

**TURN TAKING
IN CLASSROOM ORAL INTERACTION
AS INPUT TO SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

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Abstract

Tulisan ini menjelaskan tentang pemanfaatan giliran atau kesempatan (*turn taking*) dalam melakukan interaksi pembelajaran di dalam kelas dalam hal upaya memperbaiki pemerolehan bahasa bagi pelajar yang mempelajari bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa Internasional. Penjelasan dimulai dengan konsep interaksi di dalam kelas, kemudian dilanjutkan dengan kegiatan pengambilan giliran atau kesempatan (*turn taking*), dan yang terakhir akan dibahas tentang pemerolehan bahasa kedua. Permasalahan yang akan diangkat adalah berupa kegiatan *turn taking* yang terjadi di dalam kelas dan mencari input bagi pemerolehan bahasa. Permasalahan di dalam kelas tentang keadaan interaksi di kelas dan agar terjadi pemerolehan bahasa yang cukup baik, maka harus adanya aturan giliran dalam berbicara, sehingga interaksi di kelas menjadi komunikatif dan terlaksana dengan baik.

Key Words:

Turn taking, classroom interaction, and second language acquisition.

A. INTRODUCTION

Interaction happens in teaching and learning process in the classrooms. Language classrooms can be seen as sociolinguistic environments as stated by Cazden (1988)² and discourse communities as stated by Hall and Verplaetse (2000)³ in which interaction is believed to contribute to learners' language development. Interactive processes are not strictly individual or equivalent across learners and situations; language learning is a social enterprise, jointly

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² Consolo, Douglas Altamiro. 2006. Classroom Oral Interaction in Foreign Language Lessons and Implications for Teacher Development. Retrieved on January 7, 2007 from http://rle.unpel.tche.br/php/edicoes/v9n2/o2_consolo.pdf

³ *Ibid.*

constructed, and intrinsically linked to learners' repeated and regular participation in classroom activities.

Participation of the students in the classroom activities seldom happen, because the students are not interested in speaking or may be do not know what to be spoken. Speaking is oral communication that should be done by the students and the teacher in using a language in classroom. When the students and the teacher do not use speaking, there is no interaction in the classroom. So, interaction is the important thing to make the classroom learning process communicatively. In doing communication in the classroom interaction, there are 'turn' that should be followed. Communication cannot do with only one people take part, it must involve two or more people and to do that the people who talk should speak in turn.

This paper would like to see and to solve the problems about how the students make taking the turn in classroom interactions.

B. REVIEW OF THEORETICAL

1. Classroom Interaction

Interaction analysis was initiated in subject classrooms. Ellis states that "interaction analysis involves the use of a form or schedule consists of a set of categories for coding specific classroom behaviors"⁴. It runs the risk of producing disconnected tallies of behaviors that obscure the general picture. It is also depends on a number of assumptions-for example, that is possible for an observer to 'read' the intentions of the teacher and students. Based on Willson⁵ interaction is the process referring to 'face-to-face' action. It can be either verbal, channeled through written or spoken words, or non-verbal, channeled through touch, proximity, eye-contact, facial expressions, gesturing

⁴ Ellis, Rod. *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

⁵ Willson, Julie. 1999. High and Low Achievers' Classroom Interaction Patterns in an Upper Primary Classroom. Retrieved on January 7, 2007 from <http://www.aare.edu.au/99pap/wil99741.htm>

etc. Moreover, Rivers (1987) in Cheon⁶ treats interaction as the key to language teaching for communication. He defines interaction as the facility in using a language when their attention is focused on conveying and receiving authentic messages. He suggests ways to promote interaction in the language classroom such as, for example, avoiding teacher-dominated classroom, being cooperative and considering affective variables.

In addition, Kramsch (1986) in Cheon⁷ claims that “language instruction requires the development of interactional competence, and suggests a three-step approach to improve natural discourse and to build interactional competence in the classroom”. *The first step* is to work on teacher/student oriented interaction, during which the students practice the target language with their teacher as a conversational partner. *The second step* is partner-centered interaction, during which students learn to negotiate meaning with partner in the classroom as well as how to generate meaning. In *the third step* of the interactional approach, students practice ways to interact without social and cultural constraints that learners meet in natural conversations. Furthermore, Kramsch⁸ suggests that communicative competence must include the ability to express, interpret and negotiate meanings, he advocates that, for as natural a communicative situation as possible, students must be given opportunities in the classroom to interact with both the teacher and fellow students through turn-taking, giving feedback to speakers, asking for clarification, and starting and ending conversations.

Based on Ellis there are some aspects of classroom interaction as below:

1. teacher talk;
2. error treatment;
3. teacher’s questions;

⁶ Cheon, Heesook. 2003. The Viability of Computer Mediated Communication in the Korean Secondary EFL Classroom. Retrieved on January 7, 2007 from <http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/march03.sub2.php>

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

4. learner participation;
5. task-based interaction; and
6. small group work.⁹

Talking about *teacher talk*, Chaudron (1988) in Ellis¹⁰ provided a comprehensive survey of studies of teacher talk in which noted some features of teacher talks. *Firstly* is amount of talk, which is taking of teachers' takes up about two-thirds of the total talking. *Secondly*, functional distribution, in which the teachers are likely to explain, question and command and learners to respond. *Thirdly*, rate of speech, in which teachers will slow down their rate of speech when talking to the students. *Next feature* is pauses, in which teachers like to make longer pauses when talking to the students than to native speakers. *Other features* are phonology, intonation, articulation and stress. Teachers tend to make their speaking more loudly and making their speech more distinct when addressing second language learners. Teachers also make modifications in vocabulary, syntax, and discourse. An interesting on teacher talk is how a teacher determines what level of adjustment to make. Ellis¹¹ stated that in teacher talk occurs in one-to-many interactions. In this interaction the learners may vary in their level of proficiency and where there is likely to be only limited feedback from a few students.

In *error treatment*, it is talked about the treatment that results in learners' 'autonomous ability' to correct themselves on an item, in the elicitation of a correct response from a learner, the reactions of the teacher that clearly transforms, disapprovingly refers to, or demands improvement, and positive or negative reinforcement involving expressions of approval or disapproval¹². Other aspect in classroom interaction is *teacher's questions*. Teachers in content classrooms or in language, typically ask many questions. In classroom interaction, teachers' question is important, without

⁹ Ellis, Rod. *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Op. Cit.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ellis, Rod. *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1985.

¹² Ibid

teacher question, usually the interaction not happened. Many questions with students' answer make class more active.

Then, *learners' participation*, in which divided into two participations; quantity of participations and quality of participations. Quantity participation is talking about how much the learners taking part in the classroom interaction and quality participation is the contents of students' interaction. The focus has been on the amount of learner participation, the negotiation of meaning between learners and their relation to second language acquisition. Tsui gave the assumptions that learner participation is "to be more learners participate orally and the more they engage in the negotiation of meaning, the better they will acquire the language"¹³. Next feature is *task-based interaction*. Task-based attempts to specify the content to be taught in terms of a series of activities to be performed by the students, either with the teacher or in small group work¹⁴. Task variables are determining which variables to investigate. It talks about contents and small group work. The last is *small group work*. Brumfit (1984) in Ellis stated that small group work often considerable an essential feature of communicative language teaching¹⁵. It increases language practice opportunities, improves the quality of students' talk, helps individualizing instruction, promotes a positive affective climate, and motivates learners to learn.

Furthermore, Allwright (1980) in Ellis proposed three types analysis of classroom interaction, they are a turn taking analysis, a topic analysis, a task analysis.¹⁶ The first type is *a turn taking analysis*. It consists of several categories grouped under the general headings of 'turn-getting' and 'turn-giving'. The second type is *a topic analysis* which makes use of such categories as instances of the target language intended to primarily as 'models' and instances of communication about the target language. Then,

¹³ Tsui, Amy B. M. 1998. The "Unobservable" in Classroom Interaction. Retrieved on January 7, 2007 from <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/files/9/jul/tsui.html>

¹⁴ Ellis, Rod. *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. Op.Cit.

¹⁵ Ellis, Rod. *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Loc.Cit.

¹⁶ Ellis, Rod. *Understanding Op.Cit.*

the last type is *a task analysis*. It does not provide a detailed set of categories, but distinguishes tasks as the levels of turn taking and topic management, and also at cognitive level. From the three types of classroom interaction suggested by Alwrigh, the writer wants to investigate the first type.

Talking about interaction in the classroom relates to oral interaction. Students' participation in classroom oral interaction is seen based on Alwrigh in Consolo¹⁷ assumed that there are three types of oral engagement language lessons. In the most frequently type is called 'compliance'. In here, students' utterances are very much dependent on the teachers' management of classroom communication, for example, when they replay to the teachers' questions. The second type is known as 'navigation'. It happens when the learners take the initiative to overcome communication breakdowns, as in request for clarification of what has been said. This may be seen as a simpler type of negotiation of meaning that can help comprehension and may contribute to language development. The less frequents type is 'negotiation', and when it occurs, the teacher's and the students' roles may become less asymmetrical, and interlocutors attempt to reach decision making by consensus.

Classroom interactions happen between teacher and students. It supported by Wanphet which stated that a classroom interaction is the activity by teacher's questions and students' responses¹⁸. It has instructional value for children. The classroom interaction is in greatest value if it is structured so that all children know what is expected and are able to work with the teacher to build a collaborative response. Therefore, the classroom interaction is the interaction between the teacher and the students orally in learning process. It can be the students' responses to teacher's question and happen when the students would like to overcome the conversation. Cheon stated "many researchers consider interaction as a fundamental requirement of second

¹⁷ Consolo. Op. Cit.

¹⁸Whanpet, Phalangchok. Analyzing Conversational Repair in Online Second Language Classroom. Retrieved on January, 7, 2007 from [Http://www/aedc.org/scholars/thesis_abstract/education/plonearticlemultipage.2006-0504...](http://www/aedc.org/scholars/thesis_abstract/education/plonearticlemultipage.2006-0504...)

language acquisition”¹⁹. So, it can be said that interaction as one element of second language acquisition.

2. The Concepts of Turn taking

Turn in this writing talk about the order of the time for speaking, as stated by Wanphet who said that “turn used to indicate the order of talk”²⁰. The definitions above are concerned with how and in what way the next speaker selected or so called speaker selection, a basic aspect of turn taking.

Turn taking is the essential characteristic that distinguishes conversations from monologic speech.²¹ Rules which seem to govern the turn taking process were identified together with transition-relevance-places at which speaker change was found to occur, but the central concept based on Meierkor, that of the ‘turn’, has remained only vaguely defined²². Turn taking is the way simultaneous speech and pauses have been included. It also relates to participation (face-to-face communication) in the classroom, which are involved participants.

Face-to-face communication has given us sample time to learn how to speak with one another. In an in-person classroom, it is common, for instance, for students to raise their hand when they wish to ask a question or make a point. We, however, had not enough experience to develop a natural means for knowing whose turn it is to speak.

Rules of Turn Taking

Rules for turn taking may seem relatively unimportant. However, as we have seen, one of the most important advantages is that it gives students an opportunity to interact with their peers and subject experts at classroom. Without effective means of determining who will speak, interaction can be

¹⁹ Cheon, Heesook. *Op. Cit.*

²⁰ Whanpet. *Op. Cit.*

²¹ (Meierkor, 2007).

²² Ibid.

greatly stunted. Institutions should experiment to see what methods of turn-taking are the most effective.

Furthermore, Ellis²³ identified a number of rules that underlie speaker selection and change. The rules are only one speaker speaks at a time, a speaker can select the next speaker by nominating or by performing the first part of an adjacency pair (for example, asking a question that requires an answer), a speaker can alternatively allow the next speaker to self-select, and there is usually competition to take the next turn. Classroom researchers frequently highlight the differences between turn taking in natural and classroom settings.

In addition, the rules of turn taking that stated by Ten Have (1999) in Whanpet who identifies three hierarchical options of a speaker collection²⁴. The first, *a current speaker selects the next speaker*. A current speaker either specifically calls on the next speaker's name (nomination or short gun question); for example, *do you have anything to add, Joe*, or calls one who volunteers to speak next; for example, *OK, Joe* (Joe is raising his hand). The second, *the next speaker selects himself*. That is, there will be one who is going to speak without being called on after a current speaker finishes talking. The last, *if either the first or the second options* are not chosen, a current speaker may continue to talk. These three options are hierarchical options that follow the rule that only one speaks at a time.

Moreover, Van Lier in Ellis identified a number of turn taking behaviors that he considers indicative of such initiative²⁵. Examples, under the headings provided by Van Lier, are:

Topic

The turn is off stream (i.e. discontinuing), introduce something new, or denies/disputes a proposition in a previous turn.

Self-selection

Selection originates from the speaker.

²³Ellis, Road. *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Op. Cit. p. 579

²⁴ Whanpet. *Op. Cit.*

²⁵ Elli, Road. *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. *Loc. Cit.*

Allocation

The turn selects one specific next speaker.

Sequence

The turn is independent of sequence.

Lier noted that turn taking sanctions are rare in adult L2 classrooms and that there is a considerable degree of tolerance of unintelligibility. Then, he suggested that if turn taking is rigidly controlled, the learners have no need to attend carefully to classroom talk to identify potential transition points when they can take their turn. As a result, they lack 'an intrinsic motivation for listening and so are robbed of input. The important things to be remembered that students should full of attention to the process of learning in a talk, so will make them able in taking turn, listening and speaking.

The Aspect of Turn Taking

There are several aspects in turn taking stated by Whanphet, such as talk normally is composed of at least two turns by at least two people, talk is also composed of at least two consecutive turns with the rules of sometimes the second turn starts before the first turn ends, and pause²⁶. Pause is the period of silence that occurs either within the same turn of one speaker or between two turns of two speakers. However, for a pause occurring between the two consecutive turns of two speakers, it is hard to find who really owns it.

Then, based on investigation of Sato's in Glew indicated a relationship between ethnicity and the number of speaking turns taken by ESL students²⁷. The Asian students in her study took considerably fewer speaking turns with their teachers than the non-Asian students. There are several reasons for Sato in her findings. Firstly, the Asian students may be restricted in their turn taking behaviors because they adhere to an interpretation of the students-teacher relationship which pre-allocates speaking rights in the classroom to the

²⁶ Whanpet. *Op. Cit.*

²⁷ Glew, Paul, J. (1998). Verbal Interaction and English Second Language Acquisition in Classroom Contexts. Retrieved on January, 7, 2007 from <http://www.iier.org.au/iier8/glew.html>

teacher. Then, such students-teacher perceptions may create a spiral effect in the classroom, whereby the teacher calls on the Asian students less than the non-Asian students because she perceives unwillingness among the Asian students to talk.

Examples of turn taking activities

Turn taking can happen in the classroom discussion. For example, at first, the moderator of discussions after each lecture asked each campus in turn if it had questions for the lecturer or comments on the subject. The problem with this approach was the awkward silence that would greet us when a campus did not have anything to say when its turn came up. (This was also a problem for a campus with a lot to say, which had to wait for its next turn.) A better approach would be for students to be able to signal when they have something to say. Since we did not give the signals, at times our moderator asked anybody with anything to say to wave their hands so that he could see them.

We can also look these examples in classroom learning, like:

- A: I wanna go shopping. (trouble source/reparable item) (1 turn)
B: Sorry ↑ (repair initiation) (1 turn)
A: I said I want to go shopping (repair completion) (1 turn)

Turn taking must do in one to one communication; it cannot happen when all of speakers talk at one time. Turn taking is one of important of classroom interaction. It takes full of attention, because without attention carefully the students are difficult to take part in the interaction process. The students must attend to the rules and the aspect presenting in the turn taking. It helps them to make classroom interaction more communicative.

3. Second Language Acquisition

Second language acquisition (SLA) is a process of acquiring another language. SLA is a complex process, involving many interrelated factors. Ellis defined SLA as the product of many factors pertaining to the learner on the one

hand and the learning situation on the other hand²⁸. It is important, therefore, to start by recognizing the complexity and diversity that result from the interaction of these two sets of factors. In learning a language, different learners in different situations learn second language in a different ways.

Furthermore, SLA intended to contrast with foreign language acquisition. SLA is used as a general term that embraces both untutored (or ‘naturalistic’) acquisition and tutored (or ‘classroom’) acquisition²⁹. Second language acquisition refers to all the aspects of language that the language learner needs to master. Some experts in language acquisition gave their attentions to how the learners acquire the ability to communicate their ideas and intentions (i.e. pragmatic knowledge). However, the experts agreed that there are some aspects of language that should be mastered by the learners in second language acquisition, such as the acquisition of grammar, discourse, lexis, etc.

In addition, Ellis concluded that second language acquisition refers to the subconscious or conscious processes by which a language other than the mother tongue is learnt in a natural or a tutored setting. It covers the development of phonology, lexis, grammar, and pragmatic knowledge, but has been largely confined to morph syntax. The study of SLA is directed at accounting for the learner’s competence, but in order to set out to investigate empirically how a learner performs when she or he uses a second language³⁰.

In conclusion, SLA is the process of acquiring another language that happens to the learners. There are some aspect that acquired by the learners; pragmatic aspect, grammar, phonology, etc. It acquired in a process of learning directly or indirectly. Language acquisition is interested on how competence is developed, it looks an actual utterance and how it can be inferred from performance.

C. PROBLEMS AND DISCUSSION

²⁸ Ellis, Rod. *Understanding Second Language Acquisition. Op. Cit. p. 4.*

²⁹ *Ibid*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

1. Classroom problems

It is known that in turn taking there are two important things should be paid attention; turn getting and turn giving. Turn getting is the time for the students to take or to start a conversation, and turn giving is the time when the first speaker gives the chance or opportunity to speak to other speaker.

The problem is students do not know when they should be taking part in a conversation, and how to reply teacher and the others friends in classroom interaction. Naturally, the students realize when their turn to speak, and when they should give turn to others. In fact, because of only some little students can use English, the turn always dominated by them.

Furthermore, another problem is teacher should slowdown their influence of speaking to make the students understand of what they are talking about, and sometimes teachers must use the first language (Indonesian). Teachers also should repeat many times of their questions and use Indonesian, may be because the students do not familiar with the words, phrases, or sentences given.

Better acquisition can be acquired with the conversation that running well. If the conversations only dominate by one students, or small number of students, the communication in classroom interaction can nut run well. It will make the less students more dis-encourage, low anxiety and ashamed to speak. They fell not enjoyable to speak, because their other friends speak fluently, and even dominate the speaking.

These problems make the acquisition of language of the learners are slow, cannot as well as usual.

2. Discussion

The problems can be encounter with the higher motivation of the students. Teacher should encourage students to talk and to interact one each other. To make the students involved in an interaction in the classroom, teacher must give some signals, for example when the teacher gives a

question, she/he can ask the students by using names to make they ensure that the question is for her/him.

The questions can be:

- Do you agree, Fadlan?
- How do you think, Rahma?
- Anything to be added, Sherly?

By addressing the question the students themselves, they will be more encourage and motivate to speak. Also by giving them questions, the students must be involved in an interaction. They should answer and reply the teachers' question by themselves, so that they can be more active and the dominate turn do not happen anymore. Without involving students in interactions, the communication in the classroom is not doing well.

Besides that, if the interaction between students, the current speaker should also give the sign like the teacher do. He can also use the question or statement, like;

- Ok, Joe. Your turn.

or by using this statement:

- I do not think like that, how about you, John?

The statements above can be used to make the other speakers involved in the conversation.

The teacher as a motivator in the classroom must know the needs of the students; he/she should give interesting topics to speak in the first training to make the students interesting to speak. After choosing the interesting topics, the teacher can make some questions about the topics and ask the students to answer.

The most interactive students should be given an understanding that the turn must be given to the other students; they may not dominate the speaking. They also ask to help the other students to understand the questions given.

Slowly but sure, the teachers can use English in learning process, without feeling that students cannot understand what she/he talks about. By

giving turn taking to the students, the fewer students hoped could communicate with their teacher and their friends. Moreover, it can make the teacher speak fluently to the students in learning process.

D. CONCLUSION

Turn taking is an important thing to be considered in classroom interaction. Without turn taking the communication and interaction cannot do well because turn taking involves face-to-face communication. In oral communication, face-to-face communication hands important thing, and in face-to-face communication turn taking is also an important thing.

To be involved in an interaction, students should pay attention to the communication that running, because they cannot do the communication without attention, they cannot take part in the communication without understanding what the people talk. By giving attention to the communication that running, they can join the communication well.

The right turning in the interaction will help the students to be easier to understand the second language, and the acquisition of the language can be more effective. Turn taking in classroom interaction will make the students more active and creative, they will become more involve in the interaction, and interaction can be one input to acquire the language. By activating the students in classroom, they will be easier to understand the language itself, and they will also be active and interactive in teaching learning process. Participation in classroom interaction actively suggest as one feature to facilitate language development, and the teacher's role in the second language classroom. It is to construct an interactive learning environment in which learners can associate with each other and generate meaning in the target language. Classroom interaction can develop the students' language acquisition, and turn taking is as an input to the second language acquisition.

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