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Role of Collaboration to Boost Speaking in Classroom

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Abstract

This research paper focuses on learners' speaking skills development with proper use of teachers' classroom interaction. This method is always popular but lack of appropriate interactive system interrupts speaking skills. A convergent mixed method was used where both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Results reveal that the actual classroom interaction is less with controlled activity and teachers' monopolizing the talk time. Study also reveals that students respond for teachers' asking the question but initially they talk more. However, this proves that learner's interaction is more beneficial than teacher-learners' interaction. So, the teaching fraternity need to increase learners' interaction with extended talk time for communicative activities.

Keywords: Classroom interaction, Speaking skills, Communication activities, Learners' talk etc.

Introduction

Classroom interaction is a significant tool for second language learning. The aim of this study is to investigate the role of classroom interaction and improvement of learners' speaking skills in real classroom situation following Flanders Interaction Analysis Category (FIAC) (Flanders 1963) ^[3]. Earlier English language teachers followed the traditional approach of teaching in various universities, where the learners' used to be dependent only on the lecture delivered by the trainer. The learners were not subjected to ample exercise and the communication among the learners in the classroom was practically missing.

Teachers use English language for classroom delivery but could classroom delivery in English language improve learners speaking skills? At present both education system and teaching method is changed as classroom interaction has been proposed as a tool of improving speaking skills. Demand is on learners' communication than just attending to the teacher.

Context of the study

Both in education and real life situation English language is essential. But learners are not that interested in interacting in English because learners need English to get a better job. Here teachers can motivate them by saying that fluency in English speaking can get them a better job. But this trust will not work every time and there is a better solution to involve learners into speaking skills indirectly through classroom interaction. In the process of second language learning classroom interaction, concept plays a significant role. Because classroom interaction provides learners with chances to take clear input and response from their interaction on partners. The context of this study has been two private universities of Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. In this study, the proficiency level of the learners' is tertiary, and the educational background of the teachers' is master's degree from English department of various universities. The mixed method embracing characteristic of a case study is addressed to investigate classroom interaction and improvement of learners' oral communication ability in real classroom situation by following Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories. A convergent mixed method design is used to complete this research where the qualitative and quantitative data are collected in parallel, analysed separately and then merged (Creswell, 2007) ^[4]. In the quantitative phase of the research, students' survey is completed to know students' opinion which provides important feedback.

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Purposes of the study

The qualitative data is used to take semi-structured teachers' interview to know teachers' opinion, belief and attitude towards classroom interaction and their learner's condition. Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC) (Flanders, 1963)^[3] is followed to complete the classroom observation which could help to distinguish the teacher and learners' talk time in the teaching space. The type of quantitative data explores the central phenomenon for participants at the site. The reason for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data are: to attain a better understanding of the nature and status of classroom interaction, the researcher has conducted a case study among three universities. She intends to address some research questions in this study. The primary question focused on the research is: To what extent and in what ways teachers' can properly utilize the classroom interaction to improve learners' speaking skills, via integrative mixed methods analysis?

In addition, this research aims to also further explore specific questions

1. How much talk time do teachers and learners spend in the classroom while interacting with each other?
2. What are the learners' perceptions about classroom interaction and speaking skills?

Significance of the study

Long (1996) and Gass (2003)^[7] have claimed that L2 interaction assisted learning since, it focused on communication. The present study signifies that classroom interaction is necessary to improve students' oral communication because it provides opportunities for learners to practice their speaking skills in the classroom as they don't find opportunity to practice it outside the classroom. Through this study the university teachers' may understand their and learners' talk time during the classroom interaction in order to increase learners' participation and decrease teachers' talk time. Additionally, this study can create awareness among learners about interaction opportunities in the classroom which will help them to develop their speaking skills as well as language learning. The study can be enhanced in a large scale both in private and public universities to emphasize the importance of classroom interaction.

Literature Review: Related theories

There are some theories that are related to classroom interaction which proves that interaction between learners' can be beneficial for the improvement of their speaking skills. Among them Social Learning Theory, Social Development Theory, The Zone of Proximal Development, and Interaction Hypothesis is familiar.

Albert Bandura in 1960s developed a useful theoretical framework named Social Language Theory (SLT) which shows the societal standpoint of knowledge into instruction program. According to this theory any type of socially displayed behaviour is learned mainly by watching and emulating the activities of others. The process of learning and the knowledge of individuals have been formed through observation said by Bandura (1977)^[1]. The second theory is Social Development Theory, a framework for the concept of learning which is stated by Vygotsky in 1962. He states that "individuals take two levels to learn whatever. The first one is interaction with others which can be referred to as social

level and another one is individual's interacted mental structure" Vygotsky (1978)^[17]. The subsequent viewpoint is the notion that rational advancement of the individuals is bounded to a "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD). ZPD is defined by him in 1962 as the distinction between what a learner can do without assistance and what he or she can do with assistance and his belief is to develop their process of learning individuals need help and social interaction.

The third one is Long's (1996)^[7] Interaction Hypothesis where he claimed that to achieve speaking fluency in the foreign language a learner needs adequate face-to-face interaction. His suggestion shows that interaction is like a container where a learner acquires Second language (L2). The communication hypothesis has two forms-they are strong and weak forms. In the strong position the interaction contributes to language development which is made by itself and in weak position the learners' find learning chances whether they make productive use of them or not. In the same way, both in Krashen's input hypothesis and interaction hypothesis states that comprehensible greatly rises when learners must negotiate for meaning.

Many researchers do not connect the idea of interaction which is the main source of language proficiency development rather than they connect the idea with language acquisition. Gass and Selinker (2008)^[7] claim that interaction functions as an instructing device because interaction facilitates learning, "setting the stage" for learning. In addition, Ellis (1997)^[5] notes that in the interaction the input can be more complicated rather than encouraging. According to Ellis, it can happen if speakers use lengthy summarization or give difficult meanings of a word without understanding, and he concludes it by saying that in language acquisition the part of communication is complex.

Classroom Interaction

Researchers were working on classroom interaction for further fifty years in LA, SLA, and FLA. The social interactions of classroom research have begun in the 1950s and 60s. Earlier the main focus was on teachers' and learners' whole classroom interaction but in last two decades Interaction was and is still highly dealt by researchers on SLA area.

The term "interaction" is made up of two morphemes, namely 'inter' and 'action'. It is a mutual or reciprocal action or influence. Classroom interaction is the collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings or ideas, among students where learners enhance their linguistic collection and use all languages through interaction. Long (1996)^[7] claims that the conversational and linguistic changes in interaction enable acquisition which occur in discourse and it provides learners' the needed input. Through the interaction, learners' have chances to recognize and use the incomprehensible language.

On the other hand, Rivers (1987)^[13] asserts that learners' language store can be increased by using the authentic linguistic material or students can participate in conversations or joint problem-solving missions through interaction. Students' can learn from real life exchanges which express real meaning through interaction and can practice all possess of language.

Additionally, Yule (2006)^[18] follow-ups that English conversation is an activity in twofold or many in which they take turns at speaking where one speaker speaks, and

partakers await till s/he reveals the completion of their speaking by the end in the form of posing question or lingering. But here other participants can take the communication turn in several ways like making short sounds, using body shifts, or facial expressions. In this way they indicate that they have a bit to speak.

Types of Classroom Interaction

Classroom interaction occurs either between the trainer and the learner or between the students themselves, individually or in a group according to the communicative situation. Classroom interaction has two main types: Teacher - Learner interaction, and student - student interaction.

Teacher-Learner Interaction

Teacher learner interaction affects learners' development, achievement, and performance. It occurs when the teacher poses queries and students answer these queries and visa-vis; or when the trainer takes part in learning activities. It also takes place between the teacher, and the class and/or small groups in the class and/or individuals. But in the traditional way of teaching, the teacher only rests or remains at the rear of a writing desk, and devotes a substantial time in traditional teaching, whereas student's role is passive listening and note taking.

However, recent approaches to language teaching focus on communicative activities. It is believed that students' involvement with teaching process promoted their achievements in learning the target language, makes them comfortable, self-confident and highly motivated. Scrivener (2005) ^[14] made the following diagram to show the teacher and the students' interaction.

Learner-Learner Interaction

Learner-Learner interaction occurs among learners' and it gives freedom to talk with each other. It can occur either in groups called Learner-Learner interaction or in pairs called peer interaction for the sake of giving students' opportunities to speak and practice speaking skill in the classroom in order to receive feedback in the target language through correcting each other's errors or asking questions to each other when working in groups Mackey (2007) ^[10]. Generally, the good management and proper arrangement of Student - student interaction can give rise of student's educational achievement, cognitive development, and emerging social competencies. It can encourage informal learning styles, promote positive attitudes toward learning and enhance student's abilities to work collaboratively. Clearly, student-student interaction is a major part of classroom communication that should not be underestimated or overlooked.

Importance of classroom talk and interaction

The classroom talk is required for students to improve their speaking skills. It is visible that most students do not engage in an interaction by themselves unless the teachers' start first. Now students are given more space to communicate whether with teacher or with peers then teacher talking duration. Class time should not be dominated by the teachers', (Malamah- Thomas, 1987; Gass & Selinker, 2008) ^[7] because this will give students' less time if teachers spend too much time on explaining topics and giving instructions. Burns and Myhill (2004) ^[2] also add that with many of the teachers' statements concerned that rather than

an interactive whole class teaching it comes up with a transmissive model of teaching, rather. So, talking itself is not being considered as interaction. One of the methods can record the interaction between the trainer and student talking duration and that is FIAC methods. It was followed by researchers for a longer period. Here relational course has been recorded in the form of tenfold code and according to them components are calculated that show the relational state of the classroom in its better manner.

Classroom Interaction in developing speaking skills

Speaking skills require some experience and practice. It is an intricate practice of transmitting and obtaining messages using oral representations and it also includes nonverbal communication. Hedge (2000) ^[8] classifies oral skills as "a skill by which they (people) are judged while first impressions are being formed." In the communicative approach, speaking was importance because oral communication involves communication where students are supposed to communicate orally with other people. Moreover, the teachers' talk will be reduced; learners are reinforced to talk more in the classroom. In this approach, fluency and accuracy are the main characteristics, and they are balancing in achieving a given task.

So, the ultimate aim of learning a second language in classrooms will be the acquisition of the speaking skills. However, learners may find difficulties in taking part in interactions. In our country practicing the English speaking outside the classroom is not always possible that's why classroom interaction is important to develop speaking skills. Additionally, practice activities may serve the goal of speaking proficiency. Among these activities are the following

Communication games

Teachers' design such games to encourage and involve the students in verbal interaction. According to Bygate (1987) such activities include first, "Describe and Draw" in which a learner narrates specified portrayal and the other one draws it. Second, "Describe and Arrange"; specified learner illustrates a certain shape orally and the other recreates it without witnessing the original one. Third, "Find the difference", students' have to identify differences by describing pictures which are similar but with few differences, they have to describe it without seeing each other's pictures. O'Malley and Pierce (1996) call these activities "information gap activities"; they define them as "the ability of one person to give information to another. Information gap is an activity where one student is provided with information that is kept away from a partner."

Drama, simulations and role-plays

According to Bygate (1987), there are three types of oral activities that are very important which are not performed for audiences rather the participants work together within an imaginary setting. O'Malley and Pierce (1996) say that such activities are more authentic because they provide a format for using the real-life conversation such as repetitions, interruptions, recitations, facial expressions and gestures. Students often engage in another identity in role-plays, drama and simulations activities, where their anxiety is reduced, motivation is increased, and their language acquisition enhanced.

Discussion activities

These activities serve as the basis of spontaneous interaction which often employed for advanced language learners. Lindsay and Knight (2006) point out that in such activities, students' give their opinions and receive other opinions, they feel free to give opinions because teachers are not involved here and given them enough time to structure what they wish to say. However, Thornbury (2005) ^[15] says that in discussion activities learners' can report some personal things or topics from course book which arise spontaneous discussion that many teachers' agree.

Presentations and Talks

The excellent way of making students gain their self-confidence is through making them present oral work in front of their classmates. Thornbury (2005) ^[15] asserts that the students' act of standing up in front of their colleagues and speaking is an excellent preparation for authentic speaking. A planned conversation is when students' deliver a presentation on a specific concept of interest and is not planned for a natural conversation; it is more composed like.

Framework of the study

In order to make a systematic analysis of the data, Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC) (Flanders, 1963) ^[3] framework is an analytic observation system that gives an awareness into what a teacher does while teaching. This observation tool is used to arrange the oral comportment of the teacher and students' interaction in the classroom. It is intended to label the forms and extent of oral communication in the classroom and to map the knowledge on a template so that it could be analysed and construed. The findings give a picture as to measure how much the teachers and students take talk time during teaching and learning process.

Flanders Interaction Analysis

The Flanders interaction analysis was created by Flanders in the 1970s, as a method of analysing classroom interaction. In Flanders interaction analysis categories (FIAC) system, the entire classroom interaction is put into three main sections- teacher talk (indirect-accepting, encouragement, clarifying and questioning, direct- lecturing, giving instruction, criticizing), student talk (response and initiation) and silence (period of silence or confusion). Because it reveals, how much the teachers and students talking time and characteristics in classroom interaction.

Category number

Activity

Teacher talk

Indirect influence

Response

1. **Accepts feeling:** Instructor agrees and illuminates a mindset or the mood of a student in amicable manner. Emotion may be optimistic or pessimistic. Expectation and retraction of feelings are included.
2. **Praises or encourages:** Instructor praises or encourages action or behaviour. Jokes relieve stress, but not at the cost of others humiliation; head nod uttering um, hmm or go on are comprised.
3. **Receives or utilizes proposals of learners:** Instructor explaining or developing or acquiring proposals proposed by a learner. Trainer expansions of learner

proposals are incorporated but as the trainer gives more of his own, move on to the next step.

4. **Asks questions:** Instructor posing query about content to procedure, based on teacher ideas, with the intent that a pupil will answer.

Direct influence

1. **Initiation Lecturing:** Giving facts or opinions about subject or techniques; articulating his/her own thoughts, providing justification, or quoting an evidence other than the learner.
2. **Instructions:** Instructions, orders or directives to which a learner is supposed to be abide by.
3. **Criticizing:** Declarations meant to alter learner conduct from non-agreeable to agreeable form; weeping; expressing why the trainer is performing what he is; intense self-dependence.
4. **Student talk responses:** Conversation by learners in reply to instructor. Trainer begins the interaction or seeks learner assertion or shapes the condition.
5. **Student talk initiations:** Talk by learners, that they begin. Voicing individual thoughts; starting a different issue; liberty to cultivate views, like raising attentive challenges; moving further than the current composition.
6. **Hush or uncertainty:** Breaks, brief intervals of uncertainty in which message is not grasped by the onlooker.

The procedure of Flanders's Interaction Analysis

There are two processes of interaction analysis.

- **Encoding process:** Flanders Interaction Analysis is a system for coding spontaneous verbal communication. Communication could be noted in a classroom or in recording. For every 5 seconds, the onlooker notes down the type of communication he witnessed. He documents these statistics in order. He will note down 20 numbers per minute and at the end, he will have quite a few strings of statistics.
- **Decoding process:** Data is mapped on a template for easy evaluation and understanding. The technique of documenting the series of incidents involves inserting the series of statistics into a 10-row by the 10-column table. The widespread structure of the teacher-learner communication can be studied in this format.

Advantages of FIAC

1. The assessment is so reliable even if an individual is missing when opinions were made could make precise assumptions about the spoken ability and get a mind's eye view of classroom communication
2. Diverse formats can be applied to assess the performance of trainers of distinct age groups, gender, topic etc.
3. This study would work as a crucial response to the trainer or trainee about his/her objectives and tangible conduct in the classroom. The examining team can effortlessly pursue this method.
4. It is an effective tool to measure the social-emotional climate in the classroom.

Conclusion

To conclude, this research explores the development of the early efforts in developing interaction analysis systems.

Definition and types of classroom interaction condemn that there are two types of interaction-teacher-learner and learner-learner interaction. The importance of classroom talk is also analysed to distinguish the teacher and students' talk time. It is told that teachers should reduce his/her talking time in the classroom to leave enough room to students to interact and be involved in the learning process. The application of the FIAC observation method helps to measure the teacher talk time and student talk time in the classroom. Hence, most of the current teaching methods have highlighted thoroughly about the implementation of classroom interaction during learning a target language, since it improves students' speaking skills and performance. Moreover, the student's participation is highly suggested for the reason of fostering classroom interaction through allowing learners to share their ideas, insights, etc.

Research design

The present research is a mixed method case study research design. It holds real-life events of the holistic and meaningful characteristic of investigators (Yin, 2009) [19]. Yin states that a real-life context or setting is involved in a case study research. The study applied mixed methods in the case study to investigate both the qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate a real-life context or setting. As an approach, in mixed method study both quantitative and qualitative data are collected, analysed and mixed in a single study... Creswell (2008) [4]. This approach can integrate and create bridge the gap between the quantitative and qualitative paradigm, as mixed methods can answer research questions that the other methods cannot. In this study the classroom interaction of three private universities classes was studied with the purpose of investigating classroom interaction and improvement of speaking skills.

Participants

The research data was collected from three renowned universities in Guntur districts, Andhra Pradesh. A total of three classroom observations was conducted to understand teaching characteristics. There were 100 undergraduate students' (55% male and 45% female) who had participated in the student survey to express out their opinion about teacher performance and classroom interaction. Additionally, three teachers were interviewed to find out their knowledge of classroom interaction and their ways of applying it in their classroom.

Instrument applied

In order to find out the result, four research instruments were used in this research. They were students' survey, teacher's interview, classroom observation and recording.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was first piloted among 10 students to verify its comprehensiveness, readability, and understandability. They were asked to fill up the questionnaire that included background information part and items related to classroom interaction. On the basis of their replies and comments, statements which were criticized as being unclear were rewritten and some items were eliminated. In the sample a series of questions is designed to elicit information which was filled up by participants. The purpose of developing the questionnaire was to find out students' opinions. A questionnaire with 15 Likert scale

items were used to measure students' opinions about their teachers' performance and classroom interaction with '1' indicating strong disagreement and '5' indicating strong agreement. The 15 Likert scale items were categorized based on the discussion in the literature review.

Teachers' Interview

The researcher conducted a semi structured interview of the language teachers to obtain information for the research. The investigator intended the queries to be questioned preceding interview along with the order of queries. The questions were asked orally in face to face format. Each interview lasted around 20-30 minutes. The researcher had informed the interviewees that the interview was expected to last for about 20 minutes. However, the interviewees were very enthusiastic about the topic and needed more time to express their points of view. The teachers who participated were experienced English language teachers, teaching the same language courses.

Observation

'Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC) was used by the researcher as a research observation tool to collect reliable data for describing and analysing teacher-students' verbal interaction and teachers' behaviour. 'Flanders Interaction Analysis' is a procedure used to qualify direct and indirect influence that is closely related to teaching behaviour identified by research on classroom climate'. To conduct this observation, the researcher first placed the 10 categories in her memory and used a live classroom setting of three private universities to code the spoken interaction between teachers and students. There were some rules for deciding which one the best category should be put out in the code consistency. Flanders suggests using a set ground rules to be followed while noting down the observations.

Some of them are given below

1. When uncertain about placing a statement on one of any two categories, choose a category on the scale that is farthest from category five, except for category ten.
2. If the teacher's behaviour is either consistently direct or indirect, avoid shifting from one classification to the other unless such a shift is clearly indicated by the teacher
3. When the teacher repeats student's answer and if it is a correct answer, this is recorded as 24. Record an 8 when several students' respond to a narrow question.

Recording: The researcher used audio recording as the main instrument for data collection to get an accurate data. After recording the data was transferred to computer and listened to it before coding those.

Data collection

For data collection both the primary and secondary sources were used. Primary data was collected through teachers' interview, classroom observation and questionnaire while secondary data was gathered from internet, journal, article and relevant books. Moreover, the researcher had collected data from three universities. Once the research framework was established, approvals of the main authorities were taken. All the teachers and students were informed about the process and purpose of the study. The researcher administrated the survey to each of the participating English

language classes in private universities during class hours and students completed the surveys in the absence of their teachers'. The researcher completed the classroom observation for three times class meeting by using observation tally sheet and recording; and took three teachers' interview personally. Furthermore, to complete the observation the researcher had to maintain an observation tally sheet known as matrix to plot the coded data. The verbal interaction was coded where each class observation lasts for about 80 minutes were used as observation period as the researcher writes down the category numbers of the interaction after three seconds that she observed. The numbers were recorded in sequence in a column. Time to time marginal notes are also taken to explain classroom happenings. An illustration is given below-

Data Analysis

For analysing the mixed method research data both qualitative and quantitative data were employed. The results of students' survey, teachers' interview, and class observation data were linked to the central research questions and analysed in details both individually and the responses of the teachers' separately. After the collection of the data, all of the survey papers of the students and interviews of the teachers were evaluated. The researcher shed lights on teachers' talk and students' talk to identify whether students are getting proper time for practicing speaking which will create a scope for developing their speaking skills.

Validity and Reliability

To assure the quality of data collection procedure, validity and reliability play a significant role. Seligar and Sohamy (1989) said that "reliability provides information on whether the data collection procedure is consistent and accurate". A pilot study was done to make necessary changes before starting the main study. After making changes all data will be considered as accurate. It is obvious that the data collection procedure will be consistent and accurate also. At the time of structuring survey questionnaire more reliable and valid, some of the aspects have been taken into account, they are theoretical discussion of the teaching, discussion with the supervisor of the research, survey to make the survey more valid and reliable. Finally, she does the interview with three university teachers.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, this chapter explained the research design where it was identified that the research is a mixed method embracing characteristic of a case study and the participants were exclusively taken from universities (teachers and students). The instruments were applied according to mixed method approach, where a quantitative student survey was conducted with qualitative teachers' interview and classroom observation which was followed by Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC) system. The data collection procedure and analysis was also explained clearly. Lastly, the validity and reliability of the study were clarified. The results obtained from the study lead us to draw the following suggestions and recommendations for teachers' and future research.

1. The study shows the divergence relationship between language teachers' belief and actual practice which is

clearly found from the research data. Here teachers are aware of classroom interaction, but the actual practice is absent. Teachers' still controls all of the teaching learning activities. This research can help teachers to identify their own teaching behaviour and can change their teaching style which will help learners to develop speaking skills.

2. Moreover, the time allocation for communication activity should be increased and various activity should be included by the teachers' so that students can conduct it in a stress free and relaxed environment. Also, positive environment is necessary to motivate students', so that they can communicate frequently without anxiety and shyness.
3. Therefore, the communicative activity or pair/group work will increase opportunity for learning output because in teacher-learners' interaction students' only respond but in pair/group work they initiate more which may give rise of English-speaking skills.
4. Furthermore, future research can be conduct by including more universities and information for questionnaire survey sample, conduct more interview of English language teachers' and do more classroom observation to get the real scenario of the field.

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