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Categorising Interaction between Teachers and Students in ESOL

Classrooms

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Abstract: The purpose of the present study was to investigate how the Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System (FIACS) can be used to investigate the interactional practices of students and teachers of English to speakers of other languages (ESOL). Additionally, this study sought to produce a system by which interaction could be categorised in the ESOL classroom which could be deployed by teachers in order to help them gain a deeper insight into the ways that they interact with their students during classes. The dissertation tracked the practices of 46 individuals.

The data of this study included recordings of ESOL lessons. These recordings were then transcribed and categorised into different interaction types using a revised version of the Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System, in order to provide insight into what types of interaction most commonly occur between teachers and students and the purpose of that interaction.

The results of this research found that students in the ESOL classroom are given greater encouragement and opportunity to speak during classes than in non-ESOL classrooms, and the classes themselves are more student-centred. Previous research conducted in a non-ESOL context showed a more teacher-centred approach. The results of this study indicate that students and teachers in an ESOL class may have different interactional preferences for learning than those of non-ESOL teachers and students and in order to account for these differences, a new and more ESOL-specific category system has been developed.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years there has been a significant interest in the ways in which teachers and students interact with each other in the classroom, as well as evaluative techniques used in teacher training throughout different educational levels and in the interactional management of groups of students such as in classes and meetings. Changing views on the pedagogy of teaching have focused attention quite markedly on the interactional side of teaching behaviours.

Yet, even without considering the great power and value it would have to take the opportunity to assess interaction, focusing on this direction, the limitation of conducting observation-led research, does generally, remain considerable. The use of interaction analysis category systems, whilst alleviating certain problems, also generates others which may only be fully realised through the study of existing literature on, for example, skills and information theory, person perception, and interaction analysis. Very little of the current literature in these fields has been effectively applied to the understanding of the process of interaction between teachers and students in ESOL classrooms; though if reliable and objective styles of analysing teacher-student interaction are to be developed in order to, for example, improve teachers' self-awareness of their teaching style, the need for a more precise understanding of these factors is critical.

This project is concerned with interaction between teachers and students in ESOL classrooms (English to Speakers of Other Languages). With these ideas in mind, it is interesting to consider how contexts such as ESOL might be capable of revealing important information about how teachers and students interact with each other in class

and provide a vast number of ways for different interaction to take place. With the inherent social nature and variety of the interactions available, ESOL is perhaps better understood as the breeding ground for rich social interaction. It is therefore imperative that such mediums are considered when it comes to classroom discourse and interaction research.

1.2 General Introduction to the Study

This study focuses on an ESOL course, known as Course Y for the purpose of this study. To investigate how the students and teachers interact verbally, this study tracks students and teachers participating in an English Language course. By examining data on communicative tasks embedded in a course, we can better understand how teachers and students interact with each other in lessons and their preferences for interaction and interaction types, as the needs and interests of ESOL students may differ significantly from the needs of non-ESOL students. This research will expand on current knowledge of ESOL classes as a means to model the teaching and interaction strategies present in this instructional setting.

The demand to learn English is now a force so strong that it is driving the growth in ESOL education. Teaching itself has transitioned from a highly individualised form of instruction, to encouraging students to collaborate with both their classmates and the teacher (Benati, 2013). Consequently, it would seem like the natural progression in ESOL research would be to examine the collaborative environment which students are encouraged to participate in.

This study began life as part of the wider Course Y project. The Course Y project is an initiative setup by the researcher with a multi purpose mission. It provides free English Language tuition to non-native English speakers living and working in York. The second purpose was to provide academics an opportunity to collect data for research purposes. The third purpose was to provide newly qualified teachers an opportunity to volunteer to increase their teaching experience and boost their CVs.

Carrying out classroom research in authentic contexts is important in order to provide accurate results. However, gaining access to these authentic contexts can prove challenging for researchers. Out of this need to obtain authentic classroom data came the Course Y project: a classroom set up to provide data for researchers by recording all of the lessons for observational purposes and also giving researchers the opportunity to attend the sessions and gain access to the students as potential research participants.

In order to store the recordings made from the lessons securely and to allow researchers to gain access to the dataset whilst preserving the personal details of the participants, the Helix Media Library was used. Video and audio recordings of the lessons were uploaded to the York St John Helix Media Library under the category Course Y. The recordings were placed behind a password which meant that only people with an account could view them. This prevented the data from being made public, as anyone wanting to view it would need to obtain permission from the Course Y committee who have the power to grant access. The files are encrypted which prevent them from being shared outside of the Helix Media Library.

Despite its steady growth, ESOL has been associated with significant challenges when

it comes to interaction between teachers and students. As interest for learning increases, so does the need to develop programmes that meet the needs of a new student population in a foreign language (FL) environment. FL learning creates a dually challenging environment in which interaction becomes vital, both for language development and learning outcomes, but also because it aids in a strong sense of community, and limits isolation, which are essential factors for student persistence.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Many teacher-training programmes have been devised and implemented to improve the efficiencies and competencies of Primary and Secondary school teachers, with the majority of educational research focusing on children as learners. However, the reverse is true in the context of adult education, especially in the ESOL classroom. Sharan Shahi (2010) stated that there is a great need for more research to be conducted in the field of teachers' interaction patterns at this level to help inform future teacher efficiency, and also to discover what kind of teachers' behaviour best contributes to students' language acquisition (Yang, 2003).

Flanders (1970:24) speaks of the "sense of urgency" about obtaining "authentic behaviour" in research. Contradictions abound about the way we think of education and what actually goes on in the classroom. Today, most university students in the UK are prepared for teaching and teachers in schools undergo in-service education without specifically being taught how to identify, to practice producing and analyse teaching behaviour. Concepts for thinking about teaching are frequently used, though they may not be able to be defined in terms of specific actions which teachers can perform.

Perhaps another issue is that the universally accepted notion of 'one year teaching experience' is a standard unit for setting salaries and achieving status as a teacher. This creates little incentive for creating a program of self-development in which more than 'one year of experience' can occur in one year. To improve the quality of teaching, the pattern of interaction events must first be examined and judgments made about their quality. Jackson (1990) believes that even before learning teaching methodology, teachers should learn the principles of establishing relationships well and how to apply these principles to their lessons.

There have been many tools and systems devised to study classroom interaction patterns. Among these the 'Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System' (FIACS) has been found to be the best known and most widely used. The purpose of interaction analysis according to Flanders (1970: 3) is to "study teaching behaviour by keeping track of selected events that occur during classroom interaction. Other events are to be taken into consideration only when this would assist the observation." One application of this is to assist teachers and trainee teachers in developing and controlling their teaching behaviour. The second application of studying classroom interaction is to identify variations which occur in the chain of classroom events, focusing on teaching behaviour and its relationship to classroom interaction. Flanders claimed that this system was applicable to all classroom contexts. In 2015, I attempted to address this claim by examining his original theory in the context of an ESOL classroom. Relph (2015) found that the original FIACS failed to provide an accurate reflection of interactional practices in ESOL-specific environments due to its lack of accommodation for ESOL-specific features of interaction. That study recommended a revised version of FIACS be drawn up to be employed in exclusively ESOL contexts in

order to provide an accurate picture of what constitutes significant interactional behaviour in this context and which also could help teachers and teacher trainers evaluate and assess teacher performance in the classroom. This present study sets out to fulfil those recommendations.

This study has two primary purposes. The first is descriptive: to provide a detailed understanding of how students and teachers interact in ESOL classes, in order to better understand how they communicate with each other. Many previous studies believe that interaction is crucial for FL learning (Hatch, 1978; Long, 1980; Swain, 1995). However, there has been little exploration of actual interactional practices in ESOL, as the majority of the current research in this learning context relies on self-assessment measures.

In this thesis, the relevant literature is reviewed with special reference made to the particular value of categorising interaction in ESOL.

This study concerns an environment in which students take an active role in the lessons which are most beneficial for their language development, as well as determining how many lessons they will participate in. In most academic environments learners are given specific guidelines as to how they need to interact on the course. Instructor assessment is often based on the frequency of interaction. However, this study offers the opportunity to understand actual learner practices, independent of instructor expectations.

The second goal of this study is to revise and update the Flanders Interaction Analysis

Category System (FIACS) in order to enable it to provide an accurate way of categorising the interactions in an ESOL context, which could help teachers to self assess their own teaching styles and provide insight into how they interact with their students in class.

1.4 Research Questions

This project is an exploratory study seeking to develop an in-depth picture of how EFL learners interact in a classroom environment. Additionally, it will develop a system by which to categorise these interactional practices by seeking answers to the following research questions:

Research Question 1: Based on the recommendations outlined in Relph (2015), is the revised and updated FIACS an appropriate way to categorise ESOL classroom interaction between teachers and students?

The first research question is a conceptual one. It examines the changes made to the FIACS in the revised and updated version and questions whether or not these changes have improved the accuracy of the system in regards to ESOL-specific classroom contexts.

Research Question 2: What does an analysis of student-teacher interaction, using the modified Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System, reveal about the different interaction types produced by the teachers and students in the context of an ESOL classroom?

The second research question is an analytical one. This question examines interactional practices of learners in numerous ways, including the total number of interaction types occurring, the percentage of direct versus indirect talk, interactional partner communicated with, the interactional purpose, the collaborative nature of the task, and the various media used.

Research Question 3: How could an interaction analysis category system be used to inform the teacher training of ESOL teachers?

This research question examines ways in which the revised FIACS can have a practical application for teachers, teacher trainers and educational bodies in terms of monitoring and evaluating teaching technique with the assumption that interaction between teachers and students in the ESOL classroom is linked to better student grades, retention and course satisfaction.

1.5 Significance of The Study

The findings from this study have both theoretical and pedagogical significance. Firstly, this study adds to the field of classroom interaction, specifically how teachers and students interact with each other in an ESOL context. Additionally, this study adds to the recent growing body of research on interaction in ESOL by providing a framework with which interaction can be categorised in order to show exactly the types of interaction taking place and by whom. Taken together, this study sheds light on a growing body of students, namely ESOL learners.

1.6 Thesis Outline

This chapter has provided a general overview of the Masters thesis, specifically in regard to interaction in ESOL. The next chapter offers a review of the previous research that is used as a theoretical foundation for this study, with specific attention paid to interaction analysis category systems, including FIACS. Chapter Three contains a detailed description of the methods of inquiry used in this study, including the research design, measures, data collection and analysis procedures. From here, the results are divided into addressing each of the three research questions in individual chapters 4-6. Chapter Four addresses Research Question One, Chapter Five covers the discussions raised in Research Question Two and Chapter Six presents the findings of Research Question Three. Finally, Chapter Seven presents a summary and discussion of the findings, including the outcomes of the research, the limitations of the study, and a discussion of the pedagogical implications of the findings, including recommendations for encouraging interaction in ESOL classes and recommendations for future research.

This project furthers existing knowledge in the areas of ESOL and classroom interaction. Firstly, it cannot be ignored that a wide range of academic literature has been published in relation to classroom interaction, and ESOL. However, what this project does is to build upon such works by investigating the topic through an alternative context.

Secondly, this project takes ideas and concepts developed within the field of classroom

interaction and investigates if, and how, they are applicable to the landscape to ESOL teaching, allowing for insight to be given into classroom discourse on this growing interaction platform.

The third, and arguably most exciting contribution to knowledge this project will make, is through devising an interaction analysis category system to be applicable in an ESOL context. In this way, we will be able to see what is significant interactional behaviour in ESOL classroom interaction. By recording interaction in this context, this will provide a rare insight into how teachers and students interact with each other in a real-life ESOL classroom context.

Not only will this study fill a gap in academic knowledge, but it will also addresses issues outside of academia, for instance teacher-training. Research into interaction in ESOL classes will be beneficial to the language-learning industry and enable them to communicate with and target their communication more effectively. An example of how discursive research can be used within a variety of institutions and businesses can be seen within Stokoe's CARM project, which offers communication skills training that can be adapted to any workplace (See Stokoe, 2011). Stokoe's project has proved that discursive research, such as in this project, can help businesses improve interaction, services and therefore financial return.

1.7 Conclusion

This project aims to provide a unique insight into the world of ESOL classroom

interaction, through capturing live, real-time interaction in ESOL between teachers and students in classrooms. As the demand for ESOL grows and EFL teaching becomes a growing industry, it seems imperative that we understand the interaction that occurs on such mediums so that as teachers we can tailor our interactions to best suit the needs and preferences of the students. This thesis aims to build on existing knowledge by:

1) Applying an alternative analytical lens (that of discourse analysis).

2) Applying knowledge of previous interaction analysis studies to a new ESOL-specific context.

3) Capturing real life classroom communication live through the use of recording technologies.

4) Producing a framework with which teachers and teacher trainers can use to record their own interactions in the classroom, possibly using this information to monitor their teaching approach.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the relevant literature on teacher-student interaction. Interactionist theories in foreign languages (Hatch, 1978; Long, 1980) posit that learning is enhanced through social interaction. In addition to interaction, increased input (Krashen, 1985) and output (Swain, 1995) have also been recognised as essential factors in learning outcomes. Studies have shown that interactive tasks within lessons may lead to a higher rate of progress in the class (Northrup, 2002; Tello, 2002; Restauri, 2006).

Since the 1970s, an increase in academic interest has been seen in relation to interaction practices and classroom teaching. Academic interest in this area has risen as it has become more apparent to scholars that classroom interaction, especially that which occurs between a teacher and student, can play an integral part in the learning development of the student. Key ideas about the classification of interaction may need re-examining in the context of the field of English to speakers of other languages (ESOL).

2.2 Foreign Language Interaction

The present study investigates interaction in ESOL classrooms where the students' first language (L1) is not English. Because there is little agreement in any one theory, I will begin with an overview of the most relevant Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories for this study: Sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978; Hall, 1993; Lantolf, 2000; Swain, 2000), Interactionist theories (Hatch, 1978; Long, 1983; Pica, 1987), the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1985), and the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985). Each of

these theories were developed out of a growing discontent in the field of foreign language education which emphasised rote grammar instruction, resulting in the competence of grammatical structures, but not in communicative acts. Each of these theories recognises the vital role communication plays in foreign language learning. However, each has its own perspective as to what the most fundamental aspect of language learning is.

Interactionist theories have highlighted the importance of Vygotsky's sociocultural, constructivist beliefs essentially stating that language is rule-governed, and learned through interacting with others (Hatch, 1978; Long, 1983; Pica, 1987). By contrast, the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1985), which attributes the language learning process as an innate skill, and the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985) have focused on nativist approaches to explaining the language process.

Sociocultural Theory

According to Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural theory, all learning is situated in interaction or mediation between humans. A theory originally developed in educational psychology, this theory is the foundation from which a number of SLA theorists built an understanding of how language is learned. In brief terms, his theory states that development is a combination of interaction with people and the tools that the culture provides to help form their own view of the world.

The Sociocultural theory posits that learning cannot be separated from the context in which it takes place, as Vygotsky (1978: 57) explains:

> Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice:
> first, on the social level and, later on, on the individual level; first,

between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child

(intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention,

to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the

higher functions originate as actual relationships between

individuals.

At the core of this theory is the notion that learning cannot be done in isolation.

Learning must be within a social context.

Vygotsky also distinguishes between the developmental level attained (what a learner

can do with assistance), and the level of potential development reached by "problem

solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (1978: 86).

Vygotsky refers to this as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD implies

that a learner is in the process of mastering certain structures, and this higher level of

development can only be achieved through collaboration with others. In order for the

ZPD to function properly, two aspects must be included: subjectivity and scaffolding.

Subjectivity is a process whereby two individuals arrive at a shared understanding

when at first having a different understanding. Scaffolding is when the support of the

peer is gradually lessened.

Sociocultural theory, a general learning theory (not specific for learning languages),

focuses on the importance of collaboration for cognitive development. It has been

widely applied to studies in the field of SLA (e.g., Lantolf, 2000), its application being

that language learners advance to higher levels of linguistic competence when they

collaborate and interact with speakers who are more knowledgeable than they are.

In summary, many researchers agree that interaction is at the core of language

acquisition. However, Carroll (2001) reminds us that it is still unclear as to what exactly interaction provides, and if it is anything more than practice. Additional uncertainties centre around whether interaction should be viewed as one-way (Input or Output Hypothesis) or two-way (Interactionist theories). Finally, there is still uncertainty as to whether one-way theories or two-way theories have the dominant influence on language acquisition. Regardless of this uncertainty, Chapelle (1997) believes that the majority of researchers of instructed SLA would agree on the value of learner interaction for language development; whether they take a cognitive (Gass, 2003) or, more recently, a sociocultural perspective toward interaction (Lantolf, 2001).

This study is most concerned with foreign language (FL) exchanges within an ESOL course. By a close examination of how students and teachers interact on a course, it is possible to test which of the four theories (Interactionist theories, The Input Hypothesis, The Output Hypothesis, and the Sociocultural theory) is most significant to their learning, and thus further our understanding of SLA theories in the context of an ESOL course. This can be done by a thorough examination of how teachers and students actually interact. Having established a basis from which our understanding FL interaction is built, I will now discuss the background literature of Foreign Language interaction.

Interactionist Theories

Many pedagogical approaches used in classroom learning draw their basic guiding principles from research that has extolled the role of interaction in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Hatch (1978) changed the direction of SLA research by suggesting that interactions offer more than simply a forum in which to practice specific grammatical forms. She argues that interactions should be examined in the context of

their social process, and that language learning evolves out of learning how to converse. So, while much of the research in the field of SLA suggested that a learner should master a form and then practice that form through conversation, Hatch maintained that learners acquire grammatical structure from first learning how to communicate.

A number of other studies developed based on Hatch's insights, the most applicable being Long's (1980) Interactional Hypothesis (de Bot, Lowie & Verspoor, 2005). Long (1980) believed that learning occurs when attempting to communicate in the target language; students learn from the process of interacting. His hypothesis states that negotiation of meaning is what has the greatest impact on acquisition. When negotiating meaning, learners do everything from asking for clarifications, receiving feedback, conducting comprehension checks, shifting topics, and repeating the language. This process draws the learner's attention to the mismatch between the conversational partner's input and the learner's output. To summarise, Long believes the key for successful language development is the process that the learner goes through when they receive input.

Input Hypothesis

In contrast to Interactionists' views of language being a learned skill, nativists, such as Krashen (1985), believe that humans are programmed to take in new language, that learning language is an innate ability. Krashen maintains that language acquisition follows a natural order that learners will eventually master, so as long as learners are always given input that challenges them to the next level, they will understand the meaning of the other language, and eventually will master the forms of the language as well.

In order to accomplish this natural progression, Krashen believes instruction in the language being learnt should mimic first language acquisition and that formal learning settings should mirror that of natural (non-academic) environments (Terrell, 1982). Krashen's theories are outlined in his "Monitor Model" which includes five hypotheses at the core of this theory, summarised here:

First is the acquisition/learning hypothesis. This asserts the separation of acquisition from learning; acquisition is seen as a natural process, where there is no conscious focusing on linguistic forms. Learning, on the other hand, is a conscious, unnatural process, marked by conscious knowledge of the rules of grammar. Secondly, the monitor hypothesis claims that learned knowledge can function only as an editor or monitor for output. Next, the input hypothesis states that the most important factor in the development of second or other language proficiency is the learner's exposure to the target language, which he explains should be language that is one step ahead of the learner's current stage of comprehension. Fourthly, the natural order hypothesis claims that acquisition takes place in a predictable order and is unaffected by instruction. Finally, the affective filter hypothesis provides reason for learners' varying success. This suggests that SLA can only occur when the conditions are optimal (such as the student having self-confidence, motivation, and a low anxiety level). Krashen's Monitor Model highlights the necessity of input. It further suggests that teachers need to ensure that students are given input appropriate for the language level in order to maximise language acquisition.

Output Hypothesis

Also a nativist, but at the other end of the spectrum, Swain (1995) believes that input is not sufficient for the development of language abilities. Swain's Output Hypothesis has

drawn attention to the importance of learners' production of the target language.

According to Swain (1995), acquisition is achieved by producing the target language,

which increases learner fluency by giving opportunities for students to experiment with

the language and get feedback from other learners. Students then notice a 'gap' in what

they are able to say and what they want to say. The key for successful language

learning, in the framework then, is the explicit attention given to productive language

skill (speaking and writing).

More recently, Swain (2000) uses the term "collaborative dialogue" in lieu of "output".

Swain believes that dialogue provides learners with an opportunity to use language and

to reflect on language use. This adaptation draws on Vygotsky's Sociocultural theory,

specifically that originates from interaction with others.

2.3 Interaction in Education

Despite the commonly held theory that communication and interaction between

students, and students and teachers, can have a positive influence on the quality of the

education (Roblyer & Ekhaml, 2000), there has not been much empirical study

exploring classroom interaction in an ESOL context. Although interaction has long

been recognised as an essential factor in FL learning outcomes, research on interaction

is still emerging as technologies expand our pedagogical capabilities, and our

understanding of what interaction can incorporate is still developing.

<u>Definition of Interaction</u>

Interaction research is an ever-expanding field. So much so, that even though there

have been a number of studies conducted, there has not been a consensus in the field as

to what interaction entails. For the purpose of this study, it is important to understand

how the term interaction will be used.

This study combines Wagner's definition of interaction as "reciprocal events requiring [a minimum of] two objects and two actions. Interactions occur when these objects and events mutually influence one another" (1994: 8). So for example, interaction requires that there be at least two people (in our case a teacher and student(s)) and that these people are both engaging in some sort of verbal action together. The verbal action must be a reciprocal exchange for us to say that interaction has occurred. And because this study is also rooted in SLA theory, it takes into account Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural theory that learning is a social process. Thus, this study focuses on the interaction between *humans*, namely those between the teacher and student, and does not venture into the effects of interaction with content or media. While many studies also use the term interactivity, Wagner differentiates interaction (human contribution) from interactivity (technological capabilities).

Interaction in ESOL

ESOL interaction has much in common with interaction in a non-ESOL environment, but because students are dealing with interacting in a second language, the interaction that takes place on ESOL courses may be more challenging than that in a non-ESOL classroom.

Much of the recent research on ESOL interaction highlights the primary role interaction (FL or otherwise) has in determining the quality of the programme, and that interaction positively affects the effectiveness of ESOL courses. ESOL encourages students to collaborate and work together under the direction of an instructor. As such, it would seem that a natural progression in ESOL research is also to examine the

interaction that takes place.

Many researchers believe that a higher level of communication and interaction in ESOL can have a positive effect on students' achievement (Zahed-Babelan & Moeni-Kia, 2010; Abdolrahimi, Zahed- Babelan & Namvar, 2013; Odundo, 2013). However, Barnes & Todd (1995) argue that students are not given enough credit to take care of their own learning independent of interaction from the teacher.

Interaction Partner

Three types of interaction were identified by Moore & Kearsley (1996): (1) Student-Teacher Interaction (e.g., a student working with the teacher), (2) Student-Student Interaction (e.g. a student working with another student or a group of students), and (3) Student-Content interaction (e.g., a student working through the course materials). However, this model assumes that there is always a one-teacher classroom. It does not account for interaction that may involve more than one teacher in the same classroom at the same time interacting with the students. So Moore & Kearsley's model cannot be said to encompass *all* types of classroom interaction.

Student-Teacher Interaction

It is not surprising that several studies have found significant value in communication between student and teacher. Gutierrez (2000) explains that the role, and interactions with, the teacher are an essential part of the learning experience.

Research on student-teacher interaction has revealed that students perceive interactions between themselves and their teachers as important to their participation in class, and to the quality of the teaching and their own learning. Jiang & Ting's (1998) study

reported that the quality and quantity of teacher interactions positively correlated to perceived learning (Jiang & Ting, 1998), and that students who felt they knew their instructor participated more actively in group discussions (Thurmond et al., 2002).

Interaction Purpose

Although the most widely discussed area of interaction is described in terms of the partner with whom one is interacting, an increasing number of studies have investigated the purpose of interactions. A number of studies have investigated the role of productive and receptive interaction, but Hao's (2004) is the only study that measures student attitudes towards four types of interactive tasks: (1) instructional (anything considered to be content centred), (2) affective (social), (3) collaborative (productive), and (4) vicarious (receptive). Her study found that type of interaction the students liked the most was instructional interaction, and that they liked vicarious interaction the least. But because the study was based on perceptions of interaction, not practices, it is not certain which types of tasks students engaged in the most.

Contradictory to what one might expect, research has yet to show that completion of fewer productive tasks tends to lead to decreased learner outcomes. In fact, just the opposite might be true. Haalen & Miller's (1994) study found that more interactivity (defined in their study by the number of phone calls students made) did not positively correlate to greater learner outcomes. Their data showed that students who interacted very infrequently and those who interacted very frequently had a lower gain score than those who were somewhere in the middle. Similarly, Beaudoin (2002) found that students who are highly interactive do not necessarily get better grades. Beaudoin (2002) explains this point further:

> In considering how learning occurs […] it may be assumed that
> learning correlates closely to what is visible (e.g., student's written
> words that appear on the page). It may also be concluded that if there is
> no visible activity, then little or no learning is likely to occur. […]
> Instructors note that some students are passive and non-participatory,
> sometimes to the point of not even appearing for classes. Yet, despite
> doubts about how much these students are learning and how well they
> will do on assignments or exams, many of these same students
> eventually manage to do quite well academically, regardless of their
> lack of active face-to-face participation.

2.4 Motivation

Many studies have investigated the link between motivation and language learning. Meunier (1998) addressed the role of situational motivation (including anxiety and comfort, risk-taking, sociability and teaching styles) and task motivation. These two types of motivation (Brown, 1994) are an expansion of FL motivational theory first suggested and widely accepted by Gardner & Lambert (1972), namely the distinction between instrumental and integrative. Meunier's study of third-year French and German students found that participants were intrinsically and socially motivated by discussions.

Based on frequently cited attrition rates (Carr & Ledwith, 2000; Carr, 2000) it would seem that at the beginning of a course there is a very high level of motivation (both situational and task) and that students are not always able to harness this motivation throughout the duration of the course. This is certainly connected to Lambert (1991) emphasising the importance of offering very short courses, much shorter than typical semester length courses. This helps students reach a goal that seems attainable, so they do not get overwhelmed.

One final note on the FL motivation studies is that the majority of the findings in the

FL classroom have been with advanced level students. In addition, the FL students tended to be older (Lambert, 1991). This could have an effect with comfort level in interaction.

2.5 Communication and Interaction

Communication is defined differently according to which approach is being examined. In data processing theories, communication is considered as a method to minimise doubt, maximise confidence and act as an entry point to a particular situation and state. Based on this Abdolrahimi, Zahed- Babelan & Namvar (2013) define communication as "a flow through which two or more interactive agents are involved with each other so to provide the possibility to exchange messages and codes in a flexible way and thus to achieve a goal" (2013: 1).

Interaction is established through at least two individuals being involved in a series of dynamic and constant events in which each person leaves an effect on and is affected by the other within a framework of a mutual determining system (Abdolrahimi Javid et al, 2013). Therefore, interaction refers to the actions and reactions of the group members towards one another; in other words the members of the group influence each other (Safari, 2010). This study aims to explore, verbal interactions between teachers and students during lessons.

2.6 Quality of Interaction

Past research has found that the quality of teacher/student interactions plays a key part

in the quality of the learning (Needles, 1988; Darling Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, & Orr, 2007). Good teachers who can forge and maintain good relationships with students play a vital role in schools (Gibbons 2003; Luk, 2004) and such teachers can change the environment within the classroom, bringing support and success to their students (Christie, 2002). According to Reynolds & Peter (2009), one of the most basic characteristics of a good teacher is the ability to establish interaction in the classroom. In this study, a good teacher is one which has the ability to establish interaction, as the main issue observed in classrooms comes from the lack of interaction. Emphasising this issue, Brower *et al.* (2001) state that teaching happens only when a teacher establishes interactions with the students.

It should be noted that talking in and of itself cannot be considered interaction. Interaction is the way in which action and reaction between individuals is organised and this action and reaction forms part of an individual's social desirability (Gage & Berliner, 1998). Blatt *et al.* (2008) conducted relational analysis on interaction and concluded that 65.2% of interaction is related to speech. In contrast, Putz & Aertselaer (2008) estimate that around 65% of meaning transfer happens through non-verbal behaviour.

Fredericksen et al. (2000) reported that the most significant variable for academic achievement was teacher-student interaction. Another study, Jiang & Ting (2000), has suggested that the quantity and quality of teacher-student interaction is linked to student learning. However, Lie (2008) contradicts these claims and found that there is no relationship between interaction partner and linguistic outcome; language development is not dependent on with whom the student is communicating, just that

the student is communicating, practicing, and using the language.

In the area of FL research, Lie's (2008) finding also contradicts the Sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), which suggests the Zone of Proximal Development is done through interacting with a more linguistically competent person, either that of a teacher or a more competent peer. These results would suggest that the competency level of the interaction partner is not significant.

While the results of these studies do not mirror the results from the previous two studies, two things should be reiterated. Firstly, that the previously mentioned studies were all based on student perceptions of interactions and not on actual practices. Secondly, only certain types of activities were included in the analysis. The teacher did not participate in any of the activities which were analysed, therefore the validity of the measurement of students' interactional presence is questionable.

Interaction between students and teachers within the classroom is clearly important in fostering a rapport which may help students become more motivated to learn (Amidon & Hunter, 1967; Needles, 1988; Cole & Chan, 1994; Darling-Hammond, 2008). Interaction is also an affective, temperamental matter and not just a question of someone saying something to someone else. Without this mutual respect between teacher and student, the building of confidence, and the creating of many opportunities, classrooms will remain quiet places with inhibited students who dare not try to express themselves (Rivers, 2000). Oranu (2010) emphasises that classroom talk should be focused, engaging and relevant; theory should be based on actual experience and should make all implications clear and accurate.

2.7 Introducing FIACS

One of the most basic elements of high quality teaching is the way in which students respond to teaching activities, and the interaction between the teacher and student on the whole (Sahlberg, 2007). One method to carry out, with good reliability and validity in regards to interpretation of results is the Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories System (FIACS) (Wragg, 2002; Hai & Bee, 2006; Saba, 2007 and Cenoz & Hornberger, 2008). The FIACS contains ten categories, the first seven of which record teacher talk, with the next two covering student talk. The last category records silence in the classroom. Thus the FIACS examines only verbal behaviour; because this can be observed with higher reliability than nonverbal behaviour. It is assumed that an individual's verbal behaviour is an adequate reflection of their total behaviour (Amidon & Hunter, 1967). It is also assumed that classroom interaction occurs as a series of events, and that teaching behaviour consists of patterns of behaviours, embedded in the series of classroom events. Often during classroom interaction, the same sequence of events can reoccur again and again; such a sequence can be identified as a pattern if it occurs frequently enough to be of interest. The major feature of the FIACS lies in the analysis of initiation and response which are the characteristics of interaction between two or more individuals. Teaching behaviour has been defined "as acts by the teacher which occur in the context of classroom interaction" (Flanders, 1970: 4). FIACS measures directedness/indirectedness of speech and allows for student participation. Silence or confusion is the only nonverbal category.

According to Medley & Mitzel (1958), the FIACS was one of the most sophisticated interaction analysis categories developed at the time of writing. It was unique in the

presenting of a certain amount of information regarding the sequence of behaviour.

Major criticisms of the FIACS are that it lacks attention to cognitive processes (Lambert *et al.,* 1965; Amidon, 1967; Smith & Othanel, 1968), neglects levels of thinking of students and teacher (Amidon, 1967), neglects unique features of the individual students as it concentrates on the class as a whole (Lambert *et al.,* 1965), uses only overt behaviour categories thus removing the concept of purposiveness of behaviour (Boyd & DeVault, 1966), is difficult to learn the system (Amidon. 1967); and is not sophisticated enough or conceptually complex enough to provide necessary information for useful analysis of teaching (Amidon, 1967).

Criticisms levelled at the categories are that some categories need further subdivision, for example the category of criticism, and that there are not enough student-talk categories (Lambert *et al.,* 1965; Amidon, 1967).

Amidon & Hough (1967) were the first to give training in interaction analysis to teachers. Their research showed that teachers who had been trained in interaction analysis were observed by their superiors as being more effective in their teaching than teachers in the control group.

In another study conducted with teachers at Temple University, Furst (1967) reported that teachers who were taught interaction analysis accept student ideas and student behaviour significantly more than teachers not trained in interaction analysis. In addition, it was found that teachers trained in the system showed evidence of significant positive change in attitude toward teaching during the teaching experience

when compared with teachers not so trained. They seemed to be more aware of their own verbal behaviour than the untrained teachers. The verbal behaviour pattern of teachers who had been trained in interaction analysis before teaching showed a mean of 66.7% teacher-talk and a mean of 25.55% student-talk in their lesson presentations. Patterns of those trained in interaction analysis while teaching showed a mean of 61.2% teacher-talk and 39.7% student-talk in lesson presentations.

Over the past twenty years, there has been development in methods of analysis of interaction within peer groups. So much so, that to review them all here would be impossible. Instead, focusing on another system that has produced an alternative approach to the study of interaction is Barnes and Todd (1977, 1995). Their framework is an analytic system for studying peer group talk, designed from the bottom-up, as opposed to the top-down approach derivative of a pre-existing set of categories. As a consequence of this, their system was able to take into consideration the context in which this peer talk was occurring. This system focuses on actual processes of interaction and the ways students developed and constructed knowledge without direct teacher influence. They analysed dialogues that took place amongst groups of students and identified the different types of talk and their impact upon the construction of meaning during group interaction. Taking both a social and a cognitive approach, they developed a system to describe speech acts, operating across two levels focusing on discourse coherence and social strategies.

They identified 'exploratory' speech characteristics such as invitations to modify or surmise, tentativeness in voice intonation, assertions and questions made as hypotheses rather than direct assertions, hesitation and changes of direction, and self-monitoring

and reflexivity. Out of this, several conditions for collaborative work in classrooms were proposed, directly based upon the empirical evidence. These conditions were further categorised as: initiating, eliciting, extending and qualifying (Barnes and Todd, 1995).

In spite of there being some limitations in the analytical system and the fact that the data was recorded on tape recorders only (meaning information from non-verbal interaction was not recorded and analysed), the work of Barnes and Todd made an important contribution to the study of student-talk. It brings together ideas from discourse analysis and conversation analysis, with research into learning theory and educational instruction. Other studies have used the Barnes and Todd frameworks to explore classroom interaction (e.g. Edwards, 2005), however because of the lack of focus on teacher-talk, and the emphasis this system puts on group-work to provide accurate results, it was deemed that this system was not the most appropriate for this study, which wanted to examine the interactional relationship between teachers and students.

Conceptually, Barnes and Todd (1995) has made a vital contribution to our increasing understanding of the different types of talk and the different interactional relationships between teachers and students. One of the limitations of this method, though, is that what is being analysed is the group as a whole, so this framework does not account for which individual students are participating in the interaction. Consequently, this framework does not explain how the rules and customs of interaction in that context are actually formed. Additionally, by focusing entirely on student talk, this system can not give a completely accurate picture of interaction in the classroom.

The SETT (Self Evaluation of Teacher Talk) framework described in Walsh (2006) was intended to provide a springboard into facilitating discussion of classroom interaction amongst teachers and to enable some sense to be made of the interactional organisation of an L2 classroom. The SETT framework is designed to develop teaching skills via classroom interaction. Walsh states that the L2 classroom is a real social context and that what happens inside it matters just as much as what happens outside (Walsh, 2013). Walsh's SETT framework was designed to assist teachers in gaining a better understanding of the context of classroom teaching and to understand how interaction works. The SETT framework is made up of four classroom modes and thirteen interactures. Classroom discourse is presented as a series of intricate and interrelated micro-texts. Meanings are co-constructed by teachers and students, and learning takes place through the interaction between teachers and students.

Walsh reiterates that the SETT framework is a generic instrument which is meant to represent interaction, rather than provide a comprehensive account of it. It is designed to be used as a tool of reflective practice for developing teachers.

Seedhouse (2004) states that the organisation of interaction changes as the pedagogical aim changes. The structures and practices of classroom learning move between being teacher-directed, to a structure very like, but notably different from, conversation, where the students produce more initiative talk (Mori, 2007; Seedhouse, 2005). While understanding the roles of teachers and students in classroom interaction is still important, these roles are perhaps not as fixed as previous work has suggested.

The Rule of Two Thirds: A Teacher-Centred Approach

According to Flanders (1970), the majority of lesson time is spent on the teacher delivering a one-sided speech, called "the rule of two thirds"; in that in the majority of classes two thirds of the time someone is talking, it is the teacher who speaks. Teachers have a tendency to dominate the classroom discourse (Gross, 1993; Atakins & Brown, 2001). The content of teachers' speeches were mainly explaining and delivering the materials (lecturing). Students often shy away from asking and answering questions and generating ideas within the class. Walker (2002) states that when the students do get to speak, that speech is within the restricted framework of asking and answering questions which only requires utterances of a few words at a time. Most research seems to concur with Flanders's assertion that teacher-talk makes up about 70% of the interaction within classrooms (Saba, 2007; Wragg, 2002; Fathi Azar, 2003; Hai & Bee, 2006).

Pontecorvo (1993) insists that few verbal interactions occur during class. Cieniewicz (2007: 5) claims that the pattern of interactions between the teacher and students is never equal and always directed towards a small proportion of the class. Cieniewicz further claims that, unless the students are individually nominated by the teacher, then on average only four students will actually contribute in any given lesson. This teaching pattern of periods of 'lecturing' intercut with interludes of questions and answers is the most prevalent method of interaction seen in classrooms and also appears to be the most resistant to change. Abdolrahimi, Zahed- Babelan and Namvar (2013) declare that this approach needs changing to take into account the participation of the students. Cole and Chan (1994) believe that interaction plays a fundamental role

in a successful lesson. The ability to establish a positive relationship with the students is one of the main skills required of teachers. The studies conducted by Rosenshine (1971) and Dankin & Biddle (1974) showed that there was a positive correlation between the time that teachers spent talking, the way in which they spoke and their students' overall achievement. However, there is also a large positive correlation between clarity of speech, ability to attract the student's interest, organisation of speech, and the achievement of the students.

It appears that most lessons, according to the research by Flanders (1970), consist predominately of teacher-talk. Lecturing and questioning are the most common types of interaction seen in the classroom. Some research has found evidence for a relationship between teacher interaction styles and students' overall achievement. However, FIACS does not accurately account for the participation of the students, with seven categories to label teacher-talk and only two to identify types of student-talk.

Caution must be advised also: Flanders (1970) and many of the studies that immediately preceded it in the seventies and eighties, were not conducted in an ESOL classroom context. Teaching methodology in the 1970s leant on the teacher-centred model for the most part. More recently, there appears to have been a trend in exploring the relationship between interaction and achievement, with the majority of the research showing in fact that it is greater student-talk time which leads to higher academic results (Zahed-Babelan & Moeni-Kia, 2010; Abdolrahimi, Zahed- Babelan & Namvar, 2013; Odundo, 2013), as opposed to the findings of Rosenshine (1971) and Dankin & Biddle (1974). With relevance to ESOL, much of the emphasis in teaching speaking skills in particular is placed on the students becoming active interactants, initiating and

formulating their own ideas and responses to tasks. As such, students are actively

encouraged to participate more verbally in classes by the setting of activities to

encourage the production of talk and conversation. Teachers also are trained to try to

resist a teacher-centred approach for these kinds of lessons. More research should be

done which takes into account the different requirements of students within ESOL

classes and the different teaching methodology this requires, as opposed to the ordinary

high school teaching method, in order for us to determine what is significant

interactional behaviour in this context, which brings us to the statement of the problem.

2.8 The Purpose of this Study

To better understand the complexities of interaction in ESOL, Sharan-Shahi (2010)

called for research isolating specific dimensions of interaction, noting a specific need

for studies that provide a clear picture of interactivity as it currently exists. He goes on

to explain that the study of interaction patterns of teachers and students in ESOL

classes, will probably help to develop a programme of ESOL education.

Flanders' system of one set of categories to be generalisable across all contexts is

unlikely to work, given the context-dependent nature of all language. That is not to say

that Flanders' interaction analysis category system does not work in some contexts,

indeed it works very well in perhaps *the majority* of contexts. However, ESOL is not

one of them. In this report, I am proposing an amended category system to be deployed

within an ESOL context. ESOL takes such a vastly different pedagogical approach to

most high school methods of teaching, as well as encompassing a great deal of

diversity within itself.

Perhaps where most of the previous attempts at formulating an interaction analysis category system, in the vein of FIACS, have suffered in the past, is their desire to create and devise one system to be applicable to all contexts. Indeed, Flanders (1970) has been, by far, the main player in teacher-student interaction analysis category systems. While other similar systems have been created, they have all sought to provide a definitive template of interaction analysis categories applicable in all situations. Perhaps this is not the solution. Indeed, it may be the case that we cannot have a generalisable system, because all language is very much contextually-based. Surely we must concede that it would be a mistake to attempt to map the conventions of one interactional context onto another interactional context and expect them to perfectly fit into each other and match up absolutely. An ESOL interaction analysis system would be complementary to Flanders, rather than competitive, as the two would operate in different spheres.

An ESOL interaction analysis system would have to address the issue of certain ESOL-specific phenomena that FIACS does not currently accommodate, such as a way to categorise modelling and drilling. Also, a way to distinguish between meaningful silences (i.e. those which exhibit misunderstanding and those which occur when the students are working quietly) would be useful.

One important aspect to achieve (perhaps the most important) would be that of making such a category system realistically employable. A balance must be struck between not constructing too many categories, making the learning of the system unnecessarily

time-consuming, and not making the categories too broad (so that there is uncertainty on the part of observer as to within which category they should label a particular interaction).

2.9 Conclusion

Numerous studies have addressed the types and importance of interaction in FL education, but few have actually examined the interaction of FL learning. Because little is known about how these two areas intercept, the majority of the research in this area relies on what is known of learning in non-FL contexts. Many studies have pointed to interaction as the defining characteristic of FL education models, suggesting that there is great potential in creating an environment in which more opportunities are provided to the students for various types of interactions with their teachers.

Previous research has focused primarily on interaction perceptions and not on actual practices. By examining the actual interactional practices of teachers and students in an ESOL context, we will be able to give a more accurate reflection of the interactional landscape of a class.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is two-fold. The first objective is to create an interaction analysis category system to categorise interaction that takes place between teachers and students in an ESOL classroom, based on a similar system created by Flanders (1970) to categorise ESOL classroom interaction. In order to do this I investigated teachers' and students' conversational practices in 31 ESOL classrooms. The second part of this study is to apply this category analysis system to data from a group of ESOL courses in order to discover what an analysis of ESOL classroom interaction can reveal about the intercommunication practices and preferences of teachers and students in this specific context. Previous research has focused on perceptions of interaction, rather than actual practices (Hao, 2004; Kearsley, 1999). By examining data on actual practices, we can better understand how students and teachers interact with each other, their frequency of interaction and their needs for interacting. This will enable researchers to build up a picture of the reciprocated actional happenings of an ESOL class. An ESOL specific interaction analysis category system would hopefully be designed in such a way as to be able to be utilised by teachers and teacher trainers to monitor and enhance their own teaching practices.

3.2 Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. *Based on the recommendations outlined in Relph (2015), is the revised and*

updated FIACS an appropriate way to categorise ESOL classroom interaction

between teachers and students?

2. *What does an analysis of student-teacher interaction, using the modified*

   Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System, reveal about the different

   interaction types produced by the teachers and students in the context of an

   ESOL classroom?

3. *How could an interaction analysis category system be practically applied in*

   the training of ESOL teachers?

The results of the study first employed a descriptive design, the second part of the

study employed an inferential, correlational design. The data collection comprises

observations of ESOL classrooms. This data provided insight into how students

interact with their teachers in an ESOL class.

3.3 Research Design

<u>Setting</u>

The setting for this study was an ESOL class run within a University in the north of

England but open to the wider local community. For the purposes of this study, the

course name and institution name have been anonymised so the course will be referred

to as course Y. Prior to this study, course Y had been developed and administered by

the researcher over the course of approximately 12 months. The program was

specifically designed for language learners who did not seek academic credit for

participation on the course. It was designed to meet the needs of part-time learners of

English as an additional language. Students chose to attend as many or as few of the classes as they found beneficial.

Learners were given an eight week course to attend. The courses were run on evenings so as to fit in around students who may have worked during the day and met their needs.

Participants

56 individuals were invited to participated in this study (the criterion to participate in this study will be discussed in the next section). Of these 56 individuals, 49 signed and submitted consent forms. Three of these 49 were ultimately not included in the analyses because they withdrew their consent to have their results be included in the study. Further discussion of the participants will be given in the next chapter. The subject groups for this study consisted of 46 individuals comprising of 14 teachers and 32 students.

Students were divided into groups based on when they were able to participate. Group A started first and Group B started approximately three months later. This was to ensure that the teachers would have ample time during the first week of classes to orient the students to the course programme. Further details on the demographics of the course participants will be explored in the next chapter.

The participants were all adult learners of English as an additional language and their teachers. They attended free English language lessons run by the observers over a

period of one year. This amounted to 13 hours and 42 minutes of data to be analysed for this study. It was felt that this was a reasonable sample size to collect within the time available for data-gathering as I had only two semesters to gather data, conduct analyses and write a thesis paper. As all the data had to be transcribed and categorised before it could be analysed, it was felt that more than around 14 hours would take up too much time to prepare and analyse than was available over the limited timeframe of this study.

Data Collection

Two video cameras and four digital voice recorders were positioned around the classroom to record the interaction between the students and the teachers. Every student signed a consent form prior to the start of the lessons to allow themselves to be recorded, and for that data to be used by the observers for academic research purposes. Once consent had been obtained, the video recordings were collated together to form the course Y corpus, an online video library of real-world ESOL classroom data. Access to the full corpus is available through the Helix Media Library at the following link: https://hml.yorksj.ac.uk/Browse/CategoryFolder/3 (A login is required).

According to Simpson and Tuson (2003), some advantages of using observations to collect data are that they enable researchers to gain direct access to social interactions. They also give permanent and systematic records of social interaction through the making of recordings. Observations can be applied to a wide variety of contexts and can be used to address a variety of types research questions.

Teachers

There were 14 teachers used in this study. All of the teachers had studied for a degree in English Language and Linguistics at the same University in the north of England. They had also all obtained a qualification in CELTA no more than 12 months previously. The majority of the teachers had not taught a course since qualifying in the CELTA, but all had previous teaching experience from CELTA, and had taught using the BBC Speakout books on the CELTA course. This textbook was chosen specifically because the activities were interaction focused and would promote interaction between the participants, so that it could be observed in this study. Some teachers had previously an additional 8 weeks teaching experience in EFL teaching at summer camps.

The researcher conducted a survey of a group of 10 ESOL teachers. The teachers were asked questions about their classes, the content they teach, the resources they use, the teachers' perceptions of the kinds of talk occurring in the classes, and what aspects of that talk they would find it useful to reflect on. This was presented in an open discussion based format and the teachers' responses to these discussions proved to be most illuminating. Therefore, it was decided to revise the FIACS based on what teachers said that they needed and wanted most from an interaction analysis category system.

The teachers were then taught how to use the revised FIACS and were given a sample transcript from one of the observed ESOL classes to categorise. The purpose of this was to check the usability and practicality of the system; how easily could it be utilised

by teachers. From this initial trial, some of the categories were further revised based on the recommendations and requests of the sample group of teachers. For example, they suggested a separation of interactive and non-interactive silence was necessary in order to provide a clearer idea of why silence occurs in an ESOL class.

For the third research question, engagement with the teachers was important in order to help develop the revised FIACS into a tool for teacher development of reflective practice. Implementing the FIACS in lessons provides an opportunity for teachers and practitioners to reflect on specific elements of their teaching practice, perhaps realising features of their own and others teaching that may not already be apparent to them. In order to enable this, teachers were given an opportunity to view video recordings of their own lessons and categorise themselves according to the revised FIACS. The aim of this was to allow the teachers to gain a greater insight into theirs and their students' interactional practices within a class. This was followed up with an interview with the teachers in which they were asked to discuss their categorisation of their own lessons, what this revealed to them and whether or not they thought that this knowledge would have any effect on the way they taught in the future.

Students

There were a total of 32 students who participated in this study. Of these 32, 22 were females and 10 were males. The students were from a variety of nationalities and backgrounds, although the majority of them were Chinese. All were over the age of 18 at the time of the study with most being between the ages of 18 and 23. The eldest student was 34. Participants all resided in the North of England at the time of the study,

and all had some previous experience of ESOL education up to at least Elementary (A2) level prior to the start of the study. The participants were living and working in the north of England, either in employment or in education, or attempting to improve their English skills in order to be able to work or study. This tied in with their need to enhance their communication skills in English.

Learning Tasks

Sabry and Baldwin (2003) state that students perceive different interaction types differently. Similarly, following the advice of Twigg (2002), the learning materials provided in this course offer a wide variety of text materials and the individual and collaborative activities needed to provide for differences in interactional preferences and needs. Parker (1999) reiterates this point by stating that a "well designed course that has a focus on on interactivity includes many topics for discussion, feedback from students as well as experts, and finally links to sources of pertinent information" (Parker, 1999:16). Great effort was given to provide participants with a wide variety of activities and useful resources.

Examples of tasks and resources on the course include: a course handbook, language DVDs, audio files, workbooks with quizzes and games, and conversation sessions.

There were a variety of interactive opportunities in which students were encouraged to collaborate with each other and with their teachers. Synchronous tasks, according to Nobuyoshi and Ellis (1993), provide the opportunity of spontaneous conversation and exposure to new linguistic forms.

Each week's lesson was split into four 30 minute teaching slots. Each slot was filled by

a different teacher and had a different focus. The tasks were taken from the Speakout

curriculum and so were activities typically done in an ESOL course. In order to build

interaction, the students were encouraged to work collaboratively.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Permission to conduct this study was obtained from the Business School Research

Ethics Committee at York St John University prior to the commencement of this study.

The ethical authorisation code for this study is: 151105.

All individuals meeting the requirements for the course were invited to participate in

the study. Students were required to be over the age of 18, reside in the place of study,

and have at least an Elementary level of English. The researcher found it necessary to

limit the study to participants who had at least some previous English language

knowledge in order to better facilitate the interaction between them and the teachers.

Teachers were required to be over the age of 18, have an English language teaching

qualification (CELTA), were students enrolled on an English Language and Linguistics

undergraduate degree course at the same university the north of England and

undertaking the English Language Teaching Research Project module on that course.

3.5 Coding of the Data

This study builds on previous work carried out by the researcher which sought to

challenge the claim made by Flanders (1970) that the FIACS could be used to provide an accurate picture of teacher-student interaction in all educational and classroom contexts. The recommendations from that study, which are explained in full below, revealed that there was a need to adapt the FIACS and create an ESOL-specific interaction analysis category system. But first, it is necessary to introduce the FIACS in its original form, to allow readers to familiarise themselves with the system as it currently stands in order to best highlight both its usefulness and its shortcomings as they relate to this particular context.

When designing the coding system, the researcher created categories that would cover specific types of interaction, before the coding of the data began. The data collected from the course provided recordings of all the classes taking place. The researcher then transcribed each video orthographically and coded the interactions between teachers and students. The interactions were coded using the revised and updated Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System. For an example of a transcript coding, see Appendix IV.

The method used in this study was developed by Flanders (1970) at the University of Minnesota between 1955 and 1960. The category system still has many useful applications although efforts to expand upon it and increase the number of categories have been completed albeit with limited success (Sharan-Shahi, 2010). The FIACS is made up of ten categories: seven of which are used when the teacher is talking, two are used when the student is talking, and the last category is used to indicate silence of confusion. So far as teacher-student interaction is concerned, these three conditions (a) teacher-talk, (b) student-talk, and (c) silence or confusion are thought to be totally

inclusive of all possibilities, and since Flanders claimed that any event could be classified, this system therefore should permit coding of interaction events at a constant rate throughout the observation. This is essential in order to examine the proportion of time spent in any of the categories. This claim is further backed by Wragg (2002) and Hai & Bee (2006).

In Flanders' original study, conducted in 1970, an observer would sit in the classroom, in the best position to see and hear all the participants. Today, with the availability of video-recording, the observer records their classifications using pre-recorded lessons. This has the advantage of the observer being able to view a lesson multiple times in order to increase the accuracy of their observations.

The observer records the interaction in a tally. Observation works out to one tally every three seconds, with the observer having to decide which category the events just happened would best apply to. The length of the observation chunk is not significant, but the setting of a steady tempo is: as conclusions depend on consistency, not on speed. The numbers which represent each of the ten code symbols are written down in a sequence which follows the statements being coded. If more than one of the categories was observed within a three second period, then all the categories seen were recorded. The observer did not involve their personal viewpoint.

Table 3.1 The categories of the Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System (taken from Flanders, 1970).

	Response
Teacher Talk	**Response** 1. *Accepts feeling.* Accepts and clarifies an attitude or the feeling tone of a pupil in a nonthreatening manner. Feelings may be positive or negative. Predicting and recalling feelings are included. 2. *Praises or encourages.* Praises or encourages pupil action or behaviour. Jokes that release tension, but not at the expense of another individual; nodding head or saying "Um hm?" or "go on" are included. 3. *Accepts or uses ideas of pupils.* Clarifying, building, or developing ideas suggested by a pupil. Teacher extensions of pupil ideas are included but as the teacher brings more of their own ideas into play, shift to category five.
	4. *Asks questions.* Asking a question about content or procedure, based on teacher ideas, with the intent that a pupil will answer.
	Initiation 5. *Lecturing.* Giving facts or opinions about content or procedures; expressing *their own* ideas, giving *their own* explanation, or citing an authority other than a pupil. 6. *Giving directions.* Directions, commands, or orders to which a pupil is expected to comply. 7. *Criticising or justifying authority.* Statements

	intended to change pupil behaviour from an unacceptable to an acceptable pattern; bawling someone out; stating why the teacher is doing what they are doing; extreme self-reference.
Pupil Talk	8. *Pupil-talk—response.* Talk by pupils in response to teacher. Teacher initiates the contact or solicits pupil statement or structures the situation. Freedom to express own ideas is limited.
	9. *Pupil-talk—initiation.* Talk by pupils which they initiate. Expressing own ideas; initiating of a new topic; freedom to develop opinions and a line of thought, like asking thoughtful questions; going beyond the existing structure.
10. *Silence.* No verbal interaction takes place between teachers and students.	

Note that there is no value attached to these numbers. Each number is purely classificatory, to designate a particular communication event, not to pass a judgment on that communication.

This section goes into detail describing each category of interaction used for coding in this study and explains what qualifies an interaction for a particular category.

Category 1

Category 1 consists of teacher statements which accept and clarify an attitude or the feelings of a pupil in a non-threatening manner. The feelings may be positive or

negative. This also includes predicting or recalling feelings. Flanders claims these statements are rare and infrequent. Another reason for the low incidence is the use of a special rule which states that the teacher must literally name or otherwise identify the emotion(s) present before the statement can be classified as "1".

Example:

1)   T: "This class seems excited!"

This can be categorised as a "1" because the emotion is cited, the teacher offers no value judgement.

Category 2

Praise and encouragement are statements which carry the value judgement of approval. To look directly at a student and nod your head whilst saying, "Mm-mm"- with a certain inflection- is to communicate to the student that they are producing the correct behaviour and the teacher would like more of the same. The difference between Category 1 and 2, is that in 2 there is an element of praise which is missing in 1. Both categories are used for statements which have overtones of warmth and friendliness, but Category 2 adds teacher approval as well.

Teachers seem to have developed many related superficial verbal habits, such as "Right", "Good", "Okay", and suchlike which are often expressed automatically as soon as the student utterance has ended. This is probably due to the fact that reward is seen as a far better motivator than punishment. Genuine praise can usually be separated from these superficial verbal habits.

Examples:

2)   T: Have you got the answer to Question 8?

       S: Past Continuous

       T: Yeah. What's the next answer?

3)   T: Have you got the answer to Question 8?

       S: Past Continuous

       T: Well done!

        You remembered the grammatical form, didn't you?

Both of these examples begin with a teacher question and a student response. So the first two code symbols will be 4 and 8. In 2), the example could be coded as 4, 8, 2, 4. In 3), because the teacher not only gives praise, but suggests the reason for praising the student's answer, the tempo of recording enters in where interactions are split into 3 second increments, and if the praise takes up longer than three seconds to happen, this can be differentiated by recording 4, 8, 2, 2.

Category 3

Teachers can respond to ideas expressed by a student in the following ways:

A. They can acknowledge them through repeating them.

B. They can modify the idea and reshape it in their own words.

C.They can apply the idea and use it to infer the next stage of an analysis of a problem.

D. They can compare the idea to one expressed by another student or by the teacher.

E. Or they can summarise what was said by the student.

In the FIACS all of these different teacher meanings are encapsulated in Category 3. However, in some of these different responses, it is highly likely that more elapsed time would be required, thus because more time is required, two or mored coded "3's" would be used.

There is some evidence to show that greater incidence of Category 3 is associated with above average classroom measures of both student satisfaction and student achievement (Flanders, 1970).

Examples:

4)   S: I would want to live with Sarah.

         T: You would want Sarah as your flatmate. Why is that?

5)   S: Because she is a girl.

         T: You would prefer to live with a girl.

In 4) the teacher acknowledges the student's answer and refers it to the other students to either support or refute. This would be coded 3, as the teacher is attending to the student's ideas and asking questions based on the student's ideas. Notice that a teacher question, based on student ideas is not coded 4.

Example 5) raises problems concerning synonyms, paraphrasing, abstracting, and subtle changes of meaning. The student did not say what the teacher said they did. The student's ideas were translated by the teacher into their own words, presumably in

order to push towards a certain desired response. The issue with this is whether or not the teacher is introducing a new concept, which would be coded 5, or whether they are building on the student's idea which would be coded 3. When a teacher makes use of an idea in such a way that it is probable the student would no longer recognise it as their own, it cannot be categorised as 3.

Category 4

Questions asked by a teacher which serve the purpose of driving the interaction along to a different step, to introduce a new problem element, and to include ideas which the teacher believes to be important, are coded 4. A second requirement is that the teacher acts as though they expect an answer.

Questions are usually fairly easy to recognise, even when they are open. Though not all questions are classified in Category 4, such as commands, praise or criticisms framed as questions. Teacher questions can really be coded in any one of the seven teacher-talk categories: in Category 1 if they are objective, nonthreatening enquiries involving attitudes or emotions and designate the feeling or emotion; in Category 2 if they are intended to praise; in 3 if they are based on ideas previously expressed by the student; in 5 if they are categorical and no answer is expected; in 6 if they are directions; and in 7 if they are intended to criticise, or to catch students who are daydreaming. Usually the questions which are coded 4 are genuine invitations to participate.

Category 5

Lecturing, giving facts, expressing opinions, interjecting thoughts, and off-hand remarks are all classified in this category. In a way, it is sort of a catch-all for teacher statements, primarily because it usually has the highest frequency, and an incorrect tally, more or less, would be least likely to distort the teacher's profile, compared to some of the other categories.

Categories 6 and 7

Both of these categories are used for statements which are intended to produce compliance. Category 6 is for statements which give direction to students and Category 7 is for statements which criticise the student. Such statements tend to enhance the authority of the teacher.

Examples:

6) "Please take out your books and turn to page 67."

7) "The trouble with you is that you don't follow instructions."

8) "The only work I'll accept is that which is neat."

9) "I want you to think about a holiday you've been on."

10) "Could you open the windows, please?"

Example 6) is a straightforward Category 6. 7) appears to be a straightforward 7, since the implication is that the student is being criticised for not doing something they ought. Example 8) could be either a 6 or a 7, depending on the utterance preceding it. If there was recrimination, it would be 7. Example 9) presents the problem of deciding

whether the direction should be coded 6 when it is impossible to know if the command was followed.

Categories 6 and 7 are recorded to show close direction and supervision to the students by the teacher. Both categories help to establish a true teacher initiation- student response pattern. Even questions can be coded 6 as shown in Example 10) where the teacher issues a direction to the student to open some windows but frames this direction as a question.

Categories 8 and 9

Student talk is coded with these two categories. There are several dimensions which help to separate response from initiation.

One dimension which enters into separating 8's from 9's is the voluntary embellishment or enlargement of a topic. An aspect of identifying 8's and 9's is the contrast of indifference or conformity versus the expression of will through independent judgment.

Another factor in separating 8's from 9's is the element of creativity and higher mental processes compared with noncreative and lower mental processes. However, a student's statements can sound creative when they are merely repeated from memory. This is equally true of generalisations, and interpreting data.

Usually observers might like to infer, from the proportion of 9's to 8's in all student

talk, something about the freedom of students to express their own ideas, to suggest

their own approach to a problem, and to develop their own explanations or theories.

Category 10

When there is a pause in classroom interaction, or when there is noise or confusion,

Category 10 is used.

3.6 Evaluation of the Original FIACS (Relph, 2015)

In my previous work, I have examined the use of the original FIACS in ESOL

classrooms. I conducted a study into the analysis of ESOL classroom communication

using the original FIAC system, the recommendations from which formed the basis

and motivation for this study:

That study found that the FIACS is an efficient tool with which to measure both the

social and emotional climate of a classroom in a somewhat objective and reliable way.

It can be used to provide feedback to pupils and teachers about classroom teaching.

Because the FIACS focuses mostly on the teacher's talk, it is a good tool to use when

comparing the different teaching styles of different teachers in the same subject, across,

for example, different genders, nationalities and age groups.

Another key advantage is the that it is a very systematic way in which to analyse

interaction, which allows it to be applied to large amounts of data in order to identify

patterns of interaction. This framework can be used to identify the structures of classroom talk.

However, as previously stated, less attention is paid towards student-talk. As a result, interactions between the students are not considered here. Only teacher-student discourse is examined. There are many rules for observing classes correctly, as outlined in Flanders (1970), which must be followed in order to achieve accurate results with the FIACS. The system is also designed to be diagnostic in nature, as it can help to study the behavioural patterns of teachers and identify a teacher's 'strengths' and 'weaknesses'. It can also be used as a technique for the training of teachers. The analysis of the matrix is designed to be so dependable that even people who were not present at the classes are able to make accurate inferences about the verbal interaction.

The entire process of using the system needs to be done by a trained observer, one who is familiar with the limitations of FIACS, for the results to be accurate. FIACS is a purely explanatory system, therefore it cannot be used to make judgements about what is good or bad teaching. The system is not designed to evaluate classroom interaction or teacher/teaching behaviour. FIACS does not describe the totality of classroom activity, although, as previously stated, no categorising system can ever be entirely unproblematic or comprehensive. So it is with full awareness of the problems and limitations of this system that I would like to propose some suggestions for a revised version to be deployed in an ESOL classroom interaction context. This is by no means intended to be an exhaustive list. My hope is that these recommendations are found to be of interest and could be build-able and/or trialled as a topic of future research.

3.7 Recommendations for Revisions to FIACS (Relph 2015)

My previous research into the use of the FIACS in ESOL-specific contexts has found that Flanders' system of one set of categories to be generalisable across all contexts is unlikely to work, given the context-dependent nature of all language. In this report, I am proposing a revised and updated category system to be deployed within an ESOL context. ESOL takes such a vastly different pedagogical approach to most high school methods of teaching, as well as encompassing a great deal of diversity within itself.

Perhaps where most of the previous attempts at formulating an interaction analysis category system, in the vein of FIACS, have suffered in the past, is their desire to create and devise one system to be applicable to all contexts. Indeed, Flanders (1970) has been, by far, the main player in teacher-student interaction analysis category systems. While other similar systems have been created, they have all sought to provide a definitive template of interaction analysis categories applicable in all situations. Perhaps this is not the solution. Indeed, it may be the case that we cannot have a generalisable system, because all language is very much contextually-based. Surely we must concede that it would be a mistake to attempt to map the conventions of one interactional context onto another interactional context and expect them to perfectly fit into each other and match up absolutely. An ESOL interaction analysis system would be complementary to Flanders, rather than competitive, as the two would operate in different spheres.

An ESOL interaction analysis system would have to address the issue of certain ESOL-

specific phenomena that FIACS does not currently accommodate, such as a way to categorise modelling and drilling.

Also, a way to distinguish between meaningful silences (i.e. those which exhibit misunderstanding and those which occur when the students are working quietly) would be useful.

One important aspect to achieve (perhaps the most important) would be that of making such a category system realistically employable. A balance must be struck between not constructing too many categories, making the learning of the system unnecessarily time-consuming, and not making the categories too broad (so that there is uncertainty on the part of the observer as to within which category they should label a particular interaction).

The adaption of the original FIACS involves a process of consultation with a group of ESOL teachers working in the UK. The researcher will meet with the teachers and interviewed them about the types of interactions that they experience in their classrooms and discussed the ways in which analysis of classroom interaction could be of benefit and interest to them as educators. Based on these consultations, the new category system will be drawn up taking provisions from the teacher's input and the existing literature. This preliminary version of the revised FIACS is used in a follow-up session with the same group of teachers who are given a sample transcript from which to test out the revised category system. After the teachers have attempted to use the category system themselves, they come back together with the researcher to discuss

what they liked and didn't like about the categories and whether or not they will have found the use of the test to be helpful or informative for them as teachers. The categories are then further adjusted based on this formative feedback.

3.8 Data Analysis Procedure

The data analysis for this study involved descriptive statistics using quantitative procedures. The classes were recorded and the recordings of each class were then transcribed orthographically, and coded according to the FIACS. The code reports of each class were then converted into a tally chart showing the frequency of each interaction in a pair. After all the data was collected and organised in the tally chart, it was then put into a matrix, and calculated into percentages in order to show the frequency of distribution between the different categories and to clearly provide an accurate picture of the interactional goings on of the classes.

In order to analyse the classroom interaction, data was recorded from the ESOL lessons by use of video cameras and microphones. After the lessons, the researcher played back the recordings and coded one symbol per every three seconds of interaction. After all of the data had been coded and categorised, each coded symbol was paired up with the symbol directly following it. All of the pairs of interactions were then counted up in a tally. Once all of the pairs of interaction have been tallied, the total frequencies of each interaction pair were combined into a table from which could be calculated the overall percentages of occurrence for each interaction type.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has described the methodology used in this study. Participants included 32 students and 14 teachers on an ESOL programme at a Northern English university. The study involved the collection of data from recordings of the classes. The procedures used to analyse the data were also described. The results of the study are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS (RESEARCH QUESTION ONE)

4.1 Introduction

The present study was designed with a twofold purpose: firstly to develop a system to categorise the interaction between teachers and students in an ESOL classroom context, and secondly, to investigate the interaction types most prevalent in a set of ESOL classes. This chapter begins with a rich description of the participants of the study and is followed by the results and discussion of the first research question:

1. *Based on the recommendations outlined in Relph (2015), is the revised and updated FIACS an appropriate way to categorise ESOL classroom interaction between teachers and students?*

4.2 Demographic Information

Course Participants

There were a total of 34 students participating in this study. One factor that may have impacted on the results of this study was the attendance of the participants in the ESOL classes, which greatly varied from class to class. One reason for this could be that the students were adults, who are older, and thus may tend to be busier, than traditional school-age students, and so were not able to attend all the classes.

Group A had a higher course attendance rate than Group B. There are several possible

reasons for this. Firstly, several participants in Group B mentioned that the scheduling of the course was not very effective, and that finding the time during the summer was not as easy as they had expected.

A second possible reason could be related to student motivation. While Group B signed up for the course at the same time as Group A , they started approximately three months later. The researcher speculates that this group was equally motivated when they signed up, but because there was a longer time lapse from when they signed up for the course to when they began, their motivation possibly decreased. Lambert (1991) and Diaz & Cartnal (2006) have suggested that shorter term length impacts course completion. Although these studies do not take into account the time involved in pre-course preparation, the idea is the same: that a shorter time period creates an environment that helps to keep the students on task (Diaz & Cartnal, 2006: 3). A final reason why this course attracted such a high attrition rate in general was because the courses were offered for free and there was little incentive for students to keep attending the classes; no course credit was awarded and there was no loss of money involved in dropping out of the course.

Data was collected prior to the course, including age, gender, nationality and previous language learning experience. The information presented in the following tables describes the entire population of the study, including all course participants, because these demographic details will be important in the discussion of the results regarding factors that contribute to interaction in a classroom environment.

Participant Demographics

Table 4.1 shows demographic information for each student, including age, gender and nationality in Group A. Table 4.2 shows demographic information for each student, including age, gender and nationality in Group B.

Student	Gender	Age	L1
S1	Female	21	Chinese
S2	Female	34	Korean
S3	Female	19	Chinese
S4	Female	18	Chinese
S5	Female	25	Chinese
S6	Female	30	Chinese
S7	Female	23	Chinese
S8	Female	19	Chinese
S9	Female	21	Chinese
S10	Female	33	Spanish
S11	Female	19	Chinese
S12	Male	22	Chinese
S13	Male	27	Malaysian
S14	Male	20	Chinese
S35	Male	31	Brazilian

Table 4.1- Group A Demographics

Student	Gender	Age	Nationality
S15	Female	28	Chinese
S16	Female	34	Chinese
S17	Male	33	Chinese
S18	Female	18	Chinese
S19	Female	22	Korean
S20	Female	24	Japanese
S21	Female	19	French
S22	Male	21	French
S23	Female	18	Japanese

S25	Female	23	Chinese
S26	Female	20	Chinese
S27	Male	24	Italian
S28	Female	21	French
S29	Male	23	French
S30	Male	30	Sri Lankan
S31	Female	33	Chinese
S34	Male	21	Italian

Table 4.2- Group B Demographics

The tables only show the demographic information for participants who gave consent to be included in this study. Participants who withdrew consent are not shown.

Student Gender

As shown in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, each of the groups had more female students than male students. There were 73% females in Group A and 65% in Group B. Overall, there were 69% females and 31% males.

Student Age

As shown in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, student age also varied. The majority of students (66%) were between the ages of 18 and 24.

Student Nationality

Students came largely from China. 56% of the students were Chinese.

<u>Previous Language Learning Experience</u>

Students also rated their language proficiency level. As discussed in Chapter Three,

only participants who rated their English level as pre-intermediate to intermediate were

accepted onto this course.

<u>Teacher Demographic Information</u>

As shown in Table 4.3, there was a greater number of female teachers than males

teachers. Overall, there were 93% female teachers and 7% male teachers.

Teacher	Gender	Age	Nationality
T1	Female	20	English
T2	Female	20	English
T3	Female	20	English
T4	Female	20	English
T5	Female	20	English
T6	Female	20	English
T7	Female	20	English
T8	Female	20	English
T9	Female	20	English
T10	Male	20	English
T11	Female	20	English
T12	Female	20	English
T13	Female	20	English
T14	Female	20	English

Table 4.3- Teachers' Demographic Information

All of the teachers were native speakers of British English. They had studied for a

degree in English Language and Linguistics from the same UK university. They had

also all obtained a qualification in CELTA no more than 12 months previously. The majority of the teachers had not taught a course since qualifying in the CELTA, but all had previous teaching experience from CELTA, and had taught using the BBC Speakout books on the CELTA course.

Summary: Demographic Information

There were a total of 49 participants in this study. 3 of these participants withdrew their consent leaving a remaining 46. Of the 46 remaining participants, 32 were students and 14 were teachers. 35 were females and 11 were males. Participants all resided in the place of study at the time this research was carried out, and had all had some previous experience of ESOL education prior to the study.

4.3 Research Question One

In this section, I present the results of the first research question, which asked:

Based on the recommendations outlined in Relph (2015), is the revised and updated FIACS an appropriate way to categorise ESOL classroom interaction between teachers and students?

This research question is a conceptual one. It examined the changes made to the FIACS in the revised and updated version and questioned whether or not these changes have improved the accuracy of the system in regards to ESOL-specific classroom contexts. What follows in this section are details of the revisions made to the FIACS

and an evaluation of the appropriateness of its use in ESOL classrooms.

Revising the FIACS

The FIACS has previously been expanded for use in EFL by Moskowitz (1976) to contain over 20 new categories. However, it was decided for this study that the category system should be made more manageable by reducing the number of categories. By keeping a smaller list of distinct categories, this helps the system become easier to memorise and learn. The category system used in this study has been designed to be as practical as possible so that it can be used in an applied context. The methods described here can be used by teachers, teacher-trainers and education policy implementors, to similar effect, without the necessary need for a previous background in academic research. This hopefully allows the system to have cross-purpose appeal, in that it can be applied outside of an academic context. This increases the system's usefulness to people with an interest in classroom interaction.

The adaptations to the categorisation framework were devised in response to my own observations of the classroom interaction. By applying the original framework and then discovering there were elements of interaction that could not be adequately accounted for with the original, I amended the categorisations in order to make it more inclusive of those elements. The amendments to the categorisation system arose from my own critical engagement with, and application of, the framework to the data itself. This was followed up by a workshop session with the ESOL teachers who tested the revisions made and provided feedback on the category definitions.

The new category system consists of 17 categories, 11 which describe aspects of teacher-talk, 2 which describe aspects of student-talk and 2 which describe types of silence:

Category 1

Category 1 consists of teacher statements which accept and clarify an attitude or the feelings of a student in a non-threatening manner. The feelings may be positive or negative. This also includes predicting or recalling feelings. Flanders claims these statements are rare and infrequent. One reason for their low incidence is the use of a special rule which states that the teacher must literally name or otherwise identify the emotion(s) present before the statement can be classified as "1".

Category 2

Category 2 remains unaltered from the original version: it describes praise and encouragement by the teacher which carries the value judgement of approval. To look directly at a student and nod your head whilst saying, "Mm-mm"- with a certain inflection- is to communicate to the student that they are producing the correct behaviour and the teacher would like more of the same. The difference between Category 1 and 2, is that in 1 there is an element of objectiveness which is missing in 2. Both categories are used for statements which have overtones of warmth and friendliness, but Category 2 adds teacher approval as well. For the full outline of this category, revisit the description in Chapter 3.

Category 3

Category 3 also remains unaltered from the original version. It encapsulates several different teacher meanings:

1. They can acknowledge them through repeating them.
2. They can modify the idea and reshape it in their own words.
3. They can apply the idea and use it to infer the next stage of an analysis of a problem.
4. They can compare the idea to one expressed by another student or by the teacher.
5. Or they can summarise what was said by the student.

Category 3 occasionally raises problems concerning paraphrasing and abstracting which may cause a subtle change of meaning. When a teacher makes use of a student's idea in such a way that it is probable the student would no longer recognise it as their own, it cannot be categorised as a 3. This means that when teachers translate students' ideas into their own words, and at the same time add or subtract various meanings in order to perhaps push students toward a certain desired response, the idea no longer belongs to the student and becomes the teachers' own original idea. For examples of this, please revisit the full description of Category 3 in Chapter 3.

Flanders (1970) found that there is some evidence to show that greater incidence of Category 3 is associated with above average classroom measures of both student satisfaction and student achievement.

Category 4a

Questions asked by a teacher which serve the purpose of driving the interaction along to a different step, to introduce a new problem element, and to include ideas which the teacher believes to be important, are coded 4a. A second requirement is that the teacher acts as though they expect an answer.

Questions are usually fairly easy to recognise, even when they are open. Not all questions are classified in Category 4a, such as commands, praise or criticisms framed as questions. Teacher questions can really be coded in any one of the seven teacher-talk categories: in Category 1 if they are objective, nonthreatening enquiries involving attitudes or emotions and designate the feeling or emotion; in Category 2 if they are intended to praise; in 3 if they are based on ideas previously expressed by the student; in 5a if they are categorical and no answer is expected; in 6a if they are directions; and in 7a if they are intended to criticise, or to catch students who are daydreaming. Usually the questions which are coded 4a are genuine invitations to participate.

Category 4b

Elicitations made by the teacher which serve to prompt a specific response from a student, that the teacher views as desirable, are coded as 4b. As in 4a, the teacher must also act as though they expect an answer. The elicitations here refer to specifically "ESOL elicitations", a technique used by teachers to get the students to provide information rather than giving it to them.

Example 11)

The teacher elicits different types of food by asking students to look at some examples, then saying 'Some different types of food are…?'

In ESOL, elicitation is a vital component for a variety of reasons. It helps develop a student-centred dynamic, it makes learning memorable as students can link new and old ideas, and it can help produce a dynamic and stimulating learning environment.

Category 5

Lecturing, giving facts, expressing opinions, interjecting thoughts, and off-hand remarks are all classified in this category. In a way, it is sort of a catch-all for teacher statements, primarily because it usually has the highest frequency, and an incorrect tally, more or less, would be least likely to distort teachers' profiles, compared to some of the other categories.

Category 6a

Category 6a is for statements which give direction to students. Such statements tend to enhance the authority of the teacher.

Category 6a is used to show close direction and supervision to the students by the teacher. This category helps to establish a true teacher initiation- student response pattern. Even questions can be coded 6a.

Category 6b

This category is used for teacher directed drills or modelling and drilling, whereby the teacher models some language and students echo it back.

Modelling and drilling has been given its own subcategory because it is a feature which is much more common in ESOL contexts. Other non-ESOL classes may occasionally employ drilling, but not often the act of modelling and drilling together. At least not to the extent that it is prevalent in almost all ESOL contexts, and so is largely significant as a feature on its own. It has a fixed form and conventions which are noticeably distinct from the giving of other commands, and so deserves a separate category in the context of ESOL lessons.

Category 7a

Category 7a remains unaltered from the original version. It is for statements made by the teacher which criticise the student. Such statements tend to enhance the authority of the teacher. Category 7a is recorded to show close direction and supervision to the students by the teacher. It helps to establish a true teacher initiation- student response pattern. For the full outline of this category, revisit the description in Chapter 3.

Category 7b

Category 7b describes an utterance used by the teacher which seeks to mark their intention to create a boundary in the interaction. This occurs when the teacher wishes

to move the lesson along by changing topics or by starting a new activity.

Examples:

12) Teacher: So I want you to have a look at the text on the sheet.

13) Teacher: Okay, so, what answers have we got?

The function of *"So"* in both examples is to signal a change in the direction of the conversation, in this case to start a new part of the lesson, "so" is a discourse marker here. They can be used to focus, clarify, contrast, change the subject, show agreement or disagreement.

Category 8

This category describes talk by students which occurs in response to the teacher. Teachers initiate contact, or solicit the students' statements, or structures the situation. The students' freedom to express their own ideas is limited.

Category 9

Category 9 describes utterances made by students which demonstrate an expression of students' will through independent judgment. They contain an element of creativity and higher mental processes compared with the noncreative and lower mental processes of Category 8.

An observer might, from the proportion of 9's compared to all student talk, like to infer something about the freedom of students to express their own ideas, to suggest their own approach to a problem, and to develop their own explanations or theories.

Category 10

When there is a pause in classroom interaction, or when there is noise or confusion, Category 10 is used. There is very little point in recording a series of 10's for longer than 1 or 2 minutes. The FIACS is intended for situations where verbal exchanges exist between teachers and students, or in which such an exchange is imminent.

Category 11

Another shortcoming of FIACS is that transactional silence is not distinguished from silent working. An 11th category has been added and used to make distinctions between silences which are of interest to the teacher.

This category is for silence where interaction is no longer expected. This could be because the students are silently working and so are not engaged in interaction at that moment, and neither is an interaction imminent. This is separate from Category 10 which has been revised to only include transactional silences, that is, silences where further interaction is expected such as short pauses in speech where the interactant has not finished their turn. Under the new revised system, when an interchange no longer is expected the observer switches to the new Category 11, as opposed to the original study where they simply stopped categorising.

It may be helpful to remind ourselves at this stage that the FIACS was not designed to answer detailed questions about different types of silences. By developing only two out of ten categories for student-talk, and one to silence, the inferences about student-talk and silence that can be drawn will be limited.

Table 4.4 The categories of the modified FIACS with the new revised editions of the categories highlighted in bold (Adapted from Flanders, 1970).

	Response
Teacher Talk	1. *Accepts feelings.* Accepts and clarifies an attitude or the feeling tone of a student in a nonthreatening manner. Feelings may be positive or negative. Predicting and recalling feelings are included.
	2. *Praises or encourages.* Praises or encourages student action or behaviour. Jokes that release tension, but not at the expense of another individual; nodding head or saying "Um hm?" or "go on" are included.
	3. *Accepts or uses ideas of students.* Clarifying, building, or developing ideas suggested by a student. Teacher extensions of student ideas are included but as the teacher brings more of their own ideas into play, shift to category five.
	4a. *Asks questions*. Asking a question about content or procedure, based on teacher ideas, with the intent that a student will answer.
	4b. *Elicitations*. Teacher prompts a specific response

	from the student.
	Initiation
	5. *Lecturing.* Giving facts or opinions about content or procedures; expressing *their own* ideas, giving *their own* explanation, or citing an authority other than a student.
	6a. *Giving directions.* Directions, commands, or orders to which a student is expected to comply.
	6b. *Modelling and Drilling.* The teacher models some language for the students to echo back.
	7a. *Criticising or justifying authority.* Statements intended to change student behaviour from an unacceptable to an acceptable pattern; bawling someone out; stating why the teacher is doing what they are doing; extreme self-reference.
	7b. *Marking discourse.* **Utterances by the teacher which are used to mark discourse. They are used to focus, clarify, contrast, change the subject, show agreement or disagreement, etc.**
Student Talk	8. S*tudent-talk—response.* Talk by students in response to teacher. Teacher initiates the contact or solicits student statement or structures the situation. Freedom to express own ideas is limited.
	9. S*tudent-talk—initiation.* Talk by students which they initiate. Expressing own ideas; initiating of a new topic;

	freedom to develop opinions and a line of thought, like asking thoughtful questions; going beyond the existing structure.
Silence 10. *Interactional Silence.* **Silence that is parts of an interactional sequence. Pauses, short periods of silence and periods of confusion in which communication cannot be understood by the observer.** 11. *Transactional Silence.* **Silent working, or students talking to each other. No interaction with the teacher is imminent.**	

Note that there is no value attached to these numbers. Each number is purely classificatory, to designate a particular communication event, not to pass a judgment on that communication.

Evaluation of the Revised Category System

Since classroom interaction is so complex and involves many nuances, category definitions and ground rules, the definitions of each category can never completely cover all the problems that will arise. However, there are many differences in pedagogy between ESOL teaching and ordinary native language speaking practices, that the FIACS does not readily account for. This can lead to seemingly unusual results when applying FIACS to an ESOL context and issues about administrating it in the first place. Flanders gives permission for one to "feel free when you investigate patterns of classroom communication, to develop a different procedure which matches your problem or modify the procedures [described]" (1970: 77). This idea will be expanded upon in this next section.

The revised interaction analysis category system is designed to be an efficient tool with which to measure both the social and emotional climate of an ESOL classroom. It provides a method of examining and recording interaction between teachers and their students in a way that is objective and reliable. This revised interaction analysis category system could be used by ESOL teacher trainers as a way in which to provide feedback to trainee teachers about classroom teaching, as well as by teachers to provide feedback to their colleagues, or for self evaluation. Because the revised interaction analysis category system focuses mostly on the teacher's talk, it is a good tool to use when comparing the different teaching styles of different teachers in the same subject, across, for example, different grade levels, genders, nationalities and age groups.

However, as previously stated, less attention is paid towards student-talk. As a result of this, the interactions that occur between student and student are not considered here. Only discourse involving both the teacher and students is examined. There are rules for observing classes correctly using this system, which must be followed in order to achieve accurate results with the revised interaction analysis category system. The revised system is also designed to be diagnostic in nature, as it can help provide insight into the behavioural patterns of teachers, to identify and study a teacher's relative 'strengths' and 'weaknesses'. It can also be used as a way to measure and evaluate teachers in training. The analysis of the matrix is designed to be so dependable that even people who were not present at the classes are able to make accurate inferences about the verbal interaction.

The entire process of using an interaction analysis category system needs to be done by a trained observer, one who is familiar with the limitations of such a research method, in order for the results to be accurate. This revised interaction analysis category system is intended to be taken as a purely explanatory device; therefore it cannot be used as a means of distinguishing good and bad teaching behaviours. This system is not designed to evaluate classroom interaction or teacher/ teaching behaviour. This revised interaction analysis category system does not describe the totality of classroom activity, although, as previously stated, no categorising system can ever be entirely unproblematic. So it is with full awareness of the problems and limitations of this system that I would like to explore, in greater depth, the alterations made to the categories and their definitions in order that this system is now better equipped to be employed in an ESOL specific classroom context. This will hopefully provide some justification and insight into the reasoning behind why the FIACS was adapted in this way. My hope is that these adaptations are found to be of interest and could be build-able and/or trialled as a topic of future research.

Advantages and Disadvantages of using Interaction Analysis Coding Systems in the ESOL Classroom.

There are advantages and disadvantages to using Interaction Analysis Coding Systems such as this in an ESOL classroom. One of the advantages, indeed perhaps the main advantage of using such a system as this is that, in simple applications, coding requires only a pen and paper. This revision of the FIACS sought to keep the categories distinct and all-inclusive, without compromising on usability. What is meant by this is that this system has been designed to be used by people such as ESOL teacher or teacher-

trainers who do not necessarily have a background in classroom interaction or conversation analysis; indeed even in linguistics. The categories themselves have been designed so as to be easy to understand and easy to memorise with no specialist technical skills training required beyond a need to learn the category definitions. This means that this system has a practical application and there are opportunities for teachers to employ this interaction analysis category system within their own classrooms.

The display of results can be designed to compare the results of the coding process with other data, or with a coded model. Observation is systematic, programmed, and its reliability can be determined. Long sessions of classroom teaching can be efficiently displayed.

On the other hand, accomplishing any sort of skill in observation requires practice. Although effort was taken in the designing of this revised system to make the categories distinct and therefore straightforward to learn, it would still take some effort on part of the observer to familiarise themselves with each of the category definitions in order to sufficiently learn the categories and to feel confident about making professionally important discriminations. In some instances, tedious clerical work is required when it comes to getting the figures ready to be analysed. This revised interaction analysis category system is designed to be applicable in ESOL classrooms and was only tested in ESOL classroom at the development stage. Usage in other FL classroom settings may be possible but are untested, and could provide a topic of further research. This interaction analysis category system is not intended for use in non-FL settings as this may have a negative impact on the actual interactional

significance of the results. For non-FL classroom contexts, the original FIACS is still best applicable.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the demographic information of the students and teachers who took part in this study. It also explains the revisions made to the FIACS and how these revisions will strive to ensure that the FIACS can have a greater accuracy in portraying the interaction taking place in ESOL classrooms.

Research Question One sought to examine the changes made to the FIACS in the revised and updated version and question whether or not these changes have improved the accuracy of the system in regards to ESOL-specific classroom contexts.

ESOL teaching takes such a vastly different pedagogical approach to most non-ESOL methods of teaching, as well as encompassing a great deal of diversity within itself that having a separate category system to categorise interaction within this context seemed necessary in order to provide a truly accurate reflection of interaction that occurred within this context, as there are certain ESOL-specific features of interaction that were not adequately covered under the old FIACS. This revised version of Flanders' interaction analysis category system is intended to be a specialised system for use in categorising interactions in the ESOL classroom. This study assumes the contextually-based nature of language and so, based upon that assumption, a context generalisable interaction analysis category system cannot work accurately.

The revised interaction analysis category system addresses the issue of certain ESOL-specific phenomena that the FIACS does not currently accommodate, such as modelling and drilling.

The FIACS Category 10, which had previously encompassed all silence and confusion in the classroom, has now been split into two categories, 10 and 11, for interactional silences and transactional silences respectively.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS (RESEARCH QUESTION TWO)

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the results of the second research question, which was designed to explore what an interaction analysis category system can reveal about the types of interaction which occur between teachers and students in ESOL classroom contexts.

5.2 Research Question Two

What does an analysis of student-teacher interaction, using the modified Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System, reveal about the different interaction types produced by the teachers and students in the context of an ESOL classroom?

The second research question sought to provide a picture of how students and teachers interact with each other in an ESOL class as part of their language learning. The results for Research Question Two include the entire course population; all research participants are included because the different behaviours of participants can shed light on the overall interactional "picture" of a class. An overview of the results of all the research questions can be found in Chapter 7.

Very little is known about the actual practices of students and teachers in an ESOL education environment. A majority of the literature written is speculative, hypothesised or based on student-teacher perception of non-ESOL classrooms rather than on actual ESOL practices. Research Question Two therefore offers a unique, detailed insight into

the interactional practices of ESOL students and teachers. In addition, much of the

research available on interaction is by and large inferential, and is not descriptive in

nature.

Interactional Purpose

Each utterance on the course was coded as having one of 14 interactional purposes.

The majority of utterances made were in direct relation to language learning tasks.

In a study of learner preferences, Hao (2004) found that students preferred instructional

interaction (Revised Category 6a/ FIACS Category 6) more than any other types of

interaction; she defined this as anything considered to be directly related to the course

content. Lie (2008) correlated this to the combination of foreign language and language

and cultural tasks, which students did complete more than any other tasks. So although

Hao's study was based on students' attitudes towards the task, the same results were

found investigating actual practices: that students prefer to spend time on the course

content.

In summary, participants interacted with each other in different ways, although some

distinct patterns arose.

5.3 Observing Classrooms Using the Revised FIACS

The following section will examine the data collected in Research Question Two in

greater detail in order to better understand the interactional practices that occur

between teachers and students in ESOL classrooms.

Although everything that happens in a classroom depends on the coordination and cooperation of the teacher and students, it is usually considered the norm for the teacher to be in control. The teacher ordinarily makes most of the managerial decisions, and decides who is allowed to talk, to whom, what they will talk about, in what language and so on.

Table 5.1 Frequency of Interaction Categories

Cat	1	2	3	4a	4b	5	6a	6b	7a	7b	8	9	10	11	Total
Total	44	440	975	1639	163	3973	830	60	26	605	2593	3154	1032	571	16105
%	0.27	2.73	6.05	10.17	1.01	24.66	5.15	0.37	0.16	3.75	16.1	19.58	6.4	3.6	100

Category 1

0.27% of classroom interaction is spent on understanding and accepting students' feelings. Examples of teacher talk observed in this study that fall into this category would be:

*Teacher 5- "*Are you okay Student 3?*"*
*Teacher 1- "*You're welcome hm."

Category 2

2.73% of classroom time is spent on encouragement of students. "Feedback is an

inevitable part of classroom interaction" (Chaudron, 1988:133). Previous research has

shown that positive feedback is more helpful in improving students' learning than

negative feedback (Nunan, 1991). The same research also showed that simple praise,

for example, "good", or "very good", does have a positive effect on students'

performance. In the classes observed for this study, praising students and/or accepting

their answers was a common feature of almost every lesson. Neglecting was not

observed in this study. Cardelle & Corno (1981: 260) studied instructor feedback in a

FL course and found that feedback leads to the development of linguistic forms, stating

that it:

> ...supports[s] the notion that a major learning function can be
> served, at least in second language acquisition, by feedback that
> makes students' errors salient in a motivationally salient way.
> Specific feedback on errors draws attention to material not
> adequately learnt, allowing the student to focus there and not be
> distracted by too much re-examination of work done well.

The students in this study could find feedback particularly helpful, especially because

students in this environment are likely to be much more extrinsically motivated to

master the language. They are taking the language to complete a language

requirement- they live in an English speaking country and many of them are here to

work or to study.

Category 3

In addition, 6.05% of classroom interaction is spent by the teacher, on acceptance of, or benefiting from students' comments and elaboration of their opinions.

The following is an example of a Category 3 teacher-talk followed by a Category 2:

Teacher 8- **"**Wearing waterproof clothes, well done.*"*
*Student 7- "*Suitcase."

Teacher 8- "Suitcase, well done. Anything else?"

The teacher accepts the student's utterance of suitcase by repeating the utterance showcasing an acceptance of the student's idea (Category 3), then follows by immediately praising the student with a "well done." (Category 2) This combination of 3 followed by 2 was a common co-occurrence of categories observed in this study.

Category 4a

10.17% of time belongs to the questions asked by teachers.

*Teacher 5- "*Yeah, which picture is aspirin?"
Students- "O."

The teacher asks a question to which the students respond with an answer. Such an utterance provides the students with an opportunity to take an active part in the interaction, albeit in a structured, controlled way that does not allow for the forming of talk independent from the teacher.

Category 4b

Another way that students have an opportunity to take an active part in the interaction, in a structured way is through answering teachers' elicitations. Elicitations in this study are classified according to what we define as "ESOL Elicitations" where the teacher gets the students to provide the information rather than giving it to them. Examples of this can be seen in the following interaction:

Teacher 8- "Binoculars."

Students- "H."

Teacher 8- "Dictionary.*"*

Students- "K."

*Teacher 8- "*Digital camera."

Students- "C."

Here the teacher is eliciting the answer from the students to the question of which picture represents which object she is saying. Rather than simply saying 'The binoculars are in picture H', the teacher states the names of the objects and elicits the response from the students. This allows students opportunity to interact with the

teacher in the task.

Category 5

The results obtained from this study indicate that of all interactions occurring during ESOL classroom processes and lessons, 24.66% belong to teachers' speeches and explanations. Even though Category 5 still accounts for the largest proportion of class-talk-time, the difference between that and Category 9 is not as large as the previous studies would show. Flanders (1970: 52) states that "normally 4, 5 and 8 are the most frequently occurring categories." Thus, we can expect there to be more 5's, 6's, 7's and 8's over 1's, 2's, 3's and 9's.

Teacher 6- "Okay, so to travel light means to not take any items, so take everything in one bag, one small bag, so if you're travelling light you're not taking a lot with you, okay?"

Teacher 10- "Okay, well we would like to go to Easter Island. It is very isolated, very far away from other places and the nearest country is Chile. Over two thousand miles away."

Teacher-centred methods encourage students to digest vocabulary and grammar, but this can limit their ability to apply their knowledge and formulate their own unique responses. Cole and Chan (1994) believe that more student participation plays a fundamental role in a successful lesson. Using a whole-class discussion style of learning means that every student is kept in a state of absolute consciousness during

the lesson, so they are likely to remember more of the lesson content because they played an active part in it. If a teacher tries to deliberately avoid class discussions to keep student-talk to a minimum, this means that students are more likely to day-dream and not take as much of the lesson in. A teacher needs to direct the interaction to perhaps a specifically targeted student in order to keep learners in the state of absolute consciousness during class, such as randomly nominating students to speak. In order to increase student-talk in the classroom, the teacher can help to create more opportunities for student interaction. For example, the teacher could incorporate more problem-solving tasks into the lessons. Activities such as information gap exercises and those which involve the students collaborating together would foster more interaction. These tasks would all encourage greater oral output, number of turns taken in spoken language, and negotiation of meaning.

Category 6a

The third largest ranking of classroom interaction belongs to instructions and behavioural questions asked by teachers of students, i.e. 10.17%.

Teacher 3- "Can you just read through that on your own for now and answer these two question if you can do?"

Teacher 7- *"So listen carefully and see if you can hear the different sentences in the box at the bottom."*

Category 6b

Modelling of target language by the teacher is a specific feature of ESOL lessons. Here, in this study, it made up 0.37% of interaction time in class.

Teacher 10- "The trip is going to take."

Student 12- "The trip is going to take."

Teacher 10- "The trip is going to take. Just repeat--"

Student 14- "The trip is going to take."

Teacher 10- "Some of the problems we're going to face include.*"*

Students- "Some of the problems we're going to face include."

In these examples observed, the teacher is modelling the desired language and the students repeat it together after the teacher. This technique is known as modelling and drilling and is a technique taught on the CELTA course, of which all of these teachers trained, to help students learn pronunciation.

Category 7a

Teachers spend 0.16% of interactions on severe criticism of students and imperative justifications.

Teacher 2- "Okay everyone, just the last thing before I go, Guys!"

Student 2- "Sorry*"*

Teacher 2- "Can everybody look here? I know Student 2 wants to have a chat but she should wait! Rude!"

Criticism of students' behaviour was rarely observed in this study, possibly due to the fact that the students were all adults and so were able to behave themselves well in an adult manner, cooperating with the teacher and their fellow students. Most of the time the students were actually older than the teachers, so it is possible that on the occasions where teacher wished to change the behaviour of the students, they felt unable to, out of embarrassment or fear of being disrespectful. Teacher-talk time may have also been affected by the fact that the teachers were newly qualified and did not have considerable teaching experience. For example, giving oral feedback and error-correction are areas that ESOL tutors gain confidence in as they become more experienced in the field.

Category 7b

Category 7b describes an utterance used by the teacher which seeks to mark their intention to create a boundary in the interaction. This occurs when the teacher wishes to move the lesson along by changing topics or by starting a new activity. This made up 3.75% of classroom interaction in this study.

Teacher 5- "Okay, so, how about we read the extract?"
Teacher 9- "So, what does the first text say?"

The function of these utterances is largely to signal a change in the direction of the conversation, in both of these cases the teacher is attempting to focus the students onto a task or topic.

Category 8

16.1% of interaction belongs to students' talks pertaining to teachers' questions. Kearsley (1999) stated that although it is a widely held belief that a high level of interaction is desirable and positively affects that effectiveness of education, it is not clear from the research or evaluative data that interaction improves that quality of instruction in most education programs. Jiang & Ting (2000) have specifically suggested that receptive interaction is an important source of learning and that the completion of tasks is much more important than once thought. Bandura (1986) differentiates learning from performance and argues that individuals can learn through observation alone, which could lead to learning without even showing performance. Beaudoin (2002) found that "lurkers" still feel that they are learning and that they are benefiting despite keeping a low-profile approach in the classroom, and that students who are highly interactive do not necessarily achieve better grades. However, the research in this area is highly speculative and not based on actual student practices.

Teacher 2- "Yeah. So when it was raining the girls decided to escape?"
Student 10- "Yeah, the girls decided to escape."
Teacher 2- "Can you find the past simple past continuous sentence in that?"
Student 2- **"Past er simple? Before he became a famous rev er revolutionary"**

In this example all of the students' utterances are made in direct response to the utterances made by the teacher. The students do not attempt to change the subject or tract of the interaction, which is driven by the teacher. Carroll (2001) maintains that it is still not certain what exactly interaction provides, and if it is anything more than practice. These results could also reflect Meunier's (1998) finding, that student anxiety is initially very high in ESOL classes. Students who are just getting accustomed to the nature of FL learning might need more time to develop a comfort level with the classes. They must first familiarise themselves with arriving in a new country, familiarising themselves with a new language and a new culture, and then with the collaborative, communicative-centred tasks that may not have been reflective of their previous FL learning experience in their own countries. This course may not have been long enough for some students to feel 'safe' completing tasks that do not resemble their previous language learning experiences. Also, the students were taught by many different teachers and so did not get the chance to cultivate a relationship with the sane teacher over multiple lessons, which may have meant that building a rapport in the classroom was harder.

Flanders' original study examined interaction processes between teachers and students between the ages of 12 and 17. Because little of the research on FL learning focuses on adult learners, students in this context may be mature enough to be able to examine the language systems, and are potentially more focused on mastering the grammatical structures of the language, possibly reflecting how they learnt language previously. The majority of the students observed in this study came from a Chinese background where cultural differences with regards to interaction preferences and styles may have a significant effect on preferred learning styles. For example, Jin and Cortazzi (1998)

and McKay et al. (2008) looked at Chinese ESOL students with British teachers and found that the Chinese students did not see classroom discussion and interaction as being of much importance to their language learning. Instead they placed a heavier emphasis on teacher-directed lectures.

These findings also mirror that of Curtis et al. (1999: 44) who suggest that "some language students, particularly those who are accustomed to teacher-centred approaches may believe that they cannot learn from their peers or from a more collaborative style of learning." Thurmond et al. (2002), have also reported that students report less satisfaction working with their classmates.

These results could also take into account Knowles's (1998) distinction of andragogical and pedagogical learning principles (e.g., how adult learners learn differently from children). Knowles makes several distinctions between the needs of adult learners from the needs of younger learners. First, is the distinction of understanding why something is important. For FL learning, this could transfer into learners needing to understand why the language is structured the way it is, and why they need to use a specific language structure in a specific sentence type. Another point Knowles makes is that learners need to relate the materials to their previous experiences. Because the students are all living in the UK, discussing UK culture and society, as well as the topic of travelling, could be topics of specific interest to them.

The input hypothesis suggests that the completion of receptive tasks should lead to linguistic development (Krashen, 1985) and the output hypothesis suggests that

productive tasks would lead to linguistic development. While these results seem to indicate that interaction is a vital part of language learning, other findings have not shown that a relationship between interactivity and learning outcomes exist (Ebner & Holizinger, 2005). Freeman & Anderson (2007) studied "lurkers" and found that active participation in class discussions had no relationship to higher grades.

Additionally, Kearsley (1995) commented that if a student was strongly autonomous and extremely self-driven, they might not need as much interaction than other less independent students. However, these studies all examined interaction in classrooms quite generally, and were not language learning focused. The Sociocultural theory, especially, at its core, posits that learning cannot be done in isolation; learning has to be done within a social context. The Interactionist theories posit that language learning is a social process, which "evolves out of learning how to carry on conversations" (de Bot, Lowie & Verspoor, 2005: 404).

Category 9

19.58% of time belongs to students' free talks and the talks that are initiated by students. This shows that students in the ESOL classrooms observed for this study talk much more independently of their teacher, and take the initiative more than in previous research examining non-ESOL classrooms (Walker, 2002; Hai & Bee, 2006). In other words, the ESOL students in the classrooms observed in the course of this study are active in the classroom discourse. Furthermore, their participation is more aligned with communicating in a more creative, initiative-taking and freer type of talk, rather than just talking in response to the teachers' utterances.

Student 2- "Excuse me, travelling, is it a double L or...*"*

Teacher 2- "Is travelling double L?*"*

Students- "Yes."

Student 2- *"You don't like activities?"*

Teacher 3- "Not in the snow, I don't!"

It might have been expected that the proportion on student-talk would be higher than in previous studies because of the way in which ESOL lessons are designed to deliberately give students more opportunities to speak and practice their language. In a sense, I think that is what is shown here. In this study, student talking time, spent in free and initiative-taking talks is noticeably higher than the results obtained in the study by Sahlberg (2008).

The greater prevalence of Category 9, in the data collected for this study, over Category 8 is interesting and unusual, demonstrating that teaching practices in the ESOL classrooms observed here tend to be more student-centred than normal classroom contexts and ESOL students take a much more active role in classroom interaction.

Active participation of students is greatly encouraged in the ESOL classroom, with the majority of lessons designed specifically to give students opportunity to practice their speaking and listening skills. Ahmad & Aziz, (2009) and Odundo (2013) show that by

making lessons more student centred and having less teacher-talk time, the students can actually learn more. They suggest that, student-centred methods may be more effective in enhancing learning achievement than teacher-centred approaches, but only in certain educational contexts. Student-centred methods are known for stimulating innovation, critical thinking skills and retention of knowledge, whereas teacher-centred methods carry the association of limited opportunity of innovation and a more scientific-based approach to thought.

Another explanation for the prevalence of student-centred talk could be that the participants of this study were all students who genuinely wanted to learn. There were no guidelines or requirements for participating in lessons, students could attend (or not attend) as many or as few classes as they wished. However, as the classes ran were offered for free; and there being no other similar classes offered free in the area, it is possible that this could have made some students feel as though they did they not have any other options available for language learning and so made as much of an effort to participate in class as possible.

A study by Jiang & Ting (2000) found that teacher expectations for interaction were linked to perceived learning. In this study however, there were no guidelines or requirements for participation; learners participated in as many or as few lessons as they found beneficial to their learning.

Another explanation for this finding is that participants who genuinely wanted to learn English had little other options similar to this one available in the area at the time. In

the location of the study, there are English Language courses available, but even though they may be in the same city, there are possibly some conflicts due to scheduling, fees, etc. It is likely that this could make some participants feel a certain degree of urgency; those who really felt that they did not have any other options for language learning other than these free classes likely made an effort to do as much as they could during the duration of the course.

One of the weaknesses of the interaction analysis category system used in this study, it has to be said, is that 9 is the only code symbol which can be used for off-hand remarks by students, counter-dependant statements, and resistance to compliance. That is, both cooperative and uncooperative initiation falls into the same category. This may have consequences for the interpretation of data such as the perception of students challenging teachers' authority in the classroom, and student satisfaction levels which researchers may be able to draw preliminary inference from distinguishing between initiation that is cooperative or uncooperative. Also examining students' negative or positive behaviour is only possible by examining the reaction of the teacher to that behaviour, not by being able to see the behaviour itself.

Category 10

10% of class time is spent in interactional silence. Silence or confusion, where the observer could not see any interaction between teachers and students, was recorded. Previous research on silence in the classroom has found that the percentage of time in the lesson where silence occurred was around 1% (Atakin & Brown, 2001; Anorue, 2004; Schulz, 2010). Having 1% of the total class time observed be silence could seem

to support the view that most teachers dominate classroom discourse, if it is in the fact the teachers who are doing most of the talking.

The FIACS Category 10, which had previously encompassed all silence and confusion in the classroom, has now been split into two categories, 10 and 11, for interactional silences and transactional silences respectively. It was felt that there should be a distinction between silences which occur as a result of a pause in interaction, where interaction is expected (interactional silences), and silences which occur as a result of students perhaps completing an activity in silence. Therefore the silence occurs not as a result of nothing happening in the classroom, but just as a result of interaction between teachers and students not being required for a certain specific activity (transactional silences).

One factor to do with the prevalence of interactional silence in this study, may have to do with the level of this course. Most research on classroom interaction involves learners at advanced levels of FL study. Students might not feel as confident or may be deficient in their language level to interact with the teacher at an intermediate level. Students in most FL classes have time to establish a rapport with one another and their teacher, whereas in this study they had different teachers every week and different fellow students.

Category 11

There was a high proportion of classroom time taken up by transactional silence on behalf of the participants. There are several explanations for this result: Firstly, the nature of some of the tasks focused on discrete language skills rather than communicative competence, and so the interaction level would be lower during those tasks. In the case of this study, the silence in the classroom occurred very often in the context of students being instructed to complete an activity in silence. There may have been an absence of verbal interaction between the teachers and students, but the vast majority of the time this was caused by the students quietly completing their work with the teachers monitoring close-by. In all lessons observed, the teachers were ready to interact by answering questions, if needs be.

Schulz (2010) argues that silence occurs on a continuum; and to understand the role that a particular silence plays for the individual interactant, as well as the class as a whole, is a nuanced and complex process that may require new ways of conceptualising what is meant by listening. In the past, and certainly when Flanders was conducting his initial observations, silence was categorised as the absence of interaction. However, silences in the classroom, indeed silences everywhere, are capable of carrying different meanings dependant on their context and in fact can be a vital part of interaction. Schulz (2010) further emphasises that teachers should reconsider their silences, by carefully listening to their students and enquiring of them, which in essence, will shift teachers' understanding of students' participation. Schulz therefore concludes that participation should be redefined to include silence, a conclusion with which this thesis concurs.

Additionally, some learners may feel "safer" completing individual tasks rather group tasks. This security for individual tasks might be for one of several reasons. First, individual tasks are private and no one knows when the student has made an error (except the student), so they do not need to build up a comfort level with each other prior to completing them. Also, as the majority of students came from a Chinese background where greater emphasis is placed upon teacher-centred lecture based lessons rather than student-centred discussion based ones, students may feel that more discrete language learning items are "safer" because it is the type of learning that is familiar to them; it more closely resembles the language courses they have previously done. So interacting lots with other students may feel slightly awkward or unnatural.

In other words, 34.09% of interactions pertain to teachers' direct influence and 20.23% to teachers' indirect influence, i.e. 54.32% of total classroom interactions pertain to teacher talk. Based on these results, one can surmise that teachers are wont to use direct influence on students (Gross, 1993; Weimer, 1993; Anorue, 2004; Orunu, 2012). In addition, 35.68% of total classroom interaction pertains to student talk.

While many previous studies (Amidon & Hunter, 1967; Flanders, 1970; Walker, 2002; Wragg, 2002; Fathi- Azar, 2003; Hai & Bee, 2006; Blatt *et al.*, 2008; Hafiz-Mahmud *et al.*, 2008) concluded that teachers' direct talk time was around 75% of their total talk time in non-ESOL classrooms, the results obtained in the present study show a lower ratio. This indicates that students' participation in classes, in an ESOL context, is higher than in similar studies conducted outside of an ESOL context.

As noted in Flanders (1970), the teaching approaches favoured by teachers are influenced by the objectives of the lesson and by teachers' own individual teaching styles. The results of this investigation show that teachers did not stick to one specific method of delivery, showing great variation in styles. Most of the teachers used a variety of instructional methods, whether this was done consciously or unconsciously.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the results from descriptive data (interactional practices) and from the inferential data (the effect demographics may have on interactional practices). An overview of the interactional practices are presented in Table 5.1.

Research Question Two sought to provide a picture of how ESOL teachers and students interact in an ESOL course. The results for Research Question Two include the entire course population; all course participants are included, not solely the course completers, because the different behaviours of participants can shed light on the possible benefits. or not, of interaction.

The results suggest that if learners are provided with a rich learning environment, including a variety of tasks they can freely choose from, they will complete tasks that they consider to the most beneficial to their language development. In the present study, participants completed an average of 96 tasks during the eight week course. More tasks were completed during week one than any other week; the fewest number of tasks were completed in week 8. there were a comparable number of written and oral activities completed.

Another significant finding is that that the interactional practices of the groups varied slightly. Participants were divided into two different groups for the study. These groups were not given different treatments, but the second group (Group B) seemed to have a group dynamic that was very strong and several of the participants appeared to know each other from before the course had started. This helped to get conversations started, and over time, generated a strong sense of community. This was not observed to the same effect in Group A. Group A also had a higher rate of students not turning up classes than Group B. One possible reason that Group A did not have a higher student retention rate might have been because of the timing of the course, as the Group A course was run quite close the Christmas period.

Some of the findings from these analyses resemble previous research conducted in non-ESOL studies, but some are unique to this study possibly due the ESOL context, the community program in which students are enrolled, or that previous research is based on perceptions of interactions (Hao, 2004; Kearsley, 1999), not on actual practices (Freeman & Anderson, 2007; Paulus, 2007).

CHAPTER 6: RESULTS (RESEARCH QUESTION THREE)

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present some thoughts concerning the third research question, which was designed to explore the ways in which an interaction analysis category system could be practically applied in the training and development of ESOL teachers.

Research Question Three

How could an interaction analysis category system be practically applied in the training of ESOL teachers?

6.2 Practical Applications of Interaction Analysis Coding Systems in Teacher-Training

One of the main aims of this study was to produce a framework which could be employed by teachers in ESOL contexts in order to monitor their levels of interaction in the classroom. In order to make this system realistically and practically employable, it should be designed in a way that makes it accessible to those teachers who do not necessarily have an academic background in classroom interaction, conversation analysis, or even linguistics. In order to ensure this, the revised framework was tested by teachers with no previous acquaintance to the FIACS in order to gain their feedback into how user-friendly the new system was, how easy was it to understand and implement, and what criticisms or changes did they feel could improve the system.

Originally, it was felt by the teachers that having an extra category to show discourse markers was important in order to distinguish them from lecturing, and so this category as added.

The teachers felt that overall the system was straightforward and clear, with good distinctions make between each of the categories so that none of them overlapped one another. The descriptions of some of the categories were also made more explicit based on this consultation. The teachers each separately categorised a sample transcript from one of the ESOL classes observed in this study, and when comparing their classifications alongside that of the researcher, reached a categorisation consensus of around 70% agreement with the researcher. This demonstrates very clear proof that this revised category system is able to be used to a reasonable level of success by teachers with no previous experience of the FIACS.

Teachers are always looking for ways to improve in the classroom. The data collected on practitioners' engagement with the categorisation system caused the practitioners to reflect on how they could increase students' English Language production and interaction in lessons. The teachers found this useful to be able to see when and where the student interaction was happening, and this led to them being able to set goals for classroom interaction by planning more interaction-friendly activities for their lessons.

> "There are two main things that help students learn English, [and
> that is] time and practice. Although you can't rush learning, you
> can provide [the students] with practice time. By using the revised

FIACS, I can see where I can improve activities to give more space

for interaction. Hearing my students speak gives me the

opportunity to gauge what they have learned, and it is a way I can

monitor their progress."

-Comment from interview with 'Teacher 3'.

A potential side-effect of using the revised FIACS, is that by recording lessons for

categorisation, teachers can use the information gathered to assess students use of

target language because they will have a record of the talk occurring during a lesson. If

students are having difficulty with phrases or vocabulary, the teacher will be able to

offer guidance or further instruction to support language development.

Wong Fillmore & Snow (2000) state that:

Teachers play a critical role in supporting language development.

Beyond teaching [students] to read and write in school, they need to

help them learn and use aspects of language associated with the

academic discourse of the various school subjects. They need to help

them become more aware of how language functions in various modes

of communication across the curriculum. They need to understand

how language works well enough to select materials that will help

expand their students' linguistic horizons and to plan instructional

activities that give students opportunities to use the new forms and

modes of expression to which they are being exposed. Teachers need

to understand how to design the classroom language environment so

as to optimize language and literacy learning and to avoid linguistic

obstacles to content area learning (Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2000:7).

ESOL teaching is a profession with a high turnover of employees and the different

qualification requirements around the world mean that not all teachers have had the

same training experience to prepare them to teach English as a second language.

> "In my first few jobs as an ESOL teacher, I struggled with teaching
>
> English grammar to a class that knew much more about it than me. I
>
> would tell my students that because I had grown up speaking
>
> English, I hadn't been made to learn the grammar."
>
> *- Teacher 6.*

By using the revised FIACS, teachers have a record of their lessons and are able to

identify where they can give, and are giving, students opportunities to express the

target language of the lesson. By doing this, they will be optimising the language

environment in the classroom and giving their students greater ability to practise

language use.

When learning anything, the support from teachers is vital to successful attrition. In

ESOL, students can struggle because of the culture and language barrier. Lack of

student interaction might be misconstrued as ESOL students not being motivated to

learn. In fact, most ESOL students desire success just as any other students but may not

feel confident in participating in lessons due to these barriers.

"I was actually surprised when I looked back at the transcripts, how much some of my students actually talked. Some of my students are usually so quiet that I didn't know they knew as much as they did. But when I asked them more questions, they really came out of their shells."

- Teacher 4.

"Sometimes it feels daunting as a teacher when you're trying to make sure that you're not dominating the lesson and you're giving the students a chance to speak. Being a part of this exercise has really made me more aware of how much I talk in class and also helped me to identify ways in which I could give my students more opportunities to practice language."

- Teacher 8.

It is important for ESOL students to practise interacting in English in order to develop their spoken communication. Depending on their English language abilities and their previous language learning experiences, learning to converse in English may be intimidating and frustrating, but students need to engage in interaction to develop their skills and to enable the teacher to identify their strengths and weaknesses in class.

Many ESOL teachers will become preoccupied with the negatives and overlook of the positives of their teaching. By analysing their interaction they begin to analyse our speech and thought process also. When teachers discuss their own interaction, they can view their lessons from an outside perspective and gain a more objective understanding of their lessons and their students' language development.

Although the new revised FIACS is not a tool with which to evaluate teaching practices, its use can help teachers to become more self-aware of their own teaching behaviour. Not much is known about teaching-group activities in which some form of coding behaviour is conducted amongst the teachers. What follows, then, can only be considered speculation:

Interaction Analysis in Micro-teaching

Micro-teaching is based on the assumption that there are certain behaviour strategies which are key to effective teaching. By concentrating on these strategies in a teacher-training program, it should be possible to improve teacher performance.

A micro-teaching program is designed to expose the trainee to an organised curriculum of miniature teaching 'encounters'. At each step along the way, a teaching strategy is discussed until it can be incorporated into the short teaching session. The trainee then teaches the session to a small group of students, under the observation of a trainer and perhaps some peers. After the session, the students are dismissed and the teaching is assessed by those still present. The trainee is given time to think about this assessment

and to make modifications to their teaching approach. They then teach again to demonstrate improvement.

Imagine, for a moment, that micro-teaching is performed not only with a trainer observing, but that that trainer could code the interaction on a time line display. If the categories and display could be constructed to highlight the features of teaching that were being practised, there would be several advantages. First, a time line display could focus attention on specific points of the lesson. This advantage, for example, might lead the trainee and the trainer to agree that at the 12-minute mark, teacher questions began to stimulate student initiation. Attention could be given to the questions before and after that point. Secondly, coding behaviour removes vagueness inherent in some micro-teaching objectives. For example, 'set context' presumably refers to anything and all things that a teacher can do to introduce a topic to students and interest them in it. There are, however, specific things that a teacher can do to engage the interest of a student in the task at hand. A discussion of these actions would be necessary in order to select appropriate categories for coding. These discussions might help to make micro-teaching a more valuable teacher-training method than without interaction analysis. Advantages would be greater specification of the skill to be practiced and more objective information about the teaching performance itself.

Video playback might be a useful resource for teachers to observe their own teaching but in long periods of teaching, this becomes time-consuming and therefore inefficient. Interaction analysis feedback is much faster and can focus on specific skills providing the behaviour patterns can be identified in the display format. It is quite possible that interaction analysis combined with micro-teaching would provide a useful training tool

to develop teacher-behaviour. This type of reflection upon teaching behaviour enables teachers to be better able to monitor, make real-time decisions and respond to the changing needs of their students than teachers who are less reflective (Yost et al., 2000; McMeninam et al., 2003 as cited in Mann, 2005). However, teachers need support in structuring this evaluation (Copland, Ma and Mann, 2009). The revised FIACS provides a clear framework for teachers to see the interaction that has taken place in the classroom and therefore can increase the teacher's awareness of interaction in the classroom.

Some Advantages of Using Interaction Analysis Category Systems in Micro-teaching:

- Teaching objectives and live students add to the realism of the practice.

- Total class responsibility is avoided during practice.

- Step-by-step improvement is assessed through the trainee being given an opportunity to teach again after receiving feedback on the previous lesson.

- Reinforcement after a successful use of a teaching strategy is almost immediately apparent.

- Practice can move from the simple to the more complex skills.

- It is possible for the students to evaluate their teachers.

Some Disadvantages

- Equipment failure, if using video or audio recording, can be troublesome.

- Analysis might not be appropriately conceptualised before feedback.

- Organisation of getting live students and equipment requires thorough planning

and beforehand.

- Micro-teaching is not appropriate for long periods of teaching.

6.3 Conclusion

This study has contributed to both the studies of classroom interaction and ESOL by exploring the actual practices of the learners in this setting. The results of this study indicate that students and teachers in an ESOL class may have different interactional preferences for learning than those of non-ESOL teachers and students and in order to account for these differences, a new and more ESOL-specific category system has been developed.

The use of an interaction analysis category system in teacher training may be able to help teachers become more self-aware of their own teaching behaviour. This could be deployed in a micro-teaching context, where trainees could have the opportunity to gain a more objective insight into their own and their colleagues teaching performances.

A discussion of the implications these findings have for practical implementation of FL learning, the limitations of the current study, and suggestions for future research will be discussed further in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter first summarises the findings of the study and follows with some general pedagogical implications based on the research, recommendations for instructional design of ESOL courses, the limitations of the study, and finally offers suggestions for further research.

7.2 Pedagogical Implications

The following sections examine the pedagogical implications of the findings outlined in the previous chapters. The results will be discussed in terms of the nature of the task rather than by order of the research questions as there are many overlaps between learner practices, course completion and linguistic outcomes.

Interactional Partner

In this study, participants completed far more Student-Teacher tasks than Student-Student tasks, but neither type of task was a significant predictor of interaction. Previous studies (Fredrickson, et al., 2000; LaPointe & Gunawardena, 2004; Jiang & Ting, 2000) had mixed results as to which interaction partner was preferred by students and whether it was more beneficial to for the teacher to speak to students or to just let

the students talk amongst themselves.

From what is currently understood about the role of interaction in language learning, Foreign Language learners should be encouraged to communicate regardless of the partner with whom they are communicating. Additionally, this would suggest that the use of a language tutor, someone who is not fluent in the language but above the current level of the student, might also provide an extra resource with whom a student can communicate and equally as useful as fellow classmates or the teacher in terms of language learning. Twigg (2002) emphasises that this knowledge could be of particular interest to language schools because some promote student-student interaction as a way to "save expensive faculty time". In a more altruistic sense, encouraging students to work with a language tutor also makes sense in a Vygotskyan approach to language learning.

Interactional Purpose

Based on the finding that language and cultural tasks together promote language development, FL practice together with reflection and discussion of cultural and linguistic topics should be encouraged. As English is a commonly taught language, there exist many resources available. Given this situation, it may be helpful for students to exchange ideas on resources and to get teacher feedback on other resources, in print or electronic form.

Students in this study completed more receptive or productive tasks than individual

tasks. This was likely because they were more conducive to interaction and provided collaborative learning opportunities. Although interactional tasks focus on the students developing their language skills through practice rather than focusing on discrete language learning frameworks, it is shown that students enjoy individual activities even though they do not allow as many opportunities for the students to take an active part in the lesson, as opposed to sitting and being lectured at. Meunier (1998) points out that students initially may harbour anxiety towards having to communicate in the target language. This offers a possible explanation as to why students may prefer individual tasks to collaborative tasks: they feel the need to complete a task that more closely resembles something familiar. Perhaps given that the majority of the participants in this study were of Chinese backgrounds, where student interaction in lessons is not as frequent, it may take some students more than eight weeks (the duration of the course) to develop a comfort level with collaborative based learning.

One specific recommendation is to create tasks which scaffold task types: tasks which facilitate the development of communicative competence, but are still individual in nature as a way to 'breach the gap' and introduce students to a more communicative style of learning whilst not obviously straying too far from their previous language learning experiences. One example of how this could be done would be a gap fill exercise, where students have to fill in the appropriate words or phrases that are missing in a text or conversation transcript. This may be beneficial, too, in preparing students for a conversation practice, either linguistically or simply in order to make them feel more psychologically prepared.

Although collaborative tasks should be emphasised as a method to encourage

interaction in the classroom, it is possible that receptive tasks may help students stay on track by providing an environment with which students can compare themselves with their classmates. Students were able to listen to various taped recordings of conversations, for example (a receptive task) and would likely benefit from and be interested in archived audio and video sessions. These could be student-student (at the novice level, or more advanced students), or student-teacher, or with native speakers. This would provide more variety for the receptive tasks.

Possibly the most significant pedagogical implication in interaction in the classroom is that all task types are valuable to students' learning, regardless of whether they involve interaction or not. Students in this setting completed a wide variety of collaborative and individual tasks, as noted by Twigg (2002) as being essential for successful FL courses.

As previously discussed, this eight week course may not have been a long enough time for students to experience complete comfort with the course and their teachers, relating to Meunier's (1998) finding of students' initial feelings of anxiety. Based on this possibility, the implications for interaction may be similar for collaborative tasks versus non-collaborative tasks. Specifically, scaffolding of task types, in addition to scaffolding of language learning tasks, might prove to be a way to help students feel more comfortable with learning methods that they have little experience or comfort with. An eight week course may not be long enough for a student to establish complete comfort with the learning environment, so by scaffolding the tasks, students could be exposed to additional opportunities to interact in the classroom.

In conclusion of the pedagogical implication section, curriculum coordinators and teachers need to be aware that the facilitation of interactional tasks and giving students opportunities to interact are necessary for students and that based on the previous assumptions of learning, learning needs, or autonomy level of the students, each student will come to the class with a different set of preference and expectations for learning. Active participation and interaction of students, the completion of assignments and completion of language learning tasks have been shown to be possible indicators of course completion and language development, and these are the three things that should be emphasised in future FL courses with FL students (Lie, 2008).

Language Learners

In addition to the implications of this study that are more directly related to the research questions, it is important to again point out that the students and teachers in this study may interact differently than students and teachers in other contexts. This is because of the teachers' training background on the CELTA course, which emphasises interaction and student-talk opportunities. Additionally, most of the students in this study were Chinese. Interaction between students and teachers in the classroom is limited in most Chinese schools and so these students may have been more reticent to interact than students of other nationalities. However, the students in this study may have been very highly motivated to participate in the course because of the limited opportunities for free English language evening classes in their community.

7.3 General Recommendations for ESOL Courses

Amidon & Simon (1965) made an attempt to determine the extent to which interaction analysis had been used in teacher education programmes. They concluded the impact of interaction analysis on students and teachers had begun to be felt at that time:

> "Student teachers feel that Interaction Analysis is significant because it helps make operational much of what they have already learnt about educational methods and theory. Students also appear to think they have gained insight into their teaching behaviour and that this insight into their teaching behaviour and that this insight will make it possible for them to adjust their behaviour to various types of teaching situations." (1965:88)

Adult learners should be in an environment that provides support and guidance, but that ultimately allows individuals to make choices in how learning happens. This recommendation is in line with Knowles's (1998) andragogic learning principles which state that are six assumptions related to the motivation of adult learning:

1. **Need to know:** Adult learners need to know the reason that they are learning something.

2. **Foundation:** Previous language learning experience (including error) provides the basis for learning activities.

3. **Self-concept:** Adult learners need to be responsible for their own decisions on education; involvement in the planning and evaluation of their instruction.

4. **Readiness:** Adult learners are most interested in learning subjects having

immediate relevance to their work and/or personal lives.

5. **Orientation:** Adult learning is problem-centred rather than content-oriented.

6. **Motivation:** Adult learners respond better to internal versus external motivators.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are given:

- Give explicit guidance as to exactly what topics will be covered the classes and what students will be required to already know themselves, or in collaboration with an outside source. This will help to make sure that students do not feel disadvantaged in classroom interactions by lack of knowledge compared to their classmates.

- Allow activities that encourage students to interact verbally, both with the teacher and with each other. While this study revolves around what interaction types occur between teachers and students, most of the focus seems to be on examining mainly student experiences in this context. It should be noted that the most challenging aspect for the teachers was the planning of interactive tasks in this study because of the fact that it was not possible to guarantee the number of students for each session. Planning individual tasks was easier as there was a guarantee that they could be achieved even when student numbers per session were low, although several students commented that they enjoyed having the opportunity to host discussions and to communicate with native-speaking teachers about aspects of English culture, as well as language.

There are many opportunities for CELTA trainers and trainees to incorporate and utilise the revised FIACS in a CELTA programme. CELTA trainees could film each others' lessons, watch them back, transcribe their classroom interaction and evaluate the interaction. The strengths and weaknesses of the particular class would be highlighted and explored in a following feedback session. This activity practises self-evaluation, constructive criticism and critical thinking skills and this is very useful for learning. This technique could be used as preparation for assessed teaching practices on the CELTA course.

CELTA trainees can also create and upload videos of their lessons to the Helix Media Library to allow their colleagues to assess the interaction of their lessons. They can also assess the trainees against the CELTA criteria, and this could also help the trainees to pay more detailed attention to their students' language than they might have been able to do in class. This makes it possible to have different people assessing both the trainee's performance as a teacher, and the students' performances as language learners. The trainee can use this tool to provide self-assessment, they can conduct peer-assessment with their colleagues, or the CELTA trainers themselves can use this as another form of assessment for the trainee. They can compare their assessments together, and discuss where and why they digress. CELTA trainees could use the self-assessment methods if they wish to gain an overview of their skills. Furthermore, trainers and trainees can break the evaluation down, for example, if the class is preforming a specific activity like giving a presentation, then it is possible to take different aspects of the FIACS and only assess the types of interaction which will be relevant. An advantage of this method, is that trainees can use them to assess

themselves, but they can also be used for peer-assessment to let the other trainees in the group assess a certain teaching practice session.

7.4 Limitations of the Study

One limitation of this study is that the results rely on a self-assessed means of establishing technical comfort level and perceived language level. Even though the study called for students at a pre-intermediate level of English, based on my interactions with participants in this study, I felt that many of them underestimated their language ability.

It did not seem to the teachers that a number of students actually were receiving English tuition from other sources outside of this study, which translated into the teachers feeling as though they needed to provide a lot of assistance in the classroom, obviously affecting interaction levels in the classroom. Many large institutions offering English language courses have help centres where students can get assistance. These help centres frequently have trained staff ready and able to assist with a wide variety of questions. The community orientated approach to this course could not offer the support needed by some students that would have been provided if they had been enrolled in a course at a larger instruction.

Course Participants

Another significant limitation of this study was the sample, both in terms of its small

size and that it was not randomly sampled. As with many studies involving observation based methods of data collection, the sample size of the study can be problematic. And, although there were initially 49 participants in this study, 3 of these withdrew their results which decreased the sample size to 46. The sample used in this study was selected largely opportunistically, because of this the sample lacks diversity which may have a bearing on the results. As mentioned previously, the students come from majority Chinese nationalities, where students are less accustomed to talking in the classroom, so even though the percentage of initiative student talk was higher than anticipated by previous research, it may well have been higher with a sample of students of nationalities more familiar with collaborative learning styles. The teaching sample also, were all selected from recent graduates of the CELTA course who had also been studying for a degree in Linguistics at the same university in the UK, and so the sample of teachers also lacked diversity. It may very well be that there are certain features of interaction prevalent between teachers and students in ESOL which did not occur within this specific sample demographic.

Study Design

Based on the objectives and rationale of this study, a descriptive and then quasi-experimental design was deemed to be the most appropriate. This design captures how FL students and teachers behave in an ESOL course, and then further interprets their behaviour. The current study is exploratory, following the most recent recommendations in the field of English as a foreign language where there are limited empirical studies available. This was essential to further the current knowledge of student-teacher interaction from perceptions to actual practices. The design's weakness

is that it does not examine perceptions of learning, thus it does not capture possible affective variables. It is also not within the scope of this study to determine whether or not interaction nor any specific type or function of interaction has any significant bearing on students levels of achievement or assessment grades and so any information relating to the possible effects of interactions on these factors was not assessed.

7.5 Recommendations for Future Research

Although this study produced interesting results about the way in which FL students and teachers interact with each other in an ESOL classroom, these results need to be considered as preliminary. There have been so few studies carried out on the actual interactional practices of ESOL students and teachers, that a number of questions remain unanswered.

Firstly, the results of this current study should be viewed within the context of the population presented: pre-intermediate students of a largely Chinese background learning English with the same university in the UK, being taught by mainly female teachers who were all recent graduates of the CELTA course and all studying for an undergraduate degree in English Language and Linguistics at the same University in the north of England. Similar results might not have been obtained from students and teachers of other demographics, students learning at a different language level or in a different classroom context.

An interesting avenue for future research could be to explore synchronous versus

asynchronous interaction. Online foreign language tutoring is growing in popularity due to its convenience and adaptability. Future research could be conducted into students' preference for computer mediated communication and interaction within this media. The exploration for how this new media may affect classroom interaction, and possibly how current preferences for classroom interaction can have an impact on whether or not online tutoring is a viable method for education, in terms of student achievement. The application of new technology such as this could affect student and teacher satisfaction, in addition to course completion rates, student outcomes and motivation of the students. This could also lead to the further question of whether or not interaction or specific types of interaction between teachers and students in the classroom is really essential for students' learning. This study assumes that interaction in the ESOL is beneficial for student outcomes, but it would be very interesting for further research to attempt to test this. In a similar vein, it would also be interesting to examine why classroom interaction is emphasised as highly beneficial in teaching methodology and academia, in light of research that shows that there is in fact no statistically significant difference between levels of interaction and final grade outcomes in language courses. Why does the majority of the research into ESOL teaching, including this study, harbour under the assumption that interaction matters at all? These questions have become apparent to me whilst in the course of analysing and evaluating the field of this study. Though it is not within the scope of this study to answer these questions, it is important for researcher to be critical of the existing body of the work in their field and so this is an area which needs to be examined.

Another interesting avenue for future research would be to determine whether or not, and if so to what extent, individual differences or perceptions on how language is

learnt have an effect on student-teacher interaction. Do participants whose goal was to obtain a high degree of communicative competence make more of a conscious effort to interact verbally to a greater amount in class? For those students who come to class with a belief that grammar translation type activities lead to language acquisition, does communicating through verbal interaction change their views of language learning?

Along those same lines, how do student readiness variables (for example, motivation, previous language learning experiences and expectations) affect both the learning outcomes and course completion and how do these variables affect how an individual interacts? Is it a domino effect? There has been some preliminary research into individual differences related to student satisfaction of courses, but this area needs to be investigated further.

Another area that would be interesting to conduct further research into is the role receptive tasks play in linguistic development. For example, do students first seek out linguistic models of the task to read or listen to before completing a productive task? Do students find these useful, specifically at the very beginning stages of language learning?

The benefit that participants felt they received from completing tasks is another potential area for future research. Were the tasks helpful for course completion and the development of language skills because they offered the participants the chance to interact? Or did the completion of these tasks act as a motivator, having provided the opportunity for interaction in a secure and relatively non-threatening environment?

Additionally, it would be valuable to gain in depth understanding of what a small group of foreign language learners interact in this setting, how their differing learning variables possibly affect their interactional preferences and how they react to a new learning environment.

A final question is do students prefer to complete more interactional tasks or non-interactional tasks? Non-interactional tasks, such as writing, may be appealing to students as they are more private, because they are less face threatening, and because they may possibly resemble some students' previous language learning experience. Do students feel differently about the value of interaction based tasks on their language learning after the completion of a course than at the beginning of the course?

7.6 Conclusion

As English has become and is still becoming the language of expansion throughout most of the world, a lingua franca among foreign language speakers, the demand for English Language teaching has risen. ESOL is a rapidly expanding industry with features and preferences for interaction in the classroom that differ from other kinds of teaching. It is useful to examine practices that can positively affect students' experiences in ESOL courses. This study has contributed to both the fields of Applied Linguistics and TESOL by exploring actual practices of students and teachers in this setting. The results of this study indicate that participants have different interactional preferences for second language learning than in native language contexts.

This study has contributed to both the studies of classroom interaction and ESOL by exploring the actual practices of the learners in this setting. The results of this study indicate that students and teachers in an ESOL class may have different interactional preferences for learning than those of non-ESOL teachers and students and in order to account for these differences, a new and more ESOL-specific category system has been developed in order to provide an accurate reflection of interaction practices and what is considered a significant interactional finding in this context.

Very few studies have examined actual interaction practices in the fields ESOL and FL interaction, instead drawing assumptions on interaction practice in ESOL through analysis of non-ESOL contexts. As this is a relatively new field of research, much remains to be investigated to further our understanding of the unique challenges students and teachers face in this environment and how learner preferences and needs are best met.

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APPENDIX I

A sample copy of the consent form completed by the teachers on the Course Y classes.

Teacher Consent Form

Welcome to Course Y free English Lessons!

As you are aware, these free classes give you the opportunity to use your newly qualified teacher status and get some practise. All lessons will be video recorded and the data collected will be uploaded to the YSJ media library where only YSJ students will be able to access this. They will be used for academic and research purposes by your fellow teachers. You will also be able to view your own video from the media library.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information above and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. I agree to take part in teaching the free English classes.

3. I agree to the classes being audio recorded.

4. I agree to the classes being video recorded.

2. I give permission for anything I say in the lessons to be quoted in publications. (Your name and personal information will not be published).

3. I agree that the recordings will be viewed by my fellow teachers and university staff who   will keep them private.

4. I agree for the recordings and any relevant information to be used for academic purposes.

5. I agree for the recordings and any relevant information to be used for research purposes.

6. I agree for the recordings and any relevant information to be used for teacher-training purposes.

7. I understand that I can ask to be removed from the data at anytime by contacting the researcher at the email below.

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____
Name of Researcher   Date   Signature

APPENDIX II

A sample copy of the consent form completed by the students for the Course Y classes.

Student Consent Form

Welcome to the Course Y free English lessons!

These lessons are taught by York St. John University students. All of the student are currently working on the English Language Teaching Project, as part of the English Language and Linguistics Undergraduate degree. All of the students are qualified English teachers.

The lessons will be filmed and the videos used to provide data for your teacher's projects. All videos and any personal information you give to the teachers will be kept private. Only your teachers and York St. John University staff will be able to watch them. The videos will be used for academic and research purposes and may be used to train new teachers in the future.

You can ask to watch the videos yourself, by contacting us using the information below.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information above and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. I understand that the lessons are voluntary and that I can stop attending the free English lessons at any time, without giving reason.

3.   I agree to take part in the free English classes.

4.   I agree to the classes being audio recorded.

5.   I agree to the classes being video recorded.

6.   I give permission for anything I say in the lessons to be quoted in

publications. (Your name and personal information will not be published).

7. I agree that the recordings will be viewed by my teachers and university staff who will keep them private.

8. I agree for the recordings and any relevant information to be used for academic purposes.

9. I agree for the recordings and any relevant information to be used for research purposes.

10. I agree for the recordings and any relevant information to be used for teacher-training purposes.

11. I agree to my written work being photocopied by my teacher.

12. I agree to my photocopied written work being used for academic purposes.

13. I agree for my photocopied written work to be used for research purposes.

14. I agree for my photocopied written work to be used for teacher- training purposes.

15. I understand that I can ask to be removed from the data at any time by contacting the researcher at the email below.

16. I understand that I can request a copy of this consent form by contacting the researcher at the email below.

17. I understand that I can request copies of my teacher's research projects when they have been completed by contacting the researcher at the email below.

Name of Participant Date

Name of Researcher Date

Signature

Signature

You can email the researcher to ask any questions, for further information or to request a copy of this consent form for your personal records:

tiffany.relph@yorksj.ac.uk

APPENDIX III

Sample Consent form sent to participants to use the classroom recordings in this study.

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to you because you agreed to take part in the Course Y corpus project in 2014/2015. At that time, you signed a consent form granting the use of video recordings from those classes to be used in further research projects.

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you about a research project I am currently carrying out, and to invite you to participate.

Who am I?

I am studying at York St John University for a Masters by Research in English Language and Linguistics. The title of my current project is 'Categorising Interaction between Teachers and Students in ESOL Classrooms' and as a part of this project, I'm interested in finding out more about what happens in ESOL classes.

How am I trying to find the answers?

To find some answers, I would like to have access to the video recordings made of the classes you attended as part of the Course Y course. I will observe the videos to identify the types of interaction that take place. The aim of the observations is not to make any judgements about the content and delivery of the lesson, or about the conduct of the teacher and students. The observations are simply descriptive and serve the purpose of enabling me to find out how interaction is currently delivered.

Who will benefit from the project?

I strongly believe that I have a responsibility towards the schools and the individuals involved with the project. I will provide feedback to you during the project and, if you wish, will share with you any published findings. I ultimately hope that this research will help to improve people's understanding of how interaction is currently being dealt with in ESOL classes. In the long run, this should benefit both teachers and students.

What will happen if you decide to be involved in the project?

Participation in the project is voluntary. This study is in no way concerned with either teachers' or students' performance. I am very keen that participants feel happy and comfortable with being involved in the research. When I write about what the observations reveal later on, I will

not disclose the names of any of the people involved, or what school they attend. If any names of people or schools are mentioned during any of the observed classes, I will change these so that no-one can be identified. I will ensure secure storage of the observation notes by keeping them on password-protected computer files, and any hard copies will be kept in locked filing cabinets which only I will be able to access. No-one except myself will have access to any data relating to the observations. I will primarily write up my research findings in the form of a thesis entitled *Categorising Interaction between Teachers and Students in ESOL Classrooms* which I am happy to share with you. This project has been approved by the York St John University Research Ethics Committee and the authorisation code is 151105.

If you decide that you do not want to be observed, please let me know and I will remove you from any of the observation data. If you agree to participate in the project, but later change your mind, you can withdraw from the project at any time and do not have to provide a reason for withdrawing. If you would like to participate in the project, all you need to do is sign the slip at the end of this letter.

If you would like to discuss this project further with me, then please email me: tiffany.relph@yorksj.ac.uk.

Tiffany Relph
Masters by Research in English Language and Linguistics
York St John University

Name (please
print): ....

I agree to participate in the research project '*Categorising Interaction between Teachers and Students in ESOL Classrooms*'. I have read and understand my rights as a research participant, as explained in the letter above.

Signed: ....
Date: ....

APPENDIX IV

Sample transcript of ESOL class observed for this study. Each line represents 3

seconds of interaction with the interaction type coded in the right hand column.

T2- Okay, so everyone	7a
just look at the front? Can anybody	7a
tell me what "he was studying" what tense is that?	4a
All- Past simple **T2-** Past--?	8,4b
S2- Continuous **T2-** past	8
Continuous yeah	3
er, and the next one "he decided?" **All-** Past	4b
simple **T2-** Simple, yeah	8, 3
So then, "were travelling"?	4b
All- Past continuous **T2-** yeah	8, 3
"Went"?	4b
All- Past simple **T2-** Yeah, yeah, er,	8, 3
"Was raining"? **All-** Past continuous	4b,8
T2- And "decided" again? **All-** Past continuous	4b,8
T2- Past simple. Okay **S2-** yeah!	5, 8
T2- So, there's two different types of	5
verbs there. In the first sentence	5
can anybody tell me if	4a
he was studying first or if he decided first.	4a
All- studying **T2-** Studying!	8, 3
T2- so, here	5

we are studying (T2 draws timeline on the board)	5
and this is the timeline	5
where would decided	4a
go? Would it go before	4a
or after? **S8-** After **T2-** After.	4a83
S2- It would go before. **T2-** Before? **S2-** yeah.	94b8
So you think he decided, and then he started	3
studying? **S7-** Er, was. Was.	3, 9
I think studying is after the-- **T2-** "decided"	9, 5
S2- After he started studying.	8

1.