

Role of Classroom Interaction in English Language Learning: A Study on Tertiary Level Teachers and Students in Dhaka

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Abstract

Classroom interaction has always been a significant concern in language learning. It also involves the use of the target language by both the facilitator and the learners as interlocutors. Following Ellis (1990, as cited in 2017), interaction focuses on the meaning and is conducted to ease the transmission of information and prevent communication failures. This study investigates the role of classroom interaction in English language learning where teachers and students participate in discussions and collaborative practices. This study is mainly focused on four researchable questions, and the target populations are the English language teachers and students of two private universities which are prominent for classroom communication in Dhaka. This is a mixed-method research study where qualitative data from open-ended questions for the teachers, teachers' interviews, focus group discussion (FGD), and quantitative data from students' questionnaires were used to get effective results. The researcher has followed the Likert scale format to design the students' questionnaire. The questionnaire survey was completed by 50 students, 6 students participated in a focus group discussion (FGD) and 3 teachers were interviewed for this study. For questionnaire analysis, the researcher used SPSS and descriptive analysis, and for qualitative data analysis (interview and FGD session), the researcher used thematic analysis. The findings of this research have pointed to a variety of additional requirements that can only be achieved to have an effective and productive

classroom interaction. The results elucidate the significant role of interaction in the English language classroom for the learners and suggest further steps to accelerate this interaction process in the English language classroom by increasing access of the students to the teachers.

Keywords: *interaction, classroom, English language, participation, observation, mixed methods.*

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of Classroom Interaction

From the 17th century to the 21st century, many teaching methods were introduced where students could interact and could not interact. For example, to make the students talk in the class, the Audio-lingual method was introduced and then gradually students became active in the class but that was controlled drilling where students could not express their thoughts. Later, to develop learners' participation in the class the concept 'Classroom Interaction' came among the academicians and students (Allwright, 1984). Classroom interaction is an indispensable part of the modern education system through which students get the chance to acquire different skills like presentation, communication and public interaction in different stages of pedagogical life. Following Sundari (2017), it makes the students and teachers practitioners of the target language and she also added that in the era of CLT, classroom interaction is a central issue in the teaching and learning of English. Language learners develop their competencies in social interactions through interacting with the more competent users like teachers and peers (Thoms, 2012). Though the education system of Bangladesh follows a lecture-based approach, nowadays the trend is changing where teachers and students are participating in interactions,

activities and joint research which are conspicuous. Classes are not often lecture-based in the current period at all while collaborative practices like pair work, group work and individual work are arranged by teachers to accelerate the communication process among students and teachers. Consolo (2006) investigated the relationship between teachers and students in the classroom which is asymmetrical. The model of Van Lier (1988, as cited in Sundari, 2017) is given below.

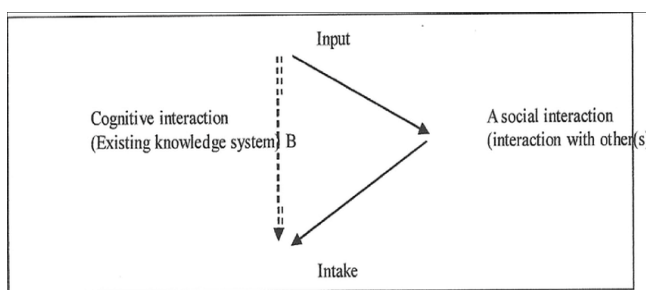


Figure 1: The Role of Interaction (Van Lier, 1988, as cited in Sundari, 2017)

Classroom interaction for language acquisition occurs in three stages, according to Ellis (1991). The first step is to notice input (linguistic elements) that is relevant to short-term memory and cognition; this is referred to as an initial intake. The second part of learning a second language involves comparing old and new linguistic characteristics. The language learner's final intake is when he or she creates new hypotheses based on the comparison of previous and fresh material. Then, according to Van Lier (in Hermanto, 2015), interaction mediates input and intake with meaningful activities, making it important for acquisition. Swain claims that intelligible input is sufficient if the language learner does not have the opportunity to utilise the language (Mackey et al., 2012). Language learners should be able to recognize

linguistic errors and reconstruct language creation as an output. With these perspectives in mind, the teacher in the language classroom plays a vital role in providing intelligible information as well as providing many opportunities for students to speak and write the language via the use of diverse interaction modalities in the classroom.

1.2. Rationale of this Study

Classroom interaction is a well-known concept in Bangladesh. Though in tertiary institutions of Bangladesh it is a practising system, in the primary, secondary and higher secondary institutions were not familiar with such practice where students participate in collaborative practices with teachers and with themselves as well. Jean Piaget told about this collaborative learning in his constructivist approach (Bhattacharjee, 2015). There is several research on interaction, but there is no research which reflects the necessities, benefits and challenges of classroom interaction at the tertiary level, as a result, the researcher felt the necessity to conduct this study. This study is focused on four research questions and the answers to these questions have provided many crucial solutions and suggestions.

1.3. Purpose of this study

This study explores the role of interaction currently in academic settings in Bangladesh. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the role interaction plays in the English language classroom. For a better understanding, the researcher did a students' questionnaire survey in different private universities and interviewed the facilitators of those universities. This study was conducted in mixed-method research to get effective results as mixed methods research combines elements of quantitative research and qualitative research to answer the research questions.

2. Research Questions

For conducting this research, four questions have been formulated which are given below sequentially:

- 1) How do teachers and students interact with each other in English classes?
- 2) To what extent, is classroom interaction beneficial for the students in learning the English language?
- 3) What are the challenges teachers and students face in case of classroom interaction?
- 4) What might be the possible solutions to solve these challenges?

3. Literature Review

3.1. Definition of Classroom Interaction

Classroom interaction is a technique for improving the development of the two most crucial language skills, speaking and listening, among students. Classroom interaction combines culture containing morality, ethics, and educational values which help the students to participate in a communication setting (Barker, 1982). Classroom interaction is the result of both the teachers' and students' participation where they develop the competency of critical thinking together for communication (Bishop, 2000). In the classroom, interaction aims at the sharing of knowledge and information between the teacher and the students. Consequently, interaction can be stated as the heart of communication (Brown, 2001:165).

Students' communicative competencies are developed when they participate in communications with each other through verbal or non-verbal language (Brown, 2001:48). For example, there are many ways of interaction like group work, pair work, dialogue practising, and role-playing where students can participate and develop their communication skills. Brown (2001) stated that interaction results in success when both the teacher and students

talk to each other in the class about different issues related to knowledge. According to Nunan (1991) language is acquired when the learners engage actively in the classroom interaction with the teacher and with each other in the target language. According to Vygotsky (1978, as cited in Shannon, 2005), social-communication acts as an important role player in the learning process. Ellis (2004) stated that language learning is seen as a result of participation in discourse, particularly face-to-face conversation, by interactionists (p. 78). Following Hall and Walsh (2002), classroom interaction is particularly important because it serves as both a vehicle for learning and a focus for instructional attention.

3.2. Concept of Classroom Interaction

The interaction came from different environments supported by different theories like constructivism, sociocultural and situated learning (Zubairu, 2015). Interaction is similar to the concept of “private speech” as expressed in the view by the work of Lev Vygotsky (1978, as cited in Feigenbaum, (n.d.)). The interaction begins in childhood with the family members. As a result, Mondal (1997) stated that “no other agents of socialisation are as important to the total make-up of the child as his family”. According to Crow (1986), the home is the most significant place which plays an essential role in the development at the early stage of life and later contributes to the classroom interaction. Fleminy (1990, as cited in Brooks & Donato, 1994) disclosed his belief in the classroom interaction concept by stating that a child learns to interact with his or her family and then contributes to the classroom. Ibrahimova (2014, as cited in Larsen-Freeman, 1986) stated that once there were classes based on lectures where students were not allowed to speak in the class, and later they were allowed to speak in the

community language learning classes and the scenario of traditional approaches got changed.

3.3. Types of Classroom Interaction

Crandall and Tucker (1990: 187) said that the attitudes of the teachers towards students matter in creating learning atmosphere. Classroom interaction can be of many types from different perspectives. Different observers talked about different types of interaction that occur in the classroom. Firstly, interaction should be clear. As Ellis (1999, as cited in Bao, 2015) there are two types of interaction: the first one is *Interpersonal* which occurs in face-to-face verbal exchanges and the other is *Intrapersonal* which happens inside our minds.

Chai (2015) distinguished six basic types of classroom interaction:

1. Quiz among students themselves or between teacher and students
2. Keep an eye on students' real needs for learning
3. Take care of the emotional needs of the students
4. Multiple rounds of dialogue timely
5. Touching the students' real-life and future career goals
6. Let the students participate in decision making

Apart from these types of interaction, Van Lier (1988: 94–120, as cited in Sundari, 2017) also talks about four different types of classroom interaction in his book “The Classroom and the Language Learner” to show his observation result among different classes. These interaction types are given below.

1. The teacher does not have control over the topic or the activity
2. The teacher controls the topic but not the activity
3. The teacher controls the topic and the activity
4. The teacher controls the activity but not the topic

According to Ibrahimova (2014, as cited in Larsen-Freeman, 1986) types of classroom interaction can mainly be categorised into some specific categories which are collaborative learning, interactive sessions, loud reading, story-telling, discussions and debates, role play, conversation with learners and soliloquies.

Tickoo (2009, as cited in Hanum, (n.d.)) suggested four types of interaction which can be useful for the students to fruitful learning. He talked about the types as follows:

1. Whole class – teacher interaction
2. Individual/pair/group interaction - teacher
3. Students interact with each other e.g. in groups or pairs or with individual
4. Students work with materials and attempt tasks to complete individually or in groups or in pairs.

3.4. Importance of Classroom Interaction

Classroom interaction is pedagogically important and best to represent the learning that has taken place in the class to the outside world (Allwright, 1984). Following Savignon (1972), we should create the opportunity for our learners of sufficient communication in the classroom if we want to witness the actual outcome in the real world. Littlewood (1981) argued that without practice activities in the classroom, learners cannot solve “real-life” communication problems. Allwright (1984) stated that communication is an essential skill for learning to lead in the corporate world. Bygate (1987) expressed the importance of communication in the classroom by arguing that by interacting in the class, students develop two different skills simultaneously one is speaking and the other is listening. Class time should be in favour of students so that they can practice different collaborative activities through communication among them (Malamah-Thomas, 1987).

3.5. Theoretical Background

Zubairu (2015) stated that the classroom is an essential environment of constructivism where Piaget and Vygotsky share the same belief when their theories are different in terms of how constructivism should be carried out in classrooms. Bao (2015) stated in his PhD thesis that there are three theories about classroom interaction which have direct impacts on the interactions that occur in the L2 classroom. They are put forward respectively below.

3.5.1. The Constructivist Perspective of Interaction in the L2 Classroom

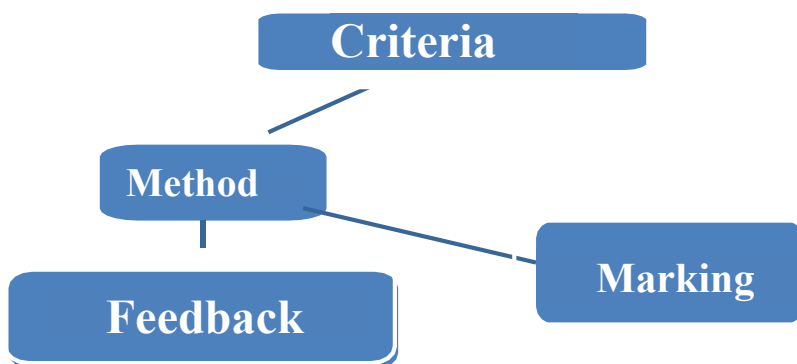
Constructivism is a new approach in education which says humans are better at understanding what they have produced by themselves (Zubairu, 2015). The constructivist theory says learning is a social advancement including collaboration and interaction in language learning. Nowadays, Constructivism works as a developer in our classrooms where it develops our retention power, knowledge and critical thinking ability (Abidin, 2007). Zubairu (2015) stated that through the constructivist theory students are no longer the passive audience; they have become the active knowledge sharers with the teachers by transforming their minds from knowledge receivers to knowledge seekers. According

to Tatar (2005), there is a crucial scope for the students in the constructivist classroom to get involved in the entire process:

Figure 2: Constructivist Classroom Interaction Process (Tatar, 2005)

3.5.2. Sociocultural Perspective of Interaction in L2 Classroom

The sociocultural theory was introduced by the Russian psychologist Vygotsky (1978), and later has been further developed by contemporary researchers in the L2 field of language education (Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, as cited in Bao, 2015). Bates (2019) states that through sociocultural theory



“interaction and knowledge are structured through social interactions with friends, family, peers and teachers.” Leonard (2002) argues that sociocultural theory focuses on an individual’s cognitive development and social interaction. As learners participate in different types of social interactions and come under the same platforms to do different activities together, they gather knowledge about the world and cultures (Scott, 2009). Wertsch (1985) suggested three major themes from Vygotsky’s work that

explain the system of this interdependency between individual and social procedures in learning and development. At first, he talks about the development that occurs at the individual level, including higher cognitive functioning which has its origin in social sources. This theme is best represented in Vygotsky's "genetic law of development", "Any function of the child's cultural development begins on the stage twice, or on two planes, first the social, then the psychological, first between people as an intermental category, then within the child as an instrumental category" (Vygotsky, 1931/1997, pp. 105–106, as cited in Feigenbaum, (n.d)).

3.5.3. Situated Learning and Classroom Interaction

Situated learning was first introduced by John Lave and Etienne Wenger for individual development in a community through acquiring different skills. A learner learns different skill through social interaction and collaboration in the situated learning environment (Lave, 1988). Brown, Collins & Newman (1989) emphasized the learner's social involvement which leads to the ultimate learning and focused on the term "cognitive apprenticeship" of situated learning. Brown, Collins & Newman (1989) explained that cognitive apprenticeship helps to learn in a particular domain by enabling students to acquire, develop and use cognitive tools in original domain activities and further added that collaborative social interaction may advance the development of knowledge and learning both inside and outside school.

This chapter reviews the articles of the relevant field of different researchers. Many researchers before worked on classroom interaction and its relationship with the English Language. Different theories that are related to this topic are reviewed and analysed to find the relationship. This review gives a clear idea about the works in this classroom interaction field.

4. Methodology

4.1. Method

Creswell (2008) stated that a study should be a heterogeneous process of both qualitative and quantitative data. Mixed method research is a way of gathering data, analyzing it, and combining qualitative and quantitative data to obtain answers to particular research questions. To get a deeper knowledge of the issue and their views, this research used a mixed-method approach that included both quantitative and qualitative methods. Moreover, the researcher observed an English language class as a part of quantitative data collection along with the questionnaire survey.

4.2. Sampling

There are several types of sampling processes for collecting data. However, this study has followed the purposive sampling process for collecting effective data as a purposive sample is a non-probability sample that is chosen based on demographic characteristics and the goal of the study.

4.3. Participants

The researcher took permission from the head of the department of two selected private universities and went to those universities in Dhaka. In the data collection process, 50 students for the questionnaire survey, 6 students for FGD, and 3 teachers participated in the interview. These students and teachers were the representatives on behalf of all the English language learners and English teachers of the private universities which were selected to conduct the study. All the students are tertiary level undergrad students of the universities.

4.4. Research Tools and Design

4 research tools have been used for collecting the data for this study. The tools are listed below-

- a) **Students' Survey Questionnaire** as a quantitative tool was initially designed in Microsoft word format based on the information of the pilot study. The questionnaire was modified several times according to the supervisor's recommendations and advice. The questionnaire has five parts excluding demographic information. For designing the questionnaire, the researcher used the Likert scale format. This survey provided an idea about students' perceptions.
- b) **Students' Focus Group Discussion Questions** as a qualitative tool were designed in Microsoft word format. The questions were developed in an open-ended structure. The researcher developed 12 questions for this session. This FGD session gives more in-depth knowledge about the students' perspectives.
- c) **Teachers' Interview Questions** as qualitative data were designed in Microsoft word and for constructing the questions, the researcher followed an open-ended format. For the teachers' interview, the researcher listed 6 questions and followed a semi-structured interview format. The data of the interview provided details view of the teachers' perceptions.

4.5. Ethical Consideration

Ethical concerns have been strictly adhered to preserve the research's professional and academic dignity. All participants have remained anonymous, and the researcher has promised

verbally that their opinions and personal information will stay secure and that sensitive information unrelated to the study will not be disclosed. In this manner, researchers upheld ethical standards and obtained precise, valid, and trustworthy data.

5. Data Analysis

5.1. Students' Questionnaire Survey-

For evaluating questionnaire survey data, SPSS (Microsoft Excel) descriptive statistical analysis was used. For assessing semi-structured interview data, the researcher first translated, then transcribed, and lastly conducted theme analysis.

5.1. 1. Demographic Information of the Participants-

In this section of the survey questionnaire, the researcher inquired about the participants' general information (gender, level of education, level of English proficiency and so on). In total, 50 (25 male and 25 female) students from post-secondary levels from two esteemed private universities participated in the survey. The English proficiency level of the participants is pre-intermediate and intermediate.

5.1. 2. Section I: Types of Interaction between Teacher and Student-

In this section of the survey questionnaire, researcher analyses the types of classroom interaction used by teachers and students are presented in the following table 2. The researcher has developed a questionnaire that followed 5-point Likert Scale (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5=Strongly Agreed).

Statements	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %
1) Teacher starts the class with roll calling, warm up activities	4% (2)	24% (12)	38% (19)	32% (16)	2% (1)
2) Teacher is strict	12% (6)	30% (15)	34% (17)	18% (9)	10% (5)
3) Teacher is friendly and supportive	2% (1)	8% (4)	4% (2)	64% (32)	22% (11)
4) The lesson objectives are declared by the teacher at the beginning of the class	4% (2)	12% (6)	16% (8)	52% (26)	16% (8)
5) Teacher gives lectures in the class	8% (4)	10% (5)	4% (2)	56% (28)	22% (11)
6) Teacher uses multimedia to take class	8% (4)	26% (13)	16% (8)	42% (21)	8% (4)
7) Teacher gets angry unexpectedly	32% (16)	28% (14)	28% (14)	10% (5)	2% (1)
8) Teacher is very demanding	16% (8)	38% (19)	26% (13)	14% (12)	4% (2)
9) Teacher talks enthusiastically	6% (3)	6% (3)	36% (18)	46% (23)	6% (3)
10) Teacher gives group work in the class	8% (4)	14% (7)	20% (10)	52% (26)	8% (4)

11) Teacher gives pair work in the class	8% (4)	14% (7)	18% (8)	58% (29)	2% (1)
12) Teacher communicates with whole class	0% (0)	18% (9)	14% (7)	46% (23)	22% (11)
13) Teacher is concerned when we do not understand	0% (0)	14% (7)	18% (9)	48% (24)	24% (12)
14) Teacher is willing to explain things again	2% (1)	10% (5)	18% (9)	44% (22)	22% (11)
15) If we have something to say teacher will listen	4% (2)	6% (3)	22% (11)	44% (22)	24% (12)
16) Teacher thinks we cannot do things well	10% (5)	36% (18)	30% (15)	18% (9)	6% (3)
17) Students work with materials or aids and attempt the task one again individually in groups, pair, or so on	4% (2)	10% (5)	44% (22)	22% (11)	4% (2)
18) Teacher threatens to punish students	28% (14)	26% (13)	20% (10)	16% (8)	6% (3)
19) Students learn a lot from teacher	0% (0)	4% (2)	18% (9)	52% (26)	26% (13)

20) Teacher holds attention of the students	4%(2)	20% (10)	18% (9)	42% (21)	16% (8)
21) Teacher is impatient	12% (6)	32%(16)	30% (15)	36% (18)	8% (4)
22) Teacher observes everything that goes on in the classroom	6% (3)	10% (5)	24% (12)	54% (27)	8% (4)
23) Teacher can make jokes	2% (1)	16% (8)	28% (14)	48% (24)	6% (3)
24) Teacher asks direct questions to the students whose attention appeals to be wandering or who are restless and fidgety	2% (1)	8% (4)	30% (15)	54% (27)	6% (3)
25) Students' active participation within the classroom demand teacher response	2% (1)	10% (5)	24% (12)	54% (27)	10% (5)
26) Teacher praises for the students' achievement	0% (0)	6%(3)	20% (10)	60% (30)	14% (7)

27) Teacher comments upon each students' response to the entire class for discussion	0% (0)	12% (6)	36% (18)	38% (19)	14% (7)
28) Teacher explains things clearly	0% (0)	2% (1)	6% (3)	52% (26)	38% (19)

Table 1: Types of Classroom Interaction between Teacher and Student

In this section, students had to answer a total of 28 questions with 5 options. The table represented the highest number of respondents' opinions about the classroom interaction process and types. Moreover, some participants agreed, some disagreed, and some were neutral in each statement.

5.1. 3. Section II: Benefits of Classroom Interaction-

In this section of the survey questionnaire, researchers conducted an analysis of the advantages presented in the following table 3. The researcher has developed a questionnaire that followed 2-point Likert Scale (1=yes, 2=no).

Statements	Yes	No
	%	%
1) Communicating in the classroom makes students capable to cope with their lack of language knowledge	88% (44)	12% (6)

2) Group and pair work help students to improve their learning	92% (46)	8% (4)
3) Group and pair work help students to clarifying and negotiating their ideas to reach to an agreement	96% (48)	4% (2)
4) Communicating with each other pushes students to produce appropriate language when they are working in pairs and in groups	84% (42)	4% (2)
5) Group work is essential for learning language	92% (46)	8% (4)
6) Interaction makes the students able to test their communicative success through exchanging information with the teachers or among the students themselves	90% (45)	10% (5)
7) Communication in the classroom contributes to language development by providing target language practice with opportunities through designing activities that makes learners use the target language	92% (46)	8% (4)
8) Students' can practice their language in the classroom to improve their Language	92% (46)	8% (4)
9) Interaction with each other allows students to receive feedback through correcting each other	88% (44)	12% (6)
10) Communicative class is better for improving language	90% (45)	10% (5)

Table 2: Benefits of Classroom

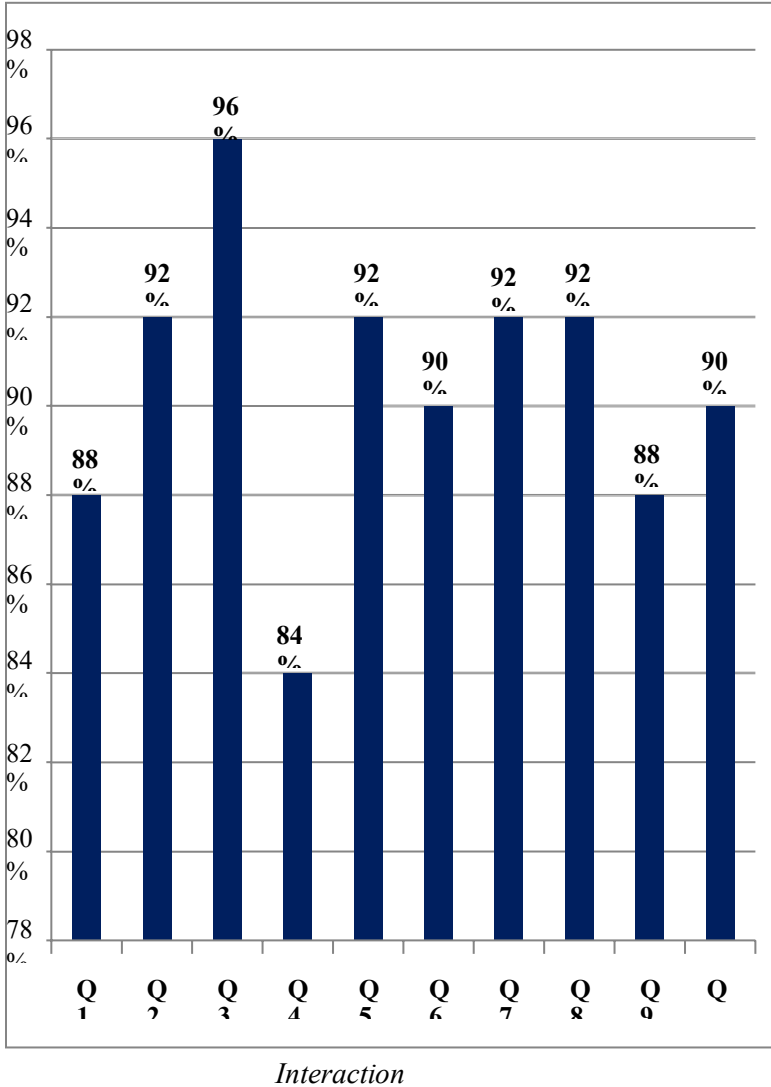


Chart 1: Benefits of the Classroom Interaction

As this section has only two options “Yes or No”, the researcher showed the percentage of the positive answers in the bar chart. All the participants acknowledged the benefits of classroom interaction in this section.

5.1. 4. Section III: Challenges of Classroom Interaction-

In this third part of the survey, the researcher reveals the challenges of classroom interaction. The researcher has developed a questionnaire that followed 5-point Likert Scale (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5=Strongly Agreed).

Statements	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %
1. Students with communication disorder often struggle to communicate in classroom settings	4% (2)	12% (6)	28% (14)	38% (19)	18% (9)
2. Students often shut down and isolating themselves out of fear or embarrassment	2% (1)	10% (5)	36% (18)	38% (19)	12% (6)
3. Students often shut down and isolate themselves because few students receive higher average level	4% (2)	6% (3)	30% (15)	46% (23)	14% (7)

of attention by teachers					
4. Students who do not want to connect on a personal level with their teachers often avoid communicating with them	0%(0)	16%(8)	36 % (18)	34% (17)	16% (8)
5. Personality differences between teacher and students lead to frustration and lack of communication	0% (0)	12% (6)	38% (19)	40% (20)	10% (5)
6. Teachers sometimes fail to create engaging lessons and struggle to connect to their students on a one – to – one basis	0% (0)	10% (5)	32% (16)	42% (21)	16% (8)
7.High competition and intense academic pressure discourage students towards group work, pair work or collaborative learning	4%(2)	14% (7)	30% (15)	32% (16)	16% (8)

Table 3: Challenges of Classroom

Interaction

In this section, students had to answer a total of 7 questions with 5 options. The table represented the significant number of respondents' opinions about the challenges. Some participants agreed, some disagreed, and some were neutral as well.

5.1. 5. Section IV: Solutions to the Challenges of Classroom Interaction

This section explores the solutions to the challenges of classroom interaction. The researcher has been developed a questionnaire that followed 5-point Likert Scale (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5=Strongly Agreed).

Statements	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %
1) Enabling students to interact on an individual or private basis with the teacher during the lesson increase potential for productive interaction	2% (1)	14% (7)	18% (9)	48% (24)	18% (9)
2) Self-reading method will provide the students with responsibility to participate fully in the lesson process	2% (1)	2% (1)	16% (8)	58% (29)	22% (11)
3) Lessons or topics should be interesting	0% (0)	4% (2)	16% (8)	50% (25)	30% (15)

4) Teacher should build engagement in the classroom	0% (0)	2% (1)	12% (6)	50% (25)	36% (18)
5) Every student should be equal for teacher	0% (0)	10% (5)	2% (1)	46% (23)	42% (21)
6) Teacher should keep calm	2% (1)	10% (5)	30% (15)	36% (18)	22% (11)
7) Teachers should praise students' achievement	0% (0)	0% (0)	10% (5)	40% (20)	50% (25)

Table 4: Solutions to the Challenges

In this section, a larger number of participants agreed and disagreed with the optimal challenges of classroom interaction. In the case of challenges, some participants responded as neutral (Table 4).

5.2. Teacher's Interview Questions Analysis

1) Teachers' opinion about the term 'classroom interaction'-

According to T1, classroom interaction means when teachers and students get the chance to interact with each other in the classroom in a productive way to maximise learning. T2 stated that classroom interaction is a mandatory criterion for conducting a learner-centred and engaging class where students will be able to learn

interactively. T3 also said that classroom interaction tells you to communicate with students for effective teaching. All the 3 teachers are more or less aware of the term ‘classroom interaction’.

2) Necessities of interaction between teacher and students-

T1 agreed that interaction is essential for the teachers to keep interacting with the students in the class to teach a language effectively. T2 replied positively and said that interact with students by checking their comprehension level, asking them to clarify their opinion on a given topic and requesting them to speak up about any inhibition(s) they are facing. Additionally, T3 thought that it works like a scaffolding to develop learner’s learning capability.

3) Teachers’ interaction process with students in the class

T1 answered positively. T1 said that T1 ask questions to the students. Also, after explaining any item in the class, T1 ask them to share their opinion. T2 stated that most of the students can interact with me spontaneously. There are some students (approximately 15% of the class) who cannot interact because of their comparatively low language proficiency level and classroom-oriented inhibitions. T3 provides them with different activities through which T3 interact with them.

4) Students interact with teachers spontaneously

T1 responded positively to students’ spontaneous interaction. T2 said that her students

interact with each other in the class. As classroom interaction increases learners' involvement in the class and enhances their motivation level, it is necessary for them. T3 responded negatively because there are many reasons like social, cultural, and religious aspects.

5) Students interact with each other in the class and its necessities-

According to T1, this is necessary. Weak students often make their ideas clear through interaction. Therefore, it is important to create such opportunities for them. T2 also agreed and said interaction between teacher and students is highly significant as it ensures learners' comprehension of content knowledge as well as increases their motivation level. T3 told that actually, in the class female students prefer females and male students prefer males. As a result, interaction among them doesn't come fruitful.

6) Challenges faced by teachers interacting with students/ students interacting with students-

T1 did not find any challenges. However, T2 said sometimes some of the students become reluctant to interact. The challenge can be dealt with the appropriate handling of the issues which make them indifferent toward classroom interaction. T3 also stated that there are challenges from different aspects like social and cultural. Consequently, students do not feel comfortable always to make interaction with the teacher. Consequently, the interaction doesn't become fruitful. Based on the teachers' opinion researcher thinks that highly motivated teachers can solve this problem with

low affective filter and friendly attitudes so that students can reduce their anxiety and participate more in the interaction process in the class.

5.3. Focus Group Discussion Analysis

1. Teacher process of conducting the class-

The teacher starts the class with greetings. After exchanging greetings with the students, he or she calls the roll and arranges some warm-up activities for the students.

2. Students interact with the teacher in the class-

In question no 2, all the students positively answered that they interact with the teacher in the classroom during class.

3. Types of activities teacher gives to the class to do individually or in pairs-

Students answered positively and stated that the teacher gives activities in the class and sometimes asks to do them individually, but mostly in pairs, told S5.

4. Teachers encourage to do peers or groups discussion-

Every student responded positively that the teacher always encourages discussion with peers or in groups. Teachers always encourage them to participate in collaborative work, said S1.

5. Teachers explain the activities-

Students stated that the teacher always explains the activities to the students in the class. The teacher explains how to do the activity or what we have to do in the activity, stated S3

6. Students ask questions to the teacher –

S1, S2 and S3 said that they asked questions to the teacher in the class. S4 and S5 remained silent on this statement.

7. Teachers' responses to the questions

S5 said that the teacher responded to that questions and solve the problems for the students. S1, S4 and S4 also agreed with the statement of S5. However, S3 did not say anything.

8. Teachers help to correct mistakes in the class-

S2 emphasised that the teacher corrects our mistakes instantly in the class. The teacher also gives examination papers to us to check our mistakes, S1 stated. The teacher corrects mistakes immediately through repetition in the class while speaking and the teacher also checks our copies in the class, adding S3, S4 and S5.

9. Importance of interaction for English language learning-

It is essential because it helps us to correct our mistakes and learns the language correctly, S1 claimed. When we make wrong grammatical sentences, teacher and peers help to correct those sentences, and so we do not repeat those mistakes, stated S3 and S4.

10. Benefits of classroom interaction-

All of the students agreed on the benefits of classroom interaction. They mentioned some advantages as well. In their opinion, it is beneficial because it increases confidence to speak the English language. It provides chances for students to express themselves in meaningful ways and also gives opportunities to students to negotiate the meaning with each other and the teacher. It increases mutual understanding between the teacher and students, student and student. Classroom interaction reduces classroom anxiety, added S5 in the last.

11. Challenges of interacting in the class-

According to all participants there are some challenges they have faced in the case of classroom interaction. The obstacles are–

- Students who have communication disorders often struggle to communicate in classroom settings
- Students isolate themselves out of fear or embarrassment
- Students often shut down themselves because few students receive higher level of attention from the teachers
- Students who do not want to connect on a personal level with their teachers often avoid communicating with them
- Personality differences often create challenges

12. Optimal solutions to solve the challenges-

From all the data, the researcher has found that there are some optimal and suggestive solutions for solving these challenges of classroom interaction. For reducing these challenges in future, they provided the following possible solutions that can be helpful to the students–

- Students should interact with the teacher and students in the class
- Every student should be equal to the teacher
- Teachers should build rapport with the students in the class
- Teachers should be friendly
- Teachers should focus on all the students' mistakes

6. Findings of the Study

50 students (25 male and 25 female) participated in the questionnaire survey and they answered 64 questions including one open-ended question where they were provided with a questionnaire and instructed to answer by discussing among themselves. The student survey questionnaire was divided into 5 sections and students answered all the sections. The researcher conducted students' FGD sessions and teacher interviews.

1. How do teachers and students interact with each other in English class?

Teachers and students use interpersonal and intrapersonal interaction, teacher-students interaction, collaborative learning, teacher-directed to the whole class, gives individual work, group work, pair work, and peer interaction is also present in the class. The percentages are shown in figure 1 where it is seen that 85% agree that these kinds of interactions are present in the classroom.

2. To what extent, classroom interaction is beneficial for the students in learning languages?

Interaction is beneficial for the students – presented in chart 2. According to the survey, students' opinions are as follows –

- a) Communicating in the classroom makes students capable to cope with their lack of language knowledge.
- b) Group and pair work help students to improve their learning.
- c) Group and pair work help students to clarify and negotiate their ideas to reach an agreement.
- d) Communicating with each other pushes students to produce appropriate language when they are working in pairs and groups.
- e) Group work is essential for learning the language.

- f) Interaction makes the students able to test their communicative success through exchanging information with the teachers or among the students themselves.
- g) Communication in the classroom contributes to language development by providing target language practice with opportunities through designing activities that make learners use the target language.
- h) Students can practice their language in the classroom to improve their language.
- i) Interaction with each other allows students to receive feedback by correcting each other.
- j) Communicative class is better for improving language

3. What are the challenges teachers and students face in case of classroom interaction?

Students and teachers face many challenges in case of interaction. I saw some students were not communicating with another teacher. They just kept quiet. They are just afraid of being humiliated in front of the whole class; even if they did not interact in their group work, pair work. Students agree with the following challenges on the survey –

- Students with communication disorders often struggle to communicate in classroom settings
- Students often shut down and isolate themselves out of fear or embarrassment
- Students often shut down and isolate themselves because few students receive higher level of attention from teachers
- Students who do not want to connect on a personal level with their teachers often avoid communicating with them.
- Personality differences between teachers and students lead to frustration and lack of communication.

- Teachers sometimes fail to create engaging lessons and struggle to connect to their students on a one-to-one basis
- High competition and intense academic pressure discourage students from group work, pair work or collaborative learning
- Teachers also gave their opinion on this issue. They said “Sometimes some of the students become reluctant and unwilling to interact.”

4. What are the possible solutions to solve these challenges?

Students and teachers suggested the following solution to the challenges –

- Enabling students to interact on an individual or private basis with the teacher during the lesson increases the potential for productive interaction
- The self-reading method will provide the students with the responsibility to participate fully in the lesson process
- Teachers should build engagement in the classroom lessons or topics should be interesting
- Every student should be equal to the teacher
- Teachers should keep calm
- Teachers should praise students’ achievement

According to the teacher, “The challenge can be dealt with appropriate handling of the issues which make them indifferent towards classroom interaction”.

7. Conclusion

This paper deals with two segments: these are conclusions and limitations. This study investigated the role of interaction in the English language classroom and its contributions to learning and teaching the English language. Mixed-method research was conducted for a better understanding of its importance. Four types of tools- students’ questionnaires, teachers’ interview questions,

classroom observation and focus group discussion (FGD) were used to get a clear result from this study. This study shows the relationships between teachers and students in the classroom and how they are maintained while teaching and learning English language.

The present study emphasises more collaborative practices in the classroom to learn and teach English effectively. This study shows the challenges teachers and students face while cooperating and also suggest possible solutions to these challenges. While conducting this study, the researcher had to face some obstacles which are limitations. Getting appropriate participants for the data collection was quite challenging and obstructive. As this study was based on private universities, challenges in terms of getting access to the students and teachers were faced by the researcher.

8. Future Research

This study is focused on tertiary-level students and teachers in Dhaka. 50 students and 3 teachers participated in this study, and FGD and classroom observation also took place. In future research, the sample size can be increased to get a better and more focused view. The setting of this research can be shifted to other cities. In this research study, the researcher explored types of interaction, their benefits, challenges of interaction and possible suggestions to solve these challenges so other areas like classroom interaction through digital technologies could be explored in future.

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