

# Classroom Interaction in Communicative Language Teaching of Public Secondary Schools in Nepal

Trilok Datt Tiwari

Far Western University, Nepal, e-mail: tttrilok@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Keywords:</b> classroom interaction, interaction types, communicative language teaching</p> <p><b>DOI:</b> <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.21093/ijeltal.v5i2.766">http://dx.doi.org/10.21093/ijeltal.v5i2.766</a></p> <p><b>How to cite:</b> Tiwari, Trilok Datt. (2021). Classroom Interaction in Communicative Language Teaching of Public Secondary Schools in Nepal. <i>Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics</i>, 5(2), 373-386</p>	<p>Recently there has been a growing number of interests in classroom research primarily focusing on interaction and language learning as these two issues are considered to be essential components in communicative language teaching which is widely practiced today. This current study was aimed to find out the classroom interaction situation and factors affecting it in public Secondary schools of Kanchanpur district, Nepal. The participants of this study were three English language teachers teaching in the secondary level. The researcher used semi-structured interview and observation of video recordings of classes for collecting the data. In analyzing this study, the researcher used types of interaction proposed by Kumaravadivelu (2006) that include: interaction as textual activity, interaction as an interpersonal activity, and interaction as an ideational activity. The findings showed that all types of interaction activities proposed by him were present in the class. The study also revealed that the teacher often dominated, controlled and initiated the interaction. It further showed that there were several affective factors that prevented the teachers from having classroom interaction. The implication of the study is that the teachers should include all three types of interaction activities in the class and maximize group/pair work for effective teaching and learning of language.</p>

## 1. Introduction

Classroom interaction is an interaction that takes place either between teacher and students or among the students in the class. Brown (2000) defines, "Interaction is the collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings, or ideas between two or more people, resulting in a reciprocal effect on each other" (p. 165). It is the practice that enhances learning, may it be the learning of language or any other subjects. Hall and Walsh (2002) assert that it is one of the primary means by which learning is accomplished in the classroom. Discussing the importance of learning through interaction Siddig and AlKhouday (2018) say, "Student-teacher interaction is essential since it plays a vital role in developing a positive trajectory of student academic progress and also a social improvement" (p. 86). They further assert that students can achieve

communicative competence through interactive methods used in the class. In the same line, talking about the importance of interaction, Gholami, Moghaddam, and Attaran (2014) reveal that interaction has been given special attention with the arrival of communicative approach to language teaching. They further assert that Students' oral participation in English has become an important issue because this approach focuses on the interactive nature of classroom teaching. However, in reality, oral participation and interaction in the class have not been given much importance. My argument is that the essential features of communicative approach to language teaching are not adopted by the teachers in real practice. They simply say that they are following communicative language teaching without giving ample opportunities for classroom tasks and interactive activities.

There are different ways to classify the interaction that occurs in the classroom. However, for the purpose of this study the researcher has used the types of interaction proposed by Kumaravadivelu (2006). He has talked about three types of classroom interactions that include: interaction as textual activity, interaction as an interpersonal activity, and interaction as an ideational activity. The first type focuses on formal linguistic concept. Based on this, the quality of interaction is measured in terms of linguistic ability or gains on the part of learners. This enables the learners to modify the signals in the conversations. The second type focuses on social context and its outcome is measured in terms of sociocultural knowledge. It encourages the learners to initiate different types of interactional topics in the classroom. The last interaction type deals with ideological content. This type of activity primarily focuses on ideas and emotions that the learners bring in the class from their own real life experience. It enables the learners to construct their identity and its quality is measured in terms of pragmatic knowledge. The researcher's focus on this study is to find out whether these all types of interactions occur in Secondary level English classes in Nepal. If not, which type has more dominance on others?

### **1.1 Situation in the schools of Nepal**

English is used as a lingua-franca for international communication in every part of the world. As a consequence of its importance as an international language, it has been included as a compulsory subject in Nepal starting from school to university curriculum (Curriculum Development Centre, 2076a) . The curriculum of Secondary schools of English in Nepal aims at communicating clearly and effectively in a range of situations and also listening and responding in English with accuracy and fluency (Curriculum Development Centre, 2076b) . However, the purpose of teaching learning English at school level seems to be unachieved. Despite the excellent marks in the exams, the majority of the students are not able to produce a single sentence in English. For this reason, interaction in the classroom is an important thing for developing linguistic skills. The researcher's own observation as an English teacher shows that there is lack of interaction in the class due to traditional methods of teaching. Moreover, there is lack of collaborative learning atmosphere in the schools and colleges. Discussing the classroom situation he observed, Adhikari (2010) mentions, "Interactional techniques such as dramatic activities and role play were completely absent from their lesson"(p. 3). He further reported that classroom interaction was just in the form of teacher asking yes/no question and students just responding. That is to say the mode of class he observed was just teacher dominated and the students were just acting as passive recipients.

Being a teacher of English, the researcher is aware that students are just found sitting passively and listening to teachers while teaching compulsory English. They are hardly seen involving in any kind of interactions and active learning strategies (Keyser, 2000; Tedesco-Schneck, 2013). In this context, it is relevant to cite Chickering and Gamson (1987) who say:

"Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just by sitting in classes listening to teachers, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences, apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves"(p. 4).

As per the observation of the researcher, the students in Nepalese schools are just seen as audiences in sports activities watching and enjoying the players sitting passively on the terrace of stadium. The teacher is seen as a complete authority controlling all the activities in the class. Therefore, despite the length of time the students have spent learning English, they are weak in communication skills. For this, the current practices and situations have to be explored among the English language teaching professionals so that it will work as guidance to other teachers as well as learners of English for the promotion of their basic communication skills through interaction. Moreover, to get a complete picture of the interaction situations of public secondary schools in Nepal, the researcher felt the dire need of carrying out the present study. The following research questions were designed to frame the study under a qualitative research approach;

1. How does classroom interaction take place in English language classes at the Secondary level?
2. What type of interactions mostly prevail in Secondary classes?
3. What factors affect the classroom interaction based on Secondary level teachers' perspectives?

### **1.2 Previous Studies**

Wang and Castro (2010) carried out a research on 'Classroom Interaction and Language Output' to investigate the effects of classroom interactions on the learning of passive voice during language input and output treatments among 28 adult L1 Chinese learners of EFL using pretest-posttest design. The study found that classroom interactions have facilitative effect on learning the target form. It also showed that classroom interaction may trigger the learner to see the target form and has a positive impact on learning the language. In a study Pujiastuti (2013) examined the realization of verbal classroom interaction, types of teacher talk, teacher talk implication on student's motivation, student talk and teacher's roles in classroom interaction using a qualitative research design and case study approach. The researcher used FIACS to analyze the patterns of interaction prevailing in the classroom. Using observation and interview the data was collected in a classroom of a private school in Bandung. The study sample consisted of an English teacher and fifteen students. The results of the study showed that all the teacher talk categories mentioned by Flanders were present such as giving direction, lecturing, asking questions, using student's ideas, praising, criticizing student's behavior and accepting feelings. However, giving direction and lecturing were dominant among other categories. In addition, the results showed that the teacher adopted a role as a controller in the classroom interaction process. Likewise, Sundari (2017) conducted a study to investigate classroom interaction and factors affecting it in English language

teaching classes of lower secondary schools of Jakarta using interview, focus group discussion and class observation. The data was analyzed with the help of grounded theory analysis. The main aim of the study was to understand the interaction in foreign language teaching classes. The findings demonstrate that classroom interaction can be categorized into verbal practices, non-verbal practices, pedagogical practices and personal practices. Further the study showed that several factors in and outside the classroom such as learners and teacher variables, learning objectives, and targeted language skills, classroom contexts, composition, class size, duration and learning facility affect the interaction. Likewise, the study reported several external factors such as sociocultural background, adopted national curriculum, school system, parent role, language exposure and other social economic variables also play affective role. The study also showed that classroom communication is dominated by teacher in giving instruction, explaining activity and checking comprehension. In the same way, Khusnaini (2019) explored the type of teacher talk and the characteristic of classroom interaction in the English language classroom of Semarang Multinational School using observation and audio recordings as data collection tools. The researcher applied Flanders's interactive theory to analyze the data. The findings demonstrated that the teachers had indirect influence on the students in teaching and learning process by relying hard on asking questions. The research further showed that the teacher often relied on asking questions to students in the teaching and learning process. In another study, Tyas and Widhiyanto (2020) analyzed interpersonal meaning between the teacher and students in the eleventh grades of Vocational High School using observation and interview as a research tool. This study mainly focused on interpersonal meaning, kind of interaction, and role relationship between teacher and students. The study demonstrated that teacher and students negotiate interpersonal meaning through their speech function. Based on the findings of classroom observation, the study found mainly four types of interaction in the class which include: interaction between the teacher and students, interaction between the teacher and a student, and interaction between a student and another student. Regarding the role relation between teacher and students the study revealed that the teacher in the class played the roles of controller, organizer, prompter, and resource while teaching. Likewise, Bhandari (2021, January) explored English teachers' perspectives on classroom interaction in learning English language using phenomenological qualitative research design. The sample consisted of four secondary level English teachers. They were selected by using purposive sampling method. The researcher used Semi-structured interviews and informal discussions for collecting qualitative data. The data was analyzed on the basis of social constructivism theory of Vygotsky. The findings showed that the English language teachers had positive perceptions regarding classroom interaction. In addition, the teachers in the study revealed that classroom interaction promotes learners' autonomy, confidence, cooperation, a friendly learning atmosphere and the critical thinking abilities.

The aforementioned literature review showed the significance of classroom interaction for learning language. However, the classroom interaction in foreign contexts might not be applicable to our contexts. Even in our context of Nepal, the learning facilities and sociocultural situation is different from Far East to Far west which might affect the classroom interaction as Sundari (2017) has previously demonstrated that there are in and outside factors that influence it. The study findings obtained in Kathmandu may be different from the findings obtained in any other less developed places of Nepal. Therefore, it is important to explore the phenomenon from context specific classroom situations in Nepal. As far as the

researcher knows, no single study in classroom interaction and language learning has been carried out in Far Western Development region, which is backward in terms of development. Moreover, the previous studies have not explored the dominance of a particular classroom interaction type applying the perspectives of Kumaravadivelu. Therefore, this study is different from others so that it could fulfill the existing gap in classroom interaction in secondary level public schools in Nepal.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

Several methods of language teaching have been proposed in the historical development of SLA so far. Among them, Communicative method has been popularly practiced these days. Explaining the history of it Richards (2006) mentions that it was in Britain in 1960s Communicative language teaching came into existence due to the drawbacks of earlier structural methods. He further says that it was first proposed in the 1970s and since then it has become very influential language teaching approach around the world. Discussing the features of it, Nunan (1991) mentions that Communicative language teaching emphasizes on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language. In the same line, talking about Communicative language teaching, Richards and Rodgers (1986) mention that the main goal of it is to develop communicative competence on the learners. It assumes that the activities that involve real communication promotes language learning. Therefore, the learners are involved in carrying out some tasks that promote meaningful communication. They further mention that the meaningful communication helps language learning process. In the same way, Richards (2006) mentions some core assumptions of current practice of communicative language teaching. Among several assumptions, one is that "second language learning is facilitated when learners are engaged in interaction and meaningful communication"(p. 22). Therefore, it can be said that interaction and communication are essential things for the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching as interaction is one of the main components in communication. In this context, Sundari (2017) clearly mentions: "Classroom interaction has been a central issue in teaching and learning English in the era of communicative language teaching"(p. 147). So, interaction and Communicative Language Teaching are interrelated to each other. It is the interaction that helps provide input to the learners in the classroom. It can be said that Communicative language teaching class expects students' interaction for performing different tasks.

Similarly, classroom management is highly required for interaction and effective leaning. Interaction cannot take place in unmanaged classroom. But, Classroom management is understood differently by different people. Traditionally, classroom management is interchangeably used with the term discipline. Now it includes a variety of factors that make a class a better place for learning and teaching. Defining Classroom management, Scrivener (2012) says that it refers to "the way that you manage students' learning by organizing and controlling what happens in your class..."(p. 1). Therefore, within the definition of classroom management several things are included such as arrangement of class, the student behavior and teacher behavior, the classroom environment etc. It is the foremost role of a language teacher to be aware and sensible to create supportive and accepting classrooms. In this context, Sariçoban (2005) says that the classroom should be secure, positive and motivating for the learners to enhance their learning. In the same line, reporting the previous studies Stronge, Ward, Tucker, and Hindman (2007) and Stronge, Ward, and Grant (2011) say that when a teacher is effective classroom manager, their students achieve at a higher level. So,

the classroom management is the effective way of managing the classroom in order to create a supportive learning environment where the learners actively engage in group and pair work and learn better.

From the discussion above, it can be said that classroom setting and management styles have direct impact on classroom interaction and language learning. Traditional arrangement of classroom is not supportive for group/pair work. In this connection, Adhikari (2010) mentions, "classroom setting is one of the main problems. Almost all the classrooms have furniture arranged in rows and fixed to the floor which prevents easy mobility required for group work and face to face interaction" (p. 3). He further mentions that such a setting discourages students' involvement in any kind of activities such as games and problem solving. Therefore, how we arrange and manage classroom either encourages or discourages interaction in the classroom. In the same line, Hadfield (1992) expresses his view on the importance of Classroom dynamics in English language teaching and expresses that it is essentially required to enhance the interaction between students and teachers and also to create positive classroom environment where the learners can feel comfortable in learning the language. To occur the interaction in the class largely depends on the kind of classroom environment the teacher creates. In this connection, McGlynn and Angela (2000) believe that effectively delivering content to the students in the class is not enough for effective learning and students' retention. The teacher has to arrange collaborative learning environment and manage the classroom dynamics in such a way that the students can develop a kind of bonding among each other. He further opines that effective teachers create an atmosphere of trust and warmth between them and among students.

### **3. Research Methodology**

It is a qualitative study based on primary data. In order to explore the practices of classroom interaction, the researcher selected 3 English language teachers from three different public schools of Kanchanpur district, Nepal by using purposive sampling from the research site. The reason behind selecting the participants purposefully is entirely dependent on the personal judgment of the researcher keeping in mind the purpose of the study. Moreover, the researcher selected the participants based on the familiarity with the teachers. Likewise, the selection of these three teachers is based on different locations representing schools from urban, suburb and rural areas of the region so that the data obtained from them could be more representative and trustworthy. For the collection of data, the researcher developed a flexible informal in-depth interview guideline including several open-ended questions so as to find out information to address the research questions. The researcher also collected data by observing video recordings of the classes of selected teachers. He requested one of his friends to video record the classes. Before video recording, the researcher requested the teachers for permission. He assured them for privacy and secrecy of the recorded materials. After getting the video clips of the classes that consumed 30 to 40 minutes, the researcher requested them for short interview on telephone that lasted for 10 to 15 minutes. Before he took interview, the researcher got their permission to audio record their voice using cell phone. He took their interview in Nepali so that it would be easy for them to have conversation with the researcher. He translated the recorded material into English from Nepali language. After transcribing data into English, the researcher read the transcription several times to generate the clear ideas. Then he organized the information into different themes and sub themes based on the research questions. The researcher triangulated data

obtained from interview and video recordings of the classes to make the results more trustworthy for the research. Finally, he analyzed the themes for answering the research questions and write description of the data as part of the interpretation. For the analysis, the researcher used content analysis using interaction types of Kumaravadivelu (2006) to see if all interaction types prevail in Secondary level classes of public secondary schools. Ethical consideration in a social research is inevitable from the beginning till end. Therefore, the researcher regulated and maintained all the required quality and ethical standards in the research starting from data collection to its analysis.

#### **4. Findings and Discussions**

The paper presents the results and discussion from the qualitative study using three main themes including: The condition of classroom interaction, the types of interaction, and the factors affecting interaction.

##### **4.1 The Condition of Classroom Interaction**

The aim of the study was to analyze how the interaction occur in Secondary level English classes. Based on the analysis of video record of the classes, very little interaction that happened in the class. Mostly, the teachers initiated it and the students just responded to the teachers by giving answers in a phrase or word. The transcription below provides an example of teacher initiating little interaction in the form of question and answer.

T: Open page number 48 and tell how many pictures are there?

S: 3 (in chorus).

T: Now look at the pictures and guess who are they? Picture no 1

S1: Family members

T: Picture no 2?

S2: Doctor

T: Picture no 3?

S: Teacher (in chorus)

As it can be observed, students interacted with their teacher mainly through words and phrases as part of responding to the teacher's questions. The teachers often did not ask long and opinion-giving type of questions. They often put the questions in whole class rather than calling out the name of a particular student. The main focus of the teachers was to deliver the content rather than having interaction. They tried their level best to make the students understand what was given in the text book. The questions were mainly based on the text. The transcription below shows how the teachers asked content related short questions to the students in order to check their comprehensibility.

T: Who has written this letter?

S: Mannisha has written this letter (in chorus)

T: Yes, Manisha has written this letter. Ok... to whom the letter was written? Ok...the letter has been written to...?

S1: The letter has been written to Sushant.

T: Ok, when was letter written?

S: The letter was written in 7th April 2017(in chorus)

This transcription above shows that the teacher was focusing on content learning rather than having interaction in the class. It was observed that he simply asked the questions in order to

confirm whether the students understood the text or not. Besides this, the teacher often used students' first language so that they could quickly convey the meaning to the students. The higher frequency of teacher asking short yes/no type of questions were often found in the class. They often used lecture method. The students carefully listened to what the teacher was saying. They did not ask any questions in between the classes except some of the questions related to the word meaning. The teachers often translated the words into their first language and sometimes they explained the word in English by using simple modified language. They focused in teaching vocabulary items given in the text. There were limited number of students who asked even word meaning to the students. They just acted as a passive listeners. Group and pair work was minimal in the class. Based on the analysis of one of the video recordings of the classes, it was found that the teacher divided the whole class into 4 groups. The division of group was traditional. He did not rearrange the chairs and students, but based on their sitting, he created groups. The teacher did not assign any proper task to the students, however, he asked them to read the letter given in the book and discuss the content given there with each other. The following short transcription provides how group work takes place in the class.

T: Ok read the letter and discuss. If you feel any problem you can ask me. Ok... on the basis of this letter. I will be asking some questions.

S: Ok sir (in chorus)

All the students were not found taking part in the group task. The teacher was often seen standing to the front side of the class during group and pair work. Guiding, monitoring and facilitating the group/ pair work was not often found. This shows that real communicative tasks did not take place in the classes, though they said that they were properly following communicative approach to language teaching. Likewise, there was problem in classroom management as the teachers were not found to be effective classroom manager. They did not arrange the class in a way that was supportive for the interaction. Moreover, it was observed that the arrangement of class was traditional as the furniture was arranged in rows and fixed to the floor which prevented them from creating group/pair activity. This was the reason, group and pair work was not much focused by the teachers. In the same way, based on the observation of video record, the teachers often did not encourage the students for participating in the interaction. So, students-teacher collaboration was lacking in the classes. As McGlynn and Angela (2000) believe that effectively delivering content to the students in the class is not enough for effective learning and students' retention. For that the teacher has to create collaborative learning environment and manage the classroom dynamics. However, based on the observation, it was found that supportive and collaborative learning activities were often missed in the classes. The teachers always initiated the interaction and the role of students was just to respond to the teachers questions. Commenting on this kind of situation Littlewood (1981), says that this sort of pedagogic practice greatly limits the communicative functions that the learners need to use and the communication skills that they should practice. The present study bears similarity with the study carried out by Lacia, Gingo, and Maxilom (2019) who found that asking question was the most predominant interactional strategy among the students. However, their study records only the conversation among the paired students in the class, but this study records the interactions that occur in the class may it be between students and students or between students and teachers.

## 4.2 Types of Interaction

**Interaction as a textual activity.** The following transcription shows interaction as a textual activity that happened in one of the classes observed in the video recordings. In that class, a teacher was supposed to teach a letter given in the book and his focus was to teach the vocabulary items. He asked one of the students to read two paragraphs of the text and asked whole the class to underline the difficult words. The transcription below makes the idea more comprehensible.

T: Dear students, did you find some difficult words in these two paragraphs?

S1: unconditional

T: Could you please repeat it again? Ok...unconditional...ok listen, there are two words one is unconditional and its opposite word is conditional...listen if you give me one thousand rupees. I will love you for two days...this is conditional, You know and if you don't give me anything else...umm... if we do not have agreement on something and still if I love you means this is unconditional love...see our father and mother love us...ok they love us without any condition...without any bargaining---that's why this is called unconditional. Ok if there is any other word?

S1: willing

T: Can anyone tell the meaning of this word? Can you please read the sentence where willing is written? Ok that her nephew is willing to find her a job. He is willing means he is ready to find...ok he is interested in finding the job means he is trying to find...now can you tell me the meaning of willing?

S2: interested to do

T: yes, interested to do something.

The transcription above provides an example of a textual interaction from one of the classes through which the teacher was supposed to teach a poem. However, his main focus was to teach them the meaning of difficult words so that they could understand the meaning of the poem. As it can be observed, the teacher–student interaction occurred mainly through word or phrases and the teacher tried to clarify the meaning of the words by modifying the language or by giving example or explaining in a simple language.

**Interaction as an interpersonal activity.** Based on the observation of video recordings, it was found that the teachers rarely provided chance for interpersonal kind of interaction. It was found that the teacher was initiator and controller of the interpersonal kind of interaction that took place in the class. The students did not get opportunity to have interpersonal interaction among each other. In one of the classes observed, a small instance of interpersonal kind of interaction was found in which the teacher was supposed to teach a poem, but before he began teaching, he provided a little time for the students to share their personal experiences. The following transcription provides how teacher initiated interpersonal interaction that took place in the class.

T: Do you like poems?

S1: Yes sir.

T: Have you ever written poems? About what topic? Anybody? Anybody of you? Have you written poem?

S2: No sir

T: You must have written....on any topic

S1: Yes sir

T: About matter, about politics. Have you ever written?

S1: Yes sir

T: About what? What was the topic?

S1: Friendship, love, sadness, happiness

T: You can write poem about your school, teacher, of your parents.....

S: Yes sir (in chorus)

**Interaction as an ideational activity.** Based on the observation of video recordings, it was found that interaction as an ideational type occurred in the classes. However, the sequence of interaction was rather short and mainly based on the exercise given on the textbook. The teacher was supposed to teach how to give advice. Before he began the exercise given in the book. He asked the students to talk about the problems in the real world. Then the teacher provided some real-world situations and elicited some kind of advice from the students. The transcription below clarifies how the interaction as an interpersonal activity went in one of the classes

T: Ok... suppose if you are suffering from fever or any disease then how would you give advice to that person? Can you tell me some sentences?

S: You should go to hospital (in chorus)

T: Yes, you should go to hospital...any other suggestion

S: Why don't you take medicine? (In chorus)

T: Yes, you must go to hospital.

S1: If I were you, I would go to clinic.

T: Yes, these are the sentences related to giving suggestion or advice

The transcription above provides the example of ideational type of activity where the students in the class tried to give advice in the situations created by the teachers. The students just gave advice in simple structured type of sentences. The teachers did not go out of the textbook even if they had ideational type of interactive activity. Based on the observation, it was found that they rarely had ideational activity in the class. However, the students were eager to express their opinion in giving advice.

Based on the results obtained from the analysis of video record, it was found that all three types of interactions mentioned by Kumaravadivelu (2006) were present in the secondary level English classes. However, the observation results showed that there is the domination of interaction as a textual activity. The findings of the study support the study carried out by Vahdani, Maleknia, and Divsar (2016) where they also found the domination of interaction as a textual type. Likewise, this study also supports the findings from Khusnaini (2019) and Adhikari (2010) in which they found the domination of teacher asking questions in the class. Likewise, the present study bears similarity with Soraya (2020) study in which the researcher found that the lecturers are more active in initiating the interaction in interactional situation of the class.

The interaction as a textual activity just deals with formal properties of language where the interlocutors try to adjust and modify the linguistic content. As Kumaravadivelu (2006) opines that interaction as a textual activity only offers limited perspective on the role of

interaction in L2 development . That means treating interaction just as a textual activity is not sufficient for the second language learning. All the types of interactional activities should be held in the class. However, in the classes observed for the study demonstrated that the teachers mainly focused on textual activity in their classes. Such classes were monotonous as the students did not have full freedom to express their opinion. Similarly, it was found that in all interactional activity the teachers were dominant, initiator and controller. As Littlewood (1981) rightly mentions, " The development of communicative skills can only take place if learners have motivation and opportunity to express their own identity and to relate with the people around them (p. 94)." He further views that a classroom requires such a learning atmosphere where the students are provided a sense of security and get value as individuals. This is only possible in the classroom situations in which there is the existence of interpersonal relationships among the learners. However, in the classes observed, the teacher did not allow the students to form interpersonal relationship among them as there were few cases found where they were permitted to have independent kind of interaction. Mostly the teachers allowed teacher-learner relationship to dominate the interaction that took place in the class. This is the reason the students could not have more interpersonal and ideational kind of activities in the classes.

#### **4.3 The factors affecting interaction**

All the teachers interviewed showed positive feeling towards classroom interaction for enhancing learning. They believed that interaction is a crucial thing for the development of communication skills in English language. In this context, highlighting the importance of classroom interaction, one of the English teachers stated:

*In the context of Nepal we teach English in EFL situation. We all know that students only get opportunity to practice English inside the classroom or inside school environment. Apart from that when they go back to their home, they don't have any kind of exposure to practice English outside the school situation. I think classroom situation is the main place where students get chance to practice their English. Without interaction it is almost impossible to enhance their oral skills. So, classroom interaction plays vital role.*  
(Interview Vignette of Teacher 1)

Another participant started sharing his experience of using interaction in the class. He stated:

*Interaction is must for effective learning.*  
(Interview Vignette of Teacher 3)

The results of the interview showed that all the teachers in Secondary level have realized the importance of interaction. Therefore, they often have interactive activities in their classes. However, based on the interview, it was found that majority of the teachers have interaction in the form of teacher asking short textual question and students responding through word or phrase. There is teacher domination in the class as they always initiate and control the interaction. Sharing the experience, one of the participants stated:

*I always interact with my students by asking them some questions related to their chapters.*  
(Interview Vignette of Teacher 2)

This showed that they have interaction mostly in the form of asking question. The participants in the study revealed that they want to have several kinds of interactive activities

like group/pair work in the class. But due to some affective factors, they are not able to make their classes full of interaction. Asked about their experiences of those affective factors that prevent them from managing interaction in the class, the responses were different: lack of motivation, large class size, lack of teaching material, lack of physical infrastructure, traditional classroom management, mixed ability students and nature of students. It was only when the researcher inquired more about it that the culture of the society as one of the most important reasons for them to prevent interaction in the class was mentioned. One of the participants revealed that the culture of the society where the institution is located plays vital role for the promotion of classroom interaction. He stated:

*Teachers expect pin drop silence in the class. Pin drop silence is an effective classroom in our culture. So, students are not allowed to speak in the classroom.*

(Interview Vignette of Teacher 1)

Another participant started sharing his experience of controlling students in the class when they talk. He is also influenced by the silence culture in Nepalese society. Noise in the class is thought to be something negative and the symbol of ineffective teacher. Therefore, the teachers try to minimize group/pair work in their classes. They just use asking question as part of interaction and a method of controlling the students. One of the participants stated:

*I can handle them easily by asking questions then they feel hesitation and they stop talking.*

(Interview vignette of teacher 3)

The results of the study shows that teachers want interaction in the class but due to large societal culture they are bound to minimize the activities. Moreover, they want to do as others are doing and following. They do not want to go against the culture in which they are brought up. This culture has affected and prevented them from having interaction in the class.

The results of present study bears many similarities to Sundari (2017) in the context of Lower Secondary schools in Jakarta. Both of these studies show that there are in and outside factors that influence interaction in the class. Likewise, the study supports the findings from Bhandari (2021, January) in which the teachers have positive perceptions towards having interaction in the class. My own observation also showed that teachers want to have either little or more interaction so that they can enhance students learning. All of them believe that interaction is vital for the development of communication skills in English.

## 5. Conclusion

The present study looks at the situation of classroom interaction and the affective factors that prevent it in Secondary level English classes. It also attempted to find out the types of interaction that mostly dominates the class. The study revealed that the teachers often initiated the interaction in the form of asking short textual questions and students responding through a word or phrase. The observation result of the study also showed that the main focus of the teachers was to teach content primarily focusing on vocabulary items in the text rather than having real interaction. Similarly, the study revealed that there is the dominance of interaction as a textual activity based on the classification of Kumaravadivelu (2006). It was found that all three types of interactions that include: interaction as a textual activity, interaction as an interpersonal activity and interaction as an ideational activity were present

in the class. The findings of the study also showed that lack of motivation, large class size, lack of teaching material, lack of physical infrastructure, traditional classroom management, mixed ability students, nature of students and culture of society were some of the affective factors in interaction. The study suggests that there should be balance of all types of interaction in the class that enhances students' learning. The study has several limitations that should be noted before generalizing the result to any other situations. Research findings are limited to three public schools located in Kanchanpur district which lies in the Far Western Region of Nepal. Similarly, the study has only used telephone interview and video recordings of the classes to collect data for the study. The researcher himself did not record the classroom teaching videos, but requested one of his friends to do it for him. Despite these limitations, the study could be useful for the teachers teaching English in the Secondary level. They could gain insights into the importance of classroom interaction for language learning. Similarly, the study could be helpful for the researchers who want to carry out classroom research in Nepal.

## References

- Adhikari, B. R. (2010). Teaching speaking in the Nepalese context: Problems and ways of overcoming them. *Journal of NELTA*, 15(1-2), 1-9. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3126/nelta.v15i1-2.4602>
- Bhandari, B. L. (2021, January). English teachers' perspectives on classroom interaction: A phenomenological study [Blog article]. Retrieved from <http://eltchoutari.com/2021/01/english-teachers-perspectives-on-classroom-interaction-a-phenomenological-study/>
- Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. London: Pearson Longman.
- Chickering, A. W., & Gamson, Z. F. (1987). Seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education. *AAHE Bulletin*, 39, 3-7.
- Curriculum Development Centre. (2076a). *National Curriculum Framework*. Bhaktapur, Nepal: Author
- Curriculum Development Centre. (2076b). *Secondary Education Curriculum*. Bhaktapur, Nepal: Author
- Gholami, V., Moghaddam, M. M., & Attaran, A. (2014). Towards an interactive EFL class: Using active learning strategies. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(19), 190-194.
- Hadfield, J. (1992). *Classroom dynamics-Resource books for teachers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hall, J. K., & Walsh, M. (2002). Teacher-student interaction and language learning. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 22, 186-203. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0267190502000107>
- Keyser, M. W. (2000). Active learning and cooperative learning: understanding the difference and using both styles effectively. *Research Strategies*, 17(1), 35-44. doi:[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0734-3310\(00\)00022-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0734-3310(00)00022-7)
- Khusnaini, N. (2019). The analysis of teacher talk and the characteristic of classroom Interaction in English for young learner. *ELT FORUM: Journal of English Language Teaching*, 8(2), 166-174.

- Kumaravadevelu, B. (2006). *Understanding language teaching: From method to postmethod*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associate.
- Lacia, K., Ginco, J. N., & Maxilom, R. M. R. (2019). Interactional strategies and anaphoric repairs of BS Information and Communications (BSIT) Technology students. *Indonesian Journal of EFL and Linguistics*, 4(1), 89-107.
- Littlewood, W. (1981). *Communicative language teaching: An introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McGlynn, P., & Angela. (2000, 2000 Mar 24). Curriculum: Classroom dynamics and retention; motivating students to persevere. *The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education*, 10, 20.
- Nunan, D. (1991). Communicative tasks and the language curriculum. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25(2), 279-295.
- Pujiastuti, R. T. (2013). Classroom interaction: An analysis of teacher talk and student talk in English for young learners (EYL). 1(1), 163-172.
- Richards, J. C. (2006). *Communicative language teaching today*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (1986). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sarıçoban, A. (2005). Classroom management skills of the language teachers. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 1(1), 1-11.
- Scrivener, J. (2012). *Classroom management techniques*: Cambridge University Press.
- Siddig, B. E., & AlKhouday, Y. A. (2018). Investigating classroom interaction: Teacher and learner participation. *English Language Teaching*, 11(12), 86-92. doi:10.5539/elt.v11n12p86
- Soraya. (2020). The dimension of discourse in English class of higher education. *Indonesian Journal of EFL and Linguistics*, 5(1), 195-209.
- Stronge, J. H., Ward, T. J., & Grant, L. W. (2011). What makes good teachers good? A cross-case analysis of the connection between teacher effectiveness and student achievement. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 62(4), 339-355.
- Stronge, J. H., Ward, T. J., Tucker, P. D., & Hindman, J. L. (2007). What is the relationship between teacher quality and student achievement? An exploratory study. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education*, 20(3), 165-184. doi:10.1007/s11092-008-9053-z
- Sundari, H. (2017). Classroom interaction in teaching English as foreign language at lower secondary schools in Indonesia. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 8(6), 147-154. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.all.v.8n.6p.147
- Tedesco-Schneck, M. (2013). Active learning as a path to critical thinking: Are competencies a roadblock? *Nurse Education in Practice*, 13(1), 58-60. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2012.07.007
- Tyas, G. A., & Widhiyanto, W. (2020). Interpersonal meaning negotiated teacher-students classroom interaction in vocational high school. *ELT FORUM: Journal of English Language Teaching*, 9(2), 87-96. doi:https://doi.org/10.15294/elt.v9i2.37221
- Vahdani, F., Maleknia, Z., & Divsar, H. (2016). Investigating the nature of interaction at elementary and intermediate EFL classes. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 6(4), 781-793. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0604.16
- Wang, Q., & Castro, C. D. (2010). Classroom Interaction and language output. *English Language Teaching*, 3(2), 175-186.