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Teachers' Initiations in Maximizing English Classroom Interaction

Aisha Stambul, Eustard Rutalemwa Tibategeza

Department of Languages and Linguistics, St Augustine University of Tanzania, Mwanza, Tanzania

Email address:

ayeshastambul@gmail.com (Aisha Stambul), eustard.tibategeza@saut.ac.tz (Eustard Rutalemwa Tibategeza)

Abstract: This paper focuses on the teachers' initiation in English classroom interaction based on Sinclair and Coulthard Model. The study focused on identifying initiations used by English language teachers in promoting interaction in the classroom, and to analyse the challenges that English language teachers face in maximizing classroom interaction. The data were collected from three public secondary schools in Nyamagana Municipality in Mwanza region - Tanzania. This study used mixed method approach where both qualitative and quantitative approaches were applied. To obtain relevant information, interviews, questionnaires and classroom observations were used. The data were analysed based on Sinclair and Coulthard theory of 1975. The findings indicate that all teachers' initiations were applied where 'teacher inform' was the dominant one followed by directing, checking, repeating, listing and eliciting. However, eliciting was rarely used by English language teachers. The results further show that English language teachers in Tanzania face challenges related to learning conditions, learner-related factors, societal factors and other challenges as far as classroom interaction is concerned. It is recommended that teachers should elicit the language from learners to enable them to produce natural answers in order to maximize interactions in English language classrooms. It is concluded that, if the teachers' intention is to maximize classroom interaction, the use of elicitation technique is more appropriate.

Keywords: Teacher's Initiation, Classroom Interaction, Sinclair and Coulthard, Maximizing Interaction and Opening Move

1. Introduction

Lack of effective classroom interaction through English in Tanzania has been a big problem assumed to cause poor acquisition of English language skills by students in secondary schools. The medium of instruction (MoI) is one of the factors that have led to this problem. Students turn into a transition from Kiswahili, which is the medium of instruction in primary schools to English medium as soon as they are enrolled in secondary schools [21]. This transition is a challenge to most of students especially when it comes to classroom interaction. The study explored classroom interaction from the teachers and students' perspectives to identify promising strategies that teachers use to improve the interactions through the use of English in the classrooms. This paper focuses on identifying the teachers' initiations used to promote classroom interaction, and to analyse the challenges that English language teachers face in maximizing classroom interaction.

2. Classroom Interaction

Classroom interaction is the crucial aspect in teaching and learning process and it is highly relevant for developing language competence. In recent years, there has been increasing research concerning classroom interactions especially in language classrooms. Interaction is the collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings or ideas between two or more people [1]. For the students to use all what they have already learnt from real life situations, sufficient interaction is highly needed. The development and success of a class depend, to a great extent, on the interaction between the teacher and students in class [19].

Johnson E. K. [7] argues that classroom communication is problematic especially when the classes are filled with students from a wide variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This is also the case with Nyamagana Municipality, where the area has a total number of 28 public

ordinary level (O-level) secondary schools where, in this level, English is the only medium of instruction. According to United Republic of Tanzania [22], the total number of primary schools in Mwanza region is 1019. The government primary schools in this region are 868 while the private primary schools are 151. This means that 85.2 per cent of students enrolled in the secondary schools are from public primary schools where Kiswahili is the MoI and the remaining 14.8 per cent are from private primary schools where English is used as MoI. This shows that in this area, the majority of students admitted to secondary schools are from primary schools where Kiswahili is used as a medium of instruction and they have to switch to English as soon as they join secondary education. They normally face challenges in classroom interaction where English is used. Consequently, ineffective classroom interaction leads to poor acquisition of English language skills to the students.

Johnson E. K. [7] adds that, in order to enhance interaction in a classroom where MoI is not the first language, as it is the case with Tanzanian secondary schools, teachers have to be aware of various useful interaction strategies of initiating conversation.

The study used Sinclair and Coulthard model of 1975 to explore the English teachers' role in opening the discourse in the classroom by identifying various types of initiation they use to maximize English classroom interaction.

3. Sinclair and Coulthard Theory

Sinclair and Coulthard [16] method of discourse analysis (DA) has been described as 'a litmus test' for whether or not a lesson is communicative and it tends to be 'overtly teacher-based' ([2], p. 3). Therefore, data taken from a student-centred classroom should not easily fit into this model.

Sinclair J. and Coulthard R. M. [16] analyse the types of teachers' initiations used in English classroom interaction. According to them, the interaction in the classroom consisted of Initiation - Response - Feedback (IRF). Initiation is the opening of discourse that is conducted by the teacher. Response is the answer or reply of the discourse usually from the students. Feedback is the follow-up from response which is conducted mostly by the teacher and very rarely by the student. The exchanges in the classroom (IRF) are realised by the rank below it, which was initiation. Initiation takes an important role to achieve the learning target. Initiation is the starting point for the teacher to start the interaction in passing on the lesson to the students. By using the appropriate initiations, the teacher could stimulate the students to be actively involved in the classroom.

Sinclair J. and Coulthard R. M. [16] explain that classroom discourse is divided into five ranks of levels, namely Lesson, Transaction, Exchange, Move and Act. In their analysis, Sinclair and Coulthard only examine the exchange, move and act. They started from Exchange, in which Exchange was divided into three moves, including Initiation Move, Respond Move, and Feedback Move. This study focused on the initiation move.

4. Initiation

Initiation is the opening of move or discourse that is conducted by the teacher and it is realized by various exchanges:

Teacher Elicit - This kind of exchange begins with the teacher asking a question. Hellermann J. [5] explains that in this type of initiation, the students give their own answer and the teacher gives a response such as follow-up evaluation. This category is designed to obtain verbal contributions from students.

Teacher Inform - This is used to pass on facts, opinions, ideas, or new information to the students. The response usually is acknowledgement of attention and understanding. Teacher always asks questions to confirm students' understanding.

Teacher Direct - Teacher direct is used to get the students to do but not to say something [15]. Therefore, the response from the students is the "doing" part, which will, most likely but not always, be a non-verbal response.

Listing - Listing is used when the teacher withholds evaluation in order to get two or more responses from the students to make sure that more than one student know the answer.

Teacher Check - This is used to discover how well the students are getting on, whether the students can follow what is going on, and whether the students understand or listen. To do this, the teacher uses a checking move which can be regarded as a subcategory of elicit, except that feedback is not essential.

Repeat - There are times when a student does not hear. Even though there is no student admitting to not hearing, teachers do so quite frequently. This type of initiation is done when the teacher repeats so as to make students repeat after him/her to model pronunciation or to emphasize on the response.

Feedback - Feedback is the follow-up from the response which is conducted mostly by the teacher and very rarely by the students.

5. Research Methodology

5.1. Research Approach and Design

The study employed mixed method approach with both quantitative and qualitative components. Quantitative method was employed in emphasizing on the objective measurements and the analysis of numerical data that were collected through questionnaires administered to students. Qualitative approach was used to analyse data which were collected through classroom observation and teachers' interviews by giving descriptions to the records. Moreover, the descriptive design was used to describe the types of initiation that English language teachers use to maximize classroom interaction in Tanzanian secondary schools.

5.2. Area of Study

The study was conducted in one of the seven districts of

Mwanza region of Tanzania, namely Nyamagana Municipality which forms part of the region's capital. The criterion for selecting this area was due to the fact that it is one of the areas where students get into a transition from Kiswahili to English medium of instruction as soon as they are admitted to secondary schools.

5.3. Sampling Procedure

The study employed simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. The researcher randomly selected classes for observation and the students to fill in the questionnaire. Purposive sampling was used to select English language teachers and the form one students because they were new to the system of using English only as MoI. Therefore, the researcher aimed at investigating teachers' efforts in promoting classroom interaction.

5.4. Sample Size

This study involved three O-level government secondary schools in Nyamagana Municipality. The sample size included three classes for observation and nine teachers who were interviewed. The researcher also selected 60 students from the observed classrooms to fill in the questionnaires.

5.5. Data Collection Methods

The data collection methods which were used in the study included questionnaires, interview and classroom observation. The researcher observed the classroom interaction without asking the questions. Data obtained through questionnaire were quantitative in that they required summing up the frequencies of initiation techniques.

6. Findings

6.1. The Initiation Techniques Used to Promote Classroom Interactions

Under the first objective, the researcher intended to identify initiation techniques used by the English language teachers to promote classroom interactions. Classroom interaction is very essential and the main resource of comprehensible target language input learners are likely to receive in the second language classroom teaching. To obtain relevant information, questionnaires and classroom observation were used. According to the findings, the initiation techniques used by the English language teachers in the classroom were teacher inform, teacher elicit, teacher direct, teacher check, repeat and listing.

Through questionnaires, form one students were required to tick the techniques used by their English language teachers to make them participate in the class. The techniques were paraphrased in a simple language so that they could be easily understood by form one students. The findings are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 indicates that 'teacher inform' and 'teacher direct' are the common initiation techniques used by the teachers in the English language classrooms. The findings can also be elaborated by the data that the researcher got from classroom observation. From the data, the researchers found various initiations made by the English language teachers to promote classroom interaction.

Table 1. Initiation Techniques used by the English Language Teachers (n=60).

Response	Frequency	Percent
The teacher uses Kiswahili to direct students	41	68.3
The teacher asks information seeking questions to promote interaction	41	68.3
The teacher promotes interactions by informing students about the previous lesson	39	65
The teacher uses repetition technique to the students	21	35
The teacher encourages the hesitating/delaying speaker to speak	9	15

Source: Field data, 2020.

6.1.1. Teacher Inform

This is the initiation technique used by teachers to pass on ideas, or new information where students' answers intended to show the teacher that they had understood. The researchers wanted observe if the teacher was asking information seeking answers to get the learner talk. The findings reveal that teachers frequently provided the students with the information to get them talk. This technique appeared in most of the classroom observations. Starting from classroom A, the following conversation shows how the teacher initiated classroom interaction by using the information seeking questions.

Teacher: What is a letter?
Students: (*remain silent*)
Teacher: (*Keeps on asking)* what is a letter? Don't read from your books. Use your own words to explain. Okay!

What is a letter?
Student: (*Raising a hand*)
Teacher: Yes! (*Mentions the name of the student who raised up a hand*)
Student: A letter is written information.
Teacher: Thanks for trying.

In most of the classes, this technique to get students involved in the lesson was used. For example, the extract from school B also shows that a teacher mostly used the information seeking questions.

Teacher: Who can give us an example of the sentence in present perfect continuous tense?
Student: It has been raining since morning.
Teacher: Very creative example, it is true that it started raining in the morning and it is still raining!
Teacher: Clap hands for him.

Students: *(Clap hands)*

Moreover, the observation made in classroom C evidently proves that teachers use information seeking questions frequently as a way to make a dialogue with students to increase the learners' output.

Teacher: Can someone tell us what the story was about?

Student: The story was about sports day.

Teacher: Very good. Another group, please tell us the meaning of common vocabulary used in sports story.

Students: *(Silent)*

Teacher: Another group! Ehe yes (*mentions the name of the student*). Tell us.

Student: Exciting.

Teacher: Yes, exciting! What does that mean?

Student: Something you enjoy so much.

Teacher: Very good! Clap hands for him.

Students: (*Clap hands*)

From the above extracts, it is evidently seen that 'teacher inform' is a commonly used technique by the English language teachers to promote interaction in the classroom. The questions asked by the teachers in the observed classroom clearly show that teachers ask to confirm the understanding and pass on facts. The study conducted by Ginting A. S. [4] in Indonesia substantiates with this view where the researcher found out that by using 'teacher inform', the teacher would convey the information to the students. This implies that the students who do not know the answer of that question did not have the courage to participate in the lesson. Moreover, the study conducted by Sitompul N. [17] found that when the teacher initiated interaction by informing and explaining about a certain material, students were silent and inactive throughout the teaching process in class. However, when the teacher used elicitation, she gained students participation in the class. As Walsh S. [25] suggests, information seeking question is enough when the teacher's goal is to assess or check understanding but when the goal is to promote oral fluency the use of elicitation technique is more appropriate.

6.1.2. Teacher Elicit

This is the initiation technique where the teacher asks genuine questions for the purpose of getting natural response from the students. This kind of exchange begins with the teacher asking a genuine question, and the students give their own answers. In this technique, the teachers move the student step by step towards the intended conclusion. The teacher's questions come from the students' answer, and then the teacher asks follow-up questions step by step to guide the students to the correct answer. In classroom C, it happened during the greetings in the classroom where the teacher asked genuine questions to get natural response from the students and promote interaction.

Students: Good afternoon teachers (including the researcher and their teacher).

Teacher: Good afternoon! How are you?

Students: We are fine, how are you too!

Teacher: We are fine! How was the week-end?

Students: It was fine.

Teacher: Okay! Have a seat. Monitor! Where are the others?

Class monitor: They are in the staffroom but they will soon be here.

This shows that, sometimes a teacher asks students questions not for the purpose of assessing or testing the students' knowledge. They ask to get answers which are not known to them.

In classroom A, the observation shows that the teacher used elicitation technique step by step to move the students to the correct definition of a letter.

Teacher: Okay, another one! What is a letter?

Student: It is written information which expresses thoughts or feelings.

Teacher: Ehe! Only that?

Students: (Silent)

Teacher: So we write to express our feelings, then, we put it on the table in our room?

Students: No.

Teacher: Where do we put the letter after writing it?

Students: We send it to someone.

Teacher: Yes! That's very good.

The findings show that a teacher can initiate interaction by asking a genuine question or moving a learner step by step to a conclusion. Eliciting is a very essential technique to get the natural learning ability [1, 25]. This technique genuinely guides a student to a correct response. It extends learners' turns and creates space for further learner talk as well as promoting learners' oral fluency. The study conducted by Sitompul N. [17] in Medan found out that teacher elicit was mostly used especially when the teacher tried to gain students' participation in the class. In her study, she also found that by initiating elicit, the students were encouraged to become more confident and brave to participate actively during the teaching and learning process.

6.1.3. Teacher Direct

This technique is used to get students to do without saying something. In this initiation, the students respond to the direction that the teacher gives. In the observed classrooms, the students responded by doing what they were asked to do. This shows that they heard and understood what the teacher directed them to do. Moreover, this initiation adds a lot in students' input and facilitates their output. The following example shows the extract in classroom A, where the teacher asked the students to do a certain action then the students responded accordingly.

Teacher: Okay class; remove from your desks anything which doesn't relate with my subject. Put your English exercise books on your desks.

Students: *(Respond by removing things from their desks not related to English subject and put their English exercise books on the table)*

This example shows how the teacher directed the students to do a certain activity. The response from the students was non-verbal suggesting that they had understood what the

teacher said.

The 'teacher direct' technique also appeared in classroom B where the teacher asked the students to sit in their groups (*their groups had names implying that they had fixed groups*) and answered the questions provided on the blackboard. Students responded by moving from their seats to follow the members of their groups and did the exercise. The teacher then passed around for assistance and more clarification.

This technique is used to get the students to do but not to say something [15]. The study conducted by Murtiningrum S. [10] on classroom interaction in English learning verify this view, where her findings show that teacher gave direction to the students by asking them to open the page and do the assignment. She also observed a teacher asking the students to open the page and watch the pictures. The response from the students becomes more action oriented than verbal response. For example, when a teacher asked the students to remove everything which was not related to her subject from their desks, the students responded by doing what their teacher asked them to do. This suggests that they had understood what the teachers wanted them to do.

6.1.4. Repeat

This is the initiation from the teacher in the communicative situation. Even though there was no student admitting to not hearing, teachers in the observed classrooms used the repeat technique frequently. The findings show that teachers provided input to the students by repeating the same questions or repeating answers from the students. This also facilitates learners' output. The following extract from classroom A illustrates the teacher's repetition to promote classroom interaction as well as modelling the right pronunciation of words.

Teacher: When writing a letter, use the best paper! Usichane daftari... [Do not tear a tear a paper from your exercise book]. Use the quality paper! Everybody say paper /peɪpə/.

Students: paper /peɪpə/.

Teacher: Yes, paper /peɪpə/ and not pepper /pɛpə/.

The illustration above shows that the teacher repeats so as to make sure that students get the correct pronunciation of the word.

Another extract from classroom B illustrates how the teacher repeated answers from the students to make other students hear well what the students' answer was as well as modelling the intonation and pronunciation of words in the sentence. This also helps to add input and widen the students' vocabulary items for better output.

Teacher: Who will give us another sentence using present perfect continuous tense?

Students: (*Raise up their hands*)

Teacher: Yes! (*Points at one of the students*)

Student: Form two students have been doing national examinations since morning.

Teacher: Yes, very good! I'm impressed with your example because it is true that form two students are doing national examinations. Okay class! She has said that form

two students have been doing national examinations since morning.

The findings show that the students were sitting quietly listening to their teacher. The teacher made a repetition on the student's answer to model the tone of talking and pronunciation of words. However, according to the observation, some teachers were affected by their mother tongue intonation and pronunciation and students could automatically copy their teachers as they are considered role models. According to Hall J. and Lorrie S. [6], one of the pillars of second language teaching in traditional classrooms was drill with frequent repetition of the target structures. Yet, in several current accounts on language learning, including Swain M. [18], the importance to have learners reproduce forms they have heard is a very essential way to help learners notice the gaps between their own and others' production.

According to Dailey A. [3], in this initiation, the teachers do not ask a question; rather they utter words and the students would automatically know they have to repeat. Dailey, in his findings, observed the teacher directing the students to repeat, in which the teacher provided the model of the language to be repeated. The students' response was a repetition of the model and the teacher followed up with a positive feedback.

6.1.5. Listing

'Teacher listing' is one of the initiation technique used by the teachers in the observed classrooms. In one of the observed classrooms, a teacher listed few items and left the rest for the class to give more answers. This was done to make sure that more than one student know the answer. The findings from classroom observation show that 'teacher listing' is also used in classroom to promote classroom interaction.

The following extract illustrates the 'teacher listing' technique in classroom A to promote classroom interaction.

Teacher*:* What is the other name of friendly letter?

Students*:* Informal letter *(chorus)*.

Teacher: We have parts of informal letter… it includes heading, greeting… what are the other parts?

Student: The main body.

Teacher: Good!

By doing this, the students easily engaged into interaction as they already got clue from their teacher. The findings show that the teacher first listed some parts of informal letter, then the students responded by mentioning the remaining parts of the same. Students who knew the answers rose up their hands; then their teacher picked one student to provide the answer in the classroom. This implies that the teacher gives the student clue on what is expected. This encourages the learners to interact as it acts as a reminder for the students.

According to Ginting A. S. [4], when the teacher gets no response to the question, s/he can start again by giving indication through listing. The findings by Sitompul N. [17] shows that the teacher asked the question as one of the effort to push the students to interact. The students quickly responded but the answer was still improper. Then, the

teacher listed some few items to give the students a clue until they answered correctly.

6.1.6. Teacher Check

In 'teacher check' technique, teachers felt the need to discover how well the students were getting on, whether they were following what was going on, or whether they could hear. To do this, they used 'teacher check' technique to discover whether the students had understood or not. Teachers passed through the organized groups or individual students doing a given task. They were checking whether the students were doing the assignment as instructed. Teachers gave more clarifications to the groups where necessary. Moreover, most of the time, teachers checked if students were following through asking questions such as: Are we together?

In classroom A, the teacher involved the students in checking the correct spelling of a word. The teacher asked if there was a student who could write the correct spelling of the word *"serious"* on the blackboard. One of the students moved forward and wrote on the blackboard *'sereos'*. Then the teacher involved the whole class to check for the spelling.

Teacher: Okay attention class, is the spelling right?
Students: No *(chorus)*.
Teacher: Who else can try?
Student: *(Another student moves forward and writes the word* 'serious' *on the blackboard)*
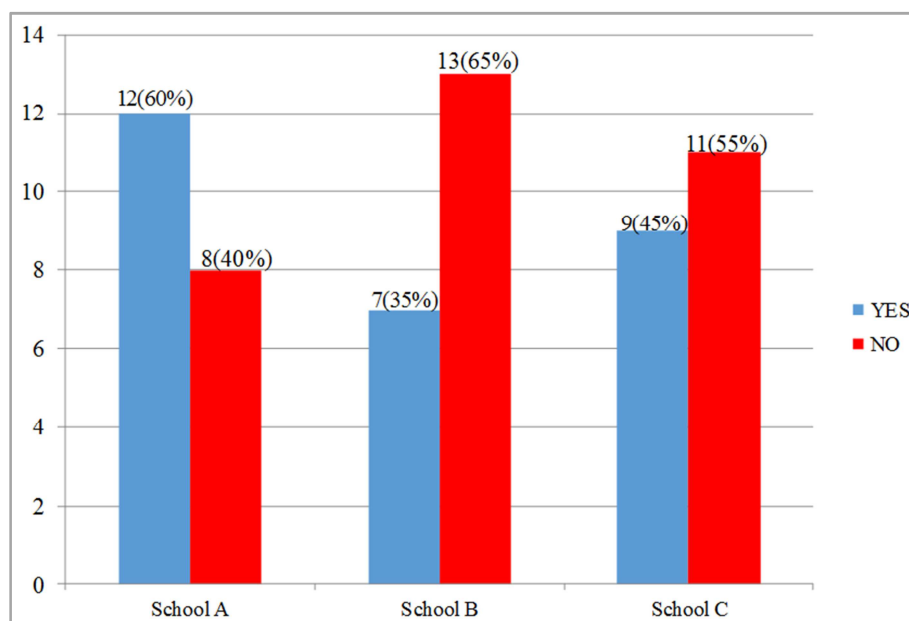Teacher: Is the spelling correct?
Students: Yes *(chorus)*.

This indicates that English language teachers use the technique to promote classroom interaction. Sometimes, teachers involve their students in checking or assessing. This implies that teachers use checking as initiation technique to promote classroom interaction. As Cockayne N. [2] suggests,

'teacher check' in order to discover how well students are getting on and how they can identify problems. A study by Sitompul N. [17] found that besides asking questions, the teacher also needs to check whether the students are following. The teacher checks whether students follow what goes on in the classroom and whether the students understand or listen. In this study, this was done by the teacher who used checking initiation which could be regarded as a subcategory of elicit.

According to Vygotsky L. S. [23], questions asked by the teachers assist mental activity during both formal and informal instructional activity. The quality of classroom interaction is always enhanced by the presence of a skilled adult. The teacher's ability to utilize various initiation techniques in forms of eliciting, informing, listing, repeating and checking and understands the functions being served by them is the essential feature of teacher's classroom interactional competence. In this study, therefore, the findings reveal that 'teacher inform' was the widely used technique by the English language teachers in the classrooms, where the teachers initiate interaction through explaining and informing the students on a certain concept and asking information seeking questions. This technique encourages those who know what is to be answered. The students who do not know the answer are likely to remain silent. Teachers are supposed to create the environment to extend learner turns and encourage interaction patterns between the teacher and students, or students and students' interaction.

This is also elaborated by the responses from the students on whether the techniques applied by their English language teachers encourage them to participate in the lesson. The question was responded by all 60 students. The findings are summarized in Figure 1.

Source: Field data, 2020

Figure 1. *Response on whether students feel encouraged to participate.*

It was found that the techniques which are applied by English language teachers in classroom do not encourage most of the students to participate in lessons. The findings in Figure 1 reveal that, out of the three schools, students in only one school were highly encouraged by the techniques applied by their English language teachers to participate and interact in the classroom.

The findings imply that the mostly used technique to promote interaction in these schools, do not make students feel secure to interact. Once the teacher asks questions to confirm understanding in the classroom, those who do not know the answers feel insecure to interact in the classroom as they fear to make mistakes. Various researchers are in line with these views where they suggest that teachers have to create the environment where the students will feel accepted. Once students are comfortable in the classroom, they will be able to have their initial interaction with the teacher and the other students in class [4, 6, 17].

6.2. Challenges That English Language Teachers Face in Maximizing Classroom Interaction

The study also focused on the challenges facing English language teachers in maximizing classroom interaction. Teachers can maximize interaction by involving learners in meaningful communication. The results indicate that English language teachers in the selected schools face challenges related to learning conditions, learner-related factors, societal factors and other challenges. Learner-related factors were reflected as the most crucial challenge in this study.

6.2.1. Learner-Related Challenges

Concerning learner-related challenge, the researchers intended to investigate the challenges that hinder the students to interact in the classroom. The students indicated that they face some challenges as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2. *Reasons that Hinder Students to Interact (n=60).*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Fear to make mistakes	32	53.3
Feeling shy	22	36.7
Poor English pronunciation	17	28.3
Failure to master English	9	15.0
Fear to be laughed	3	5.0
Fear to be punished	2	3.3

Source: Field data, 2020.

It is noted that students face various challenges that hinder them when speaking English, thus minimizing classroom interaction. Fear to make mistakes was the dominant challenge that students face when speaking English. This is evidenced by 53.3 per cent of the response as indicated in Table 2.

Classroom interaction is also hindered by the students' attitude of feeling shy and fear to make mistakes. Learners should have opportunities to sufficiently listen to and read genuine dialogues or input so that their speaking performance could be increased.

From the interview, the teachers responded that students are so reluctant when it comes to classroom interaction using English language. They said that sometimes, students may know the answer but become confused on how to explain it, so they decide to keep quiet. The problem of not knowing how to explain ideas in English is also evidenced by the response from the students who said that they fail to combine words to form clear sentences.

Through interview, some teachers said that most of the students lack diligence as they do not make time for private study and when it comes to classroom interaction, they do not participate because they do not know what to say. That is why they prefer to be silent. For example, in school A, responding to the learner-related challenges that hinder students from interacting in class, the teacher said:

Other students have bad behaviour especially when it comes to respond to the teachers' directions or questions. They do not respond, not because they don't know but because they want to show off to their peers how disobedient they are.

Through classroom observation, some students were not actively responding and participating in classroom activities. The researchers also observed that most of the questions asked by the English language teachers were for checking understanding and seeking information from students. This encouraged only those who knew what was to be answered, but most of them kept quiet.

The findings imply that teachers do not utilize adequate techniques to initiate interaction in the classroom. Teachers' inability to utilise initiation techniques to promote classroom interaction is an important feature of teachers' classroom interactional competence. Walsh S. [25] suggests that, it is the role of the teacher to elicit the language from learners and encourage patterns of communication that can promote constructed interactions. Teachers have to establish situations for learners to talk, thus, interaction in the classroom should not be only answering questions which intend to check the students' understanding. A study by Noviana A. and Ardi P. [11] corresponds with this study where, from the interview, the students noted that the teacher always asked them critical thinking questions in order to improve their critical thinking. On the contrary, this made the students feel challenged to answer the questions. This shows that when teachers use information seeking questions to promote classroom interaction, they encourage only those who know the answers. The complexity of the questions asked by the teacher determines how many students are likely to respond. This means that, the complexity of teachers' questions is considered an influential factor affecting classroom interaction [20].

Moreover, the findings reveal that feeling shy is the challenge that hinders students to interact in the classroom. Another challenge is the fear to make mistakes when speaking English. This correlates with a study by Lap T. Q. and Thy H. V. U. [9] where they noted that feeling anxious, intimidated and being afraid are the challenges that face students to interact in the classroom.

The studies noted that information seeking questions, poor pronunciation of English words, feeling shy and fear to make mistakes were the dominant challenges facing students during the classroom interaction.

6.2.2. Learning Condition

Another challenge obtained from English language teachers was based on large classes. This was echoed by the teachers during interview. For example, on response to this matter, one teacher said, "When I guide students to sit in groups, it takes time for them to rearrange their tables and chairs to form groups. This makes interaction complicated".

Dues to large classes, it was observed that students' tables could not be arranged in a way that would allow interaction especially for group discussion. The findings from the research by Lap T. Q. and Thy H. V. U. [9] are related to this view where they indicate that class size is the influential factor affecting learners' classroom interaction. Therefore, the results indicate clearly that large class size resulting to poor sitting arrangement makes classroom interaction difficult.

6.2.3. Societal Challenges

Another challenge obtained from English language teachers that hinders classroom interaction was societal challenge. From the interview, one teacher said, "It is due to the nature of the students. They do not have good foundation for English language use. Our students have not been prepared to use English language as a medium of instruction". This indicates that students have no good background in the use English language. This challenge hinders them from interacting in the classroom when English is used.

Some teachers said that the students do not like to speak English and they do not put more effort to know the language. They also said that the need in the community for them to speak English is very minimal. Most students speak English only when they go to school but resort to Kiswahili and other home languages when they go home or when in the streets. That means, there are very few chances for the students to use English language in the community around them.

Moreover, data from interview reveal that the cultural ideology has also an impact on students in classroom interaction. One teacher in the interview said that some students may know the answer but they fear and feel shy depending on how they were raised in their families. Roggof B. [13] states that the authoritarian style of parenting also has an impact on the way and perceptions the students give to learning. Therefore, teachers should deviate from their traditional authority roles and engage in dialogue with students.

The study noted that learners are unprepared for interaction using the target language. The findings also reveal that the problem which hinders classroom interaction was also influenced by socio-cultural ideology.

6.2.4. Other Challenges

The other observed challenge was teacher-influenced. According to the observation, some teachers were affected by their mother tongue intonation and pronunciation. The researcher noted that some English language teachers had consonant problems. The interdental sound /ð/ was frequently replaced by voiced alveolar fricative /z/. For example, in some of the observed classrooms the sound /ð/ in words like 'then' or article 'the' were frequently replaced with /z/ to pronounce such words as /zen/ or /ze/. This affects the students' output because they automatically copy their teachers as their role models. As Vygotsky states, development based on collaboration and imitation is the source of all human sort of consciousness that builds up in the child ([24], p. 210). This is emphasized in the research by Lantolf J. P. and Thorne S. L. [8] as they posit that imitation plays an important role in language acquisition.

Moreover, the researchers noted that teachers frequently switched to Kiswahili when explaining some concepts in the classroom. For example, during observation in classroom C, the teacher frequently used the phrase *"tumeelewana jamani"* [Do we understand each other] for checking if the students were following. Another example was taken from classroom A when the teacher said, "when writing a letter, use the best paper! *Usichane daftari* [do not tear a paper from the exercise book].

According to Nurhamidah F. E. et al. ([12], p. 78), code switching can be considered an asset to teach language or an obstacle to achieve the learning objectives. It serves some functions for the teacher to convey some concepts and for students to obtain them and communicate in classroom. However, when code switching is used frequently, it hinders students to have adequate vocabulary items in the target language.

According to Sa E. [14], the majority of the secondary school teachers use Kiswahili most of the time when teaching subjects supposed to be taught in English. For example, teachers use English terminologies but explain things in Kiswahili because they assume most students cannot follow instructions in English. As a result, teachers and students' English language speaking operate on unnatural or artificial way rather than being natural.

6.2.5. Techniques Applied by Teachers to Overcome the Challenges

The researcher noted some ways that English language teachers use to overcome the challenges they face. Some teachers said that they encourage their students to participate in the classroom by giving them positive feedback. This includes mentioning their names to answer the questions in class. In so doing, students feel acknowledged by the teacher, hence, comfortable to participate. The teachers also said that when a concept is not clear to the students and they seem to be more passive, English language teachers use Kiswahili to bridge the knowledge gap for enhancing understanding and interaction.

Moreover, one teacher said that formerly at her school, there was a radio that was used in the English language classroom for students to listen to English stories and how to pronounce words. This would help to build up good English

accent, and improve the confidence of speaking the language.

The findings by Sitompul N. [17] reveal that teachers motivate students in classroom interaction by giving them positive feedback and demonstrate that they care about them by trying to be fair in the classroom. The study noted that English language teachers make efforts to improve interaction using English language in their classrooms. They use positive feedback to encourage students' interaction.

7. Conclusion

Various teacher initiations were used in the English language classroom to promote interaction, namely teacher inform, teacher elicit, teacher direct, teacher check, repeating and listing. Teacher inform was the most preferred in the English language classroom to pass on facts, to confirm understanding, acknowledge attention and get expected responses from the students. However, this is more appropriate if the teachers' primary goal is to assess or check understanding. When the intention is to promote classroom interaction based on the target language, eliciting natural responses through asking genuine questions is more appropriate. The teachers' ability to utilize various initiation techniques in forms of eliciting, informing, listing, repeating and checking, and their understanding of the functions being served by them is an essential feature of teachers' classroom interactional competence.

Moreover, various activities can be valuable for the teacher to implement in the classroom, in the effort to gain the quality of classroom interaction and facilitating the improvement of English language skills. The scaffolding strategies make a good application of environment and social artefacts including the use of songs, real objects, pictures, images and visual representation for competent support in second language learning. The study noted that these items are rarely used in English language classrooms in Nyamagana secondary schools.

The researcher identified scaffolding strategies used in the classroom to enhance the development of English language skills. Well-trained teachers can handle the class effectively. They can find ways to cope with challenges in the classroom and use accustomed environment in contextualizing English language learning. Therefore, studies on strategies for coping with large classes should be done investigating activities to use in such classes. Studies on the importance of using environment and social artefacts in improving English language skills can also be done. It is crucial for English teachers to improve the quality of English teaching employing different activities with pair work and group work and motivating students to improve their English skills and interactions.

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