

Exploring Turn-Taking Strategies in Classroom Interaction of Senior High School

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Abstract. In the Chinese education system, English is a core subject. Reading, writing, listening and speaking are four important parts of English capacity. Speaking is not stressed in Chinese English learning classes; instead, writing is. Furthermore, in Chinese conventional English classrooms, turn-taking is not given the credit it deserves as an excellent strategy for encouraging pupils to learn a second language. This study will concentrate on the usage of turn-taking by both teachers and students in order to examine various aspects of teaching in English classes and provide some recommendations. Data for this study are gathered using a corpus and audio recordings. Discourse volume, turn quantity, and turn-taking strategy utilization are the three areas of the statistics that are studied based on discourse analysis. Additionally, the findings demonstrate the teacher's hegemony in classroom interactions and use of a single teaching style. The findings can provide teachers and students with the deeper understanding of communication in target language and inspire teachers to take appropriate teaching method.

Keywords: Turn-taking; Classroom interaction; Discourse analysis.

1. Introduction

The ability to speak is a fundamental language skill and a vital tool for effective communication. In English language teaching, speaking is crucial way to apply knowledge of phonetics, vocabulary, and grammar to express oneself clearly within the topic of context. But in Chinese classrooms, the traditional methods of instruction frequently overlook the need of helping kids learn how to take turns, which is a necessary ability for effective communication. In English classes, teachers often steer the conversation, which can make it difficult for students to take turns in a sincere and organic way. Students may find it more difficult to talk as a result of this imbalance. English teachers should both have outstanding turn-taking skills and actively encourage student participation in class interactions in order to achieve improved speaking proficiency. In order to solve this problem, this study examines the tactics used by teachers in English classrooms to help students learn the rules of spoken English and develop their communicative abilities. Specifically, it focuses on the importance of turn-taking in the acquisition and usage of spoken English.

2. Literature Review

As the core content of conversation analysis, the mechanism and strategy of turn-taking have an important impact on conversation quality and language acquisition. Researchers from abroad, such as Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson [1], proposed the sequential production model, which provided a theoretical framework for the turn-taking process. Children's turn-taking strategies and classroom dynamics changed from second to fourth grade, according to research by Barbara Maroni, Augusto Gnisci, and Clotilde Pontecorvo [2]. Ryan and Forrest developed turn-taking activities and materials to address the issue of "no chance to speak" in language schools. They discovered difficulties with awareness, unusual assignments, and uncertain opportunities [3]. The mechanism of alternation in classroom interactions, according to Carolina Sasabone, is a manifestation of the shift in speech roles from speaker to listener [4]. Turn-taking's significance for perceived fluency was highlighted by van Os, de Jong, and Bosker [5], with implications for cross-linguistic communication. Sari, Karimah,

and Latifah's case study demonstrated how turn-taking strategies enhance classroom discourse quality and effectiveness in English classroom in an international school [6].

Chinese scholars have also conducted empirical studies on Chinese English learners' conversational behavior from different perspectives. Liu and Jiang found that teachers in second language courses give their students additional opportunities to communicate in the target language in order to increase both the quality and quantity of oral output. This gives students more speaking rights and gives them influence over the turn-taking conversation [7]. Examining how Chinese English language learners took turns during oral exams, Liu discovered that they had inactive transition mechanisms, adjusted the speed slowly, and took long turns [8]. Zheng and Luo explored the characteristics of turn-taking in group discussions in English classrooms and found that in group discussions turns were usually longer and students' awareness of turn-taking was not comprehensive enough [9].

In conclusion, turn-taking has a big influence on how English is taught. Many scholars have compiled different teaching strategies and discovered how they can impact students' production of the target language while focusing on the teacher-student relationship in the classroom. However, there is still a dearth of senior high school research on the characteristics of instructors and how they interact with students in the classroom. Therefore, this study will focus on the feature of strategies teacher uses in the English classroom and discuss the reasons.

3. Research Method

3.1. Participants

The participants in this research are 40 students in a high school in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China. All the participants are the sophomores of high school, between the age of 16 and 17.

3.2. Procedure and Materials

The research collects data by audio recording of the class to give trusted data. The researcher recorded the session of an open class for a total duration of 41 minutes and 54 seconds. The processes involved in the data collection methods are seeing the teaching-learning process firsthand, gathering data via a recorder, and then transcribing the data into words, clauses, and sentences to generate the corpus. In line with Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks' hypothesis [1], the researcher will analyze the data and record the discussion using Sacks' transcription symbol in order to fully understand the debate and show how turn-taking procedures are used in the actual world during transition. The data will be double-checked to avoid error in interpretation and minimize the mishearing and omission. Following that, the data will be categorized into categories in terms of sorts of turns.

3.3. Data Analysis

Discourse analysis is used to examine the data and demonstrate how turn-taking techniques are specifically used. The researcher will pay close attention to three main features of the conversation: the speaker's volume, the number of turns, and the frequency of the different instructional strategies used. The five primary strategies—overlap, pause, interruption, adjacency pair, and tag question—will be examined and debated in accordance with the papers by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson as well as Samir Jamall Ibraheem [1, 10].

4. Research Findings

4.1. Discourse Volume

Discourse volume is the number of speaker's words in a certain time. The amount of discourse can reflect the overall feature of classroom participants' interaction [8]. Based on the audio recording and

transcription, the researcher tallied the number of talks by instructors and students as well as their respective percentages of the overall number of talks. Table 1 presents the findings.

Table 1. Teacher/ Students Discourse Volume

Words		Percentage		Total Amount	
Teacher	Students	Teacher	Students	Character	Percentage
2590	612	80.89%	19.11%	3202	100%

From the statistics in Table 1, in the class this paper studied, the amount of students' discourse is 612 words while that of teacher's discourse is 2590 words, which is much more than that of students. This illustrates how the teacher controls the conversation in the classroom and spends a lot of time explaining the concepts and language the class has covered. Students participate in class discussions only after receiving directions from the teacher, which adds to the poor level of English production. In addition, the teacher gives students explicit writing instructions during the writing portion. After that, the students read aloud from a sample and provide feedback, which results in a lengthy character count. The teacher speaks in this class, and the students primarily listen. The classroom will lack real communication, which is inefficient for students' language acquisition.

4.2. Amount of Turns

Turn refers to a continuous period of discourse during which the roles of speaker and listener are exchanged [1]. The speaker makes interruptions during this process, each of which accomplishes a different communication objective. The conversation continues until either the listener takes over or until both sides decide to end it. Each speaker usually starts and closes a discussion round. According to Sacks, there are two aspects to the turn: who gets to speak first and what they say all the way through. Speaking privileges are allotted in accordance with the way conversational turns are divided. In this research, the number of turns in communicative activities is collected and results are shown in the Table 2.

Table 2. Teacher/ Students Turns Amount

Turns		Percentage		Total Amount	
Teacher	Students	Teacher	Students	Turns	Percentage
80	68	54.05%	45.95%	148	100%

In Table 2, the number of teacher-initiated turns (54.05%) is slightly higher than that of student-initiated turns (45.95%), but the differences between the two is not significant. There are 80 teacher turns and just 68 student turns. This implies that the teacher should assertively take charge of the class. Students, however, do not merely obey their teachers. It recommends a logical approach to classroom discussion in which both the instructor and the pupils actively participate. Table 2 shows fewer significant variations in the volume of conversations between professors and students than Table 1, which stands in stark contrast to Table 1. This is because during whole-class activities, teachers are more likely to provide guidance and criticism, which motivates students to thoroughly consider their answers. So teacher have the higher discourse volume while teacher and students share the similar percentage in turns.

4.3. Use of Strategy

4.3.1 Overlap

When the listeners want to interrupt the speaker to express their own thoughts, they need to use certain strategies to take the turn. One tactic for taking the turn is overlap. When a listener can predict the speaker's final statement and conclude their turn at the same time as the speaker, this is known as overlap [11].

Datum 1.1

T1 Teacher: Have you finished? Okay. So first about the definition is a container with it which is.

T2 Ss: [Buried].

T3 Teacher: [Buried].

T4 Ss: [Hidden].

T5 Teacher: [Hidden] or locked away for it. Very good. And what about the purpose? (0.5) To give an account of.

T6 Ss: What life was like.

T7 Teacher: <What life was like> at the time. It was, very good, to show a life (0.3) of a certain time. And then >what about the contents?< (0.4) We've <got almost anything.> ↑And...

T8 Ss: A letter to the future.

T9 Teacher: Thank you so much.

In Datum 1.1, the strategy of overlap is used. Teacher encourages students to answer the questions after listening to a short audio recording. In Turns 2 and 3, the instructor and students overlap when the teacher provides the right response at the same time that the pupils respond to the question. Turns 4-5 exhibit additional overlap. In a second case, students answer "hidden," and the teacher also uses that word. This incidence fits under overlaps in progressional onset because it happened continually.

4.3.2 Pause

A pause is a short silence during communication [1]. After completing a turn, the speaker may add a silence or pause at the end of a sentence to indicate that the turn has ended. A pause may also be inserted in the middle of a sentence to seek feedback or confirmation from the listener.

Datum 2.1

T1 Teacher: Do you know the name <of our time>, the age of (0.3)... Can you have a guess (0.4)? information ↑maybe? right. the age of information. So what about THAT time? The age of (0.6)?

T2 Ss: Electricity.

T3 Teacher: <Electricity>. Very good. The age of electricity. Let me show you some pictures(.). Yes, it was 20th century. How do you feel (.)? amazing, right. wow, things like that, right? Because it's not our time, you know, right? Okay, then >we may say<, What a time, what achievements humans made (.) in the 20th century. So besides those achievements (0.2), besides the technological ↑progress, what >other aspect< did Einstein write? Read the last paragraph. Did he mention ↑anything else? (0.3) Okay, Did he mention something (0.4)?

T4 Ss: Social problems.

T5 Teacher: <Social problems.> Good, a few social problems.

In Datum 2.1, teacher guides students to extract the key words from the article and summarise their features, so the teacher pause at the end of the sentence and wait for the students to give their answer. In this case, the instructor pauses and then offers the students a turn. In Turn 3, the instructor pauses in the same way to give the students their turn.

4.3.3 Interruption

Interruption is one of the way to take the turn. When listeners want to express their thoughts or ideas, but the speaker are not going to stop, they can look for appropriate chance to take the turn by using some insertion.

Datum 3.1

T1 Teacher: So can you give me the evidence? Read the sentence for me(0.3). Okay. XY could you please ↑have a try? look at screen. Can you find the topic sentence here?

T2 XY: Our time is rich [inventive]...

T3 Teacher: [Yes], the first one (.), right? And then can you find out the examples?

T4 XY: We are crossing this by power and use power also in order to relieve (.) humanity from all tiring (.) muscular work. We have learned to fly and we are able to send messages and news without any difficulty over the entire world through electric (.) waves.

Datum 3.1 turn 1 shows that the teacher instructs students to find out the topic sentence and then teacher asks one student to answer the question. Giving the student the floor back, the teacher said, "Could you please have a try?" XY takes the floor in turn two and tries to offer the answer. Because the teacher already knows the sentence that XY wishes to utter, Turn 3 shows that she is expressly giving her assent. This falls under the category of interruption when the teacher interrupts and makes a comment as the current speaker, XY, is explaining her concept.

4.3.4 Adjacency Pair

Adjacency pair is a fundamental unit of conversational organization which refers to a sequence of two utterance of two different speakers. These utterances are produced on after the other soothly [10].

Datum 4.1

T1 Teacher: Have you ↑finished? yes or ↑no (.) ? Okay, let's check the answers. First about the 1983 who donated ↑something?

T2 Ss: Steven Jobs.

T3 Teacher: Steven Jobs. Good. ↑You know him?

T4 Ss: Yes.

T5 Teacher: The father of <the apple,> right? Yes. And >he donated< what kind of thing?

T6 Ss: The mouse.

T7 Teacher: Yes, the mouse. And this time capsule was ↑opened in?

T8 Ss: 2013.

T9 Teacher: 2013. Good. And then >the next one, the second one<. It was. <Give me a verb>.

T10 Ss: launched.

T11 Teacher: Very good. It was LAUNCHED to the ISS (.) in the sky, right? It contains(.) ↑humanities'

T12 Ss: Most important achievements.

In turn 1, teacher first raise the question 'who donated something?' and then in turn 2, students give the answer 'Steven Jobs' directly. In order to inspire students' interest and enter the next question smoothly, teacher asks 'you know him?'. The question-answer-confirmation cycle is continually repeated in turns 5-8, with the teacher using questions to elicit information and the students using their replies to demonstrate their understanding and add to it.

Adjacency pairs between the teacher and students constantly form during the discussion, frequently without any breaks or pauses. In this study, adjacent pairs are the most common kind of turn-taking. Its function is to organize the conversation by taking and relinquishing the turn.

4.3.5 Tag Question

In many situations, speakers often use 'right', 'do you' or 'can you' etc. to transit the turn to other speaker. It is an effective way to organise conversation, but in some circumstance, when speaker says 'right', instead of giving listener enough time to respond, speaker continues talking.

Datum 5.1

T1 Teacher: Okay, good. So(.) for Einstein, >actually, you know<, when he wrote his letter(.), he must make sure one thing,(.) that future people(.) must, or may say they could read his letter, right↓? Okay, so ↑where did he put his letter ↓in(.)? Can you tell me directly?=
T2 Ss: =Capsule.

T3 Teacher: Capsule. Very good, capsule. You know what a capsule is (.)? The definition of a capsule. Look at this picture(0.3). >What can you ↑see? What can you see from picture?<=
T4 WJ: =Pills.

T5 Teacher: Okay, pills. Very good. <Or medicine, ↑right?> But <can we say that> Einstein put (.) his letter in a pill, in a medicine. NO, can you give me another ↑noun? (0.5) ↑Maybe?
T6 Ss: Container.

T7 Teacher: GOOD so lovely, it's a container, right? It's a ↑container. So inside of this ↑capsule, we can see some (.) medicine (.), and inside of that capsule, you can see.=
T8 Ss: =Letter.

T9 Teacher: Very good. It was LAUNCHED to the ISS (.) in the sky, right? It contains(.) ↑humanities'

T10 Ss: Most important achievements.

In turn 1, teacher first raise the question 'who donated something?' and then in turn 2, students give the answer 'Steven Jobs' directly. In order to inspire students' interest and enter the next question smoothly, teacher asks 'you know him?'. The question-answer-confirmation cycle is continually repeated in turns 5-8, with the teacher using questions to elicit information and the students using their replies to demonstrate their understanding and add to it.

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T9 Teacher: Yes, the letter.

Turn 1 demonstrates how the teacher gives pupils the turn by asking, "Can you tell me directly?" which is a common form of tag question. This question allows the teacher to gauge how well the students have understood the text. To make sure students grasp the text completely, the teacher asks, "What can you see from the picture?" at the conclusion of turn three and, "Can you give me another noun?" in Turn 5.

5. Discussion

The way of taking and managing the turn, the amount of discourse and turns are relevant to the study of the interaction patterns between the teacher and the students since they can help analyze the roles and involvement of the teacher and the students in the conversation. In terms of the quantity of speech and the number of turns, there are more teachers than students. This suggests that the instructor establishes the tone and protocol for the class and retains a commanding presence throughout. Regarding the quantity of turns, there is less of a disparity between professors and students, suggesting that students are entitled to a given amount of work and a particular number of turns in the classroom. Students do not merely passively take in information.

There are several reasons for this phenomenon. First one is that in traditional Chinese English classrooms, most of teachers adopt the IRF discourse structure, i.e., initiation-response-feedback. An important prerequisite for the IRF structure is the existence of turn-taking. The initiation-response-feedback turn precisely reflects the sequence of class interaction [12]. The teacher asks a question, the students answer, and the teacher rewords the statement after taking the students' responses into consideration, restating, or rearranging the language. The second is that a teacher's primary responsibility in the classroom is to assist students in using their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills to enhance their comprehension of the subject matter. To this end, the teacher primarily use questions to elicit thoughtful responses from the students. Walsh divides the questions posed by teachers into two categories based on the discourse purposes they serve: demonstrative and referential. The former refers to questions that the teacher knows the answer in advance but is designed to make students to show their knowledge; the latter are questions for which the teacher does not know the answer in advance or for which there is no fixed answer, and students need to rely on their own experience and knowledge to answer [13]. The way the teacher chooses to ask the questions when initiating the turn reflects the teacher's purpose.

Adjacency pairs are the most used strategy in classroom interaction because the teacher frequently takes turns to make students to respond to what the teacher says. Adjacency pairs are pairs of discourse that contain question-answer, greeting-greeting, offer-acceptance, apology minimization, etc [10]. At the beginning of class, the teacher greets each student individually, and the students respond in pairs. The results of Sari, Karimah, and Latifah's paper show that Q&A sessions accounted for most of the class time [6].

Tag question is the second most common strategy used by teachers. At the end of sentences teacher says 'can you', 'do you', or 'right?' One of the functions of the tag question is to end the turn so that the other speakers can grab the floor to speak. However, in many cases, when the teacher says 'right?', instead of transferring the turn to students, the teacher still continues speaking. Here the function of tag question becomes seeking agreement from students, and the teacher confirm student's condition in this way.

Interrupt, pause, and overlap are used less frequently than the other two. The teacher mostly employs these three categories of tactics when pupils fail to provide prompt answers to queries. Teachers may decide to postpone answering questions in order to give students time to reflect. Teachers use the interruption and overlap strategies when students are reluctant to answer or are experiencing problems finding the right words. In order to facilitate seamless classroom interactions, these three tactics primarily serve as guides.

6. Conclusion

This study used the method of discourse analysis to investigate the classroom of 40 students in a senior high school in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China and analyzed the overall features of discourse volume and the amount of turns and turn-taking strategies in the interactions between teacher and students. The statistical data led to the identification of the following three problems: 1) The teacher's repetitive methods; 2) The pupils' inexperience in starting and organizing their turns; and 3) The teacher and students' disparity in discourse volume and turn quantity.

Without ability to manage turns, a second language learner cannot effectively engage in natural conversation in a second language, even if students have good sentence construction skills and abundant. This study offers some novel insights about turn-taking and teacher-student interaction in English-speaking classrooms, but it also contains some uniqueness. The study provides useful guidelines for teachers' instruction as well. Because this study did not compare student performances across grade levels, it is difficult to determine how different pupils are from one another. Furthermore, because the students' English proficiency was not categorized in this study, it is hard to assess the effectiveness of speech turn approaches for students at varying levels of proficiency. The objects selected for the study do not represent the current situation of Chinese English classroom with the short length of the corpus.

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