Language Related Research
E-ISSN: 2383-0816
https://lrr.modares.ac.ir
https://doi.org/10.29252/LRR.12.5.14
DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1400.12.5.9.3

Vol. 12, No. 5
pp. 385-404
November & December 2021

Received: 21 November 2020
Received in revised form: 18 December 2020
Accepted: 1 January 2021

Power Dominance and Interaction Features in Iranian EFL Teachers' Classroom Discourse

*Azizeh Chalak**

Abstract

Classroom discourse refers to the language and interaction used by the teacher and the students to communicate and shape learning in the educational context. The present study focused on Iranian EFL teachers' classroom discourse by observing their dominancy, teacher talk, question types, and interactions in their classes. To do so, through a non-experimental, descriptive research design, 20 female experienced teachers with the age range of 30-40, teaching at an upper-intermediate level in different language institutes in Isfahan, Iran were selected based on the convenience sampling. Two classes of the teachers were observed, the sessions were recorded, and their classroom discourses were transcribed and later analyzed. Moreover, to increase the validity and reliability of the research, a semi-structured interview was conducted with volunteer participants; their reflections on their communication with the learners and discourse types were collected and analyzed using descriptive statistics in terms of frequency and percentages. The findings of the study showed that the teachers made use of specific discourse to ascertain their dominance and control in their classes. The findings also revealed that the teachers used more monologic discourse patterns in their classes rather than dialogic ones. Teacher talk far exceeded student talk, Initiation-Response-Feedback pattern dominated the classroom discourse; and display questions were used more frequently than referential ones. These findings could benefit teachers to be more conscious about type of CD and its effect on student-to-student and teacher-to-student interactions. It could also serve the purpose of critical classroom discourse analysis.

Keywords: classroom discourse, display/referential questions, interaction features, monologic/dialogic patterns, IRF pattern, power dominance

* Corresponding author, Associate Professor, Department of English, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran; *Email: azichalak@gmail.com*;
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000000267018366

1. Introduction

Classroom discourse (CD) analysis essentially refers to the analysis of texts in classroom contexts, and especially the analysis of classroom talks. It is concerned with the language and interactions used by the teacher and learners to communicate and shape learning (Jenks, 2021). It can encompass a variety of issues taking place in language classrooms and include the context in which the second/foreign language is instructed, the activities that language learners do, and teachers' and learners' engagement in classroom activities.

According to Nuthall, (2020), the earliest study of CD was completed in 1910 by recording teachers and students talking in classrooms. The early studies showed that the verbal interaction between teachers and students had an underlying structure that was much the same in all classrooms, at all grade levels, and in all countries. In some countries, due to the lack of an English-speaking environment outside the classroom, CD is regarded as a kind of model for language and learners' successful performance resulting from classroom interactions (Ingram, 2019; Liu & Le, 2012). The early studies on CD were focusing only on teachers' language but it is now an aspect of classroom process research that illustrates the joint contributions of teacher and students. Because the main goal of an EFL class is using language in context, therefore, the discourse used in the classroom is both teacher-student and student-student-based.

One of the main goals of EFL classrooms is having interaction with students and the EFL teachers are supposed to communicate with the learners all the time. It has always been an exhausting process for the teachers to gain and regain control of the classroom. Based on Bhatia et al. (2008), language is meaningful when it is used in a context, and language in context is defined as discourse.

The discourse that teachers use to imply or force their dominancy varies across different fields and in different cultures. The matter of power dominancy has always been a point of interest for discourse analysts. Whether in politics or society and the classroom, power domination is traceable (Bhatia, et al., 2008). The authoritative role of the teacher requires him/her to gain control and be able to manage the classroom. Therefore, a teacher uses a certain type of discourse to apply his/her authority over the students. The classroom discourse is mainly concerned with spoken discourse rather than written discourse (Hyland, 2011). As a result, every sentence or expression which is used by the teacher might have an interpretation and specific meaning based on the situation. Studying the classroom discourse in

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1400.12.5.9.3]
[DOI: 10.52547/LRR.12.5.15]

different contexts and cultures could provide information about how to deal and communicate with the students, matching with the demands of new generations and the new era. Therefore, due to its important role in educational contexts, this study aimed at investigating the power dominancy and interaction features in Iranian EFL teachers' classroom discourse.

Research Questions

1. What types of specific speech act are employed in the discourse of the teachers in the classroom to ascertain their dominancy and power?

2. Which types of questions (display questions or referential questions) do teachers use more in their classes?

3. Which pattern do the teachers use more (Monologic or dialogic ones)?

4. What is the amount of teacher talk and IRF patterns in Iranian EFL classrooms?

2. Literature Review

Classroom discourse refers to the language and discourse that teachers and students use to communicate with each other in the classroom. Classroom discourse as explained by Kida (2005) deals with whatever occurs in language classrooms. For Clark and Clark (2008), classroom discourse is a complex sociocultural activity as an integral process of meaning-making in the creation of language learners' social identity. Understanding how classroom discourse works is a fundamental question for applied linguists and practitioners in the field.

Classroom discourse has been studied from two different etic vs. emic perspectives. Emic account (e.g. a description of the behaviour or a belief) comes from students or teachers within the classroom (Gee, 2012; Walsh, 2011). It is sometimes referred to as an insider, inductive, or bottom-up perspective because it takes the perspectives and words of research participants. An etic perspective is a description of a behavior or belief by a classroom analyst or scientific observer. The etic approach is sometimes referred to as an outsider, deductive, or top-down process because theories, hypotheses, perspectives, and concepts from outside of the setting being studied are used as its starting point. While the emic account might be subjective, the etic account attempts to be neutral and unbiased. Early L2

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1400.12.5.9.3]
[DOI: 10.52547/LRR.12.5.15]

classroom discourse studies were mainly on observable linguistic behaviors from an etic perspective, but since late 1980, an analysis was done from an emic perspective as well. They focused mainly on communicative competence and linguistic content in the classroom.

Edwards and Westgate (1994) make a very useful distinction between approaches to the analysis of classroom talk: (a) focus is primarily on the analysis of turns, sequences, and meanings, (b) analysis with linguistic orientation. The conversational model of classroom discourse deals with descriptions of turns, sequences, and meaning and also the recurrent sequence of utterances in the classroom suggested by (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975) known as Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF). Analysis with linguistic orientation deals with the theoretical perspectives of conversation analysis, ethnography, and ethnomethodology, which deals with 'classroom aims and events' through the detailed account of patterns of interaction within those classrooms, and the focus is on a more linguistic analysis of rhetorical and lexico-grammatical patterns.

A study conducted by O'Keeffe (2011) focused on the type of speech acts and classified three main speech acts used by the teacher as declarative (assertion), imperative (order/request), and interrogative (question). Video recording of three Italian classrooms showed that teachers used specific discourse in all three classes emphasizing that teachers have their specific discourse and it varies from classroom to classroom (Molinari & Mameli, 2010).

Ustunel's (2014) study on the sequential organization of classroom discourse in an EFL classroom showed that it is important to train non-official teachers and familiarize them with the specific discourse required for the classroom. It is important to know how teachers use classroom discourse to exert their domination and power. Such studies imply how teachers and students use discourse to interact and communicate in different situations and contexts and it may be inferred that accepting the existence of a specific discourse in the classroom is inevitable and certify the importance of classroom discourse in the field of TEFL.

Classroom interactions have also been studied in different countries in different ESL/EFL contexts. In a Malaysian educational context, Noor et al. (2010) studied teachers' feedbacks on students' responses from the discourse analysis perspective and concluded that teachers have specific discourses to make feedback. Liu and Li (2012) and Jiang (2012) investigated the features of discourse in English classrooms in China and stated that teacher talk far exceeded students' talk; IRF pattern

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1400.12.5.9.3]
[DOI: 10.52547/LRR.12.5.15]

dominated classroom discourse structure, and teachers used a larger amount of display questions. Based on the data analysis, the researchers offered some tentative suggestions for English teachers to encourage students to talk more in their class. The same findings were supported by Jing and Jing (2018) who explored a non-native English teacher's teacher talk in an EFL classroom through a qualitative research design. They investigated the characteristics of the EFL teacher talk and tried to explain them. The study mainly employed video-recorded classroom and observation data for analysis. They showed that teachers still conformed to the widely acknowledged conventional pattern known as IRF.

Wright (2016) conducted a study on 52 Japanese adult EFL learners by recording the interactive context of their communicative classroom and focused on display and referential questions to quantity their output. A display question is a type of question which requires the student to demonstrate his/her knowledge on a subject matter when the questioner already knows the answer. For example,

Q: Is this a book?

A: Yes, it's a book

Display question is also called known-information question and bears similarities to closed questions for short and limited answers. On the other hand, referential question is posed when the answer is not known by the student at the time of inquiry. It is also known as information-seeking questions and is open question requiring long and varied answers. For example,

Q: Which character in the story you admire most and why?

In order to elicit language practice in the classes, both types of display and referential questions are posed (Wright, 2016). Her study showed that referential questions are beneficial in promoting students' output.

Rido et al. (2014) investigated interaction strategies in Indonesian secondary EFL classrooms. The study showed that the teacher used four types of interaction strategies including control of interaction or interaction management, elicitation or questioning, speech modification or feedback, and repairing or error treatment strategies. They concluded that these strategies were able to promote interactive learning in the context of the classrooms. Girik Allo and Rahman (2020) conducted a qualitative ethnographic study on the lecturers of the English education program

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1400.12.5.9.3]
[DOI: 10.52547/LRR.12.5.15]

study of teacher training and education faculty of Universitas Kristen Indonesia Toraja and found that the lecturers' language power was represented in the EFL classroom through directive, expressive, and assertive speech acts. Their directive speech acts were through commands and requests; expressive speech acts were in the form of pleasure, and the assertive ones were represented in the declaration.

In the Iranian EFL context, several studies have been conducted on classroom discourse analysis and strategies employed by the teachers (Azimi & Asadi, 2016; Chalak, 2019; Dehkordi & Talebinejad, 2017; Gharbavi & Iravani, 2014; Khany & Mohammadi, 2016; Rezaee & Farahian, 2012; Zakaria, 2012). For example, Rezaee and Farahian (2012) investigated the teacher discourse in the classroom and found out that most of the class time (about 70%) was spent on teacher talk; Only 20 percent spent on students' interaction and about 10 percent was allocated to other activities. The most frequently used strategy by the teacher was asking questions to involve the students in the activities.

Zakaria's (2012) study investigated classroom discourse and showed that teachers use different discourse when they interact with other colleagues compared to the discourse used when interacting with the students. Barekat and Mohammadi (2014) examined the effect of teachers' usage of dialogic discourse patterns on the improvement of the students' speaking ability. They employed a treatment with direct presentation of features of dialogic discourse through an experimental study and showed that teachers' use of dialogic discourse significantly improved the students' speaking ability.

Chalak (2019) examined the classroom discourse and interaction features of Iranian EFL teachers employing Ellis's (1994) and O'Keefe's (2011) classifications by interviewing volunteer Iranian EFL teachers. She investigated the speech acts used by the teachers to show their powers and found out that teachers employed the imperative forms more than declarative and interrogative ones. The study also showed that display questions exceeded referential ones.

Khany and Mohammadi (2016) also investigated the dialogic and monologic pattern of discourse employed by the teachers and through the analysis of classroom discourse showed that teachers produced a monologic discourse pattern more in their classes compared to a dialogic one. They suggested that due to the unavoidable importance of the teachers' classroom discourse, syllabus designers, language programmers, and EFL teachers need to identify how they can establish a dialogic discourse in school classes to ensure more satisfactory outcomes. The same findings

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1400.12.5.9.3]
[DOI: 10.52547/LRR.12.5.15]

were highlighted in Dehkordi and Talebinejad's (2017) study by emphasizing the patterns of teacher-student interaction at intermediate EFL level. The examination of classroom talk demonstrated restricted monologic and teacher-fronted talking in the classrooms.

Reviewing the related literature shows that lots of information have been gathered by different researchers regarding classroom discourse from an etic or emic perspective (Gee, 2012), dominancy (Bahatia, et al., 2008), spoken discourse vs. written discourse of the teacher (Hyland, 2011), an ethnographic meta-analysis of study with a common conceptual focus on classroom discourse and interactions with a focus on CD as a tool for critical reflection (Bloome et al. 2005; Rymes, 2015) or monologic/dialogic, amount of talk and IRF patterns (Azimi & Assadi, 2016; Khany & Mohammadi, 2016; Liu & Li, 2012). However, none of the studies reviewed in this paper have investigated all aspects of classroom discourse, teacher dominance, teacher talk, and interaction features at the same time in a particular setting. Considering the limitations of the previous studies reviewed in this paper, this study explored the use of specific discourse to ascertain teachers' dominancy and control, use of monologic and dialogic discourse, student talk, Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) pattern, display questions and referential ones in the same context.

3. Methodology

3.1. Design and Setting of the Study

This study was a descriptive, non-experimental study that employed a triangulation of different methods to increase the reliabity and validity for the procedure of data collection. Naturalistic inquiry was also employed to investigate the teachers talk along with observation. The study was conducted in three different institutes and with the teachers who were teaching at the upper-intermediate level in those institutes in Isfahan, Iran during the summer, 2019. The study was based on convenience sampling and it took one semester to collect and analyze the data.

3.2. Participants

The participants were 20 female experienced teachers with the age range of 35-45,

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1400.12.5.9.3]
[DOI: 10.52547/LRR.12.5.15]

teaching at an upper-intermediate level in three different institutes in Isfahan, Iran, and were selected based on convenience sampling. All the participants had at least 10 years of experience in teaching English and were teaching the same books and levels in the institutes. Teachers' demographic background is presented in the following table:

Table 1
Demographic Background of the Participants

Number of Participants	20
Age	35-45
Gender	Female
Nationality	Iranian
L1	Persian
TL	English
Years of Experience	10-15

The teachers were informed of the researcher's study, but not of the purpose of it. Because informed consent is a prerequisite for all research involving identifiable subjects, the participants were assured that their confidentiality will be observed and no private information will be published. Therefore, ethical issues were strictly observed through consent, anonymity, privacy, and confidentiality.

3.3. Instruments

To increase the validity of the data collection procedure and minimize subjectivity or bias in the process of data collection, triangulation was employed. Audio-recording, classroom observation, and interview were the major instruments whereas the frameworks and coding schemes used for each method were different.

To examine the power and dominancy of the teachers, O'Keefe's (2011) classification including *declarative, imperative, and interrogative* speech acts was employed. To investigate the question types, Ellis's (1994) classification which categorizes the question types into *display questions and referential questions* were used. Display questions attempt to elicit information or knowledge already known by the teacher, while referential questions request information not known by the teacher and are likely to elicit long answers through higher-level thinking.

To examine the amount of teacher-talk, Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975),

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1400.12.5.9.3]
[DOI: 10.52547/LRR.12.5.15]

Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) pattern as the conversational model of the class was used to examine the teaching exchange of the teachers. Nystrand and Gamoran's (1997) classification was employed to investigate the attributes of *monologic and dialogic discourse* based on the classroom observation transcripts. The reason for employing these coding schemes is because these frameworks have been introduced as reliable and valid schemes and used by many researchers in the literature (Azam, 2015; Azimi & Assadi, 2016; Jiang, 2012; Khany, 2016; Liu & Le, 2012).

A semi-structured interview with five volunteer teachers was also used to examine the emic perspective of the teachers. The observation of teachers' classes was also randomly done and two classes of each teacher were observed through the supervision programme of the institutes, but no particular rubric was employed by the researcher as the observer who was the same for every teacher and classroom.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

The data of this study consisted of conversational and discourse instances in teacher-student interactions collected from three different institutes in Isfahan, Iran during summer 2019. Twenty female experienced EFL teachers were selected based on availability and accessibility. The teachers were all teaching at the upper-intermediate level using the same book (that is *American English File)* and they were all experienced teachers. Their classes were observed for two randomly selected sessions, and two sessions of their classroom interactions recorded by the institutes were carefully analyzed and investigated.

After completion of the observation, the participants were asked for voluntary cooperation for a 10-minute interview session. Five volunteer teachers took part in this phase of the study. The researcher, as an experienced teacher in teaching TEFL at the university level with 22 years of experience interviewed the volunteers and their ideas and reflections on the whole process and the efficiency of using specific utterances to gain power and control of the classroom were collected and further analyzed to increase the validity of the study.

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1400.12.5.9.3]
[DOI: 10.52547/LRR.12.5.15]

3.5. Data Analysis Procedure

The data collected from the observation and interview sessions were transcribed and the frequency and percentage of utterances used by the teachers in the classroom were counted, tabulated, and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. The description of the data qualitatively was used to describe every item and whenever possible, figures and numbers were presented. To increase the reliability of the instruments, intra-rater and inter-rater reliability were computed. Intra-rater reliability was checked three weeks after the analysis of the data. There were very few minor mismatches that were reexamined to finalize the analysis. Therefore, to contribute to the issue of reliability, the stability (intra-rater reliability) and the reproducibility (inter-rater reliability) of the instruments were established.

In so doing, the data were analyzed and categorized by two raters independently using the same instrument. The raters were the researcher herself, and one of her colleagues who had experience in teaching EFL courses. It is worth mentioning that the raters did not work together to come to a consensus about what evaluation they would give to the sections. Moreover, after a three-week interval, the same two raters coded the same data using the same schemes and procedures once more. Then, the inter-rater and intra-rater reliability coefficients were computed using Cronbach's alpha. The inter-rater reliability was found to be high enough ($\alpha = 0.87$) because it was statistically significant at $p \leq 0.01$. Moreover, the intra-rater reliability was quite satisfactory ($\alpha = 0.97$) which was statistically significant at 0.01 level.

4. Results

To interpret the discourse that the teachers used in the class, instances of their conversations that involved specific discourse to regain control of the class were collected and tabulated. Their power and dominancy were examined using O'Keefee's (2011) classification of speech acts. Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage of such analysis:

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1400.12.5.9.3]
[DOI: 10.52547/LRR.12.5.15]

Table 2
Frequency/Percentage of Speech Acts Used by Teachers

Types of Speech Acts	Frequency	Percentage
Declarative	198	20.89
Imperative	447	47.15
Interrogative	303	31.96
Total	948	100

As Table 2 shows, the most frequently used speech act to control the power and dominancy by the teachers was an imperative form, followed by interrogatives. Declarative was used less than the other two speech acts. This shows that teachers used imperative forms more than other forms. To exert power and show authority or dominance they were giving the order to ask the students to do a task or an exercise. This shows that still in many educational settings, classes are mostly teacher-centered. The examples of the teachers' utterances have been listed below:

Example of Imperative:

Read the text silently and infer the tone of the writer

Example of Interrogative:

What is the meaning of 'Aptitude'?

Example of Declarative:

You're forgetting the words! In a few sessions, you will have a midterm exam.

In evaluating the question types, Ellis's (1994) classification on display and referential questions was used to examine the number of research questions and types employed by the teacher. The following table shows the mean, frequency, and percentage of display questions vs. referential questions in all the observed classes.

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1400.12.5.9.3]
[DOI: 10.52547/LRR.12.5.15]

Table 3.
Frequency and Percentage of Display and Referential Questions

	Display Questions		Referential Questions	
Teachers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	11	52.38	10	47.62
2	13	59	9	41
3	10	55.55	8	44.45
4	9	45	11	55
5	10	55.55	8	44.45
6	9	50	9	50
7	11	55	9	45
8	16	69.56	7	30.44
9	11	57.89	8	42.11
10	12	57.14	9	42.86
11	10	55.55	8	44.45
12	11	57.89	8	42.11
13	8	57.14	6	42.86
14	13	56.52	10	43.48
15	9	50	9	50
16	15	65.21	8	34.79
17	11	52.38	10	47.62
18	12	57.14	9	42.86
19	15	65.21	8	34.79
20	11	55	9	45
Total	227	1129.11	173	870.89
Mean	11.35	56.45	8.65	43.55

As presented in Table 3, the use of display and referential questions were not equally distributed. The mean percentage of display questions was marginally more than referential questions (56.45% and 43.55%, respectively) . In two of the classes, teachers used the same amount of display and referential questions and except in one class where the teacher used more referential questions than the display ones, in the other classes, the number of display questions exceeded referential ones. In other words, there was a predominance of display questions over referential questions in most of the observed classes.

To examine the classroom discourse structure of the teachers, Sinclair and Coulthard's (1997) model of IRF was used. The results are presented in Table 4.

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1400.12.5.9.3]
[DOI: 10.52547/LRR.12.5.15]

Table 4
Classroom Discourse Structure

	IRF Pattern		Other Structures (IRFR, I, IR, IRF/IRF)	
Teachers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	15	68.18	7	31.82
2	19	70.37	8	29.63
3	17	77.27	5	22.73
4	16	69.56	7	30.44
5	18	72	7	28
6	16	72.72	6	27.28
7	15	65.21	8	34.79
8	18	66.66	9	33.34
9	19	82.6	4	17.4
10	17	68	8	32
11	18	72	7	28
12	16	72.72	6	27.28
13	20	71.42	8	28.58
14	14	60.86	9	39.14
15	19	73.07	7	26.93
16	17	73.91	6	26.09
17	18	81.81	4	18.19
18	17	77.27	5	22.73
19	15	68.18	7	31.82
20	16	66.66	8	33.34
Total	340	143047	136	569.53
Mean	17	71.52	6.8	28.48

As Table 4 shows, the dominant classroom discourse structure was Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) pattern. The mean percentage of the IRF pattern in all the observed classes was 71.52 indicating the predominance of the IRF pattern over the other ones (IRFR, I, IR, IRF/IRF).

To investigate the discourse pattern used by the teachers, a distinction from Nystrand et al. (1997) was borrowed. Observing teachers' classes and interviewing the volunteer teachers showed that almost all the teachers used monologic discourse as the dominant discourse pattern in their classes. It was the predominant, prevalent discourse pattern in most of the cases unless the teacher had a different purpose to follow in the class. It was interesting to see that even the teachers who claimed that they were using dialogic patterns, were employing monologic ones in most of the instances. In rare cases (two out of twenty), the teachers used both of the patterns.

Therefore, the teachers' classroom talk was mostly an IRF pattern. They selected

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1400.12.5.9.3]
[DOI: 10.52547/LRR.12.5.15]

students to respond, and the students were not initiators of the discussion or had little or no role in selecting the topics. In many cases, teachers were calling names to answer the questions. Their responses were short and directed or sometimes completed by the teachers. They initiated test-like questions which were not user-friendly in some cases. Another interesting point was the 'wait time' which was the time the teacher allowed the students to answer questions. Sometimes, it was too short and before anyone could answer the question, the teachers were answering the questions themselves. Therefore, the number of utterances made by the teacher was greater than the ones made by the students. The following samples are transcribed from the teachers' responses to the interview.

Example 1: *'If I don't speak seriously, (smiling, you know the new generation, they will all fail at the end of term'.*

Example 2: *'I can't stand the students who talk together in the class all the time'.*

Example 3: *'When they answer a question correctly, I say loudly "excellent" or "Bravo".*

Example 4: *'In most of the cases, I have to call on students for answering questions because … otherwise, only some students will be volunteers and uum… some of them will not get the chance to talk at all'.*

Example 5: *'I have to select almost all the topics to be discussed in the class from their textbooks … because their achievement test in the final exam is based on their textbooks'.*

Example 6: *'I always assign and repeat the activities or homework for the students, because every time I don't assign it, they don't do their tasks and next day, they say (smiling), But You Didn't Mention It!'.*

5. Discussion

The findings of the study showed that teachers mostly used an imperative form to exert power probably because the students were not doing all the activities voluntarily. They were selecting the students to speak or answer questions in most of the cases, they were calling on names because all the students could get an equal chance of class time. The teachers believed that if questions were initiated by the students or activities were done by voluntary participation, the shy students would be very passive due to their poor English ability. They only spoke when they were

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1400.12.5.9.3]
[DOI: 10.52547/LRR.12.5.15]

asked to. Therefore, teachers were dominant, authoritative, and the classes were teacher-centered. Most of the Iranian teachers participating in this study believed that Iranian students, still prefer teachers as the directors and in the center of classes. They are regarded as sources of knowledge and still dominant in the Iranian context and their students are the receptacles needing to be filled with information.

Therefore, the students had no objection to being told what to do and how to do the activities. The Prefabricated lesson plans imposed by the heads of the schools were also another reason for the teachers to assign certain activities at a certain time.

The findings also showed that most of the questions asked by the teacher were display questions. The students mostly provided shorter answers rather than follow up, longer statements. The 'wait time' used by the teachers was not enough, therefore, the amount of teacher talk exceeded student talk. The type of classroom discourse was mostly IRF pattern, followed by IRFR, I, IR, IRF/IRF respectively. These findings are in line with those of Liu and Li (2012), Chalak (2019) and Azami and Assadi (2016) which presented a larger amount of display questions by the teachers and showed that teacher talk far exceeded students' talk, IRF pattern dominated classroom discourse structure. The findings also confirmed the findings of Jiang's (2012) and Rido et al.'s (2014) findings on the use of IRF pattern as the dominant pattern in English classrooms.

The present study also displayed that the teachers used a monologic discourse pattern in their classes even when they were claiming that they prefer to use dialogic one. This might be because of cultural scripts and the role of the teacher, because still in the Iranian educational system, most of the students are teacher-dependent and they prefer to complete activities or assignments controlled or directed by the teachers. Most of the questions were display ones. Therefore, when students were responding to questions, they were using shorter responses or pre-specified answers than referential, authentic questions of high cognitive level, mostly limited to their textbooks. These findings are in full agreement with those of Barekt and Mohammdi (2014), Chalak (2019), and Khany and Mohammadi (2016) which emphasized the role of monologic patterns used by Iranian EFL teachers.

6. Conclusion

The present study focused on Iranian EFL teachers' classroom discourse by

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1400.12.5.9.3]
[DOI: 10.52547/LRR.12.5.15]

observing their dominancy, teacher talk, question types, and classroom discourse patterns. The findings of the study showed that the teachers made use of specific discourse to ascertain their dominancy and power in the classes. The findings also revealed that the teachers used a monologic discourse pattern with display questions. Teacher talk far exceeded students talk, and the dominant pattern of the classroom discourse and interaction was IRF pattern. The study showed that the traditional monologic, teacher-controlled instruction is still being practiced in educational settings. Efforts should be done to switch these monologic settings to the dialogic ones and prepare the conditions for such a shift. Investigating the classrooms and evaluating the discourse and interactions taking place inside the classes from emic and etic perspectives could help to get a clear picture of what is the status quo and find strategies to shift to more learner-centered approaches by promoting students' different abilities, preparing them, and also their teachers in different situations at different levels of knowledge. Studies similar to the current study could monitor teachers and administrators to be aware of the needs of the students in the new era and change school norms, cultures, and practices. The upheaval time of COVID-19 stressed the importance of changing the channels of presentations and interactions in classrooms. Investigating the power dominance and interaction patterns and features and comparing them with face-to-face student-teacher interactions might help decision makers in designing new courses, syllabi and content for the students.

The findings of the study could help practitioners in the field to employ appropriate discourse within the EFL context which might facilitate students participation and engagenement in class interactions. It could also help policymakers, and syllabus developers, or school managers to design better syllabi for the future. Considering what you teach in the class from an emic perspective could also help the teachers to have self-evaluation and provide them with more insights to evaluate their learners' success based on the way they are presenting the materials, the discourse they use, and the type of interactions they employ in classroom settings. It should be noted that this study similar to any other study is not complete by itself and might retain some limitations which might be due to those limitations regarding time, place, facilities, or instruments employed in this very particular research study. The future studies could focus on some untouched or less covered aspects in this paper such as wait time, functions that accrue from classroom discourse, gender differences, role of technology in classroom discourse, and turn-taking patterns. Therefore, further studies are required to confirm or disconfirm the findings of this study and continue the practice.

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1400.12.5.9.3]
[DOI: 10.52547/LRR.12.5.15]

References

Azimi, M. & Asadi, N. (2016). A Case study on EFL classroom discourse. *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies, 2,* 1762–1770.

Barekat, B., & Saeedeh, M. (2014). The contribution of the teachers' use of dialogic discourse pattern to the improvement of the students' speaking ability. *Procedia, 98,* 353–362. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.426

Bhatia, V. K., Flowerdew, J., & Jones, R. H. (2008). *Advances in discourse studies.* Routledge.

Bloome, D., Carter, S.P., Christian, B.M., Otto, S., and Shuart-Faris, N. (2005). *Discourse analysis and the study of classroom language and literacy events: A microethnographic perspective,* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Chalak, A. (2019, January 30- February 1). Classroom discourse and Interaction features of Iranian EFL teachers [Paper presentation]. Fifth International Conference on Language, Discourse, and Pragmatics (LDP), Ahvaz, Iran.

Clark, C. T., & Clark, I. (2008). Exploring and exposing a gap in L2 research: How socio-linguistic roles and relation-ships facilitate or frustrate second language acquisition. *Journal of the Spanish Association of Anglo-American Studies, 30*(1), 101–113.

Dehkordi, M. & Talebinejad, M.R. (2017). Iranian EFL classroom discourse: The case of teachers' and students' functions in their talk and code-switching. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research, 4*(7), 186–193.

Edwards, T. & Westgate, D. (1994). *Investigating classroom talk*. The Falmer Press.

Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford University Press.

Flowerdew, J. (2013). *Discourse in English language education.* Routledge.

Gee, J. P. (2012). *Routledge handbook of discourse.* Routledge.

Gharbavi, A., & Iravani, H. (2014). Is teacher talk pernicious to students? A discourse analysis of teacher talk. *Procedia, 98,* 552–561. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.451

Girik Allo, M. D. & Rahman, A. (2020). A critical discourse analysis on lecturers'

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1400.12.5.9.3]
[DOI: 10.52547/LRR.12.5.15]

language power in EFL teaching (an ethnography study at higher education**).** *Asian EFL Journal Research Articles, 27*(3). 177–201. https://doi.org/10.33758/mbi.v14i5.829

Hyland, K. .(2011). *Continuum companion to discourse analysis.* Routledge.

Ingram, J., & Elliott, V. (2019). *Research methods for classroom discourse*. Bloomsbury.

Jenks, C. J. (2021). *Researching classroom discourse.* Routledge.

Jiang, X. (2012). A study of college English classroom discourse. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, Vol. 2*(10), 2146–2152.

Jing, N. & Jing, J. (2018). Teacher talk in an EFL classroom: A pilot study. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 8*(3), 320–324. http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0803.07

Khany, R, & Mohammadi, S. (2016). An analysis of the English class discourse in the Iranian high schools. *The Qualitative Report, 21*(10), 1817-1835.

Kida, T. (2005). Effects of teacher discourse on learner discourse in a second language classroom. In A. Housen & M. Pierrard (Eds.), *Investigations in instructed second language acquisition* (pp. 457–494). Mouton de Gruyter.

Liu, J. & Le, T. (2012). A case study on college English classroom discourse. *International Journal of Innovative Interdisciplinary Research, 2*, 1–10.

Molinari, L., & Mameli, C. (2010). classroom dialogic discourse: an observational study. *Procedia, 2,* 3857–3860. DOI:10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.03.604

Noor, N., Aman, I., Mustaffa, R., & Seong, T. (2010). Teacher's verbal feedback on students' responses: A Malaysian ESL classroom discourse analysis. *Procedia, 7,* 398–405. http://10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.10.054

Nystrand, M., & Gamoran, A. (1997). The big picture: Language and learning in hundreds of English lessons. In M. Nystrand (Ed.), *Opening dialogue* (pp. 30-74). Teachers College Press.

O'Keeffe, A. C. (2011). *Introducing pragmatics in use*. Routledge.

Rezaee, M., & Farahian, M. (2012). An exploration of discourse in an EFL classroom: Teacher talk. *Procedia*, 1237–1241.

Rido, A., Ibrahimb, N., & Nambiar, R. M. K. (2014). Investigating EFL master

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1400.12.5.9.3]

[DOI: 10.52547/LRR.12.5.15]

teachers' classroom interactions: A case study in Indonesian secondary vocational. *Social and Behavioral Sciences, 118*, 420–424.

Rymes, B. (2015). *Classroom discourse analysis: A tool for critical reflection* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Sinclair, J., & Coulthard, M. (1975). *Towards an analysis of discourse*. Oxford University Press.

Ustunel, E. (2014). Sequential organization of classroom discourse at an EFL kindergarten classroom. *Procedia, 141*, 115–118.

Walsh, S. (2011). *Exploring classroom discourse: Language in action.* Routledge

Wright, B. (2016). Display and referential questions: Effects on student responses. *Nordic Journal of English Studies. 15*(4),160–189. http://doi:10.35360/njes.388

Zakaria, M. H. (2012). Professional discourse community of teachers through critical classroom analysis within teacher education. *Social and Behavioral Sciences, 66*, 2–7.

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1400.12.5.9.3]

[DOI: 10.52547/LRR.12.5.15]

About the Author

Azizeh Chalak is Associate Professor of TEFL at the English Department of Islamic Azad University, Isfahan Branch, Isfahan, Iran. She is the editor-in-chief of *Research in English Language Pedagogy (RELP)* published at IAU, Isfahan Branch. She was selected as the top researcher of English Department in 2017 and 2018. Her research interests include teaching methodology, integration of technology in teaching, sociolinguistics, and intercultural communication.

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1400.12.5.9.3]
[DOI: 10.52547/LRR.12.5.15]