

APPROACHES TO CLASSROOM INTERACTIONS IN NON-ENGLISH MAJOR LARGE CLASSES

Field Study: Theory and Methodology of ELT

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Previous Studies Relating to classroom interactions

- Ralston's (2004) study explored interactions that occur and are facilitated in mainstream classrooms where a majority of the students are English language learners, specifically in Southern Nevada.
- Muramatsu's (2008) study explored the general characteristics of, and the influence of, both teachers' and students' Nonnative Speaker (NS) status on teacher-student interaction during writing conferences within the context of university-level composition courses.

Previous Studies Relating to classroom interactions

- Dara Gay Shaw's (2001) study investigated the impact of gender dynamics and culture on interaction in the adult English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), from the teachers', students', and observer's points of view.
- Deborah Spiro's (2011) study determined how interaction was facilitated in an online instructional media course and the value that instructors and students place on interaction in an online course.

Previous Studies Relating to classroom interactions

- Tognini's (2007) study investigated the interaction of teachers and learners in ten primary and secondary school languages other than English (LOTE) classes in Western Australia, with the aim of providing a detailed picture of its nature and patterns.
- Larkin's (2007) study determined techniques instructors use to interact in an online environment and what procedural interaction criteria the instructors consider effective without face-to-face interaction.

Previous Studies Relating to classroom interactions

- Spiro's (2011) study determined how interaction was facilitated in an online instructional media course and to determine the value that instructors and students place on interaction in an online course.
- Tran and Le's (2013) report examined the strategies the English teachers used in managing large classes.

What is interaction?

- Interaction is “the process consisting of the reciprocal actions of two or more actors within a given context” (Vrasidas and Mclsaac, 1999, p. 25).
- “An instructional interaction is an event that takes place between a learner and the learner’s environment. Its purpose is to respond to the learner in a way intended to change his or her behavior toward an educational goal” Wagner (1994, p. 8)

Classroom Interactions

- Interaction between teachers and students in classrooms is one of the primary means by which learning is accomplished in classrooms (Barnes, 1992; Cazden, 1988; Mehan, 1979).
- In language classrooms, interaction takes on an especially significant role in that it is both the medium through which learning is realized and an object of pedagogical attention (Barnes, 1992; Cazden, 1988; Mehan, 1979).

Teacher-Learner Interaction

- According to Harmer (2009), teachers should focus on three things when they talk with their students:
 - + Language
 - + Teacher's ideas
 - + Voice, tone and intonation.

Learner-Learner Interaction

- Johnson (1995) supports that if learner-learner interaction is well structured and managed.
- “Talking students with their peers about the content of the course is a powerful way for them to reinforce what they have learned.” (Naegle Paula, 2002: 128)

The importance of interactions in English language teaching and learning

- Interaction provides the opportunity for sharing perspectives, receiving feedback, and bringing about knowledge (Garrison & Shale, 1990).
- Students who brought feelings of fear into a course and subsequently experienced high levels of interaction were able to overcome their initial anxiety (Jin, 2005).
- A large number of ideas posted at one time may actually hinder motivation (Huchinson, 2007, p. 364) .

Different approaches to classroom interactions

4.1 Interactionism/interactionist theory

- Interaction hypothesis emphasizes the importance of comprehensible input and claims that it is most effective when it is modified through the negotiation of meaning (Long as cited in Ellis, 1994).

Interactionism/interactionist theory

Interactionism emphasizes the communication that actually takes place in the classroom between teachers and students and among students for language input and creating meaningful contexts for classroom activities.

Interactions in Sociocultural Theory

- SCT is based on the concept that human activities take place in cultural contexts and are mediated by language and other symbol systems.
- SCT argues that human mental functioning is fundamentally a mediated process that is organized by cultural artifacts, activities, and concepts (Ratner, 2002).

Classroom Interactions in sociocultural theory

- In the sociocultural perspective of learning, the essence of mind is considered to be inseparable from the varied worlds it inhabits.
- Sociocultural approaches emphasize the independence of social and individual process in the co-construction of knowledge (Steiner and Mahn, 1996).

Similarities and differences between interactionism/interactionist theory and sociocultural theory in terms of classroom interactions

INTERACTIONISM	SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Interaction involves linguistics input, production and feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Interaction is a mediation to all aspects of knowledge co-construction between teacher and students , students and students.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Language acquisition is the result of an interaction between the learner's mental abilities and the linguistic environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Language learning is considered not the internal assimilation of structural components of language systems.

Interactions in large classes

- “Given that class size is most unlikely to be reduced in the foreseeable future, teachers need to come to terms with their problem” (David, 1995, p.51).
- Cleek (2005) also points out that teaching large classes is challenging as large classes consist of an extreme range in ability as well as diverse student learning styles.

Interactions in large classes

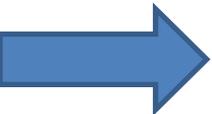
- In non-English majors classes, there are some obstacles in teacher-learner interaction:
 - + Some students may feel anonymous in the lecture .
 - + Some students feel too intimidated to ask questions or too overwhelmed by the material to approach instructors or others for help.

Operational definition of classroom interactions in the current study:

Classroom interactions include:

+ teacher-student and student-student communication.

+ verbal communication.

 - Interaction in this study refers to face to face classroom, not interaction via the web/internet.

- Interaction involves language input, production and feedback. It also a mediation to the co-construction of knowledge between teacher and students, students and students.

Operational definition of classroom interactions in the current study:

This study is limited to verbal interactions only for several reasons:

- + it is more convenient and convincing with data collected.

- + audio recordings of classroom interactions will reveal the patterns and process of classroom interactions

Conclusion

- Two dominant approaches to classroom interactions:
 - + Interactionism: The communication that actually takes place in the classroom between teachers and students and among students for language input and creating meaningful contexts for classroom activities.
 - + Sociocultural theory: Interaction in sociocultural theory emphasizes more on the use of language to mediate the thinking process of learning, especially, between teachers and more capable peers.

Conclusion

- Interaction leads to development in cognition and learning.
 - The review shows that so far almost no studies have been carried out to investigate teachers' and students' belief of interactions in these large classes.
-  It is therefore worth doing a study on the topic.



many
Thanks!

