

## *Original Paper*

# The Analysis of Novice English Teacher Talk in Junior High School under SETT Framework

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### **Abstract**

*In the realm of English teaching, teacher talk stands as a pivotal instructional instrument, serving both as a vital tool for teachers and a primary conduit for knowledge input for students. Effective classroom instruction is intricately woven with the dynamic, two-way interaction between teachers and students, which is expertly guided by the teacher talk. While numerous scholars have delved into the exploration of teacher talk, there remains a dearth of research investigating the specific landscape of novice English teachers' classroom talk, particularly within the framework of Walsh's Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk (SETT). This study addresses this gap by observing the classes of four novice English teachers in junior high schools based on Walsh's SETT framework to meticulously examine the current state of novice middle school English teachers' classroom discourse. The objective is to cultivate teachers' reflective awareness regarding their own discourse in the classroom and enhance their capacity to critically evaluate its efficacy as well as elevating the overall effectiveness of English classroom interactions in the context of secondary education.*

### **Keywords**

*novice English teacher, teacher talk, junior high school, SETT framework, interactive modes, interactive features*

### **1. Introduction**

Classroom discourse encompasses all audible language occurring during classroom teaching and learning, such as questions and answers, explanations, discussions, gossip, and recitations (Liu & Fang, 2021). It is defined as contextualized language within the educational practice, reflecting the actual language used in the classroom (秋田喜代美, 2006). Recognized as an integral part of a lesson, classroom discourse plays a vital role in facilitating effective communication and learning within the educational setting.

The kind of classroom discourse produced by the teacher is simply known as teacher talk, which is an essential component of classroom discourse and variously defined. As early as in 1982, Sinclair and Brazil proposed that teacher talk is a kind of language used by teachers for most of the time in class to instruct directions, arrange activities and check students' comprehension (Sinclair & Brazil, 1982). Yanfen and Yuqin (2010) define teacher talk as the language in the classroom that takes up a major portion of class time employed to give directions, explain activities and check students' understanding, which means that teacher talk is the main source of classroom input. What's more, Krashen implied teacher talk as "the classroom language that accompanies exercises, the language of explanations, in second language and in some foreign language classrooms, and the language of classroom management", showing that teacher talk plays a central role in not only teaching knowledge itself but also in managing the class (Krashen, 1981). In 1994, Ellis suggested that in the process of language learning, for classroom teaching, teachers should make effective adjustments to the language's functions and modes to help learners understand and make adjustments, and that this kind of language is Teacher Discourse. Jack C. Richards (2000) believes that teacher talk is that variety of language used by teachers when they are in the process of teaching. In trying to communicate with learners, teachers often simplify their talk. This definition stresses the variety and simplification of foreign language teacher talk. According to Lin (1996), teacher talk is a kind of language variant developed on the basis of foreigner talk and baby talk with simplified forms to meet teaching requirements.

In this paper, "teacher talk" encompasses all discourse employed by English teachers in the classroom to achieve teaching objectives. This includes both the target language and the native language of the country, with adaptations made based on students' actual learning situations and teacher objectives. Teacher talk serves the simultaneous functions of education, modeling, and communication. The language used in teaching encapsulates not only a wealth of knowledge and culture but also the teacher's understanding of the classroom content, subtly influencing students' thinking and fostering positive behaviors and characters. As proposed by Nunan (1991), teacher talk plays a crucial role in aiding learners in acquiring a second language. The skillful conveyance of teaching content relies on the teacher's talk, serving as the primary source of linguistic input in the classroom.

In the current English education context within junior high schools in non-English speaking countries, there is a pressing need for teachers to exhibit creativity and dynamism in their interactions with students, moving beyond unilateral lecturing towards fostering interactive classroom environments (Moh. Abraham Akbar Eisenring & Margana, 2018). In the landscape of China's basic education, particularly in English classrooms, teacher talk assumes a pivotal role as a primary source of language input for students' acquisition processes. The quality of teacher talk significantly influences the smooth and successful acquisition of the language by students. Recognizing its crucial role, there is a growing inclination to analyze the dynamics of talk in English language teaching from various research perspectives, underscoring its paramount importance in the teaching and learning process.

Novice English teachers, defined as educators holding appropriate academic and teaching credentials entering their first teaching positions, experience a “Novice Development Period” in their initial three years of work (Ma, 2023). This phase involves adapting to professional identity changes, along with interpersonal, pedagogical, and teacher talk challenges. Acknowledging the significance of teacher talk, novice English teachers should enhance their comprehension of discourse meaning and usage, grasp diverse discourse modes and concepts in specific classrooms, and enrich communication methods (Li, Tan, & Wu, 2010). Despite its importance, teacher talk is often overlooked in this period, leading novice teachers to lack awareness and systematic analysis skills. Addressing this gap is crucial for novice teachers to effectively navigate and improve their teacher talk, contributing to a more proficient and reflective teaching practice.

The SETT framework, introduced by British scholar Walsh in 2006 within his work “Studies in Classroom Discourse,” emerges as a valuable tool for novice English teachers. This framework provides a fresh perspective on teacher talk and the characteristics of interaction, contributing to a critically reflective practice (Walsh, 2006). Walsh’s SETT framework proves instrumental in studying English teacher talk and enhancing English teaching by promoting purposeful, efficient, and effective use of teacher talk. Despite its utility, there is a notable gap in research utilizing this framework, particularly in the context of English teacher talk, and even more so with a focus on novice teachers. Consequently, this paper aims to address this gap by analyzing teacher talk in classrooms with four novice teachers as participants, employing the SETT framework. Through this analysis, the study seeks to contribute valuable insights to the understanding and improvement of English teaching practices, especially for novice educators.

## **2. Method**

### *2.1 Research Questions*

This paper aims to analyze the discourse of novice English teacher in junior high school based on the SETT framework to help novice teachers understand how they can improve their teacher talk during classes in a systematic way and help them master relevant strategies in terms of teacher talk. Therefore, two research questions are followed.

Question 1: How are the four interactional modes in SETT framework distributed in novice English teacher talk in junior high school?

Question 2: What are the interactional features of novice English teacher talk in junior high school based on SETT framework?

### *2.2 Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk Framework*

Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk (SETT) is one of tools that is often used as reference to analyze the interaction and teacher talk in the classroom. It was proposed by Walsh who worked as the professor majoring in applied linguistics at the University of Newcastle. The main purpose of SETT is to arouse second language teachers’ emphasis on classroom interaction and help them understand their own talk

in classroom teaching by virtue of reflection. The result of the interaction analysis by using SETT could be beneficial for language teachers, as they may improve the effectiveness of their talk in the classroom. Walsh's SETT framework mainly proposed 4 modes and 14 interactional features. Each mode requires specific interactional features drawing upon the pedagogical goals.

### 2.2.1 Fourteen Interactional Features

Fourteen features of verbal interaction are proposed in SETT framework. These features include scaffolding, direct repair, content feedback, extended wait-time, referential questions, seeking clarification, extended learner turn, teacher echo, teacher interruptions, extended teacher turn, turn completion, display questions, form-focused feedback, and confirmation checks. The detail description of each feature is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Interactive Features of Teacher Talk**

Interactive Features of Teacher Talk	Description
Scaffolding	a. Reformulation (rephrasing a learner's contribution). b. Extension (extending a learner's contribution). c. Modelling (providing an example for learner(s)).
Direct repair	Correcting an error quickly and directly.
Content feedback	Giving feedback to the message rather than the words used.
Extended wait-time	Allowing sufficient time (several seconds) for students to respond or formulate a response
Referential questions	Genuine questions to which the teacher does not know the answer.
Seeking clarification	a. Teacher asks a student to clarify something the student has said. b. Student asks teacher to clarify something the teacher has said.
Extended learner turn	Learner turn of more than one utterance.
Teacher echo	a. Teacher repeats teacher's previous utterances. b. Teacher repeats a learner's contribution.
Teacher interruptions	Interrupting a learner's contribution.
Extended teacher turn	Teacher turn of more than one utterance
Turn completion	Completing a learner's contribution for the learner.
Display questions	Asking questions to which teacher knows the answer.
Form-focused feedback	Giving feedback on the words used, not the message.
Confirmation check	Confirming understanding of a student's or teacher's contribution.

### 2.2.1 Four Interactive Modes

The managerial mode is one in which the teacher organizes the learning process in the classroom, conducts or concludes classroom activities, or to summarize or give feedback on a particular stage of a lesson. Therefore, the managerial management model is also often used as a starting model for the other three models.

In materials mode, the subject of discourse, the timing of discourse and the content of discourse are determined by the learning materials. Specific learning materials are centered on the formulation of teaching objectives, the design of activity tasks and the selection of classroom discourse, and the way and content of classroom interaction will be gradually generated around the learning materials. The way and content of classroom interaction will also be gradually generated around the learning materials. Different classroom activities give learners different levels of language practice. Different classroom activities give learners different levels of opportunities to practice language. At the same time, the learning materials constrain the freedom of the learners' discourse.

The skills and systems mode is centered around a language system (e.g., grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary) or a language skill (e.g., listening and speaking) that provides language training to learners within the context of a classroom topic. In this model, the target language determines the teacher's turn and the topic of study in the classroom, and the teacher is responsible for controlling the turn and managing the target language in the classroom.

The classroom context mode is typically characterized by the creation of interactive scenarios and the output of natural dialogues. The teacher's dominant position is relatively weakened, and the classroom role retreats to that of a listener and facilitator, making the teaching and learning effective by pointing out and commenting on the dialogues. The teacher's discourse in the classroom context model is more about providing feedback on the content of the learner's discourse, and occasionally providing referential questions for the learner to continue the discourse. Teachers and students also engage in effective negotiation and co-construction of meaning.

The pedagogical goals and interactional features of the four modes are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Pedagogical Goals and Interactional Features of the Four Modes**

Modes	Pedagogical Goals	Interactional Features
Managerial Mode	To transmit information	A single, extended teacher
	To organize the physical learning environment	turn that uses explanations and/or instructions
	To refer learners to materials	The use of transitional
	To introduce or conclude an activity	markers
	To change from one mode of	The use of confirmation checks

	learning to another	absence of learner contributions
Materials Mode	To provide language practice around a piece of material To elicit responses in relation to the material To check and display answers To clarify when necessary To evaluate contributions	Predominance of IRF pattern Extensive use of display questions Form-focused feedback Corrective repair The use of scaffolding
Skills and Systems Mode	To enable learners to produce correct forms To enable learners to manipulate the target language To provide corrective feedback To provide learners with practice in sub-skills To display correct answers	Direct repair Scaffolding Extended teacher turns Display questions Teacher echo Clarification requests Form-focused feedback
Classroom Context Mode	To enable learners to express themselves clearly To establish a context To promote oral fluency	Extended learner turns(Not considered in this study) Short teacher turns Minimal repair Content feedback Referential questions Scaffolding Clarification request

When studying teacher talk in the classroom, the SETT framework can be used to study and analyze a variety of different teacher discourses in a more effective way, facilitating teachers' self-assessment and other-assessment methods to reflect on classroom teaching, and thus improving their own teaching standards. Although the SETT framework has received attention from academics, the number of studies based on this framework is still in its infancy at home and abroad. Most of the existing studies focus on more experienced teachers in secondary schools and college teachers, and few studies focus on novice English teachers. Therefore, this paper aims to analyze the discourse of novice English teachers in middle schools based on the SETT framework.

### 2.3 Research Participants

In this paper, novice English teacher refers to the teacher who works for at least one year but less than 3

years. We select 4 teachers who work in different schools now and record their lessons, which include two periods of listening and speaking lessons and two periods of reading and writing classes. Each class lasts 45 minutes. The detail information of the four teachers and their classes are shown in Table 3 (In order to protect the privacy of the participants, names appearing in the table are pseudonyms).

**Table 3. Detail Information of the Four Teachers and Their Classes**

Teacher	Grade	Lesson Type	Theme of the Class
Teacher 1	7	Listening and Speaking	Making plans—What are you going to do at the weekend?
Teacher 2	8	Listening and Speaking	Sports—Nothing is more enjoyable than playing tennis.
Teacher 3	8	Reading and Writing	Animals in danger—The WWF us working hard to save them all.
Teacher 4	7	Reading and Writing	Shopping—You can buy everything on the internet

## 2.4 Research Instruments

### 2.4.1 Classroom Observation

Classroom observation method refers to the purposeful analysis and recording of classroom teaching content, and the further use of meticulous observation to explore the optimization countermeasures of classroom teaching and promote the professional development of teachers' research activities.

This study adopts the classroom observation method to analyze the current situation of novice English teachers' discourse use in junior high schools in China. Classroom observation method is mainly used in this study for two main purposes: one is to lay the foundation for dealing with transcribed texts of teachers' discourse, and the other is to observe teachers' nonverbal behaviors in the classroom.

### 2.4.2 Classroom Recording

Classroom recording is a straightforward method employed for capturing classroom interactions, offering the advantage of capturing teachers' and students' gestures and facial expressions. This methodology is applied to record lessons delivered by 4 English teachers, with each lesson lasting forty-five minutes. The classroom discourse of both teachers and students was transcribed into written texts for detailed analysis, aiming to unveil interactive modes and features of teacher talk during the teaching process.

### 2.4.3 Conversation Analysis

Conversation analysis aims at figuring out the organizational rules and structural features of conversation by analyzing participants' discourse, the control and change of turn, and the connection of conversation (Cheng, 2009). This research employs conversation analysis to investigate the

characteristics and modes of teacher discourse and their impact on the teaching process and students' learning.”

#### 2.4.4 Coding

After classroom observation and recording, the authors coded the transcribed text based on the SETT framework as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4. Encoding of Interactional Modes and Interactive Features**

Interactional Modes	Encoding of Interactional Modes	of Interactional Features	Encoding of Interactional Features
Managerial Mode	A	A single, extended teacher turn that uses explanations and/or instructions	A1
		The use of transitional markers	A2
		The use of confirmation checks	A3
		The absence of learner contributions	A4
Materials Modes	B	Predominance of IRF pattern	B1
		Extensive use of display questions	B2
		Form-focused feedback	B3
		Corrective repair	B4
		The use of scaffolding	B5
Skills and System Mode	C	Direct repair	C1
		Scaffolding	C2
		Extended teacher turns	C3
		Display questions	C4
		Teacher echo	C5
		Clarification requests	C6
		Form-focused feedback	C7
Classroom Context Mode	D	Short teacher turns	D1
		Minimal repair	D2
		Content feedback	D3
		Referential questions	D4



Scaffolding	D5
Clarification request	D6

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Amount of Teacher Talk

The four classroom sessions under observation and recording in this study maintained a uniform duration of 45 minutes each. Within the framework of an English classroom, time allocation revolves around three principal entities: the teacher, students, and diverse activities. The proportion of time dedicated to the teacher talk serves as a key metric indicative of the interactive dynamics of the lesson. In instances where the instructional approach is teacher-centric, the percentage of teacher's speech tends to be elevated, signifying a diminished degree of interaction between both teachers and students and students themselves.

In the analysis of recorded video, the researcher systematically computed the percentage of time allocated to teacher talk, student talk and other activities across classrooms led by four novice English teachers in junior high schools, as delineated in Table 1. Subsequent to this analysis, an aggregate summary of the time distribution concerning teacher talk, student talk, and other activities among the four novice English teachers is synthesized and presented in Table 2. This quantitative breakdown aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the pedagogical interactions observed in the study.

**Table 5. The Distribution of Class Time of Each Teacher**

Teacher	Teacher Talk		Student Talk		Other Activities	
	Time(min)	%	Time(min)	%	Time(min)	%
T 1	29	64%	10	22%	6	14%
T 2	20	44%	18	40%	7	16%
T 3	23	51%	5	11%	17	38%
T 4	25	56%	8	18%	12	26%

**Table 6. The Total Distribution of Class Time**

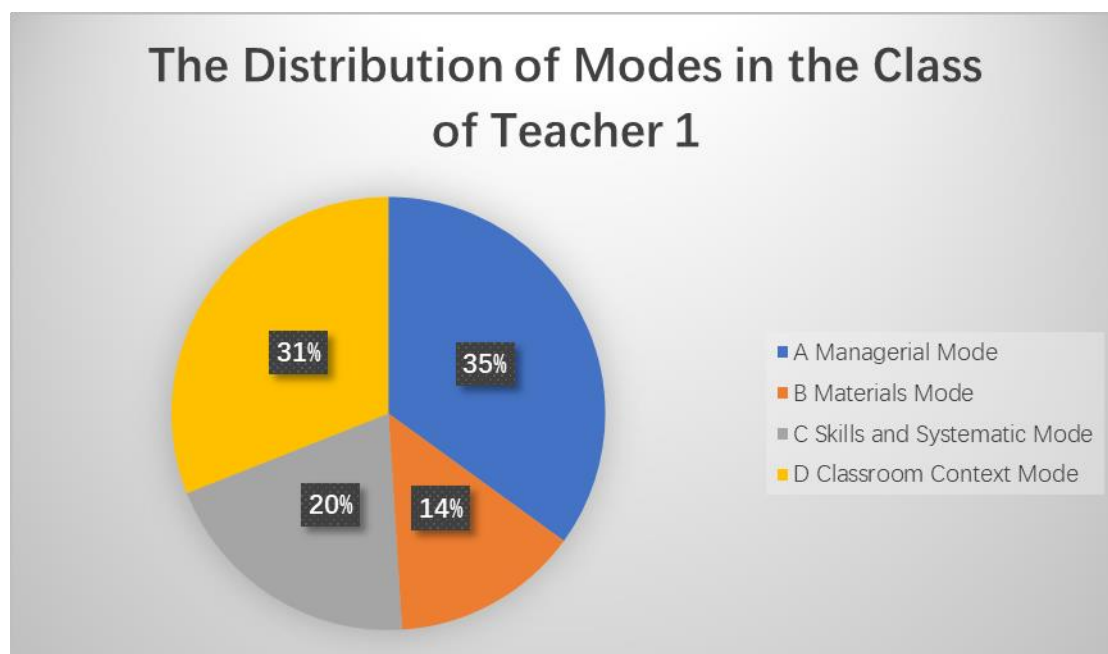
Teacher Talk		Student Talk		Other Activities	
Time(min)	%	Time(min)	%	Time(min)	%
97	54%	41	23%	42	23%

As delineated in Table 5 and Table 6, teacher talk encompasses over 50% of the total class time in the majority of instances across the four novice teachers, underscoring the influential role these novice

teachers assume in shaping the classroom dynamics. They function as primary orchestrators through direct instruction and management, substantially constraining students' opportunities for spontaneous expression and engagement in varied activities. The data presented in Table 5 and Table 6 reveals a scarcity of time allocated to activities, with teacher talk exerting precise control over most instructional moments, indicative of meticulous oversight at each instructional step.

In summary, teacher talk emerges as the predominant influence in novice teachers' reading and writing classes. Teachers demonstrate a fervent commitment and exert considerable effort in disseminating knowledge to students, contributing to a predominantly teacher-centered instructional milieu. In listening and speaking classes, while students embrace increased opportunities for verbal expression and participation in activities, these interactions predominantly occur within the guidance of teacher talk.

### 3.2 The Distribution of Interaction Modes in Teacher Talk

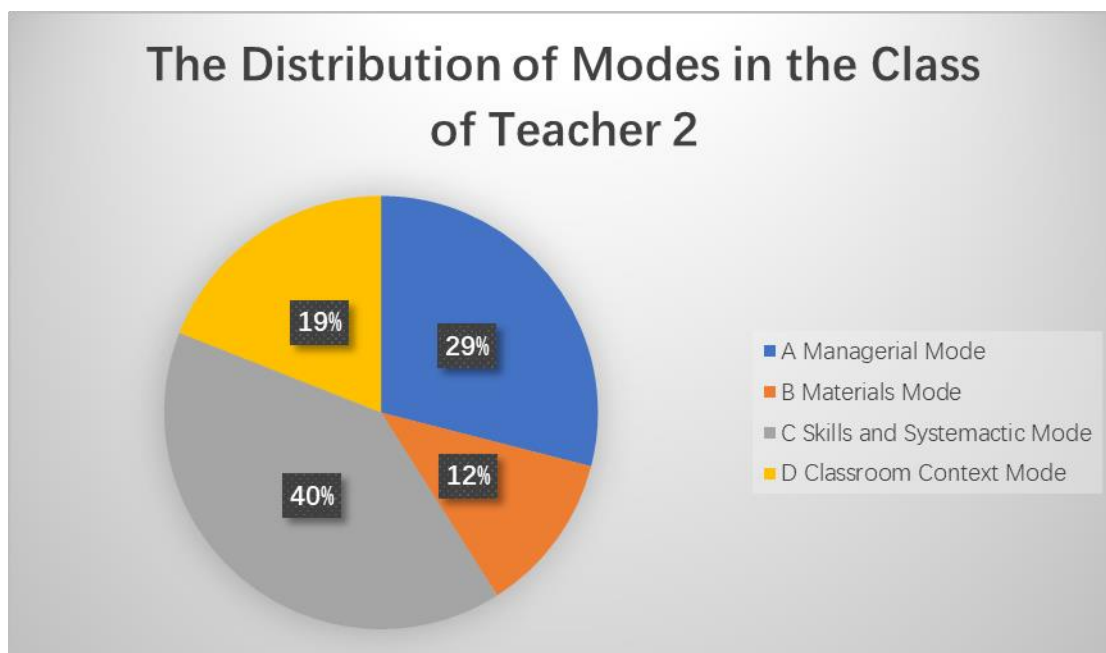


**Figure 1. The Distribution of Modes in the Class of Teacher 1**

Analysis of the preceding charts reveals that Teacher 1 predominantly employs the management mode and classroom context mode as the primary interactive modes during the listening and speaking lesson, accounting for thirty-five percent and thirty-one percent of the total time, respectively. Notably, Teacher 1 places particular emphasis on maintaining classroom discipline and introducing learning situations. A meticulously crafted scenario is presented at the commencement of the class to establish a robust foundation for the entire listening and speaking lesson, aligning with the requirements stipulated in the current English curriculum standards for compulsory education.

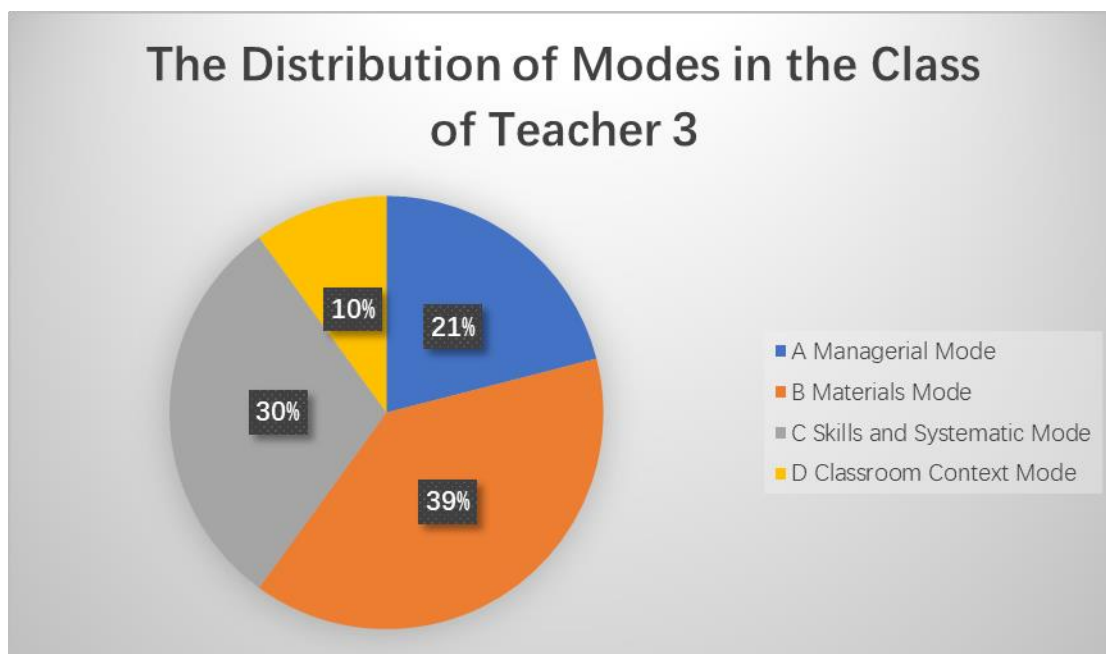
Prior to engaging in listening and speaking exercises, the teacher offers comprehensive explanations of

potential challenges that students might encounter, concluding with a post-exercise summary and conclusion. While the instructional design demonstrates attentiveness and a commitment to realistic scenarios, the classroom exhibits limited teacher-student interaction. The predominant mode of instruction involves the teacher imparting knowledge and providing instructions to students in a predominantly one-way manner.



**Figure 2. The Distribution of Modes in the Class of Teacher 2**

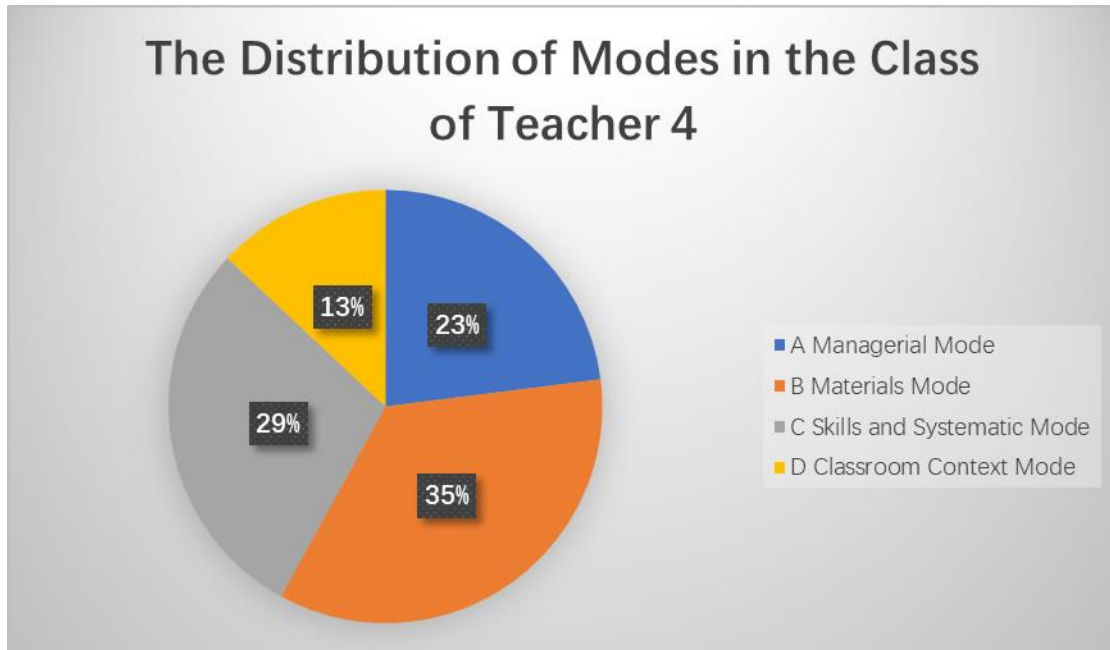
This instructional session conducted by Teacher 2 focuses on listening and speaking as well. As indicated in Table 5, Teacher 2 allocates a substantial amount of time, 18 minutes, for student talk. While management mode still constitutes a relatively large proportion of interactive discourse at 29 percent, the skills and systematic mode surprisingly reaches 40 percent. Teacher 2 significantly emphasizes the explicit presentation of linguistic knowledge. In addition to the listening exercises, detailed descriptions of the highest degree of adjectives and adverbs, along with the rules governing their changes (e.g., good, well, tall, interesting, enjoyable), are presented directly on the blackboard. Despite the classroom context mode accounting for 19 percent, Teacher 2's contextualization primarily revolves around texts and specific "sports" at the beginning. Notably, the Grammatical Translation Method and the Direct Method are the primary instructional approaches for language knowledge, resulting in a less authentic experience. Students receive knowledge unilaterally, with limited opportunities for practical application and interaction.



**Figure 3. The Distribution of Modes in the Class of Teacher 3**

Teacher 3 conducts a reading and writing lesson centered on the theme of endangered animals. In comparison to Teachers 1 and teacher 2, the management mode's percentage in this lesson decreased to 20%, while the classroom contextualization mode accounted for only 10%. This reduction is marked by a significant decrease in teacher talk related to discipline maintenance, directives, transitions, and contextualization. Teacher 3 places greater emphasis on the reading text itself, involving activities such as summarizing the passage's meaning and guiding students in subtitle completion. The majority of exercises administered by Teacher 3 concentrates on the unit's grammar point—the infinitive—excluding those dedicated to summarizing main points. Sentence completion emerges as the primary exercise type, characterized by clear direction although lacking high contextualization.

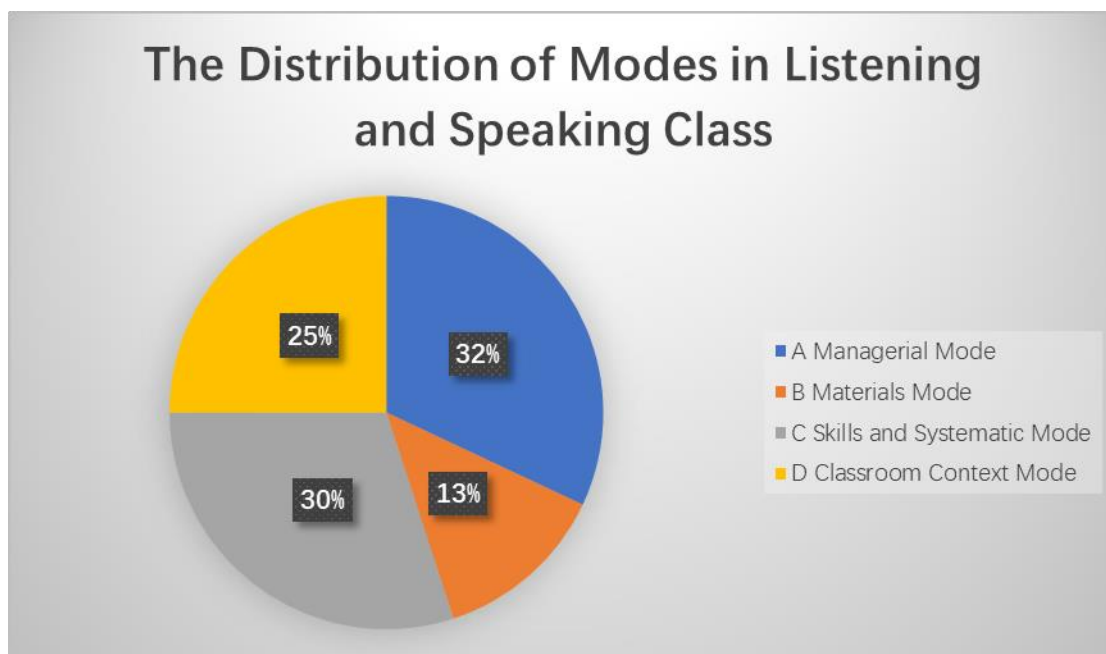
The primary function of the teacher talk in this lesson lies in providing students with feedback and explicit explanations of language knowledge, but it is relatively deficient in establishing contextual relevance. Teacher talk is primarily text-focused, and while the explanations of language knowledge are comprehensive and accompanied by numerous practice activities, the exercises exhibit a low level of authenticity. Furthermore, the teacher did not delve deeply into the hidden meanings of the text, limiting the analysis to the paragraph level. Consequently, this approach hindered the students' ability to achieve effective positive transfer by the conclusion of the lesson.



**Figure 4. The Distribution of Modes in the Class of Teacher 4**

Teacher 4's lesson is also a reading and writing session, wherein the Materials Mode and Skills and Systematic Mode stand out at thirty-five percent and twenty-nine percent, respectively. This suggests that the novice English teacher prioritizes the text and its linguistic content during the instruction. In comparison to Teacher 3, while there is a slight increase in the proportion of the contextual mode, the change is not substantial. The contextualization primarily revolves around introducing the theme of "online shopping" at the lesson's outset. Towards the end, the explanation of specific questions prompted by different interrogative words still predominantly involves drill practice.

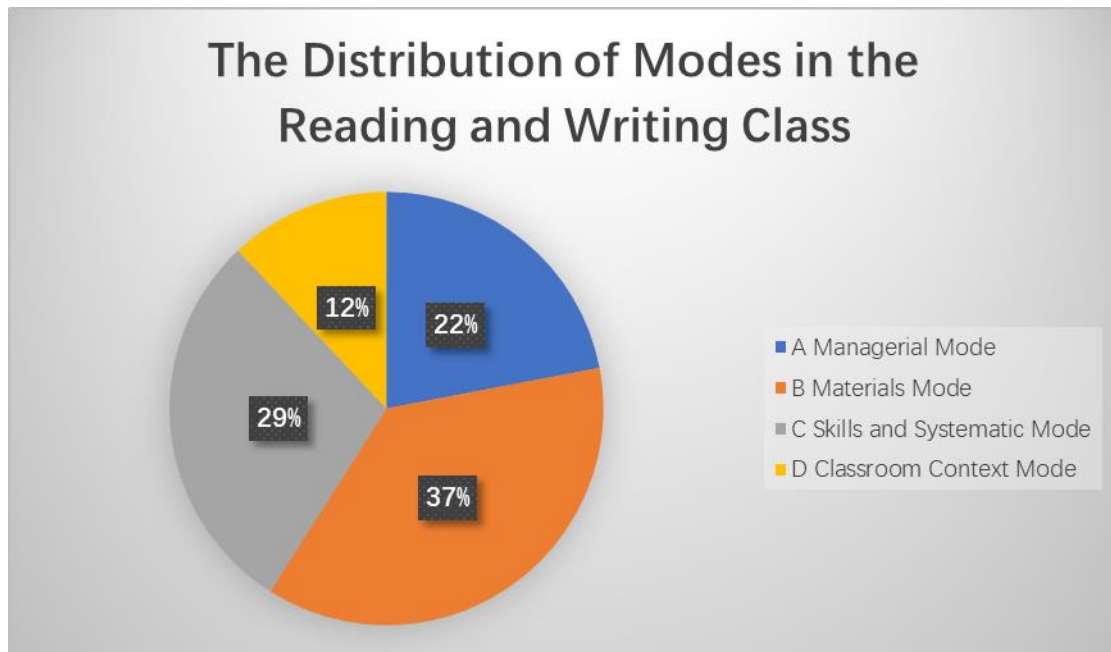
The overall reading and writing class lacks interactivity, appears somewhat boring, and offers limited content transferability. The teacher focuses on surface-level text explanations without delving into structural, conceptual, or other in-depth aspects. Consequently, students find it challenging to apply acquired knowledge. This misalignment with the curriculum standard's goal of "innovative transfer" is evident.



**Figure 5. The Distribution of Modes in the Listening and Speaking Class**

In novice English teachers' listening and speaking lessons, the teacher talk is primarily characterized by the managerial and skills and systematic mode, constituting thirty-two and thirty percent of the lessons, respectively. Following closely is the classroom context mode, accounting for twenty-five percent of the lessons. This pattern indicates that novice English teachers exhibit a preference for maintaining control in the classroom during listening and speaking lessons. They articulate each step clearly, emphasize instructions and transitions, and maintain a well-organized classroom order.

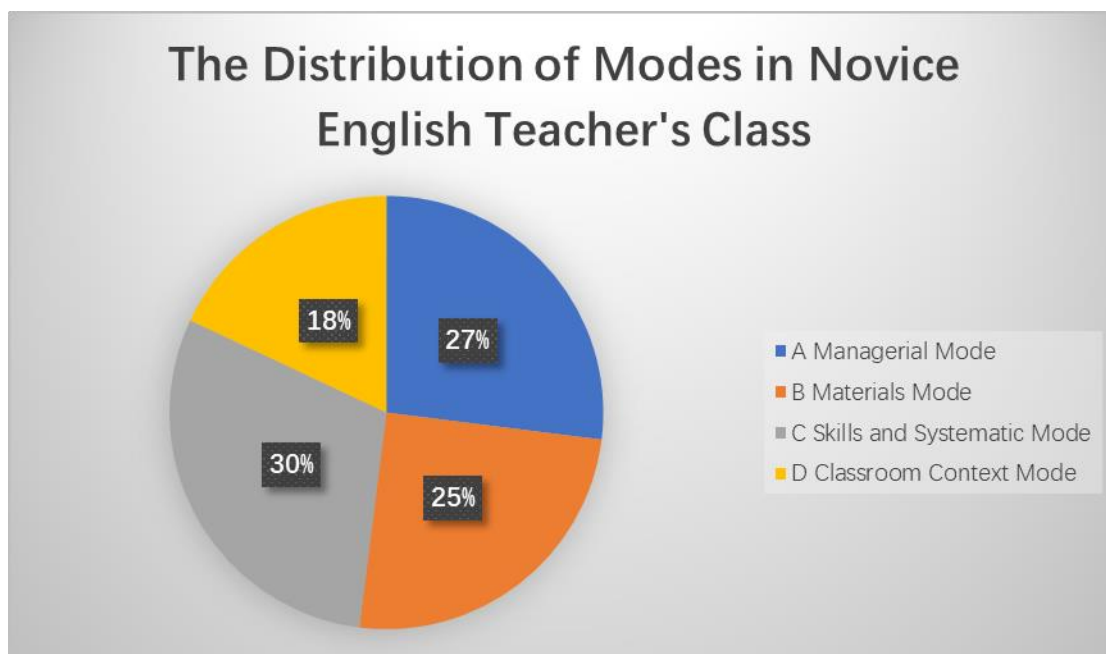
Novice English teachers often establish realistic introductory contexts, providing students with ample opportunities to engage in English conversation. They dedicate time to focus on language knowledge both before, while and after practicing speaking dialogues, ensuring that students' sentences and dialogues are accurate. This approach reflects their commitment to fostering effective communication skills and linguistic accuracy.



**Figure 6. The Distribution of Modes in Reading and Writing Class**

Novice English teachers in reading and writing classes tend to deliver instruction at a superficial level, predominantly relying on a materials model. They distill grammar points from the text and guide students in reinforcing their language knowledge through drill practices like sentence construction and fill-in-the-blanks exercises. Novice teachers prioritize correctness and accuracy, resulting in feedback that often dichotomizes into “yes or no” responses.

The approach of novice English teachers manifests as viewing the text as a conduit for language knowledge, with the expectation that students will acquire the required language skills from the unit’s text. However, this methodology limits students’ opportunities to freely express their ideas, leading to a less contextualized classroom environment. Consequently, students often face challenges when attempting to transfer this acquired knowledge into their writing.



**Figure 7. The Distribution of Modes in Novice English Teacher's Class**

In general, novice English teachers exhibit a tendency to maintain a high level of control in the classroom, ensuring well-organized and structured lessons where students follow the path delineated by the teacher. Concurrently, novice English teachers allocate considerable attention to linguistic knowledge, dedicating substantial discourse time to this aspect.

However, it is crucial to acknowledge that novice English teacher talk assumes a dominant position, often being self-centered, with students primarily assigned the role of “following instructions” and seldom afforded sufficient opportunities to interact express their ideas. The feedback provided through the teacher talk tends to be judgmental and lacks inspiration, as the emphasis is placed on accuracy, and the pace of the class is tightly regulated. The focus of teacher talk primarily centers on the text itself, lacking the depth necessary to facilitate positive knowledge transfer.

### 3.3 The Interactive Features in Novice English Teacher Talk

**Table 7. The Frequency of Interactional Features in Novice English Teachers' Classes**

Interactional Modes	Interactional Features	T1	T2	T3	T4
A Managerial Mode	A1 A single, extended teacher turn that uses explanations and/or instructions	8	12	18	20
	A2 The use of transitional markers	7	7	4	8
	A3 The use of confirmation checks	7	6	10	9
	A4 The absence of learner	5	7	9	8



		contributions				
		B1 Predominance of IRF pattern	10	12	7	8
		B2 Extensive use of display questions	8	6	12	11
B Materials Mode		B3 Form-focused feedback	6	5	3	4
		B4 Corrective repair	1	2	2	4
		B5 The use of scaffolding	1	3	2	5
		C1 Direct repair	5	7	9	8
		C2 Scaffolding	4	3	2	4
C Skills and System Mode		C3 Extended teacher turns	3	2	8	6
		C4 Display questions	10	11	16	18
		C5 Teacher echo	3	4	7	9
		C6 Clarification requests	1	2	5	7
		C7 Form-focused feedback	10	12	11	9
		D1 Short teacher turns	1	1	3	2
		D2 Minimal repair	12	14	6	7
D Classroom Context Mode		D3 Content feedback	2	3	6	4
		D4 Referential questions	1	0	3	2
		D5 Scaffolding	1	3	3	2
		D6 Clarification request	1	3	5	4

Upon transcribing the classroom videos, the author conducts an analysis using the SETT framework. The findings indicate both commonalities and variations in the frequency of interactive features in novice English teachers talk based on the type of classes.

Examining the statistics presented in the table above reveals that in both listening and speaking/reading and writing classes, novice English teachers predominantly utilize a single, extended teacher turn featuring explanations and/or instructions, IRF questions, confirmation checks, display questions, and form-focused feedback. The use of extended turns and IRF structures serves to empower novice English teachers in maintaining control and organization within the classroom. By distinctly delineating the Initiation, Response, and Feedback phases of instruction, teachers effectively manage the teaching process to ensure student concentrated engagement and understanding. This facilitates the more efficient transfer of subject knowledge, introduction of new linguistic knowledge, concepts, or skills, and ensures correct student comprehension. However, this structural approach also suggests relatively low levels of classroom interaction for novice English teachers. Students primarily play a role in responding to teacher questions rather than engaging in open and interactive dialogues to express their opinions and reflections.

To ensure students' accurate comprehension of the instructed content and the requirements of classroom activities, novice English teachers frequently incorporate confirmation checks into their

discourse. For instance, across the observed classrooms of the four novice English teachers featured in this study, following the explanation of a specific knowledge point, all four teachers routinely inquire, “Do you understand what I mean?” Additionally, they frequently prompt students to reiterate the teacher’s instructions. While the language used by the teachers is generally straightforward, their intent is unequivocal: to assess the extent to which students have grasped the conveyed information. Nevertheless, an excessive use of confirmation checks within the teacher talk has the potential to disrupt the classroom’s continuity, creating an impression of protracted interactions. This may lead students to adopt a formulaic approach, intentionally aligning with the teacher’s expectations, even if their understanding is incomplete. Consequently, the ostensibly routine nature of these confirmation checks may diminish their effectiveness.

The recurrence of “display questions” is notable in novice English teacher talk. These questions prompt students to showcase their acquired knowledge, skills, or understanding. Unlike open-ended questions, display questions typically have predetermined answers, requiring students to demonstrate their proficiency on a specific topic. While aiding teachers in assessing student mastery, display questions may limit the development of critical and creative thinking or classroom communication skills. Students may rely on existing knowledge without the need for collaboration or elicitation.

Meanwhile, form-focused feedback predominates. This type of feedback centers on instructing students on language form, structure, and grammar, aiming to rectify errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and the like. While enhancing students’ understanding of language rules and structures, form-focused feedback may overlook pragmatics and context. Overemphasizing linguistic form correctness may erode students’ confidence in real communication. Consequently, students may become hesitant to attempt new expressions, leading to a decline in self-confidence and creativity.

It is noteworthy that the frequency of scaffolding in novice English teacher talk is notably low in both listening and speaking/ reading and writing classes. This suggests a tendency among novice English teachers to provide less scaffolding support in the classroom, opting instead to explain comprehensively or offer very short descriptions of tasks and activities, expecting students to proceed independently or in groups. In both situations, students may lack the necessary scaffolding for successful task completion, potentially diminishing motivation, contextual understanding, and communication effectiveness due to task difficulty or simplicity.

In addition to the identified commonalities, variations emerge in the novice English teacher talk across distinct lesson types.

Taking the most prominent difference as an example. The prevalence of direct repair and minimal repair in teacher talk exhibits a contrasting pattern between listening and speaking/ reading and writing lessons. In listening and speaking sessions, direct repair predominates, whereas in reading and writing classes, minimal repair occurs noticeably more frequently. This distinction is exemplified in the following instances:

In Teacher 1’s listening and speaking lesson on “Making Plans”, a concluding activity requires students

to formulate sentences and initiate a conversation using the structure “be going to do.” A student makes the sentence: “I going to have a picnic with my friends next Monday.” Due to the students’ incomplete mastery of the sentence pattern, the teacher intervenes, stating: “Well, please look at the blackboard. Here, we should use ‘be going to do,’ right? So in this sentence, we should say...” The teacher talk encompasses detailed explanations and instructions, ensuring that students can correctly employ the “be going to” sentence pattern to articulate their plans.

In contrast, during Teacher 4’s reading and writing lesson on “Shopping”, students craft the erroneous sentence: “I would like to buy two box of apples on the internet.” Teacher 4 rectifies this with a simple correction, saying, “two boxes,” after the students have completed the sentence. This reminder, conveyed through the pause between “two” and “boxes” and the emphasis on the word “boxes,” aimed to prompt students to express their plans accurately without disrupting the continuity of their writing.

While direct repair entails more comprehensive explanations, minimal repair typically involves rectifying phrases or words swiftly to address students’ prior errors without causing significant interruptions. This observation suggests that novice English teachers are particularly attentive to students’ knowledge gaps in listening and speaking classes, expressing concerns about students deviating from the intended path in activities and exercises. Consequently, they opt to sacrifice some classroom continuity by elaborating on language points, aiming to ensure students’ proficiency in using grammar points correctly and constructing accurate sentences. In reading and classes, as previously mentioned, the teacher prioritizes the text itself, avoiding disruptions to students’ reading and writing continuity and employing minimal repair. Although this strategy maintains the coherence of students’ thinking in reading and writing, it may lead to a “partial understanding” of the knowledge points.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Utilizing the SETT framework, this study meticulously observes and documents the instructional sessions led by four novice English teachers in junior high school. The gathered data is subsequently coded within the framework, involving an analysis of the percentage of time dedicated to teacher talk, models distribution, and the occurrence frequency of each interactive feature in the novice English teachers’ classes. The ensuing data analysis, elaborated upon in the aforementioned Results section, yielded the following conclusions.

##### *4.1 Firstly, in the Context of Junior High School Education, Novice English Teachers Currently Demonstrate a Lack of Precision in Their Discourse*

Due to their limited experience, these teachers often exhibit nervous tendencies, resulting in instances where a blend of English and Chinese emerges in their speech. For example, when introducing the advantage of online shopping, teacher 4 says: “This passage mentions some advantages of online shopping. 现在我们来概括一下这些 advantages.....” Simultaneously, their teacher talk tends to incorporate complex vocabulary and sentence structures, posing challenges for students in comprehending the intended meaning and subsequently hindering their ability to furnish meaningful

responses. For instance, teacher talk even contains subjunctive moods---“if I were you.....” in teacher 3 and 4’s classes, which is too difficult to understand for students in their first or second year in junior high school. The effectiveness of teacher talk has a direct impact on students’ understanding of the language input. Especially in foreign language teaching, teachers’ improper expressions may cause confusion among students and affect their confidence and interest in classroom participation (Cheng, 2009). Another dimension indicative of imprecise teacher is the prevalent repetition of teaching content. In the ongoing classroom observations conducted for data collection within this study, it is observed that novice teachers, harboring concerns about potential loss of control over the classroom and apprehensive about students possibly misconstruing specific points, frequently engage in clarification checks like “Do you understand?” and “Are you clear?” or repetitively expound upon certain knowledge points. The regularity of language involves standard pronunciation, correct grammar, comprehensible meaning and appropriate language use, the first three of which have more direct demonstration significance in foreign language teaching (Cai, 2012). So although they have become in-service teachers and are no longer in the teacher education program, novice English teachers continue to refine their teacher discourse through continuous self-study and classroom observation from proficient teachers. This is not an overnight process and takes a long time to build up.

#### *4.2 The Discourse of Novice English Teachers is Notably Characterized by a Pronounced Inclination towards Control, thus Ignoring Some Key Issues*

The results presented in this paper reveal a substantial presence of both managerial and skillful and systematic as well as material mode in the discourse of novice English teachers. This prevalence underscores the significant emphasis placed by English teachers on imparting knowledge to students through classroom discourse and addressing language knowledge-related challenges. However, this instructional approach tends to establish the teacher as the predominant figure in the classroom, relegating students to a subordinate role. One of the major factors which causes passive interactions in some EFL classrooms is that English teachers do not give enough chances for students to develop their target language. Therefore, for English teachers, especially novice English teachers at the beginning stage, they are highly recommended to reduce their talking time and give students more opportunities to develop their target language (Winanta, 2020). In the same process, novice English teachers often dedicate excessive attention to elucidating knowledge points, inadvertently overlooking the analysis and exploration of text discourse. Effective English teaching hinges primarily on the teacher’s interpretation of discourse, and the teacher’s interpretative proficiency directly influences students’ learning experiences, cognitive development, emotional engagement, and learning effectiveness (Wang, Qian & Zhou, 2019). Novice English teachers should shift their focus beyond merely explicating language knowledge in the text and delve into the thematic elements. The theme serves as the discourse’s core topic, essence and soul (Zhang & Wang, 2016). Only through in-depth thematic analysis and guiding students in transferring their understanding can students cultivate critical thinking skills and shape their character.

#### 4.3 *The Novice English Teacher Talk Exhibits Limited Support for Practical Application.*

This limitation is initially evident in the context of practical exercises. At the commencement of the class, novice teachers often employ innovative and skillful contexts to introduce the lesson, leading to a notable increase in students' engagement. However, during the practice stage towards the end of the session, there is a scarcity of classroom context mode in the teacher's discourse, with the practice primarily involving drilling and lacking contextual depth. The teacher talk predominantly features formal feedback, confirmation checks, and similar elements. Novice English teachers should consider ways to seamlessly integrate exercises into the established context, creating an organic connection among teacher talk, text, and exercises. This approach ensures that students can effectively apply their knowledge within the given context, facilitating the transfer of knowledge. Simultaneously, the effectiveness of scaffolding in the discourse of novice English teachers proves to be low during exercises. Novice English teachers tend to exhibit two extremes in their scaffolding approach: either they refrain from providing sufficient scaffolding, allowing students to proceed with minimal guidance, leading to potential communication gaps and unsatisfactory learning outcomes; or they tend to "overwhelmingly" scaffold, enabling students to respond merely through the teacher's guidance without engaging in critical thinking or knowledge transfer, subsequently diminishing students' motivation to actively participate in the classroom. Therefore, novice English teachers need to consider not only how to effectively teach the text but also how to enhance the efficacy of the pivotal "practice" component.

Teacher talk is a crucial aspect in foreign language teaching and learning, which significantly influences students' success in acquiring a target language (Mu'in, 2018). The discourse of novice English teachers is an essential aspect that requires continuous attention during the novice phase. Novice English teachers need to showcase themselves confidently in the classroom, but more importantly, they should engage in continuous reflection on their "talk" after classes. This is because, in a diverse era where facing the needs of varied students, teachers must become reflective thinkers (Chen & Liu, 2023). Reflective teaching facilitates the growth of teachers' professional knowledge, enhances their professional competence, and elevates their professional emotions (Chang, 2023). However, due to the lack of teaching experience, novice teachers' reflection often remains superficial, focusing on their own behavior, with limited attention given to discourse reflection, and they may not know how to reflect on teacher talk (Wang, 2022). The introduction of the SETT framework provides a convenient condition for novice teachers to reflect on their teacher talk, and it should be utilized to refine their discourse, creating a more interactive and effective English classroom for students.

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