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Adab Al-Rafidayn Journal

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Editor-in-chief

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Investigating the Reasons behind EFL University Student's Silence in Translation Classes: A Field Study

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Abstract

Silence has become a crucial topic of research, especially at the university level, where it occurs frequently among EFL students. The aim of this study is to recognize the reasons behind students' silence in translation classes at university level and to pinpoint the differences in this respect in terms of students' gender and study stage. Three main research questions were posed: (1) What are the reasons behind students' silence in Translation classes? (2) How does the teacher resolve students' silence in such classes? and (3) How does the lecturer motivate students to not be silent in Translation classes? It is hypothesized that (1) Students in translation classes keep silent due to varied personal, social and academic factors that encourage them to do so; (2) There are no differences between EFL university male and female students in terms of keeping silent in translation classes; and (3) There are no differences between 2nd stage and 4th stage EFL university students in terms of keeping silent in translation classes. The study's participants were students enrolled in the Dept. of Translation, College of Arts, University of Mosul during the second semester of the academic year 2018-2019. They were given a questionnaire that subsumed (20) items closely related to the preceding research questions. On the basis of the participants' responses, it was found out that a set of varied reasons are behind students' silence in translation classes. Added to that, the responses revealed that students vary in terms of silence according to their gender, while the study stage has no role in students' variation in this respect.

Keywords: Silence, Translation classes, Classroom interaction

Asst.Lect/ Dept. of Translation/ College of Arts / University of Mosul.

“Blessed is the man who, having nothing to say, abstains from giving us wordy evidence of the fact.”

George Eliot

A. The Theoretical Part

I. Introduction

The Cambridge English Dictionary defines silence as “a state of refusing to talk about something or answer questions, or a state of not communicating”. Quoting the Dictionary.reference.com., Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, refers to silence as “the state of having ceased to produce sounds; this latter sense can be extended to apply to the cessation or absence of any form of communication, whether through speech or other medium”.

Generally speaking, silence is viewed as the lack of word or noise since it denotes inaction or non-behavior. But it is not always like that. Silence is not an inability to communicate. It can be a very effective mode of communication as it can indicate that someone is pondering or considering a response to a question.

In the domain of education, and more precisely in almost all classes at all educational levels, just a few students participate, compared to the majority of the class who keep silent for some reasons which are, in the main, represented by the fears of speaking, shyness, committing mistakes, the class subject, and, for some students, the teacher. On this basis, the problem of the current research sets out from the fact that while in EFL classes in general, and Translation classes in particular, students are supposed to be engaged and participate in the ongoing activities, a noticeable number of them, if not the majority, keep silent and rarely participate. It is said that such a negative phenomenon is due to a set of personal, educational/academic and social factors; a point that the current research endeavours to shed light on.

The current research aims at identifying the factors that lead to EFL university students' silence in Translation classes, and the differences, if any, between the EFL university male and female students and between 2nd stage and 4th stage EFL university students, in terms of being silent in Translation classes. It further aims at providing a set of strategies that can assist teachers of translation at university level to overcome their students' silence and make them participate in the conducted activities so as to improve their English and develop their abilities in the different forms of translation.

It is hypothesized that at university level,

1. Students keep silent in translation classes due to varied factors that encourage them to do so.
2. There are no differences between EFL university male and female students in terms of keeping silent in Translation classes.
3. There are no differences between 2nd stage and 4th stage EFL university students in terms of keeping silent in Translation classes.

The study further poses the following research questions:

1. What are the reasons behind students' silence in Translation classes?
2. How does the teacher resolve students' silence in such classes?

The current research is limited to a sample of 2nd and 4th year students enrolled in the Dept. of Translation, College of Arts, University of Mosul during the second semester of the academic year 2018-2019.

Broadly speaking, it is believed that this study would add to the understanding of the concerned people in terms of the students' seemingly passive behaviour in translation classes as the study is expected to contribute to the already existing literature on silence by proving the presence of silence, providing insights into some reasons behind silence, and suggesting the pedagogical implications on how to minimize the impact of these reasons by adopting the effective and productive teaching strategies and techniques.

It is also expected that the findings of the current research will be of some benefit to the teachers of translation subjects in the first place. They will be enabled to pinpoint the real and main

reasons behind their students' silence and duly adopt the procedures and techniques that involve and engage students in the varied learning and translational tasks. Students, on their part, may benefit from the findings of this study as they will find in both the theoretical and practical parts the remedial procedural techniques that enhance their participation in the Translation classes and try to overcome the impact of these reasons so as to learn English in a better way and duly be better at doing any translation task after graduation.

II. Silence: Preliminaries

The absence of sound is what most people think of when they hear the word "silence." Silence is commonly thought of as the lack of or the polar opposite of expression in a communicative sense.

Silence, the act of being passive and not participating in a communication event, is prevalent to varied degrees in the varied everyday contexts. The domain of education is not an exception where silence is viewed as a negative phenomenon especially for the time being when learning is totally directed to be learners-centred and that "Learning is Doing", i.e. engaging and involving students as much as possible in the learning tasks.

Silence has long been used as a means of communication across cultures. The idioms around the world can be the best evidences for this. They are exemplified by "Silence is gold" which is believed, though not verified, to be originated in ancient Egypt, and also represents a popular American idiom to highlight circumstances in case saying nothing is preferable to or better than speaking. The same literal expression exists in Japanese under "chinmoku wa kane nari" (Armstrong, 2007: 1).

Educationally speaking, silence is believed to be derived from hesitation, a lack of courage, or even fear of approaching the study subjects and/or taking part in the teaching-learning activities. It requires teachers' knowledge and adoption of the efficient instructional techniques, methods and procedures to bring the passive students back to the class and make them participate in the ongoing learning tasks.

Contrariwise, Salija (2018) quoting Rowe (1974), asserts the positive aspect of silence by stating that that the increase in 'wait-

times' affects students' performance, enhances the quality of instruction in the classroom, increases the length of response, decreases the frequency of failure to respond, increases initiation by students and confidence reflected in student responses increased, and makes students who were regarded as slow and poor performers to contribute more and have better performance.

III. Silence: Definition

Silence is a phenomenon that occurs frequently in classroom interactions. Baurain (2011) views silence as the absence, withdrawal, or withholding, possibly as a consequence of disinterest, boredom, anger, or power. It is, according to Choi (2015), the lack of communication interaction with others, and is evident by students' inability to participate, express themselves, and interact with peers and the teacher.

IV. Silence in Education Settings

Silence forms an important part of non-verbal communication in educational settings. It is often interpreted as somewhat negative, regardless of its cause (Nakane, 2007).

A set of basic questions should be posed here so as to have better understanding of silence in education settings. For instance:

- What does silence mean in terms of teaching?
- Is silence positive or negative in the classroom setting?
- What are the primary causes of student silence at various educational levels?

Dealing with the meaning of classroom silence, Schultz cited in Baurain (2011) states that silence is a multilayered, often deliberate boundary between thoughts and speech or thoughts and words. Silence could signify unspoken ideas, truths, or realities that are or appear inexpressible. The problem that teachers encounter may be that silence is rather difficult to interpret in the classroom (Harumi, 2011), and hence they might erroneously conclude that silence equals disengagement, though quite the opposite may be true.

Silence may be more easily associated with loss of interest than its counterpart of active voice, but it is equally true that disengagement can also be manifested through talking that seems

like rambling (Kim, 2008). Put differently, “neither talk nor silence is a proxy for participation or disengagement” (Schultz, 2012: 80); as a survey conducted on students from other countries and cultures attending classrooms to explore the role of silence, decipher its meaning and usefulness as a teaching-learning strategy, provided evidence that silence could be used as another form of engaged learning and active participation in addition to verbal participation (Kim, 2016: 432).

In English as a foreign language (EFL) classes, the existence of verbal interaction between the teacher and the students or the student and the students plays a fundamental role in creating positive classroom environments conducive to the practice of varied activities including translation tasks. Yet, according to Harumi (2011), silence in the context of foreign language learning has formed a source of conflict between students and teachers, as well as among students themselves. It may also be a stumbling block to practice the target language and to carry out translation tasks. Yet, silence cannot always be classified as a negative characteristic and that it is a necessity when it is interpreted in terms of students need of time to think and prepare for a question raised by the teacher or some tasks assigned for group work (Salija, 2018).

V. The Reasons behind EFL Students' Silence

Reda (2012) acknowledges that those students not being able to speak in the class are highly affected by particular contexts of class, race, and culture. She believes that anxiety about student silence in any professional situation is also controlled by “difficult classroom situations and the unjust power relations between teachers and students. Silence in a classroom can signalize resistance, boredom, respect, discouragement, disinterest, thoughtfulness, or such interactional strategies as denial, agreement, request, warning, command, threat, confirmation (Silva, 2016). The focus of research on silence in the classroom has mostly been on the negative aspects of silence. Silence which appears in the classroom mostly created a negative perception and interpretation from the teacher. It has been known that most studies on silence in the classroom focus on teacher-students' interaction (Salija, 2018: 92).

Some students who keep silent in the class have psychological problems such as lack of confidence, lack of motivation, emotional problem, different personality and lack of understanding, confusion, annoyance, lack of understanding, or low esteem. They could not express their ideas orally because of being afraid of making mistakes. Then, the influence of their peers also causes them to keep silent. In this case, few students felt shy to their friends because of their speech (Salija, 2018: 92-93).

Kim (2016: 93-94) enlarges upon the reasons behind silence in academic settings and attributes it to students' lack of time to organize their thoughts, interruption by the classroom peers or the teacher as they take the floor before the nominated student starts speaking. This action can result in more silence and/or delay in response. Added to that, students' unfamiliarity with voluntary class participation may impede their initiation to interact unless given an explicit cue from the teacher to participate.

On his part, Morita (2004: 589) refers to more reasons behind silence, viz. "limited content knowledge, personal tendency and preference, learning goals, identity as a less competent member, outsider or marginal status, role as a relative newcomer, role as someone with limited English imposed by others, and instructor's pedagogical style".

Harumi (2011: 268) points out that a number of interrelated factors may explain how learner silence is rooted in linguistic, psychological, and sociocultural factors, including an individual's unique communicative style. She further indicates that there are many more individual and contextual factors, in addition to linguistic and cultural factors, that contribute to students' silence or nonparticipation in classes conducted in English. These include personality and learning style, prior educational experiences, and silencing factors from peers and teachers.

Finally, Min (2016: 452-454) concludes that inadequate language input and output represented by students weak assimilation of sufficient vocabulary or mastery of grammatical rules; students different personalities in terms of being extroverted vs. introverted, optimistic vs. pessimistic, and active vs. passive; lack of learning motivation as many students do not realize the

important role of motivation in learning; improper learning habits as many students are used to being passive listeners and taking notes silently; and face-saving as a noticeable number of students are afraid of losing face in case they commit mistakes, are all main reasons behind students' disaffection and silence.

VI. Teachers' Strategies to Overcome Silence in Translation Classes

Teachers play a pivotal role in managing classrooms and making students verbally participate in the learning activities and tasks. As such, every teacher is responsible to enhance students' academic ability and shape their character especially by extending and expanding their knowledge. In addition, a teacher should help students increase their self-confidence and set up their positive learning attitudes in the translation class. Based on this, the strategies that teachers use to overcome students' silence in translation classes are worth studying, investigating and probing. They should be implemented and geared to decrease students' silence and increase interaction in translation classes. As such, according to Salija (2018: 93), teachers can involve students into process of learning especially in the process of discussion, inviting students to ask several questions, giving a chance to students to translate without being afraid of making mistakes.

Swain (1985) asserts students' speaking in the class by pushing them to participate in the translation tasks, making students work hard to achieve their goals, having higher motivation so as to have more self-confidence, practicing speak and learning new vocabulary in order to become accustomed to speak.

Li and Jia (2006) suggested that the teacher can encourage the students to get involved in class translation by accounting for students' likes, needs and favour of interesting topics. By so doing, the teacher is expected to create a comfortable atmosphere that encourages engagement and participation.

Inspiring students not to keep silent, asking the students to enlarge their knowledge, to enrich their vocabularies as sometimes students could not speak because of the lack of knowledge, increasing their confidence to speak, doing practice and practice as

practice makes perfect, not worrying about mistakes as mistakes enable students to know what should be corrected (Salija, 2018).

Finally, Min (2016: 454-457) states that minimizing the negative impact caused by classroom silence, the teacher and students should collaboratively need to change their teaching and learning strategies and techniques. As such, assisting students to foster positive learning attitudes towards learning English and being proficient in translation; increasing language input and output and duly extensive reading and a lot of listening practice; learning in small groups through cooperative learning is a good choice for large-scale class teaching; helping students build up confidence by giving them more encouragement and praise; and changing teacher and students' roles by renewing their teaching and learning concepts, giving students more time and freedom for their participation in the class, shifting the roles of the teacher from the dominator and controller into the organizer, instructor, monitor, helper and evaluator and the roles of the students to participators, listeners, helpers in group learning and center of the classroom activities can all contribute to the attempts to resolve the problem of silence in educational settings.

B. The Practical Part

VII. The Procedure and Data Collection

The main aim of the current study was to investigate the reasons behind students' silence in translation classes at University level. As such, a two-fold procedure has been adopted to fulfill the set aims. In the first place, there had been a theoretical account of the main topic silence and its related subtopics. That was followed by the practical handling of the topic. This is enlarged upon in the following section that is devoted to the Research Tool, the Questionnaire.

VIII. The Population and Sample of the Research

The population of the research is represented by all the students enrolled in the Dept. of Translation/ College of Arts/ University of Mosul, during the academic year 2019-2020. The first

step was represented by drawing a first sample of 60 students from 2nd and 4th year students who were asked the question:

- Do you keep silent in Translation classes?

Table (1) shows the distribution of the first sample of the population on the basis of their “Yes” and “No” answers to the aforementioned question:

Table (1): The Distribution of the Population's Replies to the Posed Question

| Question | Yes | No |
|--|-----|----|
| Do you keep silent in Translation classes? | 50 | 10 |

On the basis of this, the 10 students of “No” answer were removed and the main sample, represented by 50 students, 25 students from 2nd stage and the like from 4th stage (32 males and 18 females), who stated that they were keeping silent in translation classes, was considered. See table (2):

Table (2): Distribution of the Members of the Randomly Selected Sample according to Gender and Study Stage

| Total no. of Students | Gender | | Study Stage | |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | Male | Female | 2 nd Year | 4 th Year |
| 50 | 32 | 18 | 25 | 25 |
| | 64 % | 36% | 50% | 50% |

IX. The Research Tool

- The Questionnaire

To bring about the aims of the research and test its hypotheses, a questionnaire of (20) items was first drafted. The items of the questionnaire, i.e. the reasons behind students' silence in translation classes, were based on their categorization into two main groups, namely educational reasons and personal reasons.

- Validity of the Questionnaire

Validity outlines that a research tool actually measures what it is supposed to measure so as to derive the appropriate conclusions” (Rasinger, 2008: 28). To ensure the face validity of the questionnaire, i.e. to approve the suitability of the items of the questionnaire as far as the topic under study is concerned, it was

presented to a panel of juries specialized in teaching English and Translation at university level. The jury members agreed on the items of the questionnaire by a percentage of almost (85%). Their notes, modifications and comments were closely accounted for so as to put the questionnaire in its first draft to be administered for the pilot study.

- The Pilot Study

Piloting a questionnaire means administering it to a limited number, almost 10%, of the students who said they were keeping silent in translation classes. A pilot study helps in pinpointing the defects, identifying the accuracy of the research topics followed, estimating the time required to give responses to the questionnaire and establishing its avidity and reliability. According to Fowler (2002), the questionnaire was first piloted on 7/1/2019 by administering it to a sample of 14 randomly chosen 2nd and 4th year students.

- Reliability of the Questionnaire

According to Rasinger (2008: 28), reliability of a research tool indicates its repeated and consistently measurement of whatever it is supposed to measure. To ensure that the questionnaire set for the current research was reliable, the test-re-test method was adopted as the questionnaire was administered on two occasions to the sample of students nominated for the pilot study. The correlation factor was calculated to be (0.82) which means that the questionnaire was quite reliable (See Appendix I).

X. Data Analysis and Discussion of Results

On analyzing the collected data, and in attempt to make the analysis more understandable to the reader, the researcher has first demonstrated the whole responses together in a table setting out of

The General Hypothesis: Students in Translation Classes keep silent due to varied factors that encourage them to do so.

The General Aim: Identifying the factors that lead to EFL university students' silence in Translation Classes.

Research Question no.1: What are the reasons behind students' silence in Translation classes?

Respondents' answers to the items of the designed questionnaire which wholly embody three sets of factors, referred to in the theoretical body of the current research, and are the main sources of the silence they experience in Translation classes are demonstrated in terms of their frequencies and percentages are demonstrated in the following table:

Table (3): The Frequencies and Percentages of the Respondents Answers to the Designed Questionnaire

| Item No. | Items | | Applies to me | | | | |
|----------|---|-------|---------------------|------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------|
| | | | Very Low Extent | Low Extent | Moderate Extent | High Extent | Very High Extent |
| 1 | I have no interest to participate. | Freq. | 15 | 4 | 11 | 7 | 13 |
| | | Perc. | 30.0 | 8.0 | 22.0 | 14.0 | 26.0 |
| 2 | I try to ignore intentionally what is going on. | Freq. | 2 | 7 | 9 | 18 | 14 |
| | | Perc. | 4.0 | 14.0 | 18.0 | 36.0 | 28.0 |
| 3 | I am afraid of being mocked at by my classmates. | Freq. | 11 | 6 | 10 | 13 | 10 |
| | | Perc. | 22.0 | 12.0 | 20.0 | 26.0 | 20.0 |
| 4 | The teacher gives me no chance to participate. | Freq. | 8 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 26 |
| | | Perc. | 16.0 | 8.0 | 10.0 | 14.0 | 52.0 |
| 5 | I lack confidence when speaking English. | Freq. | 5 | 13 | 19 | 7 | 6 |
| | | Perc. | 10.0 | 26.0 | 38.0 | 14.0 | 12.0 |
| 6 | The material is difficult for me to understand. | Freq. | 6 | 5 | 13 | 16 | 10 |
| | | Perc. | 12.0 | 10.0 | 26.0 | 32.0 | 20.0 |
| 7 | I have no knowledge of the topics to be translated. | Freq. | 5 | 3 | 19 | 14 | 9 |
| | | Perc. | 10.0 | 6.0 | 38.0 | 28.0 | 18.0 |
| 8 | I am afraid of giving wrong answers to the teacher. | Freq. | 13 | 17 | 12 | 3 | 5 |
| | | Perc. | 26.0 | 34.0 | 24.0 | 6.0 | 10.0 |
| 9 | The materials to be translated do not appeal to me. | Freq. | 3 | 4 | 21 | 18 | 4 |
| | | Perc. | 6.0 | 8.0 | 42.0 | 36.0 | 8.0 |
| 10 | I feel shy. | Freq. | 11 | 10 | 13 | 4 | 12 |

| Item No. | Items | | Applies to me | | | | |
|----------|--|-------|---------------------|------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------|
| | | | Very Low Extent | Low Extent | Moderate Extent | High Extent | Very High Extent |
| | | Perc. | 22.0 | 20.0 | 26.0 | 8.0 | 24.0 |
| 11 | the teacher translates most of the time. | Freq. | 1 | 6 | 18 | 14 | 11 |
| | | Perc. | 2.0 | 12.0 | 36.0 | 28.0 | 22.0 |
| 12 | I have bad pronunciation of English. | Freq. | 8 | 7 | 12 | 11 | 12 |
| | | Perc. | 16.0 | 14.0 | 24.0 | 22.0 | 24.0 |
| 13 | I am afraid of making grammatical errors. | Freq. | 11 | 13 | 12 | 10 | 4 |
| | | Perc. | 22.0 | 26.0 | 24.0 | 20.0 | 8.0 |
| 14 | I feel I do not have the required vocabulary. | Freq. | 1 | 9 | 21 | 15 | 4 |
| | | Perc. | 2.0 | 18.0 | 42.0 | 30.0 | 8.0 |
| 15 | The teacher does not motivate me to speak. | Freq. | 2 | 6 | 11 | 11 | 20 |
| | | Perc. | 4.0 | 12.0 | 22.0 | 22.0 | 40.0 |
| 16 | The teacher does not encourage me to participate | Freq. | 4 | 6 | 8 | 13 | 19 |
| | | Perc. | 8.0 | 12.0 | 16.0 | 26.0 | 38.0 |
| 17 | The teacher does not create a friendly, open and supporting environment. | Freq. | 2 | 5 | 8 | 16 | 19 |
| | | Perc. | 4.0 | 10.0 | 16.0 | 32.0 | 38.0 |
| 18 | The teacher does not give me any feedback on my mistakes in translation. | Freq. | 3 | 2 | 11 | 18 | 16 |
| | | Perc. | 6.0 | 4.0 | 22.0 | 36.0 | 32.0 |
| 19 | The teachers' uninspired and inactive role makes me feel bored. | Freq. | 5 | 4 | 18 | 11 | 12 |
| | | Perc. | 10.0 | 8.0 | 36.0 | 22.0 | 24.0 |
| 20 | I am worried to receive negative evaluations. | Freq. | 10 | 10 | 13 | 12 | 5 |
| | | Perc. | 20.0 | 20.0 | 26.0 | 24.0 | 10.0 |

Freq.= Frequency

Perc. = Percentage

N= 50

Such a statement of the responses does not mean a lot unless the questionnaire is partitioned in terms of the relevance of the items to the set aims and hypotheses. As a result, the first step will be the division of the frequencies and percentages on the basis of their positivity negativity so as to pinpoint the respondents' reaction to

the different sets of factors that lead to their silence in Translation classes at university Level. Consider Table (4):

Table (4): Frequencies and Percentages of the Positivity and Negativity of the Sample's Responses to the Items of the Questionnaire

| Item No. | Items | | <u>Negativity</u> Low Impact | Neutral | <u>Positivity</u> High Impact |
|----------|---|-------|---------------------------------|---------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | I have no interest to participate. | Freq. | 19 | 11 | 20 |
| | | Perc. | 38.00 | 22.0 | 40.00 |
| 2 | I try to ignore intentionally what is going on. | Freq. | 9 | 9 | 32 |
| | | Perc. | 18.0 | 18.0 | 64.0 |
| 3 | I am afraid of being mocked at by my classmates. | Freq. | 17 | 10 | 23 |
| | | Perc. | 34.0 | 20.0 | 46.0 |
| 4 | The teacher gives me no chance to participate. | Freq. | 12 | 5 | 33 |
| | | Perc. | 24.0 | 10.0 | 66.0 |
| 5 | I lack confidence when speaking English. | Freq. | 18 | 19 | 13 |
| | | Perc. | 36.0 | 38.0 | 26.0 |
| 6 | The material is difficult for me to understand. | Freq. | 11 | 13 | 26 |
| | | Perc. | 22.0 | 26.0 | 52.0 |
| 7 | I have no knowledge of the topics to be translated. | Freq. | 8 | 19 | 23 |
| | | Perc. | 16.0 | 38.0 | 46.0 |
| 8 | I am afraid of giving wrong answers to the teacher. | Freq. | 30 | 12 | 8 |
| | | Perc. | 60.0 | 24.0 | 16.0 |
| 9 | The materials to be translated do not appeal to me. | Freq. | 7 | 21 | 22 |
| | | Perc. | 14.0 | 42.0 | 44.0 |
| 10 | I feel shy. | Freq. | 21 | 13 | 16 |
| | | Perc. | 42.0 | 26.0 | 32.0 |
| 11 | The teacher translates most of the time. | Freq. | 7 | 18 | 25 |
| | | Perc. | 14.0 | 36.0 | 50.0 |
| 12 | I have bad pronunciation of English. | Freq. | 15 | 12 | 23 |
| | | Perc. | 30.0 | 24.0 | 46.0 |
| 13 | I am afraid of making | Freq. | 24 | 12 | 14 |

| Item No. | Items | | Negativity Low Impact | Neutral | Positivity High Impact |
|----------|--|-------|--------------------------|---------|---------------------------|
| | grammatical errors. | Perc. | 48.0 | 24.0 | 28.0 |
| 14 | I feel I do not have the required vocabulary. | Freq. | 10 | 21 | 19 |
| | | Perc. | 20.0 | 42.0 | 38.0 |
| 15 | The teacher does not motivate me to speak. | Freq. | 8 | 11 | 31 |
| | | Perc. | 16.0 | 22.0 | 62.0 |
| 16 | The teacher does not encourage me to participate. | Freq. | 10 | 8 | 32 |
| | | Perc. | 20.0 | 16.0 | 64.0 |
| 17 | The teacher does not create a friendly, open and supporting environment. | Freq. | 7 | 8 | 35.0 |
| | | Perc. | 14.0 | 16.0 | 70.0 |
| 18 | The teacher does not give me any feedback on my mistakes in translation. | Freq. | 5 | 11 | 34 |
| | | Perc. | 10.0 | 22.0 | 68.0 |
| 19 | The teachers' uninspired and inactive role makes me feel bored. | Freq. | 9 | 18 | 23 |
| | | Perc. | 18.0 | 36.0 | 46.0 |
| 20 | I am worried to receive negative evaluations. | Freq. | 20 | 13 | 17 |
| | | Perc. | 40.0 | 26.0 | 34.0 |

Freq.= Frequency

Perc. = Percentage

N= 50

It is evident from table (4) that 14 statements, namely 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 out of (20) have got respondents' approval that they are of the causes behind their silent behaviour in the classroom. Also, statements no. 5 and 14 have got a neutral response on the part of the sample members, while only 4 statements, viz. 8,10, 13 and 20 got respondents' disapproval; i.e. respondents do not think that these items form real causes behind their silence.

Although such a method of analysis has outlined that EFL university students do come under the influence of a set of factors that inhibit them from participation in the ongoing activities in the

translation classes, further verification of such a result has urged the present researcher, and in attempt to verify such a result, to first find out broadly both the hypothetical and arithmetic means and the standard deviation of the sample's responses. That was followed by the application of the one-sample T-test which has outlined the results demonstrated in Table (5):

Table (5): The Results of the T-test

| Sample | Hypothetical Mean | Arithmetic Mean | Std. Deviation | t value | | Significance Level & Degree Freedom | Conclusion |
|--------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| | | | | Calculated | Tabulated | | |
| 50 | 60 | 66.14 | 9.238 | 4.70 | 1.68 | 0.05 (49) | There is difference |

It is evident from the contents of Table (5) that the calculated t value (4.70) is higher than the tabulated value (1.68) at significance level (0.05) and degree of freedom (49). This entails that there is a difference between the hypothetical and the mathematical means of the sample members in favour of the mathematical mean. In other words, the sample members have indeed the feeling to keep silent; a phenomenon that can be attributed to a set of varied reasons that will be highlighted throughout the discussion of the results of the analysis of the collected data.

Such a finding is in line with the result of the first question of the pilot study when the sample acknowledged being silent by (66%). This may be due to the non-existence of a cooperative atmosphere inside the classroom which in turn should help the students to overcome shyness and silence, otherwise they will feel isolated, reserved and do not participate in the in-class activities. This added to students' feeling of lacking the information and vocabulary that assist them to overcome the barrier of anxiety and fear. This is added to the probability that they do not find in the classroom an appropriate chance to present their ideas and/or opinions due to the lack of time and the teachers' feeling that they should abide by the timetable to cover the teaching material. Here,

the teacher should take the initiative by making the student the axis of

Teaching-learning process through the provision of a suitable milieu in the classroom that motivates them to participate in the class by giving enough time so as to know whether they have the real interest and enough knowledge as far as those topics are concerned.

Hypothesis No.2: There are no differences between EFL university male and female students in terms of keeping silent in Translation classes.

Aim No.2: Identification of any significant differences between the EFL university male and female students, in terms of being silent in Translation classes.

Research Question No.2: How does the teacher resolve students' silence in such classes?

To validate the preceding hypothesis and bring about the relevant aim, the sample's mathematical value and standard deviation has been calculated by applying the independent Sample t-test, as presented in Table (6) that follows:

Table (6): The t value of the Independent Samples t-test according to Gender

| Gender | No. | Arithmetic Mean | Std. Deviation | T value | | Significance Level & Degree Freedom | Conclusion |
|--------|-----|-----------------|----------------|------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| | | | | Calculated | Tabulated | | |
| Male | 32 | 64.06 | 8.802 | 2.20 | 2.01 | 0.05 (48) | There is difference |
| Female | 18 | 69.83 | 9.064 | | | | |
| Total | 50 | | | | | | |

It is evident from the contents of Table (6) that the calculated t value (2.20) is higher than the tabulated value (2.01) at significance level (0.05) and degree of freedom (48). This entails that there is a difference between the mean values of the silence of the sample members in favour of the female students.

Such a finding can be attributed to certain facts. First, boys, i.e. male students, are said to be more talkative than girls, female students, in the gender-mixed classes. Second, it is the nature of the

eastern societies that females should be quieter and less talkative in all settings since such behaviours reflect their well-behaved and polite personalities. This applies to the behaviour in the classroom by preferring silence to much talk and duly participation in the ongoing activities and discussions.

Hypothesis No.3: There are no differences between second stage and 4th stage EFL university students in terms of keeping silent in Translation classes.

Aim No.3: Identification of any significant differences between 2nd stage and 4th stage EFL university students, in terms of being silent in Translation classes.

To validate the preceding hypothesis and bring about the relevant aim, the sample's mathematical value and standard deviation has been calculated by applying the independent Sample t-test, as presented in Table (7) that follows:

Table (7): The t value of the Independent Samples t-test according to Study Stage

| Stage | No. | Arithmetic Mean | Std. Deviation | t value | | Significance Level & Degree Freedom | Conclusion |
|--------|-----|-----------------|----------------|------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| | | | | Calculated | Tabulated | | |
| Second | 25 | 67.08 | 7.746 | 0.71 | 2.01 | 0.05 (48) | There is no difference |
| Fourth | 25 | 65.20 | 10.603 | | | | |
| Total | 50 | | | | | | |

It is evident from the contents of Table (7) that the calculated t value (0.71) is less than the tabulated value (2.01) at significance level (0.05) and degree of freedom (48). This entails that there are no differences between the mean values of the silence of the sample members in terms of the study stage.

Such a finding seems to be unexpected since 2nd stage students were expected to be silent more than 4th stage students as they have been at the college for just 2 years; just contrary to the 4th stage students, who due to the long period of time they have spent at the college are supposed to have overcome the barriers of anxiety, shyness and fear.

XI. Conclusion

Silence is generally viewed as a double-faceted, positive and/or negative phenomenon, though mostly negative. It is positive as students, in order to achieve better and give good impression, may need time to think and to reflect on what they have learnt. Silence is also negatively viewed and is duly unwelcomed in classroom settings. Yet, the importance of learners' acquisition of knowledge and duly better performance necessitates their involvement in the varied teaching-learning activities including those carried out in translation classes. Such involvement and engagement on learners' part would result in overcoming learners' silence on one hand and enhancing their language competence on the other hand. Teachers, on their part, are required to attend to learners varied needs and characteristics so as to develop their linguistic abilities and competencies and make them active participants in the varied teaching-learning activities.

Based on what has been stated, the current research has both theoretically and practically attended to the silence phenomenon in translation classes at university level. As such, light has been shed on the definition of silence, the main reasons behind silence, and teachers' strategies to resolve this pedagogical problem in translation classes. The study has also accounted for silence from a practical perspective by designing a questionnaire on the reasons behind students' silence in translation classes. On analyzing the data, it has been found out that the reasons of students' silence are different among students. Most students keep silent due to the lack of confidence, feeling of having low competence, fear of being judged by others, lack of understanding or unfamiliarity with the topic, lack of vocabularies, lack of motivation in speaking, having different personalities and not having chance to speak. Based on this, a set of strategies and techniques and pedagogical implications to minimize silence in translation classes has been suggested to the teachers of the subject.

XII. Pedagogical Implications

Since the reasons behind students' silence in translation classes are quite worthy of consideration and realization by teachers, the latter have to

- create good strategy to make the students avoid silence and participate in the translation class;
- give an opportunity to the students to think and write down their answers before they speak and share their work in both small and large group settings. This will allow students to see their thoughts on paper and rethink or adjust them when speaking.
- use technology to improve class participation;
- ask students directly to translate a chunk for translation at hand;
- carry out a group discussion and make students share their translations with the other students;
- guide them to speak by using code switching as this will help them speak easily by combing the two languages especially when some words do not come to memory;
- motivate students to always practice translation to increase their translation skills;
- provide opportunity to express their feelings, thoughts, and ideas;
- devote time and energy to creating a warm, welcoming environment for students to promote a sense of community in the classroom and with each other, since through a friendly and open atmosphere, students will not be intimidated by each other and/or the learning environment;
- show sincere interest in the students, and acknowledge their contributions in the classroom since this can create a sense of belonging to the classroom community as well as increased oral participation;
- accommodate all types of students by assigning different roles within the group; and
- ask thought provoking questions as students within a group can work together to gain knowledge on the topic at hand and duly share translation performance.

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APPENDIX

Dear Student

The researcher is conducting a research entitled "Investigating Students Silence in Translation Classes at University Level". Would you please state your frank and sincere answers to the items of the enclosed questionnaire by ticking (√) in the square that best applies to you. There is no need to mention your name. Answers will be used for research purposes only.

Thank you for your cooperation

The Researcher

| | | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|--|--------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Gender | Male | | Study Stage | 2nd | |
| | Female | | | 4th | |

| Item No. | Items | Applies to me | | | | |
|----------|--|---------------------|------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------|
| | | Very Low Extent | Low Extent | Moderate Extent | High Extent | Very High Extent |
| 1 | I have no interest to participate. | | | | | |
| 2 | I try to ignore intentionally what is going on. | | | | | |
| 3 | I am afraid of being mocked at by my classmates. | | | | | |
| 4 | The teacher gives me no chance to participate. | | | | | |
| 5 | I lack confidence when speaking English. | | | | | |
| 6 | The material is difficult for me to understand. | | | | | |
| 7 | I have no knowledge of the topics to be translated. | | | | | |
| 8 | I am afraid of giving wrong answers to the teacher. | | | | | |
| 9 | The materials to be translated do not appeal to me. | | | | | |
| 10 | I feel shy. | | | | | |
| 11 | the teacher translates most of the time. | | | | | |
| 12 | I have bad pronunciation of English. | | | | | |
| 13 | I am afraid of making grammatical errors. | | | | | |
| 14 | I feel I do not have the required vocabulary. | | | | | |
| 15 | The teacher does not motivate me to speak. | | | | | |
| 16 | The teacher does not encourage me to participate | | | | | |
| 17 | The teacher does not create a friendly, open and supporting environment. | | | | | |
| 18 | The teacher does not give me any feedback on my mistakes in translation. | | | | | |
| 19 | The teachers' uninspired and inactive role makes me feel bored. | | | | | |
| 20 | I am worried to receive negative evaluations. | | | | | |

دراسة الأسباب الكامنة وراء صمت الطلبة الدارسين للإنكليزية بوصفها لغة أجنبية

في صفوف الترجمة في المستوى الجامعي: دراسة ميدانية

ماهر حسين علي الجرجري*

المستخلص

صار الصمت موضوعاً مميّزًا للبحث، ولاسيّما على المستوى الجامعي، وغالباً ما يظهر بين الطلبة الدارسين للإنكليزية بوصفها لغة أجنبية؛ إذ تهدف الدراسة إلى التعرف على الأسباب الكامنة وراء صمت الطلبة في صفوف الترجمة على المستوى الجامعي وتحديد الاختلافات في هذا الصدد من حيث جنس الطلبة ومرحلتهم الدراسية، وطُرحت ثلاثة أسئلة بحثية رئيسية: (١) ما هي الأسباب الكامنة وراء صمت الطلبة في صفوف الترجمة؟ (٢) كيف يحلّ المعلم صمت الطلبة في مثل هذه الصفوف؟ (٣) كيف يحفّز المدرس الطلبة على عدم الصمت في صفوف الترجمة؟ ومن المفترض أنّ (١) الطلبة في صفوف الترجمة يلتزمون الصمت بسبب عوامل شخصية واجتماعية وأكاديمية متنوعة تشجعهم على ذلك؛ و(٢) لا توجد فروق بين الطلبة والطالبات الجامعيين الدارسين للإنكليزية بوصفها لغة أجنبية من حيث التزام الصمت في فصول الترجمة؛ و(٣) لا توجد فروق بين طلبة المرحلة الثانية والمرحلة الرابعة الدارسين للإنكليزية بوصفها لغة أجنبية من حيث التزام الصمت في صفوف الترجمة، وكان المشاركون في الدراسة طلبة مسجلين في قسم الترجمة، كلية الآداب، جامعة الموصل في الفصل الدراسي الثاني من العام الدراسي ٢٠١٨-٢٠١٩، فقد أعطوا استبانة تضم ٢٠ فقرة ذات صلة وثيقة بأسئلة البحث السابقة، واستناداً إلى ردود المشاركين، تبين أنّ مجموعة من الأسباب المختلفة تقف وراء صمت الطلبة في صفوف الترجمة، فضلاً عن ذلك، كشفت الردود أنّ الطلبة يختلفون من حيث الصمت على وفق جنسهم، في حين أنّ مرحلة الدراسة ليس لها دور في هذا الصدد.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الصمت، صفوف الترجمة، التفاعل داخل الصفوف الدراسية.