Observations of Teacher-Student Interactions in Vietnam

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ABSTRACT: *Every day, teachers make dozens of interactions with students to make sure that the students can achieve their learning goals effectively. Classroom practices with teacher-student interactions not only help teachers build a good working environment but also assist students in forming their responsibility for learning. This paper points out the limitation of Vietnamese teacher-student interactions in the classroom and then suggest several solutions to this problem.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In teaching and learning a language, interactions between teacher and student make a major contribution during classroom time because it enhances the effectiveness of lesson and tightens relationship between teachers and students. However, according to Poole (2005), turn-taking practices occur differently in different contexts because of a wide range of cultural backgrounds. Therefore, knowledge of turn-taking in a variety of contexts can help teachers understand students' behavior and expectation.

II. TEACHING CONTEXT

Participants in this context are Vietnamese teenagers aged 16. At school, these learners attend classes with 40 people.

III. REASONS FOR CHOOSING TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTIONS

There are two main reasons for my choice about teacher-student interactions. Firstly, as a Vietnamese teacher of English, I realize that Vietnamese students are not willing to express ideas. They refuse or hesitate to answers teacher's questions. In my teaching experience, I notice the students know how to find appropriate solutions to the problems through their facial expressions and gestures but they remain in silence and listen to the teacher's responses, instead . Nguyen (2002) mentions Vietnamese learners prefers being quiet in class and carefully taking notes information to participating in classroom interaction. Secondly, I want to change from individual nominations (the students wait to be called) to invitation to bid (the students want to speak) (Poole, 2005) to increase the quality of teaching and learning. Although "individual nominations" has its own advantages such as saving time, however, the more teachers connect with students, the more students can broaden their horizons.

IV. DISCUSSION

Teacher's control in classroom is the first reason to prevent students from interacting with their teachers. In particular, teacher-talking time is longer than student-talking time. It might be explained the teachers want to make sure their students can understand the lesson, therefore, they spend much time explaining and talking about the problems and solutions, instead of listening to students' thought. As McHoul (1978) states when the floor is controlled by teachers, students find it hard to get the floor to speak. By the same token, Cazden (1988) mentions "teacher have the right to speak at any time to any person; they can fill any silence or interrupt any speaker" (p.54).

As a result, students become passive gradually.

The second reason is Vietnamese traditional learning style. According to Phuong-Mai, Terlouw & Pilot (2006) in Vietnamese classes "the teacher is considered to be a guru who is supposed to satisfy learners in the search for the truth (in knowledge) and virtues (in life)" (p.5). Whatever teachers taught will consider as right things. Thus, being quite is a way to show students' respect to teachers. Also, being talkative is not Vietnamese culture (Nguyen, 2002). Moreover, the number of Vietnamese students is quite high in each class, around 40. Consequently, interaction between teachers and students is also limited.

From these reasons, re-designing learning tasks might be a good choice to increase students' turn-taking. Particularly, the tasks should be contained 2-way interactions between teacher and student. For instance, instead of explaining and giving answers all the time, teacher can provide leaners with useful input such as vocabulary, ideas then ask them to work in pairs or groups and discuss together about the given problem before answering teacher's questions. The turn-taking is divided equally, teacher–student interaction, student-student interaction and student-teacher interaction. In addition, students' learning process is enhanced as they are encouraged to take part in class activities with their classmates. Consequently, teacher-talking time is reduced and student-talking talk is increased. Luong & Hoang (2017) explain "with regard to the context of second language development, interaction is complemented by the teacher and students through particular activities that promote learners to use the target language in communication" (p.81). Mackey (2007) states interaction is important to language development. In some cases, however, the students might work hard with their classmates but hesitate to express opinions with teacher because of traditional learning style which is mentioned above. To solve this problem, Harmer (1998) mentions creating good classroom atmosphere during the learning process is necessary. If the students feel relaxed in their class, they will not be afraid of showing their views about teacher's tasks. The relationship between teacher and student can be stronger. As a result, students' turn-taking can be improved positively.

V.   CONCLUSION

It might be difficult to change Vietnamese traditional learning style completely because of culture. However, if teacher can organize learning tasks logically with equal turn-taking for both teacher and student, teacher-student interactions can be improved. Moreover, friendly classroom atmosphere is also important, as it will encourage students to participate in interactions with teacher.

VI.   REFERENCES

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