

Teachers' Classroom Interactional Competence: An Analysis in Micro-Contexts of Teacher-Class Interaction

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ABSTRACT: *Creating learning opportunities depends to a greater extent on classroom interaction, in which learning is maximised when teachers demonstrate classroom interactional competence (CIC). This article investigates how EFL Algerian teachers manifest CIC in the co-construction of talk-in-interaction. It addresses three core objectives: firstly, it examines teachers' use of mode-convergent language. Secondly, it analyses the interactional resources deployed by teachers to manage creating interactional space. Finally, it identifies the ways teachers shape their learners' contributions. A qualitative research was adopted, and the data were collected through the use of video-recording and field notes at a private language institute in Sétif, Algeria. The findings revealed that teachers manifested CIC in different classroom micro-contexts but failed, in many occasions, to use mode-convergent language and to provide interactional space in the "Classroom Context" mode. To shape learners' contributions, the findings uncovered the use of a range of interactional resources. However, differing from previous studies, the findings unveiled the use of humour as a resource that stimulated students' further engagement in the discourse. Implications to teacher education are discussed as well.*

KEYWORDS: Classroom Interactional Competence, Classroom Interaction, Teacher Talk, Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk, Conversation Analysis.

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1. Introduction

The ultimate goal of learning a language is to use it in communication, and interaction is the key to reaching that goal (e.g; VanLier, 1996; Seedhouse, 2005; Sert, 2015; Walsh, 2006, 2011). In the EFL classroom, interaction has received much attention in recent years, considered as a social process in which learning occurs (Ellis, 2000; Seedhouse, 2004; Walsh, 2006, 2011). According to Ellis (2000, p. 209) "learning arises not *through* interaction, but *in* interaction". Under this view, learning is considered as a social process in which teachers and learners jointly construct meaning. Classrooms are social contexts made up of a series of micro-contexts created through the interaction that takes place between participants (Walsh, 2011). The teacher, under this perspective, plays a central role in creating and managing the interaction. In the classroom, when teachers interact with their learners, suitable and appropriate teacher talk (TT) is required. TT plays a central role in managing classroom interaction (CI) since language is both the medium and the object of instruction (Long, 1983). Learning is enhanced when there is an understanding of the relationship between TT, interaction, and learning opportunity (Walsh, 2006). According to Walsh (2002), teachers, through their talk-in-interaction, can facilitate or hinder learning opportunities. Therefore, developing an understanding of CI and how interaction is managed would enhance learning potential (Walsh, 2006, 2011, 2012; Sert, 2015). By making effective instant interactive decisions and deploying appropriate interactional strategies convergent to the pedagogical goal of the moment, teachers would demonstrate what Walsh (2006, 2011) coined Classroom Interactional Competence (CIC). Walsh defined it as "teachers and learners' ability to use interaction as a tool for mediating and assisting learning"(p.158). CIC focuses on the ways in which teachers and learners' instant interactive-decisions and subsequent actions improve the learning outcomes. Any evidence of CIC must demonstrate that teachers are using TT which is both appropriate to specific pedagogic goals and the agenda of the lesson and adopting specific interactional features to create interactional space and shape learners' contributions. Consequently, developing an understanding of CIC can lead to maximise opportunities for interaction and learning (Walsh, 2011; Sert, 2015).

CIC has gained much attention recently. The research has gone beyond analysing TT and CI to researching CIC (Escobar Urmeneta &Walsh, 2017; Supakorn, 2020; Walsh, 2011, 2012), or shedding light on one of its features (Cancino, 2017; Can Daskin, 2015; Girgin& Bradt, 2019; Yataganbaba & Yildirim, 2016). However, in the Algerian context, there have been very limited endeavours to investigate CIC, notwithstanding its significant importance. For example, Dine& Menezla (2019) attempted to describe broadly teachers' CIC in relation to attitudes and practices, utilizing classroom observation and interviews. The current study expands on the previous one in an attempt to provide an in-depth analysis of the three main features that constitute CIC, using natural-occurring teacher-class interaction as the main data for analysis. Therefore, in order to investigate the ways EFL Algerian teachers demonstrate CIC, the study addresses the following research questions:

- 1- To what extent do teachers use mode- convergent language?
- 2- What interactional features do teachers deploy in order to provide interactional space for students?
- 3- In what ways do teachers shape their students' contributions in the classroom?

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Nature of Classroom Interaction

For many researchers (Ellis, 1998; Seedhouse, 2004; Sert, 2015; VanLier, 1996; Walsh, 2006, 2011, 2012), in the field of education, the first concept to understand is CI. Ellis (1998) explains that CI in this field is a set of communicative events, which are co-constructed by teachers and learners to form a

context with the objective of promoting opportunities for learning. According to Allwright and Bailey (1991), CI, especially teacher-learners interaction, is crucial to learning and teaching because it provides input, intake, and output opportunities. Hence, the success of a pedagogical activity is highly dependent on the construction of communication between the teacher and learners. Concepts of "construction", "opportunities or potentials for learning" are derived from socio-cultural theories in which social interaction is fundamental in the development of cognition (Lantolf, 2000). In the classroom, it refers to the ways in which teachers and learners collectively construct meaning in interaction (Walsh, 2011). This entails the study of language or talk-in-interaction since everything that occurs in the classroom requires the use of language (Long, 1983). The study of talk-in-interaction focuses on the systematic description and explication of the moment-by-moment, turn-by-turn unfolding of social interactions. Under this view, CI refers to the teacher and learners' construction of meaning and knowledge through and in the talk-in-interaction (Sert, 2015). Hence, in order to manage CI, it is important for teachers to understand the dynamics of classroom discourse in order to demonstrate CIC.

2.2. Classroom Interactional Competence and its Features

CIC draws heavily on interaction competence theories (e.g. Kramesh, 1986; McCarthy, 2005). Interaction competence is concerned with the ways in which interactants construct meaning together as opposed to looking at features of individual performances. In this respect, CIC refers to teachers and learners ability to jointly construct discourse conducive to learning (Walsh, 2011). Placing interaction at the centre of teaching and learning, CIC focuses on teachers' ability to create learning opportunities through deploying constructive TT and making good interactive decisions. That is to say, CIC is centrally related to the good management of the dynamics of talk-in-interaction. Three major features of CIC are discussed in this study: the use of Mode-Convergent language, creating interactional space, and shaping learners' contributions.

2.2.1. The use of Mode –Convergent Language

Mode convergent TT or language refers to the alignment of language use with the pedagogical purpose at a given moment in a lesson. English as a foreign language classrooms consist of series of "micro-contexts" or "modes". Each mode encompasses specific interactional features and a pedagogical goal. Teachers facilitate learning opportunities and, therefore, manifest CIC when the pedagogical goal is aligned with the interactional features of TT in a particular mode and vice versa. Walsh (2006) identifies four classroom modes: managerial, materials, skills and systems, and context mode, with distinctive interactional features and pedagogical goals. Classroom modes are illustrated in Table 1.

2.2.2. Creating Interactional Space

Learners need space to learn and express themselves in the discourse. Teachers demonstrate CIC when they are able to create interactional space to learners. This could be achieved through the deployment of interactional features like:

- Lengthening wait-time: It is a constructive TT feature that the teacher can use to create learning opportunities. To many researchers (e.g. Walsh, 2002; Thornbury, 1996; Yaqubi and Rokni, 2012), extended wait-time increases the quantity and the quality of learners' contributions.
- Reduced teacher echo: As teacher echo can have a positive value- to amplify a learner's contribution so that other learners can hear, it can be an obstructive TT feature if it is used excessively and with no clear pedagogical goal (Walsh, 2002)

- Extending learners turns: Teachers can extend their learners' turns through clarification requests. By not always accepting learners' first contributions, teachers can encourage learners to be engaged further in the discourse by asking them to clarify their answers (e.g. How?, why?...) (Rymes, 2008, Walsh, 2002). In addition, teachers can extend their learners turns through the use of confirmation checks and backchannels. The latter, keep the channel open for further participation and hence creating space for learning (Girgin and Brandt, 2019).

However, features like teacher's interruptions and turn completion can close the interactional space. To Walsh (2002), they are obstructive TT features that hinder learning opportunities. In the same vein, Yataganbaba & Yildirim (2016) show that teacher's interruptions and limited wait-time did not provide interactional space for learners.

2.2.3. Shaping Learners' Contributions

It is teachers' ability to shape learners' contributions in the feedback move. Rather than simply providing an evaluative comment for learners response (e.g. "very good") which might close down an interaction (Rymes, 2008), more "subtle types of shaping" should be used by teachers to help learners learn from interaction (Walsh, 2011). These strategies include:

- Seeking for clarifications.
- Scaffolding: Derived from socio-cultural theories, scaffolding is a metaphor for the particular kinds of assistance that enable learners to successfully carry out a task that, alone, they would not be able to complete (Gibbons, 2007). Scaffolding can be performed through: feeding in input when learners struggle with the language; reformulation; extension, modelling.

Studies that have been conducted to investigate the ways teachers shape their learners' contributions (Can Daskin, 2015; Cancino, 2017; Escobar Urmeneta & Walsh, 2017; Supakorn, 2020) reveal that teachers in different contexts use the same strategies suggested by Walsh (2011). However, Can Daskin points out that different strategies have been detected in different classroom modes and that teachers can shape their learners' contributions through the use of L1 and the board.

2.3. Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk

Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk (SETT) framework stresses the interrelatedness of language use and pedagogical purpose. It consists of four modes and fourteen interactional features. Walsh (2006) points out that this framework permits teachers to gain a detailed profile of their CI when they combine analysis of the kinds of micro-contexts being used in their classes and assess the appropriacy of the interactional features being deployed in those modes. As such, they could make modifications that would improve creating learning potentials. SETT framework is illustrated in the table below:

Modes	Pedagogical Goals	Interactional Features
Managerial	To transmit information To organise the physical learning environment To refer learners to materials To introduce or conclude an activity To change from one mode of learning to another.	A single, extended teacher turn that uses explanations and/or instructions The use of transitional markers The use of confirmation checks An absence of learner contributions
Materials	To provide language practice around a piece of material To elicit responses in relation to the material To check and display answers To clarify when necessary To evaluate contributions	Predominance of IRF pattern Extensive use of display questions Form-focused feedback Corrective repair The use of scaffolding
Skills and Systems	To enable learners to produce correct forms To enable learners to manipulate the target language To provide corrective feedback To provide learners with practice in sub-skills To display correct answers	The use of direct repair The use of scaffolding Extended teacher turns Display questions Teacher echo Clarification requests Form-focused feedback
Classroom Context	To enable learners to express themselves clearly To establish a context To promote oral fluency	Extended learner turns Short teacher turns Minimal repair Content feedback Referential questions Scaffolding Clarification requests

Table 1 SETT Framework/ Classroom Modes (Walsh, 2006, p.94)

To summarise this section, CIC places interaction at the core of learning, with a central focus on the effective ways interactions are co-constructed. That is to say, CIC embodies the successful interactional choices teachers make through instant interactive decisions; both facilitate the co-construction of

discourse and the creation of learning opportunities. Hence, enhancing understanding of CIC and the ways teachers manage interactions is crucial to improving learning (Walsh, 2011) and could be achieved through an in-depth analysis of micro-contexts of CI. Consequently, many studies in different teaching contexts have attempted to analyse teachers' talk-in-interaction in order to characterize teachers' CIC: for instance, in Spain (Escobar Urmeneta & Walsh, 2017), in Turkey (Can Daskin, 2015, Girgin & Bradt, 2019), and in Thailand (Supakorn, 2020). However, in the Algerian context, relevant studies are scant and CIC is under-researched, indicating a gap between theory (significance of CIC) and empirical research on Algerian teachers' CIC. Thus, this study attempts to bridge the gap to provide a fine-grained analysis of the ways Algerian teachers demonstrate CIC and their impact on learners' involvements, with a view to increasing teachers' interactional awareness and improving their practices in the classroom.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Context and Participants

The research was conducted at a private language institute in Sétif, Algeria, which provides courses in teaching English and other foreign languages. Three intermediate classes participated in the study. The teachers were all females, aged between 25 and 36, with a teaching experience ranging from five to seven years. As for learners, they were adults, seeking to advance their English proficiency. Their number was 9 to 12 students in each class. Many reasons lie behind the choice of the research context and participants. Since it is a private language institute, both students and teachers are expected to be highly motivated in the learning and teaching process, and they are, therefore, more likely to willingly participate and be involved in CI. The context of teaching is rich as teachers focus on all four skills in addition to teaching grammar and vocabulary. As a result, different classroom micro-contexts and a range of interactional features are likely to be detected. Furthermore, teaching in small classes with only 9 to 12 students permits the teacher to set activities that aim to promote oral fluency. Therefore, the micro-context of "Classroom Context" could be detected in the interaction; as such, a rich analysis of CI could be provided. Regarding the selection of teachers, only those who accepted their classes to be recorded were selected.

3.2 Data Collection

The data were collected through video recording of CI and field notes. The classes were video recorded for six hours, two hours for each. The use of video-recording helped the researcher obtain more detailed and precise data about CI. Video-recordings allow making a "permanent record" of the spoken language data. The researcher can play and replay the videotapes to go back to certain points of teacher-class interaction that she is unsure of. Thus, the transcription can be more accurate and reliable (Swann, 1994, cited in Cullen, 1996). The recorded data were, then, transcribed manually using transcription conventions adopted from Walsh (2006) (Appendix 1). Six extracts that were representative of the collection were selected for analysis. The selection was based on extracts representing teacher-class interaction, extracts portraying instances of each feature of CIC, and extracts that include as many interactional features as could be in one classroom micro-context.

Video-recorded data were enclosed with field notes taken during classroom observation sessions. In qualitative research, field notes are widely recommended as a means of documenting valuable contextual data (Creswell, 2013). When field notes are accompanied with other tools, they permit the transmission of the full depth of the research context (Lauderdale & Phillippi, 2018). In this study, field notes were used to enhance data and provide a rich context for analysis. Contextual information, which the video could not capture, was documented including teachers' lesson plans, teaching aids and materials, and the researcher's reflective comments.

3.3 Data Analysis

In order to analyse video-recorded data, Conversation Analysis (CA) methodology and SETT were implemented. CA uses recordings of natural-occurring interactions as the primary source of analysis (Seedhouse, 2005). It examines the ways talk-in-interaction is constructed by participants, with a central focus on how sequences of action are generated when participants understand and respond to one another in their turns (Hutchby & Woofit, 1998). In this study, CA was utilized to analyse naturally-occurring teacher-class interaction. That is to say, it was implemented to examine how talk-in-interaction was co-constructed by teachers and learners and the ways it affected the flow of interaction and the creation of learning opportunities. In the words of aus der Wieschen (2015), "classroom discourse is talk-in-interaction, and only a fine-grained method like CA can unveil just how social this interaction is, by closely examining the very detail of talk" (p.103). CA was applied to the data to determine how teachers, through the interactional features they employed, managed to use mode-convergent TT, to provide interactional space to learners, and to shape their learners' contributions.

Along with CA, SETT was implemented to analyse the data. Relating pedagogic purpose to language use, this tool helps to understand what constitutes appropriate TT (Walsh, 2006). In order to answer the first research question, SETT Framework was utilized to examine the appropriateness of teachers' interactional features in relation to the mode and the pedagogical purpose being performed.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

In order to answer the three research questions, the six extracts were analysed in relation to teachers' using mode-convergent language, providing interactional space, and shaping students' contributions. The analysis yielded the following results:

4.1.1. Using Mode-Convergent Language

In extract 1, the teacher was working with ten students on a speaking activity around describing iconic people, objects, and places. The students were seated in a horseshoe arrangement, discussing the most famous living person they admire.

Extract 1: Mode-Convergent TT

- 1 T: who is the famous living person you admire? (2) **(pointing to L1)**
- 2 L1: Lele Pons.
- 3 T: = I'm sorry?
- 4 L1: Lele Pons
- 5 T: ok (.)
- 6 L1: yes. she has 37.8 I think million[followers
- 7 T: [followers!?
- 8 L1: yeah(.) on Instagram
- 9 T: oh! do they get paid? are they paid? **(laughter)**
- 10 just wanna ask you **(laughter)**
- 11 LL: yeah=
- 12 T: =How much? I just wanna know(.) how much? **(laughter)**

- 13 LL: **(laughter)**
- 14 L2: a lot=
- 15 L3: = in youtube channel they paid a lot=
- 16 L1: = yeah a lot just by putting their photos
- 17 T: I see (.) if I put a lesson I'm gonna be followed by millions **(smiling)**
- 18 LL: yes yes **(smiling)**
- 19 L5: we will follow you **(smiling)**
- 20 T: aha(.) yes(.) Lele Pons? **(Looking at L1)**
- 21 L2: Lele Pons
- 22 T: What does she do?=
23 L1: =she's comedian
- 24 T: Ah! All right (2)?
- 25 L2: as she has lot of followers she has lot of haters
- 26 T: Haters?
- 27 L2: yes yes (1)
- 28 T: ok (2) ? **(the teacher nods her head)**
- 29 L2: but she doesn't care (3) and she start from zero

In this extract, the teacher initiated the discourse by asking a referential question in line 1. The student responded, in line 2, naming the living famous person she admired. The teacher requested clarification as she did not recognise this person, in line 3. The learner responded, repeating the name in line 4. The teacher used a confirmation check and a backchannel "ok" to signal that the message was understood and to invite L1 to carry on with her contribution. As a result, L1 extended her turn, in line 6, which overlapped with the teacher turn in line 7. Such overlapped turns did not disrupt the flow of discourse since they occurred in natural conversations. In lines (6-8), the meaning was being negotiated as the teacher asked for confirmation that extended L1 turn in line 8. In the following line, the L1 response received content feedback from the teacher- through the use of the interjection "oh" - followed by a series of referential questions in lines (9, 10, and 12). Consequently, many students were involved in the discourse in lines (11, 13, 14, 15, and 16). The interaction was no longer controlled by the "initiation - response-feedback" exchange, and only in line 17 did the teacher hold the floor, providing content feedback. In line 20, the teacher came back to the topic of discussion about Lele Pons through the use of discourse markers "aha", "yes". She kept extending L1 turn through using confirmation checks (lines 20, 24), seeking clarification (line 22) and extending wait-time in lines (24, 28, 29)

Throughout this extract, the operating mode is the Classroom Context mode as the teacher's pedagogical goal at the moment was to elicit students' opinions and feelings. The teacher matched the pedagogical goal to the mode being performed through the interactional features she employed:

- The use of referential questions in lines (1, 9, 12, 22) matched the mode.
- The use of content feedback in lines (5, 9, 12, 17, 24, 28) helps the interaction to flow smoothly.
- Extended learner turns: each time the teacher extends L1 turns through the use of backchannels in lines (5, 20, 24, 28), seeking clarification in lines (3, 7, 9, 20, 22, 26).

- Extending wait-time in lines (1, 24, 28, 29) provides interactional space for L1 to construct his contributions and further engage in the discourse. That was evident in the teacher resisting the temptation of completing L1 turns after pauses in the interaction in line (29)

- The absence of repair: the teacher did not correct errors which was appropriate to the teacher's pedagogical purpose in this micro-context of interaction.

The teacher manages the flow of interaction effectively which resembles a natural conversation, creating learning opportunities.

In extract 2, the teacher distributed cards that contained questions about natural disasters to learners and asked them to select a classmate and answer each other questions. She gave them five minutes to brainstorm ideas before they started speaking. Her goal was to elicit students' opinions and experiences about natural disasters.

Extract 2: Mode-Divergent TT

- 1 L1: How can we help victims through natural disasters?=
(L1 mispronounced
natural as neutral)
- 2 T: = I repeat for the LAST time(.) we do not say neutral we say natural disasters
- 3 L2: we should help people with food, clothes and]
- 4 T: [so you started with food.
- 5 L2: yes (laugh)
- 6 T: you order priorities
- 7 Do you think that a person with a broken leg is going to be in urgent
need for food?
- 8 L2: no=
- 9 T: = of course(.) he needs first?
- 10 L2: medicine.
- 11 T: before medicine he needs(.) his life to be saved (.) because
- 12 in case he is in danger(.) so?
- 13 so the first priority is? (2)
- 14 to save lives. to remove danger.
- 15 then? (.) what to do?(2)
- 16 to help?
- 17 L2: injuries
- 18 T: then? to give them?
- 19 L2: water
- 20 T: no water(.) before we give them water we give them?
- 21 L2: medicines
- 22 T: we give them blood(.) in case they need blood then we think of food and

- 23 I think shelter comes before food. What do you think?
24 so we need to evacuate them in a safe place then we think of giving them
25 food because it is going to be the last of priorities
26 yes, please (pointing to L2 to carry on)
27 L2: er(3) and (.) and (.) we should take care of children who are victims and
look for their parents
28 T: very good. we should gather families.

In this extract, the teacher's pedagogical aim was to promote oral fluency. However, the interactional resources she deployed suggested "Materials" or "Skills and Systems" mode rather than "Classroom Context" one. The interactional features characterised this micro-context of interaction are:

- Extended teacher turns in lines (11-16, 22-26)
- Excessive use of display questions in lines (9, 11, 12,13,15,16, 18, 20)
- The teacher answering his own questions in lines (11, 14, 22)
- Teacher' interruptions from line3 until line 26.
- Evaluative feedback "very good" in line 28.

Throughout this extract, the teacher mismatched language use with the pedagogical goal at that moment. Therefore, she impeded interaction and obstructed learning opportunities. The extended teacher turns implied that the learner was completely excluded from the discourse. The teacher interrupted her learner to carry on with his contribution right from the beginning of interaction (line 3), and it was only until the end (line 27) did she give back the floor to L2 to finish his contribution initiated in line 2. After many pauses, L2 was able to finish his turn in line 28. The excessive use of display questions, on the other hand, disrupted the flow of discourse in which L2 was lost in "guess what I'm thinking" questions. The learner failed each time to guess the correct answer to the teacher' questions that were answered by the teacher herself at the end of the exchange in line (24). The teacher closed the discourse with evaluative feedback that did not match the pedagogical goal of stating opinions.

4.1.2. Providing Interactional Space

In extract3, after a quick recap about social skills, starting a conversation, and breaking the ice with a stranger, the teacher selected two students for a role-play, in which they acted out as new students meeting for the first time. The teacher aimed to promote fluency as she wanted learners to hold the conversation as long as they could.

Extract3: Creating Interactional space

- 1 T: you want to hold the conversation and don't wanna end it ok ok aha(.) keep the
Conversation going (.) it has to be going(.) so what you say (1)?
2 L1: how are you doing today?
3 L2: I'm good thank you for asking(.) and you?
4 L1: I'm fine thanks(.) so this is the first time here as us.
5 L2: yes I'm new here too
6 T: (3) aha(2) keep the conversation going. It has to be going so what do you say? (1)

- 7 L1: what are you study or er(.) you are worked (.) er no what did you(2) no
I want to say why you chose to to study English?
- 8 L2: Because I need English in my job
- 9 L1: AH (.) ok for me I need it in my study university I want to enhance or (1)
- 10 T: improve
- 11 L1: improve my English
- 12 T: ok?
- 13 L2: me too I want to improve my English.
- 14 L1: so we in common
- 15 T: we have something in common alright aha?
- 16 L1: yeah so are you live in front of er (1) no near(.) er(1)
- 17 T: I'm not going to correct you lady(.) just speak spontaneously. Alright I want you
To hold the conversation for so long
- 18 L1: are you live nearby or you are far from this school?

In this extract, the teacher managed effectively learner-learner interaction. The decisions she made to intervene or withdraw were successful in providing interactional space and facilitating learners' involvement. The teacher did not intervene until turn 6 to extend the conversation that was closed down by learners (in line 5) through the use of backchannels "aha", an elaboration question, and extended wait time in the beginning and the end of his turn. The teacher intervened again, in line 10, to scaffold by feeding in the word "improve" to enable L1 to carry on with her contribution. In line 12, she used a backchannel "ok" to denote that the message was understood and as an invitation to the learner to extend her turn. The use of backchannels allowed interaction to flow smoothly, preventing breakdowns from occurring and extended learners' contributions as a feedback to carry on in the discourse (Walsh, 2011). After avoiding correcting many errors, the teacher decided to intervene now when the message was not clear and corrected an error by deploying a direct repair strategy and again backchannels. Direct repair is less intrusive and time-consuming, allowing the discourse to flow with minimal interruptions (Walsh, 2011). In turn 16, L1 was struggling with the grammatical form, intending to provide the correct answer. The teacher intervened for the last time to state explicitly that errors were not to be corrected and that focus would be on the content rather than on the form to push her further in the discourse. That resulted in extending the turns of the learners who were at ease and spontaneous during the conversation. According to Walsh (2011), when learners know their errors would not be corrected, they are likely to be involved and that would result in more engagement in the discourse. On the other hand, in turn 5, the teacher resisted the temptation to complete the learner turn when she was struggling with the form and idea. The teacher made an interactive decision to withdraw and provided space for the learner to complete her turn herself. Consequently, the learner was able to articulate her idea and carried on in the discourse.

In this context, language use is aligned with the pedagogical purpose and interactional space is created to learners through the use of following interactional features:

- Extending learner turns in lines (17,7)
- The use of backchannels in lines (6, 12, 15) and seeking for clarification in line 6
- Minimal repair only in line 15 despite the many errors committed by learners.
- No interruptions, indicated in the absence of overlapped turns.

- Extended wait-time in line 6 and implicitly in line 7.

In extract 4, the teacher is discussing the topic of “natural disasters” with her students. Her aim was to promote fluency.

Extract4: Minimising Interactional Space

- 1 T: What natural disasters could happen where you live?
- 2 L: It can be (.) er (.) happen earthquake in our environment
- 3 T: repeat please (.) your answer is not correct
- 4 L: In our environment(.) it can happen(.)earthquake
- 5 T: Let's say(.) the frequent natural disasters in my area include(.)
- 6 T: earthquakes. It caused by]
- 7 T: [which are caused
- 8 L: yeah, which caused
- 9 T: which are caused
- 10 L: which are caused by high temperature and]
- 11 T: [yes **(writing on the board the word “drought” +**
- 12 is that what you need? **(pointing to the learner)**
- 13 T: do you know what is that? **(addressing the whole class and pointing at the**
word “dought”)
- 14 LL: جفاف **(drought in arabic)**
- 15 T : not in Arabic
- 16 So we have two opposed disasters. One of them is caused by the large amount
- 17 Of rain and snow
- 18 which is? **(writing the word “flood” on the board)**
- 19 LL: flood
- 20 T: flood(.) the other one is the opposite(.)is composed by dry weather
- 21 dry weather(.)
- 22 Drought(.) and a lot of rain and snow is flood(.) ok
- 23 we have drought and flood ok?
- 24 yes please(.) what about earthquake you said?
- 25 L: yeah(3) it may happened as a result]
- 26 T: [it may happened is not correct. This is not English.

In this extract, the teacher aimed to promote fluency. However, the interactive decisions she made and the interactional resources she employed did not match her aim. Consequently, she impeded the flow of discourse and hindered learning opportunities. That was evident in the little or no interactional space she provided for learners. The learner hardly articulated a sentence. The teacher interrupted, asking the learner to correct his mistake when a direct repair could be an effective strategy to keep the flow of

discourse in line 3. In lines (7, 9) the teacher kept interrupting to correct the learner's mistakes, preventing him to finish his contribution. Again, the teacher interrupted (in line 12) and switched to the mode "Systems and Skills" using the board to explain the words "drought" and "flood" in lines (17-20). That impacted providing interactional space to the learner whose involvement was almost absent in lines (10-24). Excessive teacher echo characterised interaction in lines (21-23) and minimised the interactional space of learners because it did not serve any pedagogical purpose. In line 24, the teacher gave the floor back to the students. The learner paused for three seconds and started to reformulate his sentence only to be interrupted again by the teacher to denote a mistake in line 25.

In this extract, the interactional features used are:

- interruptions in lines (3,5,7,9, 12-24)
- excessive repair in lines (3,5,7,9,25)
- excessive teacher echo in lines (21-23)

The teacher's choice to deploy those interactional features closed down interactional space to a great extent, preventing the learner to finish his turns (only one sentence).

4.1.3. Shaping Learners' Contributions

In extract 5, the students are listening to a folklore song called "the Harvest Song" which depicts British culture. While listening, the teacher is asking them to compare the Algerian culture to the British one in relation to the song.

Extract 5:

- 1 T: so are we similar to them in some points(.)
- 2 if we compare our culture to theirs? not talking about nowadays I mean (.)in the past. are we similar?did we share the same type of work? I'm not talking about you at least your grandmother.
- 3 LL: yes yes
- 4 Rami: yes
- 5 T: yes how? Rami?
- 6 L1: my grandmother tell me story about that
- 7 T: what she told you?
- 8 L1: That err (2) er(3) she was er(2)
- 9 T: helping
- 10 L1: helping her husband
- 11 T: yes(.) she was helping him with what?
- 12 L1: er(.) in animals
- 13 T: raising animals (.) aha.

In this extract, the teacher initiated the interaction through a display question and the use of teacher echo in line 1. The learner responded with a very short answer "yes", confirming the teacher's question in line 4. In line 5, the teacher chose not to close the exchange but rather extend the learner turn by seeking clarification "how". Consequently, the learner elaborated his contribution in line 6. For a second time, the

teacher was not satisfied with his response and sought clarification by asking a referential question in line 7. The student was struggling in the discourse, indicated by the many pauses in his turn in line 7. As a result, the teacher made an interactive decision to intervene in the discourse to feed in the verb "help" to prevent the breakdown in interaction, and consequently, the learner was able to finish his contribution. The teacher kept engaging L1 in the discourse through another clarification request that created another L1 response in lines (11, 12). The teacher recast the learner's response, providing a better version, in line 13.

Throughout this extract, the teacher did not close the exchange in the feedback move but rather extended it. By not accepting the learner's first contribution, the teacher increased the learner's involvement and created learning opportunities through the use of the following interactional resources:

- Seeking clarifications in lines (5, 7, 11)
- Scaffolding in line 8
- Recast in line 12

In extract 6, the teacher is explaining a grammar point related to "defining and non-defining clauses". To check comprehension, the teacher was asking her learners to provide examples about defining clauses.

Extract 6:

- 1 L1: the teacher who wears red costume is my uncle
- 2 T: the teacher who is wearing
- 3 L1: the teacher who is wearing red costume is my uncle.
- 4 T: aha(.) red suit
- 5 L1: yeah
- 6 T: the teacher who is wearing red suit is my uncle (**writing it on the board**)

In this extract, the operating micro-context is "Systems and Skills" mode, and the teacher's pedagogical goal is eliciting examples about defining clauses in order to check learners' comprehension. The pedagogical goal is in tune with the language being used. The interaction is characterised by Initiation- Response-Feedback exchange and repair. The teacher corrected a grammatical error (line3) and a language transfer error (from French) in line 5. In line 7, the teacher rephrased the learner's response (line 3) and wrote it on the board to be analysed. Therefore, the teacher shapes the learner's contribution through modelling in lines (3, 5), rephrasing and using the board in line 6.

- Humour as a Strategy to Shape Learners' Contributions

A re-examination of the previous extract (1) revealed that the teacher used "humour" as a resource to shape her students' contributions. That was evident in lines (9, 10, and 12) when she sought clarification through the use of referential questions in a funny way. That led to the rapid involvement of other students in the discourse in lines (13, 14, 15, 16), which was indicated by latched turns. Shaping learners' contribution with humour reduced the affective factors aroused in speaking, stimulating learners to be engaged further in the discourse.

4.2. Discussion

Regarding teachers' use of mode-convergent language, the finding revealed that teachers manifested CIC when they matched the pedagogical goal and language use to the mode being performed. Showing evidence of this competence facilitated learners' involvement, provided interactional space, and created opportunities for learning. That was evident in extract 1, in which the teacher managed the flow of interaction effectively. The teacher's questions were all referential. The use of more referential questions has been suggested as one way to make classes more communicative (Thornbury, 1996; Clifton, 2006; Walsh, 2002). When asking referential questions, the teacher always provided Content Feedback, which matched this type of questions. According to Thornbury (1996) and Walsh (2002), content feedback is more conducive to genuine communication and is likely to promote learners' involvement. Regarding learner turns, they were extended through the use of clarification requests and confirmation checks. This entails that meaning has been negotiated and interactional space for extended students' output has been provided (Gibbons, 2007; Walsh, 2011). Repair was absent which indicates interactional awareness from the teacher of ignoring correcting errors in this micro-context. Consequently, the teacher, in this mode succeeded in creating learning opportunities and showed evidence of CIC. However, when teachers used mode-divergent TT, they did not demonstrate CIC. In extract 2, the teacher failed to align her language use to the pedagogical goal of the moment. As a result, she hindered opportunity for learning and did not manifest CIC. The findings go in line with those of Walsh (2011, 2012), Escobar Urmeneta & Walsh (2017), and Sapukorn (2020) in the use of language that is mode -convergent.

However, unlike those previous studies, the study uncovered a significant finding that could contribute to the literature that the use of Mode-Convergent TT was a challenge only in the "Classroom Context" mode. Teachers succeeded most of the time in aligning their pedagogical goal to language use in the "Managerial", "Materials", and "Skills and Systems" modes but failed in many occasions in the "Classroom Context" one. This could be due to the influence of teachers' beliefs regarding language and how it is taught on their instant interactive-decisions, where the concern was to enhance linguistic competence rather than enhancing the interactional or communicative one.

The findings revealed as well that teachers showed evidence of CIC when they managed to provide interactional space. This was achieved through the employment of particular interactional features that were aligned with their pedagogical goals and the mode being performed. These features included: extended wait-time, the use of backchannels, seeking for clarifications, minimal repair and extending learners' contributions. Employing such interactional resources helped learners to participate in the discourse and contribute to classroom conversation, which are similar to the findings of Walsh (2011, 2012), Escobar Urmeneta & Walsh (2017), and Sapukorn (2020). Lengthening wait-time was a constructive TT that created interactional space for learners to formulate contributions. For many researchers (Walsh, 2002; Thornbury, 1996; Yakubi and Rokni, 2012), extended wait-time can result in an increase in the quantity and the quality of learners' contributions. In extract 3, the teacher's instant decision to withdraw from the discourse and provide time so that the student reformulated his contribution showed sign of CIC. This entails that the teacher resisted the temptation to complete the student's turn and to have a flawless interaction (Walsh, 2011). Hence, this is in line with Walsh's arguments (2011) that good interactive decisions lie at the heart of CIC. In addition, the use of backchannels allowed interaction to flow smoothly, preventing breakdowns from occurring and extended learners' contributions as a feedback to carry on in the discourse. The results conforms with Girgin and Bradt's(2019) on the importance of backchannels in creating interactional space for learning. On the other hand, interactional features like: excessive teacher echo, interruptions, and excessive repair impeded interaction, providing little interactional space for learners and showing no evidence of CIC. In extract 4, teacher echo did not serve any pedagogical purpose, just used to "fill in silence"(Walsh, 2011). In addition, the teacher did not align her error correction strategy with the mode being performed. Hence,

teacher interruptions dominated the discourse and learning potentials were missed. Such findings are similar with Walsh's (2011, 2012) regarding the use of mode-convergent language and those of Yataganbaba & Yildirim (2016) on the impact of teachers' interruption on creating interactional space.

To shape learners' contributions, the findings revealed that teachers deployed a range of resources in relation to different modes. The teachers used reformulation, extension, seeking for clarification, and scaffolding in the sense of feeding in the missing language, especially in the "Classroom Context" mode. In the "Materials" and "Skills and Systems" modes, features like modelling, repetition, rephrasing, and writing learners' responses on the board were the most prevailing resources the teacher deployed. The study was similar to those of Walsh (2011, 2012), Escobar Urmeneta and Walsh (2017), Cancino (2017), and Sapukorn (2020), with striking parallel findings to Can Daskin (2015), especially in relation to the use of specific strategies in different modes and to the use of the board. However, this study expands on the previously mentioned studies to uncover the use of humour as a way to shape learners' contributions. In the "Classroom Context" mode, there were a few instances in which the teacher used humour as a resource in responding to learners' utterances. Such a strategy pushed learners further in the interaction as it created a friendly relaxing atmosphere for learners to extend their turns.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the main findings indicate that Algerian teachers through their talk-in-interaction and interactive decisions made moment-by-moment created as well as hindered learning opportunities. Learning was maximized when teachers showed evidence of CIC. The latter was manifested in teachers' ability to align their language use to the mode being performed and to deploy specific interactional resources for facilitating interactional space and shaping students' contributions. Hence, teachers should raise their interactional awareness of their TT and develop CIC. This could be achieved when teachers reflect upon practices, making discourse the focus of reflection (Walsh, 2011). By adopting a reflective practice approach and researching their talk, teachers could raise their awareness of the interactional processes and understand the impact of their TT on interaction and learning opportunities. SETT could help them analyse micro-contexts of their CI in which the focus is on the interactional features of TT. Besides, Algerian inspector-teachers should introduce the concept of CIC to pre- and in-service teachers in their training programmes and seminars. It is high time, we believe, the focus of training and teacher development shifted from teaching materials and methodology to highlighting the centrality of interaction to the learning process and the significant role of CIC to maximise it. Though, the findings of this study cannot be generalized as the analysis was conducted with only three teachers and only in one context, they are hoped to inspire teachers and teacher-trainers for a more efficient EFL classroom interaction.

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Appendix 1: Transcription system (Walsh, 2006, p. 165)

T	teacher
L	learner (not identified)
L1: L2: etc.,	identified learner
LL	several learners at once or the whole class
/ok/ok/ok/	overlapping or simultaneous utterances by more than one learner
[do you understand?]	
[I see] }	overlap between teacher and learner
=	turn continues, or one turn follows another without any pause
...	pause of one second or less marked by three periods
(4)	silence; length given in seconds
?	rising intonation – question or other
CORrect	emphatic speech: falling intonation
((4))	unintelligible 4 seconds: a stretch of unintelligible speech with the length given in seconds
Paul, Peter, Mary capital	are only used for proper nouns
T organizes groups	editor's comments (in bold type)

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