ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the proportion of teachers talking time to students talking time in language classroom in Ethiopian context. The data was collected from six EFL teachers selected from six preparatory schools which are partner School of Haramaya University. Each of the participants was observed and recorded an average of two integrated skill lesson content. Then, each observed lessons were transcribed and analyzed. Finlay, it was found that EFL teacher of preparatory school use an average of 83.4% and students have got only an average of 16.6% of the classroom time to talk. This implies that teachers dominated the class and gave less opportunity for students’ interaction and language use which is against the rule of communicative language teaching. So therefore, it is recommended that EFL teachers of preparatory school should try to minimize their talking time and provide ample talking time opportunity to their students.

Keywords: Teachers’ Talk Time; Students’ Talking Time; Classroom Talk

INTRODUCTION

Teacher talking time is the time which teachers spend while instructing, lecturing, managing or/and organizing the lesson. However, the amount of talk time the teachers use in a given lesson is not the same, it varies depend up on both the specific goals of the syllabus adopted and their pedagogical principles (Nilton, 2005). For instance, introducing new topic may require much more time than summarizing the lesson. On the other hand, Student Talk Time (STT) is the amount of time student use while in classroom interaction. A lot has been said so far regarding the teacher’s talk time. For students, the most effective use of their time occurs when they are actively using the target language (Darn, 2007).

OBJECTIVES

The current study aims to find out the proportion of EFL teachers talking time to students talking time in preparatory school of Ethiopia. Moreover, the study explores the situations which teachers frequently spend the classroom time.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE
The Balance between Teachers and Students Talk Time

According to second language acquisition theories, both teachers and students should participate in language classes actively. Especially, in communicative EFL classes students need ample opportunity to practice the target language so that the teacher should reduce the amount of their talk to 20% to 30% of the class time, and Student Talk Time should be around 70% to 80% during the lesson time. Supporting this idea, (Nunan, 1991) claim that excessive TT should be avoided and total TT should not take up the majority of the class, as this will not provide students with enough opportunity for language production (Brown, 2001).

However, previous researches in language classrooms have established that teachers tend to do most of the classroom talk. Teacher talk makes up over 70 percent of the total talk. (Cook, 2000; Chaudron, 1988). Some other study has also shown that both first and second language teachers tend to dominate classroom discourse, speaking for approximately 60%, or two-thirds, of class time on average (Chaudron, 1988). Similarly, researchers such as Dunking and Biddle, and Bellack et.al believe in the teaching learning world that teachers either talk or should talk more than learners and they found out that about 60 per cent of the total amount of talk done in L1 classrooms is done by the teacher; and further investigation claimed that the figures are about the same as for L2 classrooms (Dunking & Biddle, 1974 ; Bellack et al.1966 as cited in Chaudron, 1988).

This is too high for a communicative language teaching classroom. While Krashen (1981) asserted that comprehensible input is “the crucial and necessary ingredient” (p. 9) for second language acquisition, Swain (1985) demonstrated that input alone is insufficient for developing language production skills and argued instead for the importance of comprehensible output, noting that learners need to pay more attention to meaning when producing language than for comprehension. Moreover, Nunan (1991: 190) explains that while excessive teacher talk is to be avoided, understanding what is ‘excessive’ is subjective. He argues that teacher talk is necessary to provide learners with what can be their only access to live target language input.

Reason to Reduce TTT

In a communicative language teaching the use of too much teacher taking time should be minimized due to some reasons: Firstly, it minimizes students talking time; secondly, too much teacher talk bored the learners and they fail to concentrate on their learning; Thirdly, if the teacher talk too much, he or she concentrate on discreet language items like grammar rule, vocabulary and feedback. This strategy never create learning opportunity and the learner are told about the language not to use the target language; fourthly, excessive teacher talk also make the learner passive participant and discourage interaction; and too much TTT minimizes students learning autonomy and they do not want to take any learning responsibility(Darn,2007 ).

METHODOLOGY

Participants

I conducted three classroom observations for each six volunteer EFL teachers during the first semester of academic year of 2013 from six different preparatory schools particularly grade 11 (10+1). The name of the school are Haramaya, Aboker, Hirna, Chiro, Mechara and Asebot preparatory school which were partner schools of Haramaya University. In general, eighteen classes were observed and recorded.

Instrument

To examine the ratio of EFL teachers talking time to Students talking time in communicative language teaching classroom, the researcher used classroom observations and recording. As Nunan (1989:76) said “there is no substitute for direct observation as a way of finding out about language classrooms”,...
and Seidman (1998) emphasized that observation is the best method to obtain information about how people behave. Because peoples often not accurate while they report themselves (Koziol & Burns, 1986). In other words, people often think they are doing one thing, when in reality they are doing something else.

**Data Collection Procedure**

All the class records were collected from six preparatory schools. Taking one from each school, six volunteers EFL teachers were chosen from six preparatory schools which are the partner School of Haramaya University, where the author is teaching. Each of the participants was observed and recorded an average of two integrated skill lesson contents. So the records of twelve sessions (40 minutes each session) of English classes were collected. In order not to give pressure to the teachers and students, and to gain as real materials as possible, Sony IC Recorder (ICD-PX312/PX312F) was simply placed before the teacher without the author’s personal participation and observation in the spot, as it is said that direct observation is not always the most appropriate way to gather classroom data and sometimes it seems too risky because of the likelihood that being observed will change people’s behavior. Besides, the purpose of the recording had not been told beforehand.

Finally, all of the materials which about organizing and managing teacher fronted and group work activities were transcribed and used for analysis recorded, have been transcribed into written forms for the calculation and analysis of the data. Moreover, during each observation, field notes were taken to capture classroom interactions emerging in the process of teaching/learning English throughout the entire class period (i.e., for approximately 40 minutes). The observed lessons were thus transcribed and then analyzed (see Appendix A sample transcribed recording).

**DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

At the simplest level, teacher talk time (TTT) refers to how much the teacher talks during a lesson. It can be compared with student-talking time. One key element of many modern approaches is to reduce the amount of TTT as much as possible, to allow learners opportunities to speak, and learn from speaking. In this regard, table below presents the ratio of teachers to students talking time which were obtained from transcribed data. In order to know the ratio of the talk Microsoft word counter is used.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Number of Teachers words (percentage)</th>
<th>Number of students Words (percentage)</th>
<th>Total number words (percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 1</td>
<td>3144 (86.4%)</td>
<td>496 (13.6%)</td>
<td>3640 (100 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 2</td>
<td>6034 (91.1%)</td>
<td>590 (8.9%)</td>
<td>6624 (100 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 3</td>
<td>4141 (89.5%)</td>
<td>487 (10.5%)</td>
<td>4628 (100 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 4</td>
<td>2994 (60.4%)</td>
<td>1966 (39.6%)</td>
<td>4960 (100 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 5</td>
<td>3226 (87.7%)</td>
<td>452 (12.3%)</td>
<td>3678 (100 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 6</td>
<td>3130 (85.9%)</td>
<td>514 (14.4%)</td>
<td>3644 (100 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>3778.2(83.4%)</td>
<td>750.8(16.6%)</td>
<td>4529 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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As it is displayed in Table above, most EFL teachers used much more talking time in their language classroom. As it can be seen in the table, the largest time was used by Teacher 2, which 91% of the class time and students was got the chance of only 8.9% of the total classroom talking time. Similarly, Teacher 3, 5,1and 6 used 89.5%, 87.7%, 86.4%., and 85.9% respectively. According to the finding it was only teacher 4 uses less teacher talk time (60.4%) compared to the other. In general, the average teachers talking time was 83.4% in the six studied EFL classroom of Ethiopia. From this, we can understand that students has less opportunity to use the target language in a place where communicative language is implemented.

One aspect of communicative teacher talk in language classroom is the amount of teacher talk used in a given lesson and waiting time given to students while they are engaging classroom activities.
According to Stern, to achieve language teaching goals, teacher talk plays a vital important role in language learning. In other words, classroom is the chief source for language learner in most places and the only source in some places (Stern, 1983:400).

According to second language acquisition theories, both teachers and students should participate in language classes actively. Especially, in communicative EFL classes students need ample opportunity to practice the target language so that the teacher should reduce the amount of their talk to 20% to 30% of the class time, and Student Talk Time should be around 70% to 80% during the lesson time. Supporting this idea, (Nunan, 1991) claim that excessive TT should be avoided and total TT should not take up the majority of the class, as this will not provide students with enough opportunity for language production (Brown, 2001).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The main objective of the current study is to find out the proportion of teacher talking time to students talking time of EFL teachers in preparatory school of Ethiopia. According to the findings, an average of 83.4% of the class time is occupied by the teachers thus students talking time seems neglected. It was also observed that all most all teachers use this amount of time in non communicative activities such as reading from students’ text especially the questions again and again, and write it on the blackboard. They also repeat their own speech without saying it in different ways. Another reason teachers use much more time is that they rarely allow students to engage in group and pair works but students are sited in permanent group without proper group work task. Even in teacher fronted tasks, teachers do not give to their student sufficient waiting time that only few active students communicate or respond to teachers’ questions. So therefore, it is strongly recommended that EFL teachers of preparatory school should try to minimize their talking time and provide ample talking time opportunity to their students using group and pair work and using different strategies such as providing brain storming activities, peer evaluation or feedback.

REFERENCES

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