

Interactive Features of Preservice English Teachers' Online Talk and High-School Students' Participation During Online Classes

Características interactivas del habla de docentes en formación y la participación de estudiantes en preparatoria durante las clases en línea

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For over three decades, second language acquisition theories have emphasized the importance of interaction and student output in language learning. This descriptive qualitative study analyzed preservice English teachers' talk during online classes and its impact on high school students' participation. Data collection involved recording lessons and classroom interactions, which were analyzed using Walsh's Interactive Features of English Teachers' Talk. Results indicate that constructive teacher talk, including referential questions, scaffolding, direct repair, and extended wait times, enhanced participation. Conversely, extended teacher talk and interruptions hindered participation. The findings highlight the need for preservice programs to improve teacher talk. Providing students with opportunities for self-expression and fostering an environment where meaning is negotiated is advisable. Further research with larger samples is recommended.

Keywords: online education, preservice teachers, student participation, teacher talk

Durante más de tres décadas, las teorías de adquisición de idiomas han destacado la importancia de la interacción y la participación estudiantil para el aprendizaje. En este estudio cualitativo descriptivo se analizó el habla de docentes de inglés en formación en clases en línea y su impacto en la participación estudiantil de bachillerato. Los datos se recopilaron mediante grabaciones de lecciones e interacciones, analizados según las *Características interactivas del habla docente* de Walsh. Se observó que el uso de preguntas referenciales, andamiaje, corrección directa y tiempos de respuesta extendidos favorecieron la participación, mientras que los turnos extendidos y las interrupciones docentes la dificultaron. Se recomienda que los programas de formación docente promuevan la autoexpresión estudiantil. Futuras investigaciones pueden incluir muestras más amplias.

Palabras clave: educación en línea, habla docente, participación estudiantil, docentes en formación

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Introduction

Second language acquisition theories have emphasized the importance of classroom interaction and student output in language learning (Long, 1996; Swain, 1985; Walsh, 2014). Teacher talk constitutes one-third of communication in the second language (L2) classroom, influencing student engagement and participation (Chaudron, 1988; Cook, 2013; Cotton, 1988). Walsh (2002, 2006) explains that constructive teacher talk refers to communication strategies used by teachers that enhance learning opportunities and facilitate language acquisition. This includes “engaging learners in classroom discourse, encouraging interactional adjustments between teachers and learners, promoting opportunities for self-expression, and facilitating and encouraging clarification by learners” (Walsh, 2002, p. 4). Constructive teacher talk aligns language use with the pedagogic goals of fostering an environment where meaning is negotiated, and learners actively participate in the interaction, leading to understanding and learning.

Obstructive teacher talk (Walsh, 2002, 2006), on the other hand, refers to communication practices that hinder learning opportunities. This typically involves teachers dominating the conversation, controlling the topic and interaction, and primarily using display questions. In obstructive teacher talk, teachers may also modify their speech in response to learners’ non-understanding without encouraging students to do the same, and they often provide complete answers instead of allowing students to express themselves. Such practices can lead to missed opportunities for negotiation of meaning and, ultimately, reduced opportunities for language acquisition.

This study focuses on analyzing the interactional features of preservice English teachers during online classes to explore their impact on student participation. The central question is: In what ways do teachers, through their teacher talk, create or hinder opportunities for student participation? This question addresses

the importance of learners not only receiving input (Krashen, 1982) but also opportunities to produce output and test their language (Swain, 1985). Furthermore, classroom interaction fosters student engagement and language acquisition (Gass, 1997), encompassing cognitive, affective, and social dimensions (Fredricks et al., 2004).

Theoretical Framework

The connection between teacher talk and opportunities for student participation is well-documented, with studies showing that teachers typically dominate conversations and initiate most interactions through extended turns and display questions. Although teachers often adjust their talk in response to student confusion, they seldom fail to encourage detailed responses from learners (Sharpe, 2008). Scholars such as Allwright (1984) and Ellis (1998) emphasize the teacher’s role in managing interaction, while Johnson (1995) highlights teachers’ responsibility in promoting the negotiation of meaning and shaping classroom discourse. Nunan (1999) and Van Lier (1998) similarly stress the teacher’s role in creating environments where learners actively engage in interactions.

In Iran, Ghafarpour (2017) found that extended teacher turns, display questions, and transitional markers dominated discourse, limiting student participation. Similarly, Chen (2021) in China identified scaffolding and clarification requests as constructive features, but noted that students’ participation was limited due to the infrequent use of referential questions.

Ekinci (2020), in Türkiye, emphasized teacher echo as a tool for affirming responses and correcting errors in EFL reading courses. He noted that while echoing can enhance learner participation by validating students’ contributions, it may also hinder engagement if applied excessively or ineffectively. In Thailand, Jeanjaroonsri (2018) identified both constructive and obstructive

aspects of teacher talk, where learners' questions were met with extended clarifications provided by the teacher through examples and visuals, enhancing comprehension but also limiting opportunities for learner participation. Supakorn (2020) similarly observed how constructive teacher talk, such as clarification requests and confirmation checks, promoted student participation.

Contrastingly, Korkut and Ertaş (2017) in Türkiye and Soraya (2017) in Indonesia explored differences in how experienced and preservice teachers managed interactions. Soraya stressed the need for preservice teacher training in using constructive talk, while Korkut and Ertaş noted that preservice teachers tended to prioritize form correction over interaction.

Poorebrahim et al. (2015) in Iran found that extended wait time and scaffolding promoted participation, while extended teacher turns and display questions hindered it. Similarly, Shamsipour and Allami (2012) observed that extended learner turns and scaffolding increased participation, but noted a limited amount of content feedback and referential questions. In Indonesia, Valentika and Yulia (2020) reported that seeking clarification encouraged extended learner turns, but excessive teacher talk limited student involvement.

Finally, Vázquez-Carranza and Villalobos-González (2021) study in a Mexican university emphasized the importance for preservice teachers to diversify their interactional teacher talk strategies. They emphasized promoting student oral production by reducing extended teacher talk and incorporating more referential questions.

The reviewed studies emphasize the influence of teacher talk on participation across various contexts. Notably, only one study focused on preservice English

teachers in Mexico, highlighting the need for further investigation. While the interactive characteristics of teacher talk may not vary significantly across settings, localized research is essential to explore this topic further, particularly within the Mexican cultural context.

Method

We used a qualitative descriptive approach (Creswell et al., 2007). Qualitative research, according to Mehrad and Zangeneh (2019), is designed to reveal specific meanings and behaviors within socially constructed contexts. This methodology was considered appropriate for exploring the interactions between teachers and students, as it offers categories to analyze conversations from online classes.

In second language classrooms, interactions are constructed through processes such as turn-taking, sequencing of actions, and topic changes (Johnson, 1995; Van Lier, 1998). The dynamics of conversations are captured through a descriptive qualitative methodology that recognizes the influence of these turns on the contributions of participants to the interactional dynamics.

Framework for Analysis

We adapted Walsh's (2006) Interactive Features of English Teachers' Talk (see Table 1) to examine teachers' talk. According to Jeanjaroonsri (2018) and Seedhouse (1997), Walsh's framework provides teachers with metalanguage to describe the interactive characteristics of their talk and helps them understand its relationship with student engagement. The goal of the framework, according to Walsh (2006), is to evaluate how teachers' talk can encourage or hinder student participation in the classroom.

Table 1. Interactive Features of English Teachers' Talk (Adapted From Walsh, 2006)

Checking comprehension	The teacher confirms that students have understood the contributions made during class before moving on
Feedback	Language-focused feedback: The teacher provides specific comments on the language and words used by the student
	Message-focused feedback: The teacher offers feedback on the content or meaning of the student's message rather than focusing on language corrections
Questions	Referential questions: Genuine inquiries where the teacher may not already know the answer, aimed at eliciting information or clarification
	Display questions: Require students to demonstrate their knowledge or understanding of a specific topic
Repair	Direct repair: Involves correcting errors in students' contributions to prevent misunderstandings
	Minimal repair: Involves making slight corrections to errors in students' contributions without disrupting the flow of conversation, but it often misses the opportunity to negotiate meaning
Request for clarification	When the teacher or student asks for further explanation or clarification on something that has been said
Scaffolding	Reformulation: Restating a student's contribution to clarify it
	Extension: Expanding on a student's contribution to explore the topic further or deepen understanding
	Modeling: Providing examples to illustrate or demonstrate concepts discussed by students
Teacher echo	The teacher repeats a student's contribution to affirm understanding or encourage further discussion
Teacher interruption	When the teacher interrupts a student's contribution during interaction, potentially to redirect or clarify
Transactional markers	These are verbal cues (like "aha") used by the teacher to signal interest, understanding, or a desire for the student to conclude their thought, encouraging more participation
Turn completion	The teacher complements the student's contribution to enrich the interaction, possibly by adding insights
Turn time	Short turns: Interventions by the teacher consisting of fewer than three sentences
	Extended turns: Detailed explanations or instructions by the teacher comprising more than three sentences
Translanguaging	When a bilingual speaker uses more than one language they know or are learning to communicate
Wait time	Extended wait time: Allowing several seconds for students to formulate a response
	Reduced wait time: When the teacher does not grant enough time for students to respond adequately

Participants

Between August and December 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic, four preservice teachers (A, B, C, and D) participated in a 16-week practicum, consisting of weekly two-hour lessons conducted via Google Meet. They were selected through convenience sampling from the ninth semester of a BA program in English at a university in northern Mexico.

The Mexican preservice teachers, averaging 20 years old, were assigned to teach groups of 15 to 20 high school students with intermediate English proficiency at a technical school in Chihuahua, where second language instruction is required in all public schools.

During the practicum, the preservice teachers participated in activities, including observation, self-reflection exercises, creating instructional videos, maintaining journals, and developing lesson plans. Preservice teachers are a group of interest because this stage is crucial in the professional development of future EFL teachers, as emphasized by Allen and Wright (2014) and Seferoğlu (2006). Moreover, the study provides a better understanding of how they use teacher talk in classroom contexts, thus contributing feedback to the program and to themselves.

Data Analysis

We asked the participants to select three lessons to be recorded, provided that they included examples of teacher–student interactions. Subsequent analysis focused on 12 hours of recordings, which were transcribed to facilitate discourse analysis focused on teacher talk. We wrote analytical memos to synthesize the video content, capturing the interactive moments in the lessons. We coded the data to categorize the interactions, which facilitated the identification of relevant features of teacher talk. We used the Initiation-Response-Feedback framework, developed by Sinclair and Coulthard (1992), to segment the data and analyze interactions between teachers and students. To optimize the analysis, we applied the voice transcription

conventions of the *Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English* (VOICE, <https://voice.acdh.oeaw.ac.at/index.html>), using symbols designed for data search and confidentiality.

Findings

While all excerpts were analyzed for the study, only four were selected for inclusion in this article. Limiting the analysis to one excerpt per teacher kept the examination manageable, allowing for the presentation of some of the interactive features of English teachers' talk in the data. The excerpts illustrated the features of talk exhibited by the preservice teachers, highlighting both constructive moments that promoted student engagement and instances where teacher talk hindered participation. Additionally, using only four excerpts facilitated comparative analysis across different aspects of the participants' talk, enabling the identification of consistent features or variations.

Excerpt From Participant A

- 1 Teacher: Then we, uhm, let me, then, in the same paragraph <reading from the class material> they also mention a slogan, and I think everyone knows what a slogan is. It's a short and memorable phrase. Mhm, let's see, [S2], do you have an example of a slogan? Either in English or Spanish, it doesn't matter. (3")
- 2 S2: Mhm, <L1> *El eslogan, el* <L1> slogan of McDonalds in Spanish is like <L1> "*Me encanta*" ¿no? algo así <L1>=
- 3 Teacher: =yeah, yes @
- 4 S2: <L1> *No recuerdo, la verdad* <L1>
- 5 Teacher: <L1> *Sí* <L1> yes, "I love it" <L1> *me encanta* <L1> and then mhm, the song (hums the song) Yeah, thank you, that's a good example. Mhm, someone that wants to say one slogan in Spanish? (3") Oh, well, let me choose one student. [S4] Can you give me an example of some slogan in English?
- 6 S4: Mhm, Nike, is: "Just do it"=

- 7 Teacher: =Yeah, thank you. “Just do it.” Yeah, mhm I have another one. I don’t know if you’re going to recognize this, but when I first read this slogan, I was like, “I know I heard this slogan before, but I don’t know where.” So the slogan is: “Think different.” Do you know where this slogan is from? (2”) Anyone?
- 8 S1: Apple?
- 9 Teacher: Yeah, thank you. Yes, it’s from Apple. Actually, I didn’t know that this one, this slogan is from Apple, like I said before, I was kind of trying to remember where I heard it, mmh, but yeah. I don’t think in Spanish, there’s a translation for this slogan; I think it is the same. Mmh, also I wanted to ask you something, like, do you know if Samsung has a slogan? (2”) Does anyone know?
- 10 S6: <L1> *No creo* <L1> I don’t think so.
- 11 Teacher: No, right? I was looking for it, and then I was like, no, but I don’t think they have. But I don’t know. But thank you. So, as you can see, we have a lot of slogans and catchphrases, so let’s continue.

Participant A’s Constructive Teacher Talk

Referential questions: In Turns 1 and 5, Participant A asked questions that encouraged interaction (“Do you have an example of a slogan?” and “Can you give me an example of some slogan in English?”), aligning with Afzali and Kianpoor’s (2020) findings that questioning fosters interaction. However, Participant A missed the opportunity to ask follow-up questions and establish an authentic conversation about the advertising messages, for example, by encouraging discussions about what made slogans effective or by doing a group analysis of various slogans (e.g., what characteristics they had in common? what emotions or messages they expressed?).

Direct repair: In Turn 5, Participant A confirmed the student’s input by repeating the correct slogan (“I love it”). Maximum economy was achieved in error

correction when the teacher adopted a direct approach (Seedhouse, 1997). Because it is less time-consuming and minimally intrusive compared to other correction methods, direct repair is often preferred by teachers (Walsh, 2002).

Scaffolding: Participant A, in Turns 5 and 7, used scaffolding by translating the phrase “*me encanta*” to “I love it” and singing the corresponding slogan’s jingle. She then modeled additional examples, such as the slogan “Think different.” This use of scaffolding aimed to support student understanding, aligning with the findings of Jeanjaroonsri (2018).

Transactional markers: In Turns 7 and 11, Participant A replied: “Yes, thank you” and “So, as you can see.” These markers helped to structure the conversation and guided students through transitions, facilitating a smooth flow of dialogue (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992).

Translanguaging: In Turn 5, Participant A translated the slogan “I love it” into “*me encanta*.” By incorporating Spanish, the teacher aimed to foster learners’ engagement. This approach reflected translanguaging, as it relied on students’ mother tongue to support comprehension and encourage participation, aligning with the perspectives of Dörnyei and Kormos (1998), as well as Garcines and Alvarez (2017).

Participant A’s Obstructive Teacher Talk

Minimal repair: In Turn 1, Participant A requested learners to provide an example of a slogan, without explicitly confirming their comprehension of the term. The assumption that all students understood the concept may have overlooked those who required clarification, potentially limiting participation.

Closed-ended question: In Turn 5, Participant A asked, “Do you know if Samsung has a slogan?” This question could have been answered with a simple “yes” or “no.” It neither functioned as a display question, which seeks known answers, nor as a referential question that encourages deeper discussion. This type of close-ended

questioning hinders opportunities for authentic interaction and meaningful negotiation (Ghafarpour, 2017).

Reduced wait time: In Turns 1, 5, 7, and 9, Participant A waited a few seconds for student responses, indicating a lack of effort to encourage reflection, as shown with numbers (3") and (2"), which represented the seconds allocated for answers. This brief wait time restricted learners' opportunities to articulate their thoughts, resulting in the teacher not fostering deeper engagement in the discussion (Poorebrahim et al., 2015; Shamsipour & Allami, 2012).

Teacher echo: In Turn 3, the teacher repeated S2's response ("Yeah, yes") without prompting further discussion. While echoing can affirm understanding (Ekinci, 2020), its overuse can prevent deeper interaction and negotiation of meaning (Walsh, 2006).

In summary, the effectiveness of Participant A's strategies to promote student participation varied. Constructive features of teacher talk, such as scaffolding, direct repair, and translanguaging, were beneficial in fostering student interaction and comprehension, thereby creating a supportive learning environment. However, obstructive practices—such as limited wait-time and relying on yes-or-no questions—limited opportunities for deeper engagement and meaningful learning experiences for the students.

To enhance her approach, Participant A could have integrated more referential questions into the lesson to encourage discussions about the efficacy of slogans, thereby amplifying the constructive elements of her teacher talk. Although the teacher initiated the interactions with referential questions, she could have further improved them by incorporating follow-up questions to sustain learner engagement throughout interactions. These adjustments might have contributed to a more dynamic classroom environment.

Excerpt From Participant B

- 1 Teacher: Alright, [S10], it's actually your turn.
- 2 S10: Mmh, good argument, bad argument, for four hundred.

- 3 Teacher: Four hundred <reading a question of the jeopardy-like game> Susan has failed her driver's exam four times already, so she has to pass it this time because it would be so weird for her (.) for her to fail it five times in a row. Good or bad argument?
- 4 S10: Bad argument.
- 5 Teacher: Bad argument, all right, you're right, but can you tell me why? (3)
- 6 S10: An example of a bad argument?
- 7 Teacher: No, mmh, can you tell me why this argument is wrong? (2)
- 8 S10: Ah because it's like to say, the third one is the <L1> *la tercera es la vencida* <L1> and =
- 9 Teacher: = um, third time's the charm, yeah.
- 10 S10: Third time's the charm and (.) she can say that when she (.) <UN> has failed the second try, but now he has four, so...
- 11 Teacher: Mmh, all right, so (.) this one is as the saying that gambler's fallacy you know, just because something has gone um (.) like past events do not affect this event (.) <UN> so yeah (.) it's a bad argument, just because you have failed your exam four times already doesn't mean that the fifth time you're going to pass it because <UN> you know like (.) because surely you can fail it five times in a row, you know like (.) it <UN> um, it has nothing to do with it.

Participant B's Constructive Teacher Talk

Request for clarification: In Turns 5 and 7, Participant B asked S10 to explain his reasoning ("Bad argument, all right, you're right, but can you tell me why?" and "Can you tell me why this argument is wrong?"). This encouraged the student to reflect and articulate his understanding, aligning with the goal of facilitating negotiation of meaning and active participation (Chen, 2021; Walsh, 2014).

Referential questions: In Turns 3, 5, and 7, Participant B used referential questions to elicit specific information and encourage student participation (“Good or bad argument?” and “why?”). Referential questions are known to promote interactional adjustments and active involvement in the discourse (Chen, 2021).

Scaffolding: In Turn 11, Participant B rephrased and clarified the concept of “gambler’s fallacy.” The teacher provided a familiar and concrete example (failing an exam four times) to help students relate to the fallacy. Then he repeated the key point to reinforce the concept (“just because you have failed your exam four times already doesn’t mean that the fifth time you’re going to pass it”); he also used pauses to give learners time to process the information, ensuring that they were following the explanation. This scaffolding aided in understanding a complex idea and aligned with the goal of constructive teacher talk (Seedhouse, 1997).

Teacher echo: In Turn 5, Participant B reinforced the phrase “bad argument” and subsequently posed a question to foster further discussion. This use of teacher echo encouraged student contributions (Ekinci, 2020), thereby supporting an environment conducive to negotiating meaning (Walsh, 2014).

Participant B’s Obstructive Teacher Talk

Wait time: In Turns 5 and 7, Participant B provided reduced wait times for students to respond, with intervals of 3 and 2 seconds, respectively. This limited wait time negatively impacted both the quality and quantity of student responses, which were important for promoting meaningful engagement (Cotton, 1988).

Recasting: In Turn 9, Participant B restated the student’s utterance in English after it was initially expressed in the student’s first language. While the student accurately repeated the teacher’s cue, this exchange primarily reinforced surface-level comprehension rather than

fostering a more meaningful dialogue or critical thinking about the content.

Participant B demonstrated a strong commitment to fostering student reflection and active participation through a variety of constructive teacher talk features. By employing strategies such as comprehension checks, referential questions, feedback mechanisms, requests for clarification, and scaffolding techniques, Participant B supported the pedagogical goal of creating an interactive learning environment. These strategies encouraged students to participate actively, thereby enhancing their understanding and retention of the material.

Furthermore, Participant B’s insistence on requiring learners to provide supporting arguments for their answers reflected an emphasis on promoting critical thinking and substantiated responses. This approach not only encouraged students to articulate their thoughts more clearly but also fostered a deeper understanding of the subject matter. However, the minimal wait time, in conjunction with the use of recasting—though intended to maintain the flow of the lesson—may have limited learners’ opportunities for negotiating meaning. This oversight could have restricted the exploration of complex ideas or misunderstandings that might have arisen during discussions. Despite this, Participant B’s overall approach enhanced learning opportunities and facilitated language acquisition among students.

Excerpt From Participant C

- 1 Teacher: <UN> finished watching the video? (.)
- 2 S2: Yes.
- 3 Teacher: Very good, so, tell me guys what—what do you think about this video? @ It was (.) I don’t know, it was like <showing students a surprised face>, very shocking! <using her hands to create exaggerated expressions> Very surprising, so first I was <UN>, and later, as I noticed what was really going on, I noticed he was actually a very nice guy, so, what do you think, guys? Tell me (.) <noticing that no one answers> hmm, umm, well, maybe I <UN>, umm, well, for example, [S10], what do

you, what do you—do you think about this video?
What was surprising? (.) <Noticing that someone wrote an answer in the chat, the teacher starts reading it> “It was interesting and unexpected.”
Yeah, <nodding> it was unexpected! I -I- I didn’t even expect it, mhm = <UN>

- 4 S1: = It was, it was funny that, that, the <L1> *viejita* (note: old lady) <L1> was really @ mad @ because it was eating, <UN> she is <UN> thinks that it was eating her cookies, but no, it was another cookie (.)
- 5 Teacher: I know, right? And she got pretty mad, and the—they were only four cookies <raising 4 of her fingers> they look like <UN> they’re really good but, I mean, yeah, the lady was really mad (.) And that was kind of <making quotation marks with her fingers> rude of him to eat the cookies of the lady, but in the end we—we knew, we—we came to know that those <making exaggerated expressions> cookies were not hers! but his! so, yeah @, mhm = I think...
- 6 S1: = Teacher... =
- 7 Teacher: = Yeah?
- 8 S1: = But, <UN> if, if the cookies <UN> umm, how do you say? <L1> *Me costaron un golpe* <L1> [they will come at a cost] Like she, I was, I will be really mad too (.)
- 9 Teacher: Oh, wha—what was the question? Or what do you wanna say? About the cookies?
- 10 S1: How do you say <L1> *Me costaron un golpe* <L1>
- 11 Teacher: <L1> ¿*Me costaron un golpe*? <L1> (.)
- 12 S1: <L1> *Me costaron un golpe* <L1>, yes <L1> *sí* <L1> =
- 13 Teacher: = <UN> Yeah <UN>
- 14 S1: <L1> *Ya ve que se...se golpeó contra el refri para que salieran las galletas* <L1>. [You see that she hit herself against the vending machine so that the cookies would come out]
- 15 Teacher: I know! Right, that’s, yeah! That was crazy, but yeah, the cookies were expensive!...
- (Note: The teacher interrupted S1 and continued speaking for an additional 6 minutes, also attending to incoming

written messages from S3 and S4. However, due to space constraints, this section is excluded here and will be elaborated below.)

Participant C’s Constructive Teacher Talk

Referential question: Participant C used only one referential question—“So, what do you guys think?” (Turn 3)—that provoked reactions from the students, both orally (S1 in Turn 4) and through text messages (in Turn 15, S4: “I honestly love this animation” and S7: “When he started to eat the cookies, the men made me angry.” This question encouraged student participation by inviting personal opinions and facilitating the participation of students who preferred to respond in writing. The use of a referential question aligns with the pedagogical goal of engaging learners in classroom discourse and promoting opportunities for self-expression (Chin, 2007; Derakhshan et al., 2022).

Participant C’s Obstructive Teacher Talk

Extended turns: In Turns 3, 5, and 15, Participant C provided a detailed account of an incident, dedicating six minutes in Turn 15 to explaining the concept of expressing cost in pesos and illustrating the scenario. Participant C explained how cookies were perceived as expensive and how a woman was upset about it. The teacher also emphasized the idea of considering multiple perspectives before making judgments. While extended turns provided thorough explanations, they also dominated the conversation, reducing students’ opportunities to speak. This teacher-centered interaction limited student engagement and participation (Shamsipour & Allami, 2012).

Teacher echo: In Turn 11, Participant C repeated S1’s query in Spanish without providing a direct explanation of the phrase or offering additional support (“¿*Me costaron un golpe*?”) This repetition without clarification confused students and failed to address their learning

needs. It exemplified ineffective use of teacher echo, which hindered students' learning by not resolving their doubts (Markee, 2004).

Teacher interruption: In Turn 15, Participant C interrupted S1 immediately after the student began participating to read other students' text responses. Interrupting students disrupted the flow of their ideas and limited the quantity and quality of student contributions. This practice minimized learning opportunities and negatively impacted student engagement (Walsh, 2002).

Participant C predominantly employed obstructive teacher-talk features, which impacted student participation and engagement. Initially, Participant C's interaction began with a closed-ended question regarding whether learners had finished watching the video, limiting the opportunity for substantive student input. Although one learner responded affirmatively, the teacher missed a pivotal moment to delve deeper into the content of the video by not asking for their thoughts or insights. Subsequently, when Participant C attempted to incorporate a referential question ("What do you think about this video?") that could have potentially stimulated discussion and enhanced student participation, the effort was overshadowed by obstructive features.

These obstructive features of teacher talk included extended teacher turns that monopolized the conversation, ineffective teacher echoes that failed to clarify or extend student responses meaningfully, and frequent interruptions by the teacher. Such interruptions disrupted the flow of student contributions and discouraged active engagement. By dominating the dialogue and not allowing sufficient space for students to articulate their ideas, Participant C hindered the development of an interactive learning environment where students felt encouraged to participate actively.

Overall, while Participant C's use of a referential question initially showed promise for fostering inter-

action, the subsequent employment of obstructive teacher-talk features detracted from the potential benefits. Creating a truly interactive classroom environment requires not only posing referential questions but also actively listening to learners and building upon their responses to cultivate meaningful dialogue and enhance learning outcomes.

Excerpt From Participant D

- 1 Teacher: So, er, so let's discuss some things that annoy you... We already talked about things like the bus, some things that annoy you in the bus, er, does it annoy you when people don't use the right punctuation? Like when they write to you in a message or whatever? (.)
- 2 S6: Mmh. I think yes, because I don't know, in my... er, in the WhatsApp group of my classmates=
- 3 Teacher: Aha.
- 4 S6: Someone said <L1> *hay examen* <L1> but not using an interrogation pronunciation, and we started to "What? What?" and yes, and then someone says it's an, er <UN> it's an, er, I mean is <L1> *pregunta o afirmación* <L1>?
- 5 Teacher: Aha.
- 6 S6: And he says, "I was just asking." And then I was a...wait, you need to use interrogation conventions and things like that.
- 7 Teacher: Okay, very good. [S7], do you hate when people don't write, er ,correctly? Do you...Does it annoy you?
- 8 S7: Er...not specially @ mmh, if it is not something really (.) really bad I @ I don't mind=
- 9 Teacher: =Okay, very good. But yeah, it's true, uh, and [S6]'s opinion that when they write <L1> *hay examen* <L1> like you don't know if they are actually telling you that there is an exam or like they're asking or asking the question...

(Note: The teacher continued talking for an additional 7 minutes. However, this part is excluded here due to space constraints and will be discussed below).

Participant D's Constructive Teacher Talk

Message-focused feedback: Participant D said: "Okay, very good" (Turn 7) and "But yeah, it's true, uh, and [S6]'s opinion..." (Turn 9). These instances acknowledged the content of students' contributions without focusing on language corrections, thereby fostering an environment where meaning was negotiated and learners felt encouraged to express themselves (Walsh, 2006).

Referential questions: In Turns 1 and 7, Participant D asked referential questions ("Does it annoy you when people don't use the right punctuation? and "Do you hate when people don't write, er, correctly?"), which aimed to obtain information or clarification, encouraging learners to share their opinions and participate in the discussion (Nunan, 1999).

Reformulation: By rephrasing the student's point (Turn 9), Participant D clarified and reiterated it ("it's true, uh, and [S6]'s opinion that when they write <L1> *hay examen* <L1> like you don't know if they are actually telling you that there is an exam or like they're asking or asking the question"), enhancing understanding and promoting a meaningful exchange of ideas (Lyster, 2005).

Transactional markers: Participant D used transitional markers throughout the interaction (e.g., "aha," "Okay, very good," and "But yes, it's true..."). Given that Participant D's lesson objective was to enhance oral fluency, her use of these transitional markers aligned with her pedagogical purpose. These markers closely mirrored natural speech patterns observed in everyday conversations, reinforcing the goal of fostering oral fluency. By signaling comprehension and smoothly transitioning between student contributions and teacher remarks, these markers facilitated cohesive classroom discourse (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992).

Short turns: Participant D's interventions were mostly short turns, except for an extended turn that will be discussed under obstructive features. Short turns can

potentially allow more space for student contributions, encouraging more active participation (Walsh, 2006).

Participant D's Obstructive Teacher Talk

Extended turn: Participant D's seven-minute extended turn expressed frustration with people neglecting proper spelling and punctuation, leading to miscommunication. She shared how she often corrected her siblings' Spanish mistakes, which annoyed them, but she felt justified, given their close relationship. This extended turn hindered students' opportunities to negotiate meaning and engage actively in discourse (Moorhouse et al., 2023). By controlling both topic and procedure, student interaction was restricted, limiting opportunities for language acquisition (Walsh, 2002).

Mixed Features of Participant D Teacher Talk

Translanguaging: While the teacher's and students' use of L1 was minimal, it did not disrupt comprehension. However, excessive use of L1 could potentially hinder immersion in the target language (Creese & Blackledge, 2010).

Initially, Participant D engaged students with a referential question about punctuation, prompting active participation and personal anecdotes. However, as the discussion continued, student involvement decreased, possibly due to natural pauses or hesitancy. To maintain engagement, Participant D used an extended turn, but this shifted the interaction dynamics and limited collaborative language practice opportunities.

In summary, throughout the excerpt, Participant D utilized constructive features of teacher talk, such as message-focused feedback, referential questions, and reformulation, that fostered student engagement and facilitated meaning negotiation. Transactional markers and concise turns promoted interactional coherence and balanced participation among learners. However,

the use of an extended turn represented an obstructive feature in this context. While it filled conversational gaps and sustained momentum, it risked dominating the discourse and curtailing spontaneous student input. This imbalance could hinder language acquisition by restricting authentic language use and collaborative learning experiences.

Discussion

The way teachers use their teacher talk can have an impact on the construction or obstruction of participation opportunities for students. This study examined the implications of such use, comparing its findings with those of previous studies and discussing the limitations and implications of these results for the design of practicum experiences for preservice teachers.

Participants A and B used several constructive features of teacher talk. For instance, Participant A asked some questions that invited students to share personal examples. This strategy, aligning with previous studies (Afzali & Kianpoor, 2020), highlights the importance of questions in stimulating interaction. However, Participant A could have benefited from incorporating more referential questions to promote deeper discussions on the topic.

Conversely, Participant B focused on checking student understanding and challenging their critical thinking with referential questions. This approach, supported by studies such as Chen (2021), demonstrates how questions can increase student participation by encouraging well-founded responses.

The importance of scaffolding also emerged in the analysis. Both Participant A and Participant B used it to support student understanding, although Participant B did so more prominently by clarifying errors with complex concepts. According to Walsh (2014), this practice not only facilitated understanding but also promoted a learning environment where students felt safe to actively participate.

However, not all observed strategies were equally effective. Both Participant C and Participant D often dominated the conversation with extended turns, thereby reducing opportunities for students to negotiate meaning. Shamsipour and Allami (2012) also discuss how extended teacher talk diminishes student engagement in the classroom.

Furthermore, the use of teacher echo presented different approaches among the participants. While Participant A used it to reinforce student contributions, Participant C showed an ineffective use of it that may have confused learners. This contrast highlights the importance of using teacher echo strategically to maintain the discussion without interrupting the students' flow of ideas (Markee, 2004).

In terms of wait time, both Participant A and B provided extended time, allowing students to think and formulate responses, which aligns with recommended practices to enhance the quality and quantity of student contributions (Cotton, 1988).

This study contributes to existing research; for example, it aligns with Afzali and Kianpoor's (2020) findings on the importance of questions in fostering interaction but extends this by demonstrating the difference between display and referential questions in terms of their effectiveness. Additionally, it corroborates Chen's (2021) assertions on the simplification of tasks through referential questioning, offering practical examples of how this strategy was applied in real classroom settings.

Furthermore, the study supports Walsh's (2014) emphasis on scaffolding as a means of promoting participation. By analyzing how preservice teachers employ reformulation and extension, the research provides evidence of the benefits and challenges associated with these strategies. It also echoes Shamsipour and Allami's (2012) concerns about the dominance of teacher talk and its impact on student engagement, highlighting the need for a balanced approach that allows sufficient student participation.

The findings related to teacher echo and wait time reinforce existing recommendations (Cotton, 1988; Markee, 2004) but also offer a glimpse of their application in a Mexican setting. This study's analysis of teacher talk thus enriches the existing literature by bridging theoretical concepts with practical classroom interactions, offering insights for both preservice and practicing teachers aiming to enhance student participation.

Cultural Aspects That Emerged in the Study

The study reveals particular cultural aspects of the Mexican context. The use of translanguaging by both students and teachers highlights the bilingual environment of northern Mexican classrooms, where English is taught as a second language. In public educational institutions, including elementary, secondary, high school, and university levels, the teaching of English as a second language is mandatory by the state.

In Participant A's interaction, it was assumed that learners understood the term "slogan," likely due to the proximity of the state of Chihuahua to the U.S., where exposure to American media may have made certain English terms familiar to some students. This suggested the influence of English in everyday Mexican life, with English terms often being used interchangeably with their Spanish counterparts.

Participant B's use of the phrase "*la tercera es la vencida*" demonstrated how cultural idioms in L1 are incorporated into L2 learning. This idiomatic expression, common in Mexican culture, conveys a concept that may lack a direct English equivalent. The teacher's minimal repair of this usage showed an approach that integrated students' cultural backgrounds, making the lesson relatable.

Addressing the Research Question

This study addresses the central question: In what ways do teachers, through their teacher talk, create or hinder opportunities for student participation? Results

indicate that teacher talk shapes classroom dynamics, either fostering interactive learning environments or hindering participation. Constructive practices, such as scaffolding and referential questioning, facilitated open dialogue and encouraged students to express ideas and negotiate meaning. On the other hand, obstructive talk, such as excessive teacher turn dominance and closed-ended questions, limits opportunities for interaction.

Participant A showed a mix of constructive and obstructive strategies. While scaffolding and translanguaging fostered a supportive environment, reliance on closed-ended questions and assumptions about comprehension restricted engagement. More referential questions and follow-ups could transform her classroom into a space for more dynamic interaction.

Participant B's use of comprehension checks and requests for clarification promoted critical thinking, though minimal wait time limited dialogue. This highlights the need for effective pacing and dialogue management to engage students.

Participant C's obstructive use of closed-ended questions and monopolizing turns limited student contributions. While a referential question attempted to stimulate discussion, ineffective echoing discouraged participation, stressing the need for active listening alongside questioning.

Participant D initially fostered engagement through a referential question, but her extended turn shifted the dynamic, limiting participation. This illustrates how teacher talk can both facilitate and obstruct collaborative learning, depending on how it's managed. In summary, by identifying both constructive and hindering features of teachers' talk, this study offers insights for refining teaching practices to create more participatory learning environments.

Limitations of the Study

The study was conducted in a specific context, limiting its generalizability to other educational settings. The small sample size may not represent the

variety of practices across different educational levels. Additionally, the absence of a longitudinal approach prevents understanding how these practices evolve over time and their impact on student participation. The study's timing during the COVID-19 pandemic, the students' language proficiency, and the dynamics of online classes are factors to consider. These contextual considerations should be taken into account when interpreting the study's findings and their applicability to other educational settings.

Implications for Practicum Design for Preservice Teachers

This study emphasizes the importance of teacher talk during the COVID-19 pandemic and its influence on students' oral participation in both traditional and online classrooms. Even though interaction with learners became crucial during the pandemic to keep them engaged, it is safe to assert that in traditional classrooms, providing students with opportunities for self-expression and fostering an environment where meaning is negotiated remains advisable. Further research on teacher talk is encouraged. Additionally, teachers are recommended to engage in self-reflective activities to deepen their understanding of their teacher talk.

The findings of the study suggest key elements that should be integrated into the teacher preparation program at the Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua. These elements include: learning how to ask questions that promote authentic and meaningful interaction; emphasizing the importance of checking for understanding of key concepts before progressing in the lesson to ensure that all students have the opportunity to participate; developing skills to provide feedback and make direct repairs without interrupting the flow of conversation, while also incorporating explicit correction when necessary; providing instruction on using translanguaging to support comprehension without compromising immersion in the target language; and highlighting the importance of wait time that allows

students to formulate more thoughtful and complete responses, thereby enhancing both the quality and quantity of student contributions.

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