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## | RESEARCH ARTICLE

### Classroom Interaction: An Analysis of Teacher and Student Talk in Moroccan EFL Classrooms

**Dr. Jaouad RIAD**

*Professor, Department of English Studies, Faculty of Letters & Human Sciences, Ibn Zohr University, Agadir, Morocco*

**Corresponding Author:** Dr. Jaouad RIAD, **E-mail:** [j.riad@uiz.ac.ma](mailto:j.riad@uiz.ac.ma)

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#### | ABSTRACT

Classroom interaction has always been considered at the heart of the teaching-learning process as it permits students to increase their level of understanding of the learning materials and further develop their speaking skills. However, the previous studies denoted that teachers dominate when speaking in the classroom rather than students do. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the teacher talk, student talk of EFL classrooms along with the category which is frequently used in the classroom based on the FLINT analysis system. The design of this research is descriptive qualitative. The sample of the study was EFL teachers and their students of 7 Baccalaureate high school classes in Agadir. The data were collected through naturalistic observation and recording. The data were analyzed using Foreign Language Interaction (FLINT) system as developed by Moskowitz (1971). The findings revealed all of the teacher and student talk categories as mentioned in FLINT. However, giving direction and lecturing were found as the most frequently used categories among all. Moreover, the teachers mostly adopted a role as controllers in the classroom as they frequently led the flow of interaction. The findings have a number of implications for EFL in Moroccan secondary high schools.

#### | KEYWORDS

Classroom Interaction, FLINT analysis, EFL classroom, Teachers' talk, Students' talk.

#### | ARTICLE INFORMATION

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#### Introduction

Interaction has always been at the heart of communication process to obtain experience in English communication where teacher and students need to interact regularly using the target language (Brown, 2001). It takes place as soon as people exchange, share, send and receive ideas, opinions anywhere and anytime including classroom context.

According to Dagari (2004), classroom interaction is bidirectional process between the participants in the teaching-language process where the teacher influences the learners. On the same path, Richard (1990) claimed that, classroom interaction is the pattern of either verbal or non-verbal communication along the types of social relationship which occur within any given classroom.

Through meaningful interaction, English teacher can create provide beneficial different opportunities for language learners to interact in the form of groups or individual work. In addition, classroom interaction is a pedagogical technique to trigger a student to participate and speak. However, participant during classroom interaction seem to be difficult using the target language all the time, especially in the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classroom. It took place since the most EFL students share common native languages (Brown, 2001). If the teacher of EFL ignores it, the goal of teaching process could not be achieved.

The problem related to the interaction using native language in English language classrooms can be solved only if teacher and students are aware enough of the importance of interaction in language classroom. As for Rivers (1987),

interaction plays crucial roles in language classrooms since it can increase students' language store. That is, interaction in the language classroom serves well students speaking performance, therefore, the study about classroom interaction is considerably important and worth to be analyzed.

However, Nunan (1998) claims that many language teachers were surprised of the amount of talk time they used in classroom; it is for about 70 to 80 percent out of class time was spent mostly by teacher talk. The dominance of teacher talk in language classroom interaction seems to be irrelevant in foreign language teaching since it does not provide appropriate opportunities for students to practice the language (Tsui, 1995).

Based on the issue above, the study aims at exploring the nature of verbal classroom interaction of a teacher and students at public high schools in Agadir. It mainly tries to describe categories of verbal classroom interaction of both participants namely; teacher talk; and student talk categories along with other FLINT categories. Moreover, it aims at investigating teacher's role and its implication on student's motivation.

This study is expected to provide a comprehensive descriptions and basis for future studies related to the nature of classroom interaction theoretically. From practical view, it also hopefully provides valuable contributions to English teachers in case of they can be better to analyze their own teaching performance, to observe their classroom behavior and then to plan as well as to conduct interactive classroom interactions. A qualitative method embracing characteristic of a case study was used. Furthermore, the instrument used to collect the data was audio-recording observation.

FLINT as a model of classroom interaction analysis claims that for a teaching to be effective it is basically related to the extent to which directly and indirectly teachers influence the learners' behavior. As for Brown (2001), this model is helpful in developing interactive language teaching by (a) giving you taxonomy for observing other teachers, (b) giving you a framework for evaluating and improving your own teaching, such as how well do you balance teacher talk and student talk, (c) helping you especially the first seven categories in creating a learning atmosphere for interactive teaching.

Having the fact that FLINT system is used to analyze classroom which deals with foreign language, the researcher is interested to conduct the classroom analysis at public high schools of Agadir Iddaw Tanan by using FLINT System as measurement. One of the main reasons behind the choice of third-year students (option letter or human sciences) is the fact that those students have already been taught the English language in the previous three years, and they are still studying this subject for three hours per week. Consequently, this has given them the chance to experience intensively classroom interaction as a pedagogical strategy within ELF classrooms. Moreover, those students are supposed to graduate by the end of this year (the time when the data was collected), and the majority of them are going to choose to continue their higher education at the university as English department students either at Ibn Zohr university or any other universities. Thus, they need at least to know about the importance of classroom interaction in the teaching -learning process of EFL, and its usefulness in developing one's speaking skills.

Table 1: *FLINT system (Adopted from Moskowitz, 1971, as cited in Brown, 2001)*

		<b>Cat</b>	<b>Activities</b>
<b>Teacher Talk</b>	Direct Influence	1.	Deals with feelings.
		2.	Praises or encourages.
		3.	Accepts and uses ideas of students.
	Indirect Influence	4.	Asks questions.
		5.	Gives information.
		6.	Gives directions.
<b>Learner Talk</b>	Response		<u>Criticizes student behavior/response.</u>
		8.	Student response, specific.
	Initiation	9.	<u>Student response, open-ended or student-initiated.</u>
<b>Silence</b>		10.	Silence.
			<u>Confusion, work-oriented.</u>
<b>Other FLINT Categories</b>		12.	Laughter.
		13.	Use of the native language.
		14.	Nonverbal

## Data Presentation and Discussion

In response to the major question, the result of recording analysis revealed three main aspects of verbal classroom interactions which were broken down into more aspects of analysis. They are teacher talk, student talk, silence or confusion, and other aspects of classroom interaction. The distribution can be seen in the table below.

Table 2: Summary Result of Classroom Interaction

Categories	Teacher Talk		Student Talk		Silence/ Confusion		Other FLINT Categories	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Observations								
Obs 1	2152	71.73%	372	12.40 %	374	12.46%	102	3.40%
Obs 2	2162	72.06%	377	12.56%	377	11.70%	110	3.66%
Obs 3	2169	72.30%	374	12.46%	355	11.83%	102	3.40%
Obs 4	2170	72.33%	370	12.33%	360	12%	100	3.33%
Obs 5	2185	72.83%	375	12.50%	343	11.43%	106	3.23%
Obs 6	2150	71.66%	379	12.63%	373	12.43%	98	3.26%
Obs 7	2188	72.92%	420	14.00%	280	9.33%	114	3.73%
<b>Mean</b>	<b>2168</b>	<b>72.26%</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>12.69%</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>11.59%</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>3.43%</b>

(NB) 1. Freq = the frequency of TT, ST and Sil occurred in each observation; 2. (%) = the percentage of TT, ST and S/C of each category).

From the data above, the whole picture of classroom interaction reveals teacher talk as the most dominant aspect compared to student talk, silence, and other categories. The dominance of teacher talk proportion in each meeting happened since the teacher mainly explained the material and rules and gave instructions. The findings revealed in this study is consistent with other related studies in which proportions of teacher talk were consistent, almost for about 70% (Nunan, 1999). It is of importance creating and providing opportunities for students to actively interact in classroom as Pinter (2006) proposes that quantity of chances for students to interact in classroom is crucial in language teaching learning process. The explanation of student talk will be elaborated in further section.

As regards to silence or confusion, the existence of this category tends to be consistent during all the seven observations except for the seventh where the proportion was significant high. This augmentation of silence could be related to the classroom activities at the time of observing as they arranged form workbook exercises, writing, and confusion...etc. As revealed from the data, all of teacher talk categories in FLINT system are found throughout the study. The patterns of the data are broken down into two tables according to indirect and direct influences. Indirect influence consists of accepting feelings, praising, using student's ideas and asking questions. If the teacher in teaching – learning process do more indirect teaching, it means she allows the students to be active in her classroom. It is kind of students – centered model learning, the teacher only gives little explanation about the material, then students have discussion with their friends or with the teacher. It consists of accepting feelings, praising, using student's ideas and asking questions.

Table 3: Percentages of Indirect Influence of Teacher Talk Categories (%)

Categories Observation	Indirect Influence			
	Accepting Feelings (C1)	Praising (C2)	Using Ss' ideas (C3)	Asking questions (C4)
Obs 1	0.33 %	1.66%	1.86%	16.00 %
Obs 2	0.30%	1.60%	1.80%	16.33%
Obs 3	0.36%	1.53%	1.66%	16.30%
Obs 4	0.26%	0.80%	1.60%	16.33%
Obs 5	0.30%	1.70%	1.46%	16%
Obs 6	0.40%	1.76%	1.53%	15.20%
Obs 7	0.36%	1.83%	1.33%	15.33%
<b>Mean</b>	<b>0.33%</b>	<b>1.55%</b>	<b>1.60%</b>	<b>15.92%</b>

As can be seen from Table 3, accepting feelings (C1) occurred in this study as the least category of teacher talk. It takes extreme percentage compared to the other categories which means that the teacher rarely checked and accepted student's feelings. Secondly, praising and encouraging students (C2) occurred in more frequent times than accepting feelings category. The teacher praised and encouraged the students when they were giving relevant responses confirming correct answers and enhancing them to interact. Thirdly, using or accepting student's ideas (C3) appeared in higher amount than accepting feelings and praising but lower than asking questions.

e.i In language classrooms, if the direct influence is higher than indirect teaching, it simply indicates that the model of teaching – learning process adopted is still focused on the teacher teacher-centered. It would be of prominence and benefit if the student also take part actively in the classroom. Direct instruction in the observed classes reflects the proportion of lecturing, giving direction, and criticizing or justifying authority. In FLINT Analysis, it is categorized in category 5, 6 and 7. The description of the result is as following.

Table 4: Percentages of Direct Influence of Teacher Talk Categories (%)

Categories Observation	Direct Influence		
	Lecturing (C5)	Giving Directions (C6)	Criticizing (C7)
Obs 1	46.13 %	5.66%	<b>0.06%</b>
Obs 2	46.33%	5.60%	<b>0.70%</b>
Obs 3	46.60%	5.73%	<b>0.01%</b>
Obs 4	46.70%	5.56%	<b>0.06%</b>
Obs 5	47.40 %	5.83%	<b>0.13%</b>
Obs 6	44.44%	5.72%	<b>0.03%</b>
Obs 7	47.66%	6.33%	<b>0.06%</b>
<b>Mean</b>	<b>46.46%</b>	<b>5.77%</b>	<b>0.15%</b>

In contrast to table 4, direct influence of teacher talk exists in more significant percentages than the indirect one. It was more than a half of teacher talking time in average (52.38%). Dominant categories in each meeting were lecturing or giving information (C5) and giving directions (C6). The findings are not different from previous studies conducted by Astiti (2012) and Nurhasanah (2013) in which the dominant category of Teacher Talk occurred in teaching and learning process was asking question and type lecturing. These variations were influenced by the way the teachers led the students to accomplish the learning task, i.e the model of teaching implemented.

In regard with the last category of teacher talk, criticizing occurs in constant number which is always less than one percent in each observation. Criticizing took place when the teacher rejected the behavior of students; trying to change the non-acceptable behavior and corrected the student's inappropriate performance. As it is concluded from the data, Criticizing was found to be in lower percentage than praising which indicates that the teachers gave positive feedback more than negative feedback to the students.

As for the dominance of either direct or indirect categories of teacher talk, it is obvious that the teacher adopted direct teaching more rather than indirect one. The direct influence accounts for academic reasons, which affect formal classroom context (Moon, 2000). Nevertheless, language learners' classrooms require different types of treatment and interaction in which teachers need to build more intimate and kind informal rapport with their learners. Also, Brown (2000) believes that interactive teaching is closely concerned with indirect teaching.

In addition to classroom atmosphere and relationship with the students, direct teaching also affects the role of the teacher as controller rather than monitor (tutor) (Brown, 2000). This is clear from the fact that the teachers led and pushed the students more to perform different tasks and explained materials than accepted student's feelings, praised their performances, used their ideas and asked questions.

With respect to Student talk as recommended from FLINT system. The findings of are drawn below.

Table 5: *Percentages of Student Talk Categories (%)*

<b>Categories Observation</b>	<b>Response (C8)</b>	<b>Initiation (C8)</b>
Obs 1	9.66%	2.73%
Obs 2	9.83%	2.73%
Obs 3	9.66%	2.80%
Obs 4	9.56%	2.76%
Obs 5	9.66%	2.83%
Obs 6	9.96%	2.66%
Obs 7	11.50%	2.50%
<b>Mean</b>	<b>9.97%</b>	<b>2.71%</b>

In table 5, it is quite obvious that student talk takes less significant proportion out of total classroom interaction (12.68%). The percentage of student talk goes hand in hand with what has been found by Tsui (1995) that student talk accounts for less than 30 percent in "teacher-fronted classrooms". However, as the teacher posed many display questions, the students were motivated to respond to them during discussing the student's building knowledge, reading their writing task in front of the other students.

Student's initiation takes a very small proportion in classroom interaction. The topic chosen in some classes during teaching learning processes such as historical figures gave bad impact on student's motivation both in responding to the teacher's questions and initiating the interaction. It means that the students were not enough motivated due to the fact that they were not interested and have the lack of knowledge about the topic.

Apart from the dominance of teacher talk, the teacher's questions and meaningful contexts have implication to student's motivation. However, the results show low proportion of student's participation in classroom interaction. It is in accordance with an argument stating that good characteristics of learners are those who have willingness to experiment the language and ask questions in interacting with teacher and classmates (Harmer, 2003). Moreover, the student's speaking skill is not good enough to actively interact in classroom which is shown by the percentage of silence and use of native language in classroom interaction.

Based on FLINT, Silence is divided into two parts. First, silence that indicates any pauses in the interaction and periods of quiet during which there is no verbal interaction. Second, Confusion where more than one person at a time talking, so the interaction cannot be recorded. Students calling out excitedly, eager to participate or respond, concerned with the task at hand. The detail of silence and confusion is as following.

Table 6: *Percentages of Silence Categories (%)*

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Silence (C10)</b>	<b>Confusion, Work-oriented (C11)</b>
<b>Observation</b>		
Obs 1	11.46%	1%
Obs 2	10.56%	1.13%
Obs 3	10.66%	1.16%
Obs 4	10.76%	1.23%
Obs 5	10.10%	1.33%
Obs 6	10.96%	1.46%
Obs 7	7.93%	1.4%
<b>Mean</b>	<b>10.34%</b>	<b>1.24%</b>

As shown from Table 6, it is evident that silence is present during all the meetings. The results display that silence percentage in each meeting had variation. The average was approximately (10.34%). However, confusion was very low as the percentage was identical among the classes. The percentage of confusion was (1.24%)

The other FLINT system categories namely laughter, use the native language, and nonverbal are distributed as following:

Table 7: *Percentages of Other FLINT Categories (%)*

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Laughter (C12)</b>	<b>Use of native language (C13)</b>	<b>Nonverbal (C14)</b>
<b>Observation</b>			
Obs 1	1.13%	2.26%	0.00%
Obs 2	1.33%	2.33%	0.00%
Obs 3	1.43%	1.96%	0.00%
Obs 4	1.33%	2%	0.00%
Obs 5	1.13%	2.10%	0.00%
Obs 6	1.26%	2%	0.00%
Obs 7	1.66%	2.06%	0.00%
<b>Mean</b>	<b>1.32%</b>	<b>2.10%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>

Table 7 displays that category 13 as the use of native language either from the teacher or students' part was present across all the meetings with different percentages. For instance, when the teachers gave instructions in English, then they gave equivalence of that using the native language of the students. The average was (2.10%). Laughter and giggle by the whole class, individuals, or the teachers recorded (1.32%) of the total time of classroom interaction.

## Conclusion

This present case study has revealed the consistency of the results from previous research conducted on teacher and student talk during classroom interaction that teacher talk plays a dominant part of the whole interaction as stated by Nunan (2001). It is also concluded the occurrence of all categories of teacher talk starting from the highest percentage to the lowest. That is to say, lecturing followed by asking questions, giving directions, using students' ideas, praising and encouraging, accepting feelings, and finally criticizing.

As for the student talk, this study has shown two categories of student talk as mentioned in FLINT namely responses and initiation. Many display questions posed by the teacher which somehow motivated the students to give responses. However, the usage of native language during interaction was frequently used. The finding of the study also displayed the role of the teacher that was mostly adopted by which is the "controller". This is proved by the high percentage of lecturing, asking questions, giving directions by which, the teachers led the flow of interaction.

Based on the findings, the following suggestions are offered for EFL teachers and further research.

1. It is recommended for the English teachers to motivate their students to speak and interact using the target language (English) during all learning activities, to praise them for what they have done so as to build up their confidence, and to encourage them to interact more through the use of different types of questions which are able to develop their communicative competence.

2. The teachers are advised to provide more reinforcements to the students.

Reinforcements could increase the frequency of productive behaviors and decrease the frequency of disruptive behaviors. In other words, teachers can give positive reinforcement by praising the students when their answers are correct. Consequently, the students will be more active because they would be happy to answer teachers' questions.

3. For those who are concerned about conducting similar research, they are suggested to analyze teacher and student talk using another framework of observation in rather than FLINT to obtain different senses of data and to analyze (1) whether student response was given by an individual or by a group, (2) whether interaction takes place between teacher and student or student and student, or other types of classroom interaction (3) and the perceptions of both participants of the role of classroom these types in developing students' speaking skills.

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