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Characteristics of Teachers' Classroom Discourse in an EFL Setting

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Abstract

This study explored the characteristics of teacher classroom discourse in an EFL setting. Two middle school teachers teaching grades seven and eight were observed and data for analysis were collected via audio recording on the two lessons and via some field notes. The first eleven minutes of each lesson were transcribed and analyzed for the most common features of the teacher's talk. The findings revealed a number of characteristics for their classroom discourse which involved teacher echo, extended teacher turn, display questions, error correction, extended wait time and content feedback. The research suggested that teachers need to be aware of the vast range of classroom discoursal features and to rely less on their current practices that characterize their classroom discourse as they may not result in fruitful learning.

Keywords

classroom talk, discourse analysis, classroom interaction

1. Introduction

Studying classroom language is believed to have three distinct features: "the language of curriculum, the language of control, and the language of personal identities" (Cazden, 2001, p. 3). A teacher's talk is significantly crucial to determine how they give their lessons and also how well their students learn (Yanfen & Yuqin, 2010). Teacher's talk is very important since it allows students to learn from classroom interaction and boost their language knowledge (Rezaee & Farahian, 2012). According to Azizah et al. (2023), teacher's classroom talk contributes positively to improving the learning environment and fostering students' engagement. Some researchers place heavy weight on teachers in the classroom indicating that "the teacher is responsible for controlling all the talk that occurs while the class is officially in session" (Cazden, 2001, p. 2). Smit (2010) described classrooms as the "central cells of schooling" (p. 20) and thus no wonder that classroom interaction is increasingly attracting

research interest. A number of scholars (e.g. Cazden, 2001) emphasized a shift in focus in curriculum from developing cognitive processes of individuals to the "social processes of discourse itself" (p. 6).

Alanazi and Widin (2018) defined Teacher Talk (TT) as the language teachers use in the classroom to communicate and instruct their students. Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics defined TT as:

> A variety of language sometimes used by teachers when they are in the process of teaching. Accordingly, when teachers try to communicate with their learners, they often simplify their speech, modify it and develop some spoken teaching styles to address their learners' language needs (Richards & Schmidt, 2013, p. 588).

Studies on teacher's talk have increasingly attracted educators' and researchers' attention since mid-1980s (Gharbavi & Iravani, 2014). Studies of discourse contribute immensely to our understanding of spoken language in shaping identities. In other words "spoken language is an important part of identities …[and] variation in ways of speaking is a universal fact of social life" (Cazden, 2001, p. 2). Teachers' utterances can shape students' attitudes, feelings, and thoughts and it can motivate or hinder interaction among teachers and students. Teacher language plays a vital role in the classroom. As teachers or educators, we must continually ask ourselves how we can use language for our ultimate purpose: "to support students' development and learning" (Gharbavi & Iravani, 2014, p. 558).

Rymes (2015) stated a number of reasons for employing *Classroom Discourse Analysis* (CDA) as a tool for teachers to critically reflect on their classroom practices. CDA is insightful to enhance the mutual understanding between teachers and their students, it serves as a resource to "understand local differences in classroom talk-going beyond stereotypes or other cultural generalizations, it can improve academic achievement and it can itself foster an intrinsic and lifelong love for the practice of teaching and its general life-affirming potential" (p. 5). Rymes (2015) further illustrated that classroom discourse is a valuable educational source "because looking closely at talk can reveal general patterns of communication differences between different groups of people. Patterns in how teachers and students take turns at talk, introduce topics, use multiple languages and language varieties, or tell stories in different ways can illustrate how misunderstandings between different social groups in classrooms evolve-and how they can be overcome" (p. 6).

> Classroom discourse analysis constitutes a crucial and effective teaching as it assists us in understanding the dynamic interaction between students and teachers. This analysis also offers valuable insights for language analysis within the education field (Ghafar, 2023). Classroom discourse and particularly *Teacher's Talk* TT has been the focus of much research work (e.g. Cullen, 1998; Thornbury, 1996; Walsh, 2011).

Rezaee and Farahian (2012) explored the amount of teacher's talk and how students react to it coupled with how much of class time is devoted for teacher's talk and for students' talk. The study also attempted to find out the role of teacher's questioning. The sample in this study included 12 upper intermediate students: 8 males and 4 females. The researchers utilized tape recording of students'

interaction among themselves and with their teacher for 45 minutes for 5 sessions. Structured interview with the teacher was also conducted with eight open-ended questions with respect to teacher's opinion about teacher's talk, and its merits and demerits. The findings revealed that about 70% of class time was allotted for teacher's talk, 20% for the students and 10% for other activities. Students posed three types of questions: procedural, convergent and divergent.

Masjedi and Tabatabaei (2018) mentioned that "being aware of the language and its functions the teacher can structure the language for better communication" (p. 244). Teacher Talk (TT) can impact students' learning both positively and negatively (Walsh, 2002). The researcher further explained that TT can play a dichotomous role; that is, it can facilitate and/or obstruct foreign language learning. Walsh advised researchers and educators to study English language in the classroom as a social context on its own and its interaction should be evaluated on the basis of its quality rather than quantity. Walsh identified two major roles of TT in the English language classroom: its role as constructive learning opportunity and its role as obstructive of learning. Teachers can maximize their students' learning via providing direction for error correction, offering content feedback, asking for confirmation and clarification, involving students in self-managed turn-taking with minimum intervention from the teacher, scaffolding and providing missing input in learners' language breakdowns. On the other hand, teachers' intervention is to smooth turn-taking, and to provide undefined teacher echo. Teacher's interruptions can obstruct learning and hinder students' involvement.

İnceçay (2010) conducted a study in which sixteen Turkish grade seven learners of EFL plus their teacher were included. The researcher made use of 40-minute audio-recording of a lesson and then the collected data were analyzed using Conversation Analysis Methodology. The researcher identified two distinct categories: construction and obstruction. The earlier encompassed direct "error correction, content feedback, prompting, extended wait time, repairing", while the latter included "turn completion, teacher echo, extended use of initiation-response-feedback and turn taking" (p. 277). İnceçay (2010) suggested that the teacher needs to be cognizant of teaching approaches particularly the recent ones and thus acts accordingly to reduce the obstruction of his/her talk. The researcher recommended that teachers, if they wish to improve their classroom practice, should use video and audio recording of their lessons. I believe in such a way; the teacher will reflectively and continuously improve his/her classroom practices and strive to optimize students' learning processes.

A number of studies shed light on teacher talk and teacher classroom discourse. For instance, Zhang (2012) explored the patterns of teacher-student interaction and the strategies being used to promote and facilitate students' reading comprehension in a Chinese university. After analyzing an audio recording of one teaching session, the teacher researcher concluded that the interaction took the form of IRF pattern and the teacher "consciously repeats her questions and chooses alternative and tag questions" (p.980). Many researchers believe that the pattern IRF/IRE may still be the dominant pattern in today's classroom interaction (Cazden, 2001), though further studies on classroom discourse particularly on teacher's talk are still in need in unexplored contexts.

Qashoa (2013) aimed to explore types of questions teachers ask in high school in the UAE. The data were collected via utilizing observation and audiotaping. The researcher found that the largest portion of questions asked in the classroom were display questions rather than referential questions. Meida and Fadhly (2018) analyzed teacher and students' talk in a speaking class in a university level in Indonesia. Data were collected via observation, note taking and interview. Findings revealed that most of the teaching learning process was devoted to asking and answering questions and lecturing by the teacher (this was called content cross). The lecturer's role was dominant.

In a study conducted in Indonesia by Putri (2015), the researcher analyzed the teacher's talk and the characteristics of classroom interaction in an EFL class of a vocational school. Utilizing an observation sheet, a questionnaire and a video recording, the researcher found that asking questions as well as lecturing dominated teacher's talk. Additionally, students stated that they were influenced by their teacher's asking them questions to be involved in the interaction. Gharbavi and Iravani (2014) analyzed the quantity and quality of teacher talk within the framework of the communicative approach. The data were collected via audio taping a lesson focusing mainly on the nature of classroom interaction. The findings showed that the teacher's talk was "repetitive and monotonous" following an Initiation Response Feedback (IRF) sequence "which allowed the teacher more turns and talk" (p. 552).

Studies on classroom discourse primarily focused on questions in the classroom. Vebriyanto (2015) explored teacher's questions in an EFL classroom by recording the teaching and learning process and then interviewing the teacher. The findings revealed that the teacher used more display-closed questions (69%) than referential open-ended questions (31%). Students relied heavily on giving merely words as responses rather than sentences. Similarly, Shomoossi (2004) explored two types of questioning behaviours and their effects via the use of non-participant observation by the investigator. Forty comprehension classes were observed, and findings uncovered that display questions were more common than referential questions. This study was conducted in the Iranian context.

Alanazi and Widin (2018) investigated the different types of F-moves in teacher talk and their impacts on developing students' dialogic skills in an EFL context in Saudi Arabia. In this particular context, the IRF or the F-move model was the most common sequence utilized in Saudi Arabia EFL classrooms. Eighteen secondary school teachers who taught English and spoke Arabic as their mother tongue participated in this qualitative case study research and the data were collected via classroom observation, audio-recording of 45 minutes classroom lessons and semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed that there were three types of F-moves; 1. F-move Repetition Discoursal, 2. F-move evaluative, and 3. F-move Elaborative Discoursal. These three moves contributed to "student-teacher interaction, identification, and correction of errors, and maintain and guide dialogic conversation/interaction between teacher and students if it is correctly oriented" (p. 307). The researchers concluded that the examples of teacher talk in this context assisted students' involvement in the lessons and also increased their dialogic skills; however, such proportion of TT decreased students' participation and thus reduced their spoken output.

Masjedi and Tabatabaei (2018) explored the types of moves and exchanges in the initiation and feedback phase of both experienced, with more than 6 years of experience, and novice (with less than 2 years of experience) teachers. A sample of ten male and female instructors were observed and their classroom language was audio-recorded. The researchers used Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) model to transcribe and code the data and the findings revealed that "experienced teachers make use of different moves and exchanges more than novice teachers" (p. 231). Nasir, Daud, and Masturah (2016) explored the categories of teacher's talk in an English classroom in a senior high school in Indonesia. Through classroom observation, video recording and interview, the researchers analyzed the data which revealed that "the most dominant type applied by the teacher was giving information (28.2%), followed by asking question (24.2%), next, using ideas of students (13.1%) and the lowest frequency was dealing with feelings (1.5%)" (p. 205).

Hadjeris (2019) analyzed and evaluated the features of two experienced Algerian EFL teachers talk. The researcher observed three successive sessions and the data were analyzed in light of self-evaluation of teacher talk designed by Walsh (2006). The findings of the study indicated that "there is no satisfactory correspondence between pedagogic goals and language use. This discrepancy could be explained by teachers' lack of awareness of the features that regulate teacher talk for the sake of creating a classroom atmosphere where all students have an equal right of contribution" (p. 251).

A number of studies, for example, Yanfen and Yuqin (2010) asserted the critical role teacher's talk plays in an EFL classroom. They mentioned that "[a]ppropriate teacher talk can create harmonious atmosphere and at the same time promotes a more friendly relationship between teachers and students, and consequently creates more opportunities for interactions between teachers and students" (p. 77). With respect to teacher's talk in classroom and after reviewing a considerable body of research studies, Rezaee and Farahian (2012) mentioned that much research has been done in ESL context but very few studies were conducted on EFL setting.

2. Purpose Statement and the Research Question

The purpose of this discourse analysis study was to explore the characteristics and features of teachers' classroom discourse of middle school students at an EFL setting in the Sultanate of Oman. At this stage in the research, classroom discourse will be generally defined as "the study of situated language use in one social setting" (Cazden, 2001, p. 3) which will involve "how discourse (language in use) and context affect each other" (Rymes, 2005, p. 15). More specifically, this research study tackled the question: What are the characteristics of teacher's classroom discourse?

3. Methods

3.1 Context and Participants

The study was conducted in an Omani cycle two (5-9) school in Saham, a town in North Batinah Governorate. The two participating teachers taught grade seven and grade eight classes. The data were

collected via classroom observation and field notes. The two teachers were assigned pseudonyms, Shamsa and Buthaina. Shamsa was teaching grade seven students and Buthaina was teaching grade eight and both of them have been teaching English as a Foreign language (EFL) since 2006. The participating teachers were informed about the study and things were explained to them and subsequently they signed the consent letters of their voluntary participation.

Shamsa was teaching grade seven students, aged 12-14 and of different language abilities. The lesson presented for analysis was typical for this class, which followed the course-book and focused on teaching how to ask and answer about prices of items in the market. In the beginning of the lesson, the teacher showed students a short video and asked them to name the items displayed. Then, the teacher led more practice of similar items by showing students real objects and inviting students to name them. This was followed with another video that presented dialogues of asking questions about objects' prices and responding to those questions. Then, students worked in groups of five and six to write questions and answers of prices, for singular and plural items. Lastly, students had brought items and real objects from home, and labeled them with prices. Volunteers walked around the groups to role-play buying different items as a way to practice asking and answering questions. The main focus of the lesson was to orally practice asking and answering questions about the prices of items.

In the lesson presented in this paper, Buthaina was teaching grade eight students, aged 13-15 years old, of different language abilities. The topic of the lesson was "*Extreme Cities*". Students worked in groups to transfer information from the text to a table. Prior to this activity, the teacher revised the main vocabulary of the previous lesson and invited students to watch a video about famous cities for 2019. The main pedagogical focus was reading to extract specific information and to transfer information from one medium to another.

3.2 Data Collection

The data used in the study were collected via an audio recording of two different lessons and field notes of the lessons. Researchers in the field of education urge teachers to use audio and video recorders as a tool for research on classroom discourse as a means to become "reflective practitioners" (Cazden, 2001, p. 6). Each lesson lasted for about 33-34 minutes. However, the transcribed data covered only the first eleven minutes of each lesson. These recordings were then transcribed according to particular transcription conventions (See appendix 1 for transcription conventions). The transcribed lessons were checked by the participating teachers to make sure that the transcription identically matched the actual lessons.

3.3 Data Analysis

Audio-recordings of the two teachers were transcribed, using a discourse analytic approach. Discourse analysis is the study of spoken or written texts. Its focus is on words and utterances above the level of sentences and its main aim is to look at the ways in which words and phrases function in context. Well-known proponents of discourse analysis are Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), who observed that most classroom discourse follows an initiation-response-feedback/evaluation (IR(F/E)) structure, and

which is still highly relevant to the study of classroom discourse today. For every move made by a student, teachers typically make two, for example:

I (Initiation)	T: What's the past tense of go?
R (Response)	S: went
F/E (Feedback/Evaluation**)**	T: went, excellent.

In the present study, audio-recorded data were transcribed (See appendix 1 for transcription conventions) and analyzed from a discourse analytic perspective looking for instances of features and characteristics defining teachers' talk in the classroom. The aim was to uncover the ways in which the participating teachers interacted with their students.

4. Findings

Based on the analysis of eleven minutes from each of the two lessons, the researcher managed to uncover six distinct characteristics of teachers' classroom discourse. These characteristics included teacher echo, extended teacher turn, display questions, error correction, extended wait time, and content feedback.

Teacher Echo

This feature was performed by the two teachers on various occasions in their lessons. It can be seen in the conversations below.

Extract (1) from Buthaina's class

1 T: Yesterday we talked about three important vocab in this unit. So what were they? So we talked about three vocab in this unit haaah what were they yes (Al yazya)

2 Al yazya: city

3 T: City. Yes. Thank you Al yazya, good. We talked about city haaa, what else? haa Alaa

4 Alaa: Village

5 T: Village. Yes. We talked about village. haaah, the third one, the third one, that group, haah and also that group, Ghala

6 Ghala: Town

7 T: what

8 Ghala: town

9 T: town, yes. We talked about town.

In extract (1), the teacher repeated herself many times. She repeated the question "*What were they*?" a couple of times to make sure that students heard her question and thus to encourage them to participate in answering it. She also repeated "three vocabs" to emphasize the exact answer she was looking for and to urge students to give specific answers to her questions. Additionally, Buthaina repeated students' answers "*Village. Yes. We talked about village*" and "*town, yes. We talked about town*" to give feedback to the student and also to let other students hear the answer again so they know what the expected responses to the following questions should be.

Extract (2) from Shamsa's lesson

1 T: haaah where is she? Who can tell me where is she?

2 Students in chorus: teacher teacher teacher

3 T: yes, Shurooq, yes

4 Shurooq: Khanjer

5 T: where where? Where is she?

Extract (3) from Shamsa's lesson

1 T: where?

2 Student: Oman

3 T: Oman, Ok Oman...where in Oman

Extract (4) from Shamsa's lesson

1 T: ok. Write the question only. Write the question. Write the question. Ok. Good. How. Yes… Who can read the question? Who can read the question? Who can read the question. Yes, grade seven?

In the above extracts, the teacher repeated her question "*Where is she? Who can tell me where is she?*" As a way to ensure that all the class heard the question and perhaps to give students some time to think about the answer to the posed question. When the student gave an incorrect answer, the teacher repeated the question again "*where where? where is she?*" as a way to indicate that the student did not give the accurate response and to emphasize the word *where* in order to raise the students' attention to the expected answer. When the student said "Oman" as the response to the given question "where", the teacher repeated the student's response "Oman, Ok Oman" as a way to indicate her acceptance of the answer.

Extended Teacher Turn

Extract (5) from Buthaina's lesson

1 T: Now girls, what are you going to do? You will work in your groups. I will give you aaaa an aaaa a text in your group to transfer an information to a table. I will give you a sheet of paper not in your skills book....you will work on a paper. A sheet of paper. Each group will work on a paper to find some information about aaaaa two cities. We will work on this sheet only. You will work with the Mexico City and {pause} the difficult one, Reykjavik. What?

2 Students in chorus: Mexico City and Reykjavik.

3 T: Ok. So that group will be {pause} what Mexico City and also that group. Two groups will work in number, with number 1, you will work in number four. Ok. Also here number four and that group also number one. You will work on the,,,aaaa,,,on the Calgary and Tokyo. We will not work on them now. Ok. So I will give you a paper now. A sheet of paper. We have {pause} some information. I will explain this information for you. So these two groups will be what? number four and three groups will be number {pause and students join} one. I will explain the information for you girls. Wait. Don't start. Don't start. Don't start. Don't start.

Extract (6) from Buthaina's lesson

1 T: Haa girls look at the sheet I gave you haaa WAIT (shouting). Don't start. Wait. The … information here you are going to write the name of the city, then the location, the location, the place, the country of, the country of this city, then you are going to write the size, if you have a size. How big is it? {a student made a comment in Arabic} English … Mariam please ok. The size in kilometers. Population, the number {pause students joined and said "of people"} of people, yes. Weather of ... haaah how is the weather like in that city. Places to visit. What are the interesting places to visit in that {pause students joined and said "city"} city. Things to do. What are you going to do when you visit this city? What are the things that you are going to do ?? things like shopping, diving??ok. Walking. Other things. Like maybe festivals or aaaa other things aaaaa the other information. Ok. Other information about this {pause the students joined and said "city"}. Ya llah. 1,2, 3 start.

The teacher made an extended talk, see extract (5), before getting students to work on an activity. The purpose of the talk was to explain the activity in detail and to illustrate what was expected from the teacher's part and what was expected from the students' part. Also, the long instruction given by the teacher functioned as a way to provide precise explanation of the content of the activity particularly explanation of the vocabulary included in the activity. In extract (6), the teacher is explaining the activity the students were about to complete as a group work. Notably, the teacher's concern about the vocabulary is obvious as she explains the meaning of the words either:

1. as synonyms as in "the location, the location, the place, the country of, the country of this city", "write the size, if you have a size. how big is it", or

2. by giving examples as in saying, "things to do. What are you going to do when you visit this city? What are the things that you are going to do ?? things like shopping, diving??ok. Walking.", "Other things. Like maybe festivals or aaaa other things aaaaa the other information" or

3. by defining the words as in "population, the number {pause the students joined and said "of people"} of people, yes."

Extract (7) from Shamsa's Lesson

1 T: Ok. grade seven. If you want to how grade seven to ask about the price. ok. What is the question? If you want to ask about the price. Ok. Don't say anything, just write your answer on this part {students were given a cardboard to write on}. Ok. Singular grade seven. Only one thing, one thing. Ok. one things. Singular. Singular. Write the question. One things. What is the [kind] of question. Write the question. Write the question.

In extract 7, the teacher repeated her question in the beginning of the talk to emphasize what she exactly wanted them to hear and answer. She also repeated "*only one thing*" to guide students through the activity so they do what they were supposed to do only and nothing more. She also repeated the command "Write your question" towards the end of her instruction so her students do what was precisely asked from them which was writing the question on a cardboard and not saying it out loud. The teacher's main concern was definitely completing the activity the exact way it should be completed and to keep her students focused on the lesson and the activity.

Display Questions

Extract (8) from Buthaina's lesson

1 T: What about town? {students calling Teacher} Yes, Shadha

2 Shadha: Town is the big aaa is bigger than village and smaller than city.

3 T: Yes. Excellent. So town is {pause} what bigger than haaa a village and smaller than a city.

Extract (9) from Buthaina's lesson

1 T: Who can read the topic of those two pages? the topic haah. Yes, Isra.

2 Isra: Extreme cities

3 T: Extreme cities. Yes. Like we talk about great cities. We have four cities around the world. How many aaaa or aaa, … so look at number one. What is the city in number one? What is the city in number one? You can ...Yes Alia

Extract (10) from Shamsa's Lesson

1 T: haa grade seven what's this? {T. pointing at an object} this one? What is it? haaah. What is it? haaah

2 Students in chorus: teacher teacher teacher

3 T: Yes Sarah.

4 Sarah: incense burner

5 T: incense burner, very good

Extract (11) from Shamsa's Lesson

{Teacher played the video, paused it, and asked}

1 T: ok grade seven. Now tell me about the video grade seven, haaah what do like in this video? First again, where is she? She is where?? Where is she. Yes Reema.

2 Reema: Mutrah

3 T: Yes, Mutrah Souq. Ok tell me about something you watched on the video.

4 T: Yes. Hawraa

5 Hawraa: Khanjer

6 T: Khanjer. Very good. Rayan

Extract (12) from Shamsa's Lesson

1 T: haaah. What is it? Yes Al Anood.

2 Al-Anood: Henna

3 T: Henna cone. Very good. Do you know henna? Henna? {Teacher raised a student's hand that has henna on it to show the students an example of henna}. Yes. Henna cone.

In the extracts above, the teachers mainly focused on asking display questions, the ones that require well-defined answers. There is only one sort of answer to the given questions. From the extracts above, it can be seen that the students can understand the material as they were able to give correct responses even if it was merely short answers. The teachers followed the IRF model in the questions they raised.

Error Correction

Extract (13) from Buthaina's Lesson

1 T: Number four. Haaah, number four? who wants to {pause} to try, pronounce, pronounce the word. Haaa Shadha

2 Shadha: Reykjavik {low voice}

3 T: haaaa

4 Shadha: Reykjavik {in an unsure tone}

5 T: Rek, Reykjavik, it's what? Reykjavik. Difficult in pronunciation. Reykjavik, it's what?

6 Teacher with the students: Reykjavik.

In the extract above, the teacher followed a different path to correct the incorrect response. Here, the student was not certain about the pronunciation of the word "Reykjavik" and uttered it in a low uncertain tone twice. In the first time, the teacher said "haaa" as to allow time for the student to repeat the word again correctly, but the student remained uncertain. Thus, and as in the third turn of the teacher, the teacher said the word explicitly but with broken segments. The teacher also repeated the word a number of times and invited all the class to repeat after her as she expected all the students were facing the same difficulty with that word.

Extract (14) from Shamsa's Lesson

1 T: number two. haaah. Number two. What is it? Who can read?... grade seven.

2 Students in chorus: teacher teacher teacher

3 T: Yes Ola

4 Ola: incense *button

5 T: incense

6 Ola: bu

7 T: Bur

8 Ola: burner

9 T: burner. very good. So, which one is an incense burner? Which one? This or this? {Teacher pointing at two different objects}

Extract (15) from Shamsa's Lesson

1 T: Yes. Who can Read. Read. Yes Ola. Read please.

2 Ola: {student having difficulty reading the word}

3 T: Braa

4 Ola: braa

5 T: Brace

6 Ola: Brace

7 T: Bracelet

8 T: Again, say bracelet.

In the two extracts above, the teacher attracted the students' attention to the occurrence of the error by

stopping just before the error being made to give the student the opportunity to correct herself. At the end, the student was successful in giving the accurate word after being assisted by the teacher to recognize and self-correct. This was necessary as it was an oral activity where the teacher's main concern was to speak correctly and fluently.

Extended wait-time

Extract (16) from Buthaina's lesson

1 T: What about village?

2 T: new [face], new [face]. Reem

3 T: haaah village? Our ....haaah

4 Student: Maqaesah

5 T: English. Haaah. Village. Afra School in which village?

6 {Students were asking the teacher and among themselves about the English name for their village; Maqaesah}

7 T: haaah

8 Isra: Teacher

9 T: laughing, the same name. Maqaesah the same name in English and Arabic. Ok. So, the same name. Your name is Reem in English and Arabic. Ok. So, we have different villages here in Saham.

The notion of giving extended wait time to the student is different with Buthaina. She did not pick on the same students to participate. Instead, she wanted to give chances to more students in the class and hence waited to select one to take part. In such a way, the students had the opportunity of more wait time to think and then to participate.

Extract (17) from Shamsa's lesson

1 T: haaah where is she? Who can tell me where is she?

2 Students in chorus: teacher teacher teacher

3 T: Yes, Shurooq, yes

4 Shurooq: Khanjer

5 T: Where where? Where is she?

6 Students in chorus: teacher teacher teacher

7 T: This one, where is she?

8 Students in chorus: teacher teacher teacher

9 T: The place Shurooq, the place.

10 Students in chorus: teacher teacher teacher

11 T: Where?

12 Shurooq: Oman

13 T: Oman, Ok Oman...where in Oman

14 Shurooq: not heard.

15 T: Very good. This is Mutrah Souq. Very good

In the above extract the teacher gave the student an extended wait time to respond correctly by repeating her question several times. When the student was unable to respond correctly, the teacher still gave her further opportunities to rethink and attempt a correct response. Notably, the teacher ignored other students who wanted to give the correct answer and she still offered more time for that single student to try to get it right. When the student gave an answer which was close to the right one, the teacher accepted her response and further offered the student additional chances to modify her utterance. After those attempts for the teacher to support the student and after many unsuccessful responses from the student, the student was able to provide the correct answer.

Content feedback

Extract (18) from Buthaina's lesson

1 T: laughing, the same name. Maqaesah the same name in English and Arabic. Ok. So, the same name. Your name is Reem in English and Arabic. Ok. So, we have different villages here in Saham.

In the extract above, the teacher focused on rectifying students' misunderstanding about names of villages and whether the name altered when used in a different language. Students thought their village, which was called Maqaesah, would have a different name if uttered in English. The teacher gave the student general feedback that the name remained the same and she even explained that using an example which was comparing the student's name, Reem, as it did not change across languages. This feedback was not very relevant to the main objective of the lesson; however, the teacher found it necessary to point out and add to students' knowledge.

4. Discussion

The findings in the audio recordings of the two lessons revealed that teachers' classroom discourse was characterized by the use of particular discourasal features rather than others. It was found that these two teachers relied heavily on using teacher echo, extended teacher turn, display questions, error correction, extended wait time and on giving content feedback. Teacher echo or the use of repetition in the questions and answers was beneficial as it emphasized the information required from the students and highlighted what students need to catch from the dialogues. I believe the teachers were able to achieve their goals behind the use of "echo" to make students understand and catch the necessary information clearly so there were not any further clarification questions from the students (Wasi'ah, 2016).

Pedagogically, the use of extended teacher turns as a feature of teacher talk was manifested to explain the instructions prior to students completing an activity, and to clarify any vocabulary that had a direct link to the successful completion of the activity. In this case, the extended teacher turn was important to enhance the teaching learning processes and to maximize students' learning (Wasi'ah, 2016); however, there was an observation in both lessons that extended students' turn was missing. This may indicate a dominant role for the teachers, or low language proficiency level on the part of the students.

What was noticed from the observed lessons and from the analysis of the audio recording of the lessons was that display questions were more dominant than referential questions. Via the use of display

questions, the teacher could be informed about what students understand. However, students' responses were short and simple, and the teachers did not extend them. This lends support to Walsh (2006) who states that display questions typically produce shorter answers and simpler responses from the learners. Therefore, it is suggested that the teacher also uses referential questions as well as promoting more discussion and also help learners improve their oral fluency.

According to Walsh (2002), there is a certain logic to keep error correction to the minimum in oral fluency practice activities in order to reduce interruption and to maintain the flow of the interaction. As the focus on Shamsa's lesson was on practicing asking and answering questions about prices, she corrected her students oral errors and insisted on accuracy. Her concern was to get things correct rather than to be fluent. Her error correction, though, should be minimized to make students more fluent and confident in practicing dialogic talks. On the other hand, the focus of Buthaina's lesson was to scan for specific information, she corrected all necessary inaccuracies and explained all required information in sufficient detail.

As noticed from extract (18) above, the student was able to give the correct answer after the teacher gave her adequate time to think about her own incorrect responses. Thus, the provided wait time was necessary and a condition for the successful output from the student. This finding is supported by Walsh (2011) who states that the time allowed by the teacher to answer a question not only increases the number of learner responses but also it frequently results in more complex answers and leads to an increase in learner interaction.

Feedback on message rather than its form is conducive to communication and using humor in performing this feedback created fun in learning. The teacher's use of this feature is appropriate with pedagogical goals of language learning. It ~~is~~ can be considered as a balanced choice between the two big goals of language learning: accuracy and fluency. As Walsh (2002) stated that where language use and pedagogic purpose coincide, learning opportunity is facilitated; conversely, where there is a significant deviation between language use and teaching goal, opportunities for learning are missed.

5. Conclusion

From the data collected and analyzed in the present paper, it can be concluded that teachers tended to use a number of interactional strategies in their classroom discourse. Their classroom discourse involved teacher echo, extended teacher turn, display questions, error correction, extended wait-time, and content feedback. Pedagogically, all of these characteristics have clear functions for the students, and they contribute to their learning. The two teachers largely relied on the IRF/E model in all the instances on interaction with their students. It must be born in mind that there has been a shift in focus in curriculum standards placing "less emphasis on products, facts or procedures to be learnt by heart and, correspondingly, more emphasis on processes and strategies for learning and doing" (Cazden, 2001, p. 5). Therefore, teachers are being urged to give up relying heavily on IRF/IRE pattern of classroom interaction as this traditional model "best fits the transmission of facts and routinized

procedures" (Cazden, 2001, p. 5).

It must be noted, however, that the findings of the present study were based on observation of two lessons of English in one school only. The analyzed data covered a total of 22 minutes for both lessons. Other features of teacher classroom discourse may be shown in other situations, contexts or in analysis of longer lessons. Further studies can consider observing and analyzing different grades, lessons focused on other language skills or on the quantity along with quality of teacher and students' classroom interactions.

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Appendix 1

Transcription Conventions

T: teacher

S: student (names of students are included)

S1: S2: etc, identified student

Ss several or all learners simultaneously

BLOCK CAPITAL LETTERS: to indicate that the teacher has raised her voice to attract students' attention.

{ }: words in between to explain what was going on in the classroom other than oral interaction

… : to indicate unintelligible utterances

*: to indicate incorrect responses from the students