Oral Communication in the EFL Classroom. Juan de Dios Martínez Agudo (ed.) (2008). Sevilla: Ediciones Alfar

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This book is a collection of original papers covering interesting issues related to the development of oral speech production in the EFL classroom. It provides a state-of-the-art account of current approaches to oral communicative competence in the EFL classroom, covering diverse aspects on the emergence of oral production.

As the editor states in the Preface, the aim of this book has been to include, in a single volume, a selection of the most up-to-date scientific studies related to oral speech production in EFL from a variety of perspectives. The text includes several contributions from prestigious specialists in TEFL. Oral Communication in the EFL Classroom is mainly designed to help teachers encourage speech production in the L2 classroom.

The first chapter focuses on the debate on English as an International Language (EIL), considering it as a language variety. Luis Guerra identifies the major features of EIL and highlights the need to re-examine teaching goals and practices and thus to introduce significant changes in teaching so as to promote an effective use of spoken English.

In chapter 2 Eduarda Melo pays special attention to the theoretical foundations of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory and attempts to show how this theory mar be used to encourage speech production in an EFL classroom. In this sense she offers a practical example of how to use it in a multidisciplinary approach in the EFL classroom. Her paper aims to engage learners in speech production, both oral and written, and describes a unit built around a play by English playwright David Campton.

In chapter 3 Margaret McGinity insists on the necessity and importance of the development of pronunciation skills. She discusses several aspects of teaching pronunciation. Apart from giving a detailed description of the different characteristics or peculiarities of the English sound system, she also recognizes that there are numerous activities at all levels which can be used to develop and practice pronunciation skills in the EFL classroom.

Chapter 4 includes an interesting reflection on what native speakers and non-native speakers of English know and may offer to the EFL classroom. Ian Robinson considers the roles of both speakers, particularly in terms of their speaking skills and pronunciation. It is acknowledged that native speaker communicative competence may be an impossible and unnecessary goal in the EFL classroom. In this chapter the importance of using imagination in devising situations which provoke the spontaneous use of English in the classroom as well as the ability to motivate learners to use the language for communicative purposes are especially emphasized.

In chapter 5 Sagrario Salaberri explains the pedagogical reasons and motivations that lead to the use of the Ll in the EFL classrooms, analysing the diverse functions of language

alternation. In this sense, the strategic value of code switching as a compensatory strategy in the EFL classroom is stressed. The research evidence shows that language alternation seems to be useful and effective in classroom interaction.

In Chapter 6 Mª Pilar Montijano examines several issues related to the teaching of the speaking skill in the EFL classroom, focusing especially on the design of speaking materials used for oral production. The fact is that L2 teachers have the responsibility of presenting learners with high quality learning materials, adapting speaking materials appeared in textbooks so as to help them develop the oral production skill!

In chapter 7 Juan de Dios Martinez analyses closely the impact of emotional states on SLA, particularly the psychological pressure of language anxiety. He attempts to show how oral performance seems to be determined more by affective factors than by linguistic ability. Actually, certain unfavourable corrective procedures may seriously damage learner confidence. In this sense the error-as-progress conception should be highlighted and, thus, L2 learners should run the risk of making use of the new language constantly because output constitutes an essential condition for SLA.

In Chapter 8 Daniel Madrid and Stephen Hughes present an empirical study concerning the most important motivating aspects of L2 teacher actions in the classroom. This study focuses exclusively on the perceptions and beliefs of both teachers and students with regards to the motivating effects and/or potential of teacher qualities and actions in the English classroom.

Chapter 9 highlights the importance of the confirmation process in the English classroom as highly positive for language teaching and learning. Inmaculada León analyses from a theoretical perspective the positive effects of teacher confirmation on L2 learning. Moreover, she shows that confirmation has the potential of fostering effective interaction in the English classroom. Hence, confirmation is viewed as a valuable tool to fight anxiety in L2 learning.

In chapter 10 some helpful suggestions to promote the development of the aural-oral skills in the English language classroom are offered. Alberto Ulla provides a detailed description of several successful strategies and activities that promote the aural-oral abilities as, for example.

We believe that this book is an essential reference for those interested in oral production in the EFL class. It also gives account of the vigour and strength that applied linguistic and foreign language didactics are taking in Spain.