

Exploring Behavioral Tolerance: Analyzing Student Interactions During Classroom Activities in Higher Education

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Abstract

The classroom is seen as a platform for the learning process where teachers and students interact on an equal footing. The study focuses on examining the relationship between classroom activities and intolerance within the pedagogy adopted at the University of Peshawar. The researchers used a mixed methods approach and conducted concurrent triangulation for data collection and analysis. Quantitative data was gathered using an interpersonal tolerance scale that had been previously adopted. This scale measured the level of tolerance among the participants. Qualitative data, on the other hand, was collected through ten Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with the same group of students. The purpose was to explore the experiences and perspectives of the participants on the pedagogical practices in the classroom. The analysis involved different methods for the quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were analyzed using the Pearson Chi-square test to examine any potential relationships between classroom activities and intolerance. The qualitative data was evaluated using thematic analysis, which involved identifying and analyzing themes related to various classroom activities, such as lecturing, discussions, questions, readings, students' presentations, practical work, and workshops. The researchers also explored the reduction of boring activities within the classroom. The findings of the study indicate that a significant amount of class time is spent on lecturing, with limited opportunities for discussion and questions. Additionally, there is a lack of emphasis on out-of-course readings and a lack of pragmatic connectivity between theoretical concepts and practical applications.

Keywords: *Tolerance, Teacher Centered Approach, Student Centered Approach, Discussion, Classroom Activities*

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1. Introduction

In teacher-centered education, a teacher has a central and dominant role in the teaching and learning process (Shoaib, Abdullah, & Ali, 2020; Shoaib & Ullah, 2019). Students have low or no chance of asking questions and have a passive and subordinate part in classroom activities (Ahmad, Ahmad, Shoaib, & Shaukat, 2021). Students are not allowed to convey their expressions and share their experiences (Ahmad, Shoaib, & Shaukat, 2021). In this approach to education, students do not achieve their goals through knowledge creation (Mpho, 2018; Henriksen, 2006). The students should be given experiences and opportunities in the classroom for critical evaluation of theoretical

knowledge of their practical lives as well as for the needs of the entire society (Shoaib, 2021). The learning process of student-centered education will give them a practical application of their knowledge and cognitive activities, which bring purposeful and meaningful actions (Shoaib, Shehzadi, & Abbas, 2024a, 2024b). The student should actively participate in classroom activities rather than passive observers, emphasize critical thinking, freely express their viewpoints, attention to theory and creative actions through first-hand experience; and up to some extent, students should be free in their actions (Shoaib, 2024d; Shoaib, Ali, & Abbas, 2024).

Freire (2007) explains classroom dynamics in his book "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" showing the role of identity in creating and implementing the learning environment. He argues that the student's identity should be used in every situation of the learning process. Social identity justifies one's position and makes one special from the other class fellows (Arshad, Anwar, & Shoaib, 2024a, 2024b). Gibson (2006) also elucidated that tolerance is not a 'self-evident' virtue; it is often reached after controversy, conflict, or even sometimes war. It is not only self-evident nevertheless it is found all over the world that people are willing to accept and tolerate the ostensibly irresolvable differences of the others such as norms, values, personal preferences, ideologies, religious beliefs and lifestyles etc. In coexistence, one tolerates the other's different things that may be disliked, disapproved and even disagreed (Shoaib, 2024b, 2024c). Tolerance contains the inherent paradox of accommodating non-accepting ideas and things (Shoaib, 2024a). Moreover, without accepting and tolerating others with their different ways of living, peace and equality is not possible in the region. (Sullivan and Transue, 1999; Vogt, 1997). Teachers' approach to handling the ethnic and racial differences among students in the classroom is foremost for imparting values of diversity and tolerance (Anwar, Shoaib, & Shahid, 2024; Arshad et al., 2024a).

According to Freire's conscientization emerges through practice, reaction and analysis through critical thinking and knowledge in the classroom. Social action and reflection are paramount in shifting the reality cycle (Anwar, Shoaib, & Shahid, 2024; Anwar, Shoaib, Zaman, & Arshad, 2024). Education is the cycle that creates critical awareness, which changes prevailing and enforced realities (Shoaib, Shehzadi, & Abbas, 2023; Shoaib, Usmani, & Abdullah, 2023). Knowledge cannot be replaced as it is focused on critical thinking and knowledge. Such critical understanding changes the dynamics of historical influence in the classroom among students and teachers (Akyuz, Karli & Muderrisoglu, 2017). Student centered learning is also named flexible learning, autonomous learning and self-directed learning (Wink, 2005). In this learning students are more empowered in the selection and choosing of course modules; activities in the classroom are more active, interactive, democratic and reflective (Shoaib, 2023; Shoaib, Rasool, Anwar, & Ali, 2023). The actions and reactions are creative that ensure qualitative outputs (Anwar, Shoaib, & Javed, 2013; Anwar, Shoaib, & Mustafa, 2022; Anwar, Shoaib, & Zahra, 2021). Students have an equal share in the learning process in the classroom and have a respectful position in the dialogue (Marinko, et al, 2016).

In a learner-centered approach to education, students are given learning independence and autonomy by making them responsible (Shoaib, Anwar, & Rasool, 2022; Shoaib, Mustafa, & Hussain, 2022). This approach's skills and expertise are applicable not only in the classroom but in their lives, allowing them to be self-sufficient and problem solvers (Shoaib, Ali, Anwar, & Abdullah, 2022; Shoaib & Ullah, 2021). Via previous experiences and new insights, this teaching technique aims to make the student more critical and creative. (Tursunov, 2016). For this reason, the role of a teacher is to open the avenue of dialogue on all issues concerning academic and non-academic to learners in the classroom (Shoaib, Ali, & Akbar, 2021; Shoaib, Iqbal, & Tahira, 2021; Ullah & Shoaib, 2021). This kind of education is based on the sharing of knowledge and problem

posing techniques between teachers and learners (Shoaib, Ali, Anwar, Rasool, et al., 2021; Shoaib, Ali, Anwar, & Shaukat, 2021). The stress is on the critical consciousness and creativity of learners to encourage active participation in the learning process (Nyirenda, 1996).

2. Data and Methods

For this study, to establish a relationship between classroom activities, tolerance and teaching practices triangulation of data was used. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected from undergraduate students from different faculties of the University of Peshawar. The tolerance level of students was checked with an already established scale on interpersonal tolerance, while qualitative data were gathered from focus group discussions. A total of 71 Students were randomly selected from selected departments for 10 focus group discussions. Both data were collected from the same group of respondents. Quantitative data were analyzed through the Pearson Chi-square test and qualitative data were examined through thematic debate.

3. Results

3.1. Qualitative Data Analysis: Classroom's Activities

Class activities determine the mode of the classroom environment. The environment of the class is crucial for the learning process. The teacher's role is very instrumental in the learning environment. Classroom activities train the students for their future endeavors; the way they are treated in the classroom will remain in their minds and they will replicate the same in the future. The classroom is like the globe for the students and they prepared themselves for the real world, so the sole and whole responsibility is lying on the shoulder of the trainer/teacher.

3.2. Lecturing:

Lecturing means that teachers teach in class through mostly one-way interaction. The teacher teaches with the help of a board and marker with chalk and talks or using PowerPoint slides through projector and multi-media. Students record and store the teachings/learning of the teachers in their notebooks, registers, laptops, or cell phones. The lecturing mode of teaching helps students to understand the course most readily. However, lecturing is one-way interaction, where teachers teach and students passively listen to the lecture. There is no active and reflective interaction between students and teachers in the classroom. The teachers try to complete the course in the allotted period. The purpose of lecturing is to complete the course and have less interest in the students' understanding and new things about the course through interaction and discussion.

"The teacher does not explain the topic in detail; we are writing the lecture just like writing a story. Although our subject is practical and discussion-based, unfortunately, there is no discussion and most of the time spend on lecturing."

The only form of learning at university one-way interaction in the form of stereotype lecturing by teachers. Students passionately listen to the lecture and note the instruction with silence. Delivering a lecture on the board or via a projector (multimedia) is the sole, accepted, and appreciated source of knowledge for both teachers and students.

3.2.1. Discussion

Discussion between teachers and students is another form of teaching. The teacher discusses the topic in detail with students. The teacher gives a briefing to the student on the topic and then the discussion started in the classroom in the presence of the teacher. For the discussion mode of teaching, the teacher first gives readings on the topic, both teacher and students read the readings, highlight different and somehow opposing points, write arguments on the points from other sources as well, and then discussion on the topic started at length between teacher and students in the classroom. In the discussion, every student in the class actively participates and presents their arguments in favor or against the readings, the teacher's point, or a classmate's point. At the end

of the discussion, the groups who have more solid and convincing arguments in favor or against the concept are accepted; however, this conclusion is the start of the next discussion. Inductive and deductive reasoning and logic are used in the discussion. This is the only way through which the addition of new arguments in the treasury of knowledge takes place.

“Teachers in the earlier semesters were new to us and have less acquaintance with them. Now at this stage, we have more interaction with them and feel free to discuss and share things. The class started with a discussion and then come on to the main course. Discussion with teachers is continuing throughout the class. It means that now classes are not that much boring.”

As pointed out by the students that most of the time of class goes into lecturing and very little time give to the discussion which reflects the pedagogy adopted is teacher-centered however the appreciated student-centered approach based on the discussion as mentioned by Al-Zu'be (2013) this approach is an interaction between teacher and students, and among students. Nevertheless, the teacher in this approach is the main resource of information, however, students are also actively involved in the question-answer session, where they not only improve their understanding but also communicate their own opinion on the topic. Students learn communication skills that how to collaborate during dialogue and discussion with teachers and classmates.

3.3. Questions:

In the learning mode of teaching, teachers give instructions and students listen and ask a question about unclear concepts. As mentioned that the sole purpose of the lecturing is to complete the course in one or the other way. However, in most cases, courses are designed in the standard pattern and tried to include maximum concepts in the course outlines. The students grasp maximum knowledge from the course outlines. While on the other hand, the dynamics of students are different for different batches. Some students are good at one thing while others have different interests. So the metaphor “one size fits all” is not working in course outlines/syllabi, it should be dynamic and according to the students, teacher and classroom situation. Students ask questions where there they feel difficulties in understanding and want to clear the ambiguity. Questions have sometimes got satisfactory answers and sometimes not, sometimes got attention, sometimes unnoticed by teachers, sometimes the length, of course, does not allow students to ask questions as the teachers and most of the students think that it is a waste of the precious class time.

“Teacher asks a question and then answered by himself so where are thinking and creativity? The best way is to ask questions from students at any level from primary to university, and let them free to search for answers and after searching let conclude the answer with critical analysis.”

Students are less involved in the learning process through their questions. As said by the respondents the teacher gives them less opportunity to ask questions. However, learners in the students' centered education are encouraged to set their course objectives, course outlines and topics of their interest. Furthermore, space is given to students for inquiry, questioning, discussion and learning through experience in the classroom. This form of pedagogy is more flexible and creative for the reconstruction of knowledge (Weimer, 2002; Moate & Cox, 2015).

3.4. Discussion on Non-academic Issues:

Another time-consuming activity in the classroom is a discussion other than course outlines. Chatting on the current issues of the country whether they are related to religious diversity, socio-cultural activities and national and international politics. Pakistan's involvement in wars and the war against terror, the financial situation of the country or university. Quality and quantity of students' intake by a university, behavior and personality standards of the students, moral and

ethical determinants of the society. The discussion may also include the different aspects of coronavirus in technical aspects as well as the response of common people. Chatting, on the one hand, gives extra knowledge to the student on the issue, while on the other hand, it relaxes the students from the tedious course class. Once the students feel free and open to discussion on their interested issues, then it helps them in generating debates and start thinking about the course concepts as well. Chatting or discussion other than course outlines is like the conditional reflective actions by Pavolove, through this way, students can start thinking about their subjects.

“Teachers who do not prepare their class to generate a debate on the controversial issue related to politics, religion or any social problem and the whole class rush into the discussion and everyone try to be part of the discussion. The teacher leaves the class making the issue more confusing and students continue their debate even after the teacher.”

Discussion on non-academic issues is very important for understanding academic concepts, on the other hand, students think that it is a waste of time to discuss non-academic things in class. However, in the student-centered approach, students are encouraged to take part in non-academic discussions along with academic learning. It has deep impact on students’ creativity and reflective actions and reactions. (Marinko, et al, 2016).

3.5. Readings:

Books, reading materials and notes are provided to students for having more in-depth knowledge about the concepts. Readings and books help the students in enhancing their comprehension of understanding. Readings can also help them to have more solid and convincing arguments at the time of discussion in the classroom as well as in common life. Books are our best friends and give full support in a hard time. Readings in the classroom and then discussing over it is one form of teaching practice. Sometimes teachers give the readings before class or course and then they discuss them with students. While some other teachers handed over readings to students in the classroom, give time for reading, and then discuss in the same classroom after reading. Some teacher gives readings for the understanding of the course for the paper not for discussion in class.

“Teachers stick to books and readings. We have theoretical courses and most of the classes are based on lecturing and have no practical works. Hence no discussion and debate in class with teachers, we are passive listeners in class.”

The world and word are interwoven in critical literacy, and critical reading is a constant relationship between text and context that develops a more critical understanding of each other. Critical literacy is significant for freedom from oppression. Mere reading and writing are not doing the job, but critical awareness liberates the oppressed from oppression (Raja, 2005). However, the reading culture is missing in the university students and even not instigated by the teachers.

3.6. Students’ Presentation:

One of the classroom activities is students’ presentations. Teachers divided the time and days of the course into lecturing, discussion and students presentation. Presentation topics are assigned by teachers or selected by the students themselves. They prepare the topic in detail and present it on the assigned time and date in front of classmates in the presence of the teacher. The presentation has several purposes for both teachers and students. For a teacher, it makes the teacher work easy and shares their work and time with the students. Presentation is a major source of learning for students as well as for teachers when the presenter prepared the topic in detail. They consult several books and research papers for the presentation and gain abreast knowledge. Proper PowerPoint presentation through multimedia helps students to handle computer applications and training for future presentations in their professional careers.

“Some of the teachers give us presentation topics from the course outlines at the start of the course and ask us to prepare a comprehensive presentation and assignment on the topic. Therefore, in the entire session, presentations are going on and almost in every class, someone presented his/her, topic. Teacher evaluates the students over their presentation and comment where feel necessary.”

Data from focus group discussions shows that most of the teachers engage students in-class presentations on course topics. However, sometimes these presentations are more than teachers' lectures, and students face difficulty in understanding the topic. Presentation is not only enhances the communication skills of a student but also use as an assessment tool by the concerned teacher.

3.7. Practical Work and Workshop:

Practical work and workshops are part of the classroom activities. It makes the theoretical concepts easy and understandable for the students. Students prove the theory by themselves through practical work. A famous proverb, “Practice makes a man perfect” is the same as practical work and workshops that make a student perfect in their studies. Practical work and workshops transfigure theory into practice, which is not only important for the understanding of the concepts but also physically involved the students in activities.

“In the previous semesters, teachers were just teaching in the class, but this semester, they are involved in practical works as well. Some teachers teach us presentation skills and techniques that how to present in the best way. They also educate us on well and proper dressing on the day of the presentation. They work out not only the mental preparation for the presentation but also the physical preparation. After every presentation, the teacher evaluates the presentation, its pros, and cons. The teacher also gives a comparative analysis of the presentation with the previous ones. They also set trends for the next presentation and recommended some new and different things that were missing in previous presentations. I think this way of teaching is nice as we learn more in this style rather than passively hear the teachers.”

Learning is not only theoretical or intellectual activity rather it is a practical and collective process that encompasses various forms of awareness, emotion, desire, feeling and knowledge (Shoaib, Abdullah, & Ali, 2021; Shoaib, Ahmad, Ali, & Abdullah, 2021). The new knowledge should be judged by teacher and student dialogical self-experiences to make it more authentic and practical (Shoaib et al., 2020; Shoaib, Saeed, & Cheema, 2012). Action in teacher-centered education is controlling thoughts, actions and realities by the teacher (oppressor). It protects the rights of dominating and ruling class over the oppressed class through the culture of silence (Cesaire, 2000).

3.8. Reduction of Boring Activities:

Some of the activities in the classroom are making students attentive and active. These activities drag the students from a boring environment to an interesting setting in the classroom. Teachers mostly involve the students in other than academic activities, which is very helpful to make the student activities for the upcoming study. Such activities are poetry, painting, anecdotes, epigrams, etc. These activities has also some moral endings that may help the student in understanding of the course as well as enhance the thinking ability of students.

“The teacher is very friendly in class and he teaches the course like storytelling, he uses several other mechanisms for making the class more attentive such as competition of songs and poems among students' group.”

To some extent, storytelling and other reduction of boring activities in class are very effective for increasing students' interest in learning. Data shows that students are not very happy with those teachers who repeatedly use such kinds of activities as they think that is a waste of time.

Quantitative Data Analysis: Content Analysis of FGDs

Classroom Activities	Discussion 14 (19.7)	Lecturing 49 (69)	Other 8 (11.3)	71
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Most of the class time is passed in one-way interaction, where teachers give lectures and students patiently listen to the lecture. The table shows that the majority (69%) of students in the focus group discussion told that lecturing was the only activity in the class, a teacher comes to deliver a lecture and that is all, 19.7 percent uttered that discussion is also a part of the class activities while 11.3 percent stated that teacher involves students in other activities.

Bi-variate Analysis of Pedagogy and i.e., Warm Tolerance: Pearson' chi-square value of class activities is 52.865 with df 68 and p value is .005 where warm tolerance is a dependent variable. The p value shows that classroom activities have a strong association between class activities and warm tolerance. Qualitative data shows that most of the class time is passed in lecturing, teachers give a lecture and students patiently listen. As mentioned above para teachers do not encourage students to debate and discuss in the classroom which is why, they do not embrace other people's behavior, even if they have very little in common.

Classroom Activities	52.865	68	.005
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Bi-variate analysis of independent variable ie pedagogy and dependent variable ie cold tolerance

Classroom Activities	78.768	56	.005
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The above table expresses the association between classroom activities in the university and the cold tolerance of students. Pearson chi-square test value for class activities is 78.768 degree of freedom is 56 and the point of probability is .005 with the dependent variable cold tolerance. Qualitative and quantitative data show that activities in the class affect the tolerance level of students at university. Most of the teachers are busy delivering a lecture to the class and pay less attention to the discussion, question/answer session, reading and student presentation. It is hard for the students to understand others' behavior which is different from theirs.

Bi-variate analysis of independent variable is pedagogy and dependent variable is limits of tolerance

Classroom Activities	44.271	56	.010
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The prime responsibility of a teacher is to teach; however, at the university level, teachers should prepare the students for their practical life through their reflective teaching practice. Students should be engaged in several activities, like debate, discussion, practical works, workshops, seminars etc. The qualitative data from the focus group discussion shows that the only activity in the classroom is the teachers teaching and students passively listening to the lecture. The table above shows that the Pearson chi-square test value for the activities in classroom is 44.271 the degree of freedom is 56 and the point of probability is .01. The data displays that in a classroom where the only teacher is teaching and the rest of the students remain silent breeds' low level of tolerance limits in students.

4. Conclusion

Most of the time in the classroom is spent lecturing by teachers when students passively and silently note the lecture without giving any input and putting critical and practical questions. Discussion and debate are very rare in the classroom in the presence of a teacher on different issues related to the course contents or out of course. Some of the teachers give reading materials for study but discussions do not take place between students and teachers in class over the readings.

Presentations are just for internal grading and not for understanding and knowledge and hence a waste of time. Very less practical works and workshops take place even in the practical courses and subjects.

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