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# **Conversational Analysis and Student-Teacher Talk: Speaker Perceptions of Communicative Effectiveness**

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## **Dedication**

**To my parents,  
for their unconditional love  
and never-ending support**

## **Acknowledgement**

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## ABSTRACT

In effectively articulating their intentions, students face a lot of difficulties in the classrooms but if this experience is enhanced with effective communication of student-teacher talk, both teachers and learners can make the most of their teaching and learning to know how the comprehension process works and, which processes imply functions of interactive discourse such as negating meaning, asking for repetition, or using repair strategies. This study investigates the communicative effectiveness of five teachers in four sessions of random classes of intermediate grades in Kish Institution of Science and Technology, Rasht branch. Actual data was obtained from transcribing student-teacher talks during the real class. To attain the impressions of the teachers regarding the real verbal behavior from the taped talking, they were shown some randomly selected segment of a printout of the transcribed section of their talking with some guiding lines: “Identify where you use verbal behavior to contribute to a good interpersonal relationship; identify where verbal behavior is unsuccessful” (a sort of self-assessment portfolio). Sound-recorded data, the instructors’ interviews, and their assessments from English classes were employed to determine whether the teachers in Kish Institution of Science and Technology were aware of their communicative effectiveness and if yes, in what manners they achieved this effectiveness. The results of the teachers self-evaluation of the observation tally sheet and transcriptions revealed that they are aware of communicative effectiveness and use notably more questions and corrective feedback types which will let them communicate better with their students. The findings can have implications for the field of language teaching by exposing how much teachers’ communicative effectiveness perceptions can lead to enhanced interactions with their students.

**Keywords:** Discourse Analysis, Interactive discourse, Conversational Analysis, Communicative Effectiveness, Communicative Competence, Institutional talk, Talk-in-interaction

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**AP** Adjacency Pair

**CA** Conversation Analysis

**Dep** Dependant

**Exch.** Exchange

**Init** Initiate

**Emb** Embedded

**F-up** Follow-up

**IRE** Initiation - Response – Evaluation

**IRF** Initiation - Response –Feedback (Follow-up)

**K1** Primary Knower

**K2** Secondary Knower

**Nuc** Nuclear

**OC** Ordinary Conversation

**Resp** Response

**SLA** Second Language Acquisition

**TPP** Teacher-Parent-Pupil

**TTT** Teacher Talking Time

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

### **1.1 Preview**

Interaction shows who we are. Language is a kind of mediator between a speaker's experience and the listener's understanding. And utterances construct and maintain social contexts. The participants of interaction choose the people they want to speak to, in what order, for how long. They select if their speaking is going to be continued or closed. So there are two significant characteristics of conversation: first, interactive reciprocity, and second local management by participants. According to Gardner (1999), interaction is a jointly co-constructed activity, and speakers and listeners build their utterances upon the influence of their recipients. Through conversation analysis we can focus on a speaker's selection and turns systems.

As a result, in effective social conversations among members, one member must initiate the contact; following such initiation, the interlocutor must select between responding in a consistent way with the initiator's intention or approach, and not doing so. A mutual support in an interaction could facilitate and manage interactional cooperation toward a common goal of participants.

A break in meaning between the intended and the received message can cause difficulties with the result of even the best teaching choice. Vague use of verbal and nonverbal language, poor semantics, differing values and poor listening skills are all points that can deform a message.

To become effective communicators, speakers must be aware of these possible problems and deliberately try to reduce them in their classroom interactions.

## **1.2- Statement of Problem**

According to Nunan (1991), Communicative Language Teaching puts an emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language. As such, students are required to develop a new habit of getting involved in speaking to the fullest as oral skill is frequently utilized regardless of the focus of the lesson. Harmer (2001:56) identified that “under the influence of humanistic and communicative theories, great emphasis has been placed on learner-centered teaching, which is teaching which makes the learners’ needs and experience central to the educational process.”

Students, however, come across enormous difficulty in effectively articulating themselves in the classroom setting. If the ordinary classroom experience is enhanced with effective communication of student-teacher talk, then major positive achievements in motivation to communicate may take place.

Communication satisfaction results from understanding the dimensions underlying perceptions of student-teacher interaction. Many of our teachers in English language teaching field seem to have problems in their perception of communicative effectiveness in interaction with their students. Both teachers and learners can make the most of their teaching and learning if they know how the comprehension process works.

### **1.3- Significance of the Study**

Effective communication is significant to the success of any classrooms. It is essential that teachers at all ranks have understanding of effective communication. Success in the classrooms relies greatly on the communicative competence of the students. Communication effectiveness is the outcome of speaker perceptions of talk that are significant to communicative competence. As a result, comprehending the fundamental aspects of speaker perceptions is needed. Better comprehending of speaker perceptions of talk fundamentals might inform the literature about key dimensions of interaction related to competence.

The importance of student interaction with their teacher and other students strongly encourages and emphasizes communicative competence of them. Many teachers allocate a percentage of the grade exclusively to student participation and class discussions which require the student's communication skill possession. This study will investigate the communicative effectiveness of student-teacher talk through conversational analysis.



## **1.4-Research Questions and Hypothesis**

The following questions will guide the study:

- (1) To what extent teachers have got an awareness of their employed techniques in eliciting students' talk and their own conversational effectiveness?
- (2) To what extent there is a relationship between teachers' conversational effectiveness and the techniques they employed in their interactions with students?
- (3) To what extent an exposure to teachers' own conversational styles let them become aware of their communicative effectiveness with their students?

Based on the above research questions the following null hypotheses are formulated:

H01: There is no awareness of teachers' employed techniques in eliciting students' talk and their own conversational effectiveness.

H02: There is no relationship between teachers' conversational effectiveness and the techniques they employed in their interactions with students.

H03: There is no relationship between teachers' own conversational styles exposure and awareness of their communicative effectiveness with their students.

## 1.5-Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

One of the limitations of the study is that it is not cross gender. Of course, the identity is not relevant here. Schegloff (1972) declares that if we want to say that a participant's identity (e.g., as female, or as a nonnative speaker) is relevant to some discursive performance, then it is not sufficient that the characterization be true, not sufficient that the characterization mattered to the participants on the circumstance. It must matter for the particular feature of the interaction under consideration, Schegloff claims, and the analyst must be able to reveal that. "There is still the problem of *showing from the details of the talk or other conduct in the materials* that we are analyzing that those aspects of the scene [or identity] are what the *parties* are oriented to" (p. 53).

Gardner (1999) notes:

... the way into the data is not through an appeal to some extra-interactional phenomenon, such as notions of politeness or assumptions about the influence of gender...In the case of ordinary conversation, a participant's gender would be deemed relevant only if the participant's gender is relevant to the talk.(p.268)

The study is restricted to five Intermediate levels of Kish Institution of Science and Technology. Another restriction is that the research is focused on the classes in Rasht branch, which exclude those of other provinces. Therefore, if time, finance and energy do allow, researchers can expand the scope for more valid and reliable data. In addition, the enquiry of

communication effectiveness in teacher-student-talk can be examined in a particular stage namely presentation, practice or production rather than an entire lesson.

The delimitation of the study is the Intermediate level of students. Here the researcher restricted the study to this level since this is the threshold of semi-independency of learners in conducting conversation. Students in this level usually have the sufficient communicative competence needed for initiating interactions, while they are not that much perfect in performing this skill without teachers' guides or feedbacks.

## **1.6-Definition of Key Terms**

### **1.6.1 Discourse Analysis**

According to Paltridge (2006) discourse analysis focuses on knowledge about language beyond the word, clause, phrase and sentence that is needed for successful communication. It looks at patterns of language across texts and considers the relationship between language and the social and cultural contexts in which it is used. Discourse analysis also considers the ways that the use of language presents different understandings. It examines how the use of language is influenced by relationships between participants it considers how the use of language has impact upon social identities and relations. It also considers how views of the world and identities are constructed through the use of discourse.

### **1.6.2 Conversational Analysis**

As Psathas (1995) claims, conversational analysis i.e., the study of talk-in-interaction, represents a methodological approach to the study of mundane social action that has achieved the

desired reproducible results. Conversation analysis studies the order/organization/orderliness of social action, particularly those social actions that are located in everyday interaction.

### **1.6.3 Conversational Styles**

According to Tannen, D. (2005) style is not something extra added on conversation, like decoration. Anything that is said must be said in some way; co-occurrence expectations of that 'way' constitute style. The dimensions of style are: 1) Fixity vs. novelty 2) Cohesiveness vs. expressiveness 3) Focus on content vs. interpersonal involvement.

### **1.6.4 Communication Effectiveness**

According to Trenholm, S. & Jensen, A. (2000) having good communication skills is crucial to effective communication. Listening, conflict resolution, and communicating uniformly are essential communication skills. Listening involves not just hearing what someone else says but also understanding what the person is saying. Comprehending the ideas of a speaker is significant for successful conflict resolution. Most of the times, conflict resolution requires compromise, so every party involved is left pleased. Also communication uniformly permits you to effectively negotiate your message without contradiction. Contradiction can happen in communication when verbal communication does not go with such nonverbal communications as body language, facial expressions and tone of voice.

### **1.6.5 Communicative Competence**

According to Hudenberg and Yoder (1994), scholars seem to be in considerable disagreement concerning the definition of competence, its theoretical foundations, its behavioral manifestations, and its measurement. Most definitions require the performance of