

THE IMPACT OF CLASSROOM ATMOSPHERE AND PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENT ON EFL LEARNING

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Annotation

The article aims to explore the significance of the physical environment and seating arrangement in effective EFL classrooms. Research shows that effective language learning depends not only on linguistic knowledge but also on psychological comfort and a properly organized physical space. This paper discusses the impact of the emotional atmosphere in the classroom, teacher-student relationships, the location of tables and chairs, and educational equipment on student motivation, activity, and communicative competence based on scientific sources. It also provides practical pedagogical recommendations for educational environments with limited resources.

Keywords: classroom atmosphere, physical arrangement, EFL learning, student motivation, communicative competence, teaching aids and technology, resource-limited environment.

The widespread use of English as a global language of communication has increased the demand for quality EFL education. Traditional approaches often focus on grammar and vocabulary acquisition. However, this is not enough to effectively use the language in real life. The process of language learning is complex and is significantly influenced by psychological and physical factors (Harmer, 2015). As Fraser (2012) has pointed out, the classroom environment is one of the most important factors determining students' motivation and academic success. Especially in EFL contexts, the classroom serves as the main language practice area

for students. Therefore, this article analyzes the impact of classroom atmosphere and physical location on the EFL learning process from a scientific perspective.

The role of classroom atmosphere

Classroom atmosphere refers to the psychological environment that is related to how free and confident students feel. A positive atmosphere encourages students to actively participate, not be afraid to make mistakes, and express their ideas freely. These ideas have been proven many times by the most experienced and knowledgeable scientists. For example, the Affective Filter Hypothesis proposed by Krashen (1985), language learning efficiency decreases in an environment with high stress, fear, and anxiety. Therefore, creating a supportive and friendly environment in EFL classes increases students' speaking activity. Harmer (2015) also emphasizes that a teacher's positive attitude and encouraging approach strengthen students' self-confidence.

The impact of the physical environment on effective language instruction

The arrangement of desks and chairs in a classroom directly affects the level of communication and collaboration between students. While the traditional row arrangement is more suitable for teacher-centered lessons, it can limit interactivity between students. According to Scrivener (2011), tables and chairs arranged in a circle or group form encourage active interaction among students and allow for more effective pair and group work. Richards (2006) emphasizes that the physical environment of the classroom is an important pedagogical factor in the communicative language teaching approach.

The importance of classroom teaching equipment and technology

Classroom teaching aids and technology make the EFL learning process more effective. According to Mayer (2009), multimedia learning theory, the combined use of visual and audio materials helps in better learning. In the EFL classroom, when a teacher shows a short video of a real-life conversation with subtitles and audio, students

have the opportunity to observe facial expressions, body movements, and pronunciation simultaneously. Such multimodal learning inputs can help students understand meaning and remember new words better than text-based materials.

Harmer (2015) notes that audio and video materials allow students to see language being used in real contexts, which has a positive impact on the development of listening comprehension, pronunciation, and general communication skills. Similarly, when students watch dialogues from English films or short interviews, they are exposed to natural speech, intonation, and conversational structures. As a result, through subsequent oral activities, students can improve their listening comprehension skills, work on pronunciation, and develop the ability to communicate more naturally.

Problems in Resource-Limited Learning Environments

In developing countries, EFL teaching is often hampered by problems, such as a lack of technical equipment, overcrowded classrooms, and limited space. Hayes (2010) argues that in such circumstances, the quality of teaching depends more on the teacher's methodological approach and classroom management. However, effective EFL teaching can be achieved even in conditions with limited resources by creating a positive classroom atmosphere and adapting the physical space. For example, in a crowded EFL classroom without audiovisual equipment, a teacher can arrange chairs in small groups or pairs to encourage interaction among students and organize role-plays or discussion exercises. Even in a small classroom, moving furniture slightly or allowing students to sit facing each other can increase opportunities for interaction. Furthermore, creating a supportive and respectful classroom environment that accepts mistakes as a natural part of the learning process can encourage students to participate actively, even when resources are limited. Such adaptations demonstrate that effective EFL instruction can be achieved even in resource-limited settings if teachers pay attention to the classroom atmosphere and the flexible use of physical space.

Pedagogical recommendations

EFL teachers should follow these recommendations:

- organize the classroom layout in a way that supports interactive activities;
- create a psychologically safe environment for students;
- make the most of available technical tools;
- use learner-centered methods.

In conclusion, the classroom atmosphere and physical setting are important pedagogical factors in the EFL learning process. A positive psychological environment and a well-organized physical space develop students' motivation, activity, and communicative competence. As Byram (1997) noted, effective language teaching should take into account linguistic, psychological, and social factors together.

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