

Teacher- Student Interaction in a Book Circle Activity

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The role of interaction has gained attention in the field of SLA. Due to its potential benefits in language learning, SLA researchers have examined diverse aspects of interaction. This article looked at interactions between a teacher and three ESL children in a book circle activity in the U.S. It examined how the teacher, through her talk, facilitated her students' opportunities for interaction and language use. This study used classroom discourse analysis for the close analysis of teacher-student interaction. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the classroom discourse data revealed that the teacher used various interactional, scaffolding strategies. Quantitative analysis showed that she scaffolded the children's learning by challenging them to further develop their thinking. She also challenged them to respond appropriately when they generated insufficient answers. Qualitative analysis showed that the teacher-student interaction created a context for active, meaningful use of language and co-construction of meaning. The teacher incorporated the children's utterances into classroom discourse and involved them in various cognitive processes. Nowadays, in Korea, when English teachers are increasingly expected to give English-medium instruction, this study provides useful insight into how teacher-student interaction should unfold in a language classroom.

I. INTRODUCTION

The role of interaction has gained attention in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) (Gass, Mackey, & Pica, 1998; Oxford & Nyikos, 1997; Verplaetse, 2000). It has been claimed that interaction provides learners with opportunities to better comprehend language input through meaning negotiation (Gass & Varonis, 1985; Pica, 1994), to produce output (Swain, 1985), to increase the likelihood of automaticity of language use (Brown, 1991; McLaughlin, 1987), and to acquire target discourse conventions. Due to such potential benefits of interaction in language learning, SLA researchers have examined

diverse aspects of interaction to date. The nature of teacher-learner interaction is one of them.

In the instructional settings, teachers play a major part in structuring and managing classroom discourse. In other words, teachers create or control the opportunities for students to participate in class activities and classroom discourse. Thus, it can be said that teacher-student interaction heavily influences individual students' language use and development. Given a large number of language learners learn the target language in an instructional setting, much research is needed in order to illuminate various aspects of teacher-student interaction. What types of teacher talk successfully elicit responses from students? What interactional strategies actively involve students in learning? How does teacher-student interaction promote students' language use? What factors contribute to productive teacher-student interaction?

The present study intends to partially address these issues. This study looks at interactions between a teacher and three English as a second language (ESL) students in a book circle activity in the U.S. The primary purpose of this study is to analyze and interpret the interaction in terms of how the interaction shaped the children's language use. Specifically, this study seeks to examine how the teacher uses language for interaction and how the teacher talk facilitates the students' engagement in classroom learning and language use. This study uses classroom discourse analysis for the close analysis of teacher-student interaction. Understanding various features of teacher-student interaction would be helpful to language teachers for an enhanced interaction with their learners.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual frame of this study comes from two sources: interaction and classroom discourse.

1. Interaction

The role of interaction has been discussed largely in two ways: as a source of comprehensible input and output (Verplaetse, 2000). First, it is claimed that interaction provides learners with opportunities to negotiate and co-construct meaning when communicative breakdown happens. In the process, the target language input is made more comprehensible to learners (Gass & Varonis, 1985; Pica & Doughty, 1985). The importance of comprehensible input as an essential element of language learning has widely been recognized (e.g., Krashen, 1982, 1985; Long, 1981, 1983). Second, Swain (1985) explained the role of interaction in relation to language output. She claimed that

interaction provides learners with plenty of opportunities to produce output in the target language, to notice their current language problems, to make and test hypotheses about language, and to make metalinguistic reflections. Brown (1991) and McLaughlin (1987) explained that opportunities for producing language output may increase the likelihood of automaticity of language use.

Empirical research has accumulated evidence supporting the advantages of interaction in language practice (e.g., Long, Adams, McLean, & Castaños, 1976; Pica & Doughty, 1985). Early on, for example, Long, Adams, McLean, and Castaños (1976) showed that learners in small group discussions not only talked more, but also used a greater variety of speech acts, such as initiating discussion, clarification requests, and joking, than in teacher-led whole class settings. Pica and Doughty (1985) also claimed that one of the greatest values of interaction is in language practice opportunities, which may lead to fluent use of the target language. Language learning requires situations in which interaction naturally blossoms and students can use language for actual communication (Rivers, 1987).

More recently, SLA researchers working within the framework of sociocultural theory have examined interaction from a slightly different perspective. The traditional interactionist framework views interaction as important in that it allows learners to receive comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982, 1985; Long, 1981, 1983) and to negotiate meaning (Gass & Varonis, 1985; Pica, 1994). In other words, the importance of interaction is recognized because it can increase opportunities for meaning negotiation, which supposedly facilitates better comprehension of input. In this tradition, comprehensible input and meaning negotiation are regarded as utmost important in language learning. On the other hand, the framework of sociocultural theory focuses on the inseparable, dynamic relationships between interaction and language development. Several studies (e.g., Donato, 1994; Ohta, 1995; Swain & Lapkin, 1998) reported that L2 learners co-constructed accurate target language structures and successfully learned and used the structures during interaction. This framework perceives language learning as proceeding through concrete social interactions in which learners use L2. In this view, social interaction is an arena where individuals provide each other with support and guidance, jointly shaping language learning opportunities. In Ohta's (1995) words, "L2 acquisition takes place as the gap between what the learner can do alone and with assistance is filled with collaboration" (p. 97).

2. Classroom Discourse

Classroom learning is mediated by classroom discourse – the oral interaction between the teacher and students or among students – to a great extent. The role of interaction in

general learning and cognitive development has well been documented. Substantial body of research on classroom discourse recognizes the significant role of classroom discourse in creating learning opportunities and shaping learning outcomes across classrooms (Baker, 1992; Bowers & Flinders, 1990; Cazden, 1988; Hall & Verplaetse, 2000; Wells, 1993, 1996).

Several studies of the overall structure of classroom talk have been conducted. According to Cazden (1988) and Mehan (1979), a dominant discourse pattern in classrooms is the IRE/IRF (teacher initiation – student response – teacher evaluation/feedback) sequence, where the teacher mostly dominates the classroom discourse, students simply respond with a structured single answer or short utterances, and the teacher then evaluates or provides feedback. It is reported that this interaction pattern frequently occurs in language classrooms as well (Ernst, 1994; Johnson, 1995).

Given the importance of classroom discourse in language learning, features of teacher-student interaction have been extensively examined. In particular, findings from research studies of teacher-student interaction reveal that the nature of teacher-student interaction significantly determines language learning opportunities made available to individual students (Antón, 1999; Gibbons, 1998, 2003; Verplaetse, 2000). For instance, Antón (1999) compared teacher-student interaction patterns occurring in learner-centered and teacher-centered language classrooms. Even though both classes operated in a teacher-fronted instructional setting, types of teacher-student interaction strikingly differed from each other. Her study showed that teachers, through dialogue, can engage learners in active use of language and promote learners' cognitive participation in classroom learning. Likewise, Gibbons (1998) documented effective interactional strategies that a teacher employed as scaffolding acts to expand children's linguistic resources and content knowledge. The teacher provided the children with opportunities to produce extended talk by inviting them to express their own understanding as a primary knower, rather than to simply answer display questions. The teacher also rephrased the children's utterances into alternative linguistic codes, which gave them new language input. Gibbons (1998) stressed that this type of communicative interaction resembles adult-child interactions, which are commonly understood to spur native language development.

The present study extends this line of classroom-based research by examining social interactions between a teacher and three children in an ESL class. This study asks a question: What scaffolding and instructional strategies does the teacher use to facilitate student engagement and language use?

III. METHODOLOGY

1. The Setting and the Participants

This study was conducted in a third grade ESL class of Riverside Elementary School (pseudonym) in a small Midwestern city in the U.S. During the 2004-2005 school year, Riverside Elementary School enrolled 461 students, approximately 32 percent of whom (i.e., 144 students) were language minority students. 47 students were classified as limited English proficient students. The four commonest languages other than English were Korean, Spanish, Chinese, and Japanese in the decreasing order.

Participants in the present study were one teacher and three children. The teacher, Mrs. Smith, was a native speaker of English with six years of teaching experience. Experiences in living abroad and foreign language learning helped her to sympathize over the students' difficulties in ESL learning and adjustment to new environments.

The three children were third graders aged eight to nine. Two of them were girls and one was a boy. In terms of nationality, two were from Korea and one from Mexico. The length of their residence in America varied from six months to one and a half years at the beginning of data collection. The children could communicate themselves in English at an intermediate level though their utterances were frequently short, simple, and sometimes grammatically incorrect. According to the teacher, the children's speaking skills were better than writing skills. The children were pulled out of the same regular class for a 40-minute ESL lesson every day. Mrs. Smith recommended this class for observation because she thought the class would fit my interest in teacher-student interaction. Before I started this study, I received permission for data collection from the parents of the three children.

Each lesson was structured around two major components: boardwork activity and special activity. Boardwork activity took the form of teacher-led whole class teaching focused on aspects of language. The teacher introduced and explained new language items, and then involved the children in practicing the language items. After the board work was over, the children engaged in a special activity. Special activities varied in type. They included book circle activity, partner readings, summary activities, animal inquiry projects, and content-language integration activities.

One of the most frequent special activities was a book circle activity. For this study, I chose the book circle activity because it happened almost every day and entailed constant verbal interaction between the teacher and the children. I was convinced that a close analysis of the interaction would shed light on dynamics and multiple aspects of teacher-student interaction. For the book circle activity, the teacher and the children first got together in a book circle area. The teacher then read aloud a storybook, asking

questions and making comments on students' utterances. Near the book circle area were several pillows of animal shapes which the children were sometimes allowed to use. The present study is based on classroom discourse data collected during one book circle activity. On the day when the discourse data in question was collected, the teacher read aloud a short story titled *Snowman*.

2. Data Collection

The data collected for this study include video and audio taping of one book-circle activity, field notes from classroom observation, and transcribed classroom discourse.

I observed the ESL class from October 2004 to February 2005 with a two-week winter break for a larger study, but for the present study, I chose one book circle activity as I mentioned above. During the observation, I audio and video recorded the lesson. I then transcribed the audio- and videotapes.

I wrote observation notes during the classroom observation. The observation notes contained information on the subjects, settings, activities that the children were engaged in, and specific features of the verbal interactions that captured my attention. I used the field notes to develop an understanding of what happened during the activity and to crosscheck the audio taped verbal interactions.

3. Data Analysis

One book circle activity as an instructional event was the unit of analysis. In order to identify scaffolding strategies used by the teacher, I analyzed the classroom discourse data both quantitatively and qualitatively.

In the process of quantitative analysis, I examined the overall structure of the classroom discourse and identified the types of scaffolding strategy and their frequency. For this, I coded every utterance of the discourse data by using a modified version of Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) and Verplaetse's (1995, 2000) coding systems.

Sinclair and Coulthard's coding system was one of the widely-used discourse analysis coding systems designed for analyzing classroom interaction. It consists of 5 hierarchical levels: lesson, transaction, exchange, move, and act. A *lesson* consists of one or more *transactions* with a series of conversational *exchanges*. Sinclair and Coulthard stated that a typical conversational exchange in the classroom occurs when a teacher initiates an interaction, students responds to the initiation, and the teacher gives feedback to the responses. Sinclair and Coulthard called the three elements – initiation, response, and feedback – *moves*. Each move consists of *acts* that perform specific functions, such as elicitation, check, acceptance, and evaluation.

Verplaetse (1995, 2000) slightly modified the Sinclair and Coulthard's coding system. Whereas Sinclair and Coulthard's system has three moves (i.e., initiation, response, and feedback), Verplaetse's has four with a new one (i.e., scaffold-initiation move) added. Besides, Verplaetse's coding system has two new acts (i.e., response initiation act and feedback initiation act). With regard to scaffolding strategies, the Verplaetse's coding system has three scaffolding strategies with different purposes: scaffold-initiation move, response elicitation act, and feedback act.

For the present study, I examined the classroom discourse data in terms of the three scaffolding strategies that Verplaetse had identified (i.e., scaffold-initiation move, response elicitation act, and feedback act). I looked at the frequency and nature of each scaffolding strategy. For this, I coded every utterance of the transcribed classroom discussion for the four moves which Verplaetse identified (i.e., initiation, response, feedback, scaffold-initiation). And the moves were further coded for acts which Sinclair and Coulthard identified. Through this process, I identified not only scaffolding strategies but also the overall structure of the classroom discourse. I then identified interactional segments representative of each strategy, reading the transcripts. I focused on how each of the scaffolding strategies was used and what their effects might be on classroom learning and language use.

Quantitative analysis was followed by qualitative analysis. According to Delamont (1976), coding schemes and their consequential quantitative results can miss important points of analysis. To overcome the problem, upon completion of the coding, I conducted a qualitative analysis of the whole instructional event. I segmented the instructional event into four transactions and examined how each transaction proceeded. I then identified any significant interactional, scaffolding strategies that could help students to get engaged in classroom learning and facilitate their language use.

IV. FINDINGS

As I mentioned earlier, I coded every utterance of the data by using Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) and Verplaetse's (1995, 2000) coding systems to identify scaffolding strategies and the overall structure of the discourse. The results of the coding are presented in Table 1. Definition of each move and act is provided in the Appendix.

TABLE 1
Coding for Moves and Acts

Move	Act	Frequency
Initiation	Elicitation	4
	Informative	7
	Directive	2
	Student Initiation	1
Scaffold-Initiation *	Elicitation	8
	Informative	0
	Directive	0
Response	Acknowledge (verbal, nonverbal signs of listening)	13
	Reply (answers)	37
	Teacher Elicitation *	4
Feedback	Accept	27
	Evaluate	5
	Comment	8
	Elicitation *	2

(* indicates scaffolding strategies)

Table 1 shows how the classroom discourse as a whole was structured in terms of moves and acts. A combination of student response and teacher feedback moves happened more than that of initiation and scaffold-initiation moves. It means that the students responded to the teacher's or each other's utterances quite actively, and received the teacher's feedback frequently. Student initiation of an exchange occurred only once, which means most of the initiation acts were led by the teacher. Regarding the three scaffolding strategies, elicitations in scaffold-initiation, response, and feedback moves occurred 8, 4, and 2 times respectively.

As mentioned earlier, this study is primarily concerned with the three scaffolding strategies which Verplaetse (1995, 2000) identified. From now on, I will focus on the strategies, particularly about what each of the strategies is, how they transpired in the interaction, and what their effects might be on the students' language use.

1. Scaffold-Initiation Elicitation

Verplaetse (2000) defined scaffold-initiation move as the one where a teacher "initiates additional, challenging, contiguous exchange within the same teacher-student transaction at a point where the exchange could have been satisfactorily concluded" (p. 227). Building

on the topic, the scaffold-initiation move intends to scaffold student participation and learning by challenging them to further develop their thinking.

In the present study, I identified eight cases of the scaffold-initiation elicitation act. Excerpt 1 contains three examples of the act. Before this excerpt started, the children made predictions about why a dog that had lived inside a house happened to be outside.

<Excerpt 1>

35. Donghoon: I was ↑right.

36. T: YOU were RI::GHT. Did you read it?

37. Donghoon: No, no

38. Sumi: Yes.

39. Donghoon: I just guessed.

40. T: You just gue:::ssed. Do you remember [what we were talking about

41. before?]

42. Sumi: [You just guessed.]

43. Donghoon: I just thought of Jorge ((laughing))

44. T: Well, you thought of Jorge. What was he doing with his dog?

45. Donghoon: He was umm

46. Maria: playing

47. T: He was playing hard with his dog and what did his dog do?

48. Sumi: uh

49. Donghoon: bit him and he got stitches.

50. Sumi: ((giggling))

An exchange could have ended right after the teacher's saying, "You just gue:::ssed" (line 40), but the exchange continued when Mrs. Smith asked a question about the previous discussion. The teacher was trying to stimulate Donghoon to consider what led him to make the correct guess. Mrs. Smith kept asking additional questions regarding Jorge's experiences with his dog (lines 44 and 47).

This excerpt shows that in response to the scaffold-initiation questions, the children had chances to reflect on their previous discussion and also use the target language more. The teacher's guided questions scaffolded the children's thinking and language use at the same time.

2. Response Initiation Act

Response initiation occurs when a teacher responds to students' questions or answers to further elicit responses from the students. Excerpt 2 contains an example of the response

initiation act.

<Excerpt 2>

4. T: So, now we've got Snowman, we've got a dog, we know
5. what's going on and what we want to find out i:::s, Donghoon?
6. Donghoon: Why, how come the dog is outside there?
7. T: Why is the dog out there?
8. Donghoon: yeah.
9. T: Okay. What happened to the dog and why is he out there? Okay. Do
10. you have any predictions about why he is out there?
11. Children: Oh, yeah.
12. T: You do?
13. Sumi: It's because maybe when he go under there
14. T: When he went under there, yes.
15. Sumi: Yeah. And then accidentally he ()
16. T: He accidentally did what?
17. Sumi: umm, like, for example, () fire to the floor
18. T: Maybe he accidentally set the house on fire or something like that
19. Donghoon: ahahah ((raising hand))
20. T: yeah.
21. Donghoon: Maybe, umm, the children was in there and

This excerpt occurs at the beginning of the book circle activity. The children were involved in making predictions of why a dog in question is outside. The teacher began to introduce the day's topic (line 5). Then, after Donghoon gave an answer, the teacher incorporated the answer into her talk and brought up a question to the children (lines 9 and 10). And as seen in the remaining lines, the children actively offered their predictions. The question aroused the children's interest in the topic and scaffolded the students' involvement in the co-construction of classroom discourse and also their language use.

3. Feedback Initiation Act

Feedback initiation occurs when a teacher challenges students to respond appropriately when they generate insufficient or wrong answers. Excerpt 3 illustrates examples of the feedback initiation act. Before this excerpt, Mrs. Smith described a strange feeling that the dog and the snowman might have regarding a stove in the house. Excerpt 3 starts with Mrs. Smith's question about the feeling.

<Excerpt 3>

7. T: What do you think the feeling is?
8. Sumi: Sa:d
9. Donghoon: Happy?
- 10.T: Happy:::?. They are ta::lking about the †sto::ve.
11. Maria: Oh
12. Sumi: O::h
13. Maria: Beautiful
14. T: Something beautiful:l, somethi::ng
15. Children: ()
16. T: umm, I am not going to tell you. There is no right answer, but I am not
17. going to tell you. If you ever see something that's beautiful, that's got
18. a lot of wonderful things about it, what do you feel like?
19. Maria: It's so beautiful.
20. Sumi: I want to keep it.
21. T: You want to KEEP it, right?
22. Sumi: Forever
23. T: You want to keep it forever. You go, "A::::ha, hu::h, I like that, I want
24. that."

In this excerpt, the children continuously failed to provide appropriate answers to the teacher's question (lines 8 to 12). When Maria offered a better, but still incorrect answer (line 13), the teacher tried to invite the children to think more and make a better answer. For this, she took Maria's response and tried to highlight it by lengthening the syllables in her pronunciation. This attempt failed again, but the teacher made another attempt to lead the children into a proper way of thinking (lines 17 and 18). Then, one of the children finally got the point and offered much better answers (lines 20 and 22).

In the excerpt above, although the children couldn't provide correct answers, the teacher did not give up. Instead, she tried to challenge them to think further and respond better. In the meantime, the feedback initiation acts successfully helped the children to move up to the point and use language properly.

So far I have analyzed the classroom discourse in terms of the three scaffolding strategies. We have seen that Mrs. Smith used the three scaffolding strategies several times and that the strategies facilitated the children's involvement in classroom learning and also language use. However, I reason that the real picture of classroom interaction, particularly the teacher's interactional strategies, can be better shown when we look at the full context where the interaction was occurring. For this, I examined the same classroom discourse from the holistic, qualitative perspectives. I qualitatively analyzed the whole discourse to

characterize the types of interaction and identify diverse interactional, scaffolding features. The same discourse data were analyzed, but from different perspectives.

In the qualitative analysis, I divided the single interactional event (i.e., book circle activity) into four separate communicative transactions and identified unique discourse features of each transaction. I will discuss the features, interactional strategies used, and how they would relate to language learning.

Right before Excerpt 4 took place, Mrs. Smith reviewed the previous day's reading with the children. The distinct feature of the interaction in Excerpt 4 is that the teacher involved the children in prediction and the process of making predictions eventually helped the children to maintain interest in the story and to penetrate the text personally.

<Excerpt 4>

1. T: something happened to the dog that made him outside and he was
2. talking to the Snowman about it, right? And the Snowman was asking
3. him questions about it. Okay. Let's go to page 150. That's where we
4. stopped. So, now we've got Snowman, we've got a dog, we know
5. what's going on and what we want to find out i:::s, Donghoon?
6. Donghoon: Why, how come the dog is outside there?
7. T: Why is the dog out there?
8. Donghoon: yeah.
9. T: Okay. What happened to the dog and why is he out there? Okay. Do
10. you have any predictions about why he is out there?
11. Children: Oh, yeah.
12. T: You do?
13. Sumi: It's because maybe when he go under there
14. T: When he went under there, yes.
15. Sumi: Yeah. And then accidentally he ()
16. T: He accidentally did what?
17. Sumi: umm, like, for example, () fire to the floor
18. T: Maybe he accidentally set the house on fire or something like that
19. Donghoon: ahahah ((raising hand))
20. T: yeah.
21. Donghoon: Maybe, umm, the children was in there and
22. T: The children were in there
23. Donghoon: umm, they were playing like Jorge was and he fight ((laughing))
24. T: Maybe the children were playing and maybe he bit somebody? Do you
25. think that could have been like Jorge. Yeah. That's a good prediction.
26. So maybe he made a mistake. Maybe he set, he set the house

27. accidentally on fire. Maybe he bit somebody. Well, what do you think
28. it might be?
29. Maria: umm
30. T: You don't know? Okay. Let's read on, because otherwise, we already
31. ran out of time. All right, let's see. Now, we are going to just get to
32. the part where he is going to tell us why he had to leave. ((reading the
33. book aloud)) "the Snowman looked and he saw the stove..... A bone
34. for a bone. I bit him in the leg".
35. Donghoon: I was ↑right.
36. T: YOU were RI::GHT. Did you read it?
37. Donghoon: No, no
38. Sumi: Yes.
39. Donghoon: I just guessed.
40. T: You just gue:::ssed. Do you remember [what we were talking about
41. before?]
42. Sumi: [You just guessed.]
43. Donghoon: I just thought of Jorge ((laughing))
44. T: Well, you thought of Jorge. What was he doing with his dog?
45. Donghoon: He was umm
46. Maria: playing
47. T: He was playing hard with his dog and what did his dog do?
48. Sumi: uh
49. Donghoon: bit him and he got stitches.
50. Sumi: ((giggling))

Excerpt 4 begins with Mrs. Smith's summary of a previous reading. Significantly, the teacher based the classroom discourse on a student's question and directed the question to the whole class. Building on the question for classroom discourse, she then involved the children in predicting the answer to the question. The children actively expressed their predictions (lines 11 to 29). This made the children listen attentively to Mrs. Smith reading the book, and when the children finally reached the part which contained the answer to their prediction, Donghoon yelled with excitement, "I was right" (line 35). Making predictions helped the children to pay continued attention to the story and to engage in the text actively. This excerpt ends with a couple of questions that Mrs. Smith asked in relation to Jorge's experience with his dog but which did not successfully elicit active responses from the children.

In this excerpt, there are a couple of salient interactional, instructional strategies identified. First, as mentioned earlier, Mrs. Smith picked up on a student's question and

used it as a springboard for classroom discussion. The student's question was validated and incorporated into classroom discourse. Second, use of prediction as a learning strategy involved the children in interacting with the text actively. With their own predictions, the children could penetrate the text more meaningfully and personally. A substantial body of research claims that the process of making individual responses to a reading text promotes active, engaging reading (e.g., Eeds & Wells, 1989; Farnan, 1986; Jewell & Pratt, 1999). Third, in articulating their own predictions, the children had opportunities to generate and express meaning in the L2. They were using the L2 for authentic, communicative purposes.

Excerpt 5 follows directly after Excerpt 4 in the original classroom discourse.

<Excerpt 5>

1. T: So YEAH. Anyway, that's why. Now, what did the dog not
2. understand?
3. Donghoon: He didn't understand, umm, he wasn't supposed to do it or he wasn't
4. supposed to bite the children.
5. T: That's right. Why did he bite the child?
6. Sumi: ((raising her hand))
7. Donghoon: Because
8. T: yeah?
9. Sumi: because the child took his bone away
10. T: Did that ever happen to you where you did something that you didn't
11. realize that was going to be a problem?
12. Donghoon: I didn't got ()
13. T: What happened to you?
14. Donghoon: I just lay down on my bed.
15. Sumi: hhhh
16. T: When you get into a fight, when you get into a fight with your brother,
17. did that ever happen that he took something that is yours and you ()
18. something and then you got in trouble?
19. Donghoon: No
20. Maria: ((giggling))
21. Donghoon: He got a trouble, because he was=
22. T: =yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, right.
23. Sumi: My mom does.
24. T: Your mom does that?
25. Sumi: My mom, when I was mad at her, I took her thing and then we got a
26. fight. My mom said, "you go to your room" and (). I didn't know

27. that. I thought that I have to go outside or something. I thought I
 28. would go to a big trouble ().
29. T: You didn't finally. What about at school? Did something ever
 30. happen that you didn't understand, especially, when you first got
 31. here? If you said something to somebody, you got into trouble and you
 32. didn't understand why?
33. Children: yeah.
32. T: yeah. You couldn't understand what they were saying and you just
 33. didn't know what's going on, right ? I remember that from last year
34. Sumi: I couldn't, I didn't know what anybody say. Mrs. Kim helped me.
35. T: aha. That's right. So in the story, the dog was young. He was a puppy,
 36. right? And he bit the kid and they threw him out of the house.
37. Children: ((laughing))
38. T: That's why, that's why he barks, "ouch, ouch, ouch."
39. Donghoon: ouch, ouch, ouch.

The most prominent feature of this segment is that the teacher made attempts to link the story to the children's real lives, which could contribute to the children's reading experiences and authentic, communicative use of language. In the beginning of this segment, Mrs. Smith asked two open-ended comprehension questions (i.e., 'What did the dog not understand?' and 'Why did he bite the child?'), to which Sumi and Donghoon made answers in accurate language forms. Mrs. Smith then asked the children whether they had had experiences similar to the one in the story. This question inspired the children to make personal connections with the story. Stimulated by the interesting questions, the children shared their experiences without hesitation (lines 12 to 28). The questions elicited extended personalized talk from the children. According to Rosenblatt (1968), when encouraged to make personal connections with a reading material, readers can respond to the text more meaningfully and deeply. Ballenger (1997) made a similar observation in a study of classroom interaction in a science class of Haitian students. In the class, students unfamiliar with the discourse and practices of science could understand scientific concepts better when encouraged to use their everyday ways of talking and exploring ideas. Ballenger claimed that making connections between personal experiences and discussion enhanced the students' comprehension and retention of what was being learned.

In addition, from the perspective of language learning, the process of making personal connections to the text generated positive conditions for language use. The children recalled concrete experiences, which they may have felt it easy to describe. This excerpt illustrates that personal experiences render a rich source of topics that can engender active classroom discourse.

Mrs. Smith posed another question related to their school experience (lines 29 and 30). Even though this question was not followed by a series of answers, it also served to connect the story to the children's experiences. It had the potential to elicit extended, personalized talk. This segment ends with Donghoon's repeating of the sound that the thrown dog made, "ouch, ouch, ouch."

The teacher-student interaction continues in the following excerpt.

<Excerpt 6>

1. T: Okay, now, we are going to have to go, because we are really late, but I
2. want to ask you one more question. They are talking about the stove
3. and the beautiful stove, how warm the stove is, how beautiful it is, and
4. what it looks like, and what it feels like. Then it says, "A strange feeling
5. of sadness and joy came over him. A feeling he never experienced
6. before, a feeling that all human beings know." What do you think the
7. feeling is?
8. Sumi: Sa:d
9. Donghoon: Happy?
10. T: Happy::: They are ta::lking about the †sto::ve.
11. Maria: Oh
12. Sumi: O::h
13. Maria: Beautiful
14. T: Something beautifu::l, somethi::ng
15. Children: ()
16. T: umm, I am not going to tell you. There is no right answer, but I am not
17. going to tell you. If you ever see something that's beautiful, that's got
18. a lot of wonderful things about it, what do you feel like?
19. Maria: It's so beautiful.
20. Sumi: I want to keep it.
21. T: You want to KEEP it, right?
22. Sumi: Forever
23. T: You want to keep it forever. You go, "A:::ha, hu::h, I like that, I want
24. that."
25. Sumi: I will go like this ((making a hugging gesture))
26. T: †There you go. Good job, Sumi.
27. Sumi: I want to steal.
28. T: So, now the Snowman, you want to steal, right. Now, the Snowman is
29. hearing about a wonderful thing that's called stove and he is thinking
30. about it, he sees it, and he is wondering, 'hmm, something that I want

31. to have.’ This feeling comes over him, okay?

This excerpt illustrates an instance in which the children and the teacher were working together to co-construct and clarify meaning. In the beginning of this segment, after she read a part which describes a feeling that the Snowman had about the stove, Mrs. Smith directed toward the children a question, “What do you think the feeling is?” And the subsequent verbal interaction was made surrounding this question. Children at first had a hard time figuring out what the feeling, which, according to the book, all human beings know, might be. After Maria answered, “Beautiful,” Mrs. Smith built on the answer and paraphrased the question.

Now, this time, instead of asking what the Snowman felt, Mrs. Smith started to use a position-taking strategy. That is, she led the children to imagine as if they were in the very situation and then asked how they might feel. This strategy finally enabled Maria and Sumi to generate answers (i.e., “It’s so beautiful”, “I want to keep it”) that the teacher expected (lines 19 and 20). The teacher immediately validated Sumi’s answer, putting a stress on the focal part of the answer (i.e., keep). Excited, Sumi further contributed her opinions to the classroom discourse (lines 20 to 27), while consolidating her initial meaning and adding new meaning. In the meantime, Mrs. Smith confirmed Sumi’s verbal contributions by repeating them and praising her. This excerpt shows that Sumi’s comprehension of the possible feeling became increasingly clear in the process of social interaction.

In this excerpt, the children and the teacher were actively co-constructing and clarifying meaning. Guided by the teacher, the children put themselves in a stated position and generated meanings. As interaction proceeded, meaning was gradually made clearer to the children and a child went through a series of stages until she reached an answer that Mrs. Smith may have initially had in mind.

It should be noted that the teacher played an important role in the process of co-construction of meaning. First, she identified a part of the story which could serve as a springboard for discussion and posed an open-ended question. As the teacher said, the question was not that simple to answer and required rather a high degree of cognitive functioning on the part of the children. For this, the children needed to understand the situation clearly and conjecture what the feeling was like. In the quest of an answer, the children had to put their cognitive ability in operation and use language to communicate their reasoning. Again, authentic, meaningful language use was made possible. Second, the teacher made the task more accessible to the children by positioning them in a likely situation. Through the position taking, the children could sense the feeling more easily. Then they finally succeeded in constructing and expressing meaning. Third, she responded to the children’s reasoning with a range of feedback strategies. She incorporated answers

into her utterances by repeating or further elaborating the answers. She explicitly and immediately showed an affirmative response to the children's correct answers in a louder and emotional voice. She also gave positive feedback in the form of praise. These feedback strategies may have helped the children to produce language in a stress-reduced environment. Krashen (1982) views low anxiety as one of the critical factors that facilitate language learning. According to Krashen, learners' anxiety at a high level will impede their language learning process. In contrast, when learners are encouraged to use and practice language in an anxiety-reduced setting, language learning will take place more effectively.

The following excerpt is the last part of the whole series of the teacher-student interaction.

<Excerpt 7>

1. Sumi: I have a prediction.
2. T: You have a prediction? What do you have?
3. Sumi: umm, he or somebody is going to () him and then he is going to ()
4. and then the dog is going to do like, "hu::h."
5. T: Oh, you think it is going to make a bad choice.
6. Donghoon: Oh, I know.
7. T: You think [it is going to bite the stove]
8. Donghoon: [no, I know, I can]. Umm, I think dog is going to
9. T: I think the dog, yes?
10. Donghoon: The dog is going to go inside and the sun is going to come out and the
11. Snowman is going to melt and it was night and the dog come out and
12. T: Okay, we'll find out tomorrow.

This excerpt starts with Sumi's utterance, "I have a prediction." After she had successfully generated a series of answers and received positive feedback from the teacher, Sumi now volunteered to make a prediction. Donghoon also offered his own prediction. Significantly, in this excerpt, the children took initiatives in interaction. They voluntarily made predictions, whereas, in Excerpt 4, they simply followed the teacher's request to make a prediction. In addition, the children produced longer utterances than Mrs. Smith. This interactional pattern indicates that in the process of interaction, the children increasingly engaged in the story and enjoyed the discussion.

The teacher wrapped up the class, stimulating curiosity about the next part of the story by saying, "Okay, we'll find out tomorrow." Given the teacher's words, the next day's reading time would likely incorporate the predictions and thus classroom discourse would unfold to some extent on the basis of the predictions. The predictions made a connection between the lessons of that day and the next.

To sum up, Excerpts 4 to 7 illustrate how teacher-student interaction promoted the children's participation in classroom learning and language use. The teacher built on the children's utterances, involved the children in prediction and position-taking, and encouraged them to make personal connections to the story. These processes enabled the children to engage the text and construct meaning actively. The processes also created opportunities for the children to use language purposefully and meaningfully.

V. DISCUSSION

There is a wide recognition that teacher-student interaction plays a crucial role in shaping learning opportunities. Through quality verbal interaction, teachers can involve students in co-construction of meaning and promote participation in classroom learning. Importance of such verbal interaction will increase particularly in language classes where verbal interaction is both the medium of learning and object of learning. Verbal interaction in a language class provides students with opportunities to process language input and to produce language in context.

The present study looked at how an ESL teacher, through her talk, facilitated her students' opportunities for interaction and language use. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the same classroom discourse data was conducted though more focus was on qualitative analysis. Findings of this study provide supportive evidence for the research studies that highlight the significance of teacher-student interaction in language learning (e.g., Antón, 1999; Gibbons, 1998, 2003; Verplaetse, 2000). Analysis of the discourse data revealed that Mrs. Smith used various interactional, scaffolding strategies. According to quantitative analysis, Mrs. Smith scaffolded student participation and learning by challenging them to further develop their thinking and by responding to students' utterances to elicit more responses from them. The teacher also challenged the students to respond appropriately when they generated insufficient or wrong answers. Qualitative analysis showed that the teacher-student interaction created a context for active, meaningful use of language and co-construction of meaning. The teacher incorporated the children's utterances into classroom discourse and involved the children in various cognitive processes. Such teacher-student interaction created space where learners were encouraged and challenged to use language more actively and meaningfully, and also expand language resources.

At this stage, the present study recognizes that there may exist differences in the patterns of interaction according to the types of classroom activities. Such differences will lead to the differences in the quantity and quality of language use. On the macro level, it is thus necessary to design classroom activities that have the potential to create maximal

opportunities for interaction. On the micro level, it is necessary for teachers to lead quality interaction on a moment-to-moment basis.

Nowadays, in Korea, English teachers are increasingly expected to give English-medium instruction. In this situation, the present study bears practical implications in several ways. First, this study raises teachers' awareness of the importance of active teacher-student interaction in the learning process. Success of English-medium instruction requires an active interplay among various factors, including teachers' English proficiency, use of appropriate instructional materials, and students' active participation in classroom activities. Among them, this study implies that quality interaction between teacher and students is a necessity for successful English-medium instruction. Teachers further need to develop a deeper understanding of what constitutes active teacher-student interaction and how to do it in English.

Second, in terms of pedagogical implications, this study provides teachers with insights into effective interactional scaffolding strategies that promote interaction. For example, a detailed account of scaffolding strategies and an analysis of their potential for language development will give teachers ideas of how to implement and orchestrate classroom interaction. Third, this study bears implications for teacher education. Currently, the teacher education field is faced with the pressing demands for preparing teachers for English-medium instruction. This study directs teacher educators' attention to the dimension of classroom interaction, particularly teacher-student interaction. Information on features of quality teacher-student interaction is available for teacher education programs. Pre- and in-service teachers will thus be in a better position to examine their conceptualization of interaction. They will also be stimulated to consider how to organize effective interactional practices.

Finally, this study has implications for classroom research. As mentioned earlier, this study was conducted in the U.S. Future classroom-based studies of teacher-student interaction in Korean context will shed further light on the nature of interaction conducive to Korean learners' language learning.

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APPENDIX

Definition of Moves and Acts

Move/Act	Definition
Acknowledge	a response speech act, whose function is to show verbally or nonverbally that the initiation has been understood
Accept	a feedback speech act, whose function is to indicate that the teacher has heard or seen a student's response (e.g., 'yes,' 'no,' 'hmm')
Comment	a feedback speech act, whose function is to exemplify, justify, and provide additional information
Directive	an initiation speech act, whose function is to request a nonlinguistic, behavioral response
Elicitation	a speech act found in all the four moves, whose function is to request a verbal response
Evaluate	a feedback speech act whose function is to comment on the student's responses (e.g., 'good,' 'interesting,' 'excellent')
Feedback move	Its function is to respond to the student's response.
Informative	an initiation speech act, whose function is to provide information
Initiation move	Its function is to initiate an exchange with a student.
Reply	a feedback speech act whose function is to either answer the question or provide a clue or a comment
Response move	Its function is for students to respond to a teacher's elicitation.
Scaffolding-initiation move	Its function is "to immediately initiate further interaction, after a teacher and student have satisfactorily completed an informal

	exchange.” (Verplaetse, 1995, p. 232)
Student initiation	an initiation move in which a student, not a teacher, initiates a move

Applicable levels: elementary, middle/high school, adult

Key words: interaction, classroom discourse, discourse analysis

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Teacher-student interactions have been extensively explored in English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms using the tripartite Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) model. Past research concentrates mainly on the exploration of interactions in classrooms where language skills and components are taught. However, the analysis of IRF exchanges in EFL content courses is under-researched. The present study, therefore, was designed to explore IRF interactions in these types of EFL classes. This study revolves around the English practicum experience of a Brazilian student teacher in a state school of Goiás, in Brazil. The objectives of this paper are to investigate the aspects that stand out in the experience in question and the impact of it on the undergraduate's professional life. Students Need to Direct Their Own Learning. One source of evidence about the high level of responsibility placed on students to build good-quality knowledge about learning is made clear by observations of teacher-student interaction in classrooms. Research carried out in the United Kingdom (UK) (Black, 2004; Galton, Hargreaves, Comber, Wall, & Pell, 1999) and in Hong Kong (Galton & Pell, 2012) indicates that, across classes of different sizes, many students spend a significant proportion of their time in solitary activity. In her observation of a Year 5 class (10-11 years) in the UK, B