

Initiating Talks Used by the Teacher to Stimulate Verbal Responses from Students

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Abstract

An important goal of language learning is to have students' language production. In that case, teacher initiation can be significant in stimulating such interaction. The study explored types of initiating talk and how the teacher used each type to stimulate student talk. To do so, an English Communication class was observed and video recorded. The data were transcribed and analyzed to identify types and patterns of initiating talk using the framework of Mehan (1979), and Sinclair and Brazil (1982). The results revealed that the teacher normally used Questioning rather than Invitation and Direction and each led to different types of responses. In terms of patterns, they could be found when the teacher utilized more than one turn of initiating talk until responses from the students occurred. Utilizing one initiating talk to stimulate verbal responses was successful as responses from students were given. However, the proportion of brief responses was higher than informative ones. This led the study to further discuss factors affecting the ways students responded. Types of initiating talk used, amounts of teacher talk as well as students' nature might be influential. Implications regarding when and how to use each initiating talk type were proposed with suggested interactive activities to encourage students' communicative skills.

Keywords: *teacher talk, initiating talks, classroom interaction, students' verbal responses*

1. Introduction

Interaction is believed to contribute to students' learning as students can make use of the language they possess when listening, expressing views, and answering questions (Tsui, 1985). For interaction to occur, teacher talk, the language that teachers use with their students in class, plays an important role with its dominance of two-thirds of

classroom speech (Chaudron, 1988). Teacher talk can occur when conveying instructions including telling things to students and getting them to say or do something, questioning, providing input, evaluating students' performances, and many others (Sinclair & Brazil, 1982). In a teacher-fronted classroom, the sequence of classroom interaction is normally teacher-student-teacher. That is, teachers initiate or elicit responses (I); students respond to the initiations (R); and teachers give feedback (F). This sequence is generally referred to as the IRF structure. The IRF structure is used by teachers to check if students have knowledge concerning linguistic items, to challenge students to make reasons and connections, or even to clarify and illustrate some points (Van Lier, 1998). In such an environment, students would have less chance to develop their speaking skills. Realizing the problem, some scholars attempt to find solutions by increasing student talk time (STT) and reducing teacher talk time (TTT) with their belief that good lessons are ones in which STT is maximized (Zhao, 1998; Harmer, 2000; Zhou & Zhou, 2002).

On the other hand, teacher talk is still the major part of classroom interaction particularly where the teacher is the one who normally initiates the talk. Teacher talk is regarded as having a significant effect on students' interaction in classrooms since the kinds of questions teachers ask can affect both quantity and quality of students' interaction (Brock, 1986). Cullen (cited in Krashen, 1981) also suggested that teacher talk is essential in language acquisition as it is recognized as a source of comprehensible input for learners. It seems explicit that teachers play a key role in encouraging interaction and one of many ways they do this is through teacher talk. Since it is unobvious what the best kind of teacher talk to encourage interaction is, the study will look at this point. This leads to the focus of the present study to explore what teacher talk is and how the teacher uses initiating talk to stimulate student talk in an English Oral Communication classroom.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Teacher Talk

Teacher talk is the language used by teachers in the classroom aiming to inform, order, question and evaluate students' performances (Sinclair & Brazil, 1982). In a typical language classroom, talk by teachers tends to occur more than talk from students with a large proportion of up to 70% of classroom language (Ma cited in Cook, 2000; Chaudron, 1988; Zhao, 1998). Teacher talk in classrooms can be divided into different types based on its functions, namely questioning or eliciting, responding to students' contributions, presenting or explaining, organizing or giving instructions, evaluating, sociating or establishing and maintaining rapport (Cullen, 1998). However, the focus of the present study is on questioning or eliciting since it may create interaction and stimulates students' responses.

Apart from its function of organizing a classroom, teacher talk is the major source of comprehensible input for students to receive (Nunan, 1991). In this case, teachers will use the target language to communicate with students and encourage them to practice and respond to what teachers say (Ma, 2006). For teachers and students to communicate to each other, initiation - the move in a teaching exchange that initiates an interaction - is necessary. In a teacher-fronted classroom, interaction is initiated mostly by teachers as they control the topic of discussion and allocate or decide when students should respond to them (Cazden, 2001). That is to say, without initiation from teachers, interaction in the classroom can rarely occur.

In relation to teacher initiation, there are many ways for teachers to initiate or stimulate student talk. Teachers can select the aspects of their initiating talk to correspond with what they expect their students to answer. Therefore, types of initiating talk based on the framework of Mehan (1979), and Sinclair and Brazil (1982) can be categorized into 3 main types; Questioning, Invitation and Direction.

Questioning is a request for information which is a straightforward way to make students respond (Long & Sato, 1983). A Display Question is a question with a fixed answer and teachers already know the answer. It is asked to determine whether students can display their understanding, e.g., *“What is unit 10 about?”* A Referential Question, on the other hand, is a question with an open answer and teachers do not know the answer e.g., *“How do you come to campus?”* The second type of initiating talk is **Invitation**. Through using Invitation, teachers act as a host and ask or request students to do activities with polite language. The answers from using Invitation may vary according to what students are asked to contribute e.g., *“Can anyone volunteer to tell me why you think it’s a good idea?”* The last type of initiating talk is **Direction**. It is regarded as an authoritative utterance to be obeyed or an order of teachers when directing students to do activities. Similar to Invitation, the answers from using Direction can also be various, e.g., *“I want you to explain why it is important to have an outline.”* The three types have different aspects yet their shared purpose is to stimulate interaction.

Although there are a number of studies related to teacher talk, the focuses are on talking turns between teachers and learners and classroom conversation features (Berlin, 2005; Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Robinson, 2006; Seedhouse, 2004; Wright, 2005) and feedback provision for students’ language errors (Hu, 2004; Sun, 2005; Sun, Zhao & Zhao, 2007). Only a few studies have been done concerning how teachers use initiating talk to stimulate interaction (Thoms, 2008; Liu & Zhao, 2010). This is similar to the Thai ELT research context in that studies relevant to how teachers use initiating talks to stimulate students’ verbal responses are rarely found. Realizing this matter, we aim to expand the knowledge area and provide fruitful suggestions for teachers when using initiating talks to activate student talk or responses to contribute to their language learning.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants and Setting

The participants of this study included a native English teacher and 20 Thai students (7 males and 13 females) at a university in Bangkok, Thailand. The students were from different faculties i.e., Chemical Engineering, Civil Engineering and Computer Science. The observed class was Oral Communication with the aim to practise speaking situations likely to be experienced by students, especially social conversation exchanges. Throughout the class time, English was used as the tool for communication to set up a range of activities e.g., sharing ideas, doing exercises, checking answers, working in pairs or groups, and discussions.

3.2 Instruments

There were two research instruments used in this study: video recording and observation checklist.

Instrument 1: video recording

The video recording was used to record situations in the classroom. The position in which the camera was set was at the back of the classroom to make sure the teacher and students appeared in the camera. To prevent sound problems from the camera, a separate audio recording was used to assure conversation audio capture. Then, the parts where interactions between the teacher and students happened were transcribed.

Instrument 2: observation checklist

During the observation, an observation checklist was used to check types of initiating talk used by the subject teacher. The data received from the checklist were rechecked with the video recording and transcriptions to ensure the reliability of the data. That is to say, the checklist was used to help supplement the video recording.

3.3 Data Collection

The observation was done twice (three hours for the first period and two hours for the second period) in September and October 2013 after permission was granted from the subject teacher. The duration of each class was 3 hours; however, the data gained was collected for 5 hours because the subject teacher spent time with presentations for 1 hour in the second session.

3.4 Data Analysis

3.4.1 Types of initiating talk

To investigate types of initiating talk as well as how much each type could stimulate students' responses, initiating talk used in the classroom and responses from students recorded in the video were transcribed. The transcribing process was based solely on the video recording in which the whole situation was recorded in the classroom. After transcribing, all the teacher initiating talks were coded for their types. Then, the frequencies of initiating talk types were counted based on the framework proposed by Mehan (1979), and Sinclair and Brazil (1982). (See the appendix for coding scheme.)

After the coding process, an inter-rater who had background in teaching was invited. In this process, some samples of initiating talks used by the teacher were randomly selected and categorized based on the framework. Strong agreements (correlation = 90%) between the inter-rater and the researchers were confirmed. The researchers then discussed with the inter-rater the tokens from which the codings were different to improve the coding reliability.

Next, each initiating talk used was further classified into **language focus** and **meaning focus**. Language focus in initiating talks elicited responses relevant to language points or grammatical knowledge e.g., "What are features?" (The teacher asked for the definition of the features). **Meaning focus** elicited responses relevant to general information or content e.g., "Why do you think texting is better than calling?" (The teacher asked for the reasons why texting is better than calling.)

Apart from that, students' responses were analyzed whether they were an **informative response**, a long and complex response that provided information; a **non-informative response**, a short, yes/no response; or a **mimicking response**, an utterance that repeated the teacher's choices. Finally, the frequencies were calculated as percentages to present to what degree each type of initiating talk was used and how much each type could stimulate responses from students.

3.4.2 Patterns of initiating talk

To investigate patterns of initiating talk (IT) used by the teacher, the codings were further used to formulate patterns of initiating talk. In relation to how to count a pattern, it would be when the teacher employed one or more than one turn until she could get responses (Res) from students. The example of one pattern is illustrated below:

T¹: Can you tell me the topic of unit 10? (IT1 = Invitation/language focus: IN (lf))
SS²: (silent)

¹T = Teacher

²SS = Students

T : What is unit 10 about? (IT2 = Display Question/language focus: DQ (lf))

ST³: Electronics

From the example, the pattern was IT1-IT2-->Res. It referred to the use of two initiating talks until the response occurred. After that, the frequency of the most frequently occurred patterns was counted. Within the pattern, there was a sub-pattern; [IN(lf)-DQ(lf)-->Res] or the uses of Invitation with language focus and Display Question with language focus until the response was given. In the end, the frequently occurred sub-patterns were analyzed to find out the shared aspects of each sub-pattern.

4. Findings

The data presented are separated into 3 sections: the frequency of types of initiating talk used, the frequency of responses gained from the use of types of initiating talk, and the patterns of initiating talk.

4.1 General information of the use and frequency of initiating talk

From Table 1, the majority of initiating talk type used was Question (90.19%). The next and third types were Direction and Invitation (5.22% and 4.57%, respectively), the frequencies of which were not different. However, the two types were used for different focuses. That is, Invitation was used to equally elicit both language and meaning while Direction was used only to elicit responses focusing on meaning or content.

Table 1: Frequency of initiating talk used in the classroom

Types of initiating talk		Frequency of types initiating talk		Focuses		Total
				Language focus (lf)	Meaning focus (mf)	
Questions	Display Question (DQ)	276 (90.19%)	198 (64.70%)	106 (53.53%)	92 (46.46%)	198 (100%)
	Referential Question (RQ)		78 (25.49%)	2 (2.52%)	76 (97.43%)	78 (100%)
Invitation (IN)		14 (4.57%)		7 (50%)	7 (50%)	14 (100%)
Direction (DI)		16 (5.22%)		0 (0%)	16 (100%)	16 (100%)
Total		306 (100%)		115 (37.58%)	191 (62.41%)	306 (100%)

³ST = A student

In regard to the most frequently used type, Questions could be further divided into 2 sub-types which were **Display Question** and **Referential Question**. It can be seen that the subject teacher used Display Question more often than Referential Question (64.70% versus 25.49%). Based on the observation, Display Question was used to prompt the language and meaningful responses which were not extremely different in terms of percentages. On the contrary, Referential Question was mostly used to elicit responses that could not be found directly in the context and has communicative purposes i.e. asking for reasons or explanation.

Regarding the situations in which each type was used, Questions was used to check understanding, e.g., “*What is picture no. 1?*” as well as asking about opinions, e.g., “*Which traffic problems do you think are the worst in Bangkok?*” Invitation was used to invite or request students to speak out through the use of request statements, e.g., “*Can anyone volunteer to tell me why you think it’s a good idea?*” and Direction was used to get students to do something, e.g., “*I want you to explain why.*”

Apart from presenting the frequencies of types of initiating talk, it is significant to know how many responses each type of talk can stimulate from students. The data are illustrated in the next section.

4.2 Response types

Table 2 presents the frequencies of response types that can be categorized into informative and non-informative responses.

Table 2: The frequency of response types

Types of initiating talk	Frequency of initiating talk	Frequency of response types		Frequency of response per frequency of initiating talk (%)
Questions (Display Question and Referential Question)	276	221		221/276 = 80.07%
		Informative 47 (21.26%)	Non-informative 174 (78.73%)	
Invitation (IN)	14	11		11/14 = 78.57%
		Informative 2 (18.18%)	Non-informative 9 (81.81%)	
Direction (DI)	16	14		14/16 = 87.5%
		Informative 2 (14.28%)	Non-informative 12 (85.71%)	

Note 1: Sometimes one initiating talk type can stimulate more than one response.

Note 2: Sometimes one initiating talk type cannot stimulate any responses.

In consideration of the proportion between initiating talks and responses, Direction was the type that most successfully stimulated responses (Res=14: IT=16). The frequency of initiating talk for Direction was 16 while it could acquire the frequency of response of 14. So, it could be calculated as 87.5%, which is higher than other types. The next successful types to stimulate responses were Questioning including Display Question and Referential Question with the percentage of 80.07% (Res=221: IT=276) and Invitation with the percentage of 78.57% (Res=11: IT=14).

As mentioned earlier, responses could be categorized into informative and non-informative responses. The result showed that all types of initiating talk tended to stimulate more non-informative responses than informative responses. However, informative responses occurred most when the subject teacher used Referential Question compared to the use of other types.

4.3 Patterns of initiating talk

There were 6 major patterns and 33 sub-patterns identified in the observation. The major patterns concerned turns of initiating talks i.e., the use of one or two initiating talks whereas the sub-patterns concerned types i.e. Display and Referential Question, Invitation, and Direction, and focuses of initiating talk i.e., language and meaning focus. The most found patterns were the patterns with the use of one initiating talk (IT1-->Res) and the second most occurring pattern was the use of two initiating talks (IT1-IT2-->Res). Although the use of two initiating talks was found to be 16.96%, there were some outstanding points in this pattern. For the patterns that have more than two initiating talks, the occurrences were fewer. In relation to response types, the majority of response type through the use of 33 sub-patterns was the non-informative response which could be calculated to a high percentage (80.49%) as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 patterns and sub-patterns of initiating talk

Patterns	Frequency of patterns and sub-patterns	Frequency of response types		Total
		Informative	Non-informative	
Pattern 1: IT1 -->Res	169 (75.44%)			
Sub-patterns				
1. DQ(lf) -->Res	55	4	51	55
2. DQ(mf) -->Res	61	12	56	68
3. RQ(lf) -->Res	1	-	1	1
4. RQ(mf) -->Res	37	17	28	45
5. IN(lf) -->Res	2	-	2	2
6. IN(mf) -->Res	3	-	5	5
7. DI(mf) -->Res	10	1	9	10

Patterns	Frequency of patterns and sub-patterns	Frequency of response types		Total
		Informative	Non-informative	
Pattern 2: IT1-IT2 -->Res	38 (16.96%)			
Sub-patterns				
8. DQ(lf)-DQ(lf) -->Res	12	2	10	12
9. DQ(mf)-DQ(mf) -->Res	5	1	4	5
10. DQ(mf)-DQ(lf) --> Res	1		1	1
11. DQ(mf)-IN(mf) -->Res	2	1	2	2
12. DQ(mf)-RQ(mf) -->Res	2		1	2
13. DQ(mf)-DI(mf) -->Res	1		1	1
14. DQ(lf)-DI(mf) -->Res	1		1	1
15. RQ(mf)-DQ(mf) -->Res	7		7	7
16. RQ(mf)-RQ(mf) -->Res	3		3	3
17. RQ(mf)-DI(mf) -->Res	2	1	2	2
18. IN(mf)-IN(mf) -->Res	1			1
19. IN(lf)-DQ(lf) -->Res	1		1	1
Pattern 3: IT1-IT2-IT3 -->Res	11(4.91%)			
Sub-patterns				
20. DQ(lf)-DQ(lf)-DQ(lf) -->Res	4	1	3	4
21. RQ(mf)-RQ(mf)-RQ(mf) -->Res	1		1	1
22. RQ(mf)-RQ(lf)-RQ(mf) -->Res	1	1		1
23. DQ(lf)-DQ(mf)-DQ(mf) -->R	1		1	1
24. DQ(mf)-DQ(lf)-DQ(lf) -->Res	1	1		1
25. RQ(mf)-DQ(mf)-RQ(mf) -->Res	1	1		1
26. DI(mf)-RQ(mf)-DQ(mf) -->Res	1		1	1
27. DQ(lf)-IN(lf)-IN(lf) -->Res	1	1		1
Pattern 4: IT1-IT2-IT3-IT4 -->Res	3(1.33%)			
Sub-patterns				
28. RQ(mf)-RQ(mf)-DQ(mf)-RQ(mf) -->Res	1		1	1
29. RQ(mf)-RQ(mf)-DI(mf)-RQ(mf) -->Res	1	1		1
30. DQ(lf)-DQ(lf)-DQ(lf)-DQ(lf) -->Res	1		1	1
Pattern 5: IT1-IT2-IT3-IT4-IT5 -->Res	2(0.89%)			
Sub-patterns				
31. DQ(lf)-DQ(lf)-DQ(lf)-IN(lf)-DQ(lf)-->Res	1	1		1
32. IN(lf)-DQ(lf)-RQ(mf)-RQ(mf)-RQ(mf) -->Res	1		1	1
Pattern 6: IT1-IT2-IT3-IT4-IT5-IT6 -->Res	1(0.44%)			
Sub-pattern				
33. RQ(mf)-RQ(mf)-RQ(mf)-RQ(mf)-RQ(mf)-RQ(mf) -->Res	1	1	-	1
Total	224 (100%)	47	194	241

Note 1: lf = language focus, mf = meaning focus, Res = response(s)

Note 2: Some sub-patterns can stimulate more than one response

In taking a closer look at the most frequent pattern (IT1 -->Res), there were three prominent sub-patterns which were [DQ(mf) -->Res], [DQ(lf) -->Res], and [RQ(mf) -->Res] with the frequencies of 61, 55, and 37, respectively. The extracts below were taken from the observation data.

Sub-pattern: DQ(mf) -->Res

- (1) *Teacher: Do any of you use a PDA?*
Students: Yes
Students: No.
- (2) *Teacher: Do you think it is important if we are expressing ourselves to give a reason?*
Student: Maybe we just need to give a reason sometimes, not just our feeling.

From the total use of the sub-pattern “Display Question with meaning focus” or [DQ (mf) --> Res] (61 times), the use of yes/no questions to ask about opinions and general information was 54 times (88.52%). It was found that although Display Question with meaning focus could successfully invite responses from students to a high degree, responses gained were non-informative more than informative. Display Question normally elicited fixed answers i.e., yes/no, agree/disagree or answer from alternatives provided. However, some yes/no questions asking about opinions could stimulate more than just a yes or no response as in extract (2) because the question required students to express their opinions under the use of the yes/no form.

Sub-pattern: DQ(lf) -->Res

- (3) *Teacher: So based on our answers, which is the most popular method of transportation?*
Students: Bus.

For the sub-pattern “Display Question with language focus” or [DQ(lf) -->Res], the data revealed that this sub-pattern was normally used in some contexts e.g., checking answers from the exercises, checking understanding, or reviewing the lessons. Responses gained were mainly non-informative responses with short answers or the answers that repeated the subject teacher’s choices.

Sub-pattern: RQ(mf) -->Res

- (4) *Teacher: Why do you think texting is better than calling?*
Student 1: I think it's good conversation more than talking.
Student 2: And you can save the text for getting more information.
- (5) *Teacher: What method of transportation do you use?*
Student 1: Bus.
Student 2: Taxi.

In relation to the sub-pattern: “Referential Question with meaning focus” or [RQ(mf) --> Res], both types of responses were elicited with a higher frequency of non-informative responses than informative ones. Comparing to other sub-patterns with the use of one initiating talk, informative responses were found most in this sub-pattern. In extract (4), Referential Question to ask for reason (normally began with “Why”) elicited informative responses as it required students to express their opinions. On the other hand, in extract (5), Referential Question to ask for general information elicited non-informative responses as it did not require students to clarify or explain more.

For the use of two initiating talk patterns, there were 2 sub-patterns to focus on, [DQ(lf)-DQ(lf) -->Res] and [RQ(mf)-DQ(mf) -->Res], which were used 12 times and 7 times, respectively.

Sub-pattern: DQ(lf)-DQ(lf) -->Res

- (6) *Teacher: How about picture number 3?*
Students: (silent)
Teacher: What does picture number 3 look like?
Students: BTS/Subway/MRT.
- (7) *Teacher: What about Anne?*
Students: (silent)
Teacher: What was her solution?
Student 1: Drivers pay to enter downtown.

To begin with the total use of the sub-pattern, “two Display Questions with language focus” or [DQ(lf)-DQ(lf) -->Res], there were six times in which the questions beginning with “*How about..?*” and “*What about..?*” were used. In extracts (6) and (7), the subject teacher asked students questions beginning with “*How about..?*” and “*What about..?*” yet they failed to stimulate any responses. As a result, she repeated her question with clearer purpose of what she expected students to answer e.g., “*What does the picture look like?*” or “*What was Anne’s solution?*” With clear and specific questions, students’ responses were elicited eventually.

Sub-pattern: RQ(mf)-DQ(mf) -->Res

- (8) *Teacher: What is another reason people might not ride bicycles here?*
Students: (silent)
Teacher: Have anything to do with weather?
Student 1: Too hot.

For the sub-pattern: “Referential Question with meaning focus - Display Question with meaning focus” or [RQ(mf)-DQ(mf) -->Res], there were four times out of seven (57.14%) in which the subject teacher provided clues in the second initiating talk to elicit the answer from students. As shown in extract (8), the first Referential Question with meaning

focus was unable to stimulate any responses as no one replied to the teacher's question. Therefore, in the second turn, Display Question with meaning focus was used to provide a clue until one of them came up with the answer.

5. Discussion

Based on the findings, Display Question is used most compared to other types. It appears to commonly happen in language classrooms that the teacher keeps asking many Display Questions especially in a teacher-centered classroom (Ellis, 1994; Zhou & Zhou, 2002). The possible reason of why Display Question is used most might be its effectiveness in creating classroom interaction (David, 2007). That is, the use of Display Question aims to check understanding and elicit already known answers. Thus, students are likely to respond to it.

However, if we take a close look at the context of the class, Oral Communication should aim at promoting authentic and meaningful communication. To do so, teachers teaching this kind of English course need to reconsider whether or not the questions they frequently ask are able to serve those aims. Display Questions, based on the observation, tend to stimulate non-informative responses which do not require high-level thinking i.e., analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Thompson, 1997). Therefore, using a large number of Display Questions might not promote much students' communication unless Display Questions are used to require students to express their opinions under the use of the yes/no form as shown in the data e.g. *"Do you think it is important if we are expressing ourselves to give a reason?"* To encourage more students' informative responses, other types of initiating talk, Referential Question, Invitation and Direction, should be used more in the classroom. Referential Questions can promote meaningful communication since they are more authentic and encouraging of high-level thinking (Wong-Fillmore, 1985).

Invitation and Direction can also be alternatives; however, teachers need to be careful when using these two types. Requesting or commanding students to explain, clarify, and give reason e.g., *"Can anyone volunteer to tell me why you think it's a good idea?"* Or, *"I want you to explain why"* would be more beneficial when used to encourage them to use the target language rather than requesting or commanding them to solely answer Display Questions. Consequently, teachers should be aware of the proportion of each initiating talk's type to serve the purposes of the class.

Concerning patterns of initiating talk, the use of one initiating talk (IT1-->Res) seems to be successful to stimulate responses from students if only quantity is considered. However, this might not be true if quality is taken into consideration. Most responses gained are non-informative or short responses in which students do not use the target language much. The way students give responses leads us to think if the nature of students affects the way they respond. The majority of Thai students seem to be passive and they often wait to get

an opening to speak (Liu, 2001). Most of the time, they respond only when teachers ask questions or allocate turns for them. From this observation, role shifting from both teachers and students would be a good solution. That is, teachers should shift their role from being a class controller to facilitator. Students' role should be more emphasized by providing more opportunities for them to talk or initiate conversations to produce a new classroom nature.

It seems to be true that teachers might be familiar with asking questions (Chaudron, 1988). In such a case, Referential Question should be increased whereas Display Question should be decreased or used only when necessary. Teachers may begin building interaction by asking Display Question to stimulate students' attention. When interaction begins to occur, teachers can challenge them with Referential Question, which requires students to express their ideas into longer and more complex responses. Invitation and Direction should be used more but teachers need to be clear about their purposes. In case non-verbal responses are what they expect, inviting or directing students to act out can be workable as in the example; *"Can you raise your hand if you agree?"* or *"I want you to raise your hand if you agree."* In other words, if teachers want verbal responses, inviting and directing students to use the target language can be applicable e.g., *"Can you tell me/ I want you to tell me why you agree."* Additionally, providing activities that promote authentic and meaningful communication to serve the aims of the class can be a good choice, for example, discussion, debate, problem-solving activities, storytelling, role-play and simulation (Kayi, 2006). These activities can give maximum opportunities and involvement for students to speak. Automatically, teacher talk in the activities would be lessened while student talk would be expanded.

From the aforementioned points, awareness in terms of the class purposes, students' natures, as well as opportunities to use the target language are of vital importance. Another point to be aware of is wait time even though this is not the focus of the present study. In the patterns of initiating talk, the subject teacher sometimes changed or repeated her talk when she could not get any responses from students. In this case, wait time should also be considered whether the teacher gives students enough time to think. Rowe (1986) suggested the appropriate wait time should be up to 3 seconds. Therefore, if teachers allow enough time for students to think before giving responses, repetition or paraphrase of questions might not be needed.

Due to the conflicts between those who are for and against the IRF structure in terms of whether or not it diminishes student talk, the present study does not position this issue as one of utmost concern. The awareness should be on the quality of how to use initiating talk to enhance students' speaking skill especially in an Oral Communication class.

6. Conclusion

The present study explored what and how initiating talks were utilized by the subject teacher to come up with types and patterns of initiating talk to stimulate students' verbal responses. Types of initiating talk drawn as a framework were Questioning (Display and Referential Questions), Invitation, and Direction. Unsurprisingly, the teacher used Questioning most with a large proportion of Display Question. For the patterns, the use of one initiating talk appeared to be successful to gain responses, but students just replied briefly through which they did not exactly communicate. Apart from the types of initiating talk used by the teacher that could affect the ways students responded, students' nature might be another factor. Therefore, to facilitate their communicative skills to serve the purposes of an Oral Communication class, using initiating talk which requires them to explain or give more complex responses would be beneficial. Significantly, the teacher should be more aware when initiating verbal interactions by asking, inviting and directing students to adequately use the language. Providing interactive activities such as discussion, debate, simulation, etc. might be effective and appropriate to serve the purposes of the class as well as to promote communicative skills.

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Appendix: Coding Scheme based on a framework of Mehan (1979), and Sinclair and Brazil (1982)

Types of Initiating Talk		
Abbreviations	Descriptions	Examples
DQ - Display question	Questions for which the teacher already has the answer, and only asks so that the class can display their understanding or knowledge.	What do you see from picture no.1?
RQ - Referential question	Questions for which the teacher does not know the answers and which contain no fixed answer.	Why is cost more important?
IN - Invitation	The use of polite language or request statements to ask students to do some activities.	Can anyone volunteer to tell me why you think it's a good idea?
DI - Direction	An authoritative direction to be obeyed, an order of the teacher.	I want you to explain why it is important to have an outline.
Focuses of Initiating Talk		
Abbreviations	Descriptions	Examples
lf - language focus	Initiating talk that elicits responses relevant to language point or grammatical knowledge	What does environmentally friendly mean?
mf - meaning focus	Initiating talk that elicits responses relevant to general information or content.	Why do you think texting is better than calling?

Examples of formulated patterns of initiating talk

Transcriptions	Coding
Example 1 <i>T: What do you think about taxi?</i> <i>ST: Expensive.</i>	RQ(mf) Non-informative response
Pattern: RQ(mf) -->Res	
<i>Example 2</i> <i>T: What do you think is your biggest concern?</i> <i>SS: (silent)</i> <i>T: So, what is most important to you?</i> <i>SS: (silent)</i> <i>T: Cheap or easy or environmentally friendly?</i> <i>SS: (silent)</i> <i>T: What is the most important thing in your opinion?</i> <i>ST: Cheap.</i>	RQ(mf) RQ(mf) DQ(mf) RQ(mf) Non-informative response
Pattern: RQ(mf)-RQ(mf)-DQ(mf)-RQ(mf) --> Res	