“From Carl Rogers to present: An appraisal of L2 teachers’ empathy in CLT classes”

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“When the teacher has the ability to understand the student’s reactions from the inside [...] the likelihood of significant learning is increased [...] This attitude of standing in the other’s shoes, of viewing the world through the student’s eyes, is almost unheard of in the classroom.”

(Rogers 1969: 111-112)
Domains of current research

• Applied linguistics
  – Understanding foreign language (L2) teaching/learning conditions in order to improve L2 teaching/learning processes
  – Roles played by teacher (T) and learners (Ss) in the L2 class (Berard 1991; Cicurel 1998, 2002)

• Cognitive science
  – T’s pedagogical principles and classroom practices (Breen 2001)

• Psycho-social sciences
L2 learning in CLT classes: Principles and conditions

• **L2** learned by communicating in **L2**
  – Comprehensible input & genuine communication

• Atmosphere in **L2** class promotes communication

• **T**’s roles in **L2** class
  – Which **T**’s attributes are favoured?
  – **Ss**’ perception of **T**
Empathy in CLT classes: An assumption

• Promoting a positive atmosphere in L2 classes
  → An indication of T’s empathetic attitude?

• L2 T and Rogers’ “client-centered approach” (Rogers 1961)
  – “Congruence”
Positive atmosphere in CLT classes

• To create atmosphere, during L2 interaction
  – T gives Ss time to complete their productions in L2
  – T takes time to listen to Ss and has Ss listen to one another
  – T gives (uncritical) feedback to Ss
  – T makes decisions about when and how to correct Ss
  – T praises Ss
  – T acknowledges Ss’ L2 attempts
The EFL Scottish corpus
University of Glasgow Language Centre

• Recordings from 13\textsuperscript{th} to 18\textsuperscript{th} of April, 2007
• 3 EFL teachers: C, J and R
• Academic and general English classes
• 9 hours of interaction in class
• 2 hours 15 minutes of interviews with C, J and R
• 1 group interview 1 hour focus group session with 6 Ss
Analysing class interaction

Focusing on specific class sequences
Teacher C: Stress

1. C: so TODAY (carrying on with the theme) XXX with something that's a little bit less: a little bit less CHEER:FUL (1.1) we're talking about when STRESS affects our life and our WORK
2. (0.5) XXX
3. AF: {yes} (3.0) it's cause [many disease] (/dɪˈzaɪz/) (0.9)
4. C: [YEAH] (0.9) WHAT
5. (0.2)
6. AF: it's cause many diseases (/dɪˈzaɪz/) (0.5) like hypertension
7. (0.2)
8. C: hmm [· · · · ·]
9. AF: [and headache]
10. (0.2)
11. C: YES (2.7) and: how do you know THIS
12. (1.4)
13. AF: eh: I: know
14. (0.1)
15. C: a-ha [· · · · ·]
16. AF: [I read] (/rɛd/)
17. (0.8)
18. C: a-ha (0.1) have you have you have you yourself {some of these things:} you've mentioned
19. (0.1)
20. AF: when I {go enter in a kind of exam} my {rate's fast} (2.9) it's cause XXX (laughs)
21. C: a-ha (0.1) ok:
22. (0.4) do you do you do you do the same thing you you still you always have stress before the exam
23. (0.8)
24. AF: YES and then XXX (noise)
25. (0.2)
26. C: a-ha
Teacher C: Promotion and stress

1. C: (what about the word HIGH RESPONSIBILITY)
2. (0.7)
3. C: could you (match) that in-a-PHRASE
4. (1.0) remember we're talking about
5. PROMOTION then: XXX PROMOTION
6. (AM): [promotion]
7. (0.7)
8. C: XXX expect XXX to be in a phrase
9. (4.6) the PROMOTION: (brings aBOUT:)
10. (1.4)
11. AM: pressure
12. (0.6)
13. C: WELL FIRST we need XXX someone who
14. XXX (3.3) the PROMOTION: (0.1)
15. BRINGS: YOU: (1.5) [a new:]
16. (0.2)
17. AF1: XXX
18. (0.3)
19. C: A-HA (0.1) probably (0.1) GREATER
20. (0.7) greater responsibility (0.5) or
21. perhaps DIFFERENT responsibility
22. (0.1)
23. AM: MORE responsibility
24. (0.2)
25. C: YES more responsibility and then you
26. you use XXX the word status (0.2)
27. could you put THAT in a sentence
28. (1.0)
29. AM: eh: [· · · · ·]
30. C: [what happens] when you get a
31. promotion
32. (AM): [promotion]
33. (0.7)
34. C: (0.7)
35. (AM): [promotion]
36. (0.7)
37. C: (AM): [promotion]
38. (0.6)
39. AM: hmm:
40. (0.7)
41. AM: XXX the people (0.5) get higher (0.2)
42. status
43. (0.2)
44. C: a-ha hm-mm XXX of status F (S's first
45. name)
46. (1.4)
47. AF2: changes: his: status (0.1) I think
48. (0.5)
49. C: YES a-ha hm-mm (0.1) XXX CHANGE of
50. status (0.5) what about the word
51. (1.0) EXPECTATIONS (1.8) could you put
52. (1.0) that in a sentence
53. (1.3)
54. AM: is is YOUR expectation of from the
55. other {people}
56. (0.6)
57. C: (breathes, 0.5) maybe maybe from your
58. BOSS: if {it's your boss who has
59. promotes you}
60. (4.8)
61. AF3: promotion bring higher expc:TAtion
62. (from the boss
63. (0.2)
64. C: YES a-ha (0.1) yes and maybe even
65. (1.0) from: from YOURSELF you you:
66. (0.1) you expect YOURSELF to do: to do:
67. to do better
68. (0.1)
69. hmm ok:
Teacher R: “Sleepwalking”

1. AF2: I think they they can speak
2. R: I (S's first name)
3. AF2: sleep when they walk
4. R: REALLY
5. AF2: yeah I know {someone} (0.3)
6. R: that you [know in your home country]
7. AS: [(laughs)]
8. R: in S (S's country) (0.1)
9. AF2: [she's] MY cousin
10. R: your [cousin what does she do what does she do]
11. AS: [(laughs)]
12. AF2: [she] she walk and I have to look for her
13. R: (laughs, 1.2)
14. AF2: XXX [and I have to look for her] XXX
15. R: SHE WALKS OUT (0.5)
16. and where does she where does she GO (0.2)
17. AF2: I don't know (1.2)
18. R: probably [go [straight] XXX⋅⋅⋅⋅⋅⋅]
19. AF2: [and she speak]
20. R: ⋅⋅⋅⋅XXX
21. AF2: and she [says things (laughs)]
22. AF3: [(laughs)]
23. R: what
24. AF2: while she walk
25. R: what type of things does she say (0.7)
26. AF2: XXX anyone and start talking like that XXX
27. R: (low-pitched hollow voice) ohhh: (0.4)
28. R: (laughs, 1.2)
29. AF2: and [XXX⋅⋅⋅⋅⋅⋅]
30. R: [XXX]
31. AS: [⋅⋅⋅⋅(laughs)] (0.3)
32. AF2: and I think other people scared (0.2)
33. R: yeah OF COURSE
34. AS: [(laughs)⋅⋅⋅⋅⋅⋅]
35. AF2: [⋅⋅⋅⋅for me I'm scared] I just take her and (0.2)
36. AS: [(laughs)⋅⋅⋅⋅⋅⋅]
37. R: XXX
38. AF2: (laughing) yeah
39. R: (I know) (0.4) XXX
40. AM1: it's a dangerous situation becau[se:]
41. R: [yeah:]
42. AM1: they'll eh: go out and eh for maybe for CARS [or streets or]
43. R: [yeah of course] (0.8)
44. WHEN I was younger I used to SPEAK in my
45. SLEEP (0.4)
46. I used to TALK (0.1) in my sleep (0.5)
47. it was QUITE eh: (1.6)
48. maybe quite dangerous too (0.5)
49. [(burst of laughter) XXX {it always is}]
50. [(burst of laughter)]
51. R: people would ask me questions and I would answer
52. (soft laughter, 1.4)
53. TM: (burst of laughter, 2.1)
54. R: ok
Data discussion: Empathy in L2 classes

- **T’s cognitive empathy: decoding skills** (class dynamics)
  - T facilitates and conducts interaction
  - T focuses on L2 content and on actions/processes

- **T’s affective empathy: empathetic expression** (class interaction)
  - T and Ss equal participants in L2 interaction
  - T focuses on contact with/among participants
### Data discussion: T’s own practice analysis

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teacher C</th>
<th>Teacher R</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rapport with Ss</strong></td>
<td>• T as a friend, an approachable person</td>
<td>• Limited self-disclosure: only what is desirable for T and SS</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• T can contribute to conversation with his/her own feelings</td>
<td>• Not necessary for T get caught up with what he feels from Ss</td>
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<td><strong>L2 interaction</strong></td>
<td>• Avoid artificial exchanges (<em>ternary exchanges</em>) that impede normal conversation</td>
<td>• No domination, just trying to create an atmosphere</td>
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Conclusions: Future research

• Cognitive and affective empathy in L2 class
  – Not mutually exclusive but complementary

• Empathy and pedagogical principles
  – T’s personal preference for on or the other?

• Empathy within Applied Linguistics scope
  – Consequences of T’s empathy on L2 learning/Ss?
Thank you!

Merci!

Choucrane !