

A Study of Constructive or Restrictive Features of Classroom Discourse in an EFL Adult Classroom in Thai Context

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Abstract

This study was founded on the notion that the microanalysis of classroom discourse can reveal how language is used as a tool to mediate learning (Kowal & Swain, 1994). This study used the interactional features in the Classroom Context mode in the Self-evaluation teacher talk (SETT) framework by Walsh (2006) to identify how spoken interactions lead to or hinder opportunity to learn during classroom discourse between adult learners and an English teacher in a Thai classroom. The findings show that topic initiation by students, teachers' clarification and minimal repair can potentially generate constructive teacher talk whereas the lack of extended learner turn can limit learners' linguistic production. The findings adds evidence to the need to fostering teachers' awareness of their classroom language use and its effect on learning.

Keywords: Classroom discourse, teacher talk, learning opportunity, classroom interaction

Introduction

Aims and rationale

It is widely acknowledged that classroom talk is one of important elements in the classroom since it allows teachers and learners to interact through the use of language. During classroom interaction, teachers and learners jointly construct context-specific classroom discourse. According to the socio-cultural theory, 'learning arises *not* through interaction, but *in* interaction' (Rod Ellis, 2000, p. 209; original emphasis). This highlights the importance of classroom interaction and reminds teachers that learners not only learn through producing the target language but also by socially engaging in constructing and negotiating meaning with others. Given the importance of interaction in language classrooms, it may be necessary for teachers to be aware of how they use language as a tool to manage and engage learners in classroom discourse which could potentially lead to or restrict learning.

Therefore, the aim of this study was to examine the ways in which teachers use language to foster or restrict learners' opportunities for learning by understanding dialogues in an adult-learner language classroom in Thailand. The rationale for this research was grounded on well-documented findings in the literature that most Thai learners do not know how to use English in communication even though the central aim of English teaching in Thailand has been for students to attain communicative competence (Cheewakaroon, 2011; Wiriyachitra, 2002). The underlying cause of this may partly lie in the fact that Thai students are not given optimal opportunities to use English in the classroom since English language teaching in Thailand has mostly been teacher-centred and has focused on the grammatical structure of the language. It was hoped that by looking at English language classroom discourse, teachers can become more aware of their actions which can influence students' learning opportunities.

Research questions

Given the aims and rationale discussed above, this study aims to answer the following questions:

1. In what ways do teachers foster or restrict learners' opportunities for learning through their use of language in an English language classroom in Thailand?
2. How can teachers use the interactional features in the Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk framework (SETT) (Walsh, 2006) to increase learning opportunities?

The following sections discuss classroom interaction and its importance in the language classroom. After that, the role of teachers in classroom interaction is highlighted. Finally, the interactional features in the SETT Framework are identified.

Literature review

Interaction in the language classroom

Communication has played a big part in shaping the implementation of English language teaching since the early 1970s. During the past 30 years, much more information has become available on communicative language teaching (CLT) which stresses the importance of the communicative functions of language (Littlewood, 1981). Learners should be prompted to go beyond merely memorising and repeating patterns of language so that they can initiate and participate in meaningful classroom interaction (Barnes, 1976; Kumaravadivelu, 1993; Schunk, 2004). For Walsh (2003), language classroom should be seen as a social context in its own right and understanding classroom interaction structures will not only improve quality of teaching but also create more learning opportunities for learners.

The classroom is a learning context in which a great deal of social interaction takes place through lessons, drills, group discussions and dialogues (Pica, 1987). Classroom interaction, according to Tsui (2001, p. 120), refers to "the interaction between the teacher and learners and amongst the learners, in the classroom". Interaction in L2 classrooms represents a special kind of discourse since the language used in L2 classrooms serves not only as medium and object of study but also carries the pedagogical functions with it (Jacknick, 2011). The dominant pattern of classroom interaction that has been extensively reported is the **Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRF)** sequence (Sinclair, 1975). This three-phase pattern consists of three moves of an initiation in the form a question from a teacher, a response from a learner which is then followed by some form of feedback from the teacher. It has been argued that the prevalence of such exchanges in classrooms directs learners into producing short utterances that only aim at giving the right answers and provides learners with limited opportunities for developing communicative competence (Rod Ellis, 1992; Hymes, 1972). Later, many researchers argue that the structure of L2 classroom interaction should be defined by the institutional goal of language learning. For example, van Lier (1988) claims that interaction is oriented by types of activities and topics. He provides a diagram of talk ranging from more or less topic-oriented and activity-oriented. For example small talks and general conversations would be less topic-oriented, less activity-oriented than discussions and debates. Rod Ellis (1984), however, stresses the aims of interactions. He identifies three main goals that shape the interaction in language classroom: framework goals, which are related to how classroom activities are organised; core goals, which include exercises and social goals which concerns with the role of language as the communication medium. Later, Walsh (2006) highlights the relationship between pedagogical goals and interaction. For example, he explains that if the pedagogical goal is to enable learners to

produce correct forms of language, then the use of direct repairs may be prevalent during the interaction.

There has been an increasing amount of literature on classroom interaction that facilitates second language acquisition (SLA). It has been revealed that languages are learned not only through the acquisition of linguistic codes, such as rules and structural components, but also through applying them to communicate in social interaction. Simply put, learners can learn a target language by producing it. Swain (1985), for example, suggests that learners need more than comprehensible input for acquisition to occur and emphasises the need for 'pushed output'. She states that by producing language, learners are given opportunities to notice structural forms of the language, to practise using them and finally to reflect on the language they have used. Combining input and output together, the Interaction Hypothesis claims that comprehensible input is obtained when learners are pushed to negotiate meaning with their interlocutors and learners produce more comprehensible or accurate target language forms when there is a communication breakdown (Long, 1996). Other forms of meaningful negotiation may include interaction features such as receiving feedback, clarification requests and confirmation checks. According to Gass (1997, p. 131), readiness for learning is created when attention is drawn to the linguistic forms through the means of negotiation. Walsh (2002, p. 5) asserts that the way in which teachers use their language in the classroom can either foster or restrict learners' 'opportunities to participate and consequently to learn'.

Learning opportunity

In order to identify how teachers can influence opportunities for learning by the use of their language, it is important to establish a definition that was used for the purpose of this study. In the field of SLA, learning opportunities have been linked to cognition and metacognition and thereby learning opportunities is defined as 'a specific cognitive or metacognitive activity that a learner can engage in that is likely to lead to learning' (Crabbe, 2007, p. 118). Thus, in this view, learning opportunities involves processing comprehensible input and reflecting on strategies to achieve learning goals. However, SLA's view of learning opportunities may be difficult to identify since such opportunities involves the process of thinking. As a result, for the purpose of this study, learning opportunities for second language learning will be defined according to Crabbe (2003, p. 18) as:

access to any activity that is likely to lead to an increase in language knowledge or skill. It may be the opportunity to negotiate meaning in a discussion, to read and derive meaning from a printed text, to explore a pattern in language usage, or to get direct feedback on one's own use of language.

Studies on how teachers use language in the classrooms, highlighting the different aspects such as communication patterns, question-answer exchange and teacher talk, started to gained attention in the mid-1980s. In the Thai context, there are a number of recent studies on how teachers use language in the classrooms. For example, Meng, Zhao, and Chattoophonexay (2012) looked particularly at the types and functions of questions Thai primary school teachers used through classroom observations and interviews. It was found that both display and referential questions were used but only display questions were present during teaching and learning while question modification strategies were only employed when questioned received no response. Other researchers focus on language used during scaffolding during class tasks. For instance, the study conducted by Scheb-Buennner (2013) reported on several scaffolding strategies employed by five lecturers in a private university while Samana (2013) discovered that not only teachers but also students with low-proficiency can also scaffold their peers as students have different learning strengths and weaknesses.

However, while these studies provide valuable insights on certain aspects of classroom interactions such as questioning and scaffolding in EFL classrooms, a holistic view of interactions through classroom discourse may be necessary so that how the teachers' language use during classroom interaction that facilitates or impedes learning can be identified.

It is acknowledged that teachers' choice of language can play a critical role in promoting interactions among learners. That is to say, teachers can create classroom conditions that foster or hinder learners' participation and, thus, potentially provide learners with learning opportunities. Even though interaction in a language classroom is said to be co-constructed by both by teachers and students, it is, according to Erickson (1986), the teacher who possesses superior authority in the classroom due to their institutional status and their greater knowledge. This view is echoed by Breen (1998, p. 119), who asserts that it is the teacher who 'orchestrates the interaction'. This means that teachers control decisions regarding what to learn, how it will be learned and to what extent learners will be actively involved with the learning during a lesson. In regard to classroom communication, teachers can largely determine who may contribute, when they may contribute and what will be done with the contribution. Consequently, language used and decisions made by the teacher at each stage of the classroom can significantly have an influence on learners' learning opportunities. For example, instead of accepting learners' unclear utterances, teachers can engage learners in the negotiation of meaning in order to make their initially unclear message more meaningful. This, then, will give learners the opportunity to develop their ability to produce the language. In contrast, learners' opportunities to use the target language may be missed if teachers do not allow enough time for learners to formulate a response. Furthermore, teachers can use different strategies to create learning opportunities to expose learners to the target language, such as allowing learners to extend their contribution and by reformulating learners' incorrect utterances. R. Ellis (1999) emphasises that, in order for learning to take place, it is important for teachers to recognise and seize the opportunities for learners to involve in classroom discourse.

Self-evaluation of teacher talk (SETT) framework

To assess classroom language, Walsh (2011) perceptively suggests that teachers need to develop *classroom interactional competence* (CIC) to observe and evaluate their classroom discourse. CIC is 'the ability to use interaction as a tool for mediating and assisting learning' (ibid., p.132). Walsh helpfully proposes the SETT framework which features four 'modes' of interaction in language classrooms. A mode is defined as 'an L2 classroom micro context which has clearly defined pedagogic goals and distinctive interactional features determined largely by a teacher's use of language' (Walsh, 2011, p. 125). The SETT framework comprises four micro-contexts which are divided to 'Managerial', 'Materials', 'Skills and Systems' and 'Classroom Context'. Each mode is made up of interactional features associated with instructional goals as shown in table 1 below.

Table 1: Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk (SETT) Framework (Walsh, 2006, p. 66).

Mode	Pedagogic goals	Interactional features
Managerial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ρ To transmit information. ρ To organise the physical learning environment. ρ To refer learners to materials. ρ To introduce or conclude an activity. ρ To change from one mode of learning to another. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ρ A single, extended teacher turn which uses explanations and / or instructions. ρ The use of transitional markers. ρ The use of confirmation checks. ρ An absence of learner contributions.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ρ To provide language practice around a piece of material. ρ To elicit responses in relation to the material. ρ To check and display answers. ρ To clarify when necessary. ρ To evaluate contributions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ρ Predominance of IRF pattern. ρ Extensive use of display questions. ρ Form-focused feedback. ρ Corrective repair. ρ The use of scaffolding.
Skills and systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ρ To enable learners to produce correct forms. ρ To enable learners to manipulate the target language. ρ To provide corrective feedback. ρ To provide learners with practice in sub-skills. ρ To display correct answers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ρ The use of direct repair. ρ The use of scaffolding. ρ Extended teacher turns. ρ Display questions. ρ Teacher echo. ρ Clarification requests. ρ Form-focused feedback.
Classroom context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ρ To enable learners to express themselves clearly. ρ To establish a context. ρ To promote oral fluency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ρ Extended learner turns. ρ Short teacher turns. ρ Minimal repair. ρ Content feedback. ρ Referential questions. ρ Scaffolding. ρ Clarification requests.

The Managerial mode, which occurs most often at the beginning of a lesson, refers to any organisation of learning and, thus, its pedagogic goal is to 'organise learning in time and space and to set up or conclude classroom activities (Walsh, 2011, p. 114). Interactional features in this mode include the extended teacher turn and the absence of learner contributions. Interaction in the Material mode, as the name suggests, revolves around any materials used by the teacher. According to Walsh (2011), the IRF pattern and the use of display questions are the predominant interactional features of this mode.

The pedagogic goal of the second mode, the Skill and Systems, focuses on the accuracy of producing particular language system (grammar and phonology) or language skills (such as reading and listening) (Walsh, 2011, p. 118). Therefore, the distinctive interactional features associated with this mode may include direct repairs, scaffolding and form-focused feedback which are employed to encourage learners to produce accurate linguistic forms of the target language.

The interaction of the Skill and Systems mode is in contrast with that of the Classroom Context mode which emphasises on oral fluency and getting learners to express themselves by engaging them in genuine communication. Interactional features such as scaffolding, content feedback, direct repair and extended learner turns can be found in this mode. The principle role of the teacher is to take a 'back seat', listen, support and provide learners with an interactional space (Walsh, 2011, p. 121).

These modes are intended to portray the association between actions and words (Poorebrahim, Talebinejad, & Mazlum, 2015). Walsh cautions that these modes are not static and invariant as the teacher and learners can initiate a switch from one mode to another (mode switching). The SETT framework was designed to help teachers identify their classroom interaction patterns or structures and to foster an understanding of interactional process as a way to raise their interactional awareness and improve the quality of their teacher talk (Hougham, 2015). Therefore, it seems an appropriate tool to help teachers notice their interactional practices and determine the extent to which their language uses and teaching goals are aligned.

Methodology

Context and participants

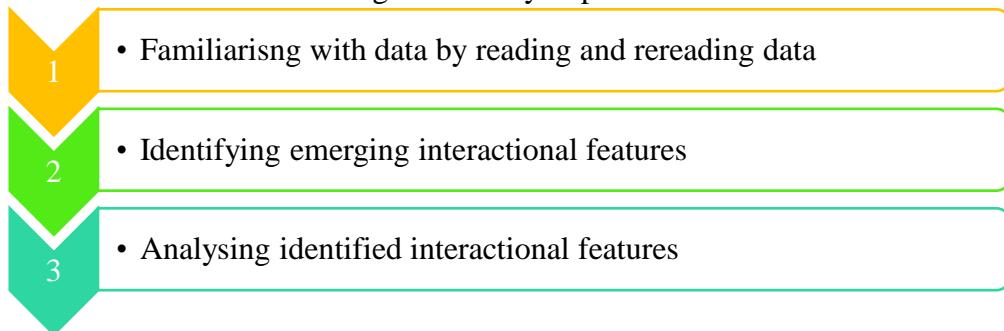
The data were taken from an English classroom organised by a language centre in a public university located in the eastern region of Thailand where English is regarded as a foreign language. A convenience sampling which relies on 'available subjects- those who are close at hand or easily accessible' (Berg, 2009, p. 32) was employed in selecting the participant for this study. Since I previously worked as a lecturer in the said university, I was able to establish contact with the university's head of the Language Centre who would make the decision on the permission. Once the permission was granted, I then approached a teacher whose teaching aims was to improve communicative competence to give my study's objectives for consideration. He then agreed to let me collect data from his class. The classroom was comprised of a male English teacher who had been teaching at the language centre for 2 years and 17 Thai adult learners. The 4 male and 13 female learners ranged in age from between 30- 60 years old with the majority being in their 30s. Fifty three percent of the participants were teaching in primary level and the other 47 percent were secondary teachers. They taught different subjects at different schools in the same province where the university was located. That is, six of them taught English, two mathematics, three in social studies, science and Thai each. They were not tested on their English proficiency before the course commenced, thus, given their diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise, it can be presumed that their proficiency of English varied.

The overall objective of the course arose from the government's policy to encourage both Thai learners and teachers to practise using English for communication in preparation for the official opening of an ASEAN Community in 2015. English was given a prominent status as it is stated to be the working language of the community (Kirkpatrick, 2012). According to the teacher, the stated aim of the lesson was to develop conversational skills and to equip the participants with basic communicative English. The class was carried out in the traditional manner with the teacher standing at the front and the learners sitting in rows on both sides of the classroom. This study was conducted to examine how the teacher either fostered or hindered opportunities for language production in the classroom.

Data collection and data analysis

The data obtained for the study were an audio and video recording of naturally occurring interactions in a language classroom. These recording were transcribed based on a transcription system adopted from Walsh (2011). Once the transcript had been developed, the first step taken was reading and re-reading the data to familiarise with the data. The second step was to identify any interactional features from the Classroom Context mode in the SETT framework that emerged from the data. Finally, once interactional features were identified, they were analysed to see whether they facilitated or hindered learning opportunities. Figure 1 summaries the analysis process of this study.

Figure 1 Analysis process



The SETT framework was chosen because it provides metalanguage and a comprehensive description of interactional features which teachers can use to identify and examine their classroom discourse. According to Walsh (2006), the Classroom Context mode allows genuine communication since its pedagogic goals are to enable learners to talk about feelings, to express themselves, to establish a context and to promote oral fluency. In this mode, the teacher will take a supportive role by allowing learners to initiate and sustain their interactions. The interactional features or interactures included in this mode can be seen from the table below:

Table 2: Examples of classroom context interactional features (adapted from Walsh, 2006)

Interactional Features	Description
Extended Learner Turns	Learner turn of more than one sentence.
Short Teacher Turns	Teacher sentence is short.
Minimal Repair	Little amount of error correction.
Content Feedback	Giving feedback to the message rather than the words used.
Referential Questions	Genuine questions to which the teacher does not know the answer
Scaffolding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reformulation (rephrasing a learner's contribution) 2. Extension (extending a learner's contribution) 3. Modelling (providing an example for learner(s))
Clarification requests	Teacher asks student to clarify something the student has said.

Findings and discussion

Analysis of the transcript revealed the following features to be in action:

1. *Constructive features of teacher talk*

a) Students' topic initiation

From the first extracts in this study, it is clear that the teacher and the learners were engaged in a communicative activity of asking and answering questions. In extract 1, the stated objective of the lesson is immediately made apparent from turn 1 as it shows that the teacher gave the learners the freedom to initiate questions and, thus, the topic of discourse was clearly determined by the learners. Learner 1's contribution in turn 2 and 6 was self-selected and indicates her engagement in the discourse. A referential question, which is a genuine question to which the teacher did not know the answer, was featured in turn 7. From this extract, it seems that the teacher gave them opportunities to learn by giving them the freedom to initiate the topics. The process in which learners initiate topics of interaction is referred to as 'topicalisation'. The study carried out by Slimani (1989) interestingly reveals that greater uptake (what learners claim to have learnt) occurred when topics under discussion were selected by learners.

Extract 1:

1. T: (seeing that learner 1 was waiting to ask a question) OK, do you do you have any questions?
2. L1: what is your favourite province in Thailand?
3. T: er (3) Chachoengsao=
4. L := OK OK teacher
5. T: yeah er... it's a lot of...I've been to a lot of provinces but there are still some provinces I would like to visit ...so... I think that for Songkran... I might go to Chaingmai...because I've never been to Chaingmai ... but I've been to Krabi...and I like Krabi a lot ... and I also like Trat but I went er last month=
6. L1: =have you ever been to Nakornnayok Sakheaw waterfall?
7. T: = yes I have ...I have... it's very very beautiful yeah ... I went er...about six months ago (6) what's your favourite province in Thailand?
8. L1 : My town is in Nakornnayok so I like Nakornnayok (**laughter**) =
9. T: =OK

b) Clarification

In this classroom, clarifications were offered in the form of examples, visuals and learners' L1. In extract 2, the teacher moved on to another male learner at the back of the class. Still, the topic of the communication was initiated by the learner 2 who asked about the teacher's favourite sports. When confusion arose in turn 14 and 16 when the learner did not understand what the teacher meant by motor sports, the teacher offered clarification in turn 17 and 19 by giving some examples the sports. Such clarification may not only benefit the learner who posed the question but also other learners in the classroom.

Extract 2:

10. L2: What sport do you like?
11. T: What sport?=
12. L2: = yeah what sport do you like=
13. T: Er I like motor sport
14. L2: huh...oh (**confusion**)
15. T: motor sport
16. L2: mo...

17. T: motor sport so driving cars
18. L2 : oh yeah
19. T: Formula One ...er ...touring cars things like that
20. L2: yeah good
21. T: what's your favourite sport?
22. L2: yeah (laugh) ... ((3)) with my friend
23. T: OK
24. L3: Have long have you been in Thailand
25. T: er... I have been in Thailand for... two and a half years (3) two and a half year so I came here in ...I don't know ...October 2008 (3) no sorry 2007 (2) ok? So two and a half years

The teacher offered elaboration on his utterance again by the use of visual and learners' native language. In turn 37 and 43, the teacher drew a picture of a rough outline of England and Europe and an oil tanker to illustrate the convenience of traveling from England to Europe and to clarify meaning of the word 'insurance' in turn 43 and 44. Clarification of words were also provided the learners' first language in turn 44. It is assumed that the teacher felt that the information was important enough to warrant a clarification by the use of drawing and learners' first language.

Extract 3:

26. L3: ((3))
27. T: er everywhere (2) er I like I like to travel around ...and there're many places I want to see
28. L3: = what what kind of place you like
29. T: Er... I think my favourite place is Thailand ... I also like Italy as well, Italy is nice yeah ... and...Spain is OK
30. L3:(**nodding**) have you ever been to around the world
31. T: er I don't know uh... ok...I've been to England Scotland Wales and ... France, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, America, Thailand (3)
32. L3: for work or for tour
33. T: just for holiday
34. L3: wow =
35. T: when I was young
36. L3: Oh=
37. = because it's easy right (**drawing a map of England on the board**) it's easy... this is England (**pointing at the map the board**) so you have (**drawing on Europe map the board**) you have France here, Spain here... Germany, Switzerland, Holland ...and many countries around here so... you can drive... you can drive your car ... down here... to visit all of these countries
38. L3: ((3))
39. T: well ... with my friends and with my family=
40. L3: = oh=
41. T: = yeah I travelled a lot with my family when I was really young.
42. L3: What what your family work?
43. T: Sorry? work oh work? My dad is a claims executive... (**writing the word 'insurance' on the board**) does anyone know this word here uh... my dad works in insurance for big oil tanker, oil tankers (**drawing oil tanker on the board**)

44. T: (laughs) OK That's a boat yeah... they have very very big boats that take oil (**saying oil in Thai**) nam mun nam mun...yeah ...so if that has an accident (**indicating if the boat sinks**) my dad has to find out how much it costs to fix everything

45. L4: How many language do you speak?

46. T: Not many...English

47. L4: German?

48. T: Er ...French a little bit ... and Thai a little bit as well...so not many

The teacher's provision of clarification could be viewed as providing comprehensible input which is an important factor for language acquisition (Krashen, 1982). The use of examples, visuals and L1 by the teacher facilitated the learners' understanding of their new input as evidenced by the coherent communication between the teacher and learners when their new utterances were built on previous ones in extract 2 and 3. It is believed that comprehensible output in second language will naturally happen after learners have accumulated adequate competence through comprehensible input (Wang & Castro, 2010).

c) Minimal Repair

Repair was not directly employed in this classroom interaction. When an error is made, it is the teacher's interactive decision whether to correct the error immediately, correct it indirectly or ignore the error (Al-Zahrani, 2014). While Seedhouse (2001) posits that learners mostly expect and like to be corrected, Walsh (2002) argues that the decision whether or not to correct an error should align with pedagogic goals of the lesson. In the three extracts from this study, it can be seen that the teacher did not attempt to correct learners' incorrect contributions as can be seen in turns 28, 30, 32, 42 and 45. It can be assumed that repair was intentionally omitted since the pedagogical goal of the lesson was to allow learners to communicate and, therefore, the focus was on fluency rather than accuracy.

2) *Restrictive features of teacher talk*

Lack of extended learner turn

Regarding the perspective on obstructing learning opportunities, it was apparent in the three extracts that extended teacher's turns were in a stark contrast with that of the learners'. The repeated pattern in the data showed that learners' questions were followed by the teacher's long answers as can be seen in turn 5, 43 and 44. Moreover, learners' contributions were accepted without further questions (turn 9 and 23). Their contributions could have been exploited as opportunities to encourage extended learner turns which are interactional features in the Classroom Context mode. The teacher could have extended the learners' contributions by asking them more questions or sustaining the topic into subsequent discourse. According to Boyd and Maloof (2000) and Goh and Burns (2012), talk in the classroom that builds on what is previously uttered and extended discourse will provide students with opportunities to practice what, when and how to communicate.

3) *Change of practice and evaluation*

The results of this study showed that learners' learning opportunities are inextricably linked to teachers' instructional practice. What teachers say or do in the classroom largely determines the dynamics of classroom communication. However, given the diverse nature of EFL classrooms which depend on several factors, such as teachers' and learners' experiences, competence, needs, backgrounds and beliefs, it may seem impossible to equip teachers with a 'fixed interaction formula' that guarantees to fit all classrooms. Nevertheless, Kumaravadivelu (1992) has helpfully offered a broad guideline, termed as macrostrategies,

that teachers can adopt to generate situation-specific, need-based classroom techniques to fit each unique classroom context. The macrostrategies include:

1. **Creating learning opportunities in class:** teachers need to continuously modify their lesson according to learners' level of proficiency, learning style and learning objectives in order to create effective learning opportunities.
2. **Utilising learning opportunities created by the learner:** As discourse in the classroom is co-created by the teacher and learners, teachers should make use of any difficulties or contributions created by learners as opportunities for learning.
3. **Facilitating negotiated interaction between participants:** Teachers should encourage learners to engage in learner-learner and learner-teacher interaction through negotiated interactions such as clarification, confirmation comprehension checks, requests, repairing, reacting, and turn taking.
4. **Activating the intuitive heuristic of the learner:** Grammatical elements should be taught indirectly through examples. Learners should be exposed to the linguistic structure many times so that they can observe and absorb the structural rules.
5. **Contextualising linguistic input:** Linguistics components such as syntax, semantics and pragmatics are *inextricably* linked and, therefore, they should not be taught separately.

Kumaravadivelu's guideline is said to be flexible and customisable enough as it provides teachers with a useful degree of autonomy to freely make an adjustment to its implementation in order to deal with unpredictable context-specific classroom challenges (Ahmad, 2014). It is believed that teachers who extend the macrostrategies and design their own microstrategies to increase learning potential become more than just classroom practitioners (Kumaravadivelu, 1994). That is to say, they will develop into strategic teachers and eventually strategic researchers who are able to develop their own systematic and coherent theory of practice that are relevant and suitable for their own contexts (Kumaravadivelu, 2006).

Conclusion

This study examines the classroom interaction in an EFL classroom and focuses on the role of the teacher in providing and restricting learners' opportunities to use the target language. The study uncovers that how often learners were given opportunities to expose to the language depended greatly on how the teacher responded to, pursued or disregarded learners' contributions. Since interactions in the classroom are controlled largely by the teacher because of their institutional status, teachers have a powerful role in distributing learning opportunities (Hall, 1997). As a result, in order to increase learners' opportunities to develop communicative competence in the target language, teachers need to be sensitive to what is going on in the context of their own classroom (Nunan, 1987). From this study, it became apparent that the SETT framework lends itself to reflective practice as it provides appropriate terminology and is a readily-available tool for teachers to assess their talk and its effects on learning. Teachers can record their own classes and use the interactional features in the SETT framework to reflect on the effect of their talk in their classrooms. It is possible that once teachers pay attention to their own contexts and become more conscious of their use of language, they can modify instructional practices that truly fit their contexts and provide learners with optimal opportunities to co-creating meaningful classroom interactions.

Limitations of the study

The data in this study was taken from a language classroom with one teacher and one group of students with specific teaching goals. It is recognised that situated meaning of particular language forms occur in specific contexts and, therefore, the results of this study may not be

generalised to other contexts since every classroom has its own characteristics with its own rules and conversations (van Lier, 1988). Instead, this study takes on a reflective view to look at how the language the teacher used could have facilitated or impeded learners' learning opportunities in order to highlight the relationship between teacher talk and learning opportunities in an EFL context. It should also be reminded that the objective of the analysis is not to criticise the teacher's performance. Another limitation of this study is the fact that the data analysis comes solely from the interpretation of transcription. Thus, reflective accounts of the classroom, from both the teacher and the learners, should be incorporated with the transcriptions in the future in order that a clearer picture of what is actually going on can be gained.

Recommendations for further research

Further classroom research of this nature may be conducted with different types of classrooms, students, cultural and linguistic backgrounds at different levels of education. It would also be optimally desirable if participants' accounts of their experiences collected from self-report methods, such as post-lesson reflective interviews, are incorporated in the analysis so that reasons of their choice of actions can be understood.

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Appendix 1:

Transcription System

The transcription system is adopted from Walsh (2011). Since the lesson was recorded from an actual classroom with no specialist equipment, some unclear utterances, caused by interference such as background noise and simultaneous speech, were marked as unintelligible in the transcriptions.

T:	- teacher
L:	- learner (not identified)
L1, L2, etc.	-identified student
LL:	-several students at once or the whole class
Ok/ok/ok	-overlapping or simultaneous utterance by more than one learner
[do you understand?]	
[I see]	-overlap between teacher and learner
=	-turn continues, or one turn follows another without a pause
...	-pause of one second or less marked by three periods.
(4)	-silence; length given in seconds
?	-rising intonation-question or other
!	-emphatic speech: falling intonation
((4))	-unintelligible 4 seconds a stretch of unintelligible speech with the length given in seconds
Paul, Peter, Mary	-capitals are only used for proper nouns
T organises groups	- editor's comments (in bold type)