

The Importance of Outside Classroom Activities in Developing Oral Fluency in an EFL Context

Authors : Maaly Jarrah

Abstract : In a study abroad context, students have the advantage of immersing themselves in the environment of the target language and being exposed to it. However, in and a stay home context, where English is not the mother tongue, students' exposure to the second language is often times restricted to the classroom. Although language teachers are keen to develop inside class room activities and practices that increase the suitability of students to acquire a second language (Cook & Singleton, 2014), many would agree that class time is too limited to enhance students' oral fluency skills. Consequently, creating opportunities outside the classroom for students to speak English is an effective strategy in compensating for students' limited use of the L2. In an argument by Ortega (2012) external classroom activities have equal significance in enabling students learn English as a second language. The author further asserts that the activities provide a non-educational environment from which a student may feel free and comfortable to acquire new language skills. This study investigates the significance of outside classroom activities in promoting students' oral proficiency. In addition, it reports on students' perceptions of such activities. 15 participants from the American University of Kuwait took part in this study. Open-ended interviews were done to find out what the participants thought of these activities, and what they gained from them. Interview results show that students found outside classroom activities very effective in improving not only their oral fluency skills, but their confidence and critical thinking skills as well. The implications of this research study are for language practitioners and language programs in the EFL context to be aware of the benefits of incorporating outside classroom activities in language teaching.

Keywords : language teaching, oral fluency, outside classroom activities

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