



Engaging (in) communication – The roles of engagement and communicativeness in interactive classroom tasks in Spanish as a foreign language

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Speaking a foreign language in a classroom peer activity is perhaps the most typical illustration of the communicative orientated paradigm. Nevertheless, according to Aronsson (2023), many students perceive that Spanish classrooms in lower secondary school are neither communicative nor offer numerous possibilities for spoken language. The degree of communicativeness can be interpreted through the lens of a continuum from focus on forms to focus on meaning, established by Littlewood (2004, 2018). Communicative language teaching is therefore closely related to TBLT, an approach that intrinsically requires student engagement (Svalberg, 2021). The construct engagement is highly contextual and therefore its various aspects are suitable for classroom studies. Among the different dimensions, *task engagement* (Phung, Nakamura, & Reinders, 2021), implies a focus on the outcome and perceptions of a specific task.

The two dimensions, communicativeness and engagement, have been combined in a framework for task design (Littlewood, 2004), which is applied in the present study. The aim is thus to investigate how the relation between task engagement and communicativeness is enacted in some specific spoken peer activities in Spanish as a second foreign language.

Through classroom observations and subsequent reflective interviews with students in Swedish lower secondary school, engagement will be examined through transcribed spoken activities and the students' perceptions of them. The expected outcomes are that engagement is expressed in emotional as well as cognitive terms, e.g. fun and educating, and that activities orientated towards both a focus on form and focus on meaning are considered to be engaging by the students. In other words: spoken activities may be engaging or communicative, although the aim for language teachers is to create activities that score high on both axes.

Keywords: Spoken classroom interaction, Second foreign languages, Task engagement

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