Questioning Practice and Classroom Interaction

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ABSTRACT: Successful SL/FL teaching- learning takes place as the participants involved actively. As such, classroom interaction plays an important role involving, both teacher and students, in the construction of language. The involvement is not only about how to teach and understand but also how to employ the talk such as question and response following the classroom discourse moves. Teacher Questions effectively provide insights for teachers to elicit students talk, facilitate students to think and express themselves in classroom interaction. In the meantime, student responses set up a major source of language output. The responses might also be helpful to reflect how teachers' questions are employed during the interactions. This article aims at reviewing questioning practice as the most common and prominent features of classroom interaction. Besides questioning, the coverage of this review includes classroom interaction practice, teacher talks, and students' responses. Thus, in factual process of teaching, teachers frequently and extensively use verbal questioning as a means of having total involvement of both teacher and students during the interaction.

Keywords: classroom interaction, teacher talk, and questioning

Introduction

The social constructivist learning theory coins the view that learning does not solely take place within the individual but that it is a social process. The theory, as advanced by Vygotsky in 1982, provides insights on the important role of others in knowledge construction process (Maphosa & Wadesango, 2017). This theory further, reveals that meaningful learning takes place when individuals are engaged in social activities. The activities are concerned with how individual involves and interacts in a certain community where knowledge construction might be experienced. Language classroom is regarded as one of the communities where students can undergo such experience.

In the context of English language teaching, knowledge construction might be reached through classroom talk. Classroom talk shapes type, scope, and quality of learning and knowledge construction likely to occur. The talk occurs between teacher and learners largely involves verbal interaction. This verbal interaction is proven as the

frontline practice employed by both the teachers and learners in language classroom interaction (Choi & Li, 2012; Geoghegan, Neill, & Petersen, 2013). In this regard, the teacher talks shape types of talks that occur in a classroom. Meanwhile, learner talks might mediate learning of language and content, and ways teachers attract and trigger learners' contribution. Thus, the verbal interaction is carried out through questions and along with expectation to students' responses.

Questioning act is mostly employed by the teacher. Farrel and Mom (2015) argue that almost 60 % of the total time classroom talks in class involve the use of teacher questioning act. Although learning materials, tasks, and activities influence learning experiences, expectations for learner outcome are routinely and determined by teacher questioning behaviour (Maphosa & Wadesango, 2017). The act of questioning is considered as the most common and prominent features of classroom interaction and is a basic technique used by the teacher during classroom interaction (Hill, 2016). The questioning act is a key indicator of classroom interaction's intention and expectation.

Realizing the importance of classroom interaction in which teacher talks are as a vital element, this article aims at reviewing both recent and earlier studies related to what and how questioning practice is employed in the context of EFL/ESL classroom interaction. As questioning behaviour is employed in classroom context, the issues which are highlighted, definitely deal with classroom interaction, teachers talk and questioning practice itself respectively.

Classroom Interaction
Previous studies have come up with several issues in classroom interaction. Iv and Tenore (2010) claim that teachers should spend extra efforts to deal with students' learning opportunities and the interactional style to be in dialogic way, (Brown & Kennedy, 2011). However, other studies emphasized that when there is a change from students' first to the second language, lessons tended to become more teacher-centered and there were fewer opportunities for negotiation of meaning and scaffolding.

By contrast, when it is changed into first language, learners become more active, (Diehl & Mcfarland, 2012; Lehti-eklund, 2012). In addition to language switching, Palma (2014) and Pianta (2016) have found that interactional features in teacher-student interactions contributed to learner involvement, measurement, engagement, and interaction. These findings have significant implications for classroom interaction and provide more important insights on pedagogy and teacher way of teaching.

Along the line of the above findings, recent studies have found that the interactive teacher-student interaction in which opportunities and involvement were evidenced from extended turns should be carried out by the teachers in their use of the specific interactional strategy such as negotiation meaning, (Cancino, 2015; Jackson & Cho, 2018; Solem, 2016). As such, the findings are corroborated by Griffiths (2015) and Manzel (2016) concluding that teacher-student interaction should be seen as a valuable tool for learning which definitely requires an effective use of a variety of techniques, strategies, measurement, and both pedagogical intentions and instructional moves, (Michener, Proctor, & Silverman, 2018).

In the mean time, teachers local tactics and strategies are moves to preserve the nature of teacher-student interaction, (Flieller, Jarlégan, & Tazouti, 2016; Rust, 2015; Salerno & Kibler, 2015; Darong, 2020). Moreover, better ways to have classroom as an interactive, a constructive and meaningful setting and meet the learners' needs and their claims through some language behaviors employed by teachers are definitely required, (Pianta, 2016b; Rolin-ianziti & Ord, 2016; Solem, 2016). As such, the requirements put forward the teacher roles as a good model or social figure for students regarding how to communicate and construct knowledge.

Teachers' ability in managing the class is another issue to deal with. The distinctive characters of teacher-student interaction must go along with the distinctive identified problems occurring in the class such as emotion, and attitudes, to help teachers attract the learners to be more cooperative in terms of filling the target of learning, (Carassa & Colombetti, 2015; Hafen *et al.*, 2015; Kapellidi, 2013; Nakamura, 2008; Tavakoli & Davoudi, 2016). These, actually, manifest in the classroom interaction in the form of turn-taking organization or organization of sequences, (Rolin-ianziti & Ord, 2016).

From the perspective of quality, interaction both in ESL and EFL appears to be in dichotomies such as being communicative or uncommunicative, high or low teacher talking time, and male or female, (Cancino, 2015; Eliasson, Sørensen, & Karlsson, 2016; Hassaskhah & Zamir, 2013). Regarding such dichotomies, Downer, *et al.*, (2015) purpose three domains; emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support which might influence the measurement of its quality. Unlike the prior studies, being communicative and uncommunicative, indeed, lies at the core of the education process, (Le, *et al.*, 2017). Then, it has been recently observed regardless of the three domains above, the students' perception, preference, feelings, and consistency are also other variables influencing the quality of interaction, ((Locasale-crouch, *et al.*, 2018). However, the term quality is extended by stressing on the teachers' classroom language and knowledge, (Canh & Renandya, 2017; Ekembe, 2014; Palma, 2014; Shintani, 2012; Shresta, 2013). Both are very crucial and have a stronger correlation to classroom interaction. The authors accentuate that teachers' language proficiency plays significant role in interactive interaction between teacher and students. A reconceptualization of teacher language proficiency, not as general English proficiency but as a specialized subset of language skills is definitely required to teach subjects (Freeman, *et al.*, 2015).

Teacher Talk
Researchers and language educators have long dealt and acknowledged the influence of teacher talks on the target language learning. Choi and Li (2012) argue that teacher talks are the frontline practice employed by the teacher. Pedagogical dialogue and literacy learning is mutually used by teachers and students in literacy practices through teacher talks, (Geoghegan et al., 2013). Likewise, teacher talks are concerned with turn-taking and sequence organization which may affect the types of students' contribution in interaction. within the classroom, (Kapellidi, 2013). Despite the prolific of other constructs in classroom interaction, Chappell (2014) notes similarly that teacher should

be aware of the types of talks occurring in their lessons. This should be effectively and strategically managed in terms of mood and commodity exchange

Effective teacher talks are crucial for successful ELT and as such is a 'threshold concept' in teaching English both as second and foreign language as well, (Rolin-ianziti & Ord, 2016). Therefore, the awareness of teacher talks reflecting through the success learning should be possessed, (Ekberg, Danby, Davidson, & Thorpe, 2016). Interactional awareness of language teachers and driving pedagogical and practical knowledge is beneficial in terms of pushing the learners' involvement (Ghafarpour, 2016; Hepple, 2012). As such, the reasoning is corroborated by Solem and Skovholt (2017) saying that raising teachers' awareness of the benefits of dialogic talk is necessarily done by making use of context. In addition to awareness, a number of interactional features of teacher talks are crucial in terms of having learners' involvement in meaning negotiation, (Cancino, 2015; Hosoda, 2015; Reinke & Herman, 2016; Sarandi, 2016; Snead & Freiberg, 2017; Solem, 2016).

From the perspective of proficiency, teacher talks might influence learners learning as teachers have good language proficiency. Language proficiency in the context of teacher talks is defined as a subset of specialized language skills required to prepare and teach lessons. It is a component of the teacher's subject knowledge influencing learners' learning (Cooke, 2013). By contrast, to make teachers' talks more beneficial and to trigger learners' language production, learners themselves should be aware of the nature of their own effective talks, (Halbach, 2015). In this regard, self-awareness is significantly contribute to shape the classroom talks.

Teachers Questions
Research on questioning practice has yielded important insights into the structure of classroom discourse. There have been numerous research studies examined typology of questions, students' response and teachers' beliefs and the actual practices in EFL/ESL classroom interaction.
Typology
Bloom's taxonomy provides insights for teachers to determine questioning types for their students. As teachers' question goes in line with Bloom's thinking domains, the question category is form lower type question to higher type question. The former is concerned with simple recall or memorization responses and comprehension checking while the later deals with students' requirement to utilize the information and concepts to clarify, compare, infer and draw conclusions (evaluative and speculative). The cognitive type is divided into four main categories namely clarifying question, associative question, critical thinking question, and values question (Hill, 2016).

However, types of questions also might promote higher order thinking and learners' achievement if only as they encounter the discourse and syntactical complexity of questioning (Hill, 2016; Walsh & Hodge, 2018). This has been corroborated by the recent findings that the complexity of teacher talk of questioning cognitively determines the students' thinking level (Stivers, 2018; Waring, Reddington, Yu, & Clemente, 2018). More specifically, it was found that the more complex question is, the better high level

thinking learners have though, this is only for high learners language skill (Hu & Duan, 2018).

The question also is categorized into the display and referential questions. Previous studies found that display question which is also termed as a closed question, corresponding to the lower-cognitive question, invite brief answers and place few cognitive demands on learners. It is predominantly used at a different level of education and usually elicit very restricted student response. Differently, referential question (opened question) that corresponds to high order question allows a range of responses and require students to contribute something new to the class interaction (Engin, 2013; Kao *et al*., 2011; Kelly *et al*., 2018; Tavakoli & Davoudi, 2016; Wright, 2016).

Aside from the types above, Boyd (2015) through his turn of talk analysis adds some types namely clarification request, procedural, contingent, convergent and divergent questions. Clarification request is a question seeking to bring about explanation or redefining of preceding contribution. Meanwhile, procedural question is concerned with relating to directions or behaviour. The third type deals with student contribution made within the three preceding utterances. Its form might be open or closed, authentic or display and yet the functions are to facilitate student thinking and exploration since it offers a coherent bridge across ideas and contribution (Kelly *et al*., 2018). The last two types deal with their coverage. Convergent question is a question that homes in an aspect of what is being talked or discussed. Meanwhile, divergent questions open up on the aspect of what is being talked or discussed. Maphosa and Wadesango (2017) and Tofade *et al*., (2013) note that this questioning type has no definite answer as the students are required to explore a variety of possible responses and permit them to explore in diverse perspectives.

Students Response

A great shift from teacher-centre to student-centre increases the students' involvement and interactional adjustment in interaction. As the students respond teachers questions or they themselves lead up the classroom talk, the class is more meaningful (Eckerth, 2009; Hirschkorn, 2009). In addition, teachers and students roles should be defined as being dynamic rather than being static in the teaching-learning process (Reinke, Herman, & Newcomer, 2016). This is corroborated by Rolin-ianziti and Ord (2016) and Reinke and Herman (2016) examining the dynamic factors in the interaction. Findings reveal that learning outcome increase significantly as teachers pay more attention to students' dynamic responses. As such, students' responses on teachers' questions are considered as the power of mood in student-teacher discourse (Babaii, Parsazadeh, & Moradi, 2018; Gallagher, Courtright, & Robinson, 2015).

Students' response might also be helpful to reflect how teachers' questions are employed during the interaction. Students' participation and their responses are significantly determined by the variety of questions types, techniques, follow-up questions, and patterns of questioning employed by the teachers in classroom interaction (Gilson, Little, Ruegg, *et al*., 2014; Heritage & Heritage, 2013; Hosoda, 2015). High order questions or complex questions affect both to increasing linguistic complexity of

students' responses and to mediating more engagement with academic content (Hill, 2016). These findings have been corroborated by other studies arguing that display questions invite short students' responses and place few cognitive demands. Differently, referential question (opened question) that corresponds to high order question usually elicit more responses and invite students to contribute something new to the class interaction (Engin, 2013; Kao *et al*., 2011; Kelly *et al.*, 2018; Tavakoli & Davoudi, 2016).

Discussion

A growing body of studies has been dedicated to the various issues of classroom interaction. The findings have emerged with different perspectives regarding what and how classroom interaction is. The learning opportunities and interactional strategy, teachers' role, classroom management, quality, and classroom language proficiency might be the most concern of previous the previous studies. Aside from shifting positions in changing activity structures and discourse, previous studies have also examined the interpersonal relationship in teacher-student interaction in which relationships among participants is highlighted. In this respect, there is a significant relationship between teacher–student interpersonal relations toward academic achievements. To add on, as noted by Pennings *et al*. (2014) and Darong (2020), teacher-student relationship results from a real-time teacher-student interaction. These real-time interactions are labeled by interpersonal content, structure, and complementarity which might be helpful to increase and shape the classroom climate.

However, it is necessary to note that the interaction would be more beneficial as teachers strengthen their concept and comprehension more on diverse pedagogical with specific attention to the quality of their talks during the classroom interaction. And yet, as one characteristic of being a good teacher, such concepts and understanding definitely make the class goes on being dynamic, (Hall, 2015). In spite of the fact that the aspects aforementioned discriminate among teachers with distinct teacher-student relationships and might differently shape and develop positive interaction, (Claessens *et al*., 2016), indeed, the teacher talks are crucial issue to deal with.

At this point, the nature of teacher talks is to manage the interaction. It is the teacher's responsibility to organize the structure, manage turn taking and the topic of discourse as well. Consequently, their talks should be carried out structurally. The structure of talks, indeed do not occur independently. As noted by Atwood, Turnbull, and Jeremy (2010), they are absolutely interwoven and are carried out in sequence. The reason lies behind is that there is a relationship between teachers' talks and classroom interaction. The more teachers talk and provide good input for the learners, the better output and interaction will be. On the other way around, the more teachers talk with no good input, the interaction might fail. Subsequently, it is worth to carry an effort of seeing how the language used for the sake of the learners' participant and involvement. The assistance of well-scaffold by using language properly in the classroom can achieve learners' optimal learning. Pushing ahead further, teachers' language might be regarded input and be used to modify the output, (Hsieh & Wang, 2017; Saito & Hanzawa, 2016). As such, the inputs and outputs depend on the teacher talks which largely involved questioning activity.

As claimed by Farrell and Mom (2015), almost 60 % of the total time a teachers talks in class involves the use of questioning of some sort. Teacher's use of questions plays a vital role in language acquisition and development since questioning behavior is the primary method for initiating students' involvement and interaction in language learning classroom. In the meantime, teacher questions are the most powerful discourse move choice in English language classroom, (Boyd, 2015) and a basic technique a teacher can use to stimulate thinking, learning, and class participation, (Hill, 2016). Along this line of argument, teacher questions should be able to organize the structure, manage turn taking and the topic of discourse. As such, it does not occur independently. It is absolutely interwoven and should be context-based for raising the interactional awareness of language teachers and driving pedagogical and practical knowledge (Atwood et al., 2010; Ghafarpour, 2016; Hepple, 2012; Lee, 2016; Solem & Skovholt, 2017). To do this, questioning alone is not sufficient. Considering students' responses is also another important aspect to deal with.

Questions and responses are vital elements of classroom discourse. In classroom interaction of language classroom, teacher question facilitates learning achievement by affecting the availability of language input to, language output from, and teacher feedback for students (Hu & Duan, 2018). Meanwhile, students' responses constitute a major source of language output. It is well-recognized by the output hypothesis, learner output is idenspensible to language development and might be beneficial for cognitive processes of second language acquisition (Hu & Duan, 2018). Regardless of demonstrating students' engagement and understanding of subject content, students' response can also indicate how students manifest their efforts to internalize and integrate their new knowledge, solicit teacher input and feedback (Wright, 2016).

By and large, classroom interaction is influenced by teachers' interactional strategy and management skills, resulting from their roles, encourage students to take the learning opportunities. In addition, teachers' language proficiency might benefit the interpersonal relation and the quality of interaction. However, as noted by Diehl and Mcfarland (2012), the interaction might be in vain if the teachers are very dominant. In this sense, the main merit highlighted is that the quality of interaction is not only on teachers' side but also on students' side. Therefore, classroom interaction might be more meaningful to investigate by involving the nature and the entire process questioning and students' responses. In this respect, questioning is one of teacher talks functioning as an interactive teaching tool to provoke student's response and thinking process following the classroom discourse moves.

Conclusion and Future Research
Classroom interaction is a means by which learning is embodied in classrooms. In the language classroom, it is regarded as an object of pedagogical attention and a medium through which learning is realized. Teachers who are in charge of organizing the classroom interactions via language used wherein the use of questions is unavoidable. In the meantime, while learners are interacting, they are encouraged to have the opportunity to construct the knowledge about the target language in context.

Regarding classroom interaction and questioning practice, some important points can be drawn from this review. First, we can state with certainty that at least two aspects of interaction are used to consider that is a great attention to teachers' effort and an endeavour of provoking learners' contribution. The aspects are similar in that they each contain particular strategies and values of shaping, field, tenor, and mode of the classroom discourse. Second, the interaction involves large activities which mostly employed through teachers' talks which are vital guide and a well-managed learning tool to have good learners' responses, prospective interaction, and progressive learning attainment. Third, questioning, does not goes smoothly as the way it should be. Some teachers succeed and others, on the other way around, fail to elicit the desired interaction. As such, the complexity and the nature of interaction are of benefit to be taken into account. A good question is not only concerned with the types but also with the form, function and strategy of its employment following the classroom discourse moves.

Ultimately, questioning does not deal only with the types, learners' responses, cognition level, and teachers' reflective practice. In this regard, future research can examine other aspects of classroom discourse such as the question functions, student-teacher interactions, peer interactions, interactional sequences, and dialogic inquiry acts. Besides, teacher beliefs is insufficient to develop a fuller understanding on questioning practice. It might be more beneficial if moving deeper to investigate students' beliefs with the inclusion of other variables such as teacher knowledge backgrounds, student proficiency levels, topic familiarity, learning materials, and socio- pragmatic aspects embedded within.

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