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Types and Functions of Speech Acts in Iranian EFL Teachers and Learners' Classroom Interactions

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Abstract

Classroom interaction improves the learning process by enhancing opportunities for learning since both instructors and learners are involved in various speech acts. Speech act refers to a functional element in the form of an act assisting individuals to perceive or promote things with words in interaction. Thus, the current study investigated classroom interaction in terms of types and functions of speech acts performed by Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers and learners. The data for the study came from audio-recording of twelve 90-minute sessions taught by six experienced Iranian teachers. To analyze the conversational data, Finocchiaro and Brumfit's (1983) model was used to examine various types of speech acts and Walsh's (2006) SETT model was employed to delve into the functions of speech acts. Following the data analysis, it was unfolded that directives were the most frequent speech acts, including suggestions, requests, warning, and giving instruction, accompanied by interpersonal and personal ones. As to the functions of speech acts, the most frequent mode appeared to be the materials one (42%), accompanied by skills and systems (34%), classroom context (16%), and managerial (8%). The overall findings indicate the central role of the teacher in teacher-fronted classes in Iran as the most speech acts, i.e. about 79%, were

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performed by teachers in the form of requestive, suggestive, and advisory to control and promote the learning process. By carrying out the current study, it is hoped that readers gain more insight regarding the pragmatics territory, most notably speech acts.

***Keywords*:** communicative competence, classroom interactional competence, speech acts, classroom modes

1. Introduction

Since the 1990s, many scholars and experts in territory of second language acquisition (SLA) have reheard the position of "contextual and interactional aspects of language use" relying on emic perspectives (Firth & Wagner, 1997, p. 286). This reconsideration in focus gave birth to an inconclusive debate about the interactional competence of L2 speakers as an ability to interact with others (Beltrán-Planques & Querol-Julián, 2018; Brown, 2001; Canale & Swain, 1980; Firth, 2009; Hadley, 2001; Hall & Pekarek Doehler, 2011; Kasper, 2009; Mori & Hasegawa, 2009; Stephenson & Leyland, 2025). By and large, from these scholars' point of view language learning is seen as learning to participate in interactions (Brouwer & Wagner, 2004; Derakhshan et al., 2020; Kotkavuori, 2025; Shahani & Chalak, 2017) rather than something just occurring inside the heads of the people. On the basis of this perspective, interactional competence can be viewed as the ability to effective participation in communication. Moreover, interactional competence paves the way for individuals to have enough participation in learning tasks (Lam, 2019) and to co-formulate a task (May et al., 2020).

Classroom interactional competence (CIC) is defined as, 'Teachers' and learners' ability to use interaction as a tool for mediating and assisting learning' (Walsh, 2011, p. 158). CIC stresses interaction's importance in teaching and learning suggesting that by the improvement of CIC, both teachers and learners will immediately promote the learning process and increase chances for learning. A better understanding of classroom discourse will play an important part in learning, especially where learning is regarded as a social activity strongly influenced by involvement, engagement and participation (Walsh, 2012). The essence of classroom talk has been touched by a bulk of studies in education lately. When it comes to the application of this topic into L2 learning environments, the focus shifts to the linguistic interactions between participants in the language classroom; that is, "negotiations of meaning" (Long, 1983). Negotiation of meaning is generally thought to be the process that speakers in a given context go through so as to understand each other more clearly.

A speech act as an action performed by means of language (Searl, 1969) is an important element of communicative competence. Speech act theory not only

encompasses the linguistic principles individuals share to perform the acts, but also directs the learners to apply the language functionally or appropriately. It is believed that to learn a language is indeed to learn how to communicate in that language. To put it in other words, speech act theory plays a significant role in linguistics since it highlights the difference between form and meaning of a linguistic choice emphasizing linguistic functions. It can be included from what was mentioned above that speech act is of high significance in any language program. Speeches play a crucial part role in people daily lives, especially in the realm of education, when instructors have to interact with learners.

L2 speech acts are of respectable position in meaning negotiation in that they aid to the flow of communication. People not only are required to acquire the language but also to have the knowledge to apply the language they acquired to communicate functionally in various contexts (Derakhshan & Shakki, 2021). The effective exploitation of language involves in the first place the learners' ability to apply the linguistic knowledge in the process of interpreting and expressing different language functions (Jalilifar, 2009). Classroom speech acts guarantee the quality of verbal communication in the classroom (House & Kádár, 2025; Shaqia & Anggraini, 2020, Shakki, et al., 2023). Despite its high significance, classroom discourse, especially different types of speech acts performed by the teachers and learners in the flow of classroom interaction, has not been adequately touched in the EFL contexts. In fact, the majority of the studies focusing on this issue in the Iranian academic context just accentuate the instruction of some specific speech acts such as request, apology, etc. Thus, the current study, focusing on this issue in the Iranian EFL setting, focuses merely on the speech act component of pragmatic competence proposed by Bachman (1990) to examine the types and functions of speech acts pronounced in Iranian EFL context to break up this scarcity. Such studies inform the instructor of the teaching behaviors they employ in interactions with their learners. As for the learners, they also gain a clearer picture of speech acts so that they can respond to their instructors more efficiently and have more successful acquisition of the presented material. It is also expected from this research to provide information for other researchers working on this issue as a study with distinct related focus. As a whole, the current research tries to answer the following questions:

1. What type of speech acts emerge in Iranian EFL classrooms?
2. To what extent are these speech acts practiced by the teachers and students in the Iranian EFL classroom?
3. What are the functions of the different speech acts employed by Iranian teachers and learners?
4. To what extent are these functions applied by the teachers and students in the Iranian EFL classroom?

2. Literature review

The building block of CIC is to acknowledge the focal role of interaction in teaching and learning. It can be postulated that interactants orient to learning through interactions which are co-formulated, they also manifest varying abilities to co-construct discourse which is regarded contributory to learning (Walsh, 2011). CIC accentuates the ways in which instructors and learners' interactional intentions and subsequent behaviors promote learning chances. The starting point for enhancing CIC, as it can be inferred from Mao and He (2021), is to exploit different speech acts. John Austin (1962) was the pioneer who introduced speech act theory and John Searle (1969) further developed it from the fundamental principle that language is used to carry out actions. Since then, speech act theory has been a key issue not only in the realm of philosophy, but also in linguistics, psychology, literary theory territories. Speech act theory, stimulated a large number of researchers to examine the ways in which people apply language to manage the social communication (e.g. Bowe & Martin, 2007; Derakhshan & Arabmofrad, 2018; Hashemian, 2021; House & Kádár, 2025; Kaivanpanah & Langari, 2020; Malmir, 2021; Malmir & Derakhshan, 2020; Skakki et al., 2020; Stephenson & Leyland, 2025; Vanderveken, 2009).

2.1. Types of Speech Acts

Any EFL curriculum must embrace certain types of language functions which seem to be highly significant and fruitful from social and cultural point of view. Literature has witnessed a proliferated number of foreign language teaching experts working in

this area leading to the preparation of broad categories of language functions leaving the details to be shed light on by the EFL teachers themselves in harmony with their needs and circumstances. For example, Wilkins (1972, pp. 14-33) pinpoints eight categories of language functions pertinent to expression of personal and interpersonal emotions. Along with similar lines, Van EK (1980) introduces his own list of language functions including persuasion, dissuasion, socializing, emotions and feelings. Drawing on these two seminal works, Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983, pp. 65-67) have presented their own list of language types which they have proposed in the following five categories:

1. Personal: Referring to emotions and ideas, is applied to clarify or arrange one's ideas and express one's thoughts or feelings including love, happiness, likes, satisfaction, etc.

2. Interpersonal: Referring to all types of talks occurring between at least two individuals, is applied to enabling people to initiate and maintain suitable and functional social relations. It encompasses: greetings and leave-takings, identifying oneself to other individuals, and so forth.

3. Directive: Referring to giving orders or directions by making requests, is an attempt to influence the others' actions. To mention some examples it includes requesting, suggesting, refusal or acceptance of a request but offering an alternative, granting permission, etc.

4. Referential: Referring to giving report on things taking place at home or class or street, etc., is used to talk about actions, events, or people in the past or in the future. It includes identifying items or people in the classroom, asking for a description of something, and the like.

5. Imaginative: Referring to reliance on imagination to promote a conversation it includes arguing a poem, extending ideas offered by others or by a text, creating plays or poetry, etc.

2.2. Functions of Speech Acts

Walsh's (2006) SETT model emphasizes the fact that the interaction and the

classroom activity are inextricably linked, and accepts that as the lesson emphasis changes, interaction patterns and pedagogic goals change (Hartono, et al. 2021). This framework becomes an institutional discourse notion as much communication in the workplace is goal-oriented, and the classroom is no exception to this phenomenon (House & Kádár, 2025; Khatib & Kardoust, 2022). As a lesson progresses, teachers' pedagogic goals are constantly shifting in order to take account of their agenda of the moment, to deal with unexpected problems, to vary the interaction and so on (Shahani & Chalak, 2017). More importantly as goals shift, the language used to realize them also varies. This framework is possible to gain an emic (insider) understanding of what is really happening regarding decisions taken and interactional adjustments made. Walsh (2006) has further posited that the SETT is prepared to assist instructors both to describe the classroom interaction of their lessons and to promote the perception of interactional processes. As it can be inferred from Tajeddin and Ghanbar (2016), the position applied is that the single L2 classroom setting does not exist. Settings are locally created by participants through and in their communication in the light of general institutional aims and immediate pedagogic purposes. The notion of the L2 lesson context is too broad brushed. Contexts are locally produced and can be transformed at any moment. The four modes, applied in this study to focus on language functions, are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1
L2 Classroom Modes (Walsh, 2006, p. 66)

Mode	Pedagogic Goals	Interactional Features
Managerial	To transmit information To organize the physical learning environment To refer learners to materials To introduce or conclude an activity To change from one mode of learning to another	A single, extended teacher turn which use explanations and/ or instructions The use of transitional markers The use of confirmation checks An absence of learner contributions

Materials	To provide input or 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 Content- focused feedback Corrective repair The use of scaffolding
Skills and systems	To enable learners to produce correct answers To enable learners to manipulate new concepts To provide corrective feedback To provide learners with practice in sub- skills To display correct answers	The use of direct repair The use of scaffolding Extended teacher turns Display questions Teacher echo Clarification requests Form- focus feedback
Classroom context	To enable learners to express themselves clearly To establish a context To promote dialogue and discussion	Extended learner turns Short teacher turns Minimal repair Content feedback Referential questions Scaffolding Clarification requests

2.3. Studies on the Speech Acts in EFL Contexts

2.3.1. Studies in the Iranian EFL academic contexts

The studies conducted on speech acts in the Iranian EFL contexts fall into two categories of meta-analyses and those which accentuate certain speech acts such as requests, agreements, complains, and the like. For example, Eslami-Rasekh, Eslami-Rasekh and Fatahi (2004) investigated the impact of metapragmatic instruction on the requesting, apologizing, and complaining speech acts comprehension of advanced EFL students. Analysis unfolded that students' speech act comprehension improved significantly. In another study, Chalak and Derakhshan (2021) aimed at exploring compliment responses exploited by Iranian EFL learners on Instagram adopting Maíz-Arévalo's (2013) framework. The findings revealed that that the most occurring response strategy appeared to be acceptance, and was different from face-to-face compliment response. Or Malmir (2021) examined the link between L2 teachers' intercultural competence and their learners' information about the prevalent English speech acts. Data analysis unfolded that all four components of teachers' ICC

appeared to be significant predictors of their learners' speech act competence. Intercultural expertise confirmed to be strongest predictor accompanied by intercultural knowledge as a mediocre one.

In terms of the second groups of studies, in a meta-analysis study, Shakki et al. (2021), targeted the influence of the teaching in an Iranian EFL context on the speech act of apology. To this aim, 12 papers published from 2000 to 2020 were chosen according to the exclusion and inclusion criteria which were coded for the analysis. The results demonstrated that the instruction of this speech act proved to be effective and it manifested a medium effect size. In another meta-analysis, Derakhshan and Shakki (2021), highlighted both a quantitative and reliable measure of the impacts of teaching for the request speech act in Iran and an explanation of the association between some variables that moderate its contribution. Results revealed an overall large effect size on the influence of the teaching of request, some variables confirmed to serve as a moderator for this influence like gender and treatment type, and the male group manifested a larger effect size compared to females.

Mohammad Hosseinpur and Goli (2026) in their study applying Cohen and Ishihara's (2005) speech act strategy analyzed usage variations and effectiveness of speech act strategies among 200 Iranian EFL learners. The participants were L2 and L3 (Turkish/Persian and Arab/Persian) EFL learners of both genders. The revealing results indicated that L3 learners manifested higher proficiency in exploiting speech act strategies compared to L2 learners. However, no statistically significant difference was reported between the two L3 groups in their strategy usage frequency or their success in employing such strategies. Findings further illustrated that multilingual learners often manifested more effective communication strategies in L2 settings.

2.3.2. Studies in the foreign EFL academic contexts

Basra and Thoyyibah (2017) examined the speech act taxonomy which was mostly applied by an EFL instructor while teaching. The study a case study which focused on an English instructor teaching in an EFL environment. It adopted Searle's classification

of speech act as the instrument. Directive speech acts, as the most frequent one, revealed to be exploited mainly by the instructor since he adopted the principle of communicative language teaching. The application of directive speech paved the way to make implication towards the promotion of learners' productive skills.

Jakob (2018) highlighted the employment of speech acts by instructors and learners in their interactions in EFL context. The findings unfolded three types of speech acts exploited by the interactants, namely locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act. Locutionary act was exploited by the instructors in case they were greeted by learners. Illocutionary act was adopted by instructors when asking the learners to read some paragraphs in the book. Finally, perlocutionary act was utilized by instructors when asking learners to keep quiet in the classrooms.

Christianto (2019) scrutinized the types of speech acts manifested by teachers and learners in EFL classrooms employing Cruse (2000) model. The findings revealed the exploitation of three types of speech acts, namely locutionary act applied when they articulate a statement without any certain intention, illocutionary act utilized when they utter an expression with intention, and perlocutionary act adopted when listeners illustrated some responses and gave feedback to the speakers' statements.

Rakaj (2022), adopting Searle's taxonomy, analyzed 60 utterances articulated by Access teachers. The results indicated four categories of speech acts performed by both teachers: representatives, directives, expressives, commissives, and no declarations. It was disclosed that directives and representatives were the most frequent speech acts employed teachers.

Browsing the existing literature on the speech acts in the EFL contexts confirmed that the field suffers from the scarcity of studies adopting Finocchiaro and Brumfit's (1983) model of language functions as well as Walsh's (2006) model of L2 classroom modes as two of ground-breaking frameworks to scrutinize the application of various types of speech acts in the Iranian EFL atmosphere. In fact, Walsh's model has been adopted in our context just to classify the teacher talk. Thus, to bridge this gap, the current study focuses on the Iranian EFL teachers and learners' classroom interaction applying these two models to gain a clearer picture of the speech acts.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The participants of the study were 20 Iranian EFL teachers (10 males and 10 females) and their 243 learners working on different books including "*American Headway*", "*got it*", and "*top notch*" in different cities like Ilam, Isfahan, Babol, Tehran, and Urmia. Twelve teachers hold BA, five hold MA, and three were PhD candidates in TEFL. They were aged between 25 and 42. These teachers were selected applying purposive sampling (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). This type of participants selection is in congruence with the idea of qualitative research which posits that purposeful selection of the participants can best help the investigators in the perception of the under-research issue (Cresswell, 2009). Learners were of different levels from introductory to advanced aging from 12-41. Their levels of achievement were distributed as follows: elementary (22%), intermediate (37%), and advanced (41%).

3.2. Data Collection

To examine the speech acts in Iranian EFL classrooms in the current descriptive study, eighty 90-minute sessions (four sessions for each teacher) were observed and audio-recorded in a number of tournaments and then meticulously transcribed by one of the researchers. Naturalistic inquiry was employed to examine diverse speech acts in the Iranian EFL classes. The recording process was done in the form of duration type (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007) because each session took one instructional session. Concerning the role of the observer, he was an outsider in the current investigation so that to achieve maximum naturalness in data. To observe the ethical issues, the researchers granted individual and institutional permissions before audio taping took place. Participants were also notified that they were being recorded for a linguistic study, but specific information about speech acts was not presented before the round so that speakers would not consciously or unconsciously shift their usual linguistic habits. Anonymity was also of high significance in the present study. To protect the anonymity of the participants, all the names in the transcripts are nickname.

3.3. Procedures and Data Analysis

After all the recordings were transcribed, the transcribed data were analyzed by means of Finocchiaro and Brumfit's (1983) for the types and Walsh's (2006) SETT (Self- Evaluation of Teacher Talk) model for the function of the speech acts manifested in the class. As the purpose of this study was to consider types and functions of speech acts in the Iranian EFL context, following the thorough analysis of the data relying on the aforementioned models, different types of speech acts exploited by the Iranian EFL learners and teachers accompanied by their different functions were extracted. To ensure inter-coder reliability, about 30% of the data were selected randomly and were checked by two informed experts in the field. Results revealed a high degree of agreement (90%) between the coders. The remaining 10% of the data were discussed later on to be revised, resulting in removing the least agreed ones and changing some others. Then, to exemplify each type and function, some excerpts were given and then the results were compared with the other studies in this regard.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1. Types of Speech Acts Applied by the Iranian Teachers and Learners

Findings from the corpora analysis focusing on types of speech acts exploited by the teachers and learners uncovered that directive speech acts were the most frequent ones with 57.5% occurrence followed by interpersonal (28.2%), referential (11.2%), and personal (3.1%), respectively. Findings demonstrated that directive speech acts were the most frequent and imaginative speech acts were the least frequent ones. It can be justified by referring to the central role played by the teacher as the director of class in EFL contexts where learners are highly dependent on teacher to promote learning (Christianto, 2020; Basra & Thoyyibah, 2017). It is the teacher who should provide the learners with sufficient chances to maximize their involvement which is a contributing factor in foreign language acquisition. Thus, it is not a surprise for this type of speech acts to be the dominant one with the frequency of 57.5% compared to the four other types. It is worth mentioning that due to the bolded role of teachers in teacher-fronted classes, directive speech acts were mainly exploited by the teacher serving as a means of controlling the class environment as well as facilitate the learning process. Following are some examples of this type of speech act

extracted from the transcribed data.

Function: Making suggestion in which the speaker is included.

Example 1: *Let's start the reading (Teacher suggesting the learners to begin the reading section)*

Function: Making request

Example 2: *Ok. Open your books. Page 54 (Teacher requesting his learners to do something)*

Function: Refusing to accept a suggestion or a request but offering an alternative.

Example 3: *No. leave it for next session (Teacher's response to one of the learners suggesting the teacher to let him go out and buy some ice-creams for the class)*

Function: Persuading someone to change his point of view.

Example 4: *No no no. You are wrong. For example, we say I marry Sara and I want to get marry to Sara (Teacher's reaction to one of the learners who have applied a verb mistakenly).*

Function: Requesting and granting permission.

Example 5: *Please, ask any question you do not know in this regard (Teacher's permission to ask related questions).*

Function: Asking for help and responding to a plea for help.

Example 6: *What's the meaning of wizard? (A student asking for help when she does not know the meaning of a word)*

Function: Forbidding someone to do something; issuing a command.

Example 7: *Ehsan stop asking lesson-irrelevant questions. Leave them for suitable time after class (Teacher's response to one of the learners who asked a question about a director which was irrelevant to the topic being covered)*

Function: Giving instructions.

Example 8*: /Intrə'dju:s/ is British. Pronounce it /Intrə'du:s/ (Teacher's feedback*

when a learner pronounced a word in British)

Function: Warning someone.

Example 9: *You haven't studied well. Why? (Teacher warning a learner who failed to answer the questions)*

Function: Establishing guideline and deadlines for the completion of actions.

Example 10: *Are you finished? Time is over (Teacher announcing the end of the time dedicated to do an exercise).*

Function: Asking for directions or instructions

Example 11: *How should I skim this text? (A learner asking for help to skim a reading text)*

Klattenberg (2022) announces classroom talk as a type of institutional talk that is empirically different from the default speech exchange system of ordinary conversation. Garton (2012) distinguishes between ordinary conversation and classroom teacher-fronted talk asserting that while the former is a locally managed, equal power speech exchange system the latter is an unequal power speech exchange system, in which teachers have rights to assign different topics and turns to learners and also to evaluate the quality of students' assistance to the producing interaction through other-initiated second-position repairs. Thus, it is not so strange to see that the majority of exchange sequences are initiated and ended by the teachers in EFL classes. In such contexts, teachers dominate the discourse and learners may be procedurally engaged, but they are rarely substantively engaged (Chalak, 2021).

The second most frequent speech acts with 28.2% occurrence were those categorized as interpersonal ones. The desired aim of learning any language is its application in communication in both spoken and written forms in different contexts. Classroom interaction is regarded as the key means to accomplish such an end. It is the collaborative conveyance of thoughts, feelings, viewpoints, and ideas between at least two individuals which leads to a mutual influence on each other. By the same token, Mimouni (2022) proclaims that through interaction, learners can enhance their language load when they listen to or read authentic materials, or even product of their partners in discussions, joint problem-solving activities, or dialogue journals. Sun and

Hsiu (2022) posit that, in interaction, learners can employ all they possess of the language – all they have acquired or naturally learned – in real life situations. Note the following examples illustrating the application of interpersonal speech acts in Iranian EFL context.

Function: Greetings and leave-takings.

Example 12: *Hi. How is everything going? (Teacher greeting learners at the beginning of the class)*

Function: Expressing joy at another's success.

Example 13: *Very good. I admire your perseverance. (Teacher expressing happiness for one of his learners' success in playing Santur which is an Iranian musical instrument)*

Function: Refusing invitations politely or making alternative arrangements.

Example 14: *Thanks for your invitation, but I think it's better to postpone it to the next weekend (Teacher refusing learners' invitation to go to cinema this weekend)*

Function: Apologizing.

Example 15: *Sorry for being late (One of the learner's response when he was late).*

Function: Indicating disagreement.

Example 16: *Farzad down the flag. I do not agree with you (Teacher disagreeing with Farzad's opinion on the negative role of internet in Iranians lives)*

Function: Interrupting another speaker politely.

Example 17: *Uhumm. What else? (One of the learners' response when the teacher was mentioning the advantages of reading books)*

Function: Making promises and committing oneself to some action.

Example 18: *I will check it and correct it for next session (Teacher promising one of the learners to revise his writing)*

Function: Making excuses

Example 19: *I wrote the meaning of the words but I did not bring them (a learner making excuse when criticized by the teacher on not bringing the word list)*

Any EFL program can be viewed as a dynamic and complex series of intertwined contexts in which interaction is benefiting from a centralized role in teaching and learning process. As Walsh (2006) maintains stakeholders in classroom interaction, instructors and learners, co- formulate (plural) settings. Along with similar lines, some experts state mere focus on comprehensible input and the negotiation of meaning does not guarantee second language acquisition emphasizing that learners must have enough opportunities to speak. In other words, as hold by Peker and Arsalan (2020), comprehensible output in the form of practice opportunities is at least of the same importance as comprehensible input. The issue is strengthened by Bygate claiming that "it is only when the learner is being required to piece together his own utterances that he is being obliged to work out – and hence learn – his own plans of verbal action, all the while evaluating his output in the light of his meaning intention" (1988, p. 231). Based on what was mentioned above, that's quite natural for interpersonal speech acts to happen extensively in any EFL class since it's replete with dialogues taking place between the teachers and the learners intending to enable them to initiate and maintain favorable social and functional relationships (Khodamoradi, Talebi, & Maghsoudi, 2020).

The third frequent type of speech acts belong to referential types (11.2%) which is somewhat similar to Searl's (1985) declaratives in his taxonomy of speech acts. Speakers, by applying such speech acts, talk about different events happening at home or class or street as well as reporting on actions, events, or people in the environment in the past or in the future as shown in following examples.

Function: Asking for a description of someone or something.

Example 20: *What is editorial? (A learner asking a question)*

Function: Defining something

Example 21: *Protest is a serious fight against others (Teacher defining the word 'protest').*

Function: Translating (L1 to L2 or vice versa).

Example 22: *Bizarre means Ajib-o gharib in Persian (Teacher translating a word from English to Persian)*

Function: Comparing or contrasting things.

Example 23: *In simple past some action is done and finished in the past, but in present perfect some action is done in the past and it may continue now. The second difference is that despite present perfect in simple past you know the exact time (A learner comparing simple past and perfect past asked by the teacher).*

Personal types, being employed in 3.1% of cases, proved to place in the fourth rank in terms of appearance in our data referring to ones' emotions and ideas. It is identical to Searl's (1985) expressive speech act in which interlocutors adopt it to express their feelings toward something, someone, and situation. These speech acts, as also posited by Zulianti (2018), were employed to clarify or arrange speakers' ideas and express their thoughts or feelings like love, joy, pleasure, happiness, surprise, likes, dislikes, satisfaction, disappointment, distress, pain, etc. In what follows, we have presented two examples for this function.

Function: Expressing like

Example 24: *I like football. I am a fan of Manchester United.*

Function: *Expressing surprise*

Example 25: *Such a great class*

Surprisingly, no occurrence of imaginative function of language was found during these classes.

4.2. Functions of Speech Acts Applied by the Iranian Teachers and Learners

Data analysis zooming in on the functions of the exploited speech acts adopting Walsh's (2006) categorization of classroom modes in which a mode is conceptualized as "an L2 classroom micro context which has clearly defined pedagogic goals and distinctive interactional features determined largely by a teacher's use of language" (Walsh, 2011, p. 125). It can be inferred that mode can refer to the different functions

of language employed by the teacher to observe and evaluate their classroom discourse so that to assist learning. The results re disclosed that the most frequently occurred mode is the materials mode (42%) accompanied by skills and systems mode (34%), classroom context mode (16%), and managerial mode (8%). As mentioned earlier, the results yielded that materials mode with 42% occurrence, as it is also echoed by the study conducted by Hatono et al. (2021), was the most frequent one for the teachers introduced language exercises around a specific piece of material aiming at eliciting learners' responses in relation to the pertinent material. The interactional feature of this mode was the predominance of IRF sequence neatly managed by the teachers themselves. The examples given below will clarify the issue.

T: *What's the meaning of translate?*

S: *Tarjome*

T: *Very good. Now translate this text.*

As the extracted piece of corpora suggests, in the IRF sequence above teacher's turn functions as both an evaluation of a learner's contribution and initiation of the next one. Generally, Walsh pronounces the IRF the most economical way to progress the interaction (2006, p. 70). Also, displayed questions were employed in many cases to check perception and to elicit responses. In addition, to attract the learners' attention, teachers relied a lot on form- focused feedbacks.

T: *Erfan, what did you do in this holiday?*

Erfan: *I stay at home and study my lessons.*

T: *You stayed at home and studied your lessons.*

In a nutshell, interaction in this phase is limited to the material presentation in which very little interactional space or choice of topic are adopted. As with managerial mode, teacher acts as initiator which it can even hinder learner involvement.

The results also illustrated that skills and system mode was the second frequent (34%) among others. The goals of skills and systems mode are to provide language practice in relation to a particular language system such as phonology, grammar,

vocabulary, and discourse or language skills including reading, listening, writing, speaking. It is in line with Shahani and Chalak (2017) arguing that the pedagogic aims stressed in this mode can be to manifest correct answer, make students to articulate correct form, and to present corrective feedback. Here, we came up with teachers' extended turns to directly repair the learners' errors and give form-focus feedback. Note the following examples to best perceive the issue.

T: *Alireza do number one.*

Alireza: *Is he running?*

T: *Ok. Good. Is he running? Saeed number two, please.*

Saeed: *She is singing.*

T: *No no no. be careful.*

Saeed: *Is she singing?*

T: *Yeah. That is right. You should write a question here. You know? Here, it will be: is she singing? And we have two kinds of answers: positive and negative.*

T: *Amirreza you do number 3*

Amirreza: *He is eating*

T: *It is a question Amirreza. Look here. Is he eating? Begin with is he. Ok?*

Alireza: *Ok. Got it.*

T: *What do you see in this picture?*

Alireza: *A bird*

T: *A bird? Ok. What is the bird doing? The bird is roaring.*

Alireza: *Roaring? What's the meaning of roaring?*

T: *Roaring means "khorushidan" in Persian.*

As the excerpt suggests, in this phase of the class, majority of the turns are devoted to the teacher as the principal goal of it is to enable learners to produce correct answers as well as to manipulate new concepts. Thus, the teacher shoulders a great

responsibility by the use of scaffolding and also providing corrective feedback. For example, the grammatical point being practiced in the above excerpt is how to make interrogative sentences. The structure was taught in advance and learners were just asked to make interrogative sentences based on what they see in the pictures of the book and those brought into the classroom by the teacher. When one of the learners did the job mistakenly by announcing "He is eating." instead of "Is he eating?" the teacher comes to scene and repairs his answer by providing direct corrective feedback: "It is a question Amirreza. Look here. Is he eating? Begin with is he. Ok?" Also, learners employed some clarification requests to best understand the lesson. For example, a learner who failed to understand the meaning of verb "guess" wanted his teacher to help him by asking: "would you mind translating 'guess' into Persian?"

The results uncovered the classroom context mode was the third most frequent one with the proportion of 16%. In this step of class, learners are bestowed with the opportunity of expressing themselves while rarely being corrected as it is also reflected by Khatib and Kardoust (2022). It can be referred to the fact that teacher should act as facilitator of communication. According to Walsh (2006), in classroom context mode the principal role of the teacher is to listen and support the interaction which frequently takes on the appearance of a naturally occurring conversation and to elicit learners' personal ideas and attitudes. In this way, students become more motivated to tactfully participate in a communication. Note the following excerpt.

T: *Ok. We have free discussion today. Why we say free discussion?*

S: *Because, we choose our discussion topic.*

T: *Yeah, that's because we ourselves select our conversation topic. Now no one says what to talk about. What do you want to talk about? Hamed.*

Hamed: *Educating*

T: *Arash u?*

Arash: *He did not say anything.*

T: *Borhan, what do you suggest?*

Borhan: *ummmmmmmmmmmm …… ok ….. . No idea*

T: Ok. *Sorush u?*

Sorush: *Our jobs in the future*

T: *What about you arsalan?*

Arsalan: *Our favorite room*

T: *ok. Let's talk about education in this session. What do you want to study in university? And why? Hafez, you first.*

Hafez: *I am going to study psychology. Because I think that people must have healthy minds to work better in our society. And ummmmmm …….. it makes me wealthy.*

T: *Excellent. You have planned to earn much money.*

As it can clearly be seen in the above excerpt, teacher gives plenty of opportunities to learners to speak English in the classroom and to communicate with their teachers. Also, teacher's questions comprised more proportion of teacher talk. In addition, learners were endowed with a pause to think and then to participate. Learners usually exploited discourse markers when they were provided with wait time to signal the need for a pause to plan and organize their next messages. Also, in some cases, the teacher tried to repeat the learners' response to enhance their confidence and consequently motivate them to have more contribution in the flow of communication. Another finding revealed in this phase was teacher's tendency to engage all learners in communication by asking for volunteers first and by calling learners' name later. These findings resemble Peng's (2019) commenting that EFL classrooms should be distinguished from others in that EFL instructors are advanced EFL learners themselves, and learners mainly learn and exploit English in class. Hence, to maximize acquisition, instructors often make efforts to stimulate learners to take part in class communication. Therefore, it was expected that almost every student are involved in the lesson. Unfortunately, though teachers provided the learners with extended turns to express themselves, the learners were less self-expressive, i.e. in this phase of the class, most of the speech acts were used by the teachers and learners did not contribute a lot.

The results also showed that managerial mode with the frequency of 8% was the least frequent mode mostly at the beginning of the session where the teacher wants to set the scene. It was the teacher's role to manage the classroom environment for students to learn and to regulate the classroom as it also discussed by Tajeddin and Ghanbar (2016). The managerial mode is of high significance because teachers at first had a pressed need to organize and manage the classroom context leading to what teachers need to introduce and to conclude the lessons. In other words, teachers had to handle and control the situations when there is anything interrupting the teaching process. In this phase of the study, we witnessed a great body of extended teacher turn used to explain or instruct a point characterized by the application of transitional markers as well as confirmation checks. Note the following excerpt.

T: *Ok, Hi students. I wish all of you enjoy your lives. Ok. Last session, we studied lesson four of headway 2. Am I right? Well. What we are going to do this session? Did you look at your syllabus? We don't have writing today. Ummm ……. We have discussion. It is optional. OK? We choose our topic. Uhhhhhh …… Do you have any idea to talk about?*

As it can neatly be seen from the transcription, in this phase of class, teachers are provided with an extended turn to organize the physical learning environment as well as to refer learners to materials. Here, we can observe the complete absence of learner turns which, most of the time, as asserted by Walsh is one of this mode's interactional features (2006, p. 67). Though occurred at the beginning of the classroom in most cases, managerial mode also was seen in the middle and at the end of the classroom to change from one mode of learning to another and to conclude an activity.

T: *Ok. Open your books. Well. What did we do in last session? I think, we studied page 26 and 27. Ha?*

T: *Ok. We now do the exercises. Complete the sentences with a few and a lot of. All right. Fill in the blanks and after that you have to read it one by one.*

T: *Finished?*

S: *Yes*

T: *All right, read please.*

T: *Excellent. This exercise is over. Now next exercise, please.*

As this excerpt suggests, the teacher used the transitional markers 'all right, well, now, okay, go to, etc.' repeatedly utilized to keep attention or to indicate the beginning or end of an activity. These sequences of discourse usually is characterized by the acceptance of the learners' responses and providence of a positive feedback on behalf of the teacher.

5. Conclusion

Due to the high importance of the notion of interaction in the realm of second language acquisition serving as a means of meaning negotiation, drawing on the moment-by-moment conversation analysis, the current two-phase investigation delved into the types and functions of speech acts produced by the Iranian EFL teachers and learners.

For the first phase of the study revisiting the types of utilized speech acts we relied on the Finocchiaro and Brumfit's (1983) model. Findings revealed that the two most frequently occurred type were directive (57.5%) and interpersonal (28.2%) which include slightly over 85% of exploited speech acts. The remaining 15% was distributed among other types of speech acts. And, for the second phase of the study exploring the function of exploited speech acts, the results illustrated that the most frequent mode was materials (42%) accompanied by skills and systems mode (34%), classroom context mode (16%), and managerial mode (8%). The findings of the two phases of the study are comparable since both indicate the teacher drastic role in the class as the initiator, controller, facilitator, and director of the class. As the results suggest, on the one hand, the most frequent speech act type appeared to be directive which was mainly employed by the teachers to give order and direction by which influence the actions of the learners to best promote the learning process. This was possible chiefly by making extensive requests and suggestions. On the other hand, the most frequent mode was materials through which teachers relied on asking numerous display questions as well as giving extensive form-focused corrective feedback directly since most of the class time was devoted to work on specific materials presented in American headway book.

By and large, though Iranian teachers worked hard to pave the way to maximize learners' involvement resorting to extensive requests and suggestions, learners did not contribute a lot in the classroom procedure. In other words, teachers' turns were much more than the students' in class. It can be confirmed with reference to a large number of corrective feedback, directions, display questions, teacher echoes, etc. attributed to the authority role of the teacher in such classes.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the study focused on teachers and learners working on books of "*American Headway*", "*Got It*", and "*Top Notch*". Thus, it is recommended that other researchers concentrate on the classrooms working on other books to see if the specific texts and exercises of the book influences the amount and nature of the classroom discourse. Finocchiaro and Brumfit's (1983) was applied for analyzing different types of speech acts in the current study. Thus, it is suggested for other investigators to adopt other models and frameworks in this regard to come up with clearer picture of the issue.

The current study is devoted to both EFL instructors and learners to create good perspective about speech acts. Hopefully, gaining insight from this mini research, teachers and learners can perform good speech acts in the learning process. Thus, application of speech act cannot be ignored in the classroom because speech acts performed by teachers and learners can make the learners more active in the classroom. Thus, teachers and learners need to practice more speech acts while interacting with their students to come up with more desired learning outcomes.

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