

Turn-taking to Analyze the Current Situation of English classes in Chinese high school students

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Abstract. English is one of the most widely used languages of communication in the world and is crucial to China's interaction with the rest of the world in the fields of business, education, science and technology, and culture. In China's education system, English, as a core subject, is compulsory from primary school to university. High school is a critical period for students to improve their English skills, which can have a long-term impact on one's academic and career development. However, due to the restrictions of classroom routine, teachers are the masters of discourse, and students have no right to speak. Instead, their right to speak is granted by the teacher or classroom rules, and who, when, and what is said is set in stone. Such classes deprive students of the opportunity to practice rotation skills. Taking turns can motivate students to learn a second language. In a conversation, students need to listen carefully to what others are saying, if they can't understand the conversation, the conversation won't happen. This allows students to absorb a large amount of input language and turn it into absorption, ultimately reaching language proficiency. However, due to the limitations of the classroom discourse wheel, students may miss out on part of the intrinsic motivation for second language acquisition. This study attempts to explore the rotation rules and its pragmatic strategies in the interaction between teachers and students in English classrooms, so as to enable English learners to master the rotation rules and conversational strategies, achieve good communicative effects, stimulate the vitality of classroom teaching and improve the quality of teaching.

Keywords: English Class, Turn-Taking, Students, Second Language Acquisition.

1. Introduction

In language acquisition and communicative interaction research, conversation analysis has been a long-standing area of interest for linguists, educationalists, and researchers. In 1974 Sacks, Emanuel, Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson drew general conclusions and implications for turn-taking from their recordings of naturally occurring conversations[1]. "Turn-taking describes the mechanism by which participants in a conversation alternate speaking. The rules of this mechanism are of key importance in revealing the effectiveness of communication. Since then, the study of turn-taking as one of the core concepts in Conversation Analysis (CA) has been widely applied in medicine, journalism, law, education and other disciplines.

Nowadays, in the context of globalization, English is a widely used language in economic, political, scientific, technological and cultural activities in today's world, and it occupies an important position in China's education system. *China's General English Curriculum Standards for Senior High Schools* emphasizes the "student-oriented education concept, which aims to enhance students' subjectivity in classroom learning so that they can truly become the masters of learning.[2]" However, in the relatively homogeneous English learning environment in China, due to the influence of the traditional teaching mode and the limitation of classroom time, classroom interactions are still dominated by the teacher's lectures, and there are relatively limited opportunities for student-teacher interactions and for students to express their personal views. The purpose of this study was to analyze the teaching videos of four teachers who won the 17th National High School English Teachers' Basic Teaching Skills Competition in China, including listening, reading, writing, and revision classes, using the corpus analysis methods of survey method and conversation analysis. The study attempts to explore the effects of different classroom types on students' turn-taking output. The study contains introduction, literature review, research methods, analysis, conclusions, references, and an appendix.

2. Literature Review

In the 1970s, turn-taking began to become an independent field of study and drew extensively on theories and findings from a variety of disciplines, including psychology, linguistics, and sociology. Sacks, Emanuel, Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson (1974) published their paper, "The Organization of Conversation Turns," by recording and studying naturally-occurring conversations. of the Simplest Systematics". In the paper, they proposed a conversation turn-transition system, which consists of a conversation turn structure part, a conversation turn assignment part, and a conversation turn-transition rule. The paper provided a solid foundation for subsequent researchers to further explore conversation organization in natural or classroom settings [1]. McHoul (1978) proposed the classroom turn-taking system as a modification of the natural conversational turn-taking system by organizing recorded materials of classroom instruction. Furthermore, he claimed that "only the teacher can direct speech in any creative way" [3]. And by Lörcher (1986) revealed that there is no difference between the teacher's dominance in managing the language classroom and the general subject classroom talk wheels. Overall, they found that classroom talk-round transitions take place when teachers and students are in an unequal position [4]. A number of scholars have also analyzed the reasons for the uneven participation of students in classroom turn-taking, and McCollum (1989) studied the cross-cultural differences in turn-taking in depth to explain the uneven participation in the classroom [5]. With the continuous development and progress of science and technology, the limitations of the above experiments have become increasingly apparent. First of all, the recording method used in the experiment can only capture sound information. However, in the actual process of conversation, the non-verbal communication aspects, such as body language, facial expressions, also play a crucial role, and these non-verbal factors often have an important impact on the organization and rotation of conversation that cannot be ignored. Secondly, the roles of teachers and students are different in different disciplines and teaching situations. Therefore, in the process of research, it is not limited to the traditional research perspective, but the teaching method, course content, students' personality and many other factors should be taken into account. Only in this way can the research be more rigorous, comprehensive and accurate.

Inspired by foreign scholars, Chinese scholars have conducted a large number of conceptual and empirical studies in this field, which have greatly promoted the study of classroom turn-taking switching. For example, scholars have gradually shifted from the broad and universal level of turn-taking systems to a more refined and specific level, aiming to deeply analyze and explain how these turn-taking mechanisms affect students' communicative potential in various classroom interactions. Wu (1992; 1994) has carefully analyzed the types of turn-taking in the foreign language classroom [6]. Nowadays, in order to seek for more scientific teaching methods, the educational concept of "student-oriented" has emerged. Gao (2023) believes that high school English teachers need to re-examine their current work from three aspects: the current teaching situation, the significance of the role of the student as the main body, and the specific implementation strategies of the teaching model [7]. In turn, a number of scholars have studied the role of turn-taking transformation on English teaching in different classroom types. Cai (2010) found that an increase in the number of talk wheels was beneficial to meeting students' different learning needs through listening and speaking classes [8]. Zhou (2022) studied the reading class and found that English teaching still adopts the traditional teaching mode, in which the teacher as the protagonist of the classroom explains some new words and sentence patterns to students in the classroom, which makes students lose their interest in reading [9]. Lin (2018) found that in the writing class, the teacher-student talk round is on the low side leading to the students' low motivation to revise their compositions [10]. Liu(2022) found that in the review class, situational teaching can mobilize students' multiple sensory and emotional experiences in the language input and output stages of various language presentations, thus deepening students' understanding of what they have learned [11].The above scholars mainly focus on the study of a single curriculum. However, English learning is a multi-dimensional process that involves listening, speaking, reading and writing. This study intends to analyze the current situation of Chinese high

school students' English classroom learning from four different types of classes: listening and speaking class, reading class, writing class and revision class.

3. Research Method

3.1. Classroom Observation Method

Classroom observation is the main research method of this paper. It is widely used in English teaching research. It is an educational scientific research method in which researchers or observers have a clear purpose, determine the observation point in advance, and use their senses and related auxiliary tools (observation records, audio and video equipment, etc.) to collect information directly or indirectly from the classroom situation. Through classroom observation, the characteristics of teacher feedback in high quality classroom and the influence of different feedback on teacher-student rotation are determined.

3.2. Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is a theoretical research method to analyze language from the perspective of linguistics itself. It is used to analyze the content of what people say. In general, it can be used to analyze the linguistic features of written and spoken discourse. The teacher feedback studied in this paper is a real conversation and therefore can be researched.

3.3. Research Subject

This study selected the award-winning videos of the 17th National Basic Skills Competition for High School English Teachers, which were displayed on the public education platform of China International English and Foreign Language Teachers Association. As a high-level English teacher teaching skills competition in China, every session has attracted the attention of English teachers across the country. The competition was attended by 24 teachers with rich teaching experience and high professional quality, who provided role models for young teachers in the aspects of classroom teaching, classroom organization and the appropriateness of teacher feedback. Therefore, it has high research value. The competition is mainly conducted in the form of live lectures. Participating teachers are required to conduct an online lottery in advance to determine grade level and type of instruction. It emphasizes not only the professional theory level of teachers, but also the practical teaching skills of teachers. This not only tests their teaching stability, but also tests their adaptability.

Table 1. Course Basic Information

	Type	Edition	Topic
T1	Listening and Speaking	PEP	Unit 2 Travelling Around
T2	Reading	FLTRP	Unit 3 Family matter
T3	Writing	PEP	Unit 3 Fascinating Parks
T4	Revision	PEP	Unit 2 Travelling around

According to Table 1, videos of 4 excellent teachers were selected, coded as T1-T4. These teachers come from all over China: Jiangxi, Guangdong, Jilin, Shandong. The types of courses taught include listening and speaking, reading, listening and review courses. Each lesson lasts about 40 minutes. Students in Grade One have accumulated a certain vocabulary foundation in junior high school English learning, mastered some simple learning strategies and skills, and have preliminary English listening, speaking, reading and writing ability. However, the English level of the students is uneven, so the teaching should not only further cultivate the learning ability of the top students but also ensure that the students with slightly weak ability can understand, mobilize their enthusiasm, make them willing to learn, and enjoy the fun in the process of learning. Although she has a certain interest in English, her learning initiative still needs to be improved. She fails to actively obtain information through other channels, and her ability of independent learning and inquiry learning needs to be

improved. The topic of the textbook is close to life, which can guide students to build new knowledge experience and information input through cooperative inquiry learning on the basis of the original knowledge experience.

3.4. Data Collection

The 17th National Basic Teaching Skills Competition for High School English Teachers in China has 24 teachers participating in the basic teaching skills competition. First, I listen to all the teachers' teaching videos. Since the high-quality class video is recorded in the form of video, it is inevitable that in the process of observation, the voice of teachers and students cannot be clearly heard due to improper adjustment of teaching facilities and equipment. After watching all the videos of the quality courses, we finally selected 4 videos with the best audio and video recording. These videos more completely and clearly record the interaction between the teacher and the student in the class, and can also accurately hear what the teacher and the student are saying, reducing the unnecessary trouble of transcribing the text later. The teacher feedback of these 4 high-quality teaching videos was transcribed into a corpus. The transcription video software used in this study is Iflyrec. In order to ensure the consistency of the corpus and the video content, the teaching videos were repeatedly observed and the transcribed texts were proofread for many times to form a closed corpus.

4. Analysis

4.1. Discourse Volume

Discourse volume is the number of speaker's words in a certain time, in this study, statistical discourse volume refers to counting the number of turns of the corpus in the recordings with the statistics of the length of the turns. Here the word rounds refer only to the effective turns. The amount of discourse can reflect the overall situation of classroom participants' interaction, and according to the characteristics of different stages of English listening and speaking classroom, it can be judged whether the overall situation of classroom participants conforms to the stage characteristics. According to the ratio of the number of conversation turns to the number of characters, it can in a sense reflect the situation of power relations in the classroom. The author transcribed the audio based on the collected audio, and took the discourse round as the transcription unit, counted the number of discourse rounds and the number of characters in the discourse rounds, and the statistical results are shown in the following table.

Table 2. Statistical Results of the Amount of Teacher and Student Discourse

	Total Amount of Discourse		Teachers' Discourse		Students' Discourse		Percentage (retain two decimal places)			
	Total Amount of Turns	Total Character	Total Amount of Turns	Total Character	Total Amount of Turns	Total Character	Turns		Characters	
							Teachers	Students	Teachers	Students
T1	176	4098	93	3243	83	855	52.84	47.16	79.14	20.86
T2	126	2823	70	2201	56	622	55.56	44.44	77.97	22.03
T3	240	3968	123	3281	117	687	51.25	48.75	82.69	17.31
T4	142	3666	77	2940	65	726	54.23	45.77	80.20	19.80

From the statistics in Table 2, there are significant differences between different courses in terms of total amount of turns and total character. The writing class has the largest number of rounds, listening and speaking class and revision class rank second and third respectively, while the reading class has the least number of rounds. At the same time, the total character is not consistent with the total amount of turns. From the perspective of total discourse volume, listening and speaking class has the most character, followed by writing class and revision class, and reading class is still the least.

According to the above situation, the following analysis is carried out. The goal of listening and speaking class is to improve students' listening comprehension and speaking ability. In class, teachers actively mobilize students to participate in dialogue and discussion, thus producing more turns. In terms of the amount of discourse, due to the relatively free oral expression, students need to use more words to clearly express their views and describe what they have heard, so the total amount of discourse in listening and speaking class is the largest. The reading class focuses on developing students' comprehension of written texts. Students spend more time reading and analyzing texts in class and spend more time thinking about themselves. Relatively speaking, there are fewer rounds of interaction. In addition, the communication in the reading class is mainly to briefly summarize the content of the article and answer questions. This kind of communication is relatively concise and does not require a lot of discourse elaboration, so the amount of discourse in the reading class is very small. The focus of the writing class is to develop students' writing ability. Although the writing process is mainly completed by students individually, there will be more discussions on writing ideas and writing skills in class. These discussions lead to a larger total number of rounds in the writing class. However, in terms of the total number of words, although there are discussion sections in the writing class, the main purpose is not oral expression after all. Compared with listening and speaking class, the amount of oral expression is still less, so the total number of words in the writing class is second only to listening and speaking class. The review course is the review and consolidation of the knowledge learned before, including the sorting out of knowledge, but also to the key and difficult questions. In this process, there will be a certain amount of interaction, such as the teacher's questions about knowledge points, students' answers, etc., which makes the number of review rounds in the middle level. In terms of the amount of discourse, the communication in the review class mainly focuses on key knowledge, which neither needs rich expression like listening and speaking class nor concise like reading class. Therefore, the total number of words in the review class is also in the middle position.

The number of teacher-speaking turns is close to that of student speaking rounds. However, in terms of the amount of discourse character, teachers are significantly higher than students. After in-depth analysis of the content of the corpus, it can be found that teachers really firmly control classroom discourse in the process of explaining classroom vocabulary and knowledge points. In the explanation section, the teacher often has a long paragraph of detailed explanation. For example, in reading class, when students come across a new word in English, the teacher will use the learned words with similar meanings to help students understand the new word. In addition, the teacher will expand fixed collocations to help students deepen their impression. In addition, during the course of the class, the teacher needs to constantly confirm that the students understand the content of their explanation. For example, in a listening class, after listening to the recording, the teacher may ask the students, "Does everyone understand?" "Is there anything unclear?" In order to prevent students from wandering, to ensure that students can concentrate on participating in class learning, so as to improve the teaching effect. Through frequent interaction with students, teachers can not only understand students' learning status, but also adjust teaching strategies in time to better meet students' learning needs

4.2. Interaction

Interaction refers to the use of language by classroom participants for correspondence. In other words, interaction often implies intelligible language input and output. Interaction is categorized as

one-way interaction, two-way interaction, multi-directional interaction and net interaction. Unidirectional interaction is when the student or teacher holds the wheel, classroom participants do not have access to the wheel because they do not understand, do not want to answer, etc., and the teacher is the only one who speaks and the student does not respond and does not use body language to respond. The two-way interaction, in which the teacher assigns students to answer questions, does not result in a positive interaction. Virtuous interaction in this paper refers to the two-way interaction in which the students actively acquire the word wheel, multidirectional interaction and mesh interaction, which are the three cases in which the students actively acquire the discourse and dominance of the word wheel. According to the interaction statistics, we can know the interaction composition of the research class and the general type of talk wheel conversion, the interaction statistics are shown in the following Table 3.

Table 3. Characterization of Discourse in Classroom Teacher-Student Interaction

	Total Number of Turns	Mode of Interaction (In Terms of the Number of Turns)			Percentage (Retain Two Decimal Places)		
		One- way	Two-way (Specified)	Benign Interaction	One- way	Two-way (Specified)	Benign Interaction
T1	176	9	31	136	5.11	17.61	77.28
T2	126	6	25	95	4.76	19.84	75.40
T3	240	3	58	179	1.25	24.17	74.58
T4	142	2	25	115	1.41	17.61	80.98
Total	684	20	139	525	2.92	20.32	76.76

According to the statistics in Table 3, there are 684 discourse theories in total, and 20 one-way discourse theories, accounting for 2.92%. This suggests that in the study participants' classes, there were very few instances in which class participants threw out a voice but no one responded. In the 20 one-way rounds, only the teacher threw the voice and the student did not respond, and there was no situation in which the student threw the voice and the teacher did not respond. In the two-way discourse round, there are 139 discourse rounds in which designated students enter the discourse, accounting for 20.32% of the total. This kind of designated students enter the discourse means that the teacher designates students to enter the next discourse round, and the students do not take the initiative to enter the discourse round. Teacher roll call is a typical traditional interaction in which students are forced to have the right to speak, so this study does not regard it as a benign interaction. There are 525 positive interactions, which is the most among all interactions, accounting for 76.76% of the total, and is also the most typical interaction in English classroom. To sum up, the positive interaction between teachers and students is conducive to students' active participation in the learning process and students' understanding and digestion of knowledge in class.

5. Conclusion

In this study, classroom analysis and discourse analysis were used to investigate the teaching classes of four teachers in the 17th National Basic Teaching Skills Competition for Senior High School English Teachers in China, and according to the collected data, word rotation and discourse strategies in the teacher-student interaction of the research class were analyzed. According to statistics, a corpus of 161:91 minutes was collected in this study, with 15,184 transcribed characters. After the analysis in Chapter 4, the following problems are found. After analysis and refinement, the following three problems are summarized. First, imbalance between teachers and students in rotation characteristics and discourse strategies. Second, students use the single discourse strategy. Third, students lack experience in planning and organizing rotating activities.

In this study, the subjects were high school students with an average of six years of English learning experience. However, their rotation is too simple, the content is not rich, and the discourse

strategy is too homogeneous. Most students' conversations are made up of words, vocabulary, and phrases, and they rarely express themselves in paragraphs. The reason for this situation is that, in the first place, students' oral English is limited, which makes them unable to express their opinions well. The second is the limitation of the class format. In class, teachers mainly talk about knowledge points to help students understand. Last but not least is the teacher's choice of classroom strategy. The questions that students answer in class are basically verbs and nouns that don't require a lot of output from students. In the corpus collected for this study, the only time students reported a self-selected topic was when there were a large number of characters in their discourse, and the rest of the time was short. In addition, teachers use overlapping pauses, interruptions, adjacent pairs, tag questions and other strategies to encourage students to have the courage to make oral statements and correct mistakes in their statements in time.

However, this study is helpful to further understand the process of students' speech acquisition and provide references for senior high school English teachers to improve teacher feedback, but there are inevitably some shortcomings. First of all, this study only selects the conversation turn transformation in the theory of conversation analysis. Secondly, only 4 high-quality teachers' lessons were selected in this study. The results are not very representative. Third, this study only examines the use of teacher feedback in high school quality courses. The part of the school studied is relatively homogeneous, and there is no comparative analysis of the quality curriculum with the real classroom. It is hoped that this study can provide some inspiration for English teachers to improve the quality of classroom feedback and improve the effectiveness of English teaching.

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