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Serrano Ortiz, Alba; Escobar Urmeneta, Cristina. Dealing with forks on the road : an analysis of adaptive teaching and interactional strategies in a models as feedback task. 2018. 49 p.

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DEALING WITH FORKS ON THE ROAD

AN ANALYSIS OF ADAPTIVE TEACHING AND
INTERACTIONAL STRATEGIES IN A MODELS AS
FEEDBACK TASK

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UNIVERSITAT AUTÒNOMA DE BARCELONA | 2017/2018



MÀSTER DE FORMACIÓ DE PROFESSORAT D'EDUCACIÓ SECUNDÀRIA OBLIGATÒRIA I BATXILLERAT
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A man traveling in an unfamiliar region comes to a branching of the roads. Having no sure knowledge to fall back upon, he is brought to a standstill of hesitation and suspense. Which road is right? And how shall perplexity be resolved? There are but two alternatives: he must either blindly and arbitrarily take his course, trusting to luck for the outcome, or he must discover grounds for the conclusion that a given road is right.

John Dewey, 1910. *How We Think*.

ABSTRACT

To what an extent teachers shape their teacher talk and interactional strategies to their students' needs? This paper aims to analyze the ways in which a teacher deals with different students molding her interactional strategies in two aspects: using learner convergent language and facilitating an interactional space to students (displaying a good CIC). Following Escobar Urmeneta's (2017) checklist and Walsh's (2011) *SETT* an exercise of reflection-on-action is put forward about the *online decisions* taken by the teacher carrying out the same Models as Feedback writing task in two very different classrooms. From that analysis interesting links and insights will be made in relation to *constructive* and *obstructive* strategies to the establishment of a successful teacher-student interaction which leads into more opportunities of learning.

RESUMEN

Hasta qué punto los maestros moldean su habla y sus estrategias de interacción a partir de las necesidades de sus alumnos? Este estudio pretende analizar las maneras en las que una maestra cambia sus estrategias de interacción en dos aspectos: su uso de lenguaje comprensible por los estudiantes y su capacidad de facilitar un espacio de interacción beneficioso (CIC). Siguiendo la Checklist propuesta por Escobar Urmeneta (2017) y el *SETT* propuesto por Walsh se realizará un ejercicio de reflexión sobre la acción sobre las decisiones instantáneas de la docente realizando una tarea de escritura usando textos modelo como feedback en dos grupos muy diferentes. De ese análisis interesantes ideas surgirán en relación a estrategias constructivas y obstructivas para el establecimiento de una buena interacción entre docente y alumno que desemboque en numerosas oportunidades de aprendizaje.

1. Introduction

If there is one thing all teachers experience when they set foot on a class, that is: perplexity. Each class is a different world with a very specific context and a different group of students passing through different stages of their academic or personal life. Furthermore, each class entails an enormous number of micro-contexts caused by the continuous and dynamic interaction between teacher and students. That is the reason why teaching involves a continuous process of decision making. We, teachers, as Dewey (1910) well described in his book *How we think*, are very much like the man who comes to a branching of roads. We are continuously adapting to student's reactions. Our student's motivation, level, participation, their eyes, their interventions, are all unique and unpredictable and they must be the variables that shape our instruction. Teachers know their path, their lessons are normally carefully planned but, yet, new paths are created when we start interacting with a group of students with a particular background and level. We need to *adapt* our teaching to them and we never take option one, i.e. we never blindly and randomly decide what to do next. On the contrary we need to keep our eyes and mind open to discover what grounds will lead to our purpose. Teachers, thus, need to put in action a set of strategies that have received the name of *thoughtfully adaptive teaching*.

The link between Dewey's theories about thinking with *Adaptive teaching* is not original. Hoffman and Duffy (2016) already pointed it out detecting in Dewey's theories the root of the literature on *Adaptive teaching* and understanding, also, that "all classroom teachers routinely encounter forks in the road" (173) and their job consists in analyzing the possible strategies to fit the new need and put them in action.

1.1 *Models as Feedback: Responding to a FLC problem of writing assessment and learning*

It is important to mention that this study is only a part of a broader study dealing with using 'Models' to provide feedback to student's writing. Such investigation arose from the realization of a great problem that exists in the foreign language classroom (FLC¹), one that every language teacher has encountered in his or her classes; that is: the traditional way of marking, correcting and grading writings is far from being helpful to develop student's L2 learning. Students write an essay, then, teachers go through a long process of correcting marking all the grammatical, lexical and coherence errors in red and giving a rather subjective mark at the end of the process. The student receives the writing, looks at the grade and doesn't even take a look at his or her errors, which have been already spotted for

¹ See appendix 1 to find out the meaning of all acronyms used in these paper.

him and already translated into a grade. It is clear that there is no such thing as an active role taken by the student in this situation whatsoever. That is why no matter how many times the teacher marks the same problem in different essays, the student keeps committing it. The problem is left unsolved because, we believe, the feedback process was not successful in the first place.

An alternative teaching strategy to that assessment or feedback process needs to be explored so that students can improve such an important skill in their L2 as writing is. The alternative exposed in our broader study is based on using ‘Models’ as feedback so that students could engage in an active process of revising their own text from which learning could be, at least, encouraged. To try such a different way of assessing and conceiving writing in a class of students who are used to the traditional way of producing writings is, indeed, a challenge. The task is really unfamiliar to students, who are trained to receive feedback from the teacher but definitely not trained to give each other feedback. That is why, a good teacher guidance becomes imperious so that students can fulfill the purpose of the task. An explicit instruction needs to be put forward, ensuring, at the same time, a great comprehension of the students of everything the teacher is asking them to do. The problem, then, is that there is a clear temptation to give that instruction in L1 to ensure complete learner comprehension. In this particular study, though, we will try to look at the ways and strategies that a teacher can use to make herself or himself understood without giving herself up to providing a full L1 instruction. What is more, we will argue -following the work of Walsh (2006-2003)- that if the teacher displays a good *Classroom Interactional Competence* (CIC) defined as “teachers’ and learners’ ability to use interaction as a tool for mediating and assisting learning” (Walsh, 2006:132) indicators of student learning might be found in the dialogue itself. In other words, the task of using ‘Models’ as feedback which is being analyzed here can be even more successful if the teacher conducts a great classroom discussion and is able to moderate a dialogue that provides students with more opportunities of learning besides the ones that arose from the model itself.

1.2 This study: An exercise of self-reflection

This present study tries to be both a contribution to the literature dealing with teacher and student interaction and a thorough exercise of self-observation. On the road of becoming a *Reflective Practitioner* (RP) I will try to analyze my own ‘*practical discourse* ϕ – borrowing Ellis’ (2013) terminology–, that is to say, the actions, speech, and interactional strategies that I use. Then, establishing a dialogue with myself and the reader of this study I will hopefully detect some problems and realize successful strategies and use that information to improve my CIC and try to put it in action in my future teaching practice.

• • •

Dewey (1910) ensured that once faced with the fork the perplexed wayfarer must “carefully scrutinize what is before him and he must cudgel his memory” (25) and then take action. “He may climb a tree; he may go first in this direction, then in that, looking, in either case, for signs, clues, indications” (25). What I will do in this study is nothing but study my own actions trying to explain the reasons that led me to climb the tree or change direction. Hopefully from the analysis of my case interesting links will be made from what I did and what others teachers do on their classes so that this personal analysis can be used by other teachers to realize what strategies should be avoided when trying to establish a successful classroom interaction and what other conversational resources really boost a great classroom discussion, and hence, encourage student learning opportunities.

2. Focus and goals of this study

In the present study we examine two excerpts of teacher-student interaction where the same teacher gives the same instructions and implements the same type of classroom discussion to provide feedback to a text that students previously wrote in two very different classrooms. We will use Walsh’s term of *Classroom Interactional Competence* (CIC) as a basis to find out the good and avoidable strategies carried out by the teacher in the different classrooms following the SETT (Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk) system of self-analysis also coined by Walsh (2011) as a checklist to compare the teacher-student interaction of the two video recorded excerpts.

With the goal of better understanding whether teachers’ language may lead or facilitate children’s comprehension of L2 we will analyze the video thoroughly trying locate and comment the different strategies the teacher puts into action to use learner convergent language and make herself understood in the class. Furthermore, we will try and see how these strategies vary on the different classes when facing a group of low.vs. high level students. In addition, we will also briefly look at content and how it is that adapted to two different types of students and contexts.

Specifically, we address these research questions:

(RQ.1) How does the teacher adapt her talk to the u v w f g p v u ø " p g g f u A

(RQ.1.1) What multimodal strategies does the teacher use to make herself understood and to ensure a quality classroom interaction in two different classrooms when giving directions in the L2?

(RQ.1.2) To what an extent those strategies can be contrasted between groups?

(RQ 1.3) What motivates the different use of strategies in each class?

We depart from an initial assumption that the classroom interaction in our high level group will be more successful as students have a higher level of English and will be able to understand the teacher's instructions and produce contributions more easily than our low level group. After carrying out the thorough analysis of both excerpts, however, we will see and demonstrate that when it comes to carrying out a good classroom interaction which provides students with numerous opportunities of learning the level of students is less relevant than the CIC that the teacher demonstrates and displays in class. In other words, student's learning opportunities and understanding of a task such as using models as feedback is very much dependent on the way the teacher carries out the classroom discourse, on his or her ability to adapt to the different contexts and in doing so, construct a dialogue that is both clear and full of learning indicators.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 An alternative teaching strategy: Models as Feedback

Before we can further look at the notion of "interaction" which of outmost for the subsequent analysis it is important, I believe, to talk about the theoretical framework behind the task students were asked to do in this paper: that is, using models as feedback for student's writings. As previously stated, the traditional method of assessing student's writings has been proved to be very unsuccessful to encourage improvement in the writing competence of FLC students. Giving lots of grammar, vocabulary and coherence corrections, that is: traditional corrective feedback, doesn't really provoke an impact on students' learning process. Most of the times that feedback has not a clear corrective response. Students know they made a mistake but do not bother to find out why they did that mistake and how can they avoid it in the future, because they don't need to.

As Sachs & Polio (2007) asserted “implicit Negative feedback is effective but much more when their effectiveness appears to be greater when learners are given cues to their corrective nature.” (67) Of course, and as a consequence of the rising popularity of constructivist theories and interactionism the more active role students have in this corrective nature the better. That is why a teacher technique such as using ‘models’ as a way to prompt student-student and teacher-student discussion on actual aspects of form is at least a very promising approach that has received a lot of attention in previous years’ literature. This teaching technique is rooted in the theoretical assumption that “Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is largely driven by what learners pay attention to and notice in target language input and what they understand the significance of noticed input to be” (Schmidt: 2001, 3-4). This basic idea of ‘noticing’ is seen by a lot of researchers as a clear indicator of learning, if students put their attention to form and can, then, spot a mistake or strength on a previously written text then they will have learned something. Explicit knowledge and attention to form, hence, can have an impact on implicit language learning. This has been noted by a large number of researchers. (See, for example: Ellis, 2013; Yang & Zhang (2010) or Manchón, López-Serrano & Santos, 2010).

It is worth mentioning that some of the researchers who have dealt with the teaching technique of using models as feedback have already realized the importance of a good teaching guidance to ensure students’ learning in this type of task. Manchón, López-Serrano & Santos, (2010), for example, suggested a future research “comparing guided and unguided noticing after receiving unfocused corrective feedback.” (148). Yang & Zhang (2010) also pointed out the importance of “guiding” students towards a better ‘noticing’ skill asserting that “to gain more benefits from the native models, the learners need to be guided to pay attention to the changes or specialties at the discourse level, especially in model texts” (480). Because we are only analyzing two video excerpts of two very specific cases our study won’t be able to provide a definite and total response to the matter as to what an extent teacher guidance shapes the amount of noticing of students. That is a way too big question to answer. However, even though we cannot connect our T-S interaction analysis to the amount of ‘noticing’ students had- we will shed some light upon how a good teacher- student interaction discussion, the dialogue on itself, can be a creator of learning opportunities that can later be expanded by student-student interaction and a more textual attention to the Model’s formal characteristics.

5 0 4 " V j g " p q v k q p " q h " ÷ k p v g t c e v k q p ø < " E K E " c p f "

Our paper, then, will focus on the intricacies, benefits and challenges of T-S interaction. We must now move on to explore the theoretical framework laying behind the essential

notion of 'interaction' that has definitely gained a lot of popularity over the years. The two competing theories of understanding L2 learning nowadays are rooted in the concept of "interacting". As I understand it, both cognitivists and Socio-cultural theory supporters see in the *interaction* between speakers the source of all L2 learning. Cognitivists, on the one hand, put their attention on inputs and outputs. Socio-cultural theory supporters, on the other hand think that everything that leads to L2 learning takes place outside the mind, that is in the social interaction, in the dialogue between speakers itself. Swain (2000), for example, a clear advocate of the socio-cultural theory argues that linguistic knowledge is articulated in what he calls, collaborative dialogue and that "internalization of process and knowledge is facilitated by their initial appearance in external speech" (112). Contrary to Swain (2000) Long (1981) gave more importance to the internal process proposing that input is made comprehensible is through 'interactional modification', an internal process that results as a consequence of a lack of comprehension. As I see it, they are nothing but two sides of the same coin. That is to say, they are opposed theories but they all agree on the importance of interaction to ensure L2 learning and development.

On the other hand, Walsh (2006, 2011) uses the notion of interaction in a rather more practical way, putting its focus on the specific context of the FLC. Walsh coined the term of CIC (Classroom Interactional Competence) which has been previously defined in the introduction section. According to Walsh, to master CIC means to be able to put interaction at the center of teaching, to improve CIC is seen as direct cause of an improvement of student's opportunities for learning. In his own words, "by improving their CIC, both teachers and learners will immediately improve learning opportunities for learning" (2011: 158). What Walsh does when coining the term CIC is try to point out the great importance that teacher talk has in a class to shape what students hear, and learn. Other researches have also agreed on the essential nature of a good teacher language that goes hand in hand with pedagogic purpose in order to obtain the best student's results.

Treating the way teacher deals with interaction in a class as a competence puts forward the idea that it is not something natural or inherent to the good teacher, but something that can, and should, be taught and improved, a skill which teachers manage at different levels of efficiency. In his studies and through a thorough analysis of different classroom interactions Walsh has been able to spot some strategies which lead to a great classroom discussion and an improvement of the teachers' CIC and some others who serve as a constraint or obstacle to the establishment of a good dialogue. In figure 1 we can a small summary of some of the beneficial conversational strategies to improve CIC in a classroom in contrast with those who might be an obstruction of it that we found in Walsh (2011 and 2002).

<i>Constructive interactional strategies</i> <i>Taken from (Walsh, 2011)</i>	<i>Potentially obstructive conversational strategies</i> <i>Taken from (Walsh 2011, 2002)</i>
Extensive use of pauses	<u>Filling Silence</u> : “interactional space is maximized through increased wait-time, by resisting the temptation to ‘fill silence’ by reducing teacher echo” (2011: 168)
Extended learner turns	<u>Turn completion</u> , also called <i>teacher echo</i> to fill in the gaps, smoothing over the discourse in an effort to advance the discussion can be ineffective to ensure extended learner contributions.
Scaffolding (reformulation, extension or modelling)	The abuse of <u>IRF turn-taking structure</u> (initiation, response, feedback) “While it may be necessary and useful in certain contexts, it should not be the predominant discourse pattern in the EFL classroom since it greatly restricts learning opportunities and minimizes learner involvement.” (2002: 13)
A lack of continuous repair and a good use of direct repair (correcting an error quickly)	
Seeking clarification from learners not fully correct contributions	
Minimal response tokens to show understanding without interrupting the flow of the interaction	
Content feedback (and not only corrective feedback)	

Figure 1. A summary of key and avoidable interactional strategies found in Walsh (2011, 2002)

Every researcher which has attempted to define the notion of ‘classroom competence’ agrees that one of its essential characteristics is its inseparable connection with the context in which it is displayed. Walsh (2011) ensured that CIC “is highly context specific: the interactional competence required in one context will not always transfer to another. Different interactional resources will be needed in different contexts.” (165). The mastering of CIC involves, then, knowing not only how to boost a great classroom interaction but when to use each strategy to adapt to students’ needs and situations. This continuous process of taking decisions that favour the establishment of a good interaction receives the name of *online decision making* or *reflection-in-action* and, according to Walsh (2011) it is only through their *online decision making* that teachers can “both facilitate the co-construction of meaning and display to each other their understandings” (177).

This way of conceiving interaction, then, is very relatable to what researchers study when dealing with adaptive teaching. Ellis (2013), for example, when working in adaptive teaching described the focus of his analysis: the ‘*r t c e v k e c* as “*the moment-by-t u g ø* moment decisions that teachers make in the process of conducting a lesson and that manifest themselves in teaching-as-interaction.” (2) which clearly connects to the notion

of CIC. Adaptive teaching has received many names by researchers; i.e.: adaptive expertise (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005), wise improvisation (Little et al., 2007) or even adaptive metacognition (Lin, Schwartz & Hatano, 2005), among other descriptors and it was traditionally defined as thoughtfully changing teaching strategies in response of students or situations. The analysis of CIC and adaptive teaching is so close, then, that by only looking at the efficiency of the CIC adaptive teaching techniques will be already examined. In other words, to master CIC means, concurrently, to be a good adaptive teacher because on the interactional competence itself the ability of adapting teacher talk and multimodal strategies to fulfill students' needs and pedagogical purpose is already contemplated.

3.3 Reflecting on-action: The Reflective Practitioner (RP)

From the thorough study of CIC in class we will be, then, able to appreciate the different online decisions made by the teacher, or in other words, analyze his or her process of *reflection-in-action*. What most researchers argue, though, is that it is only through a process of *reflection on action* that such online decision making ability in the micro-contexts of the class can be improved. That is why in this paper I will try to conduct an exercise of self-reflection so that the analysis can be used for further improvement of my own teaching practice. In doing so, we are setting foot on the road of becoming what Schön (1983) called a *Reflective Practitioner*, that is a teacher who is able to reflect about his or her teaching strategies and decision both in and outside the class. Basing his reflection-in/on-action terminology on the idea that “our tacit knowledge is embedded in our actions; it does not exist as an independent object, it exists only as a cognitive component of our action” Schön established the basis and provided the object of study in the field of teaching improvement and feedback.

4. Methodology and Data Collection

4.1 Context

The fragments being analyzed were part of two classes carried out by the same teacher in a high school located in “Vallès Occidental” next to Barcelona in Catalonia. It is worth mentioning that because its geographical location the high school receives a fair amount of complex students and has a vast majority of working class families and students enrolled. As it is one of the oldest high schools in the area its methodology is pretty traditional even though there are some innovation projects going on in the lower levels.

What interests us the most, nevertheless, is that these high school streams students into high achievement groups and standard achievement groups during EFL hours. Only during English classes, the high achievement students leave their base group to create another group where all the high achievement students of that level are put together. The students remaining in the base group are commonly referred to as low achievers by teachers. As controversial as that pedagogical measure can be, the purpose of the study is not to question it, but, rather, to take advantage of it and analyze how different teacher implementation and 'r t c e v k e c is when confronting a class full of 'low or standard achievers' versus a class full of 'high achievers'.

4.2 Description of the task

The teacher-student interaction that will be further analyzed in this study was part of a larger writing task where students were asked to use Models to improve their writings. Models were used, then, as a prompter of post-writing feedback both given between students and in a class discussion of teacher student interaction.

It was important, to boost student's engagement and implication that the writing they created had a real addressee. Searching on the web we found a very interesting NGO: CARE, who had a 'Letters of hope' program where students from all around the world worked with the concept of refugees and sent actual letters to those in need of one. Students were first shown a video and introduced to the topic of 'What is a refugee A and told they were going to write a real letter addressed to a real refugee. On a second session they were given language support on the types of structures that they would be using on the letter and were asked to guess the parts of a letter from a comic (See figure 2).

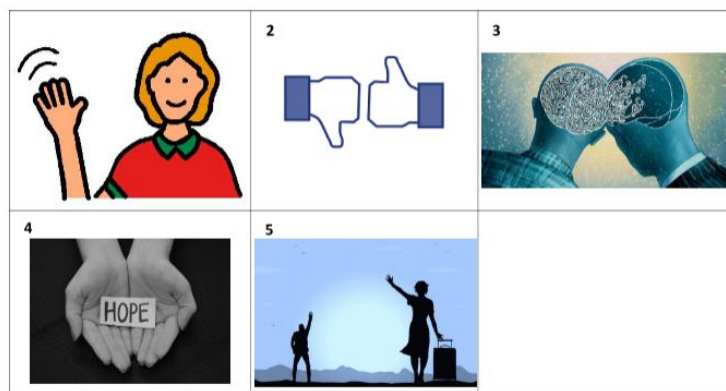


Figure 20 " E q o k e " u v w f g p v ø u " w u g f " v q " i w g u u " v j g "

On this second session students were also asked to write their first version of the letter. On the third session both students were presented with two models -a simpler and another more complex one- (see figure 3) from which they had to decide one to compare their original

text to. Student worked in pairs to give each other feedback using the model as a comparison to their text and trying to spot differences. Then, the teacher conducted a classroom discussion to share the differences students had found between their text and the models. After this, all notes and models were taken away and students produced a second version of their text, ideally using and incorporating the metalinguistic aspects dealt with during the feedback process.

<p style="text-align: center;">MODEL 1: JASMINE FROM AUSTRALIA </p> <p><i>Hello!</i></p> <p><i>My name is Jasmine and I am 17 years old. I live in Australia. A little bit about me! I am in my final year at school, and I hope to travel later! I love to read, draw and go hiking. I would love to hear a little about you!</i></p> <p><i>Although I will never be able to understand your long, hard journey, I really admire your courage and persistence. Learning about some experiences has really opened my eyes. I will be keeping you in my prayers. I truly wish you the best for the future, and please do not give up! You are strong and you are brave and you are loved.</i></p> <p><i>From your new Australian friend,</i></p> <p><i>Jasmine</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MODEL 2: MADISON FROM USA </p> <p><i>Hello, my friend!</i></p> <p><i>I'm writing to you from New York City. My name is Madison England, and I hope you are happy. I love playing basketball, computer games and hanging out with my friends. I am twelve years old. My favorite color is blue.</i></p> <p><i>Just keep on hoping, and never give up on your dreams, because they are your dreams, and no one can take them from you. Your hopes and dreams will become reality one day. Remember to keep being yourself, no matter what. Keep dreaming.</i></p> <p><i>Best,</i></p> <p><i>Madison England</i></p>
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Figure 3. The Two Models used in the task.

4.3 Ethical issues

The name of the high school will not be mentioned throughout the study nor will we mention the name of any of the other high schools which participated in the broader study to preserve their privacy. Student's privacy has also been respected. None of the real students' names will be displayed in the transcription. Instead we will number students as so: S1, S2, S3 etc.

Most importantly, because labels have been proved to be decisive and influent in teacher's expectations from students we will try to avoid referring to the low achievers as such, and we will simply assign the group an "A". Likewise, we will assign a "B" to the high achiever group and refer to it as group B from here onwards.

As far as the recordings are concerned, in order to record the videos an authorization was signed by both the students and the institution. Students were informed at all times that

they were being recorded as a part of a university purpose study and that all the information and recordings would be only used for research purposes.

4.4 Data treatment and analysis

Fragments from two lessons taught by the same teacher will be used to carry out the comparative analysis between group A and B. In Figure 4 we list the characteristics of each group, so that from here on we can only refer to them using the letter that has been assigned.

	Level of Students	Degree of achievement (as decided by the high school)
Group A	3 rd of ESO	Low/standard achievers
Group B	4 th of ESO	High achievers

Figure 4. Characteristics of the two Groups of students from which T-S interaction will be contrasted

Both videos were thoroughly analyzed and completely transcribed using Jeffersonian system of symbols. (Full transcriptions and the list of symbols used can be found in appendix number 2). To answer our more general RQ 1 we will try to answer the two parts that constitute RQ 1.1 that is: what multimodal strategies does the teacher use to make herself understood? and, at the same time, what conversational resources does she use to ensure a successful classroom interaction? We will use a checklist system to compare the teachers' performance in both classes. To deal with the first part of the question we will use the "Classroom observation checklist: teacher-student interaction in teacher-led activities" found in Escobar Urmeneta (2017) and to answer the second one we will follow *SETT* system as proposed by Walsh (2011). Following the realization of the checklist a discussion of the "ticked" and "unticked" categories will be put forward analyzing thoroughly some of the different micro-contexts that arose on the different classes and comparisons will be made between the teacher response to each of them.

I was the teacher carrying out the classroom discussion and that allowed me to use this study not only as a way of understanding and carrying out a research about teacher-student interaction but entail that research in a circle of reflective practice that could help me detect problems and strengths and improve them on my future teaching. If we are to put forward an analysis of the TS interaction of a task we might as well use such analysis to grow as a teacher as much as possible- Many researchers point out the importance of self-reflection as one of the most, if not the most effective teacher learning tool (See: Barlett, 1990; Walsh, 2002 and 2011; or Ellis, 2013 among many others). Barlett used previous literature to argue in favor of the cyclic nature of the teacher's reflection process entailing five steps: mapping, informing. Contesting, appraising and acting. Very similar to that one,

Walsh (2011) also proposes a very specific process of self-evaluation to facilitate teachers to answer the question of “how” can they really improve from reflecting of their own practices. As we are basing our study in Walsh’s theory and *SETT* it is rather appropriate to follow what he calls the *SETT RP cycle* which is formed by six clear-cut steps, as shown in Figure 5.

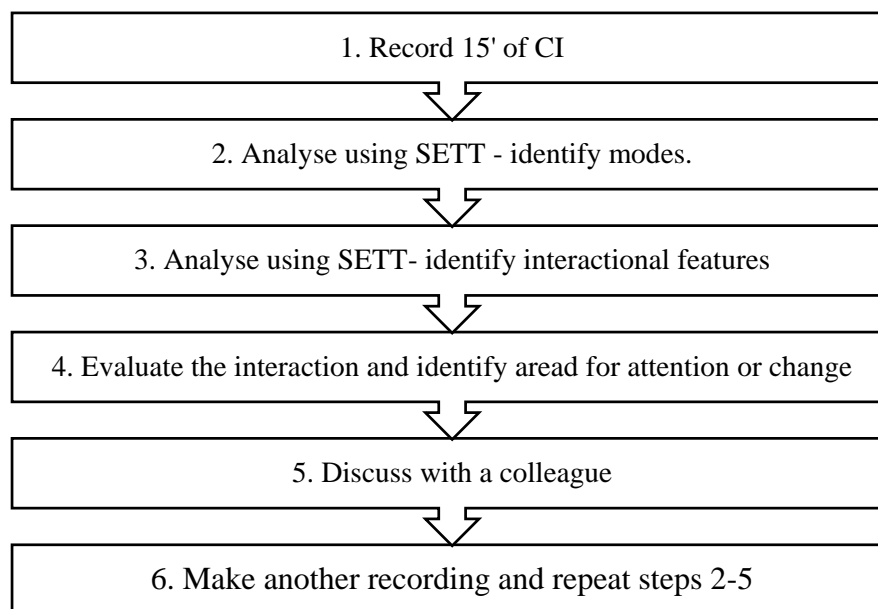


Figure 5. *SETT RP Cycle*. Extracted from Walsh, 2011 (149)

Steps 1 to 4 will be followed and will constitute the basis of our T-S interaction analysis. As far as step five is concerned, I take this paper as a way to establish a dialogue – though maybe not direct- with you, reader. Hopefully the strategies I identify in my interaction can be connected with your own experience and from this paper’s discussions later changes can be made in your future way of dealing with classroom interaction too. Step six will not be part of this study as the extension of such exercise would be too long and I believe, infinite. Other recordings would probably demonstrate improvement but raise thousands of other questions that will hopefully be part of future personal reflection process but that would not fit into the purpose and length of the present paper.

5. T-S Interaction: Analysis and Discussion

As we previously stated, the analysis of the two excerpts of teacher-student interaction will be two folded so that we can really explore all the teacher’s interactional resources. Escobar Urmeneta & Evnitskaya (2014) divided the latter in three categories, departing from the work of Walsh:

- 1) *The use of learner-convergent language*, which is appropriate to the pedagogical goals and adjusted to the co-construction of meaning.
- 2) *The facilitation of interactional space* so that students are afforded the ‘space for learning’ to contribute to classroom interaction and obtain feedback on their contributions.
- 3) *Shaping learner contributions, strategies used by teachers to help learners extend and improve their utterances.* (Escobar Urmeneta & Evnitskaya, 2014: 6)

For extension limitations our analysis will only focus on categories number 1 and 2. However, some “shaping” strategies will be also commented when taking a look at the section of “Scaffolding” in the *SETT* analysis proposed by Walsh (2011). To talk and analyze the first category the checklist found in Escobar Urmeneta (2017) will be filled up for both videos and to examine the second one we will use Walsh’s *SETT* lesson Cover sheet, and find out, using the tool he created to what an extent is CIC successful in those excerpts or not. Even though I am always talking about my own teaching from now on I will use the third person -the teacher (TEA)- when referring to myself. In doing so, with my own language, I tend to give a step backwards to facilitate, in that way, a more objective analysis of the teacher-student interaction in class.

5.1 The use of Learner-convergent Language

Let us start by addressing the teacher’s use of *learner convergent language* in the two very different classes. As the checklist is rather long, here we will only highlight some of the most interesting aspects of teacher talk strategies to make herself understood in the two excerpts. To take a look at the full filled out checklist see appendix 2. One of the interesting strategies the TEA used during the lesson is her use of ‘realia’ -point number 24 in Escobar Urmeneta (2017)-. Let us compare this two excerpts from the different classes:

Excerpt 1: GROUP A. Realia, repetition, emphasis and song to stress the concept

q h " ÷ t g f " r g p ø

- | | | | |
|---|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | TEA | So we write it down (0,2) <Everything that we find> we are going to write it down with a < <u>red pen</u> (<red pen>) | |
| 2 | ST1 | < re:d pe:n> | ((student echo)) |
| 3 | TEA | ((singing)) mm... °red pen° (<red pen>) | ((Teacher looks for a red pen and shows it to the class)) |
| 4 | ST1 | <u>Red pen</u> | |
| 5 | TEA | A <u>red pen</u> | |

6 ST2 (singing) I have a pen (.) I have [an apple

G z e g t r v " 4 < " I T Q W R " D 0 " K p u v t w e v k q p " q h " ÷ o c t m k p i ' "

1 TEA The ones that we've looked(.) right (.) and then if you put something specific of model two or model one you write down I like this better and **mark it in a different colour** (.)you write down like a justification=in a way of why did you copy that (.) si o no (.) ten minutes (.) ten minutes and we finish(.) al right (.) pues venga

To ensure comprehension and try to give a very specific and clear-cut instruction to group A, the teacher uses an actual pen, to really stress the idea that they need to mark the differences in another color. Along with the use of realia, the teacher uses repetition, emphasis and over-enunciation to stress the desired word; red pen. Interestingly, and showing the effectiveness of the strategy of using realia together with repetition, ST1 repeats the utterance copying teacher's pronunciation. This *student-echo* –adapting Walsh's (2011) terminology- indicates that at least that student not only fully comprehended the idea that the teacher was trying to put forward but he also was able to produce the word on his own, using teacher's pronunciation as a model. The teacher knows the concept is very simple and takes the student's repetition as an opportunity to make a "gag" out of the 'red pen' emphasis. She, then, sings a little bit, and repeats the words "red pen" this time giving it a fun tone. The episode provokes the reaction of another student which connects the "red pen" with a song he knows, and he sings to his peer: "I have a pen I have an apple". By doing so, the student is demonstrating willingness to practice the item which leads to the appropriation of it, evidenced by the connection the student makes between what the teacher said and an element of his own life: that is, the famous viral song of "Apple pen".

In contrast, in group B the teacher only gave the instruction of "marking it in a different color" as we can appreciate in turn 1 of excerpt 2. Notice that here, the teacher is articulating an *instructional adaption* – using (Parsons et al, 2018) wording- to a new context where students do not need clear instructions or repetitions to understand that differences need to be marked in a different color. There is no need to specify that they need to use a "red" pen or use repetition because student's comprehension of such a simple concept is already expected.

Another aspect to notice is the great amount of multimodal strategies that the teacher uses to support everything she says. See appendix one to confirm that we checked both boxes

of point number 13, relative to the use of body language, hand movements, posture etc. It is, indeed, true that she accompanies her speech with actions in both classes. The movements in group A, though, are much more exaggerated and emphasized as the ones in group B. Take this excerpt, as an example:

Excerpt 3. GROUP A: Multimodal strategies associated to v j g " e q p e g r v " q h " ÷ d q v j

- | | | | |
|---|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | TEA | So in pairs (.) you both (.) both (.) els dos (.) els dos mireu differences of the text on the right (0,2) | ((puts hands together))
((marks a two with her fingers))
((Points right with the arm)) |
| 2 | St3 | A:! Los dos! | |

In turn 1 of excerpt 3 TEA uses three different body movements to ensure comprehension of the concept ‘both’ which might be pretty unfamiliar to the low level class which almost never received instructions or full classes in English. She first puts his hands together marking with her arms the interaction between the pair (see figure 6), then she shows two fingers (see figure 7) to indicate that both means “two” and lastly, she points right with her arm (see figure 8) to physically indicate which text should students give feedback to, first.



Figure n°6 < " ò d q · Figure n°7 < " ò d q v Figure n°8 < " ò q p ·
t k i j v ö

The multimodal resources supporting the TEA’s speech are proven successful by ST3’s contestation in turn 2 of excerpt 3: “a: els dos” which is an indicator of a previous state of

incomprehension turned into comprehension. We cannot know if such comprehension comes from the body language support, the repetition technique or the self-translation to L1 that TEA also decided to do on this turn. What is undeniable, though, is that ST3 finally understood that they were supposed to give feedback to the text in pairs. Body language on itself may not be effective but it is indeed a very good complementary tool to teacher talk. As Jia & Wang (2010) point out:

“The proper and decent body language often plays an important complementary role in teachers' verbal information in the classroom teaching, which imperceptibly affects students and makes them inspired and benefited from it.” (18)

Moving on to a third strategy the TEA uses to make herself understood, that is: the use of L1. It is very interesting to examine teacher's use of L1 because the functions it has in the two classes are rather different. Whereas L1 is used as a needed, sometimes, essential tool to ensure comprehension in the low level class in the high level class it has a rather different function in the high level class. Far from being a “comprehension” tool, L1 is used as a way to make teacher talk “closer” to the students, it is often said in a high speed rate and related with humor moments where the teacher wants to connect with the students' emotions rather than their knowledge. Let us look, first, at one excerpt from the low level class where L1 is used as a ‘comprehension’ tool:

Excerpt 4: GROUP A. Using L1 as a comprehension tool

- 1 TEA Now (.) is there somewhere (.) somewhere in the text you said (.) this=the model is better than mine (.) the model is <better>=mejor (.) than mine (0,2) when did you think that↑ porqué razones (.) for what reasons↑(.) give me an example (.) give me an example (.) something that you want to write down from here to there= give me an example
- 2 ST1 Como?
- 3 TEA Que me des un ejemplo de something that you are going to use from here (.) in your text

In turn 1 of excerpt 4 the teacher uses a lot of repetition and self-translation as a way to give a clear instruction. Even so, the student does not understand what the teacher says and she, then, translates the main instruction, that is “to give an example” to L1. What the teacher is doing here is not more than what Gajo (2007) described when arguing that in order to un-densify language teachers employ reformulations and paraphrases, followed by translations. It is true, however, that in this excerpt translation is given as a “quick label” which has been considered to be not too effective by some researchers.

In group B L1 was clearly not used as a “label” but, rather, I argue, as a support for a *clowning* episode. Let us look at a moment where teacher, rather more briefly, uses L1 in a turn:

G z e g t r v " 7 < " I T Q W R " D 0 " W u k p i " N 3 " v q " ÷ e n q y p ø " c p f " i

- 1 TEA =Yes (.) some of you already did (.) like include a metaphor (.) >maybe< (.) but (.) what I am saying is that (.) maybe we don't need to copy the same metaphor (.) but from this model we can (.) we can get that (.) >Bueno mira (.) pues< I do not copy this one but (.) I think that this model gave me the idea of doing a metaphor. (.) or not do a metaphor (.) but (.) trying to be a little bit poetic about something (.) or (.) I don't know (.) I hope that when you look at the moon (.) you realize that I am also looking at the same moon (.) I don't know (.) you know (.) something like that
- 2 ST3 What's the time ((in a sexy Voice))

The short utterance pronounced in L1 is made, as I understand it, to respond to student's boredom and try to connect with them using, only briefly their L1, accompanied by a histrionic body language (see figure 9). Here, the teacher was trying to encourage students to be creative and include metaphors in their texts. To go with the idea of “creativity” the teacher played the role of a “creative person” by adopting the tone and posture of the cliché of an arrogant artist, and used a high speed utterance in L1 as a way of introducing, some acting or, even, clowning in her instruction. ST3's response, also trying to be humorous, demonstrates that the “gag” was successful and students not only understood the idea of “creativity” but the irony and humor that the teacher presented it with.



H k i w t g " ; 0 " W u k p i " N 3 " v q " ÷ e n q y p ø " v j g " k f g c " q h " w u k
elegant

To wrap this first “learner-convergent language” part up it is worth mentioning a fourth strategy used by the teacher very differently in both classes: that is speech rate, or as worded in Escobar Urmeneta's (2017): when “teacher slows down” to put forward and stress a

particular concept of his or her speech. There is a tendency in group A to over enunciate, extra articulate and reduce the speed of speech when dealing with the basic concepts of the instruction. Consider these examples:

Excerpt 6: GROUP A. Low speech rate to give essential instructions.

- 1 TEA Now (.) because here you cannot see both text (.) I am going to give you a photocopy so that you can have it in your table (0,3) you can **<decide>** if you want to compare it with model one↑ or model two↓(.) so you decide one (.) and you compare it with that ↓ (.) ok ↑ (0,2) and at the end you write down (.) model one(.) 6 differences

- 2 TEA So we write it down (0,2) **<Everything that we find>** we are going to write it down with a **<red pen>** (.) red pen

In group B, however, this clarifications or repetitions are made by speeding up the speech, probably as a consequence of TEA’s tendency to repeat key concepts even though knowing that the concept has probably already been understood by these particular students in this particular context. Consider these examples:

Excerpt 10. GROUP B. Clarifications made by speeding speech rate

- 1 TEA If I whatever (.) whatever (.) now (.) here we’ve got the correct grammar structure (.) don’t we = If I were you I_would= what is that >**what is that** < is that a [past simple
((smiling like acknowledging they now))
 - 2 ST2 Conditional]=
 - 3 TEA =That is a conditional (.) yes (.) no = so we can use the model to make sure if (.) my conditional >**the one that I wrote**< is correct or not= si
- [...]

Note how both utterances “what is that” and “the one that I wrote” are already implicit in the main sentence, in other words: avoidable. The first one is a repetition and the second one is an extension of the use of the word “my” conditional. In both cases teacher uses a high speed clarification because she is adapting to a class where students do not really need them or, at least, as she knows, students are able to understand fast clarifications.

5.2 The facilitation of Interactional Space (CIC)

To analyze the teacher talk from an interactional point of view now, we will base our analysis, as announced in the *SETT* coined by Walsh (2011). Again, the commentary of

every single strategy being used in order to display CIC would be too long for the extension of this paper. Hence, we will highlight only some of the most interesting differences between teacher talk strategies in both classes. Both full lesson cover sheets of *SETT* can be found, though, in appendix 3 for further information.

None of the two excerpts can be considered as exemplary CIC demonstrations, the interaction established in both of them is a bit limited, with a clear active role of the teacher and no extended learner turns. In another type of study this limitation could be attributed to learners' low level of achievement. That is not a thing we can do here mainly because we are analyzing a class with a pretty elevated level with students who are perfectly capable of constructing long contributions. Blaming bad interactions to students' language limitations, however, is, I believe, a rather short way of sweep the problem under the rug. In other words, the establishment of a good classroom interaction is most of the times responsibility of the teacher and not always a response to student's higher or lower level. Johnson (1995) argued in favor of that when asserting that "Teachers control what goes on in classrooms primarily through the ways in which they use language." (9) Hopefully our analysis will demonstrate such an affirmation. In fact, for many of the reasons we will know further explore there are much more features of CIC being displayed in the low level class, where students should have more problems of expression than in the high level class.

Let us start by trying to find out why features A to G of *SETT* are null in group B. There is no trace of scaffolding, direct repair or referential questions, for example. As I understand it, that is only a consequence of three very common strategies among teachers which have been already reported to be "an obstruction" to displaying a successful CIC (Walsh, 2002).

1. Extended teacher turns.
2. Fear to silence, no extended wait-time: teacher almost interrupts learner turns sometimes.
3. Lack of an appropriate number of referential or direct questions.

As the egg and the hen, there is no way of knowing if extended teacher turns are a cause of strategy number 2 and 3 or if strategies 2 and 3 lead to extended teacher turns. In any way, what is clear is that because of all these reasons much learner opportunities were obstructed.

In between the rather long teacher turns the only small contributions made by students were all full of overlapping which shows a lot of teacher interruptions and hence, indicates the existence of a rather unsuccessful CIC:

Excerpt 11. GROUP B. Lack of silence and teacher interruptions.

1 TEA But isn't it (.) isn't it ni:ce↑ (.) isn't it nice↑ to: em: (.) to: (0,2) add like a little bit of a metaphor or almost poetry (.) a little bit of poetry (.) some of you already did, uh↑ (.) some of you already did that↓
2 ST2 Yo lo he hecho (.) pero:=
3 TEA =Yes (.) some of you already did (.) like include a metaphor (.) >maybe< (.) but (.) what I am saying is that (.) maybe we don't need to copy the same metaphor (.) but from this model we can (.) we can get that (.) >Bueno mira (.) pues< I do not copy this one but (.) I think that this model gave me the idea of doing a metaphor. (.) or not do a metaphor (.) but (.) trying to be a little bit poètic about something (.) or (.) I don't know (.) I hope that when you look at the moon (.) you realize that I am also looking at the same moon (.) I don't know↓ (.) you know↑(.) something like that↓

As we see in turns 1 to 3 of Excerpt 11 TEA is interrupting the learner's turn to complete her explanation. This, then, is not a supportive interruption leading to a smooth interaction. In them we cannot see what McCarthy (2003) referred to as good 'listenership', that is: they do not signal that the speaker has been understood or that the channels are open and the communication is working well in any way. What they do signal is rather the contrary, a poor teacher 'listenership' putting her explanation ahead of the learner's contribution which is harshly stopped by her speech.

Turns 1 to 3 also demonstrate a long number of micropauses but no real silence in between utterances which indicates that the teacher is clearly, although maybe unconsciously, constructing a speech with no pauses as they are seen as a sign of weakness or low fluency. Studying T-S previous research, nevertheless, it has become clear that interactional space is maximized, and not compromised as some might think, through increased wait-time (Walsh, 2011).

As far as questions are concerned it is worth seeing that the only direct question the teacher does in the excerpt is one that does not lead to a very long learner contribution (see turns 1 to 3, excerpt 12). In order to elicit the grammar structure of a certain sentence written in a second conditional in the model the teacher asks directly to the student's "What's this?". Seeing they do not answer, she fills the silence again asking another direct question that will be obviously wrong to high level students "is that a past simple?"

One student provides the correct answer, but, as a consequence of the very direct and specific phrasing of the question the learner contribution is again, a rather short one.

Excerpt 12: GROUP B. Direct Question made by the teacher

- 1 TEA If I whatever (.) whatever (.) now↓ (.) here we've got the correct grammar structure (.) don't we↑= If I were you I would= what is that↑ >what is that↑< is that a [past simple↑
- 2 ST2 Conditional]=
- 3 TEA =That is a conditional (.) yes (.) no = so we can use the model to make sure if (.) my conditional >the one that I wrote< is correct or not= si

Much has been already said about teacher questions, to stick to Walsh's ideas as we have been doing so far. What the teacher could have done to improve her CIC would be trying to follow questions with expressions such as 'why' which result correspondingly to longer turns by learners. (Walsh, 2011: 173)

The great amount of confirmation checks, however, suggests one of the causes of some of the online, and in this case not very successful, decision the teacher made in this lesson. Students' were really tired and un-participative at that lesson. It was the last hour of class and half of the class was on in a school trip in France, so there was a clear atmosphere of indifference in the class. Adapting his speech to that situation the teacher tried to confirm continuously not that students were comprehending but to ensure they were in fact listening. In his eyes and body attitude the teacher read their boredom and disinterest towards the task so facing that micro-context or, in words of Dewey (1910), that fork on the road, the teacher decided to explicitly express what she was seeing and suggest an alternative activity to do at the end of that one. See the ending sentence of turn 3 of excerpt 12:

- 3 TEA [...] you know what I mean↑ (0,3) si o no↑ (0,5) or you don't care↓ and you want to do a song↓

A whole different story happened in group A. As we previously suggested student's lower listening comprehension competence and their unfamiliarity with receiving instructions in English lead to a greater teacher effort to ensure comprehension and display a rather successful CIC in class. The teacher, for example, shapes the discourse of the learners "helping learners to say what they mean by using the most appropriate language to do so" (Walsh, 2011: 172). This process of shaping occurs through reformulations, as we can see in excerpt 13 or modelling, as we can see in excerpt 14.

Excerpt 13. GROUP A. Shaping Learners contributions through a Reformulation

- 1 St1 Ah: I use a sentence (.) I like
2 TEA Well done! You used a sentence that you liked (.) which one↑ what did you write originally↑ (0,15)

Excerpt 14. GROUP A. Shaping Learners contributions through a Modelling

- 1 St2 Yo he puesto I like directamente
2 TEA You wrote I like right away=no↑(0,2) directly
3 St2 Yes, directly

In Excerpt 13, then, for example, ST1 gave a ungrammatical sentence “I use a sentence I like” which was reformulated into the correct structure the teacher knew he was going for “you used a sentence that you liked” adding the connector that and the past mark to the sentence. Excerpt 14, on the other hand, is an example of how ST2 used what the teacher said as a model to their contribution, see the repletion of the word “directly”.

Let us now briefly look at Excerpt 15.

Excerpt 15. GROUP A. Direct question and content feedback

- 1 TEA Don't you think that sometimes (.) it's ni:ce to <introduce> what you are going to say↑ this is like a good connector (.) uh↑ a little bit about me↑=and then you start writing↓ it's good(.) no↑ it's a way of <introducing> what you are going to do (.) because (.) what is a connector↑ (.) uh↑ (0.10)
2 St2 Lo de: para juntar frases no↑=a word link phrases (.) no↑ (.) [°no se (.) si:°xxx
3 TEA Yes, link↓] (.) we use them to link two sentences or paragraphs↓ (.) Well done↓

In this part of the discourse the TEA not only manages to use a rather successful direct question but also gives content feedback to the student ignoring, in this case, the errors made by the learner when trying to explain what a connector is “a word link phrases”. What we see in turn 3 is an evidence, then, of content feedback by the teacher who responds to the message of “linking” and not the linguistic forms used to articulate it which is very beneficial in this case to facilitate a better interaction and a latter learner contribution.

A continuous display of using learner convergent language as explained in the previous section plus a good use of supportive techniques to ensure a good interaction such as the lack of direct repair, scaffolding learner's contributions and some successful direct questions are all indicators of the great effort the teacher was doing to be understood and create a space for knowledge and acquisition in group A. In her successful adaptation to the different context the teacher can be said to have displayed a rather good CIC. Hopefully

by now we have an idea of all the strategies or, at least, some of the most important ones, used by the teacher to make herself understood and establish a good interaction in class. The causes as to why the interactions and teacher talk were so different when dealing with the same activity in two different classes are, again, response to a certain number of online decisions made by the teacher depending on the context and will be next further explored and commented.

6. Conclusion

In order to conclude our paper, we need to go back to our research questions and see if our paper and our data was successful in finding good answers to them. Starting with our most general and basic question (RQ.1) which mainly asked how did the teacher adapt her instructions to her student's need we must say that there definitely were indicators of teacher's adaptation of the teacher to both the context of the classroom and micro-context of each lessons. As to the *how*, and moving on to our most specific research question (RQ.1.1) we certainly found a set of strategies used by the teacher in the two categories we wanted to analyze that is: a) using learner convergent language and b) the facilitation of interaction space. It is worth mentioning that, as we have previously stated, there was a greater display of interactional resources group A (standard achievers) than in group B (high achievers), even though the activity and the teacher was the same. If we understand CIC as "teachers' and learners' ability to use interaction as a tool for mediating and assisting learning in a certain context" the only fact that teacher talk was so different when teaching the same task to different types of students is in itself an indicator that that teacher was, maybe unconsciously, making use of her CIC. She was adapting herself to a different situation and mediating and assisting learning using different strategies with more or less success. To this extent, we can now answer (RQ.1.2): *To what an extent those strategies can be contrasted between groups?* by affirming they can, indeed, be contrasted and what's more it is only from that contrast that interesting points can be made about teacher-student interaction; like, for example, how a greater number of strategies of using learner convergent language arise in lower level classes than in those with a greater English level, where teachers tend to feel rather more comfortable. From this state of comfortability, probably, teacher talk might be negatively affected and learning opportunities, hence, diminished.

Much in the way of Walsh's (2002) study where he talked about construction and obstruction of teacher talk, this paper can be seen as a continuation to that one. It would be interesting to conceive this study as a contrast, too, between successful teacher interactional resources and those which are not so beneficial to ensure students learning. We could,

indeed, take Group A as set of examples of good display of CIC and successful strategies of using learner convergent language and taking group B as an example of those strategies that obstruct an establishment of a quality interaction. Figure 10 shows a table of the strategies we found out in our data to be helpful for the establishment of a good interaction and great comprehension in class versus those strategies which prevent that from happening.

Constructive interactional resources		Obstructive interactional resources
Use of learner convergent language	Facilitation of interactional space	Fear to silence or wait-time
Use of realia	Scaffolding: modelling,	Lack of quality “why”
Use of L1: both as a comprehension support and as a way to get the task closer to students, (clowning).	reformulation	direct or referential questions.
Use of body language to support harder concepts.	Successful direct questions	Extended teacher turns
	Content feedback.	

Figure 10. Constructive and obstructive interactional resources found in analyzed teacher talk

As to the last research question we suggested (RQ. 1.3), dealing with the motivations of the different use of strategies in each class, these are infinite and very difficult to pin down as they respond to a great number of items. Student’s behavior, feelings, looks, body language, teacher knowledge of the task, teacher experience, feelings etc. just to name a few. However, in the greater context we can justify, always partly, some of the teacher’s decisions to:

- 1) *The Level of achievement of students*: The teacher displays a greater number of learner convergent language strategies and interaction facilitation resources in the low achievement class because she responds to a lower level of comprehension, sometimes even explicitly showed by students, but mostly known from the start. In group B, however, the teacher knows students have no comprehension problems and she then, gets tempted to speak for longer turns.

- 2) *The feelings in the atmosphere of the class*: Students in group B showed a greater indifference for the task. That day, at that moment, for a great number of reasons, they were less participative and energetic, so the teacher took a more active role as a consequence and continuously used “check marks” like “*si* ” or “*right* ” to make sure students were listening.

6.1 Indications for further research

I am aware that this study has lots of limitations. It is nothing but an analysis of two very particular excerpts of a really specific case. That’s why it would probably be a good idea to establish a more informed dialogue with Walsh’s work to explore the notions of “obstructing” and “constructing” a good CIC with a greater number of teachers, so that differences between teachers can be observed.

For extension purposes, also, this paper could not link the analysis of the teacher-student interaction with students’ amount of noticing, and success achieved in the writing task. Further studies could try to explore the connection between a good teacher guidance and classroom interaction where teachers really guide students and show them how to ‘notice’ and learn from comparing and giving feedback to their own texts.

6.2 About the task and my process of reflection-on-action

If this paper is going to be a great contribution to the previous research or not, it’s something we cannot yet affirm. It has been really helpful to me, and it can be helpful to other teachers too, because it taught me to very important things:

The impact that a real addressee in a writing task has on student motivation.

“Alba, esta noche he estado pensando que le diré al refugiado. Le estado dando vueltas y lo tengo ya escrito en el móvil. Ayer en la cama lo escribí. Cuando las enviaremos? ”

In a low-level group of a high-complexity high school one student referred as naughty by various teachers told me this at the beginning of session 2. I was utterly shocked. Students are so used to writing essays addressed only to the teacher that they have lost, they don’t know about the spark that lays behind the real exercise of filling a blank page with words that will actually be read and received by someone. When I first showed the video trying to illustrate the refugee situation in the class I started seeing some faces of intrigue, fascination, sadness. I cannot talk for all the classrooms but I can assure you that students’ faces really changed when I asked them: What if we could

write to a real refugee? What if we could send hope, an actually draw a smile of a real person who is in need of one?

Most of the times, students' high motivation results in a greater number of opportunities of learning. In fact, a motivated student is a student who will make an effort to improve what he has written, an effort we definitely not get with a writing topic called "Describe what you did in your last vacation."

How helpful it is to reflect-on-action as a way to improve as a teacher

Barlett (1990) assured that "reflection has a double meaning. It involves the relationship between an individual's thought and action and the relationship between an individual teacher and his or her membership in a larger collective called society" (204). I couldn't agree more.

To see and reflect about helpful and unhelpful strategies of my own teaching has really opened my eyes and showed me the road as to how to start creating a good interaction in class. Once I become aware of my advantages I will be able to share them with a larger community. That is what I am doing right now, after all. If through that process of sharing my process of reflection-on-action another teacher is able to find tools to improve his or her teaching the circle will be complete and all the hard work will be worth it.

• • •

To conclude my paper there is nothing left to say but encourage, you, teacher, to think of your teacher talk and your teacher-student interactions critically. I did and I can know strongly affirm that next time I encounter a fork on the road my set of options will be larger and better informed and hopefully I will take the way that leads to better interactions, better results and better learning.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1. Acronyms used in this paper

In order of appearance:

FLC	Foreign Language Classroom
CIC	Classroom interactional competence
RP	Reflective Practitioner
SETT	Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk
TEA	teacher
ST	student

C r r g p f k z " 4 0 " E j g e m - c o n v e r g e n t l a n g u a g e W u k p i " n g c t p g

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION CHECKLIST:TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTION IN TEACHER-LED ACTIVITIES²

USING LEARNER CONVERGENT LANGUAGE

Class: 3rd of ESO (low achievers)

1. She/He keeps explanations short and to the point	X
2. She/He slows down	X
3. She/He uses pauses to give students time to process the information	
4. She/He uses pauses to create expectations	
5. Uses a high pitch	X
6. She/He exaggerates intonation	X
7. She/He uses short utterances	X
8. She/He uses abundant discursive resources like pauses, discourse markers, intonation, etc. to mark the beginning and end of utterances	X
9. She/He raises her volume of voice	X
10. She/He lowers her volume or whispers	
11. She/He makes eye contact with individual students	X
12. She/He sweeps the classroom with your gaze to include the whole classroom	X
13. She/He accompanies her utterances with facial expressions and hand and body movements	X
14. She/He moves around the classroom to show closeness to all students	X
15. She/He repeats her/his utterances word by word with little or no paraphrasing	X
16. She/He paraphrases often	X
17. She/He selects the words that she uses carefully, trying to make use of cognates, simple vocabulary or words that have been recently introduced, etc.	X
18. She/He makes reference to things which are well known to all students such as brands, titles of TV series, songs, celebrities, etc	
19. She/He accepts clarification requests and actively encourages them	
20. She/He writes key words and phrases on the blackboard	
21. She/He draws on the BB, screen or any other surface	X
22. She/He uses diagrams, pictograms, maps, pictures, etc.	

² Escobar Urmeneta, C. (2017). Classroom Observation Checklist: Teacher-Student Interaction in Teacher-Led Activities. In: *Empowering Approaches To Teacher Education In L2-Medium Instruction. Module 7 - Study Guide*. Master's Degree In Teacher Development For Foreign Language Education And Content And Language Integrated Learning. Pp 73-77.

23. She/He constructs posters, exhibits, diagrams, etc. together with the students using items brought by them	
24. She/He uses realia	X
25. She/He avoids long strings of instructions, instead asking learners to 'assist' her	
26. She/He uses overstatements and provocative statements	
27. She/He grades and structures the amount of information she provides in order not to overload students	X
28. She/He self-translates When? What for? In what proportion?	X After paraphrasing and seeing little sign of comprehension in students. Briefly.
29. She/He uses L1 When? What for? In what proportion?	X After paraphrasing and seeing little sign of comprehension in students. Briefly.
30. She/He exploits other strategies. Which ones?	


CLASSROOM OBSERVATION CHECKLIST:TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTION IN TEACHER-LED ACTIVITIES³

USING LEARNER-CONVERGENT LANGUAGE

Class: 4th of ESO (high achievers)

1. She/He keeps explanations short and to the point	
2. She/He slows down	
3. She/He uses pauses to give students time to process the information	
4. She/He uses pauses to create expectations	
5. Uses a high pitch	X
6. She/He exaggerates intonation	X
7. She/He uses short utterances	
8. She/He uses abundant discursive resources like pauses, discourse markers, intonation, etc. to mark the beginning and end of utterances	X
9. She/He raises her volume of voice	X
10. She/He lowers her volume or whispers	
11. She/He makes eye contact with individual students	X
12. She/He sweeps the classroom with your gaze to include the whole classroom	X
13. She/He accompanies her utterances with facial expressions and hand and body movements	X
14. She/He moves around the classroom to show closeness to all students	
15. She/He repeats her/his utterances word by word with little or no paraphrasing	
16. She/He paraphrases often	
17. She/He selects the words that she uses carefully, trying to make use of cognates, simple vocabulary or words that have been recently introduced, etc.	X
18. She/He makes reference to things which are well known to all students such as brands, titles of TV series, songs, celebrities, etc	
19. She/He accepts clarification requests and actively encourages them	
20. She/He writes key words and phrases on the blackboard	
21. She/He draws on the BB, screen or any other surface	X
22. She/He uses diagrams, pictograms, maps, pictures, etc.	

³ Escobar Urmeneta, C. (2017). Classroom Observation Checklist: Teacher-Student Interaction in Teacher-Led Activities. In: *Empowering Approaches To Teacher Education In L2-Medium Instruction. Module 7 - Study Guide*. Master's Degree In Teacher Development For Foreign Language Education And Content And Language Integrated Learning. Pp 73-77.

23. She/He constructs posters, exhibits, diagrams, etc. together with the students using items brought by them	
24. She/He uses realia	
25. She/He avoids long strings of instructions, instead asking learners to 'assist' her	
26. She/He uses overstatements and provocative statements	X
27. She/He grades and structures the amount of information she provides in order not to overload students	
28. She/He self-translates When? What for? In what proportion?	X To adopt a tone that is closer and more relatable or motivating for students. (clowning) 
29. She/He uses L1 When? What for? In what proportion?	X To adopt a tone that is closer and more relatable or motivating for students. (clowning)
30. She/He exploits other strategies. Which ones?	

Appendix 3: SETT Lesson Cover Sheets

SETT: Self Evaluation of Teacher Talk

Lesson Cover Sheet

A. Lesson Details

Teacher's name: Alba Serrano

Class: 3rd of ESO

Level: A1/A2 (Low Level class)

Date: April, 2018

Overall Aim: Give instructions as to how “notice” differences between student’s text and a Model.

Age: 13-15

Materials: whiteboard, projector, model text, student’s original texts.

B. Lesson Modes identified

Managerial mode (main focus is on setting up the activity). Briefly at the end also *skills and systems mode* (focusing on concepts such as ‘introducing’ or ‘connector’).

C. Self-Evaluation of teacher talk

To what an extend do you think that your use of language and pedagogic purpose coincided? How appropriate was your use of language in this segment, bearing in mind your stated aims and the modes operating?

I believe my language came hand by hand with my pedagogic purpose in this excerpt as far as *managerial mode* is concerned. Knowing the limitations that this student’s level of English mean I set out a very basic and structured aim: that is to give clear instructions as to how to “mark” and “see” differences between their texts and the model. I used a lot of repetition and confirmation checks so students really knew how to realize the task.

As far as the content (*skill and systems mode*) of the differences students were being guided to notice, the classroom discussion could have really been better. The constant overlapping of speech, extended teacher turns and too specific questions generated short learner turns and obstructed the creation of a better and richer classroom discourse about the grammar and coherent concepts when dealing with the genre of the ‘letter’.

Feature of Teacher Talk	Examples from your recoding
A. Scaffolding	<p>Reformulation:</p> <p>4 St1 Ah: I use a sentence (.) I like 5 TEA Well done! You used a sentence that you liked (.) which one↑ what did you write originally↑ (0,15)</p> <p>Modelling:</p> <p>10 St2 Yo he puesto I like directamente 11 TEA You wrote I like right away=no↑(0,2) directly 12 St2 Yes, directly</p> <p>17 TEA So with] the red pen you mark all the differences (.) ok↑ what we are going to do now (.) everyone that is <on the right↑> everyone that is on the right↑ (.) please put your text in the middle of the text= [>vosaltres sou un trio so xxx<= 18 St1 In the mi:ddle] COPYING PRONUNCIATION 19 ST3 In the middle ((singing))</p>
B. Direct repair	NONE.
C. Content Feedback	<p>13 TEA Don't you think that sometimes (.) it's nice to <introduce> what you are going to say↑ this is like a good connector (.) uh↑ a little bit about me↑=and then you start writing↓ it's good(.) no↑ it's a way of <introducing> what you are going to do (.) because (.) what is a connector↑ (.) uh↑ (0.10) 14 St2 Lo de: para juntar frases no↑=a word link phrases (.) no↑ (.) [°no se (.) si:°xxx 15 TEA Yes, link↓] (.) we use them to link two sentences or paragraphs↓ (.) Well done↓</p>
D. Extended wait-time	NONE.
E. Referential Questions	NONE.
F. Seeking clarification	<p>Student ask teacher for clarification:</p> <p>1 TEA</p>

Now (.) is there somewhere (.) somewhere in the text you said (.) this=the model is better than mine (.) the model is <better>=mejor (.) than mine (0,2) when did you think that↑ porqué razones (.) for what reasons↑(.) give me an example (.) give me an example (.) something that you want to write down from here to there= give me an example

2 St1 Como?

3 TEA Que me des un ejemplo de something that you are going to use from here (.) in your text

G. Extended learner turn NONE.

H. Teacher Echo **Teacher repeats a learner contribution:**
 8 ST1 Eh: you can
 9 TEA You can (.) ok (.) you can (.) yes you can=so you wrote for example

V g c e j g t " t g r g c vous litttergnceee j g t ø

17 TEA So with] the red pen you mark all the differences (.) ok↑ what we are going to do now (.) everyone that is <on the right↑> everyone that is on the right↑ (.) please put your text in the middle of the text=

[>vosaltres sou un trio so xxx<=

18 St1 In the mi:ddle]

19 ST3 In the middle ((singing))

20 TEA >In the middle of the pair<=everyone who is on the <right> (.) derecha↑ (.) we put the text here in the middle of the table [and now

...

46 TEA No you are looking now at the text that you have in the middle of the table↓ (.) és a dir (.) queralt's text (0,2) ((clicks fingers to ask for a response)) marti's text (.) joel's text (.) Biel's text (.) si↑

I. Teacher interruptions
 6 St1 I (.) you can (.) I ponia ((reading)) "I truly wish you the best for the future↑ and please don't give up↓ (.) [e: (.) I
 7 TEA OK]=so what did you originally write↑

14 St2 Lo de: para juntar frases no↑=a word link phrases (.) no↑ [°no se si:xxx

15 TEA Yes, link↓(.)] we use them to link two sentences or paragraphs↓ (.) Well done↓

	37	ST5	Pero a ver (.) yo ya en lo primero he puesto “hi” en vez de “hello”=
	38	TEA	=Difference↓ (.) [that’s it↓ (.) that’s one difference↓
J. Extended teacher turn	9	TEA	You can (.) ok (.) you can (.) yes you can=so you wrote for example (.) this sentence (.) no↑ this sentence (.) I truly wish you the best for the future (.) o: (.) amazing= now instead of this you wrote “you can” no ↑ you can (.) bueno (.) that’s a difference (.) that’s a difference of what↑ of expression (0,2) this is one way of expressing it and this another way of expressing it (.) yes ↑= and it’s very <nic:e> to use the model and improve our texts= yes↑ But I want to point out something more↓ (.) something more↓(0,2) a little bit about me (.) a little bit about me= yes↓ (0,2= when you started talking about likes and dislikes did you started saying “and now I am going to talk about me” or you started “I like” (.) que heu fet↑ (0,10)
K. Turn Completion			NONE.
L. Display questions	13	TEA	Don’t you think that sometimes (.) it’s ni:ce to <introduce> what you are going to say↑ this is like a good connector (.) uh↑ a little bit about me↑=and then you start writing↓ it’s good(.) no↑ it’s a way of <introducing> what you are going to do (.) because (.) what is a connector↑ (.) uh↑ (0.10)
M. Form-focused feedback	4	St1	Ah: I use a sentence (.) I like
	5	TEA	Well done! You used a sentence that you liked (.) which one↑ what did you write originally↑
N. Confirmation checks	22	TEA	la mia (.) si so (.) now (0,1) both (0,1) els dos (0,1) you look for differences in thi:s text↓(0,2) now both of you (.) els dos (.) look for differences in this text↓ { g (0,3) everytime that you find a difference↑= you mark it with red (.) QM

SETT: Self Evaluation of Teacher Talk

Lesson Cover Sheet

D. Lesson Details

Teacher's name: Alba Serrano

Class: 4th of ESO

Level: B2 (High Level class)

Date: April, 2018

Overall Aim: Give instructions as to how “notice” differences between student’s text and a Model.

Age: 14-16

Materials: whiteboard, projector, model text, student’s original texts.

E. Lesson Modes identified

Skills and systems mode (Guiding students’ attention to grammar concepts such as ‘conditionals’ or ‘expressions’ to improve that specific letter).
Briefly at the end *Managerial mode* (focus is on setting up the activity, giving instructions as to how to write down differences).

F. Self-Evaluation of teacher talk

To what an extend do you think that your use of language and pedagogic purpose coincided? How appropriate was your use of language in this segment, bearing in mind your stated aims and the modes operating?

There was a real gap between the way I was expressing myself and the purpose of the activity. Students were supposed to be encouraged to contribute with their own ideas as to what differences could they find between their text and the model, but a great deal of overlapping and the various teacher extended turns obstructed almost every opportunity of student’s participation.

Other features such as the lack of display questions or referential questions and the fear of extended wait time is also responsible for the low effectivity of the interaction. Students were not prompted to speak, so they took a passive role in response to the

too active role of the teacher who behaved almost as a lecturer, rather than a facilitator or mediator of interaction.

Feature of Teacher Talk	Examples from your recoding
O. Scaffolding	NONE.
P. Direct repair	NONE.
Q. Content Feedback	NONE.
R. Extended wait-time	NONE.
S. Referential Questions	NONE.
T. Seeking clarification	NONE.
U. Extended learner turn	NONE.
V. Teacher Echo	<p>V g c e j g t " t g r g c v u " v g c e j g t ø</p> <p>5 TEA</p> <p>Another thing (.) for example (.) and this is about= expression↓ (.) no grammar (.) now this is about expression↓= let's make it pretty (.) vale↑=let's make it professional.</p> <p>...</p> <p>9 TEA the American one (.) now look at this (.) this is about expression (.) [expression again</p>
W. Teacher interruptions	19 ST2 Yo lo he hecho (.) pero:=

20 TEA =Yes (.) some of you already did (.) like include a metaphor (.) >maybe< (.) but (.) what I am saying is that (.) maybe we don't need to copy the same metaphor (.) but from this model we can (.) we can get that (.) >Bueno mira (.) pues< I do not copy this one but (.) I think that this model gave me the idea of doing a metaphor. (.) or not do a metaphor (.) but (.) trying to be a little bit poètic about something (.) or (.) I don't know (.) I hope that when you look at the moon (.) you realize that I am also looking at the same moon (.) I don't know↓ (.) you know↑(.) something like that↓

X. Extended teacher turn

5 TEA =That is a conditional (.) yes (.) no↑= so we can use the model to make sure if (.) my conditional >the one that I wrote< is correct or not= si↑

Another thing (.) for example (.) and this is about= expression↓ (.) no grammar (.) now this is about expression↓= let's make it pretty (.) vale↑=let's make it professional↓= for example= eh (.) let's see (0,3) ((reading)) Although I will never be able to understand your long hard journey (.) what is that↑ that is a way of saying ((double air quotes)) empathy= you remember the sentences of empathy that we created (.) so this is another one(.) it's pretty (.) no↑ >I think I like it< ah:= although I will never be able to understand your long hard journey (.) so for exemple (.) if you have written a sentence of empathy that (.) you like però it could be improved↑ (0,2) you can take this sentence= >and say< Ok (.) this sentence I like it (.) I like this one because the expression is better (.) you kow what I mean↑ (0,3) si o no↑ (0,5) or you don't care↓ and you want to do a song↓

1 TEA Some of you were using the models↑=some of you >were not using the models↓< >vale<=now the question is (.) can we use this to improve what we wrote↑ I think we can (.) no↑ somethings are interesting in terms of (.) expression ((double air quotes)) >most of the time< no↑ (.) because if you are correcting the grammar you can correct it and that's it=but maybe you find something↓ (.) you find the same grammar structure↑ in your text↓ and in the model↓ (.) so then you can look at the model↑ and see what is the ((double air quotes)) proper way of expression this or °whatever° si↑

So for example↓ (.) I know that some (.) some (.) some (.) °I don't know who↑° (.) yeah↓ some of you (.) some of you (.) for example in the first model it says (0.2) I am sure If I were you I would be so scared and confused about everything >blah (.) blah (.) blah< I think that some of you wrote something that was similar to [this↓

Y. Turn Completion	NONE.
Z. Display questions	3 TEA If I whatever (.) whatever (.) now↓ (.) here we've got the correct grammar structure (.) don't we↑= If I were you I would= what is that↑ >what is that↑< is that a [past simple↑
AA. Form-focused feedback	NONE.
BB. Confirmation checks	5 TEA [...] you kow what I mean↑ (0,3) si o no↑ (0,5) or you don't care↓ and you want to do a song↓
