



## Tick, tock, talk: An analysis of the types of teacher talk in university classrooms

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### Abstract

Focusing on a university classroom setting, the study determined the types of teacher talk used by three English language teachers. Data were gathered using classroom observations and structured interviews. Using Flanders Interaction Analysis (FIA), the data yielded the incidence of the following categories: seven (7) for the teacher talk, two (2) for the student talk, and one (1) for silence or confusion. The results revealed that among the seven types of direct and indirect talk, there is a preponderance of lecturing at 41.33%. Significantly, the data revealed that teachers tend to focus on the content and do not seem to practice the indirect talk which is “accepting of feelings.” The need for teachers to be fully aware of these types and facilitate such types of talk in their classrooms is recommended.

**Keywords:** Teacher talk, English as second language (ESL), interaction analysis, Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC)

## 1. Introduction

To facilitate tasks inside the classroom, a teacher engages in what is known as teacher talk. Teacher talk, as defined by Parrish (2004), is the language used by teachers in class that can have a tremendous impact on the success of interactions they have with students. The language used may vary depending on the needs of the students and, likewise, on the approach used by the teacher.

Teacher talk is an indispensable part of language teaching. The way teachers talk not only determines how well they deliver their lectures but also guarantees how well their students learn. It creates a harmonious atmosphere and, at the same time, promotes a friendly relationship between teachers and students. It is the language employed by teachers in language classes that serves as the source of input for knowledge and communication.

In the classroom setting, the input primarily comes from the teacher who gives lectures, discussions, questions, and feedback (Xiao-Yan, 2006).

Teacher talk can also be defined as the language used by teachers by which they create an atmosphere that promotes students' learning. It is also used by the teachers to instruct, explain, guide, and ask students in order to check their understanding about what transpires in the classroom and their environment.

Teacher talk is related to the situation where there is consistency in the teacher's use of the language and its pedagogical purpose. Teacher talk is situated in the classroom where the teacher and students interact with each other and where the teacher manifests the ability to take on a leadership persona through verbal and nonverbal means in establishing orderly behavior in specific classroom cultures, thereby, promoting learning of various abilities. This involves all dimensions of the classroom process, from giving instructions to questioning or disciplining students and providing feedback. Teacher talk is of utmost importance not only for the organization of the classroom but also for the process of acquisition (Dyke & Siemer, 2012; Xiao-Yan, 2006).

In addition, teacher talk is vital to language learning as it provides the direction by which activities are implemented in the classroom. Bentley (2007), citing Vygotsky's (1978) theory on interaction, argues that "interaction in the learning process is fundamental to learning" (p. 29).

In light of these assumptions, this paper analyzes the types of teacher talk (with English as the medium of instruction) used in university classrooms. It aims to identify the variations of evident and observable teacher talk used by university teachers and their implications for language teaching.

## **1.1 Literature Review**

### **1.1.1 Teacher Talk**

In classrooms, the teacher usually utilizes the art of asking questions and giving directions. Silver and Kogut (2009) cited Alexander (2004), who "emphasizes the importance of teacher talk in discussions where there is exchanging of views, sharing of information and solving of problems as well as achieving common understanding" (p. 4). These goals can be achieved through structured and cumulative questioning and guided discussion that can engage students to stimulate and extend their thinking, learning, and understanding.

Kumaravadevelk (2006), citing Nunan (1989), suggests that "there is growing evidence that in communicative classes, interaction may in fact not be communicative at all" (p. 62). English is assigned as the basic medium for classroom activities, and the four skills of language learning — listening, speaking, reading, and writing — are expected to be acquired by learners. According to Xiao-Yan (2006), "English instruction is not identical to other lecture courses" (p.13). Setiawati (2012) cited Price (2003), who investigated the amount of teacher talk and suggested that teachers should continue developing an awareness of their teaching practices and refining their questioning and explanation methods to avoid

needless or over-lengthy questions and explanations. It is through language that teachers either succeed or fail in implementing their plans. Setiawati, citing Nunan (1991), adds that in terms of acquisition, teacher talk is important because it is probably the major source of comprehensible target-language input the learner is likely to receive. According to second language acquisition (SLA) theories, both teacher and students should actively participate in language classes. Teachers have to face two tasks in language classrooms: (1) offer enough high-quality English language input, and (2) offer more opportunities for students to use the target language. To Xiao-Yan (2006), “the distribution of teacher talk time, as an important factor that affects language learning, has been a concern by many scholars” (p. 15-16).

Al-Otaibi (2004), citing Bellack et al. (1966), proposes that “verbal actions of the students and the teachers could be classified into four major categories: structuring, soliciting, responding, and reacting” (p. 30). Likewise, these basic verbal actions, labeled as pedagogical moves, occur in classroom discourse in certain cyclical patterns called teaching cycles. Findings suggest that the basic pedagogical pattern of classroom discourse started with the teacher asking a question (solicitation), in which students answer (response), followed by the teacher’s reaction or rating (reacting).

Researchers have also attempted to investigate the syntactic aspects of teacher talk. Al-Otaibi (2005), for example, found that the speech of teachers, when talking to their students, differed in its syntactic complexity from their speech when talking to their peers. By all measurements in the analysis, it was proved that the syntactic complexity in the teachers’ talk with their students was lower than that with their peers. Moreover, the speech of teachers talking to beginners was shown to be of less complexity than the one used to address more advanced students. For these reasons, all facets of communication, from the development of the four macro skills to students’ active participation and verbal actions to questioning, teacher talk is of an essential involvement. Studies conducted on teacher talk have become part of the growth of classroom development.

### **1.1.2 English as a Second Language**

The use of the target language bridges learning acquisition in a classroom setting. In fact, the type of language used greatly influences how learning will take place. The growth of interest in second language as a medium of instruction is finding its way in the improvement of learning, and one of which is the use of English as a Second Language (ESL).

ESL is defined as the “English studied in a setting where it is the main vehicle of everyday communication, where abundant input exists in it, where it is also normally essential for survival, therefore, where motivation is typically strong to learn that language” (Oxford, 2003, p. 1).

In the field of SLA, motivation plays an intrinsic role in acquiring effective communicative skills. Motivation is defined as “the individual’s attitudes, desires, and effort. It concerns energy, passion, persistence and active participation” (Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1997 as cited in Lucas, et al., 2010, p. 2). Motivation, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, could be a force in successfully learning a language.

Magno (2009), in his study about factors involving ESL acquisition in Filipinos, cited the study of August and Hakuta (1998), which explains that acquiring a second language can be described in two ways. The first is through the group of studies concerned with describing how English as a second language is developed using cognitive and metacognitive systems of strategy. The second is through the group of studies concerned with how English as a second language is better facilitated to reach proficiency through different interventions.

Several studies have been undertaken to investigate second language learning in terms of motivation, including Gardner and Lambert's study (2009 as cited in Lucas et al., 2010). They perceived the second language as a mediator between the various ethnolinguistic communities, and as such, the motivation to acquire the language of the other second language community was seen to play a vital role in either promoting or hampering intercultural communication.

The teacher's behavior also affects the students' generalized feelings of autonomy and competence. That is, the more the teacher was perceived as controlling, the less the students felt they were learning spontaneously and the lower the students' intrinsic motivation. In contrast, "the more the teacher was perceived as being actively involved in the students' learning by giving informative praise and encouragement, the more the students felt competent in learning the second language" (Lucas et al., 2010, p. 8).

A study conducted among students of a secondary school in Albania showed that classroom interaction is highly dominated by teacher talk. More precisely, combining all observed lessons, teachers devoted 53.5% of their teaching time lecturing, i.e., delivering information to students. Adding across all Teacher Talk categories, i.e., Flanders' Interaction Analysis Categories 1 to 7, teachers talk more than 70 percent of the lesson time (Sahlberg & Boce, 2010). These findings once again confirm Flanders' Law: about two thirds of instructional time is dominated by direct talk by a teacher; and of that talk, about two thirds is direct lecturing (Sahlberg, 2007, p. 7).

One study conducted by Inamullah (2008) revealed that in the majority of classes, the English language learners were passive, and the environment of the classroom was autocratic. It was observed in the classroom that most of the English language teachers used the lecture method very frequently and asked just a few low-order questions. It was also noted that in the classes where interaction took place between a teacher and students in terms of question and answers or discussion, the students enjoyed the class; after the class ended, there were no feelings of fatigue and boredom on their faces. It was also revealed during the study that indirect modes in teaching (having a discussion, question-and-answer sessions, or seeking participation among the administration and students) were considered a waste of time. In sum, learning in ESL classrooms can be successful through the motivation and support given by the teacher and, at the same time, through the promotion of autonomy among learners.

## 2. Method

Qualitative in nature, the study is undertaken to gain insights concerning attitudes, beliefs, motivations, and behaviors of individuals to explore a social or human problem (Richards, 2006). The phenomenological approach was used to observe lived experiences of the subjects.

Three professors of a teacher-training institution in Metro Manila, Philippines, were invited as participants of this study. Teacher 1 has been teaching for 30 years, 27 years in high school and currently three years in the university. Teacher 2 has been teaching for 43 years, six years in high school and 37 years in college. Teacher 3 has been teaching for 16 years in the college level. All three of them have graduate degrees in language teaching. They teach general and specialized courses in English and are also handling literature courses taught in English.

The students who participated in this observation are from the second- (38 students) and fourth-year (40 students) levels. All these students are enrolled in the teacher-education program. They attend their English classes for three hours each week and are enrolled in one or two English and Literature classes every semester for the first two years. Most are well-versed in the second language, i.e., English. During these English classes, students are expected to use the target language.

Two weeks were allotted for the observation while the interviews with the teachers were conducted after the said period. The classes observed were either in English communication skills or literature. The medium of instruction is English. Each class meets three hours per week, and lecture-discussion is the usual strategy utilized by the teachers. Pair and group work were seldom used as teaching-and-learning activities.

Direct observation was used in obtaining the data. Direct observation provides the opportunity to document activities, behaviors, and physical aspects (Trochim, 2006). The data were obtained by transcribing the recorded videos of classes observed. Interviews with the teachers were also conducted to provide a more accurate reconstruction of the classroom activities.

The observation instrument designed for the study was based on Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC) (Flanders, 1970 as cited in Sahlberg, 2007). This type of analysis provided a procedure for analyzing the gathered data from verbal teacher-students interaction. FIAC has two primary uses: (1) provide evidence of difference in teaching patterns that distinguishes one curriculum or instructional methodology from another, and (2) elicit data to help account for why differences in learning outcomes appeared or failed to appear. FIAC also includes seven categories applicable to teacher talk and two for student talk (Sahlberg, 2007).

**Table 1**  
*Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC)*

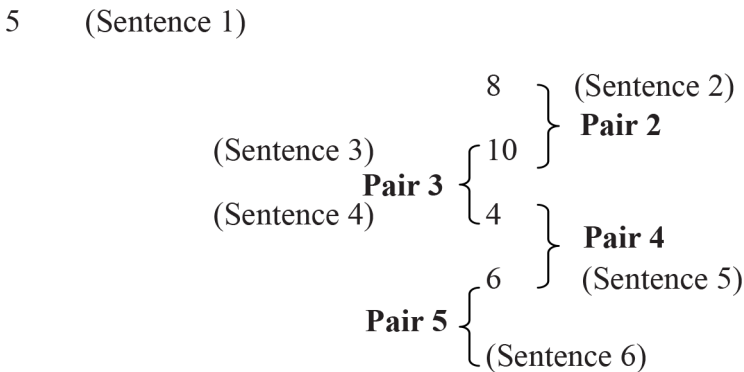
TEACHER TALK	INDIRECT TEACHER TALK	1. ACCEPTS FEELINGS
		2. PRAISES OR ENCOURAGES
		3. ACCEPTS OR USES IDEAS OF STUDENTS
		4. ASKS QUESTIONS
	DIRECT TEACHER TALK	5. LECTURING
		6. GIVING DIRECTIONS
		7. CRITICIZING OR JUSTIFYING AUTHORITY
STUDENT TALK	8. STUDENTS' TALK-RESPONSE	
	9. STUDENTS' TALK-INITIATION	
NO TALK	10. SILENCE OR CONFUSION	

In Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (Table 1), there are three divisions: teacher talk, student talk, and silence or confusion. The teacher talk is subdivided into two: indirect influence and direct influence. The former consists of four categories: accepts feelings (respond favorably to students' feelings), praises or encourages (motivate students' willingness to learn), accepts or uses ideas of students (elaborate students' response), and asks questions (elicit response from students); while the latter has three categories: lecturing (give information about the subject matter), giving direction (provide instructions to the learners), and criticizing or justifying authority (correct students' behavior). The student talk is categorized into two: student talk-response (response of students to the teachers' question) and student talk-initiation (students initiate new ideas). For the last division, there is silence or confusion (short periods of pauses and confusion).

To translate the data into a descriptive code, a 10-by-10 matrix was prepared. All sentences from the field text were analyzed and categorized according to FIAC. Every number in the FIAC describes the type of verbal interaction used by either the teacher or the student. The categorization of sentences was based on the following ground rules:

1. When it is not certain to which of two or more categories a statement belongs, choose the category number far from category five.
2. If lapses occur, such as silence and laughter, which is not less than 3 seconds, it is recorded as 10.
3. Jokes directed to a student are recorded as 7; if not, they are categorized as 2.
4. When the teacher calls a student, it is categorized as 6.

Categories were plotted on the matrix in which each column and row represents the categories of the FIAC. After categorizing all the sentences, the numbers were plotted in such a way as the first sentence will be on the *x* axis while the second will be on the *y* axis. Then, the next sentences will follow in such a way that:



**Figure 1. Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC)**

To compute the percentage of each category of talk spent by the teacher and the students, the total of all the columns were added; then, the sum was divided by the total of each column.

**Table 2**  
*Summary of observed categories*

COLUMN:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
TOTAL:	0	6	11	26	23	18	11	14	6	5
	Grand Total:		120							

Column 6 Total: 18

$$\frac{\text{Column 6} = 18}{\text{Grand Total} = 120} = 0.15 = 15\%*$$

\*15% of the time was spent in Giving Instructions.

### 3. Results

From the direct observations of classroom interactions, findings revealed the dominant types of teacher talk. Table 3 shows the percentage distribution of the types of teacher talk used by the three teachers, ranked accordingly from the most dominant to the least.

**Table 3**  
*Percentage distribution of the types of teacher talk*

Type of Teacher Talk	Teacher A			Teacher B			Teacher C			Total %	Rank
	N	%	Rank	N	%	Rank	N	%	Rank		
Accepts feelings	0	0	10	0	10	2	0	10	0	10	
Praises or encourages	21	4	7	10	1	8.5	121	8	6	4.33	8
Accepts or uses ideas of students	41	8	5	30	4	5.5	134	9	5	7	6
Asks questions	81	17	2.5	51	6	4	186	13	3	12	1
Lecturing	166	34	1	468	59	1	457	31	1	41.33	1
Giving directions	50	10	4	33	4	5.5	161	11	4	8.33	5
Criticizing or justifying authority	6	1	9	9	1	8.5	23	2	9	1.33	9
Students' talk-response	33	7	6	35	4	5.5	68	5	8	5.33	7
Students' talk-initiation	10	2	8	85	11	2	244	16	2	9.66	4
Silence or confusion	82	17	2.5	77	10	3	92	6	7	11	3



As shown in the table, there is a preponderance of lecturing among the categories of teacher talk, with 34% for Teacher A, 59% for Teacher B, and 31% for Teacher C.

The results of the study clearly show that an average of 74.32% is mostly allocated to the direct and indirect influence of teacher talk. Teacher C showed the most number of teacher talk (n=1488) compared with Teachers A and B (n=798 and n=490, respectively).

The total percentage of teacher talk of Teacher C is comprised of indirect influence at 30% and direct influence at 44%, totaling to 74%. The total percentage of student talk includes the students' talk-response at 5% and students' talk-initiation at 16%, totaling to 21%. Lastly, silence or confusion is at 6%. Teacher C frequently used verbal interaction with the students mostly through lecturing, showing the highest percentage of 31%. The following statements show an example of lecturing in an English language class:

*Teacher C: "Because on one way or the another, if you have a puppy there and it was given to you, let's say for example, it is a Rottweiler, if you have one, then you have responsibility for it. In turn, it makes you a disciplined pet owner, and at the same time, sensitive. That is why they are training for your interaction with the human beings. You got the idea? No offense meant, for those who had never experience of holding a pet because usually what the pet is actually called to make more humane just for them interact, at least there was training."*

Second in rank, Teacher B showed dominance in verbal and nonverbal interaction (n=798). The total percentage of teacher talk is comprised of indirect influence at 11% and direct influence at 64%, totaling to 75%. The total percentage of student talk includes the students' talk-response at 4% and students' talk-initiation at 11%, totaling to 15%. Silence or confusion is at 10%.

Finally, Teacher A showed the least number of teacher and student talk (n=490). The total percentage of teacher talk is comprised of indirect influence at 29% and direct influence at 45%, totaling to 74%. The total percentage of student talk includes the students' talk-response at 7% and students' talk-initiation at 2%, totaling to 9%. Lastly, silence or confusion, which is the last category, has 17%.

#### *Category one: Accepts feelings*

Below is an example of a talk in a literature class that falls under category one — acceptance of feelings:

*Teacher C: "When the lover let you down, that's correct and I agree with this dedication on this one. It is the lover not the love who broke your heart last night."*

*Category two: Praises or encourages*

On the average, 4.33% of the talk of the three teachers is on giving praises and encouragement. Surprisingly, this low percentage seems inconsistent with the teacher's comments regarding the importance of using encouragement in the classroom. Below is an example of an interaction between Teacher C and the students:

*T: Letter...is it a? They also recognize that theology also uhm is present so the more that they now try to reason out either to science or lit. So in the point of view of lit, the Bible is a sacred lit.*

*S: Becoming like a philosopher.*

*T: Correct!*

*Letter a. Remember this is the point of our discussion we accepted that philo and lit doesn't agree...we don't agree that much they usually debate but in the light of science and technology often than into they agree but that the thing of the past...compartmentalization of knowledge a lot disagree. Figurative and nonlinear expression. Accepts errors or mediocrity. Letter?*

*S: C*

Teacher A also shows some form of praise in the following excerpt:

*T: So you mean to say that the writer finds more time in writing that particular article because he or he's been doing some researches. Okay. Any other idea? Yes (Student).*

*S: A news article is straight to the point, but feature article will have more of the adjective to describe about things, that is, for example, a hamburger, so you can use ....*

*T: More descriptive words to describe a particular that's correct. Any other answer?*

*S: Inverted pyramid wherein the contents are.*

*T: **Very good.** Inverted pyramid is used for news article while pyramid is used for feature article. So when we write feature article, these feature stories are written for to add life to the paper.*

*Category three: Accepts or uses ideas of students*

It is interesting to note that ‘acceptance or using of ideas of students’ as a type of teacher talk obtained low percentages among the three teachers. Teacher A has 8%; Teacher B, 4%; and Teacher C, 9%. This is interesting because the low percentages do not exactly reflect the claims of the teachers when they were interviewed. The following statements express their views on the need to give comments on students’ answers:

*Teacher A: “That’s a form of motivation.”*

*Teacher B: “I can’t live without giving comments. Positive negative.”*

*Teacher C: “It is necessary because Asians are affirmation-oriented. You want to be sure that answer is correct. Comment itself is an affirmation. If the students didn’t hit the bull’s eye, at least there is still an effort on the part of the student. Comments’ effect is concurrent; it means I agree to their answer.”*

The above statements show that the teachers know that they should accept or use students’ ideas to further enhance the classroom discussion. Likewise, doing such can motivate the students to be more participative in the class. The disparity between the answers in the interviews and the observations in the classes, however, points out that views or theories on accepting or using students’ ideas as a form of motivation are not generally practiced in the classroom.

*Category four: Asks questions*

Seventeen percent (17%), 6 %, and 13% are the percentage results for Teacher A, B, and C, respectively, on the use of questioning as a type of teacher talk. Supporting this claim is one comment given by Teacher C on how asking essential questions can enhance classroom interaction:

*Teacher C: “Having essential questions would always be beneficial and important in classroom discussion. It is important to raise after the objectives of the lesson literally taken from the sets of competencies. No shortcuts. It is also important because you may focus the understanding of the students.”*

The teacher-participants often used questioning to elicit feedback from students, review lessons, or generate ideas. An example of questioning for review would be the following interaction:

*T: We will start with the lesson we had last Monday and the lessons that we are going to have today. Why do we have to, Why do I have to give you a lot of things in the quiz? Simply because after this meeting, the next meeting will be on January 16 and that might be the prelims already. Right? There is a lot of things we are going to cover tonight. And to begin with, okay, let's begin by short recall what we had last time. So recall; therefore, you have to close your notebook please. We connect the lesson we had last time with the lesson that we are going to have tonight. Okay? Everyone please close your notebook, and you're not supposed to be reminded of this anymore. (Student), your notebook please. Okay. Who would like to begin the recall? Go ahead class.*

*S: We have discussed about the process in news making.*

*T: Continue what else? Process of news making. Okay (Student), making in relation to what (Student) has said.*

*S: (inaudible)*

*T: Another one, continue just stand if you see no one is reciting anymore, you feel free to stand. Go ahead.*

*S: In getting the news, there are three ways: first, witnessing the event; second, have an interview; and third, get it from printed material from?*

*S: From printed material.*

*T: Go ahead. Come on.*

*S: (inaudible)*

*T: Okay continue. Did we end with that play, and we did not discuss anything anymore? Yes?*

*S: Then we have the values of news or the news values.*

*T: And the news values, includes...*

*S: This includes immediacy.*

*T: One is immediacy. Tell something about it.*

*S: It's about timeliness, Ma'am.*

#### *Category five: Lecturing*

Among the seven categories of teacher talk, the most frequently used is lecturing – 34%, 59%, and 31% for Teachers A, B, and C, respectively. The lecture method is common among the three teacher-participants. This claim is relevant to the comment of Teacher C on the type of approach most effective to the students:

*Teacher C: “Approach use is to employ direct question and answer approach. It is more on Socratic paideia that taps the schema of the students.”*

Based on the observations, all the teachers used lecturing as the type of teacher talk, having obtained the average of 41.33%. Relatively, in each observation, the teacher provided information while students listened and took down notes.

#### *Category six: Giving directions*

The three teachers exhibited this type of teacher talk: 10% for Teacher A; 4%, Teacher B; and 11%, Teacher C. The need to give directions is supported by the following comment of one teacher:

*Teacher A: “To do the assigned task effectively, so the instructions should also be given effectively.”*

#### *Category seven: Criticizing or justifying authority*

Among the least observed types of teacher talk is criticizing or justifying authority – 1% for Teacher A; 1%, Teacher B; and 2%, Teacher C. One of the teachers commented on the need to use negative feedback in the classroom:

*Teacher B: “I do that. Sermons. Negative feedbacks are important; we should grow with negative feedbacks. It challenges us - make us better people - that is, if we are mature.”*

#### *Category eight: Students’ talk-response*

An average of 5.33% of this type of teacher talk was obtained from the classroom observations done among the three teacher-participants. This finding reveals the low student participation in classroom discussions. From the following example of classroom interaction, one can glean that students’ responses are minimal compared with the teachers’ input:

*T: One, it is limited. Aside from it being limited, you must also make use not the highfaluting words. Words that are more familiar. Next one. The report of the event and the third one, the importance of the event is ongoing. For example, it's happening right now and then you are writing the news, so this is the report of the event that's why it does not mean any explanation anymore. There is no need for further explanation. What about analytical story, the focus will be the review of the game. It is analytical, for example, fight between Manny Pacquiao and Marquez. After the fight, there were so many reviews; there have been so many articles came out about what happened. So analytical review must come with review of the game. But if you are not there, if you are not present, will you be able to make an analytical story? Think. (Student) what do you say?*

*S: Yes.*

*T: What is that yes?*

*S: He can still write.*

*T: How will you able to do that? Don't you think you can't write analytical story based on what you have read? (Student), yes your answer is yes. Who thinks otherwise? (Student) what do you say?*

*S: For example, when the writer watch the video and write it.*

*T: That's right. You may do that because of the video that you have watched. Next one. The off-the-court story involves conflicts among sportsmen, particularly the officials, as well as other side-lights. Next, the follow-up sports story is a summary of the activities of a team during a week or season. Followed by the sports article does not report a definite news event. It is general in character and expository in form. The seventh one is sports feature; this is about the personality. Column is different; this is regular. If you are the writer and you have a sport column, you have the regular theme in sports news. Where is found? It is found in the sports page. Fifteen minutes that will be for the headlines. This is important because lead is where you put everything: special significance of the game, cause of victory or defeat, also called analytical lead, names of outstanding players or player, names of competing teams, name of the coach, description of the crowd, such as the size, unusual behavior, and a moment of intense interest. Let's move to the headlines. Okay, I will just give the structure of headlines how they are written. What is a headline? It is the text at top of newspaper. Basically you know this already. Functions.*

*You have to know this because you may not be able to write later. It gets the reader's attention, it summarizes or tells about the article, it helps organize the news on the page, it indicates the relative importance of a story. Read aloud.*

*S: A good headline should be accurate, clear, grammatically correct, strong, active, fresh, and immediate. It should catch the reader's attention.*

*T: This alone explains what a good headline is all about. Everything is here. How do you call that (Student), the writer writes a license.*

#### *Category nine: Students' talk-initiation*

In this category, the students initiate the response. Usually, this happens when teachers give open-ended questions or questions that would elicit unrestricted answers. There is a greater difference with the percentage result of this category among the three teachers. Teachers A and B both have 2% while Teacher C has 16%. Teacher C may have gained a higher percentage because of the nature of his or her subject: literature. In the literature class, students were encouraged to answer evaluative questions that put them in certain situations and would need their opinions. In some classes where results of the test were given, students were encouraged to question the answers provided by the teacher. Teacher A encouraged this form of talk, too:

*T: What's the difference between the two? Anyone? (Student) you've been very quiet.*

*S: The news article talks about the events that are current or events that are happening during the day, but the feature article may ...*

*T: Any other idea? Yes (Student)*

*S: I guess the feature article is about special research; the reporter research about the topic.*

*T: So you mean to say that the writer finds more time in writing that particular article because he or he's been doing some researches. Okay. Any other idea? Yes (Student)*

*S: A news article is straight to the point but feature article will have more of the adjective to describe about things, that is, for example a hamburger, so you can use ....*

*Category ten: Silence or confusion*

The study yielded the following results for this type of teacher talk – 17% for Teacher A; 10%, Teacher B; and 6%, Teacher C. This finding affirms the results discussed in category 9.

#### **4. Discussion**

As Xiao-Yan (2006) and Liu Yanfen and Zhao Yuquin (2010) hypothesize, the way teachers talk not only determines how well they deliver their lessons but also how well they facilitate their students' learning.

This qualitative study was conducted to identify the dominant type of teacher talk used in university classrooms. It focused on the classroom experiences of three teachers and their three classes in language and literature. The university students, who were part of these classes, were on their second or third year in the degree program.

Through observations, it was found that lecture outnumbered the other types in the nine categories of teacher talk under Flanders Interaction Analysis with 41.33%. Teacher talk was prevalent, but it may be perceived positively as a way to facilitate learning. Rezaee and Farahian (2012) supports teacher talk “because teacher talk is informative, explanatory and descriptive of course materials and helps teaching” (p. 1241). Teacher talk, which includes questioning, may elicit feedback from students and get the attention of the class, thereby, further developing the learning atmosphere in the classroom. In the case of a language class, the teacher can use this to provide a model on pronunciation and proper delivery of the target language.

The study conducted by Babelan and Kia (2010) revealed that the teacher-talk share during the teaching course was 58.1% and the student-talk share was 33%. In the same study, it was found that the direct influence of a teacher preponderantly showed the highest percentage over all categories with 51%. Direct influence consists of lecturing, giving directions, and criticizing or justifying authority. Direct influence may be beneficial for language learners. Silver and Kogut (2009), citing Alexander (2004), emphasize the importance of teacher talk in discussions, for it involves exchanging of views, sharing of information, solving of problems, and achieving a common understanding. Also, discussions may lend itself to the use of the target language.

In this study, lecturing obtained the highest percentage among the nine categories of teacher talk with 41.33%. This result indicates that teachers use their time to discuss the subject matter or the topic and lead the discussion, obtaining limited responses or talk from students.

Notably, in most cases, teachers have control over classroom discussions; they take charge in facilitating learning. This notion runs parallel to the claim of Inamullah (2008) who revealed that “... in the majority of the classes, the English students were passive and the environment of the classroom was autocratic” (p. 34). This approach may not be helpful



if students are passive, but if authority is used to facilitate discussion, this may yield to a positive result.

As gleaned from the study, the lecture type of discussion is commonly used by all three teachers and is the most dominant type of talk demonstrated. Furthermore, the purpose of the other types of teacher talk is to support lecturing and the use of questioning. This practice is important so as not to overly dwell on classroom discussion. As Setiawati (2012) suggests, citing Price (2003) who investigated the amount of teacher talk, teachers should continue to develop an increased awareness of their teaching practices and ways to avoid needless or overly lengthy explanations and instructions or to refine their questioning and explanation methods.

To further support this finding, Cotton (2001) asserted that questioning is second only to lecturing in popularity as a teaching method and that classroom teachers spend anywhere from 35% to 50% of their instructional time conducting questioning sessions. This is supported by the study of Al-Otaibi (2004) which revealed that the basic pedagogical pattern of classroom discourse started with the teacher asking a question (solicitation), in which students answer (response). Similarly, the teachers used this kind of pattern in their teaching process by asking questions within the lecture to increase students' participation. For language classes, lecture should be limited, and interaction should be encouraged.

Moreover, the findings of the present study proved the use of encouragement and feedback. Teachers' informative praise and encouragement can inevitably reinforce students' motivation. According to Cole and Chan (1994 as cited in Babelan & Kia, 2010), interaction in teaching is a basic element, and it has a fundamental role in efficient teaching; and in principle, recognition between being weak and strong in teaching lies behind the way a teacher interacts with students.

Although the interviews with the teachers indicated a supporting view of encouragement and feedback, this was not so evident in the classroom observations.

During the teaching process, verbal and nonverbal teacher-students interactions occurred. The facial expressions, the tone, and the movements of the teachers were observed. These nonverbal reactions of teachers are cues used by students in their classroom interactions. "The more the teacher was perceived as being actively involved in the students' learning by giving informative praise and encouragement, the more the students felt competent in learning the second language" (Lucas et al., 2010, p. 6).

As indicated in Table 2, there is a notable low percentage of students' talk-response at 7%, 4%, and 5% for Teachers A, B, and C, respectively, and students' talk-initiation of 2%, 11%, and 16%. These results emphasize that the exchange of information and ideas from a teacher to students generates classroom interaction but not as high as it should be. This inability to participate may stem from the students' lack of confidence in speaking the English language. Li and Jia (2006) find this true among East Asians as "students also comment that they do not have confidence in their English, so that sometimes they prefer to keep quiet in class" (p. 202). In the same study, however, the students may actually want to speak up given a "supportive classroom climate and context and space" (p. 205). For that reason, teachers should create an atmosphere that can encourage more student talk, thus, facilitating the learning of the topic and the target language.

## 5. Conclusion

The study examined the types of teacher talk that three teachers utilized in university classrooms. Based on the observations, lecturing, classified under teacher talk, was more prominent than student talk. This category falls under the *direct influence* of the teacher. The direct influence may be helpful as it promotes learning through the questions raised by the teacher and the responses or feedback given by the students. The authority provided by the teacher also helps in directing the learning process. The analysis also shows that the Category 1 of the FIAC, known as the ‘accepts feelings’ category which falls under the *indirect influence*, was the least used by the teachers.

Consequently, these findings ascertain that the focus of instruction of the three teachers was on the content of the subject matter. The teachers focused more on the cognitive domain of teaching, but domains considering skills-building should also be given importance. With the tertiary-level programs moving to an outcomes-based approach, performances of students are expected to be the core area for learning. Also, communicative competence should be the focus of learning as the students finish their language courses, and this can only be achieved through performance of activities.

The second commonly used teacher talk was category 4, which is asking questions. This intensifies the teachers’ concentration on the content of the course. Focusing on the cognitive domain, the teachers used lecturing to test students’ understanding. In the same line, questioning was also used to activate students’ interaction with the teacher. This interaction resulted in students’ participation that led to the application of two other categories, namely, ‘praises or encourages’ and ‘criticizing or justifying authority.’ The teachers used ‘praises or encourages’ when the students give or provide the correct response. On the contrary, ‘criticizing or justifying authority’ was used by the teachers when the students’ response is far from the expected answer.

On this account, the study found lecturing as the most commonly used type of teacher talk in university classrooms. The data revealed that teachers tend to focus on the content and hardly prioritize the practice of ‘accepting of feelings.’ This run counters to the idea that learning does not focus only on the cognitive domain but should consider the affective and psychomotor domains as well. Language learning becomes more effective if the learner is well-motivated and gets affirmation from the teacher.

Pedagogical implications can be drawn from this study. In particular, teachers should be more aware of the talks and teaching approaches they use inside the classroom, and they should determine if these talks and approaches are effective to their students. Given that they have been teaching for many years, these teachers might have found comfortable strategies that work (or worked), but given the changing needs and experiences of students, these strategies may not be effective as they used to be.

Although there have been studies conducted to determine the type of teacher talk used in EFL and ESL classes, future research can determine cases where the first language is used.

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