

A Study on High School English Teacher's Feedback Based on Conversation Analysis Theory: Taking Listening and Speaking Class as an Example

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Abstract

The English Curriculum Standards for Ordinary High Schools puts forward that teaching should focus on the improvement of students' language ability. The interaction between teachers and students is an important part of the classroom and one of the most important ways to improve learners' language ability. English teachers' classroom discourse is an important medium for English teachers to organize classroom teaching and impart knowledge. Classroom turn-taking can reflect the fluency, quantity and style of classroom communication. Based on the theory of conversation analysis, this research takes one of the 15th National High School English High-Quality Classes as the research object, listening and speaking lesson as the research class type, and transcribes and analyzes classroom teaching video. Through the research, this research aims to find the types of teachers' classroom feedback used frequently in classroom and the influence of teachers' discourse pattern on students' turn-taking. And the writer finds that teacher tends to use single positive feedback most frequently in classroom, and IRF discourse pattern is the major discourse structure in the classroom. So students have a little chance to get the turn from their teachers and most of the time the class is still dominated by the teacher, and students don't need to open a new turn.

Keywords— *teacher's feedback; conversation analysis; turn-taking; discourse pattern*

I. INTRODUCTION

The interaction between teachers and students is an important part of classroom and one of the most important ways to improve learners' language ability. In order to further develop students' language ability in the teaching process, teachers should actively mobilize the enthusiasm of teaching and learning in the teaching process to ensure that students' reasonable language input and output. Therefore, mastering turn-taking ability and skills can help teachers to develop learners' language ability to a certain extent. Therefore, high school English teachers should pay more attention to the language output of students' communicative activities and the cultivation of students'

daily oral communicative competence in classroom teaching.

The purpose of this study is to summarize the characteristics of the use of teachers' feedback in high school English listening and speaking class by counting the number of different types teachers' feedback in high school English listening and speaking class. And this paper analyzes the influence of teacher's discourse pattern on students' turn-taking by recording the discourse responses of teachers and students in the process of classroom interaction.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

As an important source of language input for learners, teacher's feedback plays an important role in teachers' classroom discourse. How to effectively use feedback to improve English teaching and learning quality is also a heated topic, which foreign language researchers and English teachers have discussed for a long time. With the development of foreign language teaching research, the relationship between conversation analysis and English teaching has been strengthened.

2.1 Conversation Analysis

2.1.1 Turn

Turn is a basic unit in conversation, which was proposed by Sacks. However, there is no uniform conclusion on the definition of turn. Edmondson, W. (1981) put forward a comprehensive definition. He believes that the term "turn" expresses two meanings: one is the opportunity to become a speaker at a certain moment in the conversation; The second is what a person says when he is a speaker. Liu Senlin (2007), a Chinese scholar, believes that turn refers to a speech that the speaker utters continuously at a certain time in the conversation process, which is the basic structural unit of conversation.

2.1.2 Turn-taking

Turn-taking is the core element in conversation analysis. Harris (1951) believes that turn taking means that the speaker continues to speak and is marked by silence before and after speaking. However, in the process of daily conversation, there will be a phenomenon that the speaker continues to speak after a short silence due to temporary thinking, which cannot be explained by this definition. Seedhouse (2004) believes that turn-taking refers to the development process of conversation between speakers in turn, including teachers' questions and students' answers. Yang Lianrui (2002) also puts forward a similar point of view. Conversation is a cooperative process in which the speaker and the hearer participate together. It is characterized by taking turns to speak. And Sacks suggests that at least and not more than one party talks at a time. In the process of conversation, the speaker and the hearer should constantly change their roles and take turns to speak.

2.1.3 Discourse Pattern

Discourse pattern refers to the discourse structure commonly used in teacher-student interaction in classroom teaching. At present, the most widely accepted analysis model of teacher-student interaction discourse structure abroad is the "Birmingham School" discourse analysis model. Through the analysis of classroom conversations between primary school teachers and students, they proposed the IRF (Initiation Response Feedback) classroom discourse structure model (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975).

There are also other kinds of discourse pattern in classroom. IRFR refers to teachers' initiation, students' response, teachers' feedback and last students' response. That is to say, after the teacher asks questions, if the students do not respond correctly, the teacher gives correct feedback, and the students imitate or repeat the teacher's correct feedback. IR_1F_1/R_2F_2 means that the teacher asks, students answer, and the teacher gives feedback. Other students may give different answers or questions to the teacher's initial questions, and the teacher gives corresponding feedback again. $IR [I_1R_1 (I_2R_2)] F$ means that after the teacher asks questions, if the students answer inappropriately, inaccurately or incompletely, the teacher does not immediately give feedback, but further guides and asks questions. The students answer again and teacher gives feedback when the answer is acceptable.

2.2 Feedback

2.2.1 The Definition of Feedback

As for feedback, Yngve (1970) defines it as a short response of the listener to the speaker in the conversation. Ellis (1985) defines feedback as a response in communication from the perspective of communication. According to the specific performance of students, teachers can respond to the students in class, which can help achieve smooth classroom communication. Bulter & Winne (1995) proposed from the perspective of the function of teacher's feedback in language acquisition that teacher's feedback is discourse information that helps learners adjust, supplement, rewrite, confirm or reconstruct. Penny Ur (1996) also believes that teacher's feedback is the teacher's evaluation of students' performance, but it is

not limited to this. To a greater extent, feedback refers to the information given by teachers on students' performance, which aims to promote students' performance. Du Chaohui and Qi Hua (2007), Chinese scholars, give a more specific definition of teacher's feedback, believing that teacher's feedback is the language in which teachers evaluate and respond to students' classroom performance, including praise or criticism given by teachers after students answer questions, as well as asking others to answer or repeating questions themselves when students do not respond.

To sum up, teacher's feedback is a language response made by teachers to students' classroom performance, and can affect students' learning and teachers' teaching. In essence, teacher's feedback is to ensure the smooth progress and implementation of teaching process and teaching behavior through information exchange between teachers and students. Teachers' feedback is generally divided into written feedback and oral feedback. This study takes teachers' oral feedback as the research object, here referred to as teacher's feedback.

2.2.2 The Classification of Teacher's Feedback

Nunan (1991) divides teacher's feedback into positive feedback and negative feedback. Positive feedback is used to confirm learners' answers or praise their classroom performance, and negative feedback is used to respond to learners' incorrect or inaccurate answers or poor classroom performance. And negative feedback is also called corrective feedback. Lyter & Ranta (1997) specialize in their study of teachers' feedback on students' performance in foreign language classrooms, and divide corrective feedback into six categories: explicit correction, recast, clarification request, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation and repetition.

Lin Zhengjun and Zhou Sha (2011), based on the classification of corrective feedback by Lyter and Ranta, divide teachers' feedback into nine single types and seven mixed types by analyzing and studying the middle school classroom interaction. And in this study, the writer mainly uses this classification (Table 2.2.2.1).

Table 2.2.2.1 Types of Teacher's Feedback

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Types of teacher's feedback | Single type teacher's feedback | Positive feedback |
| | | Explicit correction |
| | | Elicitation |
| | | Metalinguistic feedback |
| | | Clarification request |
| | | Repetition |
| | | Recast |
| | | Expand |
| | | Evaluation |
| | Mixed type teacher's feedback | Positive feedback & Recast |
| | | Positive feedback & Repetition |
| | | Positive feedback & Metalinguistic feedback |
| | | Repetition & Metalinguistic feedback |
| | | Repetition & Evaluation |
| | | Repetition & Expand |

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Research Questions

This research mainly uses the method of conversation analysis to analyze the characteristics of teachers' feedback and the turn-taking between teachers and students in high school English class, with a view to providing suggestions for improving the quality of English teachers' feedback and students' learning.

- (1) What are the characteristics of teachers' feedback in high school English listening and speaking class?
- (2) How do teachers' discourse pattern affect students' turn-taking?

3.2 Research Object

The research object of the study is the video from National High School English Teachers' Basic Teaching Skills Competition, which is about Selected Compulsory Volume I of New Education Press. The teaching content is

Unit two, Looking into the Future, and it is a listening and speaking lesson.

There are two reasons for choosing this course: First, the video of this course is recorded by professional equipment, which can clearly record the video sounds and activities of teachers and students, so as to facilitate the transcription of language materials; Second, this course is evaluated as a quality course, the teacher's teaching level is relatively high, which can provide certain teaching experience for other teachers to improve their teaching ability.

3.3 Research Method

In order to study the characteristics of the use of teachers' feedback in high school English classes, this study focuses on the observation method. However, due to the limitation of objective conditions, the observation in this study is conducted in the form of video observation, and important turns are transcribed from the original video.

For this reason, this study uses the observation method to observe the object teaching video, and record the type, quantity and specific content of teacher's feedback in the classroom, as well as turn-taking situations such as the number of teachers and students' utterances and responses, and record the students' discourse responses to teacher's feedback.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter mainly collates and discusses the observation data of the object class. The analysis of the data focuses on the types of teachers' feedback and the discourse pattern of teachers' turn-taking to explore the use of classroom feedback by teacher of high school English listening and speaking class, and the effect of teachers' discourse pattern on students' turn-taking.

4.1 The Characteristics of High School English Teachers' Feedback

4.1.1 Types of Teachers' Feedback

This study collates the observed teacher's feedback in high school English listening and speaking class. The writer classifies the transcribed high school English teacher's feedback according to the classification of

feedback by Lin Zhengjun and Zhou Sha (2011). See Table 4.1 for the observation results.

Table 4.1 Observations on Types of Teacher's Feedback

| Types of teacher's feedback | Number |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| Single type teacher's feedback | 16 |
| Mixed type teacher's feedback | 9 |

From the statistical results in the table, we can see that the use of single type teacher's feedback is more than that of mixed type teacher's feedback. Therefore, teachers tend to use simple single type teacher's feedback rather than relatively complex one.

In order to better understand the tendency of high school English quality teachers to use different types of feedback, based on the classification of teacher's feedback by Lin Zhengjun and Zhou Sha (2011), this study further collated the data of single type teacher's feedback and mixed type teacher's feedback. The results are shown in Table 4.2 and Table 4.3.

Table 4.2 Observations on the Use of Single Type Teacher's Feedback

| | Types | Number |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--------|
| Single type teacher's feedback | Positive feedback | 11 |
| | Explicit correction | 1 |
| | Elicitation | 0 |
| | Metalinguistic feedback | 0 |
| | Clarification request | 0 |
| | Repetition | 3 |
| | Recast | 0 |
| | Expand | 1 |
| | Evaluation | 0 |

In the single type teacher's feedback, the most frequently used is positive feedback. And in the listening part, the teacher seldom or never uses metalinguistic feedback and elicitation and so on.

The data shows that in most cases, teachers will use simple positive feedback words such as "OK", "Very good", "Great" to confirm and affirm students' answers. Especially in the teaching situation where multiple students answer the same question continuously, teachers use simple positive feedback words to respond to students,

so as to affirm and strengthen learners' excellent performance. For example:

Classroom segment one

T: What is the word for the first picture?
 Ss: Artificial.
 T: Yes.

Classroom segment two

T: Number one, what is Dr Hans' occupation?
 S: He is a computer scientist.
 T: Good!

T: What is Dr Hans' attitude toward intelligent computers?

S: He is confident and optimistic about them.
 T: Yes.

Classroom segment three

T: Am I clear?
 S: Yes.
 T: OK.

In the first two classroom segments, the teacher uses single positive feedback to confirm the students' answer. This simple positive feedback enables them to confirm their own answers. At the same time, teacher's positive feedback will also deepen students' understanding and memory of the correct answers to a certain extent, and strengthen students' enthusiasm for learning.

And in the third segment, the teacher uses this dialogue to check whether his instructions are clear and understandable to all the students or not.

In most cases, teachers choose single positive feedback because the questions they ask are simple and the students have mastered them already. It is unnecessary to use mixed feedback. At the same time, classroom time is also an important reason for teachers to choose single type feedback. Teachers are more inclined to spend more classroom time on knowledge explanation and learning.

Table 4.3 Observations on the Use of Mixed Type Teacher's Feedback

| | Types | Number |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------|
| Mixed type teacher's feedback | Positive feedback & Recast | 5 |
| | Positive feedback & Repetition | 1 |
| | Positive feedback & | 0 |

| | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| | Metalinguistic feedback | |
| | Repetition & Metalinguistic feedback | 0 |
| | Repetition & Evaluation | 2 |
| | Repetition & Expand | 1 |

From the table, we can know that teacher uses positive feedback and recast in teaching process most frequently, and tends to use repetition and evaluation in the teaching process.

Classroom segment four

T: Which pair volunteer to be the first pair to share your interview with all of us. Yes, XX. Please.

S₁-S₂ (role play their group interview)

T: Good job. So one of them want to be an expertise in agriculture, who wants to design, you know, the most advanced way of producing the food. The other one is a designer marking effective cars.

In the above segment, the teacher is very satisfied with students' role play interview, so he responds with positive feedback and repeat mixed feedback, which not only encourages students to answer questions, but also provides excellent demonstration for other students.

Classroom segment five

T: Have you gotten all the answers?
 Ss: No/Ss: Yes.

T: All right. Some said yes and some said no. It's ok. Because we are going to listen it for the fourth time.

In this segment, different students give different responses to teachers' question. So, the teacher first gives positive feedback and then expands to the next learning process, in order to make the students not feel anxious for not filling in the listening blankets.

4.1.2 The Discourse Pattern of Teacher's Turn-taking

After transcribing the video materials of the research object, the writer finds that the most frequently used one in listening and speaking lessen is still the IRF model. Only a few other models will be interspersed in the teaching process.

Classroom segment six

T: What about others? XX

S: I think challenges can transfer into opportunities as

well as opportunities can transfer to challenges. Because I think...If we regard opportunities in a wrong way, another opportunity, it may lead to (a long time pause)

T: A big challenge.

S: into a big challenge, and lead to bad consequences....

T: Oh, yeah. Good, sit down please. I really appreciate your ideas, and I quite agree with your ideas.

In this segment, due to the student's long time pause in his answer process, the teacher help him and elicit more information from the student.

Classroom segment seven

T: So, who is going to read Dr Han's prediction. XX

S: Computers will be clever than humans...

T: Good job. Sit down, please.

T: And who is the next volunteer to read Vincent Black's predictions. XX

S: The sea level will rise by many meters...

T: Very good. Sit down, please.

This observation is also related to the types of teacher's feedback. In the observation of teacher's use of feedback in the classroom, the use of single type teacher's feedback is significantly more than that of mixed type teacher's feedback. Among the nine types of single type teacher's feedback, the proportion of positive feedback is much higher than that of other types of teacher's feedback. However, the discourse pattern of single type teacher's feedback, especially positive feedback, is mostly IRF model, that is, teachers give feedback after students answer questions, thus ending the dialogue between teachers and students.

4.2 The Influence on Students' Turn-taking

Turn-taking is the core issue in conversation analysis. As a pragmatic strategy, it involves many linguistic and non-linguistic factors in the process of teacher-student interaction (Sun Yinghui, 2018). Therefore, teachers' reasonable allocation of turn-taking and control of turn-taking play an important role in the smooth interaction between teachers and students in the classroom teaching process.

First, the unbalanced turn allocation between teachers and students makes teachers still occupy a major position

in classroom interaction. In the process of communication between teachers and students, whether it is a single type teacher's feedback or a mixed type teacher's feedback, teachers mainly control topics. Most of the time, teacher speaks, and students only need to respond, and teacher's turn length is far greater than student's turn length. Second, classroom questions are mainly demonstration questions, and teachers will present the direction of classroom interaction, so students do not need to hold the responsibility of putting forward topics. They often only need to accept the topics designated by teachers and express their ideas on the topics designated by teachers. Third, teachers' feedback is simple and mechanical, and it will weaken learners' interest, restrict students' opportunities to participate in the classroom, and cause students to become passive receivers.

In addition, in the teaching process, teachers usually select the next speaker by selecting volunteers, which will create a situation that a few students not participate in classroom turn-taking during the class. And when students have knowledge errors or incomplete answers, some teachers will use insertion to obtain turns, so as to correct and improve them in time.

V. CONCLUSION

From the perspective of conversation analysis, this study aims to explore the characteristics of the use of teacher's feedback in high school English listening and speaking class and the influence of teacher's discourse pattern on students, so as to put forward suggestions for high school English teachers on the use of feedback and promote the development of English teaching.

5.1 Major Findings

By discussing the classroom observation materials, with the help of classroom segments, the classroom observation materials are analyzed and discussed around two research questions. Through the analysis, it is found that teacher tends to use single feedback, especially simple positive feedback. When facing students' mistakes, teachers tend to use direct correction to make sure the whole class is smooth. The teachers' discourse pattern is mainly IRF mode, that is, teacher initiates, student

responds, and then teacher gives feedback. At the same time, different types of discourse pattern used by teachers in classroom practice have different effects on students' turn-taking. From the classroom video observation, due to teachers always use IRF model in the class, it is concluded that the class is mostly dominated by teachers, and students only need to answer teacher's questions and do not need to open a new topic. And in the class, students have a little opportunity to speak, and not all the students participate in the classroom interaction.

5.2 Limitations and Implications

Due to the limitations of researchers' time and academic level, this study inevitably has some shortcomings. For example, due to the limited conditions, this study observes recorded videos, and the number of observed course videos is small, so the conclusions may not be of great universal significance.

From the above analysis, it is known that turn-taking is a key factor in promoting classroom interaction. Therefore, teachers and students should bear in mind the relationship between turn-taking and interaction. From the aspect of teachers, teacher should improve the questioning skills and make all the students participate in the classroom interaction. And teachers can change roles to become helper and organizer and give students more opportunities to speak English. As for students, they should overcome emotional disorders in the turn-taking process. In the interaction, students' fear of making mistakes will interfere with their performance. In fact, making mistakes is good opportunities for students. It enables learners to gain intelligible input in conversations with teachers and peers. Therefore, making mistakes in this sense is a potential learning opportunity.

The improvement of students' language ability requires the joint efforts of teachers and students. Teachers should pay attention to increasing the input of effective teacher talk, give full play to the indispensable role of teacher talk, and mobilize the enthusiasm of teaching and learning. At the same time, students should also take the initiative to input and output their knowledge with high quality. Therefore, the appropriate use of turn-taking in classroom can not only improve classroom interaction, but

also improve students' classroom participation and learning effect.

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