

**The Ministry of Higher Education  
And Scientific Research**

***University of Al-Qadisiyah***

***College of Education***

***Dep. Of English***

***Teacher Talk in English as a Foreign  
Language Classrooms***

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***1439 H.A***

***2018 A.D***

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَزَكَرِيَّا إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْنِي فَرْدًا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْوَارِثِينَ

صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمُ

(سورة الانبياء: ٨٩) .

## ***Dedication***

***To our first teacher prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).***

***To our parents and sisters***

***To those who have provided us with support and encouragement***

## *Acknowledgments*

*we present a great appreciation to our parents who  
support us to reach to this point*

*To our supervisor Dr. Saadiya for the scientific effort and  
guidance that helped us to complete our research*

*To the department to which we belong and for all  
our professors in general.*

## **Abstract**

Teacher talk is the language that teachers use to interact with learners inside the classroom. It is very important element during the process of learning since by which a teacher can convey what he knows of knowledge and information to learners. The quality of teacher talk depends on the teacher himself, teacher is supposed to use the appropriate language to be understood by learners.

This research consists of ten sections and each one of them talks about a specific thing. The first section involves the definitions of teacher talk and how each specialist defines it in a different way. The second section is about the theories of teacher talk, while the third one is about the features of teacher talk. The fourth section talks about the role of teacher talk and what teacher should do to help students understand the material. The fifth section is about time that teacher talk needs to be understood by learners while the sixth one is about the strategies that teacher should follow in English as a foreign language classroom. The seventh section talks about how to develop the characteristics of teacher talk in EFL classroom, while the eighth section talks about the role of teacher talk in the success of teaching. The ninth section is about the importance of teacher talk under " language-centered" teaching mode. The last section explains the problems of teacher talk in English as a foreign language classroom.

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## **1.0 Introduction**

Teacher talk is the language that teacher uses in the process of learning in the classroom. It is also considered as a master phenomenon which is used by teacher in language classroom. There are two theories which are concerned with teacher talk in EFL classroom : Krashen's input and Swain's output theory. Krashen's input suggests that one can obtain language through one method; either by understanding messages or by acceptance of comprehensible input. Swain's output hypothesis, admits that comprehensive information is not enough for second language acquisition. There are two characteristics, the formal aspect in which teachers have to speak in a reasonable speed to make vocabulary easy to understand. The second one is called functional aspect ; it involves teachers' questions, the way in which teacher asks questions, teachers' feedback, the suitable way that teacher uses to make quick revision to the previous material.

The control of time is very essential thing if students are active and good participant in language classroom, they will obtain their tasks in a suitable time. Teacher talk takes an important role in language learning since teacher is responsible for checking students' ability to perceive and comprehend language. There are two strategies of teacher talk in EFL classroom, the first one is students' error correction in which teachers are responsible for the process of correcting mistakes. Teacher can do that either by asking another learner to give the right answer, or produce a hint to the student who makes the error to warn him in order to notice his mistakes and try to correct them. The second strategy is teachers' assessment in which teacher gives the final evaluation about students' performance. Teacher is free to decide whether the students' performance is good or bad. There are many ways to make evaluation; teacher repeats what a student says then he gives him glorifications and this way is used repeatedly by teachers. Another way to make evaluation,

teacher gives students' praises which are brief modest without repeating students' response and this method is used less than the first one. Teacher talk plays an important role in the success of learning and teacher should give an importance to the quality of teacher talk and take care to make it clear to the learners. Modes of teaching involve two kinds, one of them depends on the learner only but the second one depends on the teacher while learners have little chance to speak. The problem of teacher talk, during the passage of time students forget the language and how to interact with others by using it.



## **1.1 Definitions of Teacher Talk in English As a Foreign Language Classroom.**

Teacher talk means the language that teachers use when they deal with learners who want to learn the foreign language in the classroom. There are many ways teachers can use it in order to make the language easy and clear to students to understand the lesson well. Studies of teacher talk can be classified into two kinds: one kind of studies is that which checks the kind of language that teacher depends on when he or she gives instructions to the students for example "please, sit down". The second one is that which checks the language that teacher uses when he or she introduces the subject of the lesson. Language that teacher uses when he speaks with students is considered as a register and it keeps the formal and linguistic characteristics (Wang,2014:1173).

Teacher talk is a master phenomenon which is used by teachers in language classroom. Teacher speaks with learners in a way which differs from the way in which he addresses other type of people, teacher has to deal with each one according to his proficiency. When a teacher addresses a good student he has to use a high level while when he addresses a weak student he has to use a simple level in order to help students understand. Teachers can make changes in language shape and function as so as make the language easy to understand according to students. Teachers use various types of language in the classroom during the introducing of their lessons. Teachers try to make language easy to students so that they have to use simple vocabulary and simple ways to ease materials to students but they should keep the characteristics of language when they introduce it (Jouibar and Afghari,2015:20).

Teacher talk is the language that teachers use in the classroom when they give questions or explain something to students, or when

they want to check if students understand the material which is introduced in the classroom. All teachers have individual characteristics which distinguish them from other teachers, the language used in the classroom has important role for example ,it could be used to give directions, to check students' understanding and etc. Teacher has very important role in the classroom since he enhances the interaction between him and students and this encourages students to communicate by asking questions, and giving directions (Yanfen and Yuqin,2010:77).

Language that teachers talk in is that language which they use with learners which is the second language. They want to show that there are differences between English as a foreign language classroom and other classroom teaching. An English as a foreign language classroom is in a country where English is not the dominant language, while an English as a second language classroom is in a country where English is the dominant language (wang,2014:1172).

Language used in the classroom differs according to teachers who use language, this does not mean all teachers speak equally. Teachers try to use a simple language to learners in order to make it understood by them. The language they use should hold the features of the target language (Ibid).

## **1.2 Approaches of Teacher Talk in English as a Foreign Language Classroom**

### **1.2.1 Krashen's Input Hypothesis .**

This theory suggests that one can obtain language through one method, either by understanding messages or by acceptance of comprehensible input. That means language can be understood by listeners despite they do not understand all the words and structures in it (Yan,2006:24).

Acquisition, which is the process by which humans acquire the ability to perceive and comprehend language as well as to produce and use words, sentences to communicate. It is done by entering the learner to comprehensible Input (Ibid:25).

Krashen explains that inserting second language is the main reason to obtain foreign language. In order to attain the second language, learners should focus on understanding of the language. Teacher has to work hard to help students to learn more about the language although it relies on students and their ability to seize the language (Chile,2013:18).

### **1.2.2 Swain's Output Theory**

Swain's product theory confirms the function of result in second language acquisition. She admits that comprehensive information is not enough for second language acquisition; SLA takes place only when students take turns into assimilation. students can develop their language standard ,by motivation, to product output to speak and record things or during employing language uncovered to them in useful ways (Yan,2006:26).

Swain's output theory indicates the action of producing language, under specific situations, portion of the method of second language. "comprehensive product " needed when input theory is for language procurement then for grammar capacity. After giving correct information, teacher needs to give more time to think, give more opportunity to share to produce second language. Input and output, both have substantial function for students to pick up and produce second language (Zahin,2015:12).

### **1.3 Features of Teacher Talk in English as a Foreign Language Classroom.**

Teacher talk in English as a foreign language includes many characteristics, the first one alludes to teacher talk, as well as the quickness of a teacher's speaking, where he has to stop, repeats the most important observations or changing of teacher talk. The second characteristic alludes to language that teacher uses to arrange and manage classes, the sorts of questions that teacher asks, the number of changings during the discussion and the quality of this changing as well as the final result of teacher (Zahin,2015:3).

There are two kinds of features of teacher talk in English as a foreign language classroom : Formal and Functional.

#### **1.3.1. The Formal Features of Teacher Talk in English as a Foreign Language classroom.**

Teachers have to speak in a reasonable speed to make vocabulary easy to understand and clear according to students. Teachers should stop repeatedly to give students a chance to think and introduce their opinions (Wang,2014:1172).

The matter of pronunciation should be easy and clear. Teacher has to pay attention to avoid pronouncing words in a strange way which make them difficult to understand (Zahin,2015:4).

### **1.3.2. The Functional Features of Teacher Talk in English as a Foreign Language classroom.**

#### **1.3.2.1. Teachers' Questions.**

In language classrooms, there are two types of questions which are discussed as the following : the first type displays questions in which teachers know about the answers. This type is also constructed to reveal specific structures (Zahin,2015:6).

The second type is referential question which is used in our life since in such a question one does not know anything about the answer so that he or she asks questions in order to be given answers. Also we can notice that there is a difference in the way in which we ask about something in classroom and our real life (Lei,2009:75).

#### **1.3.2.2. Teachers' Feedback.**

Feedback means making revision to the content that is discussed in the classroom rather than repeating the whole material solely and mentioning the details of a subject as a whole. Teacher can make quick revision to a subject which is discussed before (Ibid).

Feedback consists of two types: positive side which can be considered as a good side of feedback, for instance, feedback is sufficient for students to make revision to remember what they have

taught. Negative side which can be considered as a bad side of feedback, for instance, feedback takes time and this time will be taken from the time of a lesson and this may confuse teachers and oblige them to complete a material in the remainder time of a lesson which in turns will affect the students' understanding of the material (Zahin,2015:7).

#### **1.4 Teacher Talking Time in English as a Foreign Language Classroom.**

The process of learning takes time; if students are active and good participants in language classroom, for example, asking questions and giving answers, they will achieve their tasks in a suitable time. In most language classes sometimes teachers take the largest part of a lesson speaking while students speak little so that the levels of their proficiency are not much as so as they could not improve their language skills (Zahin,2015:5).

Teacher talk is very wide characteristic which is used inside English as an unfamiliar language classroom. Teacher talk is also considered as a tool which helps learners to practice the strange language that is slightly used in the real life just like some countries where English cannot be considered as a second language (Chile,2013:18).

#### **1.5 The Role of Teacher Talk in Foreign Language Learning.**

Teacher talk has a very lively importance in language learning. Teacher's importance does not lay on arranging and directing the classroom only. Teachers are responsible for checking students' ability to perceive and comprehend language, as well as to produce and use words and sentences to communicate (Yan,2006:11).

How it is important for teachers to manage and organize the classroom since through language, teachers may succeed or fail in achieving their plans in a correct way. Teacher talk may be considered one of the most important things and teachers can be considered as the chief origin inside English as a foreign language classroom, since students can get what teachers say during the lesson (Kiasi and Hemmati,2014:96).

In English as a foreign language classroom when a teacher speaks during the lesson, he gives learners an opportunity to develop their comprehensible skills. Teachers sometimes modify their speech to make all students understand the lesson well, that is to say, teachers often descend to the lowest level of students in order to make all of them seize the lesson in a suitable way (Wang,2014:1172).

## **2.1 Strategies of Teacher Talk in English as a Foreign Language Classroom.**

### **2.1.1. Students' Errors Correction.**

Students are normally doing errors during their study and by these errors the researchers evaluate how language is taught and how students understand the language. Teachers have very important role which is the correction of students' errors also teachers can get information through students' performance. When a student ,for example, explains a material, teacher can take impression about the students' understanding of the material or through performance whether it is good or not. Discovering students' errors also enable them to clarify whether they understand the meaning or not (Zahin,2015:8).

To correct students' errors, there is not only one way to make right mistakes but there are various ways to do so. A teacher may ask another learner to give the right answer, or a teacher may produce a hint to the student who performs the error to alarm him in order to notice his errors and try to correct it. Sometimes a teacher may disregard the error and let a learner continue and when the student finishes his speaking, the teacher alarms him about his mistakes (Yan,2006:43).

### **2.1.2. Teachers' Assessment.**

When students perform materials, the role of a teacher in such a matter is only evaluating students' performance. Teacher is free to give students a high mark or a low one; by this mark students know whether their performances are good or bad. Teachers also give each a student a grade as s\he deserves; through this mark teacher and students take a picture about the level of students, if their levels are high, this will support them to continue. If their levels are low, this will encourage them to do well to reach to the intended level (Zahin,2015:9).

To assess a student, teacher can use various ways to do so. In the first method, teacher repeats what a student says then he gives him glorifications and this method is used repeatedly by teacher. In the second way, teacher just gives students praises which are brief and modest without repeating the students' response and this way is used less than the previous one. The mentioned sorts of evaluating is more common than giving praises followed by assessments as well as there is no frustrating evaluation in EFL classrooms (Yan,2006:42).



## **2.2 How to Develop the Characteristics of Teacher Talk in English as a Foreign Language.**

### **2.2.1. Adapting Teacher Talk to be Suitable to Students' Understanding.**

Teachers should use a level which corresponds with students' level or not much higher than their levels to guarantee that students comprehend the presented material. Teachers should follow certain steps to achieve so. Firstly, teachers are supposed to develop their own speaking, presentation skill and communicative skills and giving attention to the correctness of information which is included in their discourse content. Secondly, it is preferable to make teachers know about their students' knowledge of the easiness of the presented teaching (Wang,2014:1173).

### **2.2.2. Making Relaxing Climate and Lively "Dialogical Relationship".**

In order to create a comfortable climate in which the dialogue will be interesting, what teachers should do is to encourage learners' enthusiasm in the classroom learning. Discovering what teachers are interested in and making interactive atmosphere which is marked by mutual acceptance and devoting. Teachers should not interrupt learners' pronouncement but to continue in their listening to learners with attention and calmness. If learners stop or forget an information, teachers should not complete what learners want to remember and prevent them from continuing. Teachers possibly give students glances, information, vocabulary or a question which helps them to remember and return to complete their speaking instead of completing communication (Ibid).

## **2.3 The Role of Teacher Talk in the Success of Teaching.**

The main reason behind the success of teacher is teacher talk and interactions that happen between teachers and students. Interaction is influenced immediately by ways of teacher talk and these methods are acceptable and preferred by both teachers and students. The first favoured choice by teachers and students is invitation, to begin an interaction; one should start with an invitation. Question is the mostly used one, it is more favoured by teachers and the least favoured by students. According to direction, it is not preferred by teacher while to students it is favoured but to questions. When students give a mistake answer or give no answer at all what teacher should do is using promotion. When students give correct answer, teachers are supposed to commend instead of being only acknowledged and the last point is encouragement is welcomed. To stimulate more interactions in class, teachers should give attention to their language during the process of the interactions with students (Yafen and Yuqin,2010:76).

Teacher introduces his speech in a good way and arrange the class as a whole in an organized method, so that students believe that they cannot do such a thing as the teacher does and prefer to keep quiet. Some students think that they understand in a good way only through teacher's interaction. Sometimes students work mutually and after that others feel they are annoyed during the class time and so little students are expected to be neutral (Zahin,2015:28).

The quality of teacher talk is so significant. Teachers should emphasize and give more attention to the quality of their speaking and creating suitable forms of teacher talk to make their speech more striking, stimulating and fascinating (Yan,2006,55).

## **2.4 The Importance of Teacher Talk Under "Language-Centered" Teaching Mode.**

There are two modes of teaching, one of them depends on the learner only which is known as "Learner-centered". The other depends on the teacher and this type is known as "Traditional Teaching Mode". Each one of them differs from the other, in the second mode, teacher tries to explain the materials as a whole while the learners have little opportunity to speak. The "Learner-Centered" teaching mode in which the perceiving subjects are learners and teachers are considered as guiders. No one can neglect the role of teachers since students' acquisition of the language depends on the teacher. Although the class is arranged by students, but one should not forget the importance of the teacher inside the classroom (Wang,2014:1173).

Nunan thinks that the significance of teacher talk is reflected not only in organizing the classroom but also in the process of learners' language acquisition. For the former point of view teacher talk directly makes a decision whether the teaching programme executed by the teacher is successful or not. For the latter point of view, teacher talk may be the main language input naked to learners (Nunan as cited in Wang, 2014:1173).

In the "Learner-Centered" classroom, teachers do not give the whole responsibility and power to the students in an unilateral way and to low the value of the teacher. Two recommendations for learner-centeredness are put forward here. The first one is that the role is not depend on the teacher only but to create a relationship between teachers and students. Teacher is the most important element inside the classroom and he has the responsibility of organizing the classroom activities and monitors the students. Teacher is also responsible for providing students with information about each specific course and the

strategy of learning. The second recommendation, teacher should give attention to the requirements of students, as considered, play the basic role in learning. Teachers are supposed to respect students' needs, motivation and their role in learning (Yan,2006:54).

## **2.5 The Problem of Teacher Talk In English as a Foreign Language Classroom.**

Teacher talk was considered as a problem since too much teachers sometimes prevent students from participating and speaking and that is why they cannot speak and communicate in a correct way. Students have little chances to speak and improve their language skills, so they do not have enough language to interact with others. Language that students study for many years will be forgotten with the passage of time. Students lose what they learn when they graduate from their classes. Teachers should take care to the quality of materials instead of the quantity. Good teacher should be appraised by his ability to ease learning and enhance communicative interaction in the classroom and giving students means which reduce the phenomenon of losing the language after many years of studying. Teacher who provides the facilitation of classroom interaction is named communicative. Teacher talk involves, for example, the type of questions teachers ask, the speech, adjustment they produce when they talk with learners, the way in which they respond to students' errors (Lei,2009:75).

## **Conclusions.**

Teacher talk is very essential element during the process of learning. It depends on teacher since he takes most of the time speak, while students listen and apply what teacher directs. Sometimes learner takes the role of teaching and such a learner is known as "learner-centered". But this does not mean that teacher does not work anything contrarily teacher here is considered as a guider. The process of understanding the language is not very easy but it needs more time to be understood carefully by learners. Time of learning is also influenced by learners if they are active, it needs little time while if they are careless it needs much time to be achieved. With regarding to correct errors not only teacher is responsible for correcting mistakes, students sometimes are asked to correct errors of their colleagues and this based on teacher's request. Teacher talk has formal feature and by which teacher is supposed to speak in a suitable speed to make vocabulary easy to understand and clear to be understood by learners. The functional feature involves teachers' questions; how teachers display questions and teachers' feedback; how teachers make quick revision to the previous material without mentioning details. Finally, the easiness of teacher talk depends on teacher since he takes most of the time speak and students listen. Students are influenced by teachers since students imitate what teachers do. As a result both teachers and learners are considered as contributors to succeed the process of learning.

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