms; an autonomous learner is able to control and determine his/her own self; on the other hand, an agentically engaged learner is able to take initiation and be centred in any lecture. The two types of learners are active and valued. Autonomous learners are often motivated learners and their autonomy helps them to be active and centred in the classroom. Agentic engagement and autonomy, then, can be considered as related elements, and can be used interchangeably. Some literature conceptualizes agency and autonomy in much the same way (Teng, 2019).

Dickinson (1987) in his study, has shown how teachers should help their students either by clarifying or simplifying things for them. teachers are responsible for creating a friendly supporting environment, which is a very sensible point to shed light on in order to get better results (as cited in Teng, 2019). Agentically engaged students are the ones who take actions, either by questioning, suggesting, or even complaining about point covered in the lecture. Those learners plan the learning activities together with their teachers based on their needs. Autonomous learners are the ones who learn, and look for knowledge out of curiosity

and personal needs. Agentically engaged students and autonomous learners both learn based on personal sake and the feeling of need to learn about something in a specific way. Both types of learners need to be active participants in the learning process and are all expected to take partial or total ownership of their learning.

2.5.3. Motivation

Although the meaning of the word 'motivation' might appear simple and easy, it is a concept that proves difficult to be defined. Thus, researchers and theorists have not agreed on one definition of motivation. According to Gardner (1985) "motivation refers to what extent the individual works or sought to learn because of a desire" (p. 10). As for Ryan and Deco (2000, p.54), they stated, "To be motivated means to be moved to do something". Based on these two definitions, it can be said that a person who feels no reason, impetus or inspiration to act is unmotivated while someone who is energized or activated toward working and achieving an end is considered motivated.

Motivation is closely related to the concept of agentic engagement in that motivation provides the meaning and energy for people to be agentically engaged. In other words, the more learners are motivated, the more active they will be in learning.

2.6. Agentic Engagement in Interaction

The process of agentic engagement can be seen through the aspects of classroom interaction. This section discusses how agentic engagement can be distinguished in negotiation of meaning, questioning, and turn taking.

2.6.1. Agentic Engagement in Negotiation of Meaning

By definition, negotiation of meaning is a feature of interaction through which learners discuss the information given by their teacher or other learners and attempt to make themselves understood by them. Swain (1985) claimed that learners should not consider the

input they receive as sufficient though it is necessary for learning. They should also negotiate input to make it more comprehensible through producing their own output. Learners' comprehensible output allow learners to notice the gap between the desired knowledge they "want to convey and that which they can convey. As a result, they discover what they do know and what they do not" (as cited in Wright, 2016, pp.161-162). This is to say, through engaging in negotiating of meaning, learners give and receive further explanations either from the teacher or the classmates to increase comprehension in communication. This means that negotiation of meaning is a type of engagement and the more students negotiate meaning, the more agentic they are.

2.6.2. Agentic Engagement in Questioning

According to Richards and Lockhart (2000), questioning is one of the most common strategies used by teachers; it is considered as the quickest and easiest technique that motivates students and guides them toward a real conversation. Questioning is considered as a key tool in the teaching process that creates a natural interaction in the classroom. Similarly, McCormick and Donato (2000) stated that questions are a "fundamental discursive tool for engaging learners in instructional interactions, checking comprehension and building understanding of complex concepts." (Cited in Sánchez García, 2010, p.16). In other words, questioning is necessary for creating and sustaining interaction since it leads students to learn more and engage better and discuss different views.

Generally, students who tend to answer questions asked by teachers and who also often ask questions during their courses are the ones who feel confident to share their understanding and ideas and seek extra explanations. Therefore, regular involvement in questioning reveals that students are agentically engaged.

2.6.3. Agentic Engagement in Turn Taking

Turn taking plays an important role in interaction in that it enables students to notice when they have the right to speak and participate in the classroom. Wilson and Zimmerman (1986) argued that "turn taking is not considered as a stimulus and response, rather it should be a collaborative activity done in an organized manner where all members respect each other's turn and opinion" (as cited in Tavakoli, 2016, p.137). In other words, through taking turns, students show that they are ready to collaborate with others and interact in the classroom in a respectful way, show that they are able to regulate and control themselves. The concept of agency, then, can be seen in taking a big number of turns in interaction.

Conclusion

The concept of agentic engagement emerged as a type of students' active involvement in the learning process as opposed to other types of engagement which are essentially reactive in nature to instruction. Students' agentic engagement is supported by and related to their autonomy and centeredness in learning. It leads students' to be more active in interaction by taking initiatives and assuming responsibility for learning.

Chapter Three: Field Work

Introduction

3.1. Data collection Procedures

3.2. Population and Sampling

3.3. The Student Questionnaire

3.3.2. Analysis of Qtudent Questionnaire.

3.3.3. Interpretation and Discussion of the Student Questionnaire.

Conclusion

Chapter Three: Field Work

Introduction

The present chapter is dedicated to the field work of the study which investigates students' attitudes towards agentic engagement in classroom interaction. First, it describes the procedures employed in collecting data and selecting the target population and the sample. Next, it examines whether students are agentically engaged in the classroom through a questionnaire, which was submitted to a sample of Master students of English at Mohammed Seddik Ben yahia University by describing it and analysing students' answers. This chapter ends by discussing and interpreting the data obtained from the students' questionnaire.

3.1. Data collection Procedures

For the sake of collecting data, a questionnaire was selected as an appropriate tool of investigation. This is because questionnaires allow for the views, attitudes, and acts of a population to be collected, described, and analyzed. Furthermore, in a quantitative research, such as the one in hand, the results from the questionnaire can be represented accurately in numbers and percentages which can later be compared (Dörnyei & Csizér as cited in Mackey and Gass, 2012).

3.2. Population and Sampling

The present study was conducted in the second semester of the academic year 2019/2020, and it addresses Master level students in Mohammed Seddik Ben yahia University. 100 students of Master One and Master Two were selected as the sample of the study. These students represent the most experienced category of students. Drawing on their experience, these students have a better understanding of what constitutes good learning practices and can describe the ways in which they have been taught.

The sample represents more than half the students in Master levels, which is estimated at 274 students. 50 students were retained in each level based on convenience sampling given that the questionnaire the first 50 students to have answered the online questionnaire were kept to ensure equal representation of each level.

3.3. The Student Questionnaire

This section starts by providing a description of the questionnaire followed by the analysis of the results obtained. Next, the overall results are interpreted and discussed. The section ends up by a conclusion that summarizes the whole chapter and sheds light on the results obtained.

3.3.1. Description of Student's Questionnaire

The student's questionnaire is made up of twenty-three questions, arranged in four sections. Section one is devoted to the demographic information; the second section is entitled "Agentic Engagement in Learning English"; agentic engagement in classroom interaction is dealt with in the third section; whereas, the last section is designed for any further suggestions or comments students would like to add concerning this topic.

The first section, containing one question (Q1), asks about the students' levels. The aim is to sort the students and choose an equal number of students from Master One and Master Two.

The second section seeks to collect data about students' agentic engagement in English classes. Q2 demonstrates the frequency of students' engagement in preparing lectures before the teacher delivers them. Q3 aims at eliciting whether students contribute in explaining lectures by adding new information. Q4 indicates how often students suggest topics for the coming lectures. Q5 specifies the modules where the students feel themselves more active and motivated. Q6 and Q7 aim at testing how active students consider themselves

in comparison to their peers and whether they prefer themselves or their teacher to take on more active roles. Q8 seeks to collect students' opinions about the current teaching in our department, and whether it gives them chances to be active. Q9 directly asks students whether they discuss their opinions and preferences about teaching with their teacher. Q10 aims at differentiating between students who keep to the content given by the teacher and those who support that content by further reading about it and looking for new insights outside the classroom. Q11 tests the degree of students' engagement in learning settings outside the classroom either with their pairs or online. Q12 attempts to find out whether students are able to transfer knowledge they receive from their teachers to real life situations. Q13 asks students about the frequency of their self-evaluation with regard to instructional materials. Q14 intends to check if student often ask their mates to assess their progress with regard to instructional materials

Section three of the questionnaire seeks to collect data about agentic engagement in classroom interaction. In Q15, students are asked about the frequency of their involvement in classroom interaction. Q16 asks students to indicate whether they usually participate after being selected by the teacher or they initiate responses without being selected to do so. In response to Q17, students should demonstrate whether they prefer to interact with the teacher, their peers or both. Q18 is directed at eliciting the interaction activities they usually engage in more, be they pair work, groupwork or individual tasks. Questions 19 and 20 explore students' acceptance of corrective feedback from both their peers and their teachers. Q21 aims at exploring which positive and negative comments from the teachers and the classmates make students less engaged in interaction. In questions 22 and 23, students are asked about how often they usually ask for explanation or clarification from teachers and students, and whether they respond to questions they are asked by teachers and peers.

The last section is devoted for further suggestions and comments students would like to add concerning the current teaching in our department, and the changes they look for.

3.3.2. Analysis of Qtudent Questionnaire.

Section One: Demographic Information

Q1: What is your level?

Table 3.1.

Students' Level

Option	N	%
Master One	50	50
Master Two	50	50
Total	**100**	**100**

The first question of the online questionnaire was designed to select 50 students from each of the master levels. Thus, an equal number of students in master one and master two were retained to constitute the sample of the study.

Section Two: Agentic Engagement in Learning English

Q2: How often do you engage in preparing lectures before the teacher delivers them?
   a. Always   b. Often   c. Sometimes   d. Rarely   e. Never

Table 3.2.

The Frequency of Students' Advance Preparation of Lectures

Option	N	%
a.	3	3
b.	4	4
c.	36	36
d.	44	44
e.	13	13
Total	**100**	**100**

57% of the students claimed that they rarely or never engage in preparing lectures before the teacher delivers them, 36% asserted that sometimes that they engage in preparing lectures while a minority of them (7%) stated that they regularly do so.

Q3: How often do you contribute to the process of explanation of lectures by adding new information?

a. **Always** b. **Often** c. **Sometimes** d. **Rarely** c. **Never**

Table 3.3.

The Frequency of Students' contribution to the Process of Explanation of Lectures

Options	N	%
a.	5	5
b.	15	15
c.	47	47
d.	22	22
e.	11	11
Total	**100**	**100**

The table above demonstrates that almost half the students (47%) contribute sometimes to the process of explanation by adding new information, 20% do so regularly while 33% are not really interested in adding extra information to enrich explanation given by the teacher.

Q4: Do you generally give suggestions for the topic of the coming lectures and sessions?

a. **Always** b. **Often** c. **Sometimes** d. **Rarely** e. **Never**

Table 3.4.

Frequency of Students' Suggestions of Topics for Coming Lectures

Options	N	%
a.	1	1
b.	7	7
c.	14	14
d.	26	26
e.	52	52
Total	**100**	**100**

Most students (78%) are not very interested in suggesting topics and ideas for coming sessions and lectures, 14% of them occasionally do so while 8% claim that they usually give their suggestions for the coming lectures.

Q5: Are there specific modules where you feel yourself more active and motivated?

* Explain….

Table3.5.

Students' Motivation and Activity across Modules

Options	N	%
Yes	89	89
No	11	11
Total	100	100

89% of the students feel themselves active and motivated in specific modules. The rest (11%) do not feel that their activity and motivation changes across the different subjects they study.

Only some students (58 students) who admitted that they feel motivated in particular modules gave the explanations which are listed below:

- The modules of Oral Expression and Practical Communication appealed to 20 students because they feel so comfortable with their peers and discuss everything together. However, lectures in which only the teacher talks make them feel passive.

- 18 students relate their increased motivation in some modules to the teachers who succeed in engaging them in exploring more about the subject matter.

- 10 students thought that some modules make them feel active and want to explore them more especially those subjects related to real life problems like Applied Linguistics, TEFL, Psychology, and Discourse Analysis.

- 10 students relate their activity and motivation to individual preferences and interest in the subject.

Q6: Do you consider yourself?

a. More active than most students

b. Less active than most students

c. As active as most students

Table 3.6.

Students' Self-Evaluation of their Engagement in Comparison to their Peers

Options	N	%
a.	16	16
b.	36	36
c.	48	48
Total	**100**	**100**

Almost half of the students (48%) consider themselves similar to their peers in terms of participation while 36% perceive themselves less active than their classmates. The rest of the students (16%) consider themselves the most active students in the classroom.

Q7: Are you in favour of a teaching in which:

a. Students are more active

b. Teachers are more active

c. Both are active

Table 3.7.

Students' Preferences about the Degree of Activeness of Teachers and Students

Options	N	%
a.	17	17
b.	13	13
C	70	70
Total	**100**	**100**

70% of students preferred the situation in which they are active as well as their teachers in the classroom or in learning, in general; whereas 17% prefer to interact in a

classroom where the students are the dominants while 13% of students prefer to work under

teacher's control.

Q8: Do you think that the current teaching in our department gives you enough chances

to be active?

a. Strongly agree   b. Agree   c. Neutral   d. Strongly disagree   e. Disagree

Table 3.8.

Availability of Opportunities for Agentic Engagement in Current Teaching

Options	N	%
a.	3	3
b.	15	15
c.	39	39
d.	31	31
e.	12	12
Total	**100**	**100**

43% of master students disagree with the statement that current teaching encourages

them to be active; 18% of them see that they are given enough chances to be active by their

teachers while 39% of students are not sure about the matter, which may mean that some

teachers give them opportunities to be active while other do not do so.

Q9: Do you discuss your opinions and preferences about teaching with your teacher(s)?

a. Yes   b. No

Table 3.9.

Students' Engagement in Discussing their Preferences about Teaching

Options	N	%
a.	29	29
b.	71	71
Total	**100**	**100**

It is clear from the above table that the majority of students (71%) do not discuss their opinions and show their preferences about teaching. Whereas (29%) do so.

Q10: As part of learning each subject, do you?

a. Keep to the content given by the teacher

b. Further read about the topics presented in class and explore more?

Table 3.10.

Students' Engagement in Learning more about the Topics Presented in Class

Options	N	%
a.	40	40
b.	60	60
Total	100	100

The table shows that 60% of students do not rely only on the content given by the teacher and they read and look for knowledge outside the classroom, which means that that they are actively engaged in learning. However, 40% of students keep to the content they receive inside the classroom and do not engage themselves in further learning.

Q11: How often do you engage in the learning situation outside the classroom?

a. Always   b. Often   c. Sometimes   d. Rarely   e. Never

Table 3.11.

The Frequency of Learners' Engagement in learning Situations outside the Classroom

Options	N	%
a.	7	7
b.	22	22
c.	45	45
d.	23	23
e.	3	3
Total	100	100

The most noticeable result in students' answers is the tendency of almost half of them (45%) to engage sometimes in learning experiences outside the classroom. 27% of the

students claim that they regularly engage in learning situations while 26% rarely or never do

so.

Q12: Do you think that the current teaching is meaningful and useful in real life

situations?

a. Strongly   b. Agree   c. Neutral   d. Strongly disagree   e. Disagree

Table 3.12.

Students' Perceptions of the Meaningfulness of Current Teaching in Real Life Situations

Options	N	%
a.	5	5
b.	26	26
c.	32	32
d.	28	28
e.	9	9
Total	**100**	**100**

Most students cannot establish a link between what they study in the classroom and

its usefulness in real life situation since 37% disagree with the statement that current teaching

is useful in real life settings and 32% are undecided about the matter. Almost a third of the

students (31%), however, think that current teaching helps them in their daily life, meaning

that they transfer what they learn to practical situations.

Q13: How often do you assess yourself with regard to instructional materials?

a. Always   b. Often   c. Sometimes   d. Rarely   e. Never

Table 2.13.

Frequency of Students' Engagement in Self-Assessment

Options	N	%
a.	5	5
b.	21	21
c.	46	46
d.	22	22
e.	6	6
Total	**100**	**100**

46% of master students in the department of English state that they sometimes evaluate themselves to check their understanding and progress with regard to the instruction provided; 26% assert that they assess themselves regularly; whereas 28% rarely or never engage themselves in self-evaluation.

Q14: How often do you ask your peers to assess your progress with regard to instructional materials?

a. Always   b. Often   c. Sometimes   d. Rarely   e. Never

Table 2.14.

Frequency of Students' Engagement in Peer-Assessment

Options	N	%
a.	1	1
b.	16	16
c.	28	28
d.	25	25
e.	30	30
Total	**100**	**100**

In response to the question of whether students seek assessment of their progress with regard to instructional materials from their peers, more than half the students (55%) state that they rarely or never do so. The table also shows that 17% of students usually engage in peer assessment while 28% of them report that they sometimes do that.

Section Three: Agentic Engagement in Classroom Interaction

Q15: How often do you participate in the classroom?

a. Very often   b. Sometimes   c. Occasionally   d. Never

Table 3.15.

The Frequency of Students' Engagement in Participating in Classroom Interaction

Options	N	%
a.	19	19
b.	40	40
c.	38	38
d.	3	3
Total	**100**	**100**

19% of the students questioned consider themselves as very much engaged in interaction in classroom. The bigger parts of students mention that either participate sometimes (40%) or occasionally (38%) participate in classroom interaction.

Q16: How do you usually participate?

a. When the teacher asks you to do so

b. You take initiative when you see it suitable to do so

* Explain …

Table 3.16.

Preferences of Participation between Initiation and Teacher Selection

Options	N	%
a.	33	33
b.	67	67
Total	**100**	**100**

The majority of students (67%) take initiative to participate in classroom interaction when they see it suitable to do so. The suitable moments for taking those initiatives are listed by 50 students as follows:

- 14 students said that they participate when they feel that that they have the right answer.

- 12 students mentioned that they participate to correct a wrong idea

- 9 students said that they participate when they have information about the topic discussed

- 6 students said that it depends on the teacher's personality

- 5 students claimed that their participation depends on the situation

- 4 students said that they participate only if they find that no one has the idea

This suggests that students are not very active in taking initiatives because they initiate only when they think that they have the right answers and enough knowledge about the topic of discussion.

The remaining students (33%) participate after the teacher selects them specifically or gives them the floor. 28 students explained their behaviour saying:

- 12 students only respond when they have the answer to the questions.

- 9 students said that they answer when the teacher obliges them to participate.

- 7 students said that they wait for their turn.

Concerning students who participate after being selected by the teacher, it is clear that those students do not initiate in their lectures until the teacher selects them.

Q17: Do you generally prefer to interact with?

a. Teacher   b. Classmates   C. Both   d. None of them

Table 3.17.

Preferences of Teacher-Student Interaction and/ or Student-Student Interaction

Options	N	%
a.	12	12
b.	21	21
c.	59	59
d.	8	8
Total	**100**	**100**

It is clear from the results in the table above that the bigger part of students (59%) prefer to interact with both teacher and their classmates; 21% of the students prefer to interact with their mates while 12% interact with their teacher only. The rest, 8%, are not interested in interaction at all.

Q18: In which type of interaction activities do you engage more or feel more engaged?

a. Individual   b. Pair work   c. Group work   d. No difference

Table 3.18.

Types of Interaction Activities Preferred by Students

Options	N	%
a.	22	22
b.	32	32
c.	27	27
d.	19	19
Total	**100**	**100**

The table describes the types of activities that students engage more in. Pair work is the most favourable classroom activity with 32% of students' choices. Next, 27% of students like to work in groups, and 22% prefer to work individually. 19% state that they participate in all types of classroom interaction, be it pair work, groupwork or individual work.

Q19: Do you accept it when your classmates correct you?

a. Yes   b. No

*Explain….

Table 2.19.

Degree of Students' Acceptance of their Classmates' Corrective Feedback

Options	N	%
a.	90	90
b.	10	10
Total	**100**	**100**

The table above includes results to the question that checks the students' acceptance of receiving corrective feedback from their classmates. It shows that 90% of students react positively to their peers' corrective feedback by accepting it while only 10% of students do not accept to be corrected by their mates.

The second part of this question aims at highlighting the reasons why students accept or do not accept correction by their classmates. Most answers were similar, and they are summarized as follows:

- 35 students said that they are still learners bound to make mistakes with or without attention; so it is a chance for them to learn and correct each other

- 4 students said that they really appreciate the idea of peer learning especially the act of being corrected because they remember things corrected by classmates more than those corrected by teachers.

- 3 students said that they do not accept others' advice because the only one who has the right to correct them is the teacher.

Q20: Do you find it normal when the teacher corrects you while or after you participate?

a. Yes   b. No

* Explain…

Table 2.20.

Students' Acceptance of Teachers' Feedback during and after Participation

Options	N	%
a.	95	95
b.	5	5
Total	**100**	**100**

As it is claimed above, 95% of students find it normal and accept when their teachers correct them while or after they participate. Only 5% of them do not accept when their teachers do so.

The second part of the question seeks to gathering the reasons behind students' choices. 75 students justified their choices, the answers are summarized below:

- 10 students said that teachers are the guide and are more knowledgeable. They regard feedback as a valuable feedback whether it is negative or positive because it will boost their knowledge even further.

- 8 students claimed that teacher's feedback is beneficial to avoid making the same mistakes again.

- 12 students see that mistakes should be corrected, because they are a part of learning process

- 6 students said that it is better to correct the mistakes after finishing in order not to be confused because it is part of the teacher's job to give corrective feedback

- 5 students said that they don't find it normal. It makes them uncomfortable and they might not be encouraged to participate in that session anymore.

Q21: Which of the following makes you less engaged in interaction?
a. Receiving positive comments from the teacher
b. Receiving positive comments from the classmates
c. Getting negative comments from the teacher
d. Getting negative comments from the classmates
Table 2.21.

Students' Opinions about Comments that Make them less Engaged in Interaction.

Option	N	%
a.	17	17
b.	8	8
c.	67	67
d.	31	31
Total	100	100

Surprisingly, the majority of students (67%) state that they engage less in classroom interaction when of teacher supplies negative feedback on their answers. This contradicts students' answers to question 20 in which, the majority of students assured that they find it normal and accept when the teacher corrects them. Moreover, 31% of the students are uncomfortable with negative comments from their classmates. This also contradicts to question 19 in which almost all the students claimed that they accept and react positively to their peers' corrective feedback. On the other hand, what makes 25% of students less engaged is receiving positive feedback or comments from teachers and classmates.

Q22: How often do you respond to questions by your classmates or your teacher to clarify what you said?

a. Always   b. Often   c. Sometimes   d. Rarely   e. Never

Table 2.22.

Frequency of Responding to Teacher and Classmates' Questions

Options	N	%
a.	19	19
b.	21	21
c.	12	12
d.	48	48
e.	0	/
Total	**100**	**100**

48% of students rarely respond to the teacher's and students' questions while 40% claim that they usually engage in responding to teachers and classmate's questions and 12% sometimes do so.

Q23: Do you usually ask your teacher or classmates to repeat or to explain when you do not understand?

a. Always   b. Often   c. Sometimes   d. Rarely   e. Never

Table 2.23.

Frequency of Asking for Repetition and Explanation

Options	N	%
a.	20	20
b.	21	21
c.	39	39
d.	11	11
e.	9	9
Total	**100**	**100**

The findings presented indicates that 41% of students regularly ask their teachers or their classmates to repeat or explain when they do not understand. 39% of students ask sometimes for repetition and more explanation from both teachers and students while 20% of them rarely or never do that.

Section four: Further suggestions

Students' comments regarding the ways in which they consider themselves active

- I would like to have a more comfortable environment where my classmates and teachers both listen to all opinions and not only to the few ones whom they are used to hear.

- Individual learning is not always the key to improve oneself. It is important to cooperate and participate with other classmates since they may have different ideas that help you to understand better.

- We're taught to memorize everything. Little attention is given to other aspects of the language.

- I think that shyness is a striking reason which makes students less engaged in the classroom. Sometimes some students have information, but they feel shy to interact either with their teacher or classmates. So, the teacher may play a great role in

engaging students by first trying to rid them from their shyness because it is the

barrier that hinder students from being active in the classroom.

- Teachers should add some rewards to students who participate to encourage to

    engage them more in the lesson

- Classroom interaction is the best educational setting where EFL students feel active

    to interact with their classmates as well as their teachers.

- In my opinion, I consider myself active in learning and classroom interaction when

    I find the suitable and motivating teacher.

3.3.3. Interpretation and Discussion of the Student Questionnaire.

The analysis of students' questionnaire provided answers to the previously stated

research questions and proved that most students in Master degree are somehow aware of the

concept of agentic engagement and its importance.

1. The extent of students' engagement in learning

Concerning the first question which highlights the process of learning, most students

claimed that they do not engage neither in the preparation nor in the suggestion of lectures

and they are not interested in adding information to enrich their lectures. In addition to this,

almost half of the students, contribute sometimes in the explanation by adding new

information. Similarly, less than half of the students engage regularly or sometimes in

learning experiences outside the classroom and only some of them are regularly engaged in

self-assessment or peer assessment with regard to the instruction received. However, more

than half of the students claimed that they usually learn more about the topic presented in

class.

2. The extent of students' engagement in classroom interaction

This question highlights the frequency of students' engagement in classroom interaction. The results obtained show that most students engage in the process of interaction in the classroom with both their teachers and peers when they see it suitable to do so. However, their initiation is linked to having the right answer or when they feel confident and motivated in learning about the subject. Most students also accept their teachers' and peers' feedback during interaction. Most students prefer to be in a classroom where they are as active as their teachers, but few of them engage equally in all types of activities and consider themselves as the most active students in the classroom, which represents the agentically engaged category in Master classes. Students, however, have not been consistent in their responses because less than half of them responded to teachers' and classmates' questions or asked them for clarifications.

3. The current instruction encouragement of students' agentic engagement

Concerning the third research question which is related to the usefulness of the current teaching in making learners active or not, most students are either undecided about the matter or think that current teaching does not encourage them to be agentic and active. One of the reasons behind their answers can be attributed to the fact that most students do not discuss their opinions and preferences about teaching with their teachers. Another reason may be that they fil to transfer or apply what they learn in classrooms to their daily-life situations.

4. The relationship between students' agentic engagement in learning and their agentic engagement in classroom interaction

Most students have shown that they are not very engaged in learning since they are not interested in preparing, suggesting, and adding information to enrich their lectures. However, most of them engaged in the process of interaction in the classroom. However, their initiation is linked to having the right answer, feeling confident and feeling motivated in learning about

the subject. When students receive questions from both teachers and students, less than half of them responded to those questions, which supports their attitude of answering only when they possess the right or correct answer. This also confirms that students are not also very engaged in meaningful interaction that aims to solve problematic situations and develop their thinking abilities. In short, students' lack of engagement in learning situations seems to be related to the quality rather than the frequency of taking part in classroom interaction.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented an analysis of the results gathered by the questionnaire used in the current study. The students' questionnaire which explored the attitudes of students towards agentic engagement and classroom interaction was described and analysed. The results obtained showed that students are not really engaged in their learning because they neither prepare nor suggest lectures and they occasionally respond to their teachers' and peers' questions. However, they usually engage in their classroom interaction and in the subject in which they feel more motivated and active.

General Conclusion

1. Putting it all together

2. Limitations of the Study

3. Pedagogical Recommendations

General Conclusion

Putting it all together

The present study aimed at exploring attitudes of students toward agentic engagement in learning and classroom interaction. Agentic engagement in language learning and teaching was defined as students' proactive involvement in the learning process, and being as centred as the teacher.

Classroom interaction in EFL classes is the process of action and reaction among teachers and students or students themselves. It is characterized by the use of such interactive features as collaborative dialogue, negotiation of meaning and co- construction which help students in developing their communicative skills, and surf the acquired knowledge in real life settings. Moreover, the use of different interactive techniques like teacher's questions, feedback, turn taking and teacher talk helps learners to develop their target language in addition to receive comprehensible and simplified knowledge.

Agentic engagement is considered as an important concept which helps students to be centred in the classroom. The term emerged in order to include students' constructive contribution in the learning process. Agentic learners are essentially autonomous and self-centred, they can control their learning and they generally look for knowledge out of curiosity.

Results from the empirical study conducted with master students at the department of English showed that most of them are not very engaged in learning, especially in preparing lectures and attempting to establish the link between what they study in classrooms and real-life settings. However, students sometimes engage in classroom interaction, this engagement is linked to having the right answer, feeling confident, feeling motivated, and interested in the topics.

2. Limitations of the Study

The concept of agentic engagement is a new concept in the field of language learning and teaching, which means that more research is needed to identify its precise nature and effects. Moreover, exploring students' attitudes through an online questionnaire might represent reality and actual practices, but it is likely to lead students to choose ideal attitudes or to exaggerate in expressing themselves. This was apparent in students' contradictory answers to some questions. The use of classroom observation would have allowed to elicit more reliable behaviours.

One limitation that might have affected the interpretation of results is related to the way a question was formulated. Question 21 was biased because it imposes on students to choose a behaviour that makes them less engaged in interaction. Stated this way, the question overlooks the fact that some students may accept to receive negative and positive comments from their teachers and classmates. Thus, one more option (e.g. none of the above) should have been added to allow students to state that their interaction level is not negatively affected by their teacher's and peers' comments.

3. Pedagogical Recommendations

Based on the reported findings, a number of pedagogical recommendations are suggested:

a) We initially propose to provide students with more chances to be centred in their courses through involving students in the process of explaining parts of the lectures.

b) We highly recommend that the teachers allow students to be agentically engaged in the process of learning by creating a motivating and enthusiastic environment in the classroom.

c) The students should accept receiving comments from all participants and use them as a motive to engage more in learning and interaction.

d) we recommend that teachers and students should establish links between current teaching and real-life settings.

e) Students must take responsibility of their own learning and also take initiative in their courses.

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Appendix

Questionnaire for Students

Dear student,

Your willingness to fill in this questionnaire will furnish us with the necessary data to bring our master's dissertation to an end. This questionnaire aims at exploring students' attitudes towards agentic engagement in classroom interaction.

May we thank you in advance for your cooperation and for the time devoted to answer the questionnaire. Please, read first the key definitions then tick the appropriate answer and write full statements where necessary.

Key Definitions

Student agentic engagement stands for students' active participation in a learning environment (such as the classroom)

Being an agent means taking actions, being an initiator, and centered in the learning process.

Section One: Demographic information

1. **What is your level?**

   a. Licence first year

   b. Licence second year

   c. Licence third year

d. Master one

e. Master two

Section Two: Agentic Engagement in Learning English

2. How often do you engage in preparing lectures before the teacher delivers them?

   a. Always ( ) b. Often ( ) c. Sometimes ( ) d. Rarely ( )e. Never ( )

3. How often do you contribute to the process of explanation of lectures by adding new information?

   a. Always ( ) b. Often ( ) c. Sometimes ( ) d. Rarely ( ) e. Never ( )

4. Do you generally give suggestions for the topics of the coming lectures and sessions?

   a. Always ( ) b. Often ( ) c. Sometimes ( ) d. Rarely ( ) e. Never ( )

5. Are there specific modules where you feel yourself more active and motivated?

   a. Yes ( )b. No( )

Explain…………………….

6. Do you consider yourself:

   a. more active than most students?

   b. less active than most students?

   c. as active as most students?

7. Are you in favour of a teaching in which:

   a. students are more active?

   b. teachers are more active?

   c. students and teachers are more active?

8. Do you think that the current teaching in our department gives you enough chances to be active?

    a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neutral   d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree

9. Do you discuss your opinion and preferences about teaching with your teacher(s)?

    a. Yes ( )   b. No ( )

10. As part of learning each subject, do you:

    a. Keep to the content given by the teacher?

    b. Further read about the topics presented in class and explore more?

11. How often do you engage in learning situations (with your peers, online, etc.) outside the classroom?

    a. Always ( ) b. Often ( ) c. Sometimes ( ) d. Rarely ( ) e. Never ( )

12. Do you think that current teaching is meaningful and useful in real life situations?

    Strongly agree b. Agree c. Neutral   d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree

13. How often do you assess yourself (evaluating yourself) with regard to instructional materials?

    a. Always ( ) b. Often ( ) c. Sometimes ( ) d. Rarely ( ) e. Never ( )

14. How often do you ask your peers to assess your progress with regard to instructional materials?

    a. Always ( ) b. Often ( ) c. Sometimes ( ) d. Rarely ( ) e. Never ( )

Section Three: Agentic Engagement in Classroom Interaction

15. How often do you participate in the classroom?

    a. Very often

    b. Sometimes

    c. Occasionally

    d. Never

16. How do you usually participate?

    a. When the teacher asks you to do so.

    b. You take initiative when you see it suitable to do so

    c. Other, please specify:

17. Do you generally prefer to interact with?

    a. Teacher

    b. Classmates

    c. Both teachers and students

    d. None of the above

18. In which type of interaction activities do you participate more or feel more engaged?

    a. Individual tasks

    b. Pair work

    c. Group work

    d. No difference

19. Do you accept it when your classmates correct you?

    a. yes (   )   b. No (   )

Why or why not? ……..

20. Do you find it normal when the teacher corrects you while or after you participate?

    a. yes (   )   b. No (   )

Why or why not?…..

21. Which of the following makes you less engaged in interaction?

    a. Receiving positive comments from the teacher

    b. Receiving positive comments from the classmates

    c. Getting negative comments from the teacher

      d.   Getting negative comments from mates

22. How often do you respond to questions by your classmates or your teacher to clarify what you said?

a. Always ( ) b. Often ( ) c. Sometimes ( ) d. Rarely ( )   e. Never ( )

23. Do you usually ask your teacher or classmates to repeat or to explain when you do not understand?

a. Always ( ) b. Often ( ) c. Sometimes ( ) d. Rarely ( )   e. Never ( )

Section Four: Further Suggestions

Please, feel free to add any comments regarding the ways in which you consider yourself active in learning and/or classroom interaction

Résumé

L'étude en cours explore les attitudes des étudiants à l'égard de l'engagement agentique dans l'apprentissage et l'interaction. L'engagement agentique fait référence à l'implication proactive des étudiants dans une activité d'apprentissage et au fait d'être aussi centrés que leurs enseignants. On a émis l'hypothèse que si les étudiants sont conscients de l'importance de l'engagement agentique, ils agiront de manière proactive et commenceront l'apprentissage et l'interaction en classe. Pour tester cette hypothèse, un questionnaire a été administré à 100 étudiants en master 1 et master 2 au département d'anglais de l'université Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia. Les résultats obtenus ont montré que la plupart des étudiants de niveau master ont montré qu'ils ne sont pas très engagés dans l'apprentissage car ils ne sont pas intéressés à préparer, suggérer et ajouter des informations pour enrichir leurs cours. En revanche, la plupart d'entre eux sont engagés dans le processus d'interaction en classe. Cependant, leur initiative est liée au fait d'avoir la bonne réponse, de se sentir confiant et de se sentir motivé pour apprendre le sujet.

Mots-clés : agence, engagement agentique, interaction en classe

ملخص

تستكشف الدراسة الحالية مواقف الطلاب تجاه المشاركة الفعالة في التعلم والتفاعل. تشير المشاركة الفعالة إلى المشاركة الاستباقية للطلاب في نشاط تعليمي وكونهم متمركزين مثل أساتذتهم . تم الافتراض أنه إذا كان الطلاب على دراية بأهمية المشاركة الفعالة ، فسوف يتصرفون بشكل استباقي ويأخذون المبادرة في التعلم والتفاعل في الفصل الدراسي. ولاختبار هذه الفرضيات ، تم إرسال استبيان إلى 100 طالب في السنة الأولى و الثانية ماستر في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة محمد الصديق بن يحيى. أظهرت النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها أن معظم الطلاب في مستوى الماستر قد أظهروا أنهم غير مشاركين بشكل كبير في التعلم لأنهم غير مهتمين بالتحضير والاقتراح وإضافة المعلومات لإثراء محاضراتهم. في المقابل، يشارك معظمهم في عملية التفاعل في الفصل. ومع ذلك ، فإن مبادرتهم مرتبطة بالحصول على الإجابة الصحيحة ، والشعور بالثقة ، والشعور بالحماس في التعرف على الموضوع

الكلمات المفتاحية: ، تفاعل، مشاركة فاعلة ، والتفاعل في الفصل الدراسي.