THE FEATURES OF A NOVICE TEACHER TALK IN CLASSROOM INTERACTION: AN ANALYSIS USING SETT FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

This study sheds light on the features of the SETT framework employed by a novice teacher in order to facilitate learning opportunities. The method applied is descriptive qualitative methods using classroom observation, classroom recording, and field notes as data collection techniques. The SETT framework is chosen to find out the dominant features employed by a novice teacher while interacting with learners in the classroom. The results are all modes in the SETT framework applied by the novice teacher with the IRF interactional pattern as the dominant interaction pattern in classroom interaction. Additionally, the type of display questions is found out in interaction in which it is used to elicit the learners' responses. The result of this study is the SETT framework is not applicable to be used to evaluate novice teachers since the dominant activities in the classroom are not to reach communicative activities due to his/her teaching experiences. However, the deviant modes are found: shifting and divergent modes. The divergent modes found in this study do not facilitate learning opportunities for learners to have communicative interaction.

Keywords: Teacher Talk; Classroom Interaction; Conversational Analysis; SETT Framework

INTRODUCTION

There have been extensive investigations into communication between teachers of English as a second language. It begins with conversational analysis (CA henceforth) as the framework which has two aspects regarding how CA ties classroom interaction to language outcomes. The aspects are categorized into a foundation of CA and ethnographically grounded dispositions and expectations about individuals' social worlds (Hall, 2009). The former is the idea that individuals are competent participants who share knowledge that they get from interactional activities. The latter includes knowledge of prosodic, linguistic, interactional, and other verbal and nonverbal tools used in communication to infer meaning. It is in the form of turns and actions so they are interpreted by others. The pattern of Initiation Respond Feedback (IRF) is the interactional practice that is applied extensively by researchers to investigate classroom interaction (e.g. Poole, 1992; Hall, 1995, 1998, 2004; Seedhouse, 2004). He adds that the use of IRF is categorized into the second layer of CA which is ethnographically-grounded dispositions and expectations. Additionally, Mchaul's research, related to classroom interaction, calls for a systematic investigation by examining violational and non violational turn transition for orderliness (quoted by Sert and Seedhouse, 2011). One of the most influential research studies at the intersection of Applied CA and reflective practice by Walsh (2006) who developed a Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk (SETT, henceforth). This framework identifies different modes of classroom discourse, pedagogical aims, and features of interaction that occur in each mode (Seedhouse, 2011).

According to Walsh (2006), SETT is a framework that has the features of :

1. L2 classroom is socially conditioned.

2. Classroom interaction should consider very much the learning objectives and the language used in the classroom to achieve communicative interaction.
3. The suggestion is the lesson taught is composed of locally negotiated microcontexts which are called modes (2006).

Accordingly, CA is considered well-suited to investigate interaction patterns. The SETT design is to assist teachers to describe classroom interaction and understand the process of it. Further, it concerns establishing an understanding of the relationship between interaction and learning. Additionally, it concerns the interface that occurs between the teacher talk and teaching objectives. For learners, a classroom is a place for them to be exposed to English as the target language. The language used by the teacher to explain the lesson, ask the learners, and give feedback is mediation for learners to learn besides other medications such as textbooks, pictures, and supplemented materials.

Teacher language use is teacher talk. Teacher talk is the special language used by teachers when addressing L2 learners in the classroom. He adds that the language used by the teacher is the register (Ellis, 1985, Mesthrie, 2008). The teacher communicates with learners using his/her language to introduce the new lesson, explain the lesson, ask questions, give feedback, etc. In other words, the teacher talks to learners in order to build communicative interaction with learners. By so doing, it is expected that teacher talk can facilitate opportunities for learning.

SETT is a framework that can be used quickly and effortlessly by the teacher to evaluate his/her own talk (Cohen as quoted by Walsh, 2006). A teacher can benefit from the evaluation since he/she can know the positive points and negative points to improve their interaction in the classroom. He/she gains knowledge about it and develops his/her teaching competence and performance. Glatthorn as quoted by Reimers (2008) states that teacher development is the professional growth that a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience in teaching and examining his/her teaching in the classroom. Therefore, he/she is expected can improve his/her quality of teaching.

Huan and Wang conducted research on their own teacher talk in 2010 and found that extended-wait time is effective since the contributions from learners are important during the process of teaching and learning. They found only one feature of classroom interaction. When a teacher evaluates his/her talk without being helped by a supervisor or researcher, the evaluation is not objective. Even though SETT is designed as a self-evaluation tool, it is not elaborative for novice teachers. Therefore, the study is to use SETT as a framework to evaluate a novice teacher's talk by observation as a method of collecting data. The study sheds light on features of a novice teacher talk employed in classroom interaction. Moreover, it investigates whether the chosen interactional features facilitate learning opportunities. The features of teacher talk and SETT as the framework by its microcontexts (modes), pedagogical aims, and interaction features are described following.

Cullen (1998) categorizes teacher talk as communicative and on-communicative talk. The communicative teacher talk involves the use of referential questions posed by teachers. Referential questions are questions that the teachers do not know the answers given by the learners. The questions are related to learners' opinions about the problems asked. Another feature is when teachers give feedback on learners' responses, the content feedback is applied. The teachers' responses are not on the form but on meaning. In addition, the teacher talk is characterized by speech modification, hesitation, and rephrasing. Elaborating on the lesson, asking questions, giving feedback, elaborating on practice direction, and giving examples are some class activities in which teachers use their language more. The features such as the use of repetition, and request for clarification are negotiated meaning activities that teachers do to build up communicative interaction.

The non-communicative activities when teacher talk is characterized by the use of many display questions. It is believed that teacher talk is not genuine for teachers have already known the answers. Another feature is teacher uses form-focused feedback. It refers to grammar correction for learners' mistakes. It is not to develop learners' communicative skills. Additionally, it occurs in pre-teaching and teachers should move to another stage. The teachers keep using IRF pattern. The teacher always initiates the talk, waits for the learners' responses, and gives feedback when teacher talk is responded.

The IRF pattern can be adopted in the pre-teaching and teaching stage in which teachers still give some inputs, elaborate on the lesson and form feedback to learners. The teachers can facilitate the learner-initiated talk and facilitate the learning opportunities to communicate. The use of more referential questions, speech modification, and content feedback more than form feedback can be used to prepare the learners to come to the post-teaching stage. It is found that the teachers' initiation can be reduced and replaced by the learner-initiated talk (Saswati, 2018). However, teachers can start with non-communicative ones and move to communicative talk in order to give learners input first before they share knowledge and experience related to the lesson learned. When moving to post-teaching stage, the interaction is expected to be communicative (Cullen, 1998).

Walsh (2006) elaborates on the framework based on the modes, pedagogical aims, and features of interaction. The modes consist of:

1. Managerial Mode

Walsh proposes pedagogical aims under this mode which are:

a. to transmit information regarding the management of learning.
b. to organize the physical condition for learning to take place.
c. to refer to learning material.
d. to introduce and sum up an activity.
e. to move from whole class activity, pair and group work, or individual.

The interactional features in this mode are:

a. a single, extended teacher turn, in the form of explanation.
b. the use of transitional markers to focus learners' attention or to signal that the lesson begins.
c. confirmation checks.
d. the absence of learners' contributions.

The mode occurs at the beginning of the lesson or at the end of the lesson.

2. Material Mode

The goals are:

a. to provide language exercises.
b. to elicit learners' responses.
c. to check and display answers.

The interactional features under this mode are:

a. predomination of IRF.
b. display questions to check to understand and elicit responses.
c. form-focused teacher feedback.
d. Repair is used and give examples.
e. Learners may be afforded more or less interactional space.

Both two modes, managerial and material, still focus on forms in teacher talk. The goal is for learners to produce the language items correctly.

3. Skills and System Mode

The aims are:

a. to enable learners to produce a string of correct utterances and manipulate the target language.

b. to provide corrective feedback.
c. to provide sub-skills practice.
d. to display correct answers.

The interactional features are:

a. the use of direct repair.
b. the use of scaffolding.
c. extended teacher turn.
d. display questions and teacher echo to elicit the target language.
e. clarification requests and form-focused feedback.
4. Classroom Context Mode

The aims are:

a. to enable learners to talk about feelings, experiences, attitudes, etc.
b. to establish context.
c. to activate mental schemata.
d. to promote oral fluency practice.

The interactional features of this mode are:

a. extended learner turns.
b. direct repair.
c. content feedback.
d. referential questions.
e. scaffolding techniques in case learners need to express their ideas and opinion.
f. clarification checks and confirmation checks.
5. Deviant Modes

There are reasons why the deviant modes occur:

1. Mode switching: movement from one mode to another.
2. Mode side sequences: a brief shift from one mode to another. It is possible that the mode is managerial then there is a quick shift to the classroom context. Then, it goes back to managerial mode again.
3. Mode divergence: where the pedagogical aims do not coincide with the interactional features.

METHOD

A qualitative method is adopted in investigating the employed features of SETT framework chosen by the novice teacher. Additionally, it is to describe whether the chosen interactional features facilitate learning opportunities. The data are taken from teacher talk of a novice teacher (one-year teaching) teaching an elementary 3 class. The data collection techniques are classroom observation, classroom recoding and field notes. The recording takes 90 minutes. The data are analyzed by identifying the modes that the teacher chooses by checking the observation report and recorded classroom interaction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This segment presents five extracts as data that are randomly chosen. The format of data transcription is not to refer to any reference. It is T for the teacher, L for the learner, and Ls for learners.

Extract 1

1   T: So we move to lesson 8

2   L: Lesson 7
3   T: All right, Lesson 7
4   T: What is the title of Lesson 7?
5   L3: About the place
6   T: Yes…
7   L3: Where….
8   T: The title is Where is the Cafetaria?
9   T: What will we talk about?
10 T: What is it about?
11 T: About what?
12 T: Okay. Today, we'll talk about location, about prepositions (T writes them down on board
      word 'prepositions')
13 T: Can you mention what are prepositions?
14 L: (No answer from the learners)
15 T: Just so this one first.

The microcontext is a material mode that occurs at the beginning of the lesson. The teacher aims to elicit the learners' responses by asking questions. However, there are absences of learners' contribution in (14). The use of transitional markers, *okay, all right, move to, so,* signals that the teacher introduces the new lesson. The teacher uses many display questions to learners to elicit responses (4, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 13) and it is found repetition in her display questions in (9, 10, and 11). The teacher achieves the goal which is to introduce the new lesson and to give information about what the learners are going to study. It is found in (1, 2, 3,4, 5). The interactional features found are IRF at the beginning of a dialog, and some display questions which the learners fail to answer them. Another feature is teacher dominates the interaction even though she asks questions about what they are going to learn now, and the learners do not respond the teacher.

Extract 2
1   T: Just do it this one first.
2   T: Activity one. Can you complete?
3   T: Ehhhm. Can you fill number 1 until number 12? We have computer lab, library, principal's office, gym, science lab. What is science lab?
4 Ls: *laboratorium*
5   T: okay. Cafeteria, locker room. Do you have a locker room in your school?
6   Ls: No
7   T: No. teacher's room, nurses' office?
8   L5: *UKS*
9   L4: *Unit Kesehatan Sekolah*
10 T: Bike track. Do you have it in your school?
11 Ls: No
12 T: School yard. Do you have it?
13 Ls: Yes

In this stage, the material mode is found. The teacher is to achieve the goals by providing the exercise, eliciting the learners' responses, and giving the correct answers. The interactional features found in this interaction are IRF pattern. Moreover, it is found that display questions are used more in this excerpt. It is found in (5,7, 10,12). The questions posed by the teacher are responded if the questions are about the facilities found in their school. In this mode, the learners

engage actively in the interaction. The communicative teacher talk occurs in this mode. The learners respond to teachers' display question.

Extract 3

1   T: rest room. How about hallway?
2   T: what is hallway?
3   Ls: *Lapangan*
4   T: Hallway…. Ehhm
5   T: It should be like this. It's your classroom. This is the hallway. (T draws a map to show hallway).
6   T: What is that?
7   L5: *Lorong*
8   T: Yes. Okay . That's right.

The mode is the material mode in which the teacher still provides an exercise about a preposition. The interactional features are teacher talk is still categorized into communicative talk with repetitive display questions (1,2,6). The teacher provides feedback and the learner repair the mistakes by drawing a map of the hallway on the board. It is expected that the learners understand the meaning. The pedagogic feedback is given since there is an evaluative purpose. It is characterized by giving clues to learners as in (5). The interactional features chosen by her are scaffolding and negotiation meaning and the goals are achieved, by providing exercise, eliciting the learner's answer, and checking and displaying answers. When the teacher provides content feedback to the class, the mode is moved to skills and system mode. The interactional features of that mode are found; scaffolding and learner's repair. There is a shift from forms to meaning in which the deviant mode occurs. The mode is shifted from material to skills and system. The aim achieved in which the learners are able to produce correct forms.

Extract 4

1   T: Let's try first. Look at the pictures.
2   T: Number 1. You start from number 1.
3   T: Do you know what is that?
4   Ls: school yard
5   T: How do you know getting the school yard?
6   T: What is the clue there?
7   L6: *Ada taman*
8   T:There is a plant, so it is a school yard.
9   T: What about number 2? What is that?
10 L6: Principal's office
11 T: How do you know it's a principal's office?
12 L8: There is a principal
13 T: Number 2 is principal's office. You are right.

The conversation is still in the material mode for the teacher to discuss the practice on the material. However, the teacher gives signals that there is a move to another part and starts the lesson by asking a display question to the class. During the interaction, there is a negotiation of meaning in which the teacher checks the learners' comprehension by asking as in (5 and 6). In (13), the teacher does comprehension checks again as the part of negotiation meaning. Definitely, there is a brief shift from material mode to classroom context mode that is confirmation check as the evidence. The teacher tries to achieve the goal that learners can talk about their experiences with the places they have ever seen. Even though there is a shift, not all the goals of the two modes are achieved. There are only to enable learners to share their

experience, establish the context, and activate the learners' schemata which are limited only on places only. The mode of divergence is found. The interactional features do not reveal that the learners are able to have a natural communication. The deviant mode of divergence

Extract 5

1 **T: here we go to…..**
2 **T: Okay.**
3 **Where is the gym?**
4 **L:** *Tempat olahraga*
5 **T: where? Where is the gym?**
6 **Ls: between the Nurse's office and the restroom.**
7 **T: Where is the gym?**
8 **Ls: It is between the nurses' office and the restroom. (T writes down the sentence on the board).**
9 **T: Here we have the preposition. The preposition is this one. (She points the word between in the sentence written on the board). Between is the preposition.**
10 **T: Mention other prepositions.**
11 **L: Next to**

This interaction is in the material mode in which the teacher provides practices for the learners. The type of interaction is scaffolding by elicitation by asking using display questions in order to get the correct form. It is found that there are repetitive display questions as a technique of eliciting the complete sentence as in (4, 6). However, there is a divergent mode from material mode at the beginning to managerial mode at the end, characterized by explaining the preposition. At first, the teacher provides an exercise. Then, it is followed by the teacher elaborating on the material. This type of deviant, divergent mode does not facilitate learning opportunities for learners. The goals are not achieved since providing exercise cannot be presented prior to explaining the lesson. The risk is the learners will get confused since they do not get the input yet. The managerial mode is featured by which there is absence of learners' contribution and teacher talk dominates the interaction.

Discussion

Classroom interaction needs collaboration between teachers and learners in order to achieve the objective of the lesson. It means teachers are still the initiators of the interaction and learners respond to teachers' initiation. The teachers in the beginning stage are to manage the class by asking questions, elaborating on the lesson, giving input, providing feedback, and deciding the talk turns. The management of the interaction in the beginning stage depends on the teachers. Moreover, in the next stage of teaching, it is supposed that the teachers have less domination in interaction and learners are more engaged. To do so, teachers should have the competence to manage the class (Soraya, 2017). It reveals that the novice teachers does more IRF pattern and dominates the classroom interaction based on the features of SETT framework he/she has chosen. The features characterized by the novice teacher are all the types of modes: managerial, material, skills, system mode, and classroom context mode. However, deviant modes are found. The deviance occurs since there is a shifting mode and mode divergence. The shifted mode is from material mode to skills and system mode. The aims are achieved since it is still form-focused teacher talk. However, there is a divergent mode in which the aim fails to achieve, for the teacher provides an exercise and is supposed to give correct answers as feedback. In fact, he/she elaborates on the material and goes back to managerial mode to give input. The teacher decides to go back since the learners are not able to answer the questions.

Regarding the framework itself, SETT is designed for teachers to do self-evaluation for their own teacher talk for reflection and teacher development; however, it is not applicable to novice teachers. They do not have any ideas about complicated aims referred to by the framework not to mention the overlapped features of interaction. There must be help from the supervisor to evaluate the novice teacher's talk. Related to observation conducted by the supervisor using this framework, it is difficult to identify the mode the teacher is in, and the features chosen by the teacher are not always coincided with the goals. An example is the scaffolding interaction which is deployed in material, skills, and system and classroom context. When the teacher does this, the goals are not achieved. It means which goals belong to which features of interaction are still unclear.

SETT is a tool for teachers to do self-evaluation and supervisors to evaluate the novice teachers regarding their teacher talk. The mode, goals, and interaction features are not easy to identify for teachers and supervisors when they need to evaluate. The features and the pedagogical goals are overlapped with each other. It is recommended to be simplified. Otherwise, teachers can use their own format to self-evaluate, and supervisors can create their own format to evaluate teachers. Conversational analysis of teacher talks to see whether teacher facilitates learning opportunities or not is partial research. The analysis should involve learners' talk as a part of the conversation.

CONCLUSION

The classroom interaction found is form-focused teacher talk. In this stage, the teacher dominates the talk. He/she asks by using many display questions and gives feedback on forms. Some referential questions are asked. However, it is still in guided by the teacher and still in controlled practice. The novice teacher is just to give input and give exercise as the dominant activities in the classroom. There is no move to communicative activities. Therefore, the SETT framework is not applicable to be used to evaluate novice teachers since the dominant activities in the classroom are not to reach communicative activities due to his/her teaching experiences.

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