



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

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3

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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
 - Identity as a dynamic construct conditioned by social circumstances (Goffman 1959, 1969; Lahire 1998, Snyder 1987)

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 13th to 18th 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
2 less: a little bit less CHEER:FUL (1.1) we're talking about when STRESS affects our
3 life and our WORK
4 (0.5) XXX
5 AF: {yes} (3.0) it's cause [many disease] (/dI'zalz/)
6 C: [YEAH] (0.9) WHAT
7 (0.2)
8 AF: it's cause many diseases (/dI'zalz/) (0.5) like hypertension
9 (0.2)
10 C: hmm [.....]
11 AF: [and headache]
12 (0.2)
13 C: YES (2.7) and: how do you know THIS
14 (1.4)
15 AF: eh: I: know
16 (0.1)
17 C: a-ha [.....]
18 AF: [I read] (/rId/)
19 (0.8)
21 C: a-ha (0.1) have you have you have you yourself {some of these things:}
22 you've mentioned
23 (0.1)
24 AF: when I {go enter in a kind of exam} my {rate's fast}
25 (2.9) it's cause XXX (laughs)
26 C: a-ha (0.1) ok:
27 (0.4) do you do you do you do the same thing you you still you always have
28 stress before the exam
29 (0.8)
30 AF: YES and then XXX (noise)
31 (0.2)
32 C: a-ha

Teacher C: Promotion and stress

1	C:	{what about the word HIGH RESPONSIBILITY}	34		(2.3)
2		(0.7)	35	AF2:	your status [change]
3	C:	could you {match} that in-a-PHRASE	36	AM:	{[self promotion]}
4		(1.0) remember we're talking about	37		(0.6)
5		PROMOTION then: XXX PROMOTION	38	AM:	hmm:
6	{AM}:	{promotion}	39		(0.7)
7		(0.7)	40	AM:	XXX the people (0.5) get higher (0.2)
8	C:	XXX expect XXX to be in a phrase	41		status
10		(4.6) the PROMOTION: {brings ABOUT:}	42		(0.2)
11		(1.4)	43	C:	a-ha hm-mm XXX of status F (S's first
12	AM:	pressure	44		name)
13		(0.6)	45		(1.4)
14	C:	WELL FIRST we need XXX someone who	46	AF2:	changes: his: status (0.1) I think
15		XXX (3.3) the PROMOTION: (0.1)	47		(0.5)
16		BRINGS: YOU: (1.5) {a new:}	48	C:	YES a-ha hm-mm (0.1) XXX CHANGE of
17		(0.2)	49		status (0.5) what about the word
18	AF1:	XXX	50		(1.0) EXPECTATIONS (1.8) could you put
19		(0.3)	51		(1.0) that in a sentence
20	C:	A-HA (0.1) probably (0.1) GREATER	52		(1.3)
21		(0.7) greater responsibility (0.5) or	53	AM:	is is YOUR expectation of from the
22		perhaps DIFFERENT responsibility	54		other {people}
23		(0.1)	55		(0.6)
24	AM:	MORE responsibility	56	C:	(breathes, 0.5) maybe maybe from your
25		(0.2)	57		BOSS: if {it's your boss who has
26	C:	YES more responsibility and then you	58		promoted you}
27		you use XXX the word status (0.2)	59		(4.8)
29		could you put THAT in a sentence	60	AF3:	promotion bring higher expec:Tation
30		(1.0)	61		{from} the boss
31	AM:	eh: [.....]	62		(0.2)
32	C:	[what happens] when you get a	63	C:	YES a-ha (0.1) yes and maybe even
33		promotion	64		(1.0) from: from YOURSELF you you:
			65		(0.1) you expect YOURSELF to do: to do:
			66		to do better
			67		(0.1)
			68		hmm ok:

Teacher R: "Sleepwalking"

1	AF2:	I think they they can speak	30		{deep psychological}
2	R:	I (S's first name)	31	AF2:	and [XXX.....]
3	AF2:	sleep when they walk	32	R:	[XXX]
4	R:	REALLY	33	AS:	[.....(laughs)] (0.3)
5	AF2:	yeah I know {someone} (0.3)	34	AF2:	and I think other people scared (0.2)
6	R:	that you [know in your home country]	35	R:	yeah OF COURSE
7	AS:	[(laughs)]	36	AS:	[(laughs).....]
8	R:	in S (S's country) (0.1)	37	AF2:	[.....for me I'm scared] I just take her
9		yeah (0.1) what do (0.2) what do they [DO]	38		and (0.2)
10	AF2:	[she's] MY cousin	39	AS:	[(laughs).....]
11	R:	your [cousin what does she do what does she do]	40	R:	XXX
12	AS:	[(laughs)]	41	AF2:	(laughing) yeah
13	AF2:	[she] she walk and I have to look for	42	R:	{I know} (0.4) XXX
14		her	43	AM1:	it's a dangerous situation becau[se:]
15	R:	(laughs, 1.2)	44	R:	[yeah:]
16	AF2:	XXX {and I have to look for her} XXX	45	AM1:	they:'ll eh: go out and eh for maybe for
17	R:	SHE WALKS OUT (0.5)	46		CARS [or streets or]
18		and where does she where does she GO (0.2)	47	R:	[yeah of course] (0.8)
19	AF2:	I don't know (1.2)	48		WHEN I was younger I used to SPEAK in my
20	R:	probably {go [straight] XXX.....}	49		SLEEP (0.4)
21	AF2:	[and she speak]	50		I used to TALK (0.1) in my sleep (0.5)
22	R:	[.....XXX]	51		it was QUITE eh: (1.6)
23	AF2:	and she [says things (laughs)]	52		maybe quite dangerous too (0.5)
24	AF3:	[(laughs)]	53		[(burst of laughter) XXX {it always is}]
25	R:	what	54	AS:	[(burst of laughter)]
26	AF2:	while she walk	55	R:	people would ask me questions and I would
27	R:	what type of things does she say (0.7)	56		answer
28	AF2:	XXX anyone and start talking like that XXX	57		(soft laughter, 1.4)
29	R:	(low-pitched hollow voice) ohhhh: (0.4)	58	TM:	(burst of laughter, 2.1)
			59	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

	Teacher C	Teacher R
Rapport with Ss	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• T as a friend, an approachable person• T can contribute to conversation with his/her own feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited self-disclosure: only what is desirable for T and SS• Not necessary for T get caught up with what he feels from Ss
L2 interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid artificial exchanges (<i>ternary exchanges</i>) that impede normal conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No domination, just trying to create an atmosphere

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 !