

---

This is the **published version** of the bachelor thesis:

Santiago i Ribas, Marta; Evnitskaya, Natalia, tut. The effects of teacher talk on students' oral productions. 2010.

---

This version is available at <https://ddd.uab.cat/record/67663>

under the terms of the  license

**FINAL MASTER  
DISSERTATION**

**THE EFFECTS OF TEACHER TALK ON  
STUDENTS' ORAL PRODUCTIONS**



**Marta Santiago i Ribas**

TED Masters Degree

UAB, 2010

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank all the students who generously gave me their time, energy and feedback.

My most sincere gratitude to my mentors for their commitment, patience and experience.

I would also like to thank my tutor, Natalia Evnitskaya, for her valuable comments and suggestions. Thank you for your time and kindness.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my family, especially Jorge, for their unconditional support and tenderness.

And last but not least, a big thank you for all my classmates, who made things much easier throughout the whole course. Rosa and Laura, thanks for always being there, no matter what.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

ABSTRACT + KEYWORDS	3
1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. GENERAL CONTEXT	5
<i>The school</i>	5
<i>The class</i>	6
<i>The activity</i>	6
3. GLOBAL OBJECTIVES	7
4. METHODOLOGY	8
5. EMPIRICAL STUDY	10
5.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	10
5.1.1 Classroom Interaction Patterns	10
5.1.2 Teacher talk	11
5.1.2.1 Questions	12
5.1.2.2 Feedback	13
5.1.3 Students talk	14
5.2 ANALYSIS	16
6. OVERALL REFLECTION	23
7. CONCLUSIONS	31
8. REFERENCES	34
9. ANNEXES	34
9.1 Transcript	34
9.2 Transcription conventions	39
9.3. Activity file	40
9.4 Feelings Record Card	41
9.5 Journal	41
9.6 Teaching materials	42

## **ABSTRACT**

The present study is a brief personal enquiry into the teaching and learning of EFL in the classroom with an orientation to action and personal professional development. It focuses on teacher talk, making special emphasis on questions, as well as on students' resulting oral productions. The research contains samples of empirical data, which include their interpretations in the light of relevant research literature, and a more personal overall reflection of the teaching practice. Both the analysis and the reflections derive to a large extent from the self-observation paper 1 (SO1) and the Practicum portfolio (PP) developed within the TED Masters Degree practicum stages.

## **KEYWORDS**

Classroom interaction patterns, conversation analysis (CA), students' oral skills, teachers talk, content-based (CLIL), questions, feedback, turn-allocation behaviour.

## **RESUM**

L'objectiu d'aquest estudi és elaborar una petita reflexió personal sobre la manera d'ensenyar i aprendre l'anglès a les aules, amb la finalitat principal d'assolir una millora d'aptituds pedagògiques i un major desenvolupament professional. Per fer-ho, s'analitza el discurs docent, fent especial èmfasi en les preguntes, i la producció oral dels alumnes que en deriva. L'estudi inclou dades empíriques interpretades segons la literatura corresponent i una reflexió més personal sobre la pròpia pràctica docent. Bona part de l'anàlisi i les reflexions s'han extret del *Self-observation Paper 1* (SO1) i el *Practicum Portfolio (PP)* elaborats al final dels dos períodes de pràctiques del màster de formació de professorat de secundària.

## **PARAULES CLAU**

Models d'interacció a l'aula, anàlisi del discurs, competència oral dels alumnes, discurs docent, aprenentatge de continguts (AICLE), preguntes, reacció-resposta, torns de paraula.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

After listening to many English teachers from different schools, there is a general feeling of frustration due to students' low rate of participation in classroom interactions. In fact, there is always the same complaint: *"our students know very little and make no effort to speak English."* This statement is obviously very hard on students and apparently frees teachers of any kind of responsibility. However, do teachers play any role in creating a suitable environment for interaction and learning where students can feel relaxed and self-confident?

There is a tendency for teachers to control the patterns of classroom communication by the ways in which they use language. Equally, some pieces of evidence show that teacher's questions take up a very high percentage of teacher talk. Therefore, it can be deduced that teacher talk, especially questions, conditions the discourse patterns which are possible in classroom interactions.

This research project aims to highlight the most relevant findings related to teacher talk gathered while leading an EFL class carried out during the practicum sessions of the TED Masters Degree. More specifically, the study focuses on teachers' questions to further analyse the way they influence the quality and the quantity of students' contributions to the classroom talk.

Such a detailed analysis should also provide a valuable insight into one's own teaching practice and, consequently, lead to a reflection about possible actions to be taken towards improvement and professional development as a teacher. That is the reason why the present study not only includes empirical data but also a more personal and subjective overall reflection on the process of professionalization undergone throughout the course.

To begin with, the present document provides a detailed explanation of the context and the global objectives of the study. In the second place, there is a brief outline of the methodology used to undertake the study, such as the data collection process, the analysis procedure, the interpretation and the type of approach.

Afterward, empirical data is presented by means of a detailed analysis supported by documents made available in the annex and relevant references to research literature. It should be mentioned that the data is partially derived from a self-observation study (SO1) carried out at the end of the first 2-week practicum period in the school. Next, it includes a personal reflection about the teaching practice experienced during the practicum stages, which is mainly taken from the Practicum Portfolio (PP) written at the end of the second practicum stage. The research concludes with a summary of the major findings derived from the analysis and suggests areas for future professional improvement.

## 2. GENERAL CONTEXT

Since all communication occurs in a specific context, it is important to describe the background where the action takes place. The present analysis is based on data collected in a high-school, where a class group carries out a content-based activity. Hereunder, there is a brief description of the whole context to better illustrate the general situation:

- **The school**

The study has been developed in a state high-school in Collserola, situated on the top of a hill near downtown. According to the teachers, very few things have changed since the facilities were first inaugurated in the 70s. It is a relatively small two-floor construction with capacity for 450 students and about 55 teachers, other school staff aside.

The high-school offers 3 streams per group of age in *ESO* and just a couple for each group of *Batxillerat*. There is a very low rate of immigration and the common language used in the school is Catalan. Although they do not have a strictly speaking CLIL project going on, this year they are teaching several parts of the syllabus in English, such as some lessons of social sciences in 1<sup>st</sup> of *ESO* and economics in 2<sup>nd</sup> of *Batxillerat*.

The classrooms are pretty small, so using different layouts or organising activities that involve movement tends to be quite difficult. Since there is an evident lack of resources, it is also complicated to count on technical equipment at any time. Some of the classrooms, nevertheless, have large screen displays and a projector.

- **The class**

The analysis is based on a teacher-fronted lesson carried out in a 4th of *ESO* English class. This class is made up of 28 students, but during the activity there were also 4 student-teachers plus the mentor observing. Regarding the language level, there is a considerable variation in students' abilities in English, henceforth termed L2. Nonetheless, the listening-comprehension skills are quite high and the average level can be set on COE A2.

- **The activity**

In the analysed vignette students participate in a content-based activity called *Global Issues*. This activity was designed to check students' listening-comprehension skills as well as to stimulate their speaking skills in public. Furthermore, it also aimed to encourage their reflective thinking with the purpose of raising students' awareness of the effects of human action on the environment. The lesson was based on a PowerPoint presentation that displayed two types of images: first, nice spots to go on holidays and then shocking pictures about environmental impacts. After 20 minutes talk about a long series of pictures students watched a 6 minutes video about a girl making a speech at the Environment World Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Finally, they had to work in pairs in order to answer 10 questions about the video.

The analysis is based on a 3 minutes excerpt which belongs to the first part of the activity, where still nice pictures are on display. The first slide shows a skyline of Paris and the second one the Golden Temple in Kyoto, Japan. The teacher asks some questions for students to describe the pictures and express their feelings about them.

It should be highlighted that the activity was an excuse to first check students' level of English, for it was the first time for the teacher to face them. Moreover, she was quite worried about the success of the activity since the mentor had told her the students rarely participated in classroom oral activities.

Furthermore, recycling did not seem to be the most appealing topic for 15-year-olds who were just back from their morning break at 11:30 a.m. In addition, it should be noted that these students were mainly used to working on grammar-based activities from their English course book.

All these factors may have presumably conditioned some of the interactions, but this possibility will be discussed in more detail below.

### **3. GLOBAL OBJECTIVES**

Since no data analysis starts without expectations of what may or will be found let me briefly state what these are: personal experience has proved that teachers do most of the talking during the class; they normally control the topic of discussion, who may participate and when. Consequently, students' chances to speak are limited and depend largely on teacher's turn-allocation behaviour, types of questions and feedback.

This is a double purpose research. On the one hand, it wants to confirm or disprove empirically the above-mentioned premises and explore students' reactions and output. Therefore, the study will try to answer the following question:

**How this particular type of teacher talk, especially questions, influences the quality and quantity of students' contributions to the classroom talk?**

On the other hand, there is a more practical purpose involved. Since the data of the study has been taken from a real teaching performance, the second objective is to find strategies to improve this teacher's future professional development by answering the following question:

**What should or should not teachers say/do in a classroom in order to encourage students produce longer stretches of speech in the L2?**

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

According to Tsui (1995), a classroom is a place where various elements interact. Teachers are normally the ones to establish the patterns of such interaction; hence students are normally tied to their convenience. It is obvious that teachers' behaviour exert great influence on students' chances to express themselves and participate in oral exchanges, especially during L2 classes.

Many interesting issues related to students' communicative competence arise from such a premise. In contrast to Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance and his dismissal of actual speech as a degraded form of idealized competence, Conversation Analysis (CA) studies naturally-occurring talk on the assumption that spoken interaction is a highly and orderly organised phenomenon that should be treated as an object of analysis in its own right. Thus, CA is seen as a major approach for analysing real language use.

In the same line, many scholars focus their research efforts on proving that, as with conversation, there is also order at all points in L2 classroom interaction. Seedhouse (2004) suggests that the reflexive relationship between pedagogy and interaction and hence how learning takes place through interaction can be explained by means of CA. According to this author, "any utterance is a document on many levels and L2 classroom interaction in particular operates on a number of levels simultaneously" (Seedhouse 2004, as quoted by Seedhouse, 2005, p. 13-14).

He also defines each utterance as a display of the learner's analysis of the prior utterance of an interactant. As a result, Seedhouse understands the utterance as a response that performs a social action and which positions the learner in a social system, besides being a way of displaying an understanding of the current context and also renewing it. Therefore, if we wish to fully understand the processes of cognition in relation to instructed L2 acquisition, it is vital to understand how L2 classroom interaction is organised.

Taking all the previously mentioned statements into account, the present research wants to analyse a classroom-based interaction using primarily an ethnographic approach.

However, since the data to be analysed has been extracted from a real performance, the study will also offer a more personal view of the facts with the aim to achieve professional development.

There is only one type of data that has been selected for the present study according to several requirements. For example, it was very important that it clearly showed a teacher-fronted lesson. The teacher, nevertheless, had to be implementing an activity aimed to develop students' oral skills. Therefore, students talking needed to be shown, as well.

The student-teacher responsible for the present research decided to record her first teaching experiences in a secondary school. It is important for teachers to be aware of their innate habits at the moment of teaching, since these are things you do not plan or study, they just come out. It does not matter how much you know, but how many of the things you say can turn into students' potential learning material. In other words, it is crucial for a teacher to be able to communicate with students plainly and effectively and this student-teacher was interested in knowing what her starting point as a teacher was like. Afterwards, she studied the recordings to detect need-to-be-improved areas. Once she realised the influence that the teacher talk exerts on students' participation, she defined the already mentioned requirements to choose the excerpt to be analysed. She used video editing software to cut the 3 minutes sequence which serves as a cornerstone of the present research.

Next, she transcribed the discourse and started to analyse it by using a qualitative discourse analysis procedure, mainly. However, some counting and categorization concerning types of questions and turn-taking behaviour were also developed at some stages.

It should be mentioned that the student-teacher has always counted on her peer-student teachers', her mentors' and students' feedback in order to improve the validity and reliability of the evaluation of findings.

Finally, the research wants to offer a narrative account of the first performance of an inexperienced teacher and her own reflections for future improvement.

## 5. EMPIRICAL STUDY

### 5.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Before presenting the analysis of the selected excerpt, it may be useful to mention several concepts and ideas about classroom interaction patterns, teacher talk (making special emphasis on questions and feedback) and students talk.

#### 5.1.1 Classroom Interaction Patterns

According to Johnson (1995), in L2 classrooms, the language is both the medium through which teachers teach and students demonstrate what they have learned. Acquiring that language is the final goal of L2 education and she follows:

if teachers understand how the dynamics of classroom communication influence L2 students' perceptions of and participation in classroom activities, they may be better able to monitor and adjust the patterns of classroom communication in order to create an environment that is conducive to both classroom learning and L2 acquisition (Johnson, 1995, p. 3).

Gaies (1980), as quoted by Tsui (1995), describes the classroom as the 'crucible' in which elements interact. Both teachers and students have certain expectations about how business should be conducted in the classroom. Allwright and Bailey (1991), as quoted by Tsui (1995), point out that students have their own particular needs and hopes, and that they attend classes with their own load of experiences of life and learning, which presumably affect their interactions. According to Tsui (1995), teachers also have certain ideas about how a lesson should proceed. Both sides' expectations constantly interact with each other and it is the balance between them that determines the progress of the lesson and the kinds of available learning opportunities.

There is a tendency to judge lessons as good or bad ones on the basis of whether they turn out the way they were planned and whether the expected outcome is achieved (Tsui, 1995). This judgment is not that easy, nevertheless, since there are many factors that can affect classroom interaction.

Therefore, to achieve a successful interaction, all the participants involved in the exchange should unite their efforts in a way the interaction was managed by everyone taking part in it and not just by the teacher (Allwright and Bailey, 1991, as quoted by Johnson, 1995).

The underlying structure of classroom lessons generally consists of a sequence of 3 acts called IRE or IRF: Initiation – Response – Evaluation/Feedback, respectively (Johnson, 1995). This feedback is a very important element of Classroom Interaction (CI), since students need to know whether they have correctly understood the teacher and have provided the appropriate answer.

### 5.1.2 Teacher talk

In the framework of classroom talk, Johnson (1995) states that there is a tendency for teachers to control the patterns of communication. This control comes from their special status of teachers and from the way they use language. That means they normally decide how, when, where and with whom language is to be used in the classroom. It is now generally recognised that such teachers' control behaviour influence the extent to which students use L2 during the lessons. Nonetheless, it is important to bear in mind that these differences are sometimes part of teachers' own pedagogical purposes.

For example, one of such mechanisms of control is the way teachers allocate speaking turns to students by either specifying who is to take it or by throwing it open to the whole class. These kinds of turn-allocations have been referred as 'personal solicit', if it is done by nominating or using gestures; and 'general solicit', when it is done by simply asking questions and looking round the class (Allwright and Bailey, 1991, as quoted by Tsui, 1995). Sometimes teachers unconsciously give the floor to the same students repeatedly. However, they also have specific motivations for allocating turns.

For instances, besides checking students' knowledge, solicits have other functions like being classroom management devices, strategies to structure a lesson, ways to introduce a topic or tools to move the lesson forward. Tsui (1995) describes a common pattern found in classrooms, which is the one where the teacher starts off with a general solicit but, when no student volunteers to take the turn, he resorts to a personal solicit to sustain the interaction.

Studies in L1 classrooms have shown that the language used by the teacher affects the language produced by the learners, the interaction generated and hence the kind of learning that takes place. In a study that compares children's language at home and at school, Wells (1986) found that, in school, children spoke with adults much less than what they did at home. He also found that children got fewer speaking turns and asked fewer questions.

The reason might be that teachers usually do most of the talking in the classroom, determine the topic of talk and initiate most of the questions and requests.

As a result, students tend to be reduced to a very passive role of answering questions and carrying out the teachers' instructions. It was also found that, "while parents often incorporated meanings offered in children's utterances, teachers tended to develop meanings that they themselves had introduced into the conversation" (Wells 1986, as quoted by Tsui 1995 p. 7).

#### 5.1.2.1 Questions

Questions are another teachers' mechanism of control. Some of the evidence shows that teacher questions take up a very high percentage of teacher talk. Tsui (1995) explains how "studies on ESL classrooms have focused on the effect of teacher questions on learners' productions of the target language and on the types of learner response." (p. 14)

It appears that depending on the types of questions, teachers can control more or less the content of the lesson. MacLure and French (1980), as quoted by Johnson (1995) defined two interactive strategies commonly used by teachers to indicate the students the answers they wanted. The strategies are the following:

*'preformulation'*, when teacher's question serves to orient the students to the context of the question and provide some indication for how it should be answered; and *reformulation*, which involves rephrasing the question so that it is less complex and more specific" (p. 22).

Tsui (1995) agrees on the fact that the type of question the teacher asks affects the kind of response the student produces. She distinguishes different kinds of questions depending on the type of information requested, the kind of response elicited, and the nature of the interaction generated.

- **Factual vs. Reasoning questions:** questions that begin with ‘what’, ‘when’, ‘who’, and ‘where’ are considered ‘factual questions’, because they apparently ask for specific facts or data, while those that begin with ‘how’ and ‘why’ are classified as ‘reasoning questions’, because they apparently require some reasoning from students (Barnes 1969, as quoted by Tsui, 1995).
- **Open vs. Closed questions:** a ‘closed’ question can have only one acceptable answer whereas an ‘open’ question has a range of acceptable answers. Therefore a ‘closed’ question is apparently more restrictive in terms of students’ language output (Barnes 1969, as quoted by Tsui 1995).
- **Display vs. Referential questions:** some scholars refer to knowledge-checking questions as ‘display questions’ and those to which the teacher does not have the answer as ‘referential questions’. “This distinction is very important given the emphasis on meaningful communication in the language classroom” (Long and Sato, 1983, as quoted by Tsui, 1995, p. 27). Besides ‘display questions’ “generate interactions that are typical of didactic discourse, whereas ‘referential questions’ generate interactions typical of social communication” (Tsui, 1995, p. 28).

According to Tsui (1995):

teachers who often ask ‘display questions’ and/or disguise them as ‘referential questions’ are likely to encourage students to regurgitate facts or pre-formulated language items, and discourage students from trying to communicate their own ideas in the target language. Teachers who often ask ‘closed questions’ are likely to restrict students output. Those who use what appear to be ‘open questions’ and yet who are not prepared to accept any other answers except those they have in mind will encourage students to guess what they want as an answer rather than what is appropriate. (p. 30)

#### 5.1.2.2 Feedback

Besides questions, another very important aspect of teacher talk is providing feedback to student responses. When this feedback is absent, students know that there must be something wrong or unsatisfactory with their answer (Tsui, 1995).

The kind of feedback that a teacher provides affects student learning as well. Tsui (1995) states that teacher's feedback, apart from evaluating and providing information related to students' responses, has many other functions. For instances, it can also be used to acknowledge information or provide personal comments on students' responses.

Therefore, it is very important for teachers to define what an error is, whether it has to be corrected on the spot, who has to do the correction and, finally, what type of correction is suitable for learning purposes. Studies in error treatment have pointed out that the best thing the teacher can do is to ignore the error, in circumstances where students do not seem to have reached a stage in interlanguage development where they will benefit from the corrective feedback provided by the teacher (Allwright and Bailey, 1991, as quoted by Tsui 1995).

### 5.1.3 Students talk

We have been emphasizing the importance of students involvement in the classroom learning. "Just as communicative competence is considered to be essential for L2 learners to participate in the target language culture (Canale & Swain 1980; Hymes 1974), classroom communicative competence is essential for L2 students to participate and learn from their L2 classroom experiences" (Johnson, 1995, p. 6). The British researcher Douglas Barnes (1976) disagrees with the notion that students are passive receivers of knowledge and challenges educators to examine classroom communication, including the role students play as active participants in the creation of knowledge (Barnes, 1976, as quoted by Johnson, 1995).

As we have already mentioned, whether students are actively involved in classroom interaction is largely determined by the teacher's turn-allocation behaviour. Students can either initiate turns voluntarily or take turns that are solicited by the teacher.

Some shy students, though, can also take 'private turns' by making comments in a low voice for themselves (Allwright, 1980, as quoted by Tsui, 1995). If these private turns go unnoticed, shy students can feel neglected and demotivated to participate in further occasions. Therefore, teachers' sensitivity towards shy students' turn-taking behaviour is very important as well.

Still, studies have shown that student talk accounts for an average of less than 30 per cent of talk in teacher-fronted classrooms. If children are known to be persistent questioners, what is wrong in L2 classes? According to Tsui (1995), these are some common factors that tend to contribute to students' reticence to participate:

- **Low English proficiency:** it is not so much that students do not know the answer but that they do not know how to express it in English.
- **L2 classroom anxiety:** In L2 classrooms students have to master the target language and perform in that language at the same time. Two types of anxiety have been described as 'trait anxiety', understood as a permanent characteristic of the subject's personality, and 'state anxiety', which is specific to a situation.

Another distinction is made between 'facilitating anxiety' and 'debilitating anxiety' (Kleinmann 1977, Scovel 1978, as quoted by Tsui, 1995). Whereas the former refers to the kind of anxiety that helps a person to try harder and consequently perform better, the latter refers to the kind of anxiety that hinders good performance.

- **Students' pressure:** the pressure to give the right answer and the fear of making mistakes and being laughed at by their peers.
- **Teachers' incomprehensible input:** teachers sometimes do not give clear instructions or explanations and students are too shy to ask for clarification.
- **Teachers' intolerance of silence:** this intolerance makes them ask one question after another without giving students much time to come up with an answer. It can be caused by the pressure to go through the curriculum, the fear of students getting too noisy or the belief that effective teaching is imparting knowledge all the time.
- **Teachers' subconscious choice to allocate speaking turns:** teachers tend to allocate turns to the brightest students. Consequently, weaker students can feel ignored, their confidence can be undermined and they can become even more reluctant to participate.
- **Students' cultural background:** some competent students may be reluctant to participate because they do not want to stand out from the rest, especially oriental cultures which emphasise modesty.

Teachers can solve some of these anxiety or fear problems by creating a relaxing atmosphere, in which students feel comfortable to try out the target language and make mistakes. According to Tsui (1995) this can be achieved by means of group work. Nevertheless, a new set of different problems appear during group work such as excessive code switching, unbalanced amount of talk among participants, off-task periods, etc. However, since there are many, they would require another whole research project with a different focus.

## 5.2 ANALYSIS

A good way to illustrate the ways in which teachers use language to control the patterns of communication in L2 classes is by using transcripts of language lessons (Johnson, 1995). In order to realise to what extent teacher questions can affect student's productions, I have undertaken a detailed analysis of the transcript<sup>1</sup> which is divided into the following sections:

- a) Balance between teacher and students talk
- b) Turn-allocation behaviour and control of the patterns of communication
- c) Frequency and types of teacher questions
- d) Types of feedback and students' productions

### a) Balance between teacher and students talk

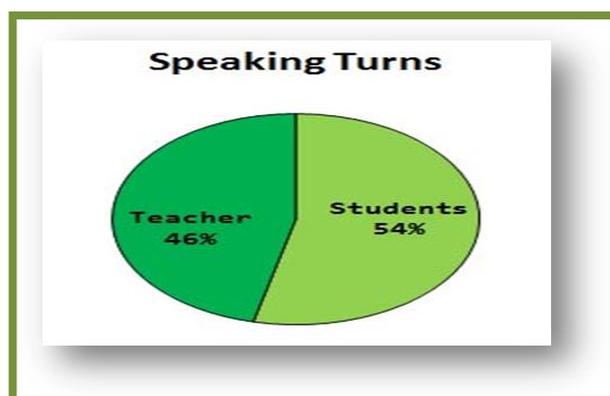


Figure 1: Speaking turns distribution

Looking at the speaking turns distribution (Fig. 1), it could be easily assumed that there is a relative balance between students' and teacher talk. From a total of 80 turns, students take 43 whereas the teacher takes the other 37.

<sup>1</sup> See annex 9.1

However, it is important to note that many of the turns that students take are simply to nod or raise their hands. Besides, surrounding talk and unclear or unintelligible speech are also included in students' turn recount. In the same way, teacher's acts of speech account for over a 64% of the total, which means that she tends to produce longer and more complex stretches of speech than students. Therefore, the assumption above needs to be changed.

Although students' rate of participation is quite high (taking into account teacher's initial expectations), it is evident that teacher and students have unequal rights to the floor, being mainly the teacher the one to hold it. As is it was already discussed in the previous section, teachers do most of the talking in the classroom and students are reduced to a quite limited role of answering questions and carrying out teachers' instructions (Tsui, 1995).

### **b) Turn-allocation behaviour and control of the patterns of communication**

The dominant underlying pattern of interaction is that of the teacher question, student response and teacher feedback, which is typical of classroom exchanges (Tsui, 1995). However, we have already seen that the teacher individually takes up more and much longer turns than students, so this is the first clear evidence of control of the patterns of communication.

Another common pattern of control found in classrooms is the teacher's turn-allocation behaviour. According to Tsui (1995), teachers tend to start off with a general solicit and, when no student volunteers, then resort to a personal solicit, also called nomination, to avoid conversation breakdowns. Students can also take self-solicited or private turns depending on their interest on the topic or on the teacher's degree of control of the classroom interaction patterns.



**Figure 2: Turn-allocation & Turn-taking Behaviour**

In this particular case (see fig.2), the teacher allocates only a few turns when general solicits remain unanswered for too long, obviously according to her particular perception of time. There is an example in **turn 17**, when answering takes Pol 3.5 seconds.

- |     |     |   |   |
|-----|-----|---|---|
| 17. | POL | (3.5) [( )  | ((Smiling nervously))                   |
| 18. | T   | [What can you do in a big city, In <u>any</u> big city, not <sup>↑</sup> only Paris | ((Pau turning his back to look at him)) |
| 19. | POL | ( ) (1.2) [Vi:::sit   |   |

This intolerance of silence makes the teacher ask one question after another without giving the student much time to think, as we can see in **turn 18**.

However, as figure 2 clearly illustrates, the teacher makes general solicits most of the time, which apparently encourage students to take some self-selected turns. There are some examples in **turns 9, 25, 37 and 54**.

- |     |      |   |                        |
|-----|------|---|------------------------|
| 24. | T    | Any (.) body has been to <sup>↑</sup> Paris here? | ((Fronting the class)) |
| 25. | ANNA |   | ((Rising hand))        |
| 26. | T    | Anna (.) =  |                        |

- |     |     |  |                     |
|-----|-----|--|---------------------|
| 36. | T   | =Maybe you can go there again (.) when=<br>=you are <sup>↑</sup> older, right? (.) > Who else=<br>=has been to Paris?  |                     |
| 37. | ROC |  | ((Rising hand))     |
| 38. | T   | For example the <sup>↑</sup> guy (.) Roc (.) Where =<br>=did you go? What's the thing you=<br>=remember the most, or the thing that=<br>=liked - That you liked the <sup>↓</sup> most. | ((Pointing at Roc)) |

It is interesting to note that there are some students taking 'private turns' as well (Allwright, 1980). For instances in **turn 56** Pau whispers '*very beautiful*' and the teacher praises his contribution by acknowledging his words and giving him positive feedback in **turn 57**. All this is aimed to foster Pau's further public participation in the class.

55.	T	There are tree:::s	((Pointing at the trees))
56.	PAU	°°Very beautiful°°	
57.	T	Very↑beautiful trees (.) Very well Pau! What else,	((Looking at Pau))

**c) Frequency and types of teacher questions**

In less than 3 minutes the teacher asks more than 25 questions to the students. It is important to clarify that questions are not only canonical direct interrogative acts like ‘*Did you like it?*’, in **turn 28**, but also indirect acts whose surface form can be any type of statement like ‘*A normal house*’, in **turn 59**.

28.	T	=Did you like it?
29.	ANNA	A lot.

58.	CLASS	A typical house	
59.	T	Do you think this is a↑house? (.) A↑= =normal house?	((T staring with surprise))
60.	CLASS	No:: [ no::	((Surrounding noise))

Therefore, this data confirms what Tsui and Johnson point out about questions which, in fact, take up a very high percentage of this particular teacher’s talk.

Figure 3 shows the type of questions asked in terms of the distinctions between closed, open, display, referential, factual and reasoning explained earlier.

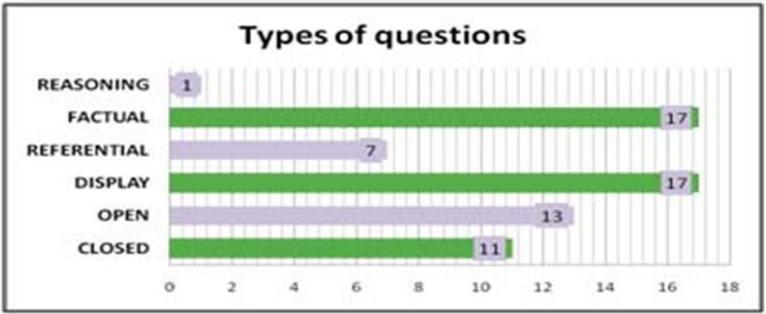


Figure 3: Types of questions

There is an evident predominance of factual display questions. In contrast, only 7 out of the 25 are referential, and reasoning questions are almost inexistent. Finally, we can see there is a balance between open and closed questions.

According to Tsui, display questions prevent students from trying to express their own ideas and are likely to encourage them to repeat facts or pre-formulated language items. For example, in **turn 45** the teacher asks what the country of the picture may be and later, again, asks about the city. These questions force students to give one-single-word answers randomly, until the expected 'right' one comes up.

- |     |       |   |                            |
|-----|-------|---|----------------------------|
| 45. | T     | [Ok, Asia for sure, but (.) what country=<br>=do you think this is,     | ((Gesturing to put order)) |
| 46. | CLASS | =Japan.   |                            |
| 47. | T     | =Ok, this is <sup>↑</sup> Japan (.) What <sup>↑</sup> about the<br>city |                            |

In the same way, closed questions like the one in **turn 32** narrow down significantly students' chances for replying.

- |     |      |                                     |
|-----|------|-------------------------------------|
| 32. | T    | ↓ Ok, did you go with your parents? |
| 33. | ANNA | ◦Yeah◦                              |

Tsui (1995) adds that "those teachers who use what appear to be 'open questions' and yet who are not prepared to accept any other answers except those they have in mind will encourage students to guess what they want as an answer rather than what is appropriate" (p. 30). There is a clear example in **turn 59** where the teacher says: '*Do you think this is a house? A normal house?*' Although the sentence is grammatically correct and '*a house*' can be understood as a synonym of 'building', teacher's feedback implies there is something inadequate in that student's response. In other words, this statement could be treated as negative feedback; since the reply the student gives in **turn 58** ('a typical house') is not the answer the teacher is expecting.

- |     |       |  |                             |
|-----|-------|--|-----------------------------|
| 58. | CLASS | A typical house  |                             |
| 59. | T     | Do you think this is a <sup>↑</sup> house? (.) A=<br>=normal <sup>↑</sup> house? | ((T staring with surprise)) |
| 60. | CLASS | No:: [ no::  | ((Surrounding noise))       |

On the other hand, referential questions, like the one in **turn 30** where the teacher asks Anna the reason why she likes Paris, give the students the chance to express their feelings and, consequently, generate much longer and complete sentence stretches, like the one in **turn 31**.

30.	T	A ↓lot (.) Why?	
	ANNA	Because it's so:: romantic, and the Tour Eiffel it's so:: (.) I don't know (.) Hmm (.)	
31.		when I was little I ever↑dreamed to go to Paris, °°when I was,°°	((Smiling and gesturing a lot))

As it was already said before, MacLure and French (1980) defined 'preformulation' as the way teacher's questions serve to indicate the student how the question should be answered (Johnson, 1995). There is a clear example in **turn 20** where the teacher, after seeing the student is stuck and unable to say anything, disguises the open question in **turn 18** into a very simple low-demanding statement. Consequently, student's chances to give a wide reply are narrowed down significantly and he merely has to say: 'museums', in **turn 21**. The teacher is, in a way, guiding the student towards the word she is expecting to hear.

18.	T	[What can you do in a big city, In <u>any</u> big city, not only↑ Paris	((Pau turning his back to look at him))
19.	POL	( ) (1.2) [Vi:::sit	
20.	T	[There are a lot ↑of ,	
21.	POL	°°Museums°°	

#### d) Types of feedback and students' productions

In this particular case, feedback is mostly used to acknowledge student responses using repetition or reformulation, as we can see for instances in **turns 3,7,13 and 30**.

06.	PAU	Paris	
07.	T	↓ Paris very↓ well This is a different type of holidays(.) right? (1.5) What can we do in a big↓ city	((Looking at the whole class))

According to Tsui (1995), teachers can also use feedback as a way of giving the appropriate answer without having to correct a mistake explicitly. For example, in **turn 73** Grau is describing the Japanese temple and says: *'It has two (wood wooden) plants'*; the teacher replies in **turn 74** by saying: *'ok, there are two floors'*, to what the student replies: *'two floors, sí.'*

72.	GRAU	It has to °°(wood (.) wooden)°° plants,	((Hesitating voice))
73.	T	Ok, there are two↑ floors,	((Gesturing to show what a floor is))
74.	GRAU	Two floors↑ sí (.) No sé::	

Sometimes inadequate feedback can also restrict students' output, and therefore affect their learning (Tsui, 1995). For example, feedback given in **turn 34** makes Anna notice there is something wrong or unsatisfactory with her answer and forces her to try to provide another response which she is not able to finish. Nevertheless, giving feedback to students is vital to make them feel involved in the classroom interaction, as well as to enhance their learning process.

32.	T	↓ Ok, did you go with your parents?	
33.	ANNA	°Yeah°	
34.	T	So it's not - it was not that romantic [maybe you can go=	((Everybody smiling))
35.	ANNA	[Yeah I kno::w I kno::w but, >	((Speechless and gesturing))

On this basis, it can be concluded that a tight control of the patterns of communication in the classroom prevents students from producing long stretches of speech. Moreover, the types of questions, which clearly take up a high percentage of the classroom talk, influence the chances students get to express themselves widely. Nevertheless, when the topic and the materials used are interesting, students' participation tends to increase. In the same way, teachers' expectations about students' answers condition the feedback they give. Therefore, creating a comfortable and relaxed environment where everybody is allowed to talk is crucial to encourage quality communicative exchanges in the L2. However, it is important to bear in mind that the more a teacher talks the less opportunity there is for the learners. Taking this into account, a teacher should allow enough interactional space and silence, at some stages, for students to think, process their answer and finally speak.

## 6. OVERALL REFLECTION

This is a special section in the dissertation where I want to leave formalism aside and give more emphasis to emotions. It is important for a teacher to be able to analyse his/her own performances from many different angles. The academic approach is useful to find more functional tools and solutions oriented to improve the development of pedagogical skills. However, teaching not only involves concepts and ideas. It is something that goes beyond books or tasks; it is something that involves feelings. Since you are working with real human beings, teacher's attitude, manners and emotions play an important role within the classroom context. In order to implement any kind of activity successfully, a teacher needs a dose of intuition and empathy, just like an actor who tries to attract the audience's attention and tries his best to please it.

This research is based on my own experience as a student-teacher, so that is precisely the reason why I would like to shorten up distances and analyse my teaching practise using a more personal approach.

Since Global Issues is the cornerstone of the present research I would like to start by talking about the activity and the feelings I had after its implementation. Later on I would like to illustrate the sensations I had during the whole practicum sessions by describing my most valuable experiences, my greatest challenges and some of the things I learned. Since feelings are spontaneous and unordered, there is not a logical order in my explanations either. This section is more like a ragbag of memories and valuable learning experiences deliciously blended with a pinch of emotions, thoughts and feelings.

Then, regarding Global Issues, I was quite happy with the result of the activity in the beginning. As previously said, good lessons tend to be the ones which turn out the way they were planned and which provide the expected outcome. In this particular case, after analysing students' reactions at the end of the class, it could be easily said the activity was a success. Students participated, they apparently enjoyed the activity and they even applauded in the end. However, this high level of motivation could be due to the different types of activities we did and the variety of materials we used, which are obviously far from what is ordinary for them in English classes.

Nonetheless, when I checked the recordings and analysed the classroom interaction patterns carefully as it was presented in the previous section, I realised that students produced very short stretches of speech. I deduced it might be due to the little interactional space I gave them and it was at that stage when I understood why I felt so exhausted after the class. To be honest, I already had the feeling to have spoken too much and, after the analysis, I guess I definitely did. Besides, it can also be confirmed by the fact that I had to skip the last part of the activity<sup>2</sup> due to the lack of time.

If I were to start again, I think I would conduct the activity in a very different way. Instead of making students describe the pictures, I would ask other types of questions such as their feelings towards the images, the memories they brought, etc. In any case, I would rather ask not so obvious things to allow them express their ideas by using their own words and imagination.

The truth is that if experiences could be lived twice, I am sure I would change many of the things I did during my practicum stage. It was a great privilege for me to have the opportunity to analyse the daily routine of a school from a student-teacher point of view. The fact of having no-real responsibilities and being able to attend the classes of such a variety of teachers, who are working with so many different levels, stimulated my reflective thinking enormously. I think there are just very few teachers who have been able to see their colleagues in action, because they are probably teaching at the same time. Yet, we have been able to see many different teaching methodologies, as well as a huge amount of children's reactions. In the beginning, not being able to participate actively in the lessons and spend the whole day shadowing the mentor became quite tiring and frustrating at some stages. However, now I see I learned a lot of things from just observing. I am very thankful for the opportunity I was given and I think it is worth sharing some of them with you.

For example, one of the most instructive moments of the practicum was when I observed the same mentor teach in 2nd Batxillerat and immediately afterwards in 1st of ESO. The contrast appeared extremely interesting to me. Whereas she used the same methodology with both groups, she performed very differently.

---

<sup>2</sup> See annex 9.6 and CD

She was serious but approachable, strict but caring. We could see students respected and enjoyed her lessons. In both groups she started by checking homework and reviewing what had been said on the previous class, but she used different words to do it.

She adapted her body language, her tone and intonation, the vocabulary, but, still, she kept the same classroom interaction patterns and managed to have students active and attentive until the end of the class. Moreover, not only she taught them content but also manners and study techniques. For example, she told the little ones how to sit properly and to raise their hands to speak. Regarding Batxillerat students, she showed them how to extract the key ideas in texts and reminded them to submit neat and quality assignments. From all that, I learned that teaching could be defined as a matter of adaptation and routine. In other words, teachers have to adapt their voice, body language, vocabulary, contents and rhythm to the group class they are working with. But at the same time, students should adapt themselves to each teacher's standards, rules and methodology.

Another interesting moment of the practicum was when I visited the economics class. Although the teacher was Catalan he had a pretty good level of English. In fact, he spoke in English most of the time, except when it was necessary to highlight some important points. He was really enthusiastic about what he was explaining, you could tell that by the way he gestured and the expression on his face. I also noticed that he tried to explain things as simply as possible. Also, he used the blackboard to draw lines and pictures about what he was saying. Students apparently followed him without having too much trouble. I was surprised at a couple of Batxillerat students, who I had seen very quiet in the English lessons, making contributions in English. I realised that they understood much more than what I thought, after having seen them in the English class. Therefore, I deduced that having interest in the topic, framing the conversation within a context and forgetting about grammar structures encouraged students to express themselves in English. That is something I would like to keep in mind when designing and implementing future lessons. Contextualisation of the subject and emphasis on the content rather than the form encourages students to speak and participate.

One of the greatest challenges appeared when I had to assess an oral exam in Batxillerat. I learned that having to evaluate students' oral productions is one of the hardest tasks a teacher has to do. It is very important to design a clear and concise checklist in order to be fair with the whole group of students.

Apart from grading students, I found out another major difficulty for teachers, which is adapting materials and tests. Since a wide range of levels coexist in the heterogeneous framework of a class, I realised it is crucial for a teacher to be sensible enough to notice such differences and needs. A teacher must be eager to work hard and never give up on any student. A teacher has to be the first one to believe in his/her students' possibilities in order to encourage them and nourish their self-esteem. As someone said once "a mind once stretched by a new idea never regains its original dimensions". In other words, no matter if your students cannot achieve the standards, as long as a single new idea or thought crosses their minds, it is worth the effort.

Having to stay several times in the afternoon made me aware of another important fact. Each class group has a particular soul. Students spend many hours together, especially the ones who stay during lunch time in the school. Little by little an invisible but noticeable aura of homogeneity binds up the group and shapes its identity. I also learned that teaching after lunch time is definitely not productive at all. Students are tired and distracted and the teacher needs to know how to adapt the activities to such particular circumstances.

Tandem-teaching proved to be a very instructing experience as well, although the first time I was pushed into it by one of the mentors. She had to monitor some students that had missed an exam the week before, so I and a couple of other student-teachers were left alone with a reading-comprehension exercise in the last minute. Two other peer student-teachers and I were literally thrown into the classroom without being able to plan anything in advance. Of course it would have been enough giving them the worksheet and making them do it on their own, but we felt we had a responsibility on them and we could not stay arms crossed. We tried to do our best but that was a clear example of what NOT to do in a class! I just wanted to get out of there. Tandem teaching is not an easy thing to do and it can be chaotic if you have not planned it carefully in advance. In spite of sorting things out, we were aware of the fact that we could have done it much better.

On the other hand, tandem teaching proved to be a very useful resource in other occasions. For example, we were told to explain the Passive Voice in Batxillerat. Since the three of us had enough time to plan it, together we designed a PowerPoint presentation and a couple of worksheets.

At the end of the explanation, we moved around the class answering students' doubts and questions. If I had been alone in the class that day, I am sure I would not have been able to cope with so many risen hands.

Another valuable lesson that I learned was the fact that, as a teacher, you cannot control everything. The thing is that we were asked to design a CLIL tandem-teaching activity for 1<sup>ST</sup> of *ESO*. In the beginning, I was so enthusiastic about it. We spent hours thinking about the best way to adapt the content for the children. We enjoyed a lot designing the materials but the performance did not meet our expectations. In other words, after so much work it was a real disappointment. Concerning tandem-teaching though, it was good to see that in this case, as we had had time to plan the activity, the three of us managed the speaking turns perfectly well. However, we did not succeed in guessing the level of the students. The contents were far too easy for the majority of them and that was a significant mistake in my opinion. In any case, I learned that you have to accept that some activities will be more successful than others, but the most important thing is to be able to take smart decisions on-the-spot and implement things according to the students you have in front of you. No matter the effort you put in doing something, the most important thing is to help students get something useful out of it.

During the second practicum stage we also visited two different schools from the same area. It was very useful to see a different reality from the one we had in our high-school. In the future we do not know where we will be assigned, so it is very important to be flexible. I could see that each school has its own style, working methodology, identity and idiosyncrasy. As a teacher you need to be ready to adapt yourself to anywhere you can go.

During the *credit de síntesi* and Saint George's day I learned that sharing extra time with students doing different things rather than ordinary class helps to create a more familiar and easy atmosphere. It was fantastic to share those days with them. Those types of activities allowed us to see a different facet of students and thanks to that we got to know them a little bit better. You can learn many things from students because they have surprising creative minds!

Designing a teaching unit is probably one of the most complicated tasks I have ever been assigned. At the same time, though, it has been a very instructive and demanding experience and I would also like to share it with you.

For example, I learned that before starting planning you need to define a clear approach and the methodology you want to use. Equally important is to be able to clearly describe teacher's goals and connect them with the expected students' outcome. This is a crucial exercise since the assessment criteria depends on it.

I can also draw some significant conclusions regarding the implementation of a teaching unit. For example, giving clear instructions to students is paramount to achieve the desired results. Students need to know exactly what they are being asked and how they will be assessed. Most importantly, students need to see the point in what they are doing. Meaningful learning is crucial to keep their motivation and interest activated. Also, if you combine such aspects with a little bit of emotion, challenge and entertainment it can be a perfect combination to achieve students' involvement in what you are doing. Just to give an example, I would like to post some of our students' comments about the activities we did during our practicum stages. It can be observed that students basically value the fact of learning and enjoying at the same time. These are two features which should walk hand in hand, but depending on the topic, I know it is sometimes difficult to achieve.

FEELINGS	COMMENTS
	I like that we can travel to Egypt, <del>it</del> was very interesting and funny
	this day was a little bit funny. because <del>it</del> was history only, other <del>it</del> activities <del>was</del> were more funny and interesting
	I don't like the history but I like a little because Malta have done funny
	
	the quiz was very interesting and we learned and (funny) <del>funny</del> . had fun.
	the funniest day, I think that's a activity <del>am</del> was a vely good job got do it
<div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	activities interesting, funniest and I learned a lot and I was very funny

✓ I can order a text and extract the main ideas.

He opriès moltes coses au grup, calieu individual, m'ha agradat molt perquè  
• he parlat en anglès m'era la primera vegada encara que estava nerviosa.  
Es la primera vegada que faig això i m'agradat moltíssim.  
Tant de tot es pagues fer un altre cop, però amb els mateixos  
profes d'Universitat. "!!".

La meua opinió es que ets una bona professora i que en el futur t'han sortiras força bé.  
Des de la meua perspectiva es que penso que saps portar una dinàmica de grup. És bastant  
fàcil d'entendre, alhora de parlar amb anglès. lucky!:) )

Is there anything you did not like or that can be improved? We will appreciate your opinion!!! Thanks!

I like a lot Marta because she do the funniest class in the world and I learned  
a lot. thanks for this time. You are a very good teacher !! Good luck and  
I would someday I can see you ^ ^

✓ I could not create a blog, but now, yes. This is the first blog that I have.  
✓ I have learned to improvise.  
✓ I can order a text and extract the main ideas.

I can learn and play in a same time, I can speak about Egypt because I  
learn a lot, and I can speak in English! I don't know that I can speak  
in English when I don't think in this.

Is there anything you did not like or that can be improved? We will appreciate your opinion!!! Thanks!

La Marta encara que no se molt d'anglès m'ha ajudat molt i o'he agafat  
molt de conñio i a vegades hem d'aver guies de porer perquè es una persona  
que m'ha agradat com a persona, com professora i com amiga.  
Es una persona maravillosa i encara que a vegades ens hem parlat una  
mica malament has tingut molta paciència. Gracies de venitat que  
m'encantes. Adieu Marta.  
Gracies per tot el que m'has ajudat.

24

Is there anything you did not like or that can be improved? We will appreciate your opinion!!! Thanks!

all the activities were very funny and the teacher helps all the people so much!!  
I think you are make so good!! every activities.

**Teacher's evaluation: comments and suggestions**

I like the way to teach of Malta, it may doesn't make bored the classes.

Is there anything you did not like or that can be improved? We will appreciate your opinion!!! Thanks!

Of my point of view all have been perfect!

Is there anything you did not like or that can be improved? We will appreciate your opinion!!! Thanks!

Emm... you have done it very well, and prepare the activities perfectly, because we learned, and it was fun simultaneously. All the things that we have done are different and interesting.

😊 Thanks for these days and good luck!!!



✓ I can order a text and extract the main ideas.

✓ I learn a lot of things about Egypt.

✓ I learn English having fun.

Thanks to students' feedback I also learned that they appreciate a lot when you listen to them carefully and when you show them real concern about their work. They also notice it when you work conscientiously and, as a result it makes them work harder themselves.

I would like to finish by talking about group work. Students told us they found it very useful to work in groups during the implementation of our teaching unit. However, I have mixed feelings about it. On the one hand group work is a powerful tool to enhance communication in the classroom. Besides, students can help each other and share real language exchanges. Unlike teacher talk, group work tends to be more flexible and informal. These factors encourage students to speak without being under pressure or embarrassed. However, if the groups are unbalanced skilled students can destroy the weakest ones' opportunities to participate and express their own thoughts. Moreover, there are always those lazy students who prevent the group from enjoying an equal distribution of the amount of work. It is also difficult to control if students are on-task most of the time.

Still, I think it is a matter of balance as most things in life. A teacher should be skilled enough to combine different techniques and methodologies to make the most of each activity and promote real and meaningful communication in the class.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

During this year I have been going through very intense and demanding experiences like having to manage a classroom, facing students who had expectations about me and recording my lessons to analyse my work. Watching the videos of my teaching practice has been a challenging and a deeply reflective task. I must admit it has also been uncomfortable at some stages, since it is never easy to face one's mannerisms and tics. However, this revealing insight into the teacher-student interaction patterns has not only been very interesting but also quite fruitful as findings are concerned. All in all, it has been a very useful experience to become aware both of strong and need-to-be-improved aspects.

The research carried out in this dissertation proved that, as it is widely recognised, the types of question the teacher asks affect the kind of responses students produce and, consequently, their learning. In my particular case, I realised that I mainly use display and factual questions. These types of questions prevent students from expressing their own ideas, and only encourage them to repeat what has already been said. In other words, they generate interactions that are typical of a didactic discourse and far from a real social communicating framework. Therefore, if my main objective was to encourage students to speak and produce long sentence stretches, this is something I should definitely change. Equally, overuse of 'yes-no' questions deprives students of the chance to produce longer responses, affecting their learning input negatively as a result.

There are obviously many other aspects to improve. For example, I shall give students more interactional space. The truth is that I am always too concerned about those who feel embarrassed, but I realized that silence is not a bad thing in a classroom as long it is for a purpose. I will have to make an effort to hand over the floor to students more often, because I really get in panic when I feel silence is lasting too long. Besides, it will be positive if I avoid being so protective and I challenge students with better formulated high-level thinking questions.

In the same way, I learned that a lot of noise can be a positive thing. Promoting group talk appears to be a good strategy to help students acquire discourse competence in a more comfortable atmosphere. As far as feedback is concerned, I should avoid being so assertive at some stages. Maybe I could use more tag questions or slightly change my intonation.

What I definitely need to improve is the timing issue. I tend to speak a lot and I never get to finish what I had previously planned. Nevertheless, someone said once: "Getting things done is not always what is most important. There is value in allowing others to learn, even if the task is not accomplished as quickly, efficiently or effectively."

On the other side, I have noticed that I appear to be more concerned with understanding what students are trying to say than with the grammatical accuracy of their responses. That makes them try to speak without the pressure of having to say things perfectly right. To be honest, I was gladly surprised when I noticed that since my goal is to promote communicative competence above all. In my opinion, being able to make students try to speak in the L2 is the first and most important step. Once they realise that English is a communication tool, rather than a linguistic barrier they will start polishing their accuracy. However, being fluent and able to communicate things, better or worse but getting the message through, is the most important objective in our globalised world where many different varieties of English coexist and where languages are in continuous transformation.

Again having a global understanding of the different structures of classroom interaction can be very positive in my future career. Students tend to get bored easily and they need "new emotions" constantly. Being aware of the possibilities that a classroom offers will enable me to design a greater variety of activities and, thus, have a better command of students' expected outcomes, which will altogether result in a more coherent and better quality assessment. Sometimes teachers assign tasks which have almost no purpose, just because they are in the book. I want to be selective and critical with the materials used in my classes. I want students to experiment meaningful learning, and not just fill their heads with useless words or activities.

I would like everybody in my class to feel they have voice and opinion. Due to the complex nature of talk, it is a good idea to combine different types of approaches and activities to suit the great variety of situations that can take place. It is generally agreed that teachers are the ones in charge of organizing classroom communications, which patterns depend largely on how they use language to control the structure and content of the classroom events. Yet, according to Vigotsky, students construct new ideas or concepts developing and expanding their current knowledge and they do it by means of socialisation. Therefore we, as teachers, should present materials and tasks in a way that students feel encouraged and attracted to take an active role and feel the desire to learn by themselves.

However, unfortunately the majority of schools structure the academic year program of L2 upon a specific book. Students spend most of the time doing grammar-based exercises and repeating the same topics year after year.

Another aspect to be considered is that teachers bombard students with questions and extra photocopies for homework and keep on complaining about students' low rate of participation and commitment. However, are all these tasks and questions effective? Do they produce the expected outcome? Teachers must work hard to make sure that all that is done in their classrooms is useful and meaningful. Students notice that as well, and their involvement depends largely on the way activities and materials are treated and presented.

In conclusion, there are many things to improve and many topics for further research but the most important thing is to remember that a teacher is sometimes a model. Many students tend to follow a teacher's example because they identify themselves with his/her particular way of doing things. This is a great responsibility, indeed. Teachers are like bridges between childhood and adults. They need to know how to separate these two words and act accordingly.

I would like to finish with a couple of quotes that sum up pretty well what I want to become in the future as a teacher. Here they are:

I like a teacher who gives you something to think about besides  
homework. Edith Ann, [Lily Tomlin]

"Who dares to teach must never cease to learn." Dana

## 8. REFERENCES

- Š Johnson, K.E. (1995). *Understanding communication in second language classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press..
- Š Seedhouse, P. (2004). The interactional architecture of the language classroom. Bellaterra: *Journal of Teaching & Learning Language & Literature*, V.1:1-13.
- Š Seedhouse, P. (2005). Conversation Analysis and language learning. State-of-the-Art Article. *Language & Teaching*, 38: 1-23.
- Š Tsui, A.B.M. (1995). *Introducing classroom interaction*. London: Penguin.

## 9. ANNEXES

### 9.1 Transcript

(Images on display during the transcript's dialogue)



\* Note: names of the school and participants have been changed to preserve their identity.

**SCHOOL:** Collserola

**CLASS:** English class 4<sup>th</sup> ESO (15-16)

**DATE:** 23/01/2010

**TIMING:** 3:00''

**ACTIVITY:** Teacher-fronted + content-based activity 'Global Issues'

**PARTICIPANTS:** student-teacher; students: Anna, Carla, Eli, Grau, Pol, Pau i Roc.

Turn	Speaker	Utterance	Visual Information
01.	T	Would you like to go <u>there</u> on holidays? ☺	((Pointing at the screen))
02.	CLASS	Yes!	((Everybody, smiling))
03.	T	Yes, right? It's √fantastic	((Turning my back, bending forward))
04.	T	What <u>else</u> do we√ have	((At the laptop, changing the slide))
05.	CLASS	Oh! Paris!	((Everybody, showing emotion))
06.	PAU	Paris	
07.	T	√ Paris very√ well This is a <u>different</u> type of holidays= =(.) right? (1.5) What <u>can</u> we do in a big√ city	((Looking at the whole class))
08.	CLASS	( 2.00)	
09.	CARLA	◦◦Shopping◦◦	((Speaking aloud))
10.	T	For ex – Carla!	
11.	CARLA	√ Shopping	
12.	T	Shopping^If you have money ☺	((Carla laughing))
13.	T	What else√ Pau What would you do(.)in Paris?	
14.	PAU	◦◦Skate visite?◦◦	((Pau looking at Carla))
15.	CLASS	( )	((Laughing at Pau's answer))
16.	T	Skate^very well, There are lots of (.) places= =to^ skate , ◦yeah◦ , What√ else (.) Pol.	((Pointing at Pol))
17.	POL	(3.5) [( )	((Smiling nervously))
18.	T	[What can you do in a big city, In <u>any</u> big city, not= =only Paris ^	((Pau turning his back to look at him))
19.	POL	( ) (1.2) [Vi:::sit	
20.	T	[There are a lot ^of ,	
21.	POL	◦◦Museums◦◦	
22.	T	Very√ well you can visit (.) museums	

Turn	Speaker	Utterance	Visual Information
23.	PAU	Visit the museums	((Pau looking to the front again))
24.	T	Any (.) body has been to <sup>↑</sup> Paris here?	((Fronting the class))
25.	ANNA		((Rising hand))
26.	T	Anna (.) =	
27.	ANNA		((Nodding))
28.	T	=Did you like it?	
29.	ANNA	A lot.	
30.	T	A <sup>↓</sup> lot (.) Why?	
31.	ANNA	Because it's so:: romantic, and the Tour Eiffel it's= =so:: (.) I don't know (.) Hmm (.) when I was little I= =ever dreamed to go to <sup>↑</sup> Paris, °°when I was,°°	((Smiling and gesturing a lot))
32.	T	<sup>↓</sup> Ok, did you go with your <u>parents</u> ?	
33.	ANNA	°Yeah°	
34.	T	So it's not - it was not <u>that</u> romantic [maybe you can go=	((Everybody smiling))
35.	ANNA	[Yeah I kno::w I kno::w but, >	((Speechless and gesturing))
36.	T	=Maybe you can go there again (.) when you are= = <sup>↑</sup> older, right? (.) > Who else has been to Paris?	
37.	ROC		((Rising hand))
38.	T	For example the <sup>↑</sup> guy (.) Roc (.) Where did you= go? What's the <u>thing</u> you remember the most, Or the thing that liked - That you <u>liked</u> the <sup>↓</sup> most.	((Pointing at Roc))
39.	ROC	Visit the tour Eiffel.	
40.	T	The tour Eiffel (.) <sup>↓</sup> ok (.) Let's see the next <sup>↓</sup> one= =What do we have?	((Bending forward at the laptop))
41.	CLASS	JAPAN	((Everybody speaking))
42.	S1	CHINA	((T gesturing they are close to the answer))
43.	S2	[( )	((Loud surrounding talk))

Turn	Speaker	Utterance	Visual Information
44.	CLASS	[( )	((Loud surrounding talk))
45.	T	[Ok, <u>Asia</u> for sure, but (.) what country do you think= =this is,	((Gesturing to put order))
46.	CLASS	=Japan.	
47.	T	=Ok, this is <sup>↑</sup> <u>Japan</u> (.) What <sup>↑</sup> about the city	
48.	S3	OSAKA	
49.	T	Osa:::ka:::↑ it's not far from <sup>↑</sup> Osaka but it's not= (.) =↓ Osaka. >	((T looking at the slide))
50.	S4	[ <i>Hong Kong es, ( )</i>	((Surrounding talk))
51.	T	[ <u>First</u> of all (.) what <sup>↑</sup> can we see here,	
52.	CARLA	Lake.	
53.	T	There is a <sup>↑</sup> la:::ke What else,	((Pointing at the lake))
54.	S5	Tree.	
55.	T	There are tree:::s	((Pointing at the trees))
56.	PAU	°°Very beautiful°°	
57.	T	Very <sup>↑</sup> <u>beautiful</u> trees (.) Very well Pau! What else,	((Looking at Pau))
58.	CLASS	A typical house	
59.	T	Do you think this is a <sup>↑</sup> <u>house</u> ? (.) A <u>normal</u> <sup>↑</sup> house?	((T staring with surprise))
60.	CLASS	No:: [ no::	((Surrounding noise))
61.	T	[Ok, what kind of house <sup>↓</sup>	((Surrounding talk and noise))
62.	S6	°°Typical°°	((Surrounding talk and noise))
63.	S7	°°Japanese house°°	((Surrounding talk and noise))
64.	CLASS	( )	((Surrounding talk and noise))
65.	GRAU	°° <i>Temple</i> °°	((Surrounding talk and noise))
66.	T	I've – I've heard something interesting here! (.) Who= =said it?	((T looking for the one who spoke))

Turn	Speaker	Utterance	Visual Information
67.	GRAU	UN TEMPLE=	((Repeating in Catalan))
68.	T	=Very well Grau! A ↓ temple ok?(.) A:::nd (.) can you describe the ↑ temple (.) a little bit?	((Pointing at the screen))
69.	GRAU	Si?	((Face expressing doubt))
70.	T	Can you describe the [temple?=-	((Slowing down her pronunciation))
71.	GRAU	[A:::hh	
72.	T	=please?	
73.	GRAU	It has two °°(wood (.) wooden)°° plants,	((Hesitating voice))
74.	T	Ok, there are two ↑ floors,	((Gesturing to show what a floor is))
75.	GRAU	Two floors ↑ sí (.) No sé::	
76.	T	A:::nd, what about the roof? It's -	((Gesturing to show the shape of the roof))
77.	GRAU	It ↑ has a:: (.) it's like a:: square but -=	((Slightly nervous))
78.	T	=It's <u>different</u> from the roofs in Spain ↑ right? >	
79.	GRAU	Yeah.	
80.	T	↓ Ok	

## 9.2 Transcription conventions

[	Indicates the point of overlap onset
]	Indicates the point of overlap termination
=	a) A turn continues below, at the next identical symbol b) There is no gap at all between the two turns
(2.5)	An interval between utterances
(.)	A very short untimed pause
<u>word</u>	Underlining indicates speaker emphasis
e:r the:::	Indicates lengthening of the preceding sound
-	A single dash indicates an abrupt cut-off
?	Rising intonation, not necessarily a question
!	An animated or emphatic tone
,	A comma indicates low-rising intonation, suggesting continuation
.	A full stop (period) indicates falling (final) intonation
<b>CAPITALS</b>	Especially loud sounds relative to surrounding talk
◦ ◦	Utterances between degree signs are noticeably quieter than surrounding talk
◦◦ ◦◦	Considerably quieter than surrounding talk
∨ ↑	Indicate a rising or falling intonational shift on the syllable preceding the arrow
( )	A stretch of unclear or unintelligible speech
(guess)	Indicates transcriber doubt about a word
((T shows picture))	Non-verbal actions or editor's comments
<i>word</i>	Italics indicate the word is in Catalan
>	Smiley voice

### 9.3. Activity file

ACTIVITY TITLE: <i>Global Issues</i>	
CLASS/AGE: 4 <sup>th</sup> of ESO	DATE: 23 <sup>rd</sup> of January 2010
APPROXIMATE TIMING: 45'	COE Level: B1
INTRODUCTION TO THE MAIN TASK	
<p>This activity wants to test the students' <b>listening-comprehension</b> skills, as well as to stimulate their <b>speaking</b> skills in public. The whole activity is also aimed at encouraging their reflective thinking about global issues and good behaviour rules. The instructions for the students are the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. First we will <b>see</b> two types of <b>pictures</b> on a <b>PowerPoint</b> and we will <b>discuss</b> about them altogether: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some nice spots to go on holidays</li> <li>• terrible images showing environmental impacts.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. After that, you will <b>watch a 6' video</b> of a girl aged 13 who made a speech about environmental issues in the world summit or Rio de Janeiro.</li> <li>3. In pairs, you will have to <b>answer 10 questions</b> about the video.</li> <li>4. Finally, the class will <b>discuss about the video and correct</b> the sentences altogether.</li> </ol>	
OBJECTIVES/ GOALS / COMPETENCES	
<p>By the end of the lesson / task / the students <u>will be able to ...</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe several pictures related to holidays, landscapes and environment using all the vocabulary resources they already have.</li> <li>2. Reflect on the pictures and express their critical opinion about the situation of the environment nowadays and the importance of the human action.</li> <li>3. Answer several questions from a video where a girl speaks with Canadian accent.</li> </ol>	
ASSESSMENT: CRITERIA, TASK or INDICATORS (AND GRADING SYSTEM)	
CLOSELY LINKED TO GOALS & TASKS	
<p>This is, basically, an interactive activity. The main aim is to make students talk. In order to check if they are listening carefully and understanding everything that is being said, I will be asking them random questions. Everybody <b>MUST</b> participate! The listening part will be corrected jointly in class.</p>	
STEPS TO FOLLOW + APPROXIMATE TIMING + INTERACTION PATTERN <sup>(*)</sup>	
<p><sup>(*)</sup>Teacher (T) β à Student (S) // S β à S // T à S // T à CLASS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction of myself and presentation of the activity (4 minutes) T à CLASS</li> <li>2. PowerPoint display and discussion (20 minutes) (T) β à Student , T à CLASS</li> <li>3. Presentation of the video (1 minute) T à CLASS</li> <li>4. Video (6 minutes)</li> <li>5. Pair discussion (4 minutes) S β à S</li> <li>6. Sentences correction and conclusions (10 minutes) (T) β à Student , T à CLASS</li> </ol>	

## 9.4 Feelings Record Card

### RECORD CARD

- **My feelings:** at the beginning I was a little bit worried about the possible low rate of participation. Moreover, the class took place after the morning break and the students tend to be quite excited at that time.
- **Reaction from the students:** the students were very nice and welcoming. They paid a lot of attention to everything that was being said and done in the class. In fact, some of them came to talk to me at the end of the activity to give me feedback and more ideas. So, I dare to say they were interested in the activity and they enjoyed it.
- **Thing/s that worked well and why:** It was a very visual and interactive activity. I think that the images and the music I played at the beginning attracted their attention. Moreover, it was very different from the type of classes they attend, so everything that is new tends to raise interest at the beginning, at least.
- **Adjustments on the spot and why:** the activity was too long and I skipped the last speaking in groups part.
- **Aspect(s) which need to be rethought and possible lines of action:** I have to improve the timing and maybe not speak that much. I have to give the students more time to speak.
- **Feedback from tutors and/ or fellow student-teachers:** they all told me the activity was pretty good. I have to pay attention though to all the people interested in saying something. It appears that I missed some hands that were up and the students maybe felt disappointed at me not giving them floor!

## 9.5 Journal

Wednesday - 20th of January, 2010

I am so happy!!!! The students apparently enjoyed the activity. They even applauded in the end, so I think I can consider it a little success! But, I had the feeling I spoke too much and, in fact, I felt exhausted when the class finished. I will have to watch the recording to check their sentences as well. I have the feeling that despite the participation, their sentences were too simple and short. Maybe I should have not spent that much time on the slideshow. Then, we would have been able to do the last part of the activity and they would have had more freedom to speak.

## 9.6 Teaching materials

(A sheet of paper per person, pair-work)

### The Girl who Silenced the World for 5 minutes

Listen to Suzuki Severn's speech carefully and answer the questions the teacher assigns you. (Pair-work)

1. What does the acronym E.C.O. stand for?
2. Severn Suzuki says she is there to speak on behalf of some things. Could you name some of the points she mentions?
3. What is she afraid of doing and why? What is she not doing anymore?
4. She mentions several things the governors don't know how to do. Do you remember any of them?
5. What kind of people is she addressing her speech to?
6. What does she say about Canada with regard to recycling and sharing? Do you think we act the same way in Spain and the rest of Europe?
7. Why was she shocked in Brazil, while spending some time with the children living on the streets?
8. She *puts herself in the shoes* of some children born in different countries to show the importance of where you are born and raised. Do you remember any of the 4 places she mentions?
9. Can you remember any of the things she says about the behaviour rules the school teaches in the world?
10. What does her father always tell her? And in connection to that, what is the challenge she throws to the people at the summit?

- Link to Youtube video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZsDliXzyAY>

(This is the part of the activity I had to skip due to the lack of time)

Following topics for group discussion:

Let's speak! (Groups of four)

- What do you do to make this world a better place to live?
  - Do you think that the earth is going to disappear some day?
  - If you had the power to change something in the world, what is the first thing you would like to do?
- 

## Ensenyaràs

*“Ensenyaràs a volar,  
però no volaran el teu vol.  
Ensenyaràs a somiar,  
Però no somiaran el teu somni.  
Ensenyaràs a viure,  
Però no viuran la teva vida.  
Si més no...  
en cada vol,  
en cada vida,  
en cada somni,  
perdurarà sempre l'empremta  
del camí ensenyat”*

**Mare Teresa de Calcuta**