CHAPTER II
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RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 The Aim

Classroom Interaction is the most effective teaching and learning strategy. It is used to impart knowledge, adhere to skillful teaching and also to gain something much more than mere knowledge and skill. That is to make students use their creativity to understand, appreciate and to grapple with important ideas as they develop a depth of understanding for a wide range of issues and questions. This study is intended to look at and observe the interaction between teachers and students and between students themselves within the classroom atmosphere. The present study of interaction in the classroom takes up relevant information related to actual status of curriculum implementation at the graduate level. In order to develop communicative skills among students, the interaction in the classroom between the teacher and students and amongst the students themselves, is necessary and interaction has a pivotal role in determining and evaluating the achievements of the students.

English Language being an international language, is highly valued in the global market. Therefore people belonging to different Nation try to learn it as the second language, and give more attention to the study of English Literature. The present research is mainly concerned with the observation of the interaction, that takes place in the English Literature classroom while poetry and prose are being taught.
Further the aim of the present study is to analyse the role interaction plays in the didactic process and in the achievement of skills among students.

1. Characterizing the features of the classroom as an Interactional context.

2. Identifying the classroom speech events.

3. Discussing factors that shape the structure of classroom lesson as well as norms that govern it.

4. Identifying patterns of interaction.

5. Distinguishing the different approaches to the teaching of English Literature particularly prose and poetry.

6. Identifying the communicative strategy used while teaching.

7. Identifying the communicative strategy during interactional situation, (i.e.) the observation of word choice being used.

8. Bring about effectiveness of teacher interaction and their corrective mechanism.

2.2 Data

The data for the present study is drawn from 4 colleges, in and around Coimbatore. The Colleges where English Literature teaching is undertaken were chosen for the present study. The researcher observed the undergraduate English
Prose and Poetry classes for collecting the observational data. The interaction that took place between the teacher and students during the course of teaching Poetry and Prose was observed. The interaction pattern emerging in the classroom situation was recorded using a tape-recorder. Later on, based on the observed and recorded interactional activity, a questionnaire was prepared. The questionnaire covered the following information related to classroom interaction.

1. Classroom Interaction strategy. (T:S)
2. Gender difference
3. Classroom Interaction system
4. Classroom Interaction and environment.
5. Psychological processes involved during interaction.
6. Group dynamics (group physical effort)
7. Motivation
9. Communication strategy
10. Reception strategy in interactive listening
11. Instructional conversation and their classroom application.

The questionnaire had been devised to cover the whole gambit of classroom interaction. The questionnaire was administered to 30 teachers and 130 students,
to test the reliability of the same. Finally after the reliability test, the data was collected. An attempt was made to study the interaction taking place within English Prose and Poetry classes with the focus given to the kind of speech acts occurring in the literature classes. Speech acts like introducing, informing, eliciting, acknowledging, directing, replying etc. adopted by teachers and the acts adopted by students also have been identified.

The collection of data through participant observation method were found to be suitable to study the interaction during the teaching phase which includes communication in general and stimulus of teachers and response of students in particular. It was noted that the pre-reading, reading, post-reading/recollection phases of interaction are important since in each phase the degree of interaction varies. The speech acts mentioned earlier were recorded, so as to classify the language use, language shift (from second language ‘English’ to first language) in the classroom to assess the oral communicative potential during interaction.

2.3 Informants

Teaching is considered as an interactive process between a teacher and the taught. The classroom teaching activities and events can be studied objectively by observing and analysing these situations.

The teachers and students being the major participants in the interactive process, the researcher had drawn data from teachers and students belonging to the undergraduate colleges in Coimbatore city, where English Literature is taught.
as a subject. Each college is different from the other in relation to, the atmosphere, performance and discipline. The variables considered in deciding the colleges are Rural and Urban. Among the four colleges chosen for the present study, two colleges are situated in the rural area, and the other two are in the Urban area. The teachers and the students in the selected colleges are bilinguals and English is considered to be their second language. The teachers chosen for the present study teach only English Literature and General English. With regard to students, some had their education in English Medium Schools and some in Tamil Medium schools. One college was a women's college. Other three colleges were co-education colleges.

It was noted that boys were given more encouragement and attention by the teachers, whereas girls were literally overlooked. The reason may be that boys are active, fidgety, restless in the classroom which makes the teachers to direct their gaze, questions and lectures towards them. Girls seem to remain silent and are found, to be too shy to participate in the classroom environment. Girls do not respond to the teachers' questions, when they do not know the answer. Whereas boys are bold enough to answer straight away probably this kind of lack-lustre performance by girls, might have directed teachers to pay more attention towards boys. However, the examination results revealed that the performance of girls in English is significantly higher than that of boys.

From four colleges, data regarding student and teacher performance was recorded by the researcher during classroom interaction. The classroom interaction questionnaire was distributed to 30 teachers and 130 students, for the collection of data.
### Table 2.1

**STUDENT INFORMANTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Status</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>No. of students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>40</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2.2

**TEACHER INFORMANTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Status</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>No. of teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduation</td>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.4 Use

Classroom Interaction is an important way to achieve the ambitious but elusive goals long held by many thoughtful educators. It is designed to promote learning, while it is conversational in quality. Being conversational it appears to be spontaneous language interaction, minimizing didactic characteristics normally associated with formal teaching. Students get engaged in extended discussion-conversation, with the teacher and among themselves. Both teacher and student are able to present provocative ideas or their experiences to which each other respond. Teachers' manoeuvrability to keep everyone engaged in a substantive and extended conversation, weaving individual participants' comments into a larger tapestry of meaning, encouraging expressions of students' own ideas, building on informations provided by students and guiding students to increased sophisticated level of comprehension, provides extensive and abundant knowledge to widen their communicative competence. The exposure to linguistic input provides opportunity to develop comprehension of the second language, English. This is where the oral and written communicative potential of a student eventually develop, along with divergent thinking.

Goldenberg and Gallimore (1991) have analysed and evolved a model of instructional conversation useful for effective classroom interaction. Instructional aspects involve the following:

1. **Thematic focus.** Teacher selects a theme on which to focus the discussion and has a general plan for how the theme will unfold, including how to “chunk” the text to permit optimal exploration of the theme.
2. **Activation and use of background and relevant schemata.** Teacher either hooks into or provides students with pertinent background knowledge and schemata necessary for understanding a text, weaving information into the discussion.

3. **Direct teaching.** When necessary, teacher provides direct teaching of a skill or concept.

4. **Promotion of more complex language and expression.** Teacher elicits more extended student contributions by using a variety of elicitation techniques: invitation to expand, questions, restatements and pauses.

5. **Promotion of bases for statements or positions.** Teacher promotes students' use of text, pictures, and reasoning to support an argument or position, by gently probing: "what makes you think that?" or "show us where it says......."

**Conversational aspect has the following points**

6. "Fewer "known - answer" question". Asking questions for which there might be more than one correct answer.

7. "Responsiveness to student contributions". Maintaining the focus and coherence of the discussion, teacher becoming responsive to students' statements and the opportunities they provide.

8. "Connected discourse". The discussion is characterized by multiple, interactive, connected turns; succeeding utterances build upon the extended previous ones.
9. "Challenging, but non-threatening, atmosphere". Teacher creates a challenging atmosphere that is balanced by a positive affective climate. Teacher is more like a collaborator than an evaluator and students are challenged to negotiate and construct meaning of the text.

10. "General participation, including self-selected turns". Teacher does not hold exclusive right to determine who talks; students are encouraged to volunteer or otherwise influence the selection of speaking turns.

The above discussed conversational or interactional pattern is best suited to identify the degree of oral and written communicative potential of students in English Language usage.

By observing language completeness through active participation and recorded help, the classroom interaction with different kinds of speech acts between teachers and students had given rise to the understanding of communicative competence. Sometimes the interactions are so structured to the demand of the interactions outside the classrooms also. So "on-task" and "off-task" activities are rendered, group dynamics, pair work, discourse strategies, setting up communicative tasks (fluency-oriented, teacher-directed) are considered to be few of useful mechanisms for better interaction and for improved communicational potential.

2.5 Scope

Questions and Answers as adjacency pairs are found in the interaction between the language teacher and the learner. Interaction analysis is nothing
more than an observational technique which can be used to obtain a reliable record of spontaneous verbal responses, much of teachers' influence is exerted by verbal statements. Interaction analysis does not refer to one system but to many systems for codifying spontaneous verbal communication. The analysis of interaction helps to study patterns of teaching and learning (Flanders, 1970).

It has been a protracted debate in language teaching concerning classroom interaction whether to focus on accuracy and form or on fluency and meaning. All these activities are carefully observed to identify the interaction potential. It was noted that interaction was more during the questioning session and during the explanation phase. A degree of variation was found among the teachers while they were handling the class before, during and after dealing with the literary work. Some teachers explained the sociological background, the period of the work, some relative incidents were narrated for drawing more attention and enthusiasm. At this point learners appeared more attentive. They were also given opportunity to think creatively and narrate examples. Interaction was consistently less while the teacher questioned about the meaning of few vocabulary items and many literary terms. During pre-reading/motivational phase, reading phase, post-reading / recollection phase, a lot of talking was made by the teacher. Whereas, the students involved in the discussion mostly when asked to do so. In one classroom it was found that the teacher persistently discouraged the status-quo state of the students. Here the teachers' friendly attitude made the fearless students, externalize their built-in-language creative ability, evaluative thinking and interpretation.
The researcher in her view thinks that the innovative ideas and the evaluative thinking of a student, when externalized can enhance the teacher to adopt new techniques in teaching. Because silence in the classroom can distract a teachers' zealousness while teaching, it is the students' duty to make his teacher sure about teaching capabilities. In all the four colleges taken for research study the teaching was based on the curriculum based subjects. Textbooks and table copy abridged version of guides were used. Besides teaching texts, exercises, group discussions, group segmented-points marked question answering session were also conducted. Seminars were conducted with the topic given prior to the session. The prose is sometimes made to read by the students. Each student were given a chance to read a paragraph. In this reading aloud phase the students were able to read larger semantic units rather than focusing on literary cues. The main purpose of this reading aloud method is to investigate and to improve their reading comprehension and their apt pronunciation of words. With appropriate practice readers gradually realize that they can achieve a higher level of comprehensions by reading larger meaningful units of texts rather than focusing on individual units. Along with proper production of pronunciation, punctuation signals, stress and intonation play an important role in this process. By reading, students were able to notice a significantly positive effect on the second language, especially their ability to inter-relate, interpret and draw conclusion from the content. However, the feelings, mood, emotions and the tone of the characters in the text were found significantly effective while the teacher read the literary text.
2.6 Methodology

Syllabus, instructional material, teaching methodology, learning strategy etc. play a vital role in communicative potential and language acquisition of the students. Classroom interaction is one of the key factors in achieving them. The researchers had followed few essential methodology to observe various speech acts and the actual language use in the classroom. The language shift, usage of first language to facilitate the understanding of the second language (English), over-lapping during reading aloud act, types of mistakes committed while in the classroom situation, misinterpretation of meanings, fluency and accuracy in both reading and replying act, degree of interaction between the teacher and the student, the successful transmission of messages, the various kinds of effective approaches for effective teaching and learning method, elements of instructional conversation were observed in order to study the nature of interaction inculcated in the classroom atmosphere of under graduate students, learning English Literature. Tape recorder was used to record the interaction. After having actively participated in the observation and collected the recorded data, a questionnaire was prepared keeping all elements of classroom behaviour in mind in order to identify the attitudes towards various aspects of interaction. The observed and recorded data was drawn from four colleges where English Literature was being taught. Only the Prose and Poetry classes were observed by the researcher. The collected data was used to study the student-teacher interaction. Also to study how deficient students were at oral communication, to what degree the interactional pattern helps alleviate the problem, what more constructive approaches could be administered for effective teaching and learning methods for acquiring proficiency
in the degree of communication. The questionnaire based data was used to find out the attitudes, roles, outcome, cause and benefits of classroom interaction while teaching English literature.

2.7 Organization of the present study

The dissertation comprises of seven chapters. They are:

Chapter I: Introduction

The first chapter begins with a brief description about literature, especially, English Literature and the teaching of English Literature in India. Language teaching skills in general, and teachers' role in teaching English Literature in particular are explained. Classroom interaction, its role in teaching-learning process are explained with due care given to a few definitions. A brief view of literature related to classroom interaction studies is also included.

Chapter II

This chapter deals with the aspects of the research work undertaken by the present researcher. It consists of the methods adopted to study the aim, scope, methodology, data, motive, observation of the study, selection of Informants and colleges and finally the presentation of the research work is described.
Chapter III - Teachers' role in classroom interaction

Chapter three explains in general the teachers’ role in the classroom atmosphere. The activities and strategies teacher adopt to develop student-teacher interaction to teach English Prose and Poetry, are given due attention. The tools that govern the classroom interaction, different kinds of approaches, activities and teaching elements adopted in the pre-reading, reading, post-reading/recollection phases along with different speech acts, the use of other languages in translation, testing and evaluation, etc. are discussed in this chapter. On receiving the feedback from the students the teachers inculcates several techniques to bring about efficient interaction pattern while teaching prose and poetry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student-Teacher</td>
<td>Inside the classroom</td>
<td>Poetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-Teacher</td>
<td>Inside the classroom</td>
<td>Prose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-Teacher</td>
<td>Inside the classroom</td>
<td>Other than the subject</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter IV - Students' role in classroom interaction

Students' interaction pattern during the learning of Poetry and Prose is described in this chapter. Different kinds of techniques adopted by students, constitute the data for this study. The act they perform like, answering, questioning, clarifying, correcting, eliciting, acknowledging, etc. with regard to the literary theme
being taught, and the utterances and theme of talk of students in the teaching
situation etc. are explained. However it is noted that students’ interaction is less
ing degree in the classroom.

Chapter-V - Language use in classroom interaction

This chapter deals with the degree of interaction in relation to the teacher
and students. The kind of language use that takes place during classroom
interaction, deficiency in language use among students and some errors in the
utterances are analysed. The interaction pattern that occurred in the classroom
are studied thoroughly.

Chapter VI - Attitude towards interaction : Questionnaire Analysis

The attitudinal survey questionnaire was supplied to 30 teachers and 130
students belonging to 4 colleges in order to identify the attitude of the students
and students towards the cause, the kind of interaction and the benefits of
interaction. Taking information drawn from the questionnaire, the role of classroom,
teacher, student interaction behaviour and the aspects of classroom, teacher and
student related to classroom interaction are reported in qualified form in this section.
Interaction is sometimes favoured by certain causal factors and it brings certain
benefits. Occasionally interaction is delimited by certain other factors. The causal
factors and the benefits related to classroom interaction are studied from students’
and teachers’ point of view. Through the analysis of the responses to the
questionnaire it is proved that benefits achieved are enhancement of language
skills, oral communication, divergent thinking, assessment of understanding, student growth, better language learning, critical thinking, effective language use and effective classroom management strategy are also useful for effective learning.

Chapter VII - Conclusion

The concluding chapter deals with the major findings of the present study, remedial measures for effective classroom interaction and scope for further research in classroom interactions.

Appendices

1. List of References and select Bibliography

2. Questionnaire - sample.