

## Developing Student-Teacher Rapport in ESL Classrooms

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### ملخص البحث

تم تصميم هذه الدراسة البحثية لإلقاء نظرة عامة على دور مبدأ الثقة والاحترام المتبادل بين المعلم والطلاب في تعلم اللغة الانجليزية، وفهم كيفية بناء علاقة حميمة بينهم داخل الفصول الدراسية، حيث أكدت العديد من الدراسات في هذا المجال أن بناء العلاقات الجيدة هي العامل الأساسي والمهم الذي يكفل نجاح أي عملية تعليمية معقدة. إن هذه الورقة قد تناولت بعض التقنيات والطرق الحديثة التي من شأنها أن تساهم في خلق ارتباط وثيق بين المعلم وطلابه والتي تؤدي بدورها إلى تحقيق الهدف التعليمي المنوط به في تعلم اللغة الانجليزية وفق الخطط والأهداف المعدة مسبقا وللجدول الزمنية المحددة للحصول على نتائج جيدة , كما خلصت هذه الورقة إلى أن بناء الثقة بين المعلم وطلابه لم تساهم في تسهيل تعلم اللغة الانجليزية فحسب بل يساهم هذا المبدأ في تكوين علاقة وانسجام تمكن الطالب من التواصل الايجابي للحصول على نتائج عمل أفضل وكذلك في سرعة القرارات لحل المشاكل التعليمية التي تواجه الطلاب بشكل عام.

### Abstract

Studies have established that rapport plays an important role in building a good relationship between the teacher and the student/s. It is also surely related to success in any learning process and ESL as well. This paper is designed to overview the role of rapport in learning English as a second language ESL and to understand how to build rapport in classrooms. Rapport is an important factor in determining the success or failure of any complex task. Besides, some related techniques are represented to help ESL teachers in building rapport with their students in order to meet good results of learning English. The reviewed literature indicated that rapport has a very important role in learning English as a second language. The paper concluded that rapport can be seen as a harmonious partnership that allows for productive communication, better results of work and fast resolution of problems.

**Keywords:** rapport, ESL, teachers, students, and techniques.

### 1. Introduction: -

Humans are social creatures; it matters what others think of us and how they handle us. Humans are gravitating towards people they respect and away from people they don't. Likewise, students follow the same trend. When students feel that their teacher works harder for them, they look forward to being in class, raising their attendance, increasing their grades, and having a more positive outlook towards the subject of the teacher when they may not have been fond of it

before .On the other hand, even though the teachers are a fantastic instructor with a high degree of subject experience, it can be exasperating to continue to learn from a person that they hate, they have no regard for, or they would like to avoid.(Gremler & Gwinner, 2000). (cited in Frisby & Matthew 2).

If teachers agree that the relationship has real educational implications, then logic will have it as teaching best practice which requires frequent attempts to strengthen one's level of relationship with students. Time constraints, unfortunately, restrict these future opportunities. Hundreds of students are seen by some teachers every week. Another problem is that the relationship is not instantaneous; in the first few lessons, there is no magic method that will make every student love the teacher. Slowly and over a long period of time, Rapport builds. This is a concern because teachers want to boost student performance as quickly as possible; we can't wait for rapport to grow gradually over the next 3 or 6 months-somehow, they need to fast-forward the process. (ibid).

Rapport is a great bond that helps teachers and students to work and learn well with each other, (Brown 70) describes rapport as the teacher's relationship or interaction with his / her students, this relationship based on trust and esteem that contributes to the capable, knowledgeable, and innovative emotion of students. (Paterson70) adds that this partnership is established by the influential teacher early in the year of work to maintain it. When good rapport has been remembered, students and teachers benefit from each other in the class, and students are more encouraged to do well. A key characteristic of teaching is building teacher-student relationships. A comfortable atmosphere in the classroom is promoted because the theory is that students in such environments will learn better.

"Trust between teachers and students is affective glue that binds educational relationships together. Not trusting teachers has several consequences for students. They are unwilling to submit themselves to the perilous uncertainties of new learning. They avoid risk. They keep their most deeply felt concerns private. They view with cynical reserve the exhortations and instructions of the teachers." Stephen Brookfield (2006).

The word rapport refers to the nature of the teacher-student relationship in a classroom. It is not mainly technique-driven, but when people like each other and get on together, it naturally develops. The relationship is sometimes described as a sort of recognizable magic that some teachers manage to create where others fail, and certainly, a teacher can often identify when it is present in a room in a few seconds: a sense of lively engagement, a space of people who are happy to work together and happy to be together. Despite the appearance of magic, good rapport is all down to a number of separate, concrete, learnable elements. To generate better rapport, any teacher can learn (Scrivener 40).

An interpersonal partnership has been labeled between a teacher and a student (Dobransky & Frymier, 2004; Frymier & Houser, 2000; Nussbaum & Scott, 1980) where both teachers and students reach the classroom with relational objectives (Frymier, 2007). The ability of a teacher to communicate interpersonal messages can be considered as one dimension of the competence of instructional

communication (Worley et al., 2007) and can help to achieve relational objectives. Jorgenson (1992) believes that one rapport is in capturing what is experienced in an interpersonal relationship, one term is truly relationship-centered. She further argued that a relationship-intensive area is teaching. Rapport will also enhance the expectations of an interpersonal relationship in the classroom. Specifically, two dimensions are used to operationalize the rapport: a private relation and a friendly contact (Gremmler & Gwinner, 2000). (cited in Frisby & Matthew 2)

## 2 :- Aims of the study:-

This study aims to:

- 1- Overview the role of rapport in second language learning.
- 2- Understand how to build rapport during ESL classrooms.

## Significance of the study:-

It is important to establish rapport with students within a classroom for a variety of reasons such as, a) it builds trust between students and teacher, b) it insights students for deep activities, c) it makes students more confident. d) it allows for a fun learning environment.

All sides of teaching require a teacher for having some sort of rapport with students. For a variety of reasons, it is important to develop relationships with students in a classroom, create trust between students and teachers, recognize trust in students and facilitate a pleasant learning environment. All aspects of teaching involve a teacher to have a relationship with students of some kind. When the teacher is interested and displays affection for their work as well as an interest in their students, students can retain more information and do better in classes. Many students will not learn well from a teacher who comes to school, does not welcome the students, let alone know their names, and read through the lesson without showing any interest and whatsoever. For a teacher, having a good relationship with his / her students is far more beneficial because it will not only make learning more enjoyable for the students, but teaching will also become more enjoyable for the teacher.

## 4 :- Literature review :-

Rapport can be thought of harmonious relationship that enables effective communication, improved work outcomes and quick resolution of issues. Rapport is based on trust and respect. In the technical sense, relationship building is not a methodology of teaching and learning. Teachers do not specifically plan for the building of relationships and there is no appropriate part of any lesson devoted to it.

However, it is one of the most powerful methods for inspiring learners. Rapport can be seen as a harmonious partnership that allows for productive communication, better results of work and fast resolution of problems. The study focuses on conviction and reverence. This involves learning about others, their

desires, likes , dislikes, attitudes, moods, opinions, beliefs , values, ambitions, context, etc. It is a professional partnership that allows problems to be quickly fixed or prevented problems entirely. If people have rapport, it means that they work well together, they enjoy each other 's company and they coordinate their efforts to achieve shared goals. It is the basis of a positive work environment and high job satisfaction. The level of relationship between a teacher and his students is a key indicator of the success of a teacher in developing a positive dynamic in the classroom. The significance of rapport development extends to all students, regardless of age, subject, context, impairment, intellect or skill. (Moira&Valdéz,3)

**4.1 The Nature of Rapport:** Rapport is an important part of preparing a classroom for collective learning strategies to be introduced. In normal conversation, teachers use the word "rapport" to indicate the relationship among students. If a "healthy friendship" exists, it means that students can relate to each other. "Bad friendship" suggests difficulties in the relationship. Despite this common interpretation of the term, it is important to differentiate between different phases of rapport. Collaborative learning projects frequently fail due to low levels of partnerships in the classroom. (Frisby& Martin, 146).

There are three components within the structure of rapport. the primary is mutual attentiveness. Mutual attentiveness relates to the “feeling as one” and implies attention faraway from self and toward others. The second is being positive. Being positive is described as a way of “mutual friendliness and caring”. The third is coordination. Coordination refers to predictability and equilibrium within the relationship. (Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal,286) (ibid).

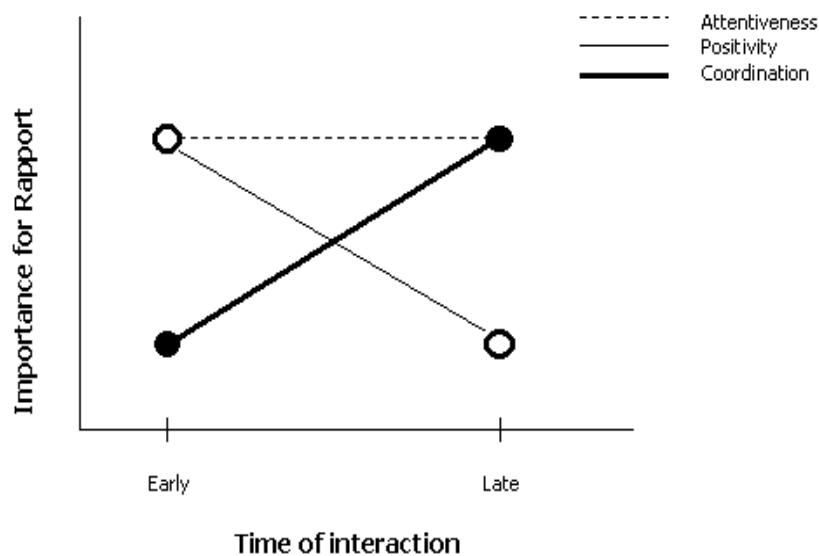
Figure 1: Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal's Three Components of Rapport



However, the relative importance of every component differs over time because the relationship between and among individuals evolves. As individuals get to understand one another and feel easier, the importance of positivity decreases as their communication tends to become more open and honest. for instance, two friends who have known one another for several years tend to speak more openly and with more freedom to disagree than two people that have just glanced at one another across a crowded classroom. (ibid).

Inversely, the importance of coordination among individuals increases as their relationship progresses. Hence, the idea behind regular practice sessions for athletic teams is that their coordination will improve because the individuals on the team interact more with one another. The sole constant component throughout the connection is mutual attentiveness because it supports the event of coordination and diminishes the importance of positivity. Diagram 1 shows the relative importance of the three components of rapport from early to late interactions.

Diagram 1: Relative Importance of Components



Source: Tickle-Degnen, Linda and Rosenthal, Robert (1990). The Nature of Rapport and Its Nonverbal Correlates. *Psychological Inquiry*. 1, 4: 287.

In the early stages of a relationship, interactions between and among individuals are characterized by awkwardness and misunderstanding. Hence, students at the beginning of the semester appear inhibited in their interactions with their classmates and teachers. Both students and teachers focus on external factors, such as race, gender, clothes, and general appearance in the early stages of their relationship. The information exchanged when there is a low level of rapport tends to be superficial. However, as long as the initial interactions among individuals included the component of positivity and mutual attentiveness, rapport will improve and the information shared will become more intimate, with less emphasis on peer acceptance. (ibid).

#### 4.2: Techniques for Developing Good Rapport :-

This section is designed to represent some useful techniques which may help ESL teachers to develop good rapport with their students. Rapport skills are crucial for

effective teaching. (Dhority, 202) suggests the following strategies for building rapport:

- 1- **Acknowledging Eyes:** As a teacher started to observe his / her "suggestive" actions, he noticed how often he / she would make passing or just automatic eye contact with those around him / her (in his / her pace or busy disconnectedness). When he / she started to want to reach their students more validly with his / her eyes, what a difference it began to make. To say: "I really see you and I'm not in a hurry to move on." I'm not talking about a penetrating look, or one that requests or asks for something or tarries, Uncomfortably long, but seeing what is comfortable, happy, welcoming, simply knowing the person as he or she is. Just taking a few moments when a class starts to acknowledge eye contact with all students in a class is a variety of welcome and invitation for meetings that helps create good rapport.
- 2- **Voice Intonation:** Teachers can identify people in their eyes at this time and almost welcome them, so they can do the same with the quality of their voices. The attention to the speech says something that is deeper than the phrases they speak. As teachers become more aware of their actions, voice tone is primarily conveyed and obtained subconsciously, they can start aligning this powerful form of suggestive speech with their best attentions.
- 3- **Body Presence:**In a language student, the physical presence in the classroom projects numerous messages, knowing fluently, while largely unconsciously learning to tell what teachers really want to communicate with teacher bodies, i.e. aligning physical speech with real intent. This affects both teachers and students positively.
- 4- **Entertainment:-** In their classrooms, some teachers have moments where everything seems to be going just fine, teachers feel appreciated, linked to the others, and what they think. Teachers feel physically relaxed, aware and mentally alive and emotionally at ease.

(Jones & Bartlett 51) declare that there are number of ways that can reinforce good communications to new teachers, including these strategies for the first day in the classroom:

- 1- **Learn students' names and interests quickly:-** New teachers could learn about their students by using surveys or playing icebreaker games. Give ideas like interviewing two students and then making a short speech to the class in which each one introduces his or her partner.
- 2- **Establish classroom expectations:-** By setting reasonable classroom rules and standards, and then applying them consistently, new teachers will gain the respect of their students.

- 3- **Reinforce expectations:-** If new teachers decide to punish students and do not comply in the regulation of the classroom, it easily dissolves. Emphasize to new educators that the rules of the classroom are intended to be followed.
- 4- **Praise rather than punish:-** By going on the defensive, new teachers frequently respond to class troublemakers. Through the support of teachers, though, they will understand that encouraging good behavior helps students to develop positive attitudes as soon as they see it.
- 5- **Keep a sense of humor:-** If someone asks teachers to describe their first teaching year, most begin with, "I just wanted to cry every night," or "I thought I was definitely in the wrong company." These are followed by a chuckle and tale of the problem student who taught them a lot that first year.

Brookfield cited in ( Cralum 165-9) offers an additional perspective on teacher-student rapport, and he points out the possible reasons for low teacher-student rapport. These reasons are:

- 1- The weak self-image of learners.
- 2- Their apprehension of what is unknown.
- 3- Lack of consistency in instruction from teachers.
- 4- Personal dislike of teachers among students.
- 5- Do junction modes between learning and teaching.
- 6- Obvious irrelevance of the learning process.
- 7- Learners' fear of publicly looking foolish.

These possible reasons are fundamental needs in human life. In a beginning level class, sometimes, language is missing when students are not feeling comfortable using it. In this kind of situation, establishing rapport should come before anything (ibid).

(Paterson71) adds the following ten strategies that help building teacher-student rapport:

- 1- To reveal little about teachers, to provide sufficient details at a suitable time. Using classroom examples that are personally important and have a few personal things in the room, such as a picture.
- 2- To learn the names of the students, and a bit about them, as quickly as possible. Holding a checklist of the likes, preferences, abilities, and so on of learners, so that when talking to them, teachers can be truthful and precise.
- 3- Demonstrating honesty and modesty (students detect insincerity quickly). Avoiding being arrogant and self-deprecating, if possible.
- 4- At times other than in class, being open. Staying in school just for talking.
- 5- Behaving in a polite and warm way.

- 6- To keep a happy mood, and to smile a great deal.
- 7- Treating students with dignity, always.
- 8- When talking to students, maintain eye contact and give emphasis.
- 9- Watching students closely to get their body language hints about them.
- 10- Maintaining or developing a sense of humor, and now and then using jokes and 'in-class silliness. 'Watching students closely to get clues about them from their body language. Maintaining or cultivating a sense of humor, and using jokes and "in-class silliness" now and then.

(Rowan & Grootenber 73-5) add the following four rapport-building categories:

- 1- **Recognizing the person:-** By having students focus on their relationship with the subject at the beginning of each course, individual eliciting personal information was explicitly integrated into the framework of course. The teacher modeled the informal language to be used and the level of frankness, considering the personal nature of reflections, to show students a secure space existed in the course where they were free to convey their anxieties and problems concerning their personal levels of numeracy. The informal nature of the reflections allowed students' personalities to emerge, particularly important as the predominant medium of communication in the course was the written word. Having students to a discussion board past these reflections and then making them respond to the reflection of at least one other student enabled the students to share their experiences and begin to make connections with fellow students.
- 2- **Supporting and monitoring:-** Support and monitoring were accomplished in a variety of ways, the teaching interaction was initially dramatically expanded from the proposed hours, although this was achieved mainly for academic purposes, the opportunity to provide more immediate support and monitoring was an unplanned benefit of the expanded hours. The fortnightly quizzes and the provision of determining input at the midpoint of the course were two additional mechanisms. These were designed to allow students to observe their comprehension of the content and ensure that their portfolios are complete.
- 3- **Availability, Accessibility, Responsiveness:-** At the outset, it was believed that students would require substantial help for the duration of the courses.
- 4- **Tone of interactions:-** to build rapport, the tone of the interactions should be responsive deferential and truthful joking applied suitably.

According to (Moir&Valdéz,6) there are 5 simple ways that teachers can build rapport in a shorter timeframe than would otherwise naturally occur:



1. Students need to first respect you. This comes from being organized, enthusiastic, professional, and from communicating effectively. Show students and your
2. colleagues that you take your work seriously and that you are competent at your chosen profession.
3. Learn basic facts about each student, such as their first and last names, and where they come from.
4. Ask students direct questions about their hobbies, how they are going in other subjects, about their family and the suburb that they live in, what they had for dinner last night, what they did for their birthday, about their favorite subject and their career aspirations – the types of questions that distant relatives might ask at a family event. Showing interest in this way tells students that you care about them and their lives.
5. Identify and point out intersections and commonalities in conjunction with step 3 above. If a student lives close to the beach, for instance, clarify that you would love to live near the beach. If a student loves basketball and you have played once, tell them and ask them what role they're playing.
6. Remember the details from step 1-3 and bring them up again in the future, such as a week or 2 later. This shows students that you cared enough to remember details about them and their lives. For example, if a student tells you that they scored 2 goals in a soccer match, ask them if they have scored any more goals a month later.

For some teachers, building rapport comes naturally. For others, a concerted, strategic approach is needed. Here are some ways to help you build rapport with learners:

- 1- Learn their names easily by constantly using them. Write out a rough seating plan in the early days to be used as a fast guide, look for their names on their stationery and books, and remind all students to write their names on top of their homework.
- 2- Use their surnames now and then in order to show respect. For instance, by saying 'Thank you Mr. Brown,' you might thank a student.
- 3- Comment and ask questions about objects in their possession, such as 'that's an interesting pair of shoes,' where did you get them? '.
- 4- If you see students in the playground or outside school, greet them with something easy like 'Hello John, how are you today?' '. As it is insensitive, do not disregard them.
- 5- Tell your students about yourself and explain to them that you are human. Using sentences like 'I think' and 'I feel' (like 'I feel tired today'). Share the insights and opinions you have. Ask for opinions from them.

- 6- Make ties wherever possible. If you live in the same place, for instance, say 'I also live in that area, do you like it there? '.
- 7- Say light jokes and see it from the funny side.
- 8- Be polite, open and available.
- 9- When listening to them, look to their eyes.
- 10- Be forgiving: all teachers, as well as students, have bad days.
- 11- Be wary of your language, tone, pace and volume of your body.
- 12- Never make a student ashamed, even extroverts. Whisper when discussing others, whether for interpersonal, support or other purposes, so that nobody else will hear.
- 13- Sit in a student chair or crouch down to their level when delivering assistance.
- 14- Keep students secure (physically, emotionally, mentally) by shielding 'incorrect respondents.'
- 15- If appropriate, apologize. For example, 'I'm sorry I was distracted, how can I help? 'It demonstrates value and professionalism.
- 16- Master critical strategies and techniques-feedback, questioning, formative evaluation, scaffolding, meta cognitive skills, and so on-to open a path for student success.
- 17- Develop the self-esteem of students by helping them set goals and achieve them (including micro-goals). (British Council, 1).

Besides, to establish rapport with students, (Scrivener 40-1) adds the following techniques:

**1-Being friendly, motivating, approachable:-** Building in time and space to communicate as individuals to a teacher, as far as realistically possible. From minute one to the end, the instructor does not cram complete lessons. It's nice he should have space for unstructured speaking. A teacher should listen carefully when things are said to him by learners. react as a person

**2-Treat each student as an individual:-** the instructor should not consider the class as a class only. As soon as he or she can. As a person with the ability to make them see that, he / she can learn names and begin to see and believe in each person. This is how students are treated by teachers.

**3- Remembering the students' positive stuff:-** holding a notebook in which a teacher documents and reminds himself of the students' positive items, personal notes (hobbies, relatives, stories they share, etc.) about them. To let students know that the instructor is interested in their lives outside the classroom by asking about

individuals or activities they have previously discussed. when a student is feeling down, a teacher should remind them of their positive achievements.

- 1- **Empathize:-** From the viewpoint of the learner, an instructor can see what things look like.
- 2- **Being a human rather than "the instructor":-** don't feel compelled to leap to save or solve all the time as an instructor. Don't speak from a hierarchical background. Asking real personal questions and listening (not just the errors) to the responses.
- 3- **Don't fake happiness or pleasure:-** this can often be called 'false'.
- 4- **Being culturally aware:-** means that what is said and asked is not suitable for the local context.
- 5- **Avoiding sarcasm:-** it's almost impossible to pitch correctly, and it upsets people in ways that teachers can't always see.

### 5:-Conclusion

In the light of the literature review in this study, the primary goal of rapport is a positive interaction between the teacher and the students for the purpose of enhancing any learning process and ESL as well. As ( Frisby & Martin ,2010 , 144) suggested (see page 5). Rapport can be seen as harmonious partnership. It is one of the most powerful method for inspiring students and allows productive communication, better results of works and for resolution of problems. The second goal is that some useful techniques are provided for the purpose of helping ESL teachers to develop good rapport. Finally, the study focused specifically on conviction and reverence which involves students learn about each others, their desires, likes, dislikes, attitudes, opinions, beliefs, values, ambitions, and context.

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