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An Investigation on the Effect of Teaching Conversation on Developing EFL Learners' Discourse Competence in Speaking

The Case of Second Year Students in the English Department at the University of Djelfa

A Thesis Submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctorate-ES Sciences in English (Linguistics & Didactics)

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the substance of this dissertation is entirely the result of my investigation, and that due reference or acknowledgement is made, whenever necessary, to the work of other researchers.

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DEDICATION

To

my family for their understanding of my long working hours and absences from family life

To

my mother and my two late brothers

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My sincere gratitude goes to my supervisor **Professor Fatiha Hamitouche** not only for enlightening my path of research but also for her patience and constant support.

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ABSTRACT

The ability to communicate efficiently is perceived as the ultimate goal of foreign language learning. However, even though second year students at the Department of English in the University of Djelfa have been taught the speaking skills for many years, their level of conversational competence is far from satisfactory, which hinders the development of their spoken discourse competence. This may be due to the fact that teachers and students seem to be unaware that holding a natural, spontaneous conversation is a complex skill that involves the mastery of not only the linguistic but also the conversational features of the target language. The present research study considers explicit teaching of conversation. It specifically aims to investigate whether teaching the speech action of news announcement in conversation through Conversation Analysis-informed consciousness-raising activities has any effect on developing learners' spoken discourse competence. In addition to the teacher questionnaire and classroom observation conducted to elicit information about how speaking and conversational skills are taught in oral expression sessions, an experiment was carried out with twenty second year students to investigate the effect of teaching the speech action of news announcement through consciousness-raising activities on developing learners' spoken discourse competence. The experimental tests consisted of role-plays and the experimental group was submitted to a treatment of five units based on a adapted framework for teaching conversational skills. The data gathered from the teacher questionnaire and classroom observation revealed that the teachers adopted a rather traditional and teacher-centered way of teaching which put focus on learners' linguistic knowledge and overlooked the development of their conversational competence. The findings obtained from the experimental tests showed that most of the

students made gains in the post-test. It was noticed, however, that the experimental group not only ameliorated their speech performance, especially in terms of fluency and coherence in conversation and sociolinguistic appropriateness but also outperformed the control group in producing syntactically and sequentially better organized conversations with the appropriate use of formulaic language.

Key words: Conversation, conversational analysis, news announcement sequences, formulaic expressions, consciousness-raising activities, spoken discourse competence.

List of Abbreviations

CA: Conversation Analysis

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

CR: Consciousness-Raising

CSs: Communication Strategies

D: Deliverer

DA: Discourse Analysis

FL: Foreign Language

FPP: First Pair Part

IRF: Initiation/ response/ Feedback

NDS: News Delivery Sequence

PPP: Presentation-Practice-Production

R: Receiver

SL: Second Language

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

SPP: Second Pair Pair

STL: Situational Language Teaching

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Definitions of Technical Terms

Conversation analysis	It is an inductive, micro-analytic method for studying language as it is used in social interaction
Sequence organization	It is concerned with how speakers construct turns at talk,
Preference structure	It refers to the different ways in which some conversational actions may be accomplished. In a particular context, certain actions may be avoided or delayed in their production, while other actions are normally performed directly
Adjacency pair	An adjacency pair is composed of two utterances by two speakers, one after the other. The speaking of the first utterance (the first-pair part, or the first turn) provokes a responding utterance (the second-pair part,.
Turn-taking	Turn-taking is a term for the manner in which orderly conversation normally takes place. A basic understanding can come right from the term itself: It's the notion that people in a conversation take turns in speaking.
Conditional relevance	When the first item is given, the second is expectable and can be seen to be a second item to the first
Repair	Repair occurs when speakers recognize faulty plans or communication breakdowns and try to find ways to get rid of these problems

General Introduction

Oral proficiency or the ability to communicate in English should be a priority for the great majority of second language learners who often assess their progress in terms of their proficiency attainment. However, many of them seem to be unaware of the fact that speaking in a way that is both accurate and appropriate is the most difficult skill to develop as it involves mastery of not only the linguistic aspects but also other features that characterize native discourse. In fact, to participate fully and effectively in conversations on a variety of topics is a difficult task because it includes not only the knowledge of how the system of language works but also the knowledge of how to use it in a given situation. When compared with native speakers, second language learners usually develop an unsatisfactory level of conversational competence because they ineffectively manage the interactive and conversational features involved in conversation and also because they produce utterances with very few or no formulaic expressions.

It is within this perspective that a considerable amount of research is advocating teaching conversation to develop learners' ability to successfully communicate in the target language in terms of language forms, the capacity for managing the conversational features, familiarity with culture-specific rules of spoken discourse and awareness of pragmatic conventions (Thornbury and Slade, 2006). In fact, research findings in oral discourse analysis, communicative competence, conversation analysis, and pragmatics have revealed that conversational strategies such as turn taking, sequence organization, and repair

should be incorporated into the language classroom so that learners get a clear understanding of the realities of native spoken discourse. According to Thornbury and Slade (2006: 307), a conversational approach to teaching a second language enables learners not only to be conversationally competent but also enhance their language competence. This implies that an explicit teaching of the different conversational aspects involved in conversation enables the students to acquire both the language and the techniques to accomplish everyday conversation successfully and, thus, foster their ability to communicate and engage in social interaction with others(Barraja-Rohan, 1997, 2000; Wong and Waring, 2010).

However, teaching conversation does not mean getting learners talk for the duration of the class period, exposing them to short dialogues with idiomatic expressions, or assigning them presentations followed by discussions about a given topic. In doing so, learners may be learning from using English and practising specific language forms, but they may not learn how conversation works and how native speakers effectively participate in social interaction and successfully manage skills such as openings, closings, turn-taking, the use of silence, making, accepting and refusing an invitation, announcing and responding to news, etc. Given this fact, research carried out by Nolasco and Arthur, 1987; Eggins and Slade, 1997; Barraja-Rohan, 2000 suggests the use of ordinary or casual conversation in the classroom as a pedagogical support to teach how conversation works and how participants manage to talk. This is due to the fact that ordinary conversations constitute the basis of spoken interaction and are necessary to understand native social interactions (Barraja-Rohan, 2000: 72). They also contain rich data of sociocultural norms reflected in the strategies and conventionalized expressions that native speakers utilize to talk to one another,

predict what someone is likely to say and successfully take the turns at talk. Therefore, making EFL learners familiar with the structure of spoken interaction, prosodic features and non-verbal features involved in ordinary conversation may help them develop the conversational skills they need to be effective speakers of the target language (Nolasco and Arthur, 1987:5).It may also help them maintain conversational coherence and, thus, avoid going off tangents while conversing. Raising learners' awareness of the different skills and strategies involved in native conversational discourse may also get them avoid pragmatic failure (Kasper, 2006) negative transfer (Odlin, 1989) and inappropriate conversational organization (Sacks et al, 1974; Levinson, 1983).

Incorporating casual conversation in EFL pedagogy is not void of criticism. It is usually claimed that some features of natural conversation such as laughter, body movements, gestures, facial expressions, and also some features such as greetings and closings are 'universal' and, thus, need not be incorporated in the language programs. It is also believed that native speakers' norms of conversation can be automatically learnt through immersing learners in the target culture by exposing them to authentic conversations or through constantly getting them interact with native speakers. Such immersion enables learners to use the target language accurately and converse spontaneously and naturally with one another and with native speakers without being taught the internal structure of conversation. Furthermore, FL students are usually expected to use English only in the classroom with no possibility to engage in a conversation with native speakers. They do not need to speak like native speakers; all they need is to produce utterances that are fluently and pragmatically appropriate. However, there is evidence in research (Bernesten, 2002; Joyce and Slade, 2000; Wong and Waring, 2010, Thornbury and Slade, 2006) that appropriateness in L2 can only

be achieved when learners are familiar with how native speakers use conversational features, sociocultural aspects, and formulaic expressions in their daily natural conversations. In other words, getting learners' engaged in 'conversation classes' may not be enough. They also need to be able to master the different conversational skills and this can be possible only if they are explicitly taught the skills and strategies involved in conversation.

With the advent of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), conversation instruction has been given much importance. CLT equips students with tools for developing learners' conversational performance for real-life communication and language techniques are tailored to get students involved in the authentic and functional use of language for meaningful purposes. Therefore, the focus of conversation class is on providing learners with the opportunity to use the language fluently and creatively by the design of some interactional activities such as role-plays, simulation, information-gap, jigsaw, information transfer activities (Bygate, 1987). However, even if these activities purport to develop learners' fluency by getting students to interact in contexts that are as realistic as possible (Joyce and Slade, 2000), they may fail to enhance learners' conversational competence given the fact that the different conversational features, strategies and formulaic language are not taught explicitly. Exposing learners to masses of conversational input without any focus on the rules that govern conversational features, may accelerate their language progress but may not provide them with the opportunity to recognize and produce sequences of social actions such as invitations, news announcements, and requests in the same way they are performed by native speakers in different contexts (Nattinger and DeCarrico, 1992).

The indirect way has also been challenged from other quarters. In the 1980's and as a result of the influence of conversation analysis (henceforth, CA) in language teaching, there was a turning point in the way teaching conversation was addressed. Since then, there has been an increasing body of research conducted from a conversation analytic perspective into second language teaching. Indeed, researchers including Gardner, 1994; Barraja-Rohan, 1997;Seedhouse, 2004; Kasper, 2009; Wong, 2010; Wong and Waring, 2010 argue that learners' difficulties to produce appropriate conversations should be addressed by integrating CA in language teaching as it "offers a wealth of knowledge that makes our understanding of interactional competence more specific, more systematic, and more pedagogically sound" (Wong and Waring, 2010:8). Geluykens (1993) as cited in Bernsten (2002:1) advocates using CA as "a framework to make explicit some of the 'rules' operating in conversational discourse, which in turn could be useful for teaching purpose". The integration of CA in L2 teaching, according to Barraja-Rohan (1997), can enhance L2 learners' conversational skills since socio-cultural norms are reflected in conversational strategies such as openings, closings, turn-taking, repairs and adjacency pairs (e.g. greetings, leave-taking, invitations, requests, and news announcements, etc.). For their part, Seedhouse (2004) and Wong and Waring (2010) argue that to help L2 learners develop their conversational ability, understanding of social actions and their syntactic and sequential organization should be directly taught. This implies that when L2 learners are given the opportunity to notice and analyze how native speakers usually sequentially and syntactically organize and expand the sequences in a natural and authentic conversation, they not only understand how conversation works but also improve their conversational competence (Thornbury and Slade, 2006).

Most students at the Department of English at the University of Djelfa usually produce dialogues with grammatically accurate sentences but that are unnatural and inappropriate. In fact, these learners usually use an exchange of questions and answers that seem to make the speakers sounding each other out but in a way that is quite different from what native speakers do. As shown in the following dialogue performed by two second year students. Samir is announcing some news to Nadia:

Samir: Soulking is in Algiers.

Nadia: What is his job?

Samir: He is a singer.

Nadia: What's his nationality?

Samir: He is Algerian

Nadia: Does he sing well?

Samir: Yes.

The unnaturalness of the conversation above sounds contrived and unnatural because the exchanges between the participants seem to adhere to formal written language rather than to spoken interaction. The exchanges between the speakers are more like a 'pattern practice drill' of isolated questions and answers that do not resemble real and natural conversation. This provides some evidence that the students have an unsatisfactory level of conversational competence and seem to be unfamiliar with the basic patterns of conversational exchanges with respect to announcing and responding to the news. In other words, they seem to ignore the fact that the skills of conversation are not only a mere exchange of questions and answers to practice a particular grammar point (here, the present simple), but involve the appropriate use of conversational features (Joyce and Slade, 2000: xvi) such as utterances that are sequentially placed, and logically related to one

another, appropriate feedback and assessment to the announcement of the news through using formulaic utterances that reflect the sociocultural norms of the target language culture.

The students' low conversational performance might be due to the fact that most of the teachers lack knowledge of what needs to be taught in spoken interaction; they usually convey to the learners "a false picture of conversational discourse in the target language" (Sze, 1995:234). This implies that the teachers tend to focus on the formal aspects of the language rather than on the mechanisms involved in natural conversation (Barraja-Rohan, 2011). These mechanisms involve the knowledge of the formal characteristics of spontaneous speech (fillers, overlaps, feedback tokens, styles of speaking) and the techniques of engaging in a conversation such as how to open and close a conversation, how to produce sequentially organized sequences when inviting, requesting, announcing news, etc. In addition, because teachers are unaware of the structure underlying spoken interaction (Celce-Murcia et al, 1995), they tend to equate conversation with students talk that occur in student-student and teacher-student interaction. Therefore, they develop their learners' speaking skill through devising oral communicative activities which require them to practice the linguistic features of written grammar, overlooking the conversational features. Moreover, teachers tend to provide learners with materials with contrived and artificial dialogues which develop their linguistic knowledge but fail to prepare them for the kinds of conversational interactions they need to engage in a natural conversation with native or nonnative speakers.

It is hoped that this study will contribute to the development of EFL learners spoken discourse competence in the Algerian context as it can provide teachers with an alternative to the current teaching practices in speaking classes.

It is significant in the sense that it calls for the incorporation of conversation teaching in language pedagogy to help teachers whose conversation classes tend to be characterized by a random selection of general communicative activities that focus on their linguistic competence probably rethink and modify their teaching methods and beliefs regarding the enhancement of learners' conversational competence. Being aware of the features involved in natural conversation, teachers will gain better understanding of what L2 conversational competence entails and will be in a better position to help their students develop the conversational skills they need to be effective speakers of the target language. In addition, they can benefit from the findings of this study to eventually be able to develop effective ways to prepare students for spontaneous communication, not based on their intuitions but on the findings of conversation analysis. This study can also help textbook authors to use native speakers' ordinary conversation padded out by CA-informed consciousness raising activities in students' textbooks to provide students with a real picture of the nature of interactive talk and, hence, foster their speaking proficiency in general and conversational competence in particular.

The present research study explores the extent to which teaching conversational features can enhance L2 learners' spoken discourse competence. It specifically aims to investigate the effect of raising learners' awareness to how conversational features such as news announcement sequences and formulaic expressions are used in the target language natural conversation to enable them understand and, then, produce these features effectively and appropriately in their own conversation. Thus, the present research study addresses the following research question:

To what extent can an explicit teaching of conversational features such as news announcement and formulaic sequences in conversation help learners develop their spoken discourse competence?

The present research study also investigates the following sub-questions:

1. Are learners at the Department of English in the University of Djelfa aware of the different conversational features involved in a conversation?
2. Can raising learners' awareness to how conversation works help them be conversationally more competent?
3. What are the factors that might distort or develop learners' EFL conversational competence?
4. How can raising-awareness activities contribute to the development of learners' oral language proficiency?

Given the focus of this study is the investigation of the impact of teaching conversation on developing learners' spoken discourse, this study adopts a mixed-methods research framework where both qualitative and quantitative approaches are used. Thus, three research tools are used in this study: a teacher questionnaire, classroom observation and an experiment. The teachers' questionnaire aims at eliciting the teachers' objectives, techniques and methods in speaking sessions whereas classroom observation is used to crosscheck the findings of the teacher questionnaire and examine the teaching procedures prevalent in the oral expression sessions at the Department of English. The experiment aims at investigating how conversation instruction affects students' spoken discourse competence. To achieve this, twenty students will be divided

into two groups: a control group and an experimental group. Both groups will be submitted to two different teaching procedures. The control group will be taught conversational features related to news announcement and formulaic sequences implicitly without specifically directing their attention to how these features are used in conversation whereas the treatment group will receive a five-week treatment in which they will be submitted to a set of CA-informed consciousness-raising activities. Specifically, they will be explicitly taught sequencing organization with regard to how news delivery is sequentially organized and what formulaic expression are used in natural conversation. The two groups will be required to perform role-plays as pre- and post-tests. The aim of these tests is to a) reveal information about the students' level of oral proficiency and conversational competence before the experiment and b) know whether the treatment they will be submitted to will enhance their spoken discourse competence.

To inform the research questions above, the present study explores an explicit teaching of the target conversational features through consciousness-raising activities that are based on an adapted model proposed by Barraja Rohan (2000). The aim of these activities is to raise the students' consciousness to the rules and strategies and processes in view of developing their conversational ability and helping them use these features in their own conversations. This approach to formal instruction is contrasted with the traditional teaching of conversational features where students were taught speaking and conversation indirectly (i.e., exposing them to authentic conversations followed by activities which put focus on the formal aspects of conversational language such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, etc. but gave little importance to the rules of conversational interaction).

The present study comprises 6 chapters. Chapter one reviews the relevant literature about the issues related to communicative competence, and discourse competence. It also deals with conversational competence and factors affecting it. Chapter two defines conversation and provides its functions and key aspects: linguistic aspects, coherence, cohesion and function. It also sheds light on the principles as well as key findings of conversation analysis, with much focus on sequence organization. It then specifically deals with how news announcements sequences are syntactically and sequentially organized in ordinary conversations. Chapter three addresses the issue of teaching conversation. It provides the context of conversation instruction and factors affecting the development of learners' spoken discourse competence. It also examines the main approaches and methods of teaching conversation as well as the contribution of conversation analysis to language teaching and learning. The last section of this chapter is devoted the issue of teaching conversational features through consciousness-raising activities. Chapter four provides a description of the research methodology. In so doing, the data collection instruments, the subject and the teaching materials are described. Chapter five is devoted to the analysis of the data collected through the questionnaire and classroom observation. The findings will also be discussed in this chapter. Chapter six is concerned with the area of research that addresses the main research question: it deals with the analysis of the data collected through the experimental tests as well as the interpretations of the findings. It also provides some recommendations to teachers along with the implications for teaching EFL conversation.

Chapter One:

Models of Communicative Competence and Spoken Discourse Competence

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Introduction

This chapter which is part of the theoretical foundation of the present research mainly focuses on communicative competence and spoken discourse competence. To this aim, it reviews the different models of communicative competence, starting from Chomsky's dichotomy: competence and performance and contrasting it with Hymes' communicative competence which includes not only linguistic knowledge but also knowledge of sociolinguistic codes and rules for using them. The chapter also deals with how Hymes' model was refined and reconceptualized by researchers with some focus on the news components that deal with the interactional processes and their effect on developing learners' communicative competence. The second section explores the construct of spoken discourse competence and its different aspects, putting emphasis on the concept of conversational competence and examining how factors such as fluency, formulaic language, communication strategies, pragmatic competence and negative transfer affect second language learners' conversational ability.

1.1. Models of communicative competence

The concept of communicative competence was triggered by the publication of Chomsky's *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* in 1965. In this work, Chomsky maintained that language existed in the individual quite apart from communicating needs, and labelled that internalized mental grammar of language 'competence' and the actual use of language 'performance' (Chomsky, 1965: 4).

In other words, Chomsky distinguished between people's linguistic competence, what they know about the language and their performance, what they say at any given moment. Even though Chomsky recognized the fact that language ability is more important than knowledge of grammatical rules, he paid little attention to the nature of language use in real communication. Thus, Chomsky's model privileges what he labelled *linguistic theory* whose focus is on the speaker's competence which is of a psychological nature in that it represents the knowledge of language each individual is generally endowed with. The overt realization of language, according to Chomsky, belongs to the *theory of performance* (Chomsky, 1965: 9). This means that performance is "the actual use of language in concrete situation" (Chomsky, 1965:4) and is, according to him, affected by the psychological factors (such as attention, memory, interaction, etc.) and environmental or sociocultural factors (such as cultural norms, register, dialect, etc.). This means that Chomsky regards performance only as a defective realization of competence and this reveals Chomsky's disinterest in language use (Widdowson, 1989).

The inadequacies of Chomsky's linguistic competence led Hymes to coin the term "communicative competence" which, according to him (1972), is a wide term including not only linguistic Knowledge but also knowledge of a set of sociolinguistic codes and rules for using them. Hymes` criticism of Chomsky is based on the fact that Chomsky's linguistic competence does not include a social aspect and pragmatic dimension of communication and that it is concerned only with reference to grammatical features of language. Therefore, the way Hymes viewed language is different from Chomsky's in the sense that the former viewed it not as a system of signs that cannot be separated from their communicative function but also as an instrument of social interaction.

Thus, Hymes' communicative competence model, as shown in figure 1.1, attempts to include everything a speaker needs to communicate effectively in authentic social situations. In this way he expanded Chomsky's concept of competence to include both the linguistic and sociocultural facets of knowledge, as well as psycholinguistic and probabilistic factors that may affect a speaker's ability to use language. Hymes maintained the dichotomy between competence and performance. He, however, provided a much broader definition of competence, which, according to him, does not only include the linguistic forms but also the ability to use these forms appropriately in contexts. This means that competence involves both the tacit knowledge as well as the ability of use. The former involves the speakers' knowledge of grammatical and sociocultural rules while the latter includes non-cognitive factors, such as attitudes, values, motivation and individual characteristics. Concerning performance, Hymes believes that it has a far wider scope in that it includes the interaction between the competences of all those involved in the communicative event. In other words, Hymes views performance as a dynamic concept involving not only the competence of individual speakers, but also the competence of other participants in the speech event, as well as the contextual factors. It is worth pointing out that despite the fact that interactional features (or conversational features) are not incorporated in Hymes' model, his conception of performance laid the groundwork for future conception of these features.

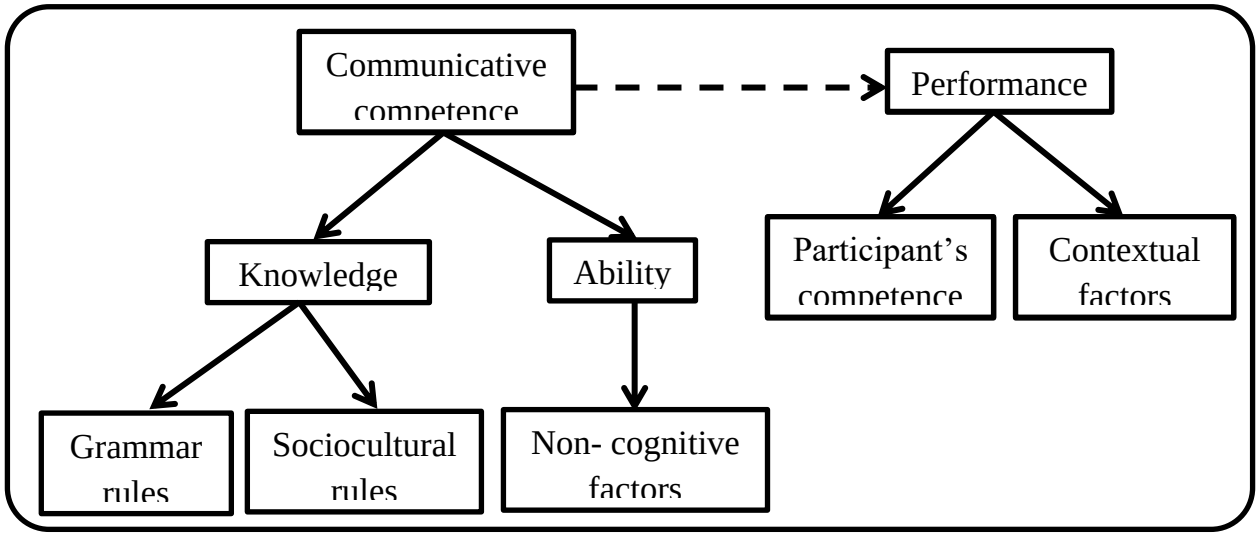

Figure 1.1: Hymes's (1972) communicative competence model

Canale and Swain (1980) were the first to adapt Hymes' model for L2 context. The most influential feature of this model was that it treated different domains of language as separate. Based on the idea that sociocultural factors govern, to an extent, the form language takes, as well as on empirical research in the field of L2 instruction, Canale and Swain's model was characterized by two important and influential aspects: a) they distinguished between the 'theories of basic communication skills' and sociolinguistic perspectives on communication competence' on one hand and what they termed as 'integrative framework of communicative competence' on the other and b) they presented the integrative and elaborate model of communicative competence. For the two researchers (1980), communicative competence consists of three main components: the first component, grammatical competence, basically refers to the Chomskian understanding of language. That is, it comprises knowledge of the lexicon and the rules of phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. The second component, sociolinguistic competence, is based on Hymes's understanding of appropriateness. The last component, strategic competence, attempts to account for the verbal and non-verbal actions L2 learners employ to reach their

communicative goals or when they encounter difficulties due to their lack of grammatical or sociolinguistic knowledge. This domain of competence refers primarily to strategies employed to negotiate meaning during synchronous communication (i.e., speaking). Later, Canale (1983) introduced discourse competence which refers to the ability to produce "a unified spoken or written text in different genres" (1983: 9) using cohesion with respect to form and coherence with respect to meaning, as shown in the figure below.

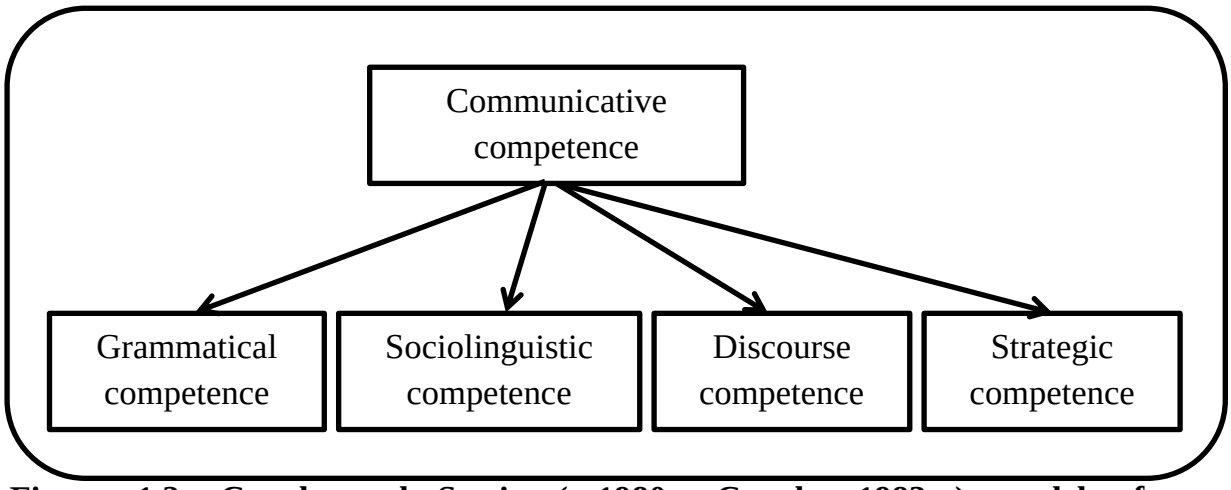

Figure 1.2: Canale and Swain (1980 ; Canale, 1983) model of communicative competence

Canale and Swain's (1980) and Canale's (1983) framework has been rather influential on studies of second language use and served as a starting point to the newer approaches to components of competence. Their model has been particularly significant in the sense that it acknowledges that language is not only about knowledge, but is also about the ways in which speakers manage their interaction with their interlocutors. However, the problem with this model is that it is essentially static, and fails to point out how its components interact with each other and how language users manage to cope with various kinds of contextual conditions. This problem is addressed in Bachman's (1990) model of communicative language ability which is discussed below.

Bachman's (1990) model is very much indebted to Canale and Swain's (1980;1983) concept in that it essentially includes its components, and underlies the same principle: gaining linguistic competence involves control over the mechanics of language and the social and psychological functions to which it can be put to use. This model accounts for the entirety of factors that might affect performance in language tests and departs from previous conceptualizations of language ability in the sense that it eliminates the dichotomy between competence and performance, effectively treating the two dimensions as an integrated whole. Within this perspective, Bachman's (1990) model of communicative language ability recognizes that (1) there is a broad range of linguistic components, (2) that these interact, (3) that language ability interacts with extra-linguistic abilities, and (4) that language ability includes interaction with the communicative context. Accordingly, this model views language as a dynamic interaction among all of the components (language competence, strategic competence and psychomotor skills) occurring within the specific social context in which a communicative event takes place. This model is illustrated as follows:

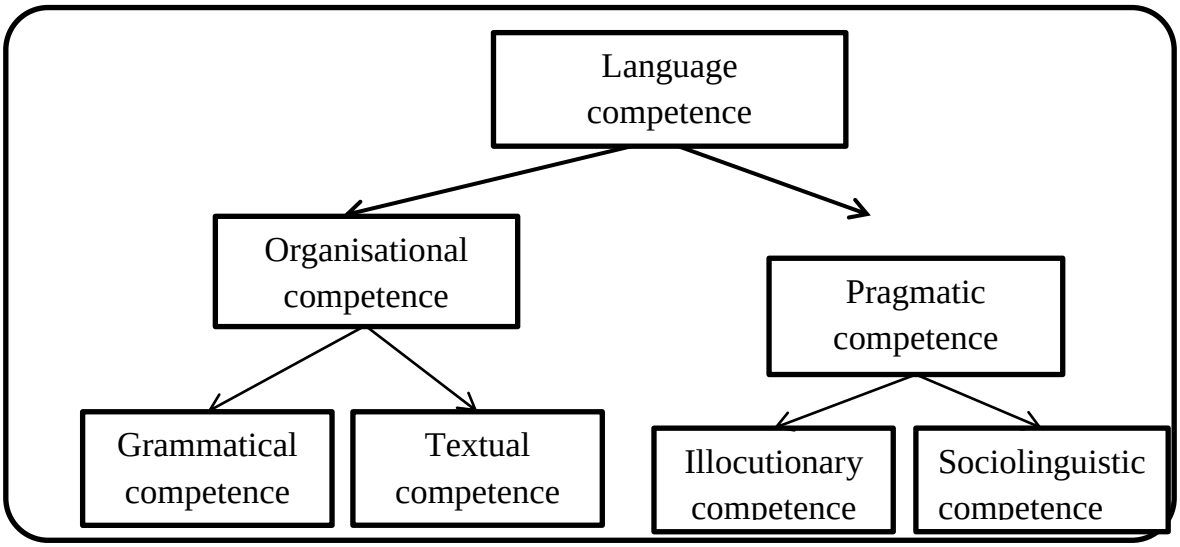

Figure 1.3: Bachman's (1990) Communicative Language Ability model

As shown in the table above, the Bachman model of communicative language ability divides language competence, which refers to the speaker's knowledge of the variables involved in verbal communication, into the following two main categories: 1) organizational competence and 2) pragmatic competence. The former has two main categories: grammatical knowledge (aspects of vocabulary, morphology, syntax, phonology etc.) and contextual knowledge (knowledge of conventions necessary for putting together the discourse elements so as they can make up a text, written or uttered, following the rules of cohesion and rhetorical organization).The conventions for language use in conversations which involve starting, maintaining and closing conversations are also within the scope of textual competence. The other component (pragmatic competence) consists of illocutionary competence (knowledge of the pragmatic conventions for performing acceptable language functions) and sociolinguistic competence (knowledge of the sociolinguistic conventions for performing language functions appropriately in a given context).

In a later formulation, Bachman and Palmer (1996) view language use as the creation of discourse and the interpretation of meaning among two or more individuals in a particular context. Their model is explicit about the need to consider language ability within an interactional framework of language use. Initially designed for language testing purposes, their (1996) model of communicative competence emphasizes that the traits or attributes of learners such as their topical knowledge and affective schemata influence their language ability (Cummins, 2000:123). For Bachman and Palmer (1996) this ability comprises two broad areas: language knowledge and strategic competence. Language knowledge includes both organizational knowledge which includes how utterances or sentences and texts are organized) and pragmatic knowledge

which deals with how utterances or sentences are related to the communicative goal of the language user and the features of the language use situation. Organizational knowledge comprises the control over formal language structures, i.e. of grammatical knowledge (vocabulary, syntax, phonology..) and textual knowledge (cohesion, coherence and conversational organization). Pragmatic knowledge includes a) Lexical knowledge which is the knowledge of the meanings of words and the ability to use figurative language, (b) Functional knowledge which is the knowledge of the relationships between utterances and the intentions, or communicative purposes of language users and (c) sociolinguistic knowledge.

The second area in Bachman and Palmer‘s (1996) model is strategic competence which is understood as a set of metacognitive strategies. This set is the combination of language knowledge and metacognitive strategies which provide language users with the ability to create and interpret discourse. Thus, according to Bachman and Palmer (1996:70), strategic competence refers to;

> a set of metacognitive components, or strategies, which can be thought of as higher order executive processes that provide a cognitive management function in language use, as well as in other cognitive activities. [...] What makes language use possible is the integration of all of these components as language users create and interpret discourse in situationally appropriate ways.

As far as spoken discourse competence is concerned, it is evident that both areas are required to promote oral language ability. On the one hand, organizational knowledge and pragmatic knowledge are necessary to produce accurate and appropriate utterances. Language users, on the other hand, resort to

strategic competence or metacognitive strategies to compensate for any deficiency in their knowledge and, thus, prevent any communication breakdowns.

Having criticized Bachman' (1990) and Bachman and Palmer's (1996)models, Celce-Murcia et al (1995) proposed a model that expanded the scope of the prior models of communicative competence in terms of content specification. Their model includes the following components: linguistic competence, strategic competence, sociocultural competence, actional competence, and discourse competence. The main component of this model is discourse competence which refers to the selection and organization of words which are needed to create a message. Linguistic competence involves phonological, lexical, morphological, and syntactic elements which are required in communication. Socio-cultural competence is related to the speaker's ability to use the language appropriately in a given context. Actional competence entails the speakers' ability to perform and understand speech acts. Finally, strategic component is the speaker's ability to know communication strategies and use them in communication breakdowns.

In this model, discourse competence plays a central role, a position where the three components(linguistic, socio-cultural and actional competence) are interrelated and shape the discourse, which in turn shapes each of them. This implies that the development of discourse competence depends on the parallel development of the three intertwined competencies. The centrality of discourse competence in Celce-Murcia et al's (1995:13)model is explained by the fact that this component is "where the bottom-up lexico-grammatical microlevel intersects with the top-down signals of the macrolevel of communicative intent and socio-cultural context to express attitudes and messages and to create texts"

Celce-Murcia et al (1995:13). In this model, discourse competence involves sub-components such as

a- cohesion: the ability to combine utterances using cohesive devices such as pronouns and connectors in oral and written discourse,

b- deixis: situational grounding achieved through use of personal pronouns, spatial terms, temporal terms, and textual reference,

c- coherence: the ability to organize thought coherently,

d- generic structure: link one idea to subsequent utterances through convention for expressing purpose/ intent, managing old and new information, etc., and

e- conversational structure: "inherent to the turn-taking system in oral conversation" (ibid:16). This sub-component includes features such as performing openings and reopening, topic establishment and shift, holding and taking the floor, interrupting, collaborating and backchannelling, adjacency pairs and knowing preferred and dispreferred responses, etc. (Celce-Murcia et al, 1995:14).

This model is revised by Celce-Murcia (2007) who suggests that to enable language learners to be conversationally competent, it is necessary to include the following two competencies: formulaic competence and interactional competence. The first component, which is the "counterbalance to linguistic competence"(Celce-Murcia, 2007:47), refers to the chunks of language that are employed in everyday conversations. The second one is related to the ability to use specific interactional resources to communicate

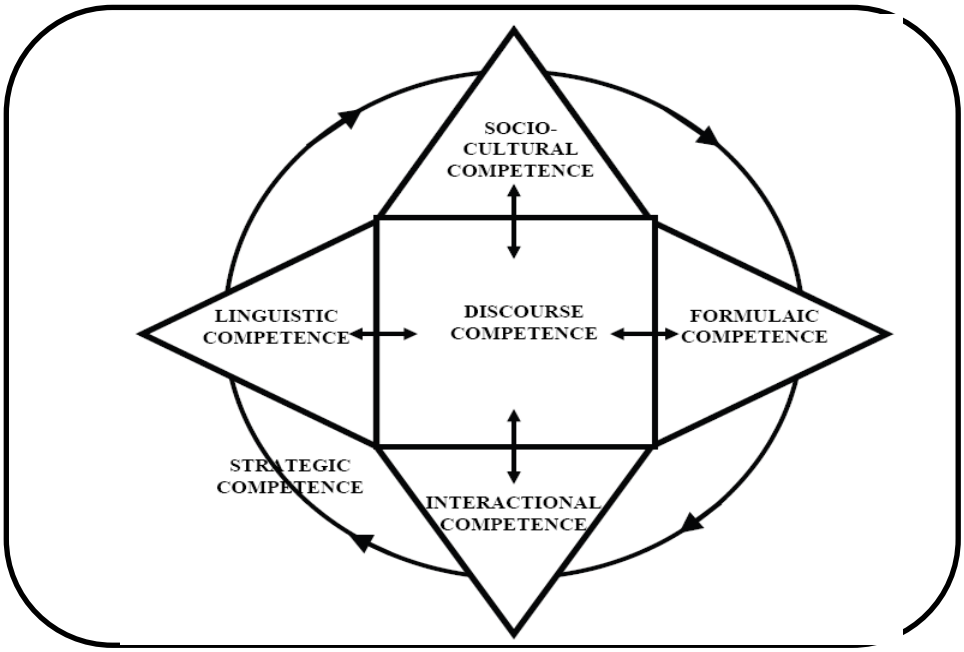

Figure 1.4 :Celce-Murcia 's (2007) Revised schematic representation of 'communicative competence'

In Celce-Murcia's (2007) framework, the focus of communicative competence research is more social and less linguistic. The only feature of her model that deals with language is linguistic competence. All the other components relate competence with respect to social abilities, expressions and idioms, pragmatics, communicative strategies, and conversations. To meet the scope of the present study, the two components discussed above in Celce-Murcia's (2007) model are described below:

1. **Formulaic Competence**

According to Celce-Murcia's (2007:48) model, formulaic competence refers to the learners' ability to use fixed and pre-fabricated chunks of language such as the following:

- Routines: fixed phrases like of course, all of a sudden and formulaic chivh How do you do? I 'm fine, thanks, how are you?
- Collocations: spend money, play the piano, statistically significant…etc.
- Idioms: kick the bucket = to die, to get the ax=to be fired..etc.

- Lexical frames: I am looking for……. See you later/tomorrow/next week.

Celce-Murcia (2007:48)

This competence, according to Celce-Murcia is the counterbalance of linguistic competence in the sense that proficient speakers of the target language draw on their use of formulaic sequences as often as their systematic linguistic knowledge.

2. Interactional competence

According to Celce-Murcia's (2007 : 49) model, interactional competence, which is "the bottom-up counterpart to the more global top-down social-cultural competence", addresses not only knowledge regarding how to perfom common L2 speech act sets but also conversational competence and non-verbal features. Therefore, interactionaal competence , in Celce-Murci's model encompasses the following components:

1. Actional competence refers to the speakers' knowledge of how to use speech acts in the second/foreign language. This includes interacting to exchange information, express opinions and feelings, etc. According to Celce-Murcia actional competence entails the ability to
    (a) perform speech acts and language functions,
    (b) recognize and interpret utterances as (direct or indirect) speech acts and language functions, and
    (c) react to such utterances appropriately.

a) Conversational competence is concerned with the use of turn-taking system within interaction and also with the use of conversational strategies such as how to open and close a conversation, how to interrupt, how to repair and backchannel, etc.

b) Non-verbal/paralinguistic competence refers to the particular features of oral interaction such as body-language or physical space between the speakers.

The interactional competence, according to Celce-Murcia, is extremely important since the way speech acts are performed by learners in their native language considerably differs from the way they do it in the target language. This is due to the fact that normal conversational practices vary from one culture to another. The actional competence should be supported by the conversational competence related to the different skills and strategies involved in conversation. Therefore, it goes without saying that learners should be aware of both L1 and L2 conversational norms because they are essential in developing their communicative competence, and they have to know how to manage social introductions, how to invite , how to announce bad or good news and so forth in the target language.

Celce-Murcia's (2007) revised model provides useful insights to be implemented in the language course in order to help learners to be linguistically and culturally competent. Among the most significant insights is the fact that the knowledge about the culture of the target language should be incorporated in the language instruction. According to Celce-Murcia (2007:52), social and cultural aspects of the language should also be carefully supplemented by authentic discourse and context to help learners produce meaningful discourse for themselves. In addition, linguistic accuracy should also be highly considered in the foreign language classroom along with the development learners' formulaic competence, as these two can ensure that learners can experience the dynamic nature of genuine interaction in the target language.

1.2. Spoken discourse competence

As mentioned before, discourse competence is the ability to know how to interpret a larger content and how to construct coherent and cohesive stretches of language so that the parts together make up a whole and unified unit. To develop this ability in oral communication, learners should master the speaking skills in three major areas. First, they should have a good command of the mechanical elements of language (pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary), which allows them to use the right words in the correct sequence. Second, they should master the different speaking skills whether they be interactional or transactional. Richards (1990:56-57) argues that while the purpose of the interactional uses of language for communication is mainly social, the transactional uses of language aim at communicating information. Put differently, the interactional use of language is to create harmonious interactions between participants rather than to communicate information. Third, learners should master the socio-cultural norms of the target language in conversation. The knowledge of these norms helps the learners to be conversationally competent, as put by Berns (1990) cited in Richards (2002:206):

> …to speak a language, one must know how the language is used in a social context. It is well known that each language has its own rules of usage as to when, how, and to what degree a speaker may impose a given verbal behavior on his or her conversational partner.

Speakers who are said to be competent in spoken discourse make and interpret the meaning of different functions of speech acts in different contexts: classroom setting, interviews and interaction with native and non-native speakers in different situations. According to Nunan (1985:30), spoken discourse

competence does not only refer to the learners' ability to use well-formed sentences and articulate phonological features and other aspects such as stress, rhythm and intonation patterns but also to their ability to have an acceptable degree of fluency. This means that they should demonstrate a variety of skills in engaging in conversation by taking short and long speaking turns, knowing about and negotiating purposes for conversations and using conversational formulae and fillers appropriately. This is echoed in Rivers' (1987: 97) following quotation:

> spontaneous expression does not mean just idle chatter, it means saying appropriately what you mean to say in whatever circumstances…learners of a new language will need to know how to express their intentions appropriately (that is comprehensibly) for many purposes.

1.2.1. Aspects of spoken discourse

The focus of this present study is on spoken discourse from interactional perspectives. Therefore, the focus is on conversation due to two important points. The first one is that "conversation is synonymous with spoken discourse" and that conversation constitutes over 99% of all speech (Abercrombie, 1965:2 as cited in Warren, 2006:3). The second one is that other specialized types of spoken discourse such as interviews, business meetings, courtroom discourse and academic discourse are different from conversation due to the fact that this latter is characterized the interactive processes between the participants and also by the fact that the exchanges between the participants are spontaneous , requiring no planning or editing.

Therefore, spoken discourse is often "associated with conversation that is produced, proceeded, and then evaluated in the context of face-to-face exchange

and grounded in interpersonal relationships" (Horowitz and Samuels (1987:56). It is more likely to be about personal experiences compared to written discourse which typically conveys more general descriptive and explanatory information. Thus, participants in a typical conversational situation tend to be more involved in their communication than those in written discourse. According to Chafe (1994) spoken discourse and written discourse differ in many ways among which are the following:

1. Spontaneity versus deliberate working over:

Spontaneity refers to the nature of spoken language wherein it tends to be delivered without careful thought about the content. According to Chafe(1994: 43), " in conversations, ideas tend to be activated "off the top of one's head". This implies that speakers have little time to elaborate their talk and as a result of this their utterances tend to be fragmented and disorganized. On the other hand, writers usually have the opportunity to look over their work and revise what they have produced.

2. Situatedness versus desituatedness:

This refers to the setting in which communication takes place. Those engaged in conversation are typically physically close when they speak. Chafe (ibid:44)) argues that this 'copresence' "makes it possible for interlocutors to interact , alternating their roles as speakers and listeners". In other words, the speaker at any moment can be the listener at the next turn while writing lacks this intermediate interchange.

Spoken discourse involves conversational and non-conversational discourse (i.e., between highly interactive and less interactive discourse). In other words, a speech which is spoken discourse is less interactive than conversation because of the number of active participants and because of the turn-taking

nature of conversation. Geluykens (1992:29) argues that what distinguishes conversational discourse to non-conversational discourse is that the former "has a fast turn rate, i.e., the floor is constantly taken over by another participant". Since communication requires two parties and since "language use is really a form of joint action…carried out by an ensemble of people acting in coordination with each other" (Clark, 1996:3), the collaborative view of communication has been emphasized by many researchers including Anderson, 1995; Brown, 1995; Bublitz and Lenk, 1999; Clark, 1996 who assert that communicators actively collaborate to ensure that understanding takes places. According to Aijmer and Stenström (2004:90), this collaboration is clearly visible in conversation in which participants actively cooperate to achieve coherence. They further (ibid) posit that to achieve this collaboration, the participants use completions, clarifying questions, etc. to show that they that they have understood what their fellow communicators were saying. Aijmer and Stenström (ibid) also stress the fact that this feedback is sometimes not necessary for successful collaboration since "a continuous flow of communication is in itself a proof of collaboration and no overt signals of cooperation are needed". Therefore, to develop their spoken discourse competence, speakers need to master the conversational aspects of the target language.

1.2.2. Conversational competence

Conversational competence refers to as the ability to make use of conversational features that are indispensable to successful conversation. These features, according to Riggenbach (1998:57), include the following eight micro-skills:

> ..the ability to claim turns of talk, the ability to maintain turn of talk once claimed, the ability to yield turns, the ability to backchannel appropriately, the ability to self-repair, the ability to ensure comprehension on the part of the listener, the ability to initiate repair when there is a potential breakdown, and the ability to employ compensatory strategies .

Riggenbach (ibid) further adds that these skills display learners' discourse competence and strategic competence in conversation, and are required elements in coherent, fluid turn-taking and in successful negotiation of meaning in the case of potential communication breakdown (i.e., strategic competence).

Conversational competence is not limited to the mastery of conversational skills and strategies. It also refers to the ability to have an adequate oral proficiency as it involves the ability to produce clear, smoothly flowing and well-structured speech with an effective logical structure. Put differently, it refers to students' fluency and how they can describe and present a variety of subjects within their field of interest in a linear sequence of points. Competent conversationalists are also believed not only to carry out communicative tasks easily and appropriately but also express themselves at length with natural, effortless, unhesitating flow. They also are competent in carrying out, understanding and interpreting not only verbal communicative actions but also non-verbal behaviors in the target culture such as eye contact, body language, facial expressions. Put differently, the speakers' knowledge should not be limited to verbal communicative actions but also to non-verbal ones. This knowledge enables speakers to be aware of the different cultural norms of the target language and , thus, avoid being rude or being misunderstood.

Thornbury and Slade (2006:186) make a distinction between L1 conversational competence and L2 conversational competence. According to

them, first-language learners are competent in holding conversations, and thus, have excellent skills in opening and closing conversations, taking turns, changing the topic, interrupting, yielding the floor, filling pauses and telling stories with plenty of appropriate discourse markers, formulaic sequences and communication strategies. They can not only make an acceptable conversation without being limited by linguistic knowledge but also can use language flexibly and effectively for social purposes, including emotional, allusive and joking usage. However, second language learners are usually unable to transfer their L1 conversational skills to their L2. In fact, these learners lack the ability to master native-like conversational aspects. These aspects are summarized Kasper (2006:86) below:

- To understand and produce social actions in their sequential contexts:
- To take turns in an organized fashion
- To format actions and turns, and construct epistemic and affective stance (…), by drawing on different types of semiotic resources (linguistic, non-verbal, nonvocal) including register-specific resources)
- To repair problems in speaking, hearing and understanding
- To co-construct social and discursive identities through sequence organization, actions in interaction and semiotic resources (…)
- To recognize and produce boundaries between activities including transitions from states of contact to absence of contact (interactional openings, closings) and transitions between activities during continued contact.

Even though language researchers seem to agree on the fact that a fluent speaker can fill time with talk, speak smoothly, appropriately, correctly, with ease and effortlessness, they seem to agree on the fact that the ability to hold a conversation is a matter of fluency rather than of accuracy. For Schmidt and

Frota (1986 :262) as cited in Thornbury and Slade (2006 :214) " the ability to carry on a conversation is not just reflection of grammatical competence" as this ability to converse effectively and appropriately can also be attributed to the following variables : length of runs, pause ratio, speech rate (Chafe, 1985 ; Lennon 1990a), the use of formulaic sequences (Pawley and Syder, 1983 ; Erman, 2007), use of pragmatic features (Cohen,2007)…etc. Thornbury and Slade (2006 :218) state that learners with low grammatical competence can fill pauses and at the same time increase the length and complexity of their between-pause units because they rely on the use of 'ready-made' or prefabricated units (formulaic sequences), discourse markers and communicative strategies. Thus, a competent conversationalist and a proficient speaker of English is not only expected to use accurate sentences (grammatically correct forms) but should also be able to produce discourse that is comprehensible, easy to follow, and free from errors and breakdowns in communication (Richards, 1990:75). However, there are factors that enhance or undermine second language learners. These factors are addressed in the following section.

1.2.3. Factors affecting conversational competence

Second language learners encounter a lot of problems in establishing and maintaining a conversation in the target language. When they engage in real interactions, they are unable to master the formal properties of conversational skills. Thornbury and Slade (2006:14) propose five factors that affect learners' conversational competence: These factors are fluency, formulaic language, communication strategies, pragmatic competence, and transfer. These factors are dealt with below:

1.2.3.1. Fluency

Fluency refers to the extent to which an L2 learner demonstrates full control over the language he/ she has acquired/learned and can have appropriate things to say in a wide range of contexts. This implies that the mastery of grammatical competence does not make a speaker conversationally competent. In other words, a fluent speaker of language is not only expected to use accurate sentences (grammatically correct forms) but should also be able to produce spontaneous discourse. Schmidt (1983) provided the example of Wes, a Japanese worker, who despite his poor grammar, was able to carry on a sustained conversation in English only after three years living in Hawaii. Schmidt (1983:159) cited in Thornbury and Slade (2006:215) reports that despite his poor grammatical control of English, his conversational competence developed considerable. He (ibid) further adds that when communication breakdowns occur,

> Wes is almost always able to repair these breakdowns, and it seems that his confidence, his willingness to communicate, and especially his *persistence* in communicating what he has in his mind and understanding what his interlocutors have in their minds go a long way towards compensating for his grammatical inaccuracies

In other words, fluent speakers are able to produce discourse that is comprehensible, easy to follow, and free from errors and breakdowns in communication (Richards, 1990:75). Fluency can also be reflected in a learner's use of a number of discourse aspects such as the logical structure of speech, use of connectors, cohesive devices and discourse markers. Thornbury and Slade (2006: 216) argue that a fluent conversationalist should be able to express himself in a smooth and effective manner through the use of fewer repetitions, longer turns and faster speech rate. They further claim that these fluency

phenomena in conversations are of two kinds: temporal variables and hesitation phenomena. The former include elements such as speech rate, and pause length while the latter include filled pauses (eg,erm) repetitions and self-corrections .

1.2.3.2. Formulaic language

The term formulaic language is very frequent in all human communication and subsumes a wide range of terms such as, prefabricated routines, chunks, rote-learnt sequences, fixed expressions, collocations, idioms, phrasal verbs, routines, recurrent word combinations, etc. Wood (2006:12) refers to formulaic sequences as "fixed strings or chunks of words …. cognitively stored and retrieved by speakers as if they were single words". According to Coulmas (1979), the two qualities of formulaic sequences are : fast speech rhythm (lack of pauses and hesitation) and complexity. For Wray (2002), formulaic sequences are characterized by semantic and syntactic irregularities. In other words, formulaic sequences are not necessarily grammatically regular or semantically logical. Formulaic sequences can be marked by fixedness (or invariable form), phonological coherence, greater length and situation dependence, and frequency of occurrence (Pawley and Syder, 1983).

Many researchers including Pawley and Syder, 1983; Myles et al., 1999 ; Wray, 2002; Boers et al., 2006; Wood, 2006 have stressed the importance of formulaic language in enhancing SL learners' fluency in communication and helping them to produce spontaneous speech. This is due to the fact that being orally and conversationally competent does not depend only on linguistic and syntactic knowledge but also on their ability to use formulaic expressions to manage the micro-aspects of discourse…such as adjacency pairs (questions/ response, offer/acceptance), and interactional strategies (Joyce and Slade, 2000:

xiv). According to Boers et al. (2006), L2 speakers can benefit from having a command of formulaic sequences in three ways: First , these sequences which are idiomatic in nature and which are not predictable by grammar rules, may help them produce utterances that sound native-like. Secondly, using these utterances directly from memory can help them reduce hesitations and increase the length of runs and, thus, improve their spoken fluency. Thirdly, if they appropriately use these prefabricated chunks in their discourse, they will reach a high degree of accuracy because these utterances offer them 'zones of safety' "where they can settle momentarily while they monitor input and plan subsequent output" (Thornbury and Slade, ibid).

It is often argued that learners with limited exposure to authentic input tend to generate utterances that sound unnatural because they are void of idiomatic language. It is for this reason that researchers have called for exposing learners to authentic native-like input to 'notice' how these significant fixed expressions are used in native speakers' spoken to retain them as single units in long-term memory. Wood (2002:10) claims repeated exposure to such input over time "would encourage learners to achieve a certain level of comfort with natural expression in English". According to Schmitt (2002), learners' constant use of formulaic sequences in their spoken discourse can help them improve their conversational fluency in three areas: functional use (effective and appropriate management of speech acts such as invitations, requests, announcement, etc.), social interaction (enhancement of social solidarity and avoidance of communication breakdowns) and discourse organization (especially spoken through the use of linguistic and syntactic devices). In addition, the use of formulaic sequences which are stored and recalled as wholes are processed more

quickly than nonformulaic sequences, allowing speakers to make fewer errors and achieve greater efficiency in communication.

1.2.3.3. Communication strategies

According to Thornbury and Slade (2006:220), a highly useful resource for the development of second language learners' conversational competence is the use of communication strategies (henceforth, CS) which are referred to as actions taken to facilitate a conversational interaction or overcome difficulties that arise during conversation. In other words, CSs are plans consciously designed to solve communication problems that may prevent individuals from reaching a particular communicative goals. Poulisse et al. (1984) cited in Kasper and Kellerman (1997:2) posit that CSs are

> strategies which a language user employs in order to achieve his intended meaning on becoming aware of problems arising during the planning phase of an utterance due to his own linguistic shortcomings

In the above quotation, CSs are considered as mental plans implemented by the second language learners in response to an internal signal of an imminent problem. Indeed, when communication is disrupted, speakers make efforts to enhance the effectiveness of communication and to sustain the continuity of a conversation in the face of communication difficulties (Celce-Murcia, Dornyei & Thurrell 1995).Tarone (1981:287) as cited in Thornbury and Slade (2006:220) explains this by stating that CSs are usually deployed not only to compensate any deficiencies in the language system, but also to explore other alternative ways to transmit the message.

Various taxonomies of communication strategies have been proposed by many researchers, such as Tarone (1980), Faerch & Kasper (1984), and Bialystok

(1990); Dörnyei (1995). For example, Dörnyei (1995:58) suggests that L2 learners usually use two types of communication strategies

- avoidance or reduction strategies and
- achievement or compensatory strategies.

The strategies of the first type are, for example, topic avoidance or message abandonment to change, replace, or reduce the content of the intended message so that they keep the message within their communicative resources. The strategies of the second type include word coinage, language switch, paraphrase or circumlocution, paralinguistic devices, or appeal for help. These strategies are used in an attempt to deal with the communication problems directly by using alternatives in order to get the message across. The second type of CS include 'stalling or time-gaining strategies' and are used to compensate for any linguistic deficiencies but "to gain time and to keep the communication channel open at times of difficulty" (Dörnyei,ibid:57).

1.2.3.4. Pragmatic competence

Pragmatic competence refers to "the ability to relate language to its contexts of use" (Thornbury and Slade: 2006:223). Thus, it is the ability to use language forms appropriately in particular contexts. This means that pragmatically competent users of language have the ability to use appropriate language and conversational behaviours in their contexts of use. Many researchers such as Leech (1983); Thomas (1983); Kasper(1997); Rose, (1999); have pointed out that pragmatic competence comprises two elements: a) pragma-linguistics which refers to the resources of linguistic forms needed to convey communicative acts (the ability of using grammar rules to make sentences correctly) and b) socio-

pragmatics which signifies “the social interface of pragmatics” (Leech, 1983: 11) (learners’ performance is determined by their social perception). Put differently, socio-pragmatics deals with the speakers' ability to communicate properly, according to the social rules of language.

Second language learners are frequently unable to achieve native-like speech in the target language due to their inappropriate use of language, inaccurate interpretation of conversational event and awkward speech behavior. Despite the fact that SL learners have adequate grammatical knowledge of the target language rules, they often produce socially and culturally inacceptable responses that can impede their understanding and interpretation of their interlocutors' intentions. These errors of appropriacy, according to Crandall and Basturkman (2004) cited in Bowles and Seedhouse (2007:308), are due to the learners' use of L1 sociocultural norms and behavior, a limited and inappropriate forms for realizing specific speech acts, direct translation from their L1, and overuse of certain politeness markers (Ellis,1994:166). Bardovi-Harlig (2001:14) as cited in Thornbury and Slade (2006:223), argues that the absence of idiomatic routines (i.e., formulaic sequences) in learners’ utterances can also undermine their pragmatic competence.

Thus, to achieve a high level of proficiency of the target language and to be conversationally competent, second language learners should not only acquire grammatical competence but also pragmatic competence. Grammatical competence is about correctness, while pragmatic competence is more about appropriateness. Grammar contains facts and rules about the given language system that must be followed, otherwise the language is awkward or unrecognizable. Pragmatic rules (language use rules) however, are different: not

following them may cause misinterpretations of linguistic behavior. According to Kecskes (2007:108), “If grammar is bad, the utterance may not convey the right message or any message while if pragmatics is bad, the utterance will usually convey the wrong message.” The example of a North American shop-attendant’s saying “What can I do for you?” versus “What do you want?” provided by Yorio (1980) cited in Kecskes (2007:109) clearly illustrates the difference between the two utterances. Even if the second utterance is grammatically and semantically accurate, it is inappropriate and even impolite at the pragmatic and sociolinguistic levels due to the context of use.

1.2.3.5. Negative transfer

Transfer is referred to “the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously acquired” (Odlin, 1989:12). For Faerach and Kasper (1987), transfer occurs when L2 learners activate their L1 knowledge in developing or using their interlanguage. This process, according to them (ibid) can be either positive (i.e., promotes learning) or negative (i.e., detracts learning). Positive transfer occurs when a high level of proficiency in the first language promotes that of the second language. This means that second language learners with an already well-developed conversational competence can draw on their L1 when conversing in their L2. This positive transfer is usually due to the fact that conversations in all languages include features such as back-channels, closings, face-threatening acts, greetings, hesitations, interruptions, overlaps, turn taking, etc. are “arguably universal” (Thornbury and Slade, 2006:224).

Research tends to focus more on negative transfer than on positive transfer, because it is generally believed that only negative transfer presents

challenges for second language learners. According to Thornbury and Slade (2006: 224), negative transfer occurs when these learners directly 'translate' conversational features into their L2 based on the way they would perform them in their L1. They (ibid) further add that negative transfer of the conversational features from native language to the target language is due to the fact that second language learners are often unaware of the way the conversational features are realized in L2. For example, they don't know that conversational features such as compliments, apologies, invitations, requests and news announcements may be interpreted and responded differently in L2 because of "all cultures have ritual constraints on the way social interaction is mediated, but the way these constraints operate vary from one culture to another" (Thornbury and Slade, 2006:229).

Due to culture differences, negative transfer occurs when learners make errors that violate norms of conversation and, therefore, leading to communication failure. Richards, (1990:150) argues that unlike linguistic errors (lexis, grammar, and pronunciation), pragmatic errors have much more serious consequences partly because they lead to misunderstanding and miscommunication and partly because conversational aspects are "closely related to presentation of self, communicating an image of ourselves to others" (Richards, ibid:152). This seems consistent with Odlin's (1989:148) claim that this 'presentation of the self' can be dangerously affected by the negative transfer of two discourse areas, which are politeness and coherence. He (ibid) argues that even though these two notions are known in every society, their expression and application vary considerably in the discourse patterns of different languages and when transferred indiscriminately into learners' L2, they may lead to

communication failure. Odlin(1989:152) identifies other areas of cultural mismatch that are susceptible to create misunderstanding. These areas are:

- Greetings, the extent to which greeting sequences are variables or fixed;
- Turn taking conventions, e.g. the extent to which interruptions are tolerated;
- Formality, e.g. when and with whom a formal conversational style rather than an informal one, is considered appropriate;
- Silences, the extent to which this is tolerated in conversations; and
- Narratives, the way stories are structured in different culture.

The norms of conversation, according to Thornbury and Slade, can be either a) sociolinguistic norms or b) sociocultural norms. The former refer to the extent to which the speakers use appropriate linguistic forms to open a conversation, close it, take a turn, etc. The latter refer to the extent to which the speakers understand when such linguistic forms are appropriate. The sociocultural norms, according to Wolfston (1983:61) include

> knowing when and how it is appropriate to open a conversation, what topics are appropriate, what forms of address are to be used to whom and in which situation, and how speech acts such as greetings, apologies are to be given, interpreted and responded to.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided the theoretical background of this research study related to communicative competence. It has presented an overview of the notion of communicative competence by presenting the different models of communicative competence. This overview has started by Chomsky's linguistic competence criticized by Hymes who developed a model of communicative competence, arguing that in addition to grammatical competence, speakers need

to be sociolinguistically competent to be able to communicate effectively and appropriately in a language. The chapter has also provided the other models that refined Hymes' model (Canale and Swain, 1980; Swain, 1983; Bachman, 1990; Bachman and Palmer,2010; Celce-Murcia et al,1995; and Celce-Murcia, 2007), focusing on issues related to the present study with respect to how learners can be interactionally competent. This chapter has also dealt with the construct of spoken discourse competence and its aspects, with particular emphasis on conversational competence which is the main part of spoken discourse as well as the factors affecting it.

Chapter Two:

Conversation Analysis and

News Announcement Sequences

Chapter Two:

Conversation Analysis and News Announcement Sequences

Introduction

The second chapter is concerned with the theoretical background related to conversation analysis and sequence organization, with specific focus on the speech action of news announcement. It first defines conversation along with its related issues such as the linguistic aspects, cohesion, coherence and functions. It also sheds light on the concept of conversation analysis as a methodological approach to study the order and organization of social actions, and also provides its key aspects: turn-taking, repair and sequence organization. The third aspect with its main features, preference structure and sequence expansion, will also be dealt with. The final section of the present chapter deals with the speech action of news-announcement in conversation as it is the focus of the present study. It provides a detailed account of the target conversational features of this speech action: its sequential organization (how news announcement sequences are organized) as well as its syntactic organization (how these sequences are linguistically organized through the use of formulaic sequences).

2.1. Defining conversation

Researchers including Schegloff et al, 1974; Liddicoat, 2007; Sidnell, 2010; Gardner, 1994 argue that conversation is the basic form of human interaction and may be "the most appropriate and egalitarian vehicle for the display of oral proficiency" (Van Lier,1989 :494). They also reveal that conversation is a multifaceted construct so intertwined with daily interactions

that it is difficult to define. Thornbury and Slade (2006:5) point out that this complexity in defining conversation derives from conversation being so ubiquitous in our daily language usage. However, definitions which simply define conversation as "an interactive spoken exchange between two or more people" (Pridham, 2001:2), or "talk which is not motivated by clear pragmatic purpose" (Eggins and Slade, 2000 :19) may be too general because talk involving more than one speaker does not necessarily constitute conversation. This is exemplified by the classroom conversation where there may be a great deal of oral interaction between teacher and students during a lesson but cannot be qualified as genuine conversation.

Many researchers including Liddicoat, 2007; sydnell, 2010 assume that conversation is characterized by systemacity and orderliness. They have based their findings on four assumptions about conversation:

1. Conversation is structurally organized
2. It is jointly produced among participants
3. It is contextual
4. It is locally managed.

The first assumption is based on the hypothesis that ordinary conversation is a deeply ordered, structurally organized and sequentially constrained. This can be evidenced by the fact that conversation is made up of adjacency pairs which are pairs of utterances that are ordered. This means that there is "a recognizable difference between first parts and second parts of the pair; and in which given first pair parts require second parts (or a particular range of seconds)" (Hutchby and Woofitt (2008: 42-43). An example of an adjacency pair is an invitation sequence where the invitation is the first pair part which should be followed by a

second pair part which can be either an acceptance or a declination. These two pair parts, which are usually adjacent to each other, exemplify structural organization as well as orderly sequence interaction in conversation. The second assumption is that conversation is a joint product among the participants and that the recipient plays an active role in the interaction. Thus, conversation exists within a social context "which determines the purpose of the conversation and shapes its structures and features" (Pridham, 2001:2). Thus, conversation is a talk which occurs when two or more participants come together and have a few moments "during which everyone is accorded the right to talk as well as to listen and without reference to a fixed schedule" (Goffman, 1976:264). The third assumption about conversation is that it is context-dependent. According to Heritage (1984), the action that emerges in conversation is both 'context-shaped' and 'context renewing'. The communicative action in a conversation is context-shaped' because "its contribution to an ongoing sequence of actions cannot be adequately understood except by reference to the context in which it participates" (Roger and Bull, 1988:22). The action is context-renewing 'since every current utterance will itself form the immediate context for some next action in a sequence' (Roger and Bull, 1988: ibid). Thus, 'context' in conversation is different from the general belief that the hearer uses the context to interpret what is said. Instead, it refers to sequences of action and interpretation that emerge in the organization of conversation. In other words, the context in a conversation is "neither fixed nor fully shared by the participants (…) but jointly constructed through and by the language" (Warren, 2006:199). The fourth assumption is that conversation is locally managed in that it comprises "the minute step-by-step details by which talk is constructed" (Goodwin and Heritage, 1990:267). This seems consistent with Tsui's (1993, cited in Sze, 2005: 233) claim that a

conversation is a chain of utterances related to each other but is "organized in an orderly fashion" depending on the speakers'/hearers' behavioral selections. Thus suggest that in a conversation there exists a whole range of features such as turn order, turn size and distribution of turn that are not specified or fixed in advance but are systematically realized through rules determined by the speakers themselves.

2.1.1. Linguistic aspects of conversation

Since conversation is spontaneous, interactive and interpersonal, ordinary conversation is characterized by the use of informal language (lexical choices such as the use of slang, colloquial language, and certain features of pronunciation). The use of informal (or vernacular) language, according to Thornbury and Slade (2006:21) enables people to "establish and maintain their affiliation with a particular social group". Conversation is also marked by continual expressions of likes, dislikes, emotional attitudes, constant expressions of politeness and use of humour. Another aspect of conversational language is usually characterized by utterances that are completely different from those used in written productions and that seem inadequate to be used as language models for classroom instruction. Moreover, half of the utterances in a given conversation are characterized by incomplete sentences and elliptical constructions. This aspect of conversational language, according to Thornbury and Slade (2006:107) is due to the fact that "…conversation builds social contexts at the same time as these contexts guide and shape conversation". The language of conversation is also characterized by formulaic language, and "filled with clichés" (Wray, 2002: 2). Another aspect of conversational language is that it is not necessarily structured in a question-answer issue, where a question

always follows an answer. This is evidenced by the fact that in certain situations, particularly when one is asking for service or making a request, a question can often be followed by another question, rather than by a predictable short answer (Wray, 2002:7). Conversational language is also characterized by numerous social and contextual factors as well as pragmatic presuppositions due to the fact that a conversation is a social activity. An example of this is that in the adjacency pair (How are you ? / Hi), a question is not being asked, and an answer is not being provided. In addition, conversation is culture-bound. What people say in a conversation, how they say it, when they say it, and what gestures they use to reinforce their verbal utterances are all governed by cultural constants that determine such conversational features such as how to take turns in a conversation, how to make a request/an offer/ an invitation / an announcement, and how to repair a communication breakdown.

2.1.2. Coherence in conversation

Coherence is commonly defined as a situation where all parts or ideas fit together so that they constitute a unified whole. In conversation, however, coherence incorporates more than parts fitting together due to the fact that utterances in conversations may not fit together but speakers understand each other. As put by Lenk (1998a:13):

> Quite often neighboring stretches in conversation do not form a united whole, and nevertheless participants in these conversations understand what is going on. One could almost say –if need be- that participants in a conversation manage to work out an understanding of the coherence of that conversation despite the fact that its parts do not ‘fit together well’ for non-participants.

Therefore, coherence in conversation is not something that lies within the conversation itself; it is rather, something that is created in the interaction between the speaker/s and the listener/s and has to do with both what the speaker produces and the listener interprets. According to Nofsinger (1991:4) cited in Warren (2006:56), "participants in conversation routinely monitor each other and often respond to each other in delicately co-ordinated ways". This means that participants in a conversation do understand a conversation as coherent while participating in it, and during the interaction they usually have the impression that parts of the conversation develop naturally from each other and indeed do form a 'unified whole' (Lenk, 1998:16)

Coherence can be measured in different ways, for example by looking at how the participants in a conversation act to create coherence. According to Linell (1998), conversations are coherent because they can be broken down into episodes, which are basic units that make up the conversation. These episodes help us to make order and sense out of what we hear when talking and listening to others and to understand each other in a conversation. Episodes are closely related to topicality, as they are mostly about something specific. Linell (1998) refers to this as 'aboutness' and states that the construction of episodes in a conversation functions to create coherence and to support the topic. Episodes are more important from this point of view than single utterances about the topic itself (Linell 1998:182).

2.1.3. Cohesion during conversational exchanges

According to Hoey (2009:3), cohesion in writing is described as "the way certain words or grammatical features of a sentence can connect that sentence to its predecessors and successors in a text". Cohesion is also applied to

conversation since it is achieved “both within and across turns” (Thornbury and Slade, 2007:137). In fact, conversational partners interacting with one another construct conversation through creating joint meanings and coordinating conversationally relevant acts. If a contribution from either the speaker or the hearer is not in step with the ongoing conversation, that particular turn may violate the conversational stability and may, result in the breakdown of the interaction. Therefore, cohesion in conversation creates a relation in which the interpretation of one element in the discourse presupposes, and is dependent upon another. According to Thornbury and Slade (2007:109), this created relation makes up the fabric (or ‘texture’) of the discourse.

Conversational cohesion can be viewed as the participants’ collaborative construction of connections between utterances in a sequential organization (Schegloff, 1995, 1997). Besides the use of discourse markers, the connectedness of spoken conversations is assured by discourse structures, such as turn-taking and adjacency pairs of question- and-answer sequences (Schegloff et al, 1974). For example in an adjacency pair, which is a two-part ritual exchange, an utterance by one speaker requires a particular type of response by the listener (Goffman, 1976; Schegloff et al, 1974; Schegloff, 1986).

2.1.4. Functions of conversation

Many researchers including Brown and Yule (1989) and McCarthy (1991) have suggested that spoken discourse is driven by two major types of functional motivation: a) interactional or interpersonal interaction and b) transactional, or pragmatic interaction. Interactional language engages people for social reasons, i.e. the focus is on maintaining social relations (greetings, complimenting, and chatting with friends) whereas transactional language is for service encounters

like buying tickets or ordering food, i.e. the focus is primarily on the meaning of the message. According to Brown and Yule (1989:13), interactional language is "primarily *listener-oriented*, whereas transactional language is primarily *message-oriented*". Warren (2006:80) states that conversation tends to be viewed as interactional as it is concerned not with primarily informing but with social relations. The purpose of conversation, therefore, appears principally to be interactional even though conversation can also include transactional purposes of a combination of the two, as put by Thornbury and Slade (2006:20):

> Talk is seldom purely transactional or purely interpersonal, but that both functions are typically interwoven in spoken language: even the most straightforward transactions are tempered with interpersonal language (such as greetings) and chat amongst friends would be ultimately unrewarding without some kind of information exchange.

Eggins (1990, cited in Goh and Burns, 2012:115) suggests a model that presents the different functions for interactional and transactional spoken language:

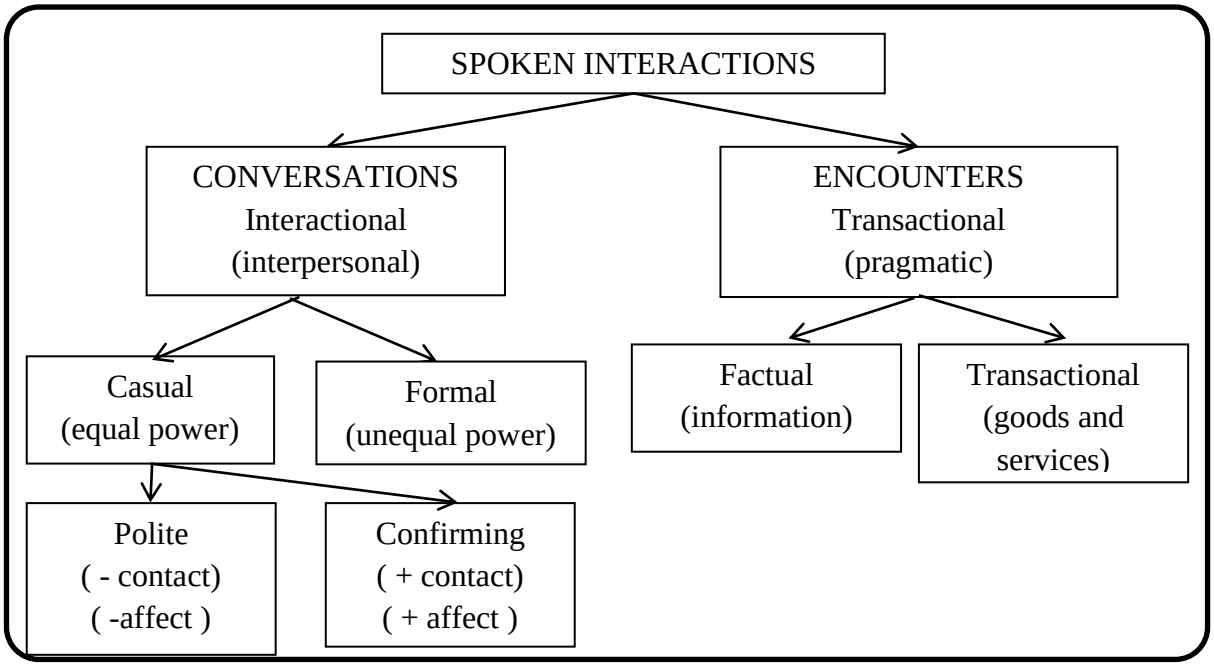

Figure 2.1: Functional motivation for spoken interactions (Burns, Joyce and Gollin, 1996:11)

The table above shows that spoken interaction can be either broadly interactional or broadly transactional. The first type can be either casual or formal. In casual conversation the interactants have more or less equal interpersonal power: it can be either 'polite' (no or limited previous or future contacts) or 'confirming (no psychological or emotional feeling towards one another). Formal conversation, however, is where the power is likely to be unequal (i.e., one of the interactants has more status or knowledge than the other). The second type of spoken interactions can be either factual (giving or seeking information) or transactional (negotiation of goods and services). The model also shows how the relationships between speakers in interpersonal interactions might influence the specific language that is produced. According to Goh and Burn (ibid :81), this model is useful for teaching in the sense that "it provides a planning base for teachers to make decisions about which type of spoken interactions they want to introduce to their learners…..and to identify the kinds of discourse features they might need to focus on".

2.2. Principles of conversation analysis

There are two main methodologies to analyze and examine conversation from a linguistic perspective: discourse analysis and conversation analysis. A common aim of both of them is to give "an account of how coherence and sequential organization is produced and understood" (Levinson, 1983:286). Discourse analysis, is an examination of "how stretches of language, considered in their full textual, social, and psychological context, become meaningful and unified for their users" (Cook, 1989: ix), while CA examines "how participants manage interaction as it proceeds: how they make sense of the moment-by-moment unfolding of interaction"(Wooffitt, 2005:79). However, conversation analysis is considered as a more 'empirical approach' to study natural occurring

conversation in the sense that it does not formulate rules according to the patterns researched. Hence, it attempts to find out why a special utterance was produced and not an alternative one. This seems consistent with Levinson' (1983:287) claim that in CA, it is not important if an utterance is well-formed or not, but rather why the speaker chose such an utterance and what effect it has on the listener.

Conversation analysis (CA) developed as a field of study in the 1960s with the work of sociologists Harvey Sacks, Emmanuel Schelgoff and Gail Jefferson. Since then, CA has grown as a sociological 'naturalistic observational discipline' (Sacks, 1992a: 189) to "describe, analyze and understand talk as a basic and constitutive feature of human social life". Following Goodwin and Heritage (1990), the aim of CA is to describe the underlying social organization through which orderly and intelligible social interaction is possible. For CA, the starting point for investigating and analyzing social interaction is ordinary, mundane conversation which is often referred to as the casual everyday talk that occurs between friends and acquaintances, either face-to face or on the telephone. The analysis is done with regard to the social characteristics of the speakers taking part in the interaction, the relationships between them with respect to which linguistic forms used in the talk.

Conversation analysts' investigation and analysis advocate that ordinary conversation "is the default version of talk" and that "all forms of talk-in-interaction are derived from it" (Gardner, 2010:115). This is due to the fact that ordinary conversation is the most basic mode of interaction or "primordial site of sociality" (Schegloff, 1986). However, researchers shared the assumption that ordinary conversation is not chaotic and disorganized but progresses in an orderly manner. In fact, insights from conversation analysis have enabled

researchers to discover how the participants understand and respond to one another in their turns at talk and how they produce and organize their sequences of talk. This implies that the scope of CA is to investigate the social organization of activities conducted through conversation where "turns at talk are designed in various ways to show their relationship to the activity performed by prior turns." (Wooffitt, 2005:79).

Thus, CA provides a framework for looking at 'local' aspects of interaction in detail, especially how participants in a conversation work hard to make it successful. It also focuses on how speakers decide when to speak during conversation, and how to collaborate to manage conversation. Within the CA's perspective, the organization of talk should not be dealt with from an external viewpoint, but from the perspective of how the participants display for one another their understanding of 'what is going on' (Huchby and Wooffitt, 2008:17). This implies that when speakers engage in a conversation they in fact engage in socially organized interaction where the talk is presented and understood as meaningful because participants share the same procedures for designing and interpreting talk. These procedures, according to Wooffitt (2005:79), include "highly patterned sequential structures through which particular activities are accomplished" and also "the methods used to effect turn-transfer, or to identify and address troubles". Put differently, CA attempts to understand how talk is organized and how interactants understand and display understanding of each other as their talk unfolds. This is summarized by Gardner (2010:164) as follows:

> One of the major objectives of CA is to describe how the various sub-systems of talk combine, and to provide an account of the mechanics of talk. Such an account will then provide a focus not only on how speakers' utterances are constructed

> prosodically, grammatically, and lexically – turn design – but also on how speakers overwhelmingly cooperate in an orderly taking of turns, and how these turns are sequenced into sets of actions, as adjacent pairs and more extended sequences.

The quotation above seems to indicate that CA's main objective is to describe the different procedures that explain not only how talk is organized linguistically but also how speakers cooperate to achieve orderly and organized sequences in conversation. This organization, according to Heritage (1984:130), is governed by the following assumptions:

1. Interaction is structurally organized
2. The significance of each turn at talk is doubly contextual in that (a) each turn is shaped by the context of prior talk, and (b) each turn establishes a context to which the next turn will be oriented.
3. No order of detail in interaction can be dismissed a priori as irrelevant to the parties' understandings of what is occurring.

2.3. Key concepts of conversation analysis

As mentioned above, CA is an inductive, micro-analytic method for studying language as it is used in social interaction. This method includes rules and 'machineries' of practice (Schegloff et al, 1974) governing how speakers conduct a conversation. These rules and machineries are: turn-taking, repair and sequence organization which are concerned with how speakers construct turns at talk, open and close conversation, repair conversational errors and trouble, and organize 'adjacency pair ' utterances such as greetings and return greetings and other reciprocally organized discursive structures (Lynch,1993). These concepts are described below.

The concept of turn is approached differently by scholars. According to Stenstrom (1994: 4), a turn is everything the current speaker says before the next speaker takes over. Goodwin (1981:2) defines it as the talk of one party bounded by the talk of others constitutes a turn which means that the speaker and the listener signal to each other that one turn has come to an end and another should begin. Speakers do signal when they want to end their turn at speaking and either indicate the next speaker or leave the floor open. Thus, turn taking in a conversation operates according to a systematic principle that regulates the conversation and prevents communication breakdowns. As put by Thornbury and Slade (2007:123):

> In conversations, although there are many overlaps and interruptions, the way people take or allocate turns is not random. It is systematic and the signals, which may not be explicit, are clearly understood by speakers familiar with the cultural context. This is evidenced by the fact that conversations can flow coherently for extended period of time, and without prolonged silences or breakdowns.

Therefore, turn-taking system is not only a theoretical construction in the linguistic field of discourse analysis, but also a crucial pattern in communicative events that governs speech acts, defines social roles and establishes and maintains social relationships as it is a "a prominent type of social organization, whose instances are implicated in a wide range of other activities" Schedloff et al (1974:696. This means that turn-taking plays an essential role in structuring people's social interactions in terms of control and regulation of conversation.

The second concept is repair, which is one of the common features of spoken discourse that deals with the problems that occur during a conversation. These

problems range from apparent errors in turn-taking to slips of the tongue, mishearing or misunderstanding. During an ongoing interaction, repair occurs when speakers recognize faulty plans and try to find ways to get rid of such problems. Hence, repair is instigated by trouble in the talk which includes word researches, articulation difficulties, intonation or stress problems and the reordering of elements in an utterance. During a conversation, L2 speakers encounter problems due to their lack of linguistic resources; therefore, they modify their plan and use their existing knowledge, usually consciously, with the intention of sending a comprehensible message and achieving their communicative goal. However, repair is likely to be understood as correction but Schegloff et al (1974) define correction as simply fixing errors but repair is a way to deal with both errors and other types of problems like mishearings and misunderstandings. Similarly, Liddicoat (2007) posits that repair refers to the processes that enable speakers to deal with the problems which arise in their talk. In addition to linguistic problems (pronunciation, vocabulary, syntax, etc.), repair may also relate to acceptability problems, such as saying something wrong in a broad sense, that is untrue, inappropriate or irrelevant. A repair sequence, according to Schegloff (1997a), constitutes a sequence of actions in which participants initiate and try to solve a problem in the talk.

After analysis of numerous instances of repair in naturally occurring conversations, Scheglof et al (1974) identified four varieties of repair distinguished on the basis of the following points:

a- Who initiated the repair by pointing to something as a source of trouble?

b- Who produced the trouble source ?

c- Who carried out the repair?

Taken from this perspective, Scheglof et al (ibid) state that repair may be initiated either by the speaker of the problematic talk (self-initiated repair) or by the other speaker (other-initiated repair). The repair may then be carried out by the speaker of the problematic talk (self-repair) or by the other speaker (other-repair).

However, speakers do not take turns for the sake of taking turns. They take turns to get things done (i.e., to perform actions such as inviting, offering, requesting, announcing etc.). This is referred to as sequence organization which will be dealt with in the next section.

2.4. Sequence organisation

A distinct empirical finding that conversation analysts have contributed to the understanding of talk in conversation is that turns in a conversation are not just serially ordered (i.e., they do not come 'all in a row'), but are organized into sequences of action. This means that certain turns appear in block together, with next turns continuing on coherently from prior ones, while others appear to be disjoined from prior talk, with next turns taking off in a different direction. The notion of sequence in conversation refers to a course of action in talk that is built collaboratively by different speakers (Schelgof, 2007 ; Sidnell, 2010). To put it differently, a sequence is an ordered series of turns through which speakers accomplish and coordinate an interactional activity. The ways these speakers link turns to each other as a coherent series of interrelated communicative actions is called sequence organization.

Sequence organization involves two or more individuals in a focused manner as well as a temporal and progressive ordering of actions in interaction. As interactants speak, turns come together to form sequencing practices, which

are “ways of initiating and responding to talk while performing actions such as requesting, inviting, storytelling or topic initiation” (Wong and Waring 2010: 10). One of the most noticeable things about sequences in conversations is that certain classes of utterances conventionally come in pairs. Schegloff et al (1974) called these paired utterances ‘adjacency pairs’ which, according to them, are the basic unit on which sequences in conversation are built. Thus, adjacency pairs are the fundamental unit of sequence organization in a conversation.

The following table shows a number of first- and second- pair parts of adjacency pairs:

First- pair part action	Second-pair part action
Summons	Answer
Greeting	Greeting
Invitation	Acceptance/declination
Offer	Acceptance/declination
Request for action	Granting/ denial
Request for information	Informative answer
Accusation	Admission/ denial
Farewell	Farewell

Figure 2.2: Adjacency pairs (Liddicoat, 2000: 107)

According to Schegloff and Sacks (1973:195), adjacency pairs are utterance pairs that are “widely operative in conversation” through adjacency pairs, participants are allowed to start conversation, negotiate deal, relate facts, change topics, and end the conversation. This implies that adjacency pairs are ordered; one turn always comes first and one turn always comes second. The first turn is designed to initiate next actions, the second to complete the initiated

action. Thus, an adjacency pair is formed through the contents of two utterances which are produced successively by two speakers and is coherent in content in terms of semantic and pragmatic features (Schegloff, 2007). The main properties of adjacency pairs are summarized by Schelgoff and Sacks (1973) in four points:

a- They occur adjacently to one another;
b- They are produced by different speakers;
c- They are relatively ordered such that first-pair part precedes second-pair part adjacently placed (i.e. one after the other):
d- They are type-matched such that a particular FPP makes relevant a particular, related, SPP.

The last aspect is related to 'conditional relevance', a concept introduced by Schegloff (1968:1083):

> By conditional relevance of one item on another we mean: given the first, the second is expectable; upon its occurrence it can be seen to be a second item to the first; upon its nonoccurrence it can be seen to be officially absent – all this provided by the occurrence of the first item.

This explains why in a conversation, a question may not be followed by an answer. It is the conditional relevance that a question establishes that makes the participants expect any talk that follows a question to see if it answers that question. Therefore, adjacency pairs are considered to be a normative force in organizing conversation because they set up expectations about how talk will proceed (Heritage, 1948), as put by Wong and Waring (2010: 58)

> It is important to note that the pairs do not always occur adjacently. The adjacency pair organization is a normative framework, not an empirical generalization: it shapes the expectations, understandings, and actions of

participants. In other words, it is not that a particular first pair-part is always followed by its second pair-part, but that the absence of that second pair-part (e.g., not saying *Hi* back to someone's greeting) becomes noticeable for the participants.

2.4.1. Preference structure

An important feature of the relationship between the two parts in an adjacency pair is the concept of preference structure which refers to the different ways in which some conversational actions may be accomplished. In a particular context, certain actions may be avoided or delayed in their production, while other actions are normally performed directly. For example, invitations and offers are normatively accepted rather than rejected; requests and proposals are normatively granted rather than refused. The same can be said about announcements: the recipient may accept the announcement presented by the teller that it is news or that it is something he already knows. This format of agreement is labelled the 'preferred' and the disagreement format is called the 'dispreferred' action turn shape (Pomerantz, 1984 cited in Hutchby and Wooffitt , 2008 :49). An acceptance is a preferred response because the speaker aligns with the invitation, request, and announcement made in the first pair part. In contrast, a rejection is a dispreferred response because of its failure to align with the invitation, request, or announcement (Pomerantz, 1984).

Wong and Waring (2010 :62) suggest the following five features of preference :

(1) preference applies to both first and second pair-parts;

(2) preference is not a psychological concept;

(3) preferred actions minimize "face" threats;

(4) preference is context-dependent;

(5) not all adjacency pairs are subject to the preference organization.

The above features indicate that preference applies to both first and second pair-parts. In the first pair part, for example, offers are preferred and requests are dispreferred while in the second pair part both of the actions can be either preferred (i.e. accepted) or dispreferred (i.e., refused). Another feature of 'preference' it is not a psychological concept that indicates one's personal desires (Wong and Waring). In other words, a speaker produces a refusal which is dispreffered not because he hates rejecting (an invitation to a party, for example) but only because he does not want to go to the party. Another feature of the preferred actions is to minimize face threats, maintain social solidarity, and avoid conflicts (Heritage, 1984a:265). Moreover, preference structure is influenced by context (i.e., it depends on context). Put another way, context may make disagreement rather than agreement preferred as in the following example "I am not good at explaining things". The final feature of preference structure is that not all adjacency pairs are subject to the preference organization. For example, *wh*-questions do not involve alternatives that can be "compellingly characterized" as preferred or dispreferred (Schegloff and Lerner, 2009).

2.4.2. Sequence expansions

As mentioned before, a basic unit of sequence construction is the adjacency pair. However, chains of additional turns related to the action initiated by the first pair part of the pair can be located. These additional turns, called expansions, are of three types: a) pre-expansions which occur before the first pair part, b) insert- expansions which occur between the first pair part and the second

pair part and post-expansions which occur after the second pair part, as shown in the following table:

	Summons-answer
←Pre-expansion	e.g. Pre-announcement
a. First pair part	
←Insert-expansion	Post-first insert (repair) Pre-second inserts (adjacency pairs)
b. Second pair part	
←Post-expansion	Minimal post-expansions Non-minimal post-expansion

Figure 2.3: expansion of a base adjacency pair (Clift, 2016:89)

This means that the sequences produced by the interactants can become very elaborate, taking several minutes of talk hung on a single adjacency pair. According to Liddicoat (2007:12):

> Sequence expansion allows talk which is made up of more than a single adjacency pair to be constructed and understood as performing the same basic action and the various additional element are seen as doing interactional work related to the basic action under way.

a- Pre-expansions

A pre-expansion involves a sequence that paves the way for the main adjacency pair, whether it be, an invitation, an offer, a request or an announcement. According to Sidnell (2010:95) “pre-expansions are, on a basic

sense, preparatory to some other projected work to be done in the sequences and implemented by the FPP of the base adjacency". Pre-expansions show that speakers are careful in the order in which they present their actions. The rationale behind starting with a pre-sequence is that the speaker may wish to avoid potentially embarrassing or annoying situations. When a speaker makes an invitation, an offer, or an announcement for instance, he/she may expose him/herself to a possible rejection, so speakers typically avoid the possible rejection by producing pre-sequences, such as pre-invitations or pre-offers. For example, before an announcement, a pre-sequence such as (guess what?) is used to enquire about the recipient's availability (i.e., the announcing participant checks whether the recipient is ready for the news). In brief, a pre-sequence is a sequence that is often used to prefigure the upcoming action and secure the recipient's co-operation (Terasaki, 2004).

Pre-expansions can be either generic pre-sequences or type-specific pre-sequences (Scehgloff, 2007). In generic pre-sequences the recipient cannot predict what type of sequence is yet to come. These sequences are used to get the attention of a co-participant. In order for interaction to begin; the speaker needs to make sure that they have their co-participant's attention. Examples of generic pre-sequences are summons-answer sequences in which the action done by the turns that come before the first pair part are relevant to the first pair part. The first pair part is used to indicate that the speaker is seeking a recipient, an attitude that can be realized through a politeness term (excuse me) an attention getting token (hey) or even by touching the recipient. In the second pair part, the attention can be manifested through eye gaze, verbal token (what, yes , yeah) or changing the body position to orient to the summoner (Goodwin and Heritage, 1990). Pre-expansions are 'type-specific' because, according to Sidnell (2010),

they project a specific base first pair part. They can be pre-invitation (are you busy tonight?), pre-announcement (Guess what happened to me?) or pre-requests (You wouldn't happen to be going on my way would you?).

b. Insert-expansions

As mentioned before, an adjacency pair consists of two adjacent utterances, with the second selected from some range of possibilities defined by the first. However, on some occasions, the two utterances of an adjacency pair are not, in fact, adjacent and are often harder to spot because they can be separated by intervening utterances, which together make up what is called an insert-expansion (Schegloff, 1982). Therefore, insert expansions, (or insertion sequences) are adjacency pairs that occur between the first and second pair-parts of the base adjacency pair and that expand other pairs by being inserted, or nested inside them. According to Wong and Waring (2010: 60), the function of the insert expansion is to either clarify the first pair part or seek preliminary information before doing the second pair. The topic of the insert-expansion is related to that of the main sequence in which it occurs and the question from the main sequence is returned to and answered after the insertion (Pridham, 2010:27). According to Scheglof (2007), insert-expansions can be divided into post-first and pre-seconds. Post-first insert-expansion "are 'repair' sequences addressed to problems in hearing, or understanding the preceding talk" (Schegloff, 2007:100). In other words, post-first insert expansions are designed to address issues arising from the first pair part. Pre-second insert expansions, which are type-specific, are designed to do work relevant to the up-coming second pair part. The two kinds of insert-expansions are explained by Schegloff (2007:101) in the following quotation:

whereas post-first inserts look backward, ostensibly to clarify the talk of the first pair part, pre-second inserts look forward, ostensibly to establish the resources necessary to implement the second pair part which is pending.

c- Post expansions

According to Sidnell (2010), post-expansions are highly variable with their complexity. These post-expansions can be divided into 'minimal post-expansion' and 'non-minimal post-expansion' sequences (Schegloff, 2007). Minimal post expansions get their character from having been designed to be possibly finished with one turn following an SPP. Although there are a number of forms or combinations of them, the most common minimal post-expansions might be 'Oh', 'Okay', and 'assessments ('That's good', 'Well done', 'Good job', etc)'. These expansions, which are also referred to as sequence- closing third (Wong and Waring, 2010:60) are called minimal because they minimally expand the sequence. They are used by the speaker to claim that he has been informed and thus has undergone a change of state from not knowing to knowing.

Non-minimal post expansions, on the other hand, are different in that the turn following that SPP is itself an FPP, and thereby projects at least one further turn. In other words, the non-minimal post-expansion does exactly the opposite of the minimal post-expansion. Instead of closing down the sequence, it keeps the sequence open. It is typically done because the second pair-part of the base sequence is treated by the recipient as unsatisfactory in some way. Non-minimal post expansions can include other-initiated repair, disagreements, rejections, challenges, and reworkings of first pair part (Schegloff, 2007:68).

2.5. Sequential and syntactic organization of news-announcement sequences

Although conversation analysts (Schegloff et al, 1974, Terasaki, 2004; Sacks, 1992a; Schegloff, 2007; Seedhouse, 2004, etc.) have provided a strong analytic base for investigation in the field of news announcements in conversation, it should be noted that all the instances of news announcements in conversation cannot be captured in this study because the content of news announcement varies a lot across conversations. Rather, the focus will be on basic components of news announcements as well as the formulaic chunks used in the different parts of a given conversation to show that speech events that are recognized as possible news announcements display a particular sequential organization as well as a particular syntactic format.

According to many researchers including Schegloff, 1986; Sacks, 1992a; Maynard, 2003 ; Terasaki, 2004; Wong and Waring, 2010 news or information in a conversation can be done in different sequential units, but when announcements of news are concerned, the focus is on conversational events in which occurrences are reported as 'announceable news'(Terasaki, 2004:154). According to Maynard (1997:94), an event to be 'announceable news' is a "conditional matter" that depends on the actions and responses of the participants in conversation. In other words, participants in a conversation often share an event of the world but "for the information to be news is something they interactively work out" (Maynard, 1997:94).

News delivery is a topic initiation method that reports on activities related to or interactively done by speakers to convey "news" of their own initiative" and organize "the activity of telling" (Button and Casey, 1984). This activity,

according to Terasaki (2004), is usually organized through a sequence that consists of two turns and that make a 'minimal announcement sequence' (Terasaki:2004:172):

a) The announcement of the news by Deliverer (D) as an FPP and

b) The assessment of the news by Recipient(R) as an SPP.

Terasaki (2004:172), provides the following example to illustrate the sequence above:

- D: Guess what- I haven't had a drink for eight days (FPP)..(announcement)
- R: Fantastic! (SPP)……(assessment)

The data collected from hundreds of samples of announcements sequences from audio and video recorded conversations have enabled conversation analysts to find out that in the serial presentation of the news, news announcement sequences have specific characteristics. Terasaki (2004:177) summarizes them as follows:

- Announcements in conversation occupy turn series.
- The series of turn are adjacently placed.
- The series are organized into adjacency pairs.
- The adjacency pairs, moreover, are related to one another as pre-sequences and as insertion (or insert) sequences to the announcement sequence.
- The announcement sequences regularly take assessments as their conditionally relevant second pair parts.

Thus, announcements in conversation are usually done through turn series which are interrelated and which are larger than the two-turn pair

(announcement/ assessment). This adjacency pair, composed of two pair parts (an FPP and a SPP), can be further expanded. This 'expansion', according to Terasaki (2004:172), includes in addition to the minimal pair part described above, two other optional adjacency pairs: a) those before the announcement turn, called pre-announcement sequences and b) those between the announcement turn and its assessment called insertion (or insert) sequences. Finally, a regular aspect of news announcement is that they take assessments as their conditionally relevant SPPs (Schegloff, 2007).

Therefore, the 'minimal announcement sequence' can be expanded beyond the basic two-turn structure and "sequences can become quite lengthy and involve large number of turns" (Liddicoat, 2007: 123). In the same vein, Wong and Waring (2010) state that the 'minimal announcement sequence can take a larger form composed of pre-announcement (initiation of the news) , insert-sequences (elaboration), and post-sequences (assessment). This expanded sequence is illustrated in the first part of a conversation provided by Terasaki (2004), Sydnell (2007) and Wong and Waring (2010):

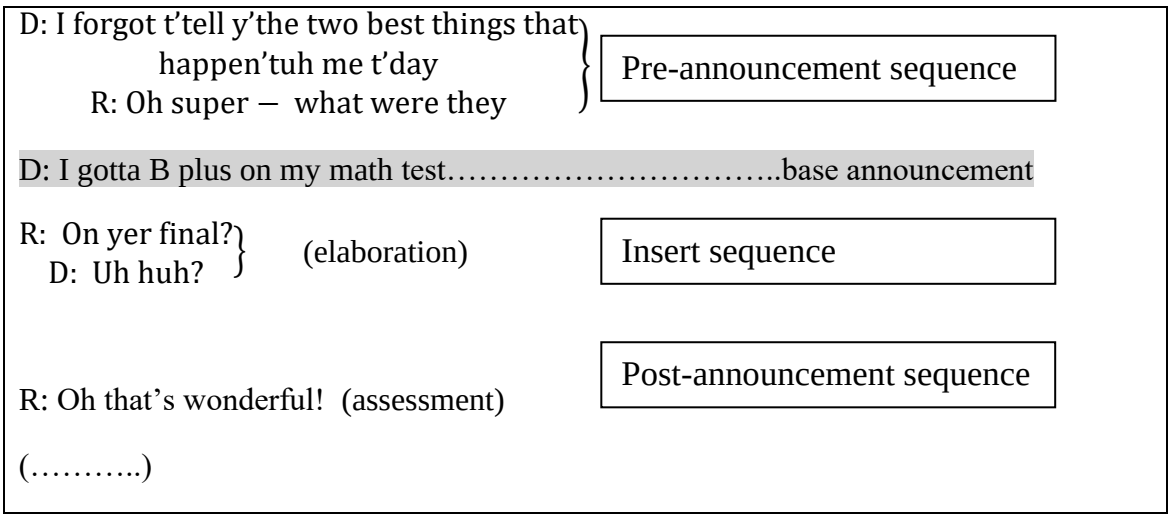

Figure 2.4: News Announcement sequence with an example (Terasaki, 2004)

Maynard (1997) provides a framework of news announcement sequences, which he calls "News Delivery Sequence (NDS). The NDS, according to Maynard (1997:116) deals with both good and bad news that are done through specific interactional practices and achieved through the participants' mutual alignment. The NDS consists of a sequence of turns, each of which is dependent on the production of the prior turn. According to Maynard, the NDS has four parts: a) announcement, b) response, c) elaboration, and d) assessment. Maynard (1997) argues that the news announcement can be initiated by the potential deliverer through a pre-announcement ("Hey, we got good news", "you will never guess what happened"), a term first introduced by Terasaki (2004) , while the potential recipient can occasion its delivery by a news-inquiry such as "what's up", "what is the matter?", "what is new with you?" etc.,. The news announcement sequences as outlined by Maynard (1997) can be as follows:

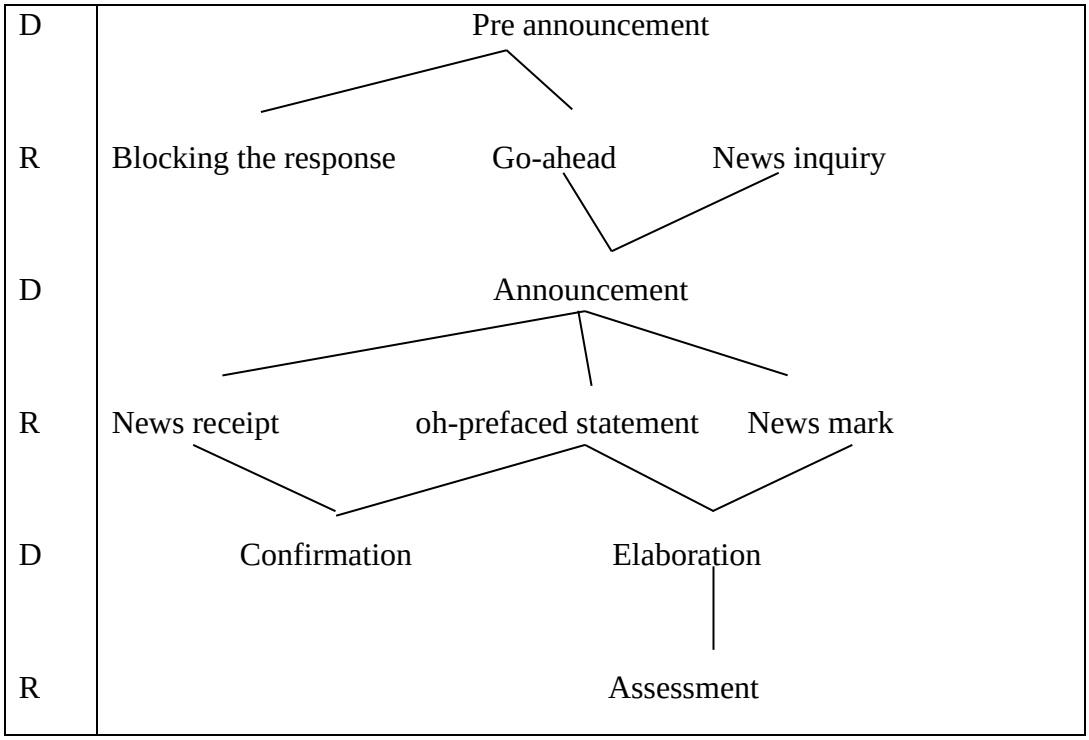

Figure 2.5: Interactive construction of news delivery sequences (Maynard, 1997)

As shown above, pre-announcement and its response (pre-announcement sequence) precedes the announcement of the news. Schegloff (2007:38) posits that the pre-announcement sequence is used to allow a teller and a recipient to sort out together whether "the news is already known". Liddicoat (2007:136) explains this, stating that this sequence "helps the recipient to recognize the telling as news when it is delivered, especially if the news is topically discontinuous with previous talk". Schegloff (1995) cited in Bernsten (2002:15) argues that the pre-announcement sequence (or pre-sequence) does two things: (a) it projects the contingent possibility that a base FPP will be produced; and (b) it makes relevant the production of a SPP". This means that the use of this pre-sequence not only predicts the co-participant that a certain type of action (news-announcement) is coming, but also makes a response relevant. Based on whether the response to the FPP (i.e., the pre-announcement) is positive, neutral or negative, the speaker can decide whether or not to produce the base FPP (i.e., the news announcement). In this way, the speaker can avoid a dispreferred response or, in other words, he can avoid the rejection of what it is to be told as news (Wong and Waring, 2010).

According to Terasaki (1976:27), the pre-announcement sequences are characterized by the use of some syntactic features. He (ibid) claims that they "regularly occur in a highly attenuated simplex (declarative) sentence form" while Liddicoat (2007) argues that most of these sequences are quite formulaic and consist of the following basic components:

Guess (Do) you know Remember	what who when where	+/- information

Figure 2.6: The basic components of a pre-announcement sequence

This means that the main lexical item that recurs in the design of a pre-announcement first is a WH-word ‘Guess what’ which indicates that the speaker has something to tell, but gives no additional information about the news. The recipient may also be provided with more information about what the news involves. For example, the sequence “Guess who I saw yesterday?’ gives some indication about the topic or the news. The other lexical item that recurs in the design is the noun ‘thing’ or ‘something’ as shown in the following examples:

- I got something that gets wild
- I have something terrible to tell you, etc). (Terasaki, 1976)

According to Schegloff (1968), pre-announcements can be preceded by summons/answer sequences (such as D: Jim? / R: Yeah?) to anticipate the initial exchange of a conversation they preface. In other words, these sequences provide entry into the talk they preface by summoning the recipient into availability for further talk and their answer establishes their availability, as put by Terasaki (2004: 179):

> In establishing the availability of the parties for further talk and thereby warranting the occurrence of that talk, Summons/Answer sequences share with other Pre-sequence types the feature of contingently pre-cursing some next action. (….) If one party is found not available on the occurrence of the Summons, the proposed talk is delayed or averted.

Concerning the announcement of the news, Maynard (1997:100) posits that speakers usually produce an announcement utterance not only as an ‘assertion or a declaration’ (Angies’s got a baby) but also as a small narrative. This is due to the fact that when speakers produce an announcement, they usually

draw on their own life and experience and possess firsthand knowledge of the event.

The recipient in a given conversation can provide different responses to show that the announcement is "news-for-them" (Maynard, 1997:104). According to Wong and Waring (2010:71), these responses can be of three types: Newsmark, News receipt, and Oh-prefaced assessment. Each of these responses can elicit a different turn, which together with its response forms an insert-sequence (Terasaki, 1976). The three types of announcement responses are shown in the following table:

Type and function of the annou. response	**Forms of the announcement response**
1. News receipt (discourages elaboration)	1) Oh 2) Oh really 3) Uninverted yes/no question (she did?) 4) Oh+assessment (oh great)
2. Oh-prefaced assessment (designed to be ambivalent about encouraging or discouraging elaboration)	1) Oh good (for good news) 2) Oh dear (for bad news) 3) Oh lovely
3. Newsmark (encourages elaboration)	1) Oh+ partial repeat (e.g., oh do they? 2) Really? 3) Yes/no questions (e.g., did she?)

Figure 2.7: Types and forms of news announcement responses (in Wong and Waring, 2010)

Each of the forms above has different functions. Depending on the recipient's response to the news announcement, the next turn can be determined in three ways. The first one is a "News receipt" which "may elicit a confirmation in next turn but no elaboration and sometimes may mark the end of an informing

sequence altogether" (Maynard, 1997: 107). In other words, its production from the recipient means that he confirms the announcement as news and possibly ends the announcement sequence (i.e., no elaboration). The second type of response (Oh-prefaced assessment) can either confirm or elaborate the news announcement sequence. Maynard (1997: 109) argues that News receipts and Oh-prefaced assessment responses are similar in that they both appear to curtail the development or elaboration of a news delivery. However, oh-prefaced assessment is different from News receipts in that:

> items such as 'oh good', in response to good news, and 'oh dear', in response to bad news, may be designedly ambivalent in terms of encouraging or discouraging elaboration. Maynard (1997:109)

The third type of responses to the announcement is a News mark. Its production from the recipient means that he acknowledges the information as news for him and encourages the development of the news (i.e., encourages elaboration), as shown in the following example:

D: I met Joan yesterday and she had that form concerning the job		**Announcement**
R: Oh she has?	(News Mark)	**Response**
D: Yes she is sending the form back		**Elaboration**
R: Oh good. I am pleased she applied		**Assessment**

Maynard (1997:196)

Finally, assessment can be the last turn in a news announcement sequence. It can announce the end of the news announcement sequence, shift to another topic, or initiate further elaborations, as Maynard (1997:118) puts it:

The assessment turn may mark the completion of an NDS. However, ollowing an initial assessment, a deliverer may produce further, embellishing elaborations that also receive evaluation.

Conclusion

The second chapter has mainly addressed issues related to conversation analysis and sequence organization. It has first explored the concept of conversation along with the related issues such as the characteristics of the language of conversation as well as other aspects such as cohesion and coherence. The key findings of conversation analysis: turn-taking, repair and sequence organization which constitute the main aspects of conversation have also been examined. Much focus has been put on sequence organization to give evidence that turns and sequences of social talk are organized and expanded to be coherent and to get some courses of actions accomplished. Full details have also been provided about the speech action of news announcement in naturally-occurring conversation and how its different sequences are sequentially and syntactically organized.

Chapter Three:

Teaching Conversation

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Introduction

This chapter addresses the issues related to the teaching of conversation in EFL classrooms. It first discusses the context of teaching conversation and factors affecting the development of learners' discourse competence. It also provides a historical overview of conversation instruction before dealing with the emergence of conversation analysis and its contribution to language teaching and learning. It also attempts to shed light on the importance of conversation instruction in second language classrooms, explores the two approaches of teaching conversation and, finally, addresses the issue of teaching conversation through consciousness-raising activities.

3.1. The context of teaching conversation

One of the priorities in the language teaching programs in language classrooms has been the teaching of speaking skills and the development of learners' oral fluency. However, second language learners find difficulties to speak the language fluently and appropriately. To reach native or near-native-like oral proficiency they are required no only to master the grammatical and semantic rules of the language but also to know how to use the language in the context of interpersonal exchanges (Shumin, 1999 cited in Richards and Renandya, 2002:204). For Goh and Burns (2012) speaking is a 'combinatorial' aspect that involves not only the use of linguistic knowledge but also the use of conversational features and communication strategies which "cohere simultaneously to constitute speaking competence and to facilitate fluent and

intelligible speech production" (Burns, 2012: 121). Reaching fluent oral proficiency also requires learners to use the language appropriately in social interaction which involves not only understanding and using effective conversational and sociocultural features but also having control of idiomatic expressions involved in native speech discourse. This means that students should not be mere responders to the teacher's questions; they should go beyond that by interacting in an appropriate way. According to Nunan (1991), the ability to carry out a conversation appropriately and interact with other people using the characteristics involved in natural conversation might be the only good means of developing their oral proficiency. As he (1991:39) puts it :

> mastering the art of speaking is the single most important aspect of learning a second or foreign language, and success is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the language

Tsang and Wong (1998) as cited in Richards and Renandyia (2002 :202) conclude, in their study on the effect of teaching conversational features to seven Hon Kong Cantonese speakers, that teaching students conversational skills explicitly might help them handle everyday conversation and , thus, achieve considerable gains in both listening and speaking.

However, even though teachers manage to make their learners do a lot of talking in the classroom, they fail to enhance their ability to hold a conversation effectively and appropriately. This may be due to the fact that many teachers tend to get their students talk for the duration of a class period by getting them work on communicative activities such as problem solving tasks and communication games in pairs or in small groups to practice language skills (pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar). Other teachers do allow 'conversation classes' by simply organizing classroom discussion about a given topic chosen and prepared

beforehand in view of enabling them to 'practise' conversation while many others ask their students to reproduce model conversations that are most of the time contrived or designed to practice some particular grammatical structures or to work on situational dialogues in pairs or in small groups to talk about things that happen in a restaurant or at the market, etc. where the focus is usually on controlling students' pronunciation and grammar rather than on improving their oral and communicative skills (Richards, 1990). In the same vein, Nolasco and Arthur(1987) and Wray (2002) claim that students should be aware of all the features of ordinary conversation and of the purposes of their use. For example, they should be aware of how speakers in an ordinary conversation take turns in an organized way, how they produce social actions such as requests, offers, news announcement, etc. in their sequential contexts and how they repair problems in speaking , hearing and understanding. Helping learners' be familiar with these skills will facilitate their attempts to converse in English, improve their fluency and reach native-like competence, i.e., develop their conversational competence.

3.2. Factors affecting learners' discourse competence

Researchers including Nunan, 1985; Ellis, 1994; Seedhouse, 2004 have argued that discourse competence can affected by many factors. These factors are dealt with below.

3.2.1. Classroom discourse and naturalistic discourse

The classroom provides opportunities for relevant L2 communication as learners are exposed to communication patterns typical of natural discourse and providing relevant opportunities to practice them. As suggested by Seedhouse (2004), there is no need to promote genuine communication in the classroom as it is already one. They also advocate the fact that classroom communication is one of natural discourse domains since language instruction aims at helping learners

to communicate in natural contexts such as maintaining casual social contact with a neighbor or a car mechanic. However, a classroom has its apparent institutional limitations and, therefore, its discourse is likely to deviate more or less from authentic conventions because "the discourse that results from trying to learn a language is different from that which results from trying to communicate " (Ellis,1994:580). This is consistent with Nunan's (1985: 137) claim that there are "comparatively few opportunities for genuine communicative language use in second language classrooms" since teachers focus too much on form rather than on meaning and on accuracy over communication.

The discourse jointly constructed by both teachers and pupils differs in important ways from out-of-classroom language use in that its main purpose is to instruct and inform and this difference is reflected in the structure of this discourse and also in the ways "how language use… is shaped by processes, practices and content demands of the curriculum" (Ellis, 1994:581). In other words, the talk that occurs inside the classroom has a pedagogical rather than a social purpose. This makes it have specific methodological frameworks different from those of natural discourse. According to Ellis (1994), the main framework in the classroom context is centered on a particular interactional pattern where the teacher initiates or asks a question and the learner answers the question, followed by the teacher's feedback or evaluation. This, according to him (ibid), often provides single-word responses from the learners in teacher- dominated class interaction and results in the learner's limited competence**.** Contrary to natural discourse, classroom discourse is characterized by less fluid roles established through interaction tasks and, therefore, hinders equal participation in the negotiation of meaning. In addition to this, the problems occurring in a

conversation due to errors or misunderstanding may not be repaired by the speaker himself but by the teacher who takes the initiative to do so.

3.2.2. Classroom interaction

Educationally oriented research into classroom interaction has focused mostly on whole-class interaction between the teacher and students. (Ellis, 1994; Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975) have revealed a common instructional pattern with three sequences of discourse 'moves'(IRF), where I is teacher initiation, R is learner response and E/F is an optional evaluation or feedback by the teacher. This tightly-framed participation pattern is described by Cazden (2001:39) as "the most common pattern of classroom discourse at all grade levels". Sinclair and Brazil (1982:45) in their seminal work on teacher talk give the following example of the IRF(E) pattern :

T: Give me a sentence using an animal's name as food, please. (Initiation)

S: We shall have a beef for supper tonight (Response)

T: Good. That's almost right but 'beef' is uncountable so it's 'we shall have beef", not 'we shall have a beef'. (Feedback/Evaluation)

However, many research studies (Ellis, 1994; Long, 1985; Nunan, 1990) have criticized these interactional processes that consist largely of IRF as being entirely teacher-led and dominated. This heavy reliance on the restrictive IRF/E limits students' learning opportunities and inhibits learners' participation. In examining their own and others' L1 classrooms, Cadzen (1988) indicates that the use of IRF was more facilitative of teacher control of classroom discourse than of students' learning. For his part, Van Lier (1996:156) posits that the strict IRF sequence "reduces the student's initiative, independent thinking, clarity of expression and the development of conversational skills (including turn taking,

planning ahead, negotiating and arguing), and self-determination". Thornbury and Slade (2006:240) argue that the IRF exchanges in the classroom, which are mostly transactional, cannot be equated with conversation because learners do not have the opportunity to engage in a real conversation. According to them (ibid), the teacher does most of the talk in IRF exchanges, asks the majority of the questions, nominates the speakers and provides feedback, in contrast to conversation "where speakers' rights are more evenly distributed , so the talk is more collaborative, with speakers free to take turns, and to introduce topics of their own choice.

3.2.3. Teacher talk

Many researchers state that teachers taking most of the talk can minimize the degree as well as the quantity of students' interaction in classroom. In other words, teachers tend to devote large amounts of time to explain and manage instructions giving little opportunity for exposure to, or practice of conversational interaction. The teacher's control of classroom talk may negatively affect the development of learners' language proficiency as it deprives them of opportunities to speak as well as participate in classroom communicative interactions. This control of the classroom talk, according to Ellis (2000:174), often makes the students' responses "brief, reactionary, and certainly rarely conversational". This means that teacher talk in the second language classroom setting has nothing in common with real natural conversation and, thus, cannot prepare learners for the kinds of interaction that occur outside the classroom. This type of talk may also lead to a great deal of teacher's discourse control in the processes involved in conversation. In this respect, Field (2000:174) argues that in a teacher-dominated classroom talk:

> The teacher also controls the turn-taking, not only who should speak but also for how long they should speak. They also control the wait-time, the time they allow a learner to come up with an answer before giving the turn to someone else. The teacher chooses when to change the direction of the discourse via-discourse markers (by using L2 versions of 'well, 'ok', 'right')

Teacher talk is also characterized by the domination of display questions (questions that teachers know the answer to but are asked to elicit or display particular structures) over referential questions (teachers do not know the answer to and ask the questions with the purposes of seeking information from the students). In fact, researchers including allwright and Bailey, 1984; Brock, 1986; Pica et al, 1995; Nunan, 1990 claim that classroom interaction is usually characterized by the use of display questions to the almost exclusion of referential questions. The consequence of such practice, according to Brock (1986:50), is that the teacher not only knows the answer but also "provides the propositional structure into which the answer fits". In other words, besides knowing the answer, the teacher has also control over the flow of information into coherent ideas, resulting in the learners' production of discourse that is short and mechanical. It is for this reason that researchers such as Brock, 1986, Nunan, (1991) and Ellis (2005) suggest that referential questions should prevail over display questions in the same way they are in naturalistic discourse. Brock (1986:49) argues that when teacher increase the use of referential questions in language classroom, they "create a flow of information from students to teachers, ...and generate discourse which more nearly resembles the normal conversation learners experience outside of the classroom".

3.3. A historical background of conversation instruction

Foreign language teaching methodologies have dealt with teaching conversation differently. Traditional methods, for example, used dialogues that focused on the explanation of grammar in isolated sentences, but gave no importance to the practice of teaching conversation, while modern methods of teaching have focused on the role of increasing the amount of speaking practice in the classroom to help learners' develop their communicative abilities but held different views on the incorporation of conversation in language classroom. With the advent of Grammar Translation Method in the 19th century, the practice of teaching a foreign language focused on reading texts that were borrowed from a classical tradition in view of translating them from the L1 to the L2 and vice versa. The learning materials consisted mainly of isolated sentences that were highly contrived and that involved specific grammatical problems and vocabulary for translation.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the Reform Movement came into existence as a reaction to Grammar Translation Method for being ineffective in preparing students to use the target language to communicate. The key principles of this movement are summarized by Howatt (2004:171) as follows:

> The primacy of speech, the centrality of the connected speech as the kernel of the teaching-learning process, and the absolute priority of an oral methodology in the classroom

Therefore, the primary focus of the Reform Movement is that the spoken language of everyday life done through easy, natural and interesting texts and dialogues is primordial in teaching foreign languages. However, Thornbury and Slade (2006:248) state that even if the founding principle for the early reformers

was the prioritization of the use of larger stretches of texts, including dialogues, these texts sounded "stilted and contrived" and seemed to adhere to formal written language rather than to spoken language. A corollary of the Reform Movement was the Direct Method which considered oral communication as fundamental and pronunciation is emphasized from the outset. The focus was on practicing language structures with vocabulary and grammar presented through dialogues (often termed conversations) and consolidated through imitation and repetition. One of the principles of the Direct Method is that:

> Lessons should contain some conversation activities; some opportunities for students to use language in real contexts. Students should be encouraged to speak as much as possible.
>
> (Richards, 1990:112)

The 1950s saw the emergence of the Audiolingual Method which resulted from the increased attention given to foreign language teaching in the United States. Like the Direct Method, the Audiolingual Method prioritized the development of learners' oral communication skills but focused more on the memorization of conversation patterns to enable learners form correct speech habits (Alesi and Pantell, 1962) cited in Thornbury and Slade (2006:252). In other words, the Audiolingual Method is characterized by the memorization of dialogues through activities that consist mostly of specific grammatical structures to reach automatic production and comprehension of utterances. Brown (2001:23) posits that this method favours conditioning and habit-formation models of learning through getting learners repeat and memorize conversations that were padded out with mimicry drills and 'carefully graded sentence patterns'. However, these conversations composed mainly of

sets of inauthentic questions and answers were not a means of developing learners' oral communication skills and conversation competence but only a way of "dressing up practice skills" (Thornbury and Slade, 2006:251). Real conversations that enable learners acquire conversational skills and strategies were deemed unnecessary because, according to the Audiolingual Method, learners can get a real fluidity of language use and spontaneous communication not through knowing and using these strategies and skills but through being exposed to "a multiplicity of structures and lexical items that have to be learned over a period of years" (Rivers, 1968:200).

While the Audiolingual Method was evolving in the USA, a parallel method called Situational Language Teaching (SLT) emerged in Britain. The assumptions underlying this method came up from the influence of linguists such as Halliday (1973, 1979) who emphasized that language structure needs to be tied to meaning and to a context or situation. Therefore, one of the distinctive features of SLT was that new language points should be introduced and practiced in situations rather than in isolated items of grammar. Typical techniques for introducing spoken language in SLT were the presentation and practice of dialogues. 'Situated' within an everyday setting such as a restaurant or a railway station, these dialogues introduced lexical items and grammatical structures which were then practiced in follow-up activities. The main purpose was to draw learners' attention to language use in everyday settings and to develop their language fluency. A sequence of classroom activity, according to the situational method, should be based on a procedure known as PPP (Presentation-Practice-Production). The main feature of PPP is that the new grammar point is first presented through a conversation or text. Then, students practice the structure in a controlled context through drills and substitution exercises. Finally, students

practise the new structure in different contexts, using their own content and information usually through mini-conversations. Even if the conversations used in the situational approach were attempts to make learners communicatively competent, they were, in fact of little use for them because their primary focus was the oral drilling of grammar structures rather than their communicative fluency. For Thornbury and Slade (2006:254) the conversation lesson as presented in SLT did not reflect 'the spoken language of everyday life' due to the fact that they put more focus on grammar accuracy than on ' conversation practice', with little or no attention to the social as well as to the functional meanings of the target language.

In the early 1970s, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) made its appearance. It emerged as a reaction against the assumptions underlying the previous language teaching approaches and methods. For CLT, the primary focus should be on language as a tool of communication rather than on sets of phonological, grammatical and lexical items to be memorized (Littlewood, 1981). CLT rose to prominence as a result of the development of three related areas of research: functionalism, discourse analysis and communicative competence. "which were to provide a new impetus to the design and methodology of the teaching of conversation" (Thornbury and Slade, 2006:256).

CLT first emerged from the development of functionalism which is based on the premise that language is used not only as a means of communication but also as a way to " represent our experiences of the processes, persons, objects, abstractions, qualities, states and relations of the world around us and inside us" (Halliday,1989:145-146). Proponents of this approach, including Wilkins (1976) state that the incorporation of communicative functions in language learning can

help learners to use the target language effectively when communicating with others. The notional-functional proposed by Wilkins (1976) consisted of three parts: a) semantico-grammatical categories, b) modality, and c) communicative functions. The most important one was communicative functions (asking questions , making requests, inviting a friend, making offers, etc.) and was realized as 'functional syllabus' which appeared to be based on language in use rather than on grammatical forms.

Discourse analysis led to the development of teaching conversation within the CLT. In fact, the shift of focus from the analysis of language at the sentential level to the level of discourse provided useful insights about the structure of written and spoken language. The core findings of this field showed that conversation is far from being unstructured and banal, but has evident 'patterns and regularities' , as put by Thornbury and Slade (2006:258):

> Discourse analysis has demonstrated that, like written language, spoken language has a texture and structure, and that conversation from from being shapeless and unregulated, has patterns and regularities that distinguish it from written language and other spoken genres.

The third research area which influenced the development of CLT was communicative competence which is defined as "the ability to function in a truly communicative setting; that is, in a spontaneous transaction involving one or more persons" (Savignon, 2001: 12). This, according to Hymes (1972), requires the learners not only to master the linguistic forms of the language (mastery of vocabulary, word formation, sentence formation, semantics, phonology) but also its social rules (i.e., the ability to produce and recognize socially appropriate utterances in different socio-cultural contexts).

The findings of these three areas clearly influenced the design and methodology of the teaching of conversations. Language materials started exploiting conversational rules to enable learners understand and use them in language classroom. Activities were based on 'functional outlines' such as exchanging greetings, enquiring about health, making a suggestion about a meeting, persuading someone to do something etc. to help learners to carry out a fairly extensive conversation (Byrne ,1976) cited in Thornbury and Slade, 2006:257). The use of discourse features such as discourse markers, conversational routines, turn taking strategies, and adjacency pairs were presented and practiced through communicative tasks to help learners achieve 'conversational endeavours', maintaining the flow of conversation (Walsh, 2006:4), and achieving cohesion across utterances. Activities also included role plays and games that help learners practice speaking "under conditions that are close as possible to those of normal communications" (Scott,1981:121).

3.4. The emergence of conversational analysis

Developing EFL learners' ability to hold a conversation has always been a daunting task for teachers. One reason behind this difficulty may be the fact that most of these learners have little opportunity to interact with native speakers outside the classroom and that teachers of English themselves have only limited exposure to the language of the natural English conversation (Sze, 1995; Thornbury and Slade, 2007; Wong and Waring, 2010).

The main aim of the current trend of second/foreign language teaching pedagogy has put focus on the development of learners' communicative competence rather than their acquisition of discrete linguistic elements in order to develop their communicative ability so that they can express themselves appropriately in the situations they come across in real world. However, even

though this current language teaching pedagogy has been implemented for many years in EFL context, it has not been successful in enhancing learners' conversational abilities. In fact, this teaching pedagogy through communicative approaches has been trivialized with some critics among which is that it has inadequately dealt with conversational competence as most of the models of communicative competence consider it as dependent on or included in other components (Markee, 2005).

Other critics assert that even though spoken language is acquired via social interaction, there is a lack of attention to the learning context that helps students interact with their peers appropriately and effectively communicate in various intercultural settings within EFL contexts. According to Markee (2005:406), CLT has overlooked interactional competence which he identifies as a broader term for 'conversational competence'. According to him, this competence "involves learners orienting to different semiotic systems - the turn taking, repair, and sequence organizations that underlie all talk-in-interaction, combined with the co-occurrent organization of eye gaze and embodied actions".

According to Seedhouse (2004), CLT has not taken L2 classroom interaction into account from any communication or sociolinguistic theory but from a single, invariant pedagogical concept. In the same vein, Liddicoat (2007:1) posits that even though CLT has focused on oral language use, features of everyday conversation have often been ignored or undervalued in language textbooks". This implies that learners are not provided with the opportunities to be aware of the conversational features involved in conversation. Instead they are directed to depend only on communicative activities such as games and role-plays, without really helping them hold a real conversation. This is due to the fact that learners are not made aware of how spoken language works and what conversational

features native speakers employ in their daily conversations (Wong and Waring, 2010).

However, it is often argued that the aforementioned problems can be addressed using conversational analysis (CA) which investigates the order, organization and orderliness of social action in discursive practices in order to understand how talk is organized and how interactants understand and display understanding of each other as their talk unfolds. Researchers including (Barraja-Rohan, 2011; Markee, 2004; Seedhouse, 2005; Wong and Waring, 2010;Wu, 2013) have all claimed that CA can provide a comprehensive and systematic way of describing the structure of conversation and explicating the sequential organization of language actions such as invitations, offers, requests , news announcement, etc. If incorporated in language teaching, CA can be an effective tool not only to raise awareness to causes of the difficulties learners have in understanding and producing natural conversation but also to enhance interactional and conversational abilities.

Several studies carried out by Markee (2005) and Barraja-Rohan (2011) provided evidence of the effectiveness of the incorporation of CA in EFL classroom. These studies investigated the role CA-informed consciousness-raising to develop learners' interactional and conversational abilities. Barraja-Rohan (2011) maintained that the learners became successful in acquiring various aspects of language actions such as invitations, request and offers while Fuji (2012:28) who concluded, in an experimental study examining the effect of the application of CA insights to raise ESL Japanese students on specific conversational aspects, that CA-based conversation instruction increased learners' interest in the mechanisms involved in English conversational interaction and helped them develop their conversational competence.

3.4.1. Conversation Analysis in language learning and teaching

Applying CA to language learning and teaching has emerged, partly as a result of criticism of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research by Firth and Wagner (1997) cited in Barraja-Rohan (2013). Their criticism centered on the fact that SLA views the learner as a 'defective communicator' and that "much SLA research was experimental or classroom-based, and did not acknowledge the learning that goes on in non-institutional settings" (1997:120). As an alternative, they called for a more context-sensitive and participant-relevant approach. Following this, recent research has called for the integration of CA in SLA as it can be a useful tool to aid understanding language use within the language classroom.

In fact, a number of researchers including Seedhouse, 2004; Markee and Kasper, 2004 ; Markee, 2005 ; Young, 2009 have indeed addressed the issue of what insights CA can offer into language learning. For example, Markee and Kasper (2004:496) claim that language learning may be understood as a "conversational process that observably occurs in the intersubjective space between participants". Their claim is based on the premise that language acquisition and use are intertwined and that language as a learning object cannot be separated from talk-in-interaction in which it is embedded .

The claims that CA has the tools to describe in great detail the practices students are oriented to in learning is evidenced by the fact that "CA is uniquely placed to examine the finest details of talk-in-interaction" (Gardner, 2008: 229) and to shed light on language learning events. These details, according to Markee (2005: 44), "can help refine insights into how the structure of conversation can be used by learners as a means of getting comprehended input and producing comprehended output ".

CA can be beneficial in the teaching process. The teachers' understanding of the norms of talk-in-interaction enables them to teach these norms more efficaciously and help them not only manage and capture all the features of conversation, but also serve as effective tools for uncovering and teaching these sociocultural norms. According to Lee and Hellermann (2014) cited in Barraja-Rohan (2013:7), CA research enables language teachers to uncover different levels of complexity, constraints, and order that are often unique to each L2 interaction. In other words, the use of CA principles to analyze L2 data can explicate certain phenomena related to L2 spoken discourse (mainly, natural conversation). For example, the turn-by-turn analysis allows language educators to understand how particular actions are understood and accomplished by participants in L2 interaction and helps them provide an effective instruction. In addition, CA framework can provide teachers with a solid understanding of the sequence organization of conversational structures and equip them with the necessary tools to teach students how particular interactional practices (openings, closings, refusals, requests, announcement, etc.) work in real situations .

In addition to informing and improving language educators' instructional practices, CA's turn-by-turn analysis of naturally occurring interaction constitutes a valuable resource for materials development. Within this perspective, it is now commonly known that a CA perspective can also be beneficial in the field of materials design and development especially with respect to issues related to the naturalness or authenticity of textbook conversation. It should be noted that many language teaching materials have long been stigmatized with artificial scripted dialogues based on someone's intuitions about what people are likely to say or in most cases drawn from written language rather than from research about spoken language use (Bernsten, 2002).

This means that many materials writers continue to invent dialogues that sound unnatural and fail to enhance learners' spoken discourse competence. However, the analysis of naturally occurring language has not only provided materials writers with useful insights about how natural conversation works but also raised their awareness of the inadequacies of invented dialogues in language teaching materials. Instead of using dialogues which are considered to be problematic and incomplete, the use of insights from CA research helps materials writers to choose authentic naturally-occurring dialogues "that can provide students with empirically researched rather than intuitively generated information… and eventually help them prevent cross-cultural miscommunication (Huth,2006 cited in Wong and Waring, 2010:56).

3.5. Indirect and direct approaches to teaching conversation

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research has made a traditional distinction between incidental and intentional acquisition which is somehow reflected in different terms: 'acquisition vs 'learning '(Krashen (1982) and 'implicit' vs explicit' learning (Ellis, 1990). For example, Krashen (1982) advocates that language learning occurs through the formal study of rules, patterns, and conventions while language knowledge is better internalized through the learners' experiencing natural language use. Put differently, language proficiency, according to Krashen (1982), can be achieved naturally "through doing it" (i.e., without formal instruction) or as Hatch (1978) cited in Richards (1990:77) puts it "one learns how to do conversation, one learns how to interact verbally, and out of this interaction syntactic structures are developed".

This polarity between 'acquisition' and 'learning' underpins another distinction made by Richards (1990) at the level of teaching conversation.

Richards points out that there are two major approaches to teach conversational features: indirect and direct. According to Richards (1990:76), the indirect approach occurs when "conversational competence is seen as the product of engaging learners in conversational interaction" (Richards, 1990:76). It is concerned with providing students with supportive environment that encourages conversational interaction through engaging them in functional language. The direct approach, on the other hand, involves "planning a conversation program around the specific micro-skills, strategies, and processes that are involved in fluent conversation" (Richards, 1990:77). It, thus, involves the explicit teaching of the conversation mechanics as part of the curriculum through emphasizing on strategies and conversational routines that the students can use to improve and reinforce their conversational competence.

Proponents of the indirect approach emphasize that teachers can improve and foster their learners' conversational skills only by engaging them in conversational interaction through communicative activities and in supportive real-life language environments which involve "setting up and managing life-like communicative situations in the language classroom (e.g., role plays, problem-solving tasks, or information gap activities)" (Celce-Murcia et al, 1997:241). Thornbury and Slade (2006:277), posit that indirect or 'experiential' learning involves "exposure to a lot of conversational input- preferably authentic- from which learners would be able to extract lexical chunks, including conversational routines." They (ibid) further add that having conversation and practicing the different conversational features in communicative activities would provide learners with the opportunities to acquire, develop and automatize the conversational strategies. According to Carter (1991:128), these communicative activities should not include how speakers do conversation, but get learners

practise the conversation aspects that "generate the natural sorts of conversational patterns and strategies".

The indirect approach is based on the assumption that students , though indirectly taught the different features involved in conversation, can work out the strategies and conversational principles for themselves through being exposed to extensive communicative activities without being necessarily aware of the rules governing these principles. It is also based on the premise that the direct focus on form is unimportant because learners learning their first language (L1) receive no such input, yet they eventually become competent users of language (Dornyei and Thurrell, 1994; Hedge 2004; Richards 1994). In fact, many researchers state that providing learners with explicit teaching of conversational strategies such as turn-taking, topic change, and overall coherence in a conversation may not be beneficial for learners since these strategies are "universal" and " transferable form the learners' L1" (Thornbury and Slade,2006:276). Cook (1989) goes further by stating that there are conversation features such as pausing, overlapping, and pitch rise to signal turn-taking are only unconsciously accessible and , therefore, acquired naturally.

The indirect approach is part of the underlying philosophy of CLT whose main principle is that conversation should not be taught but "learners learn to converse by conversation" (Hidalgo, 2002) cited in Thornbury and Salde (2006). In other words, the conversation class should focus on providing learners with opportunities to use the language fluently and creatively. Bygate (1987) assumes that learners should not be taught conversation explicitly, but implicitly through the act of involving them in interaction through a large number of productive activities.

However, the implicit teaching of conversation has triggered some criticism. It is argued that this approach to conversation instruction is not doing enough and is less effective in providing learners with specific micro-skills and strategies required for fluent conversation (Dornyei and Thurrell (1994) and that engaging learners in communicative classroom activities have failed to address the interactional dimension of conversation (Sze, 1995). These views are based on the assumption that learners who have been fully exposed to authentic conversation in communicative activities and tasks are still conversationally incompetent because they have not been made aware of the rules or strategies governing conversation.

It is for this reason that researchers such as McCarthy, 1991; Brown, 1994; Ellis, 1994 suggest that learners' speaking opportunities should be combined with explicit instruction of conversational aspects to prepare them for spontaneous communication. Richards (1990) refers to this explicit instruction as the direct approach of teaching conversation which, according to him involves planning a conversation programme that should directly address aspects of a conversation such as those related to the interactional processes involved in a fluent conversation and those related to the development of appropriate conversational skills. These aspects include how to turn-take, how to control topic, how to backchannel, how to repair, etc. (Richards, 1990: 97).

The direct approach is based on the premise that second language learners cannot acquire conversational skills such as formulaic routines and conversational features only through engaging in communicative activities but through explicit instruction. They, according to Richards (1990), need more than only 'doing the conversation' in order to hold a conversation systematically and appropriately. For him, the ability to produce appropriate conversational

language and to master the different conversational skills can be possible through the direct learning of the processes and strategies involved in conversation. For Thornbury and Slade (2006:275), a form- focused stage (explicit teaching) can provide second language learners not only with full exposure to naturally occurring conversation, but also with opportunities to know and practise conversational patterns and rules such as how to break into a conversation, how to hold the listener's interest, how to change the subject, etc. In the same vein, Carter (1991), cited in Thornbury and Slade, 2006: 276) argues that direct teaching of conversation helps second language learners to recognize their deficiencies in conversation and be aware of the gap between them and the native speakers.

There is ample evidence that when learner are taught the features of second language conversational competence such as the conventionalized ways of opening and closing conversations and performing speech acts such as inviting, requesting, or announcing news, they overcome their difficulties in mastering these conversational routines and patterns which are usually 'highly culture-bound' and may, in many cases, lead to negative transfer of 'L1 stylistic features' (Thornbury and Slade, 2006:276). In addition, explicit teaching of these features activates learners' awareness of these features, and, consequently, facilitates their understanding of how these features are used in natural speech (Richards, 2015). Indeed, it has been proposed that the presentation and practice of explicit knowledge of the conversation features provides learners with the specific language points, routines, conversational rules and communication strategies necessary for their conversational fluency (Dornyei and Thurrel, 1994). As put by Thornbury and Slade (2006:279):

> It may nevertheless be the case that a certain teacher intervention-e.g. by having students identify and categorize discourse markers, hesitation, devices in a conversational extract- will promote the conscious ‘ noticing’ (Schmidt,) and how these exponents are realized, and thereby accelerate the processes of acquisition.

Put differently, the direct approach of teaching conversation helps learners to be explicitly aware of how to do a conversation through practicing and managing its different aspects. This helps them, for example, to know and use not only the interactional processes involved in a conversation but also to be able to develop and maintain conversation appropriately and in different social setting and for different kinds of social encounters and through mastering the different conversational skills such as how to start and close a conversation, how to take, hold and relinquish a turn. In Dornyei and Thurrel’s (1994:41) terms, explicit instruction of conversation “fosters learners’ awareness of conversational rules, strategies to use, and pitfalls to avoid, as well as increasing their sensitivity to the underlying processes." Thus, the explicit instruction of conversation provides learners with the ability to practice many fixed expressions or conversational routines that constantly occur in natural conversation, the purpose of which is to increase their understanding of the processes involved in a conversation. This presupposes that the classroom activities following the direct teaching of conversational skills introduce the students to the turn-taking system and all its features such as opening and closures , backchannels, discourse markers, hedges, fillers, etc. and making them aware of their functions as these feature are not “automatically transferred to a foreign language” (Nolasco and Arthur, 1987:9). These activities do not only highlight the language that characterizes natural

conversation but also focus on the exploitation and practice of the various features of conversation such as pragmatic regularities and politeness strategies, communication strategies (Celce-Murcia et al., 1997:86) and also other conversation aspects such as the real rhythms, pauses, and hesitation devices.

Common to the two approaches to teaching conversation is the fact that they both aim at developing learners' conversational skills. What matters for the two approaches is that "students need to be aware of what native speakers do in conversation if they are themselves to achieve conversational competence in the target language (Nolasco and Arthur, 1987:51). If the indirect approach is used to provide opportunities for students' practice and use of the conversational skills, the direct approach is used to raise students' awareness of the rule governing these skills. This fact has led many researchers including Richards, 1990; Hadley, 2002; Dornyei and Thurrell, 1994; Thornbury and Slade, 2006 to call for the integration of the direct and the indirect approaches in view of overcoming the limitations and problems of each approach. According to Richards (1990:84), these two approaches are complementary and "a balance of the two approaches seem to be the most appropriate methodological option". In the same vein, Thornbury and Slade (2006:278), argue that combining "features of indirect and direct learning in alternating cycles of performance and instruction" provides learners with opportunities of exposure to authentic conversation and knowledge and practice of the conversational strategies and processes involved in conversation. In other words, teachers should not only provide opportunities for students' practice and use of the skills learnt in communicative activities, but also raise their awareness of the strategies and conversational principles that govern conversation.

Thus, researchers call for a middle ground between the direct and the indirect approach to teaching conversation so that learners notice, elicit and use patterns of conversation to develop their conversational competence. Put simply, these researchers suggest that the two approaches should be used side by side in order to facilitate the move from free language communication by exposing learners to natural conversation to the teacher's direct intervention. For Hadley (2002, cited in Hidalgo, 2007:141), the merging of the two approaches helps

a) To provide learners with the conversational strategies which contribute to successful conversation by teacher's direct intervention.
b) To expose them to authentic language data so that they notice linguistic and conversational features alike.
c) To encourage them to generate their own oral discourse using the features they have become aware of .

Hence, the combination of direct and indirect approaches in teaching conversation implies that learners are directed to learn conversation starting "from the whole and on to the parts" (Thornbury and Slade, 2006: 278) in order to achieve conversational fluency. This means that second language learners are first provided with the opportunity to be engaged in communicative tasks in which they are first exposed to authentic conversations that display conversational patterns and regularities as well as formulaic expressions. Then, they are introduced to the rules underlying the turn-taking system, including openings and closings, adjacency pairs and strategies for repairing breakdown.

3.6. Teaching conversation through consciousness-raising

If first language settings learners have rich exposure to the target language outside the classroom and a lot of opportunities to use it for real-life purposes, learners in foreign language settings have only scarce opportunities to use the

target language. In addition, foreign language learners cannot achieve adequate mastery of the target language simply through interacting with other learners (i.e., through engaging in conversation with their teachers or peers). Even after a long period of contact with the target language and sufficient exposure to authentic language, some features of conversation cannot be adequately acquired. According to Porter (1986:220) cited in Thornbury and Slade (2006:233), the language produced by learners inside and outside the classroom, compared to native speakers' language, usually lack the necessary sociocultural norms and conversational skills involved in conversation so they are unable to acquire these features from each other because they cannot "provide socioculturally accurate models for expressing opinions, agreement and disagreements". Porter (ibid) suggests that the conversational features and strategies should be explicitly taught to develop learners' conversational competence because many of these features can only be learned (i.e., cannot be acquired). It is for this reason that most language practitioners agree that the creation of the necessary conditions to foster learners' spoken discourse competence to acquire the target language's features would be especially necessary in foreign language contexts. One of these conditions is to raise learners' awareness the language features while providing them with relevant language input and activity (Skehan, 1998:139). In other words, teachers should help learners notice how the target language features work in context to help them discover how native speech works and how the different conversational features are used in order to hold an effective and appropriate conversation.

Sharwood-Smith (1981) and Rutherford (1985) originally used the term 'consciousness-raising 'to argue against Krashen's (1982) view that formal instruction plays a little role in language learning. Rutherford and Sharwood-

Smith argue that if learners are exposed to a rich variety of language input and explicitly draw their attention to the target features of the input, they will acquire the target language forms in an effective way, as they (1985:274) put it:

> Instructional strategies which draw the attention of the learner to specifically structural regularities of the language….. will under certain condition significantly increase the rate of acquisition over and above the rate expected from learners acquiring that language under natural circumstances

Thus, two principles underlie the concept of consciousness-raising (Schmidt, 1990138). The first one is that formal instruction is deemed important and even desirable as it can help facilitate acquisition of the different features of the language. Mere exposure to comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982) is necessary, but not sufficient to bring about successful acquisition. The second one is that it is more effective to develop awareness of specific language forms than to require learners to produce them in communication. If learners are given sufficient exposure and opportunity to discover the language forms (whether they be grammatical structures or conversational features), they will reach conclusions concerning not only how the forms are used but also how they conceive and understand these forms. Rutherford and Sharwood-Smith (1985) emphasize the significant role of learners' internal processes that enable them to test their hypotheses about the language features. For them (ibid: 384), the main goals of conscious-raising are: a) to give the learner the necessary exposure to input in order "to realign the circles of understanding" and facilitate the awareness of language features, and 2) to point out features of L2 so they "can capture and process understandable meaning by connecting the 'new' with what they already know". Willis (1996:56) explains this, stating that consciousness-raising involves reconciling learners' new findings with their current language , that is,

“noticing the gap’ between their understanding of the use and usage of a particular feature, and examples of its use by native speakers”. This helps learners internalize the target feature and constantly revise their interlanguage in view of achieving native-like performance.

While researchers in the field of second language acquisition such as Dornyei and Thurrell, 1994; Doughty and Williams, 1998; Fotos, 1994; Williams, 1995; Ellis 2010 have advocated that raising learners’ awareness to language forms at the level of syntax and morphology can be an effective way to help learners acquire and foster their understanding how these forms work in context and eventually use them in their productions, other researchers (Bernesten , 2002; Sze, 1995; ; Joyce and Slade, 2000; Thornbury and Slade, 2006; Wong and Waring, 2010,) suggest to extend this focus on form to conversational features. These researchers advocate the usefulness of explicit teaching of conversational features to develop learners’ conversational competence. For example, House (1996) cited in Thornbury and Slade (2006:231) concluded in her study on the effect of explicit instruction in the use of conversational features such as routines in openings and closings that compared to the control group who were exposed to a rich repertoire of these conversational features, as well as opportunities to practise them, the experimental group who had the same input but explicitly taught the target conversational features through conscious-raising activities outperformed the control groups in developing a more richly varied, more interpersonally active repertoire” of the target conversational features (Porter, 1996:245).

Consciousness-raising activities are student-centered class. They work as a guideline which encourages the learners to think about samples of language and draw their own conclusions about how the language works. They are based on

spoken or written texts in the forms of conversation or story. Fotos (1994) cited in Tomlinson (2010:79-80) draw on research made by Sharwood-Smith (1981) and Rutherford (1987) and suggests the following four points to enhance consciousness-raising in EFL/ESL classroom:

1. Properly-sequenced, controlled, conscious attention to target structure is shown to have positive results in terms of students' eventual acquisition of the structures.
2. Learning can be more effective if learners are required to process the structure without having to produce it; too precipitous an invitation to production is shown to be unhelpful.
3. Activities should be sequenced so that students first respond to the meaning of the structure through content-based tasks, then are sufficiently encourage to raise their consciousness to notice the form and function of the target structure and then finally engage in some kind of error identification activity (preferably of identifiable learners errors) where incorrect or inappropriate versions of the key structures are presented.
4. There is some evidence of the benefits of an emphasis on encouragement to students to use their own interpretive skills during the content- based tasks so that there is some initial, personalized purchase on the target structure and its general meaning.

There are reasons why an approach to conversational features through consciousness-raising activities should be seriously considered, and why such an advocacy may be particularly appropriate. Learners need to learn the conversational skills communicatively and through activities that prioritize fluency rather than accuracy (Dörnyei and Thurell, 1994). Thornbury and Slade

(2006 :296) provide a model of teaching conversation based on consciousness-raising activities arranged into three phases: exposure, instruction and practice.

1. **Exposure**: learners are required to listen to how proficient speakers perform conversational skills or read authentic conversation extracts. They are also encouraged to later incorporate those features in their own conversation. They are also asked to notice how native speakers perform the conversational skills and how these speakers differ from them in terms of the choice and use of the conversational skills. Put differently, they have to notice the difference between these speakers' conversation in different contexts and their own conversation.
2. **Instruction:** Learners are given explicit instruction in a feature of conversation through conversation transcripts or video extracts (including the use of sequences of film and TV drama) as these extracts "allow learners time to notice features that may not be noticed for a long time if only heard in the flow of real-time conversation " (Willis, 1996 :75-76). In this step, teachers should help learners observe how these features work in conversation through the use of 'language-focused questions' such as : a) notice the underlined words in conversation, b) what do they have in common ? c) What is the function of each one of them ? and d) Do you have the same words in your own language, etc. Learners can also be asked questions about the context of the conversation as well as about the participants and the purposes of the interaction. To help students focus their attention on specific aspects (conversational skills or formulaic sequences) of the text, the teacher can devise classroom activities such as underlining, gap-filling, marking phonological features, etc.

3. **Practice**: In this step, the students are provided with practice opportunities that target both accuracy and fluency. Phrased differently, learners are encouraged to produce the different features that they have focused on before. They can be required to do activities such as completing a dialogue, discussing about a given feature, telling a friend about a particular story 'in free- flowing talk' and improvising their own conversation including the target features appropriately.

Other researchers (Ur, 1981; Newton, 2006, Dornyei and Thurrel, 1994) offer a rich menu of consciousness- raising activities that can also be used to teach conversational features. For example, Newton (2006) advocates the use of consciousness-raising activities where learners are encouraged to participate in group work or in pairs. This, according to him, would facilitate the learners' focal attention to the target of instruction and to foster the discovery of conversational patterns through interaction. In these activities, learners in groups or pairs discuss sequences of conversation from films and native speakers' data in order to "maximize the intake from the input, as well as to focus on the intended target features" (Newton, 2006:120). Swain, (1998) suggests collaboration tasks where the focus is on the exploitation of learner reflection using meta-linguistic resources. In these tasks, learners listen or view the audio or video recording of their production activities (e.g., pair conversational exercise, role plays, etc. and to analyze their own performance referring back to the instructed features.

Conclusion

This chapter has been devoted to conversation instruction in EFL classrooms. Accordingly, it has first explored the context of teaching

conversation in the current language pedagogy along with the factors that affect learners' spoken discourse competence. It has also provided a historical overview of teaching conversation in order to understand how conversation was dealt with in the approaches and methods in the field of language teaching. Then, this chapter has shed light on the contribution of conversation analysis to language teaching and learning. It has also examined the two major approaches of teaching conversation: direct and indirect approaches to teaching conversation. The last section has been devoted to the role of consciousness-raising in teaching conversation and has shed light on the different characteristics of consciousness-raising activities.

Chapter Four:

Research Methodology

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the description of the methodology of this study. It begins with presenting the research design followed by a detailed description of the subjects who took part in the study as well as the research tools for data collection: the teacher questionnaire, classroom observation and the experiment. This latter includes the experimental tests, which consist of role-plays, as well as the teaching procedure for both groups: the control group and the experimental group. The teaching materials used in the treatment are also presented and fully explained.

4.1. Research design

The present study is concerned with the explicit teaching of conversation. It mainly deals with the teaching of sequential and syntactic organization of news announcement in ordinary conversation through CA-informed consciousness-raising activities in order to find out the extent to which this teaching methodology can develop learners' spoken discourse competence. To achieve this, a mixed-method research framework is used. This method is referred to as a research in which "the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods in a single study" (Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007: 4).

In order to inform the research questions stated before, the study has two areas of investigation. The first area examines the relationship between students' oral discourse competence and classroom practices. It, thus, aims at finding out the teachers' attitudes and perceptions towards teaching speaking and

conversational features and also the methods and techniques they use in the oral expression session. To achieve this, a survey is carried out using two instruments: a teacher questionnaire and classroom observation. The teacher questionnaire aims at eliciting the teachers' views about the teaching of conversational skills and investigating their objectives and the techniques they use to promote their learners' spoken discourse competence. The second instrument, classroom observation, is intended to find out whether the classroom practices help develop learners' spoken discourse competence. Specifically, the focus will be on the teachers and learners' behaviours that occur in the classroom.

The second area of research, which addresses the main research question, is to investigate how conversation instruction affects students' discourse competence in speaking. For this purpose, the experimental part of this study was carried out: twenty participants were placed in two groups of ten students each: a control group and an experimental group. Both groups benefited from an instructional intervention with focuses on conversational features (namely news announcement sequences along with their formulaic sequences). The control group were taught the conversational features through exposure to conversational input (i.e., they were taught the target conversational features implicitly, without specifically considering how these features are structured in the conversation). However, the treatment group received a five-week training in which they were submitted to a set of CA-informed consciousness-raising activities about the target conversational features. In other words, they were explicitly taught sequencing organization (how news announcement sequences are sequentially and syntactically structured in a natural conversation).

The two groups, without being aware that they took part in an experiment, were required to perform role plays both in the pre-test (before the experiment) and after the experiment). Put differently, the pre- and in the post-test comprised role-plays in which the informants were asked to carry out a conversation around the topic of news-delivery (i.e., announcing good and/or bad news). It was important to use a role-plays as they are considered a widespread technique to elicit speech actions such as invitations, requests, offers and news announcement and "a means of dealing with many of the dimensions of conversational interaction" (Richards, 1990:86). All the role-plays were recorded to help carry out the analyses. According to Bloor and Wood (2006:16), data collection through audio-recording conversations has the advantage of freeing up the researcher from note-taking and, thus, allowing him to concentrate on the job in hand. They (ibid) further add that audio-recording improves the reliability of data collection since "they are not dependent on the researcher's recall or selective attention".

After the data were audiotaped, the conversational elements were analysed through the use of statistical procedures. The aim of the statistical analysis is

1. To know the extent to which each group used the target conversational features correctly.
2. To proceed with a comparison of the two groups with regard to the number of conversational features used in their interaction.
3. To compare the use of these features by individuals within each group. This means that the performance of the two groups were compared on the following basis:

a- Before the experimental treatment: the aim was to ensure the homogeneity of the two groups and the "comparability of the participant groups prior to their

treatment" (Mackey and Gass, 2005:70). In other words, the researcher was particularly interested to demonstrate that the two groups (control and experimental) had the same level with regard to their spoken discourse competence in general and to check whether they were familiar with the target conversational features.

b- After the experimental treatment: the aim was to investigate whether conversation instruction through consciousness-raising activities had any effect on developing the students' discourse competence in speaking. Put differently, we were particularly interested in whether the consciousness-raising activities, compared with the activities for the control group, had any significant effect on the development of learners' spoken discourse competence.

The research design and procedure are better illustrated in the diagram below:

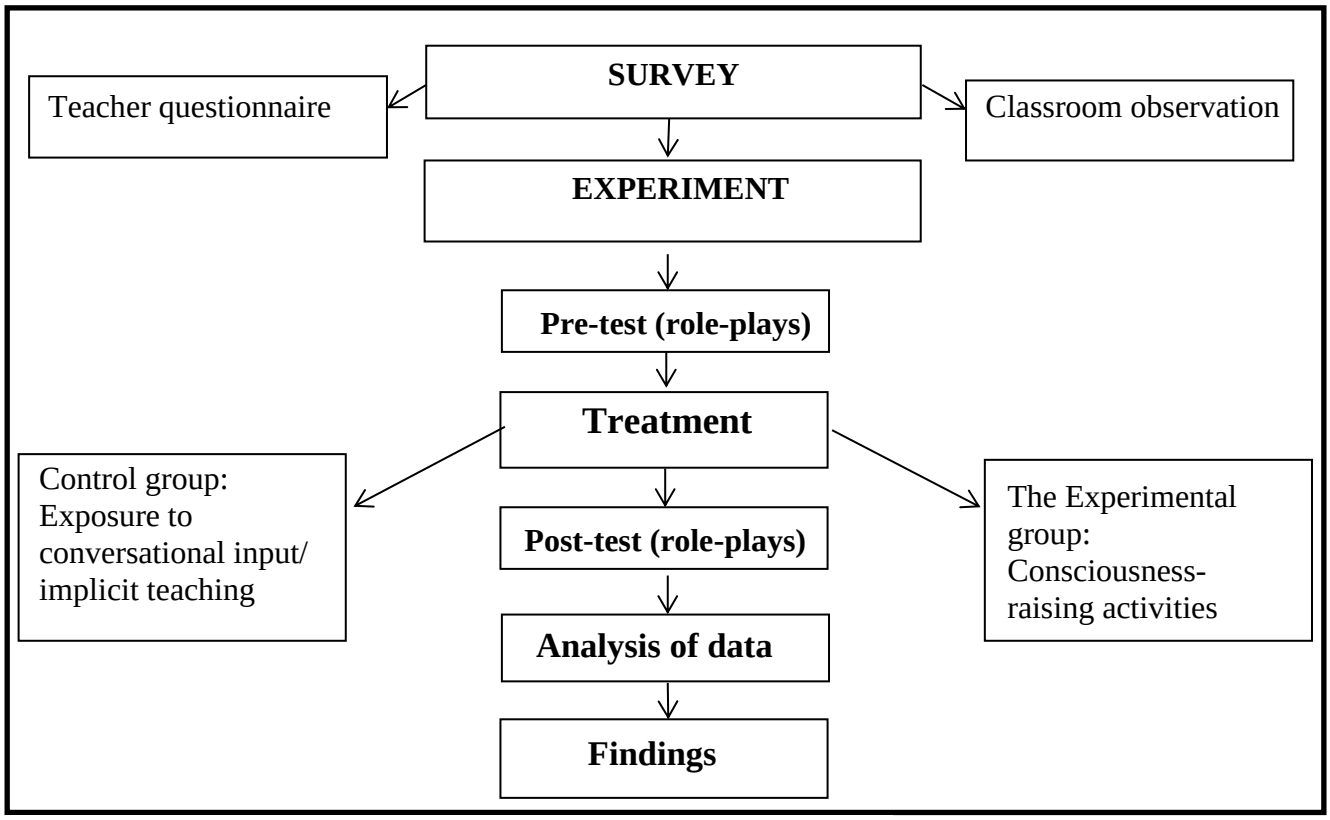

Figure 4.1: The Research Design

4.2. Rationale behind the choice of the conversational features to be taught

This study aims at investigating the effect of explicit teaching of conversation on developing learners' spoken discourse competence. It tries to demonstrate the extent to which this teaching methodology helps learners develop their oral proficiency and provide them with the opportunity to engage in a conversation effectively and appropriately. However, due to the considerable number of conversational features involved in natural conversation, focus will be put only on two conversational features:

a) Sequence organization (how news announcement sequences are structured)

b) Formulaic expressions (what syntactic features characterize news announcement sequences)

a) Sequence organization

Sequence organization refers to the particular coherence, order and meaningfulness in the sequence actions or moves in a given conversation. In other words, conversational sequence organization describes how turns and sequences of talk are organized to be coherent with the prior ones to get some courses of action accomplished, such as actions of request, offer, telling, and announcement. Thus, the rationale behind teaching sequence organization in natural conversation is that students need to be aware of how patterns of sequence organization which people use in order to organize stretches of talk and produce courses of actions. This will help them recognize and use related and coherent sequences in their own conversation. Moreover, Making ESL/EFL learners aware of how social actions such as announcing news are implemented and responded to in sequence can enhance their ability to understand and produce relevant turns, and ultimately, avoid communication breakdowns.

b) Formulaic expressions

A growing body of research has opted for the value of incorporating formulaic sequences in L2 pedagogy. Indeed, many researchers including (Pawley and Syder, 1983; Wray, 2002; Wood, 2002; Thornbury and Slade, 2006) claim that one possible reason for the learners' inability to hold a conversation adequately is that they have a limited command of formulaic sequences. Therefore, helping learners to recognize and use ready-made phrases in a conversation can enhance their spoken discourse in a number of ways. First, the knowledge of routine expressions can help improve comprehension. According to Wray (2002), when presented within input, learners who have large amount of sequences in their mental lexicon can make use of these expressions to comprehend the input quickly. Second, teaching these routines can lead to fluent language use (Thornbury and Slade, 2006) and may contribute to a greater facility and economy in learning and language use (Wray, 2002). Third, these conversational routines may enable learners to acquire the socio-cultural norms and notions that are necessary to avoid negative transfer of the conversational features (Odlin, 1989). Therefore, providing the students with sufficient exposure to how native speakers use formulaic sequences related to news announcement sequences through written materials or through movies, sit-coms or talk shows can be a suitable means to enable students to be more communicatively competent.

4.3. The Subjects of the study

Both teachers and students participated in this research study.

4.3.1. Students

The subjects are twenty second year students at the University of Djelfa. They were randomly chosen from a population of 210 second year students at the department of English. They were divided into two groups: experimental and control. The experimental group consists of 10 students, 6 girls and 4 boys, and the control group comprised 10 students, 7 girls and 3 boys. All the learners in both groups had been learning English for at least seven years and according to their scores in oral expression in the last semester exam, they could be best described as intermediate.

The participants in the study (both experimental and control groups) were exposed to approximately fifteen (15) hours of formal instruction in conversation instruction over a five-week period of study covering the target conversational features. The present experiment did not involve all the items involved in conversation but only features related to sequence organization. This means that the experiment involves how the different sequences in a natural conversation are organized and what formulaic expressions are used in news announcement sequences.

Prior to the formal training, the students were assessed through a pre-test based on role-plays so as to obtain some information on their level of spoken discourse with regard to their ability to announce news (good or bad) in a conversation. At the end of the experiment, the students were assessed through a post-test based on role-plays to compare their performance before and after being trained so as to see the extent to which students obtained real progress in their spoken discourse in general and conversational competence in particular.

4.3.2. Teachers

Twelve teachers from the department of English took part in the research. All of them have taught oral expression. A copy of the questionnaire was given to each of the participants via the Head of the English department. They were invited to fill in a questionnaire. The researcher's interest was to know their views, beliefs and attitudes and more importantly their methods and techniques in teaching speaking and conversational skills in oral expression sessions.

4.4. Research Instruments

Three types of research instruments were appropriately chosen to collect the data. These data collection tools which consisted of a teacher questionnaire, classroom observation and an experiment were utilized to answer the research questions and enrich the research findings. The rationale together with a full description of each tool is provided in the next section.

4.4.1. Description and rationale of the Research instruments

The sections below deal with the description and rationale for the two research tools: the teacher questionnaire and classroom observation.

4.4.1.1. Teacher questionnaire

As mentioned before, twelve teachers from the English department of the University of Djelfa participated in this research. The teachers were invited to fill in a questionnaire (Appendix A) that had been designed to elicit information about their beliefs, and the procedures they use to teach speaking and conversational skills in the language classroom.

The rationale behind choosing the questionnaire for collecting data from teachers is that it is a more reliable research tool compared to other tools such as teachers or students interviews and that it can save time and effort. In addition, it is a good way not only to get straightforward and fairly accurate information but

also to obtain uniform, standard, and objective data (McBurney and White, 2009). McDonough & McDonough (1997:135) state other advantages:

a) They can collect data that may not be easily observed
b) The knowledge needed is controlled by the questions; therefore, they can afford a good deal of precision and clarity
c) They ensure the anonymity of the respondents and give them enough time to think and fill them in.

However, researchers including Dörnyei, 2007; Berg, 2007; Cohen et al, 2011 have drawn attention to the fact that questionnaires may have some drawbacks. Berg (2007) points out that questionnaires rely on individuals' self-reports of their knowledge, attitudes, or behaviour and, thus, the validity of the data obtained is contingent on the honesty of the respondent. With regard to questionnaire format, Cohen et al. (2011) argue that questionnaires could have the following disadvantages: a) if only closed items are used, questionnaires may lack coverage or authenticity; b) if open-ended items alone are used, respondents may feel unwilling to write their responses in full.

Bearing in mind all what has been said so far, the teachers were requested to fill in a questionnaire that includes eighteen questions most of which are closed format questions. According to Mackey & Gass (2005:93), the main advantage of including closed-format questions in the questionnaire design is that a) they typically involve a greater uniformity of measurement and therefore greater reliability, and b) they lead to answers that can easily be quantified and analyzed. It follows that respondents were presented with sixteen closed-ended questions that include yes/no items, lists and ranking. In addition, two open-ended questions are used in the questionnaire. The first one is in question eleven to elicit from the teachers their views on presentations and discussions and the

second one is used at the end of the questionnaire in order to elicit from the respondents their suggestions to improve students' conversational competence.

The questions were formulated in such a way as to cover the different aspects directly related to the purpose of the present research work. All the questions included in the present questionnaire are asked to help the researcher gain valuable information about the teachers and their way of teaching and are classified into the following elements:

a) Teachers' teaching background (questions 1 and 2)
b) Teachers' attitudes and practices in teaching speaking skills (questions from 3 to 9)
c) Teachers' roles, activities and input materials in conversation classes (questions from 10 to 15)
d) Teachers' assessment of students' conversational competence (questions 16 and 17).
e) Teachers' suggestions to improve students' conversational skills (question 18)

The use of the teacher questionnaire in the present study seeks to obtain information from teachers in order to understand how teachers perceive the issue of teaching speaking and conversational skills in the EFL classroom. It, thus, aims at eliciting the teachers' objectives, techniques and methods in speaking sessions. It is worth noting that the researcher bore in mind the above-mentioned drawbacks of the questionnaire so he used it as a complementary tool to the classroom observation.

4.4.1.2. Classroom observation

Observation is one of the most frequently used data collection research tools. This is due to the fact that it helps obtain data more accurately and

objectively than the other tools (e.g. questionnaires) which may carry biased views of events (Mackey and Gass, 2005). Researchers rely on this data collection tool because it is a systematic way to observe interactions, relationships, actions, events, and attitudes about a situation in its natural contexts. In other words, observation can help the researcher to watch behavioral patterns of people in certain situations to obtain objective information about the phenomenon of interest. Cohen et al. (2011) claim that "observations are valued for their authenticity and objectivity. They are also useful for their potential for exposing researchers to both habitual behaviors and unexpected events". This is consistent with Mackey and Gass's (2005:175) claim that when collecting data using observational techniques, researchers' main aim would be to provide objective and careful descriptions of learners' activities "without unduly influencing the events in which the learners are engaged".

In classroom settings, observation is regarded as a form of inquiry consisting in describing activities as they happen in the classroom, understanding the different contexts in which language is used, and collecting relevant linguistic and interactional data (Mackay and Gass, 2005; Duff, 2008). Thus, it is an important research tool that gives direct access and insights into complex social interactions and physical settings to be recorded. As put by Gass and Mackey (2011: 165):

> Observations are one of the most commonly employed data collection procedures in classroom research, as they allow researchers to gather data on the vents, interactions and patterns of language use within particular foreign and second language classroom contexts.

However, research (Dorneyi, 2003; Gass and Mackey, 2005; Cohen et al, 2011) has shown that observing interactional processes involved in the classroom

may include some caveats for many reasons. First, interaction involves more than one person and is very fast and the language used by participants may be performing many functions at the same time. Second, when observing interactional processes, individual learners' personalities and attitudes (learners' fear of mistakes, loss of face and shyness which frequently result in learners' low or even no participation or use of their mother tongue) during the communication process may also be a problem. Third, conversational patterns in the classroom are unpredictable and hardly ever permanent because conversations are usually spontaneous and unstructured (Ur, 1995:121). Fourth, the presence of an observer in the classroom may influence the linguistic behavior of those being observed (Gass and Mackey, 2005:176). This is evidenced by the fact that when learners realize they are under observation, they may perform better to please their teacher.

Bearing these difficulties in mind, the current study adopted a non-participant observation in the classroom context. In other words, the researcher took a peripheral outsider role in the classroom in order to minimize the "observer effect" (Gass and Mackey, 2007:47) in the process of data collection which means that the researcher did not intervene in the events but rather focused on capturing what was occurring without commenting or judging. This implies that the classroom observation was conducted using a quantitative methodology where a pre-established checklist (see Appendix B) was developed in order to reduce subjectivity and to be as neutral and factual as possible.

The aim of classroom observation in the present study is to supplement and crosscheck the findings of the teacher questionnaire. It also aims at examining the teaching procedures prevalent in the oral expression sessions and

investigating whether these procedures promote learners' speaking and conversational skills. To achieve these aims, three university teachers (2 males and a female) with a teaching experience ranging from 6 to 12 years participated in the research study. They all accepted to allow the researcher into their classrooms (22 students for each) for three sessions of observation (one for each teacher).

In order to conduct an organized observational procedure, the researcher attended the three sessions in February to avoid any disruption to the teachers and the administration (exams, correction of the exams, etc.) .Before the observation session, the researcher explained to the teachers the objectives of his research and also the aspects of practices that he intended to observe without stating all the details to preserve the naturalness of the teachers' work as intact as possible. At the outset of the observation sessions the researcher sat at the back of the classroom and took field notes to capture the classroom practices emerging in the teaching/learning process. These field notes were used to fill the observation grid which included the following points

- The activities used to in the teaching process (oral expression)
- Classroom talk and teachers' and students' attitudes in the classroom,
- Teacher's and students' interaction,
- The features of class conversation
- The use of formulaic sequences in the classroom

4.4.1.3. Experimental tests

The sections below are concerned with the description and rationale of the pre- test and post-test.

4.4.1.3.1. Description and Rationale of the experimental tests

The elicitation techniques used in this investigation are based on the design of a pre- test and a post-test. The students formed in two groups (control group and experimental group) were required to perform role-plays before and after the treatment. The pre-test was administered to determine the level of proficiency of the students in both groups and whether they were familiar with the target conversational features (news announcement sequences). Once the treatment was finished, the post- test was administered. The results of this test were compared to those of the pre-test to find out what effect the treatment had on both groups.

The evaluation carried out by means of these tests, has two major aims:

- It seeks to reveal information concerning the students' level of oral proficiency especially in terms of fluency, sociolinguistic appropriateness, grammar and pronunciation.
- It seeks to know whether the consciousness-raising activities used in the treatment, compared with the implicit teaching of the target conversational features, have any effect in enhancing the experiment group's understanding and use of the speech action of news announcement.

To achieve these aims, the pre- and post-tests role-plays were performed in dyads which were formed at random, the control group being formed of five pairs numbered from one to ten while the experimental group being formed of five pairs numbered from 11 to 20. Each pair of students received two different role cards which contained instructions and prompts to conduct a conversation using the sequence action of news announcement. Before the role plays were audio-recorded, each pair of the students in both groups were allowed enough time to read the role cards and act them out in the presence of the researcher only.

Before delving into the experiment, it appears important to refer to literature concerning the use of tests as research tools to evaluate the students' productions. Nunan (1991: 188) claims that in order to heighten the tests' reliability and validity, the researcher needs to take into account two conditions which are:

- to set a control and a comparing group, and
- to consider students' level of proficiency prior to the experiment.

As far as our research is concerned, both conditions were considered as was explained in the previous paragraphs.

The pre-test aimed at 1) determining the students' level of proficiency, 2) ascertaining the participants' levels of familiarity with the sequence organization prior to the experiment, and 3) assessing the learners' use of the formulaic sequences related to news announcement sequences involved in conversations (linguistic organization). The post-test, on the other hand, aimed at 1) providing a measurement of the subjects' conversational competence in both groups that followed two distinct ways of language teaching, 2) comparing the results of both groups with respect to their use of news announcements and formulaic sequences, and 3) investigating the effect of CA-informed awareness-raising instruction on developing learners' spoken discourse with regard to their understanding and use of news announcement sequences.

It is worth noting that the students' oral performance aspects other than the conversational features were individually assessed and rated by the researcher according to the extent to which they mastered the following aspects:

- fluency and coherence in conversation
- Sociolinguistic appropriateness
- Grammar
- Pronunciation

The pre-test role plays were assessed using the analytic parameters of spoken language scoring indicated by the Council of Europe (2001).The assessment criteria and weightage of marks are described below:

	Aspects tested	Weightage of marks
1	Fluency and coherence in conversation	4 marks
2	Sociolinguistic appropriateness	2 marks
3	Grammar	2 marks
4	Pronunciation	2 marks

However, in the post-test role-plays, the students' ability to produce a sequentially and syntactically appropriate conversation in their conversation was evaluated in pairs using CA techniques. Indeed, the students' conversations with regard to the use of news announcement sequences were selected and analysed on a turn-by turn basis to see whether

1. the participants' used news announcement sequences : summons/answer/preannouncement/announcement/ assessment…
2. they delivered and responded to news accurately and appropriately.
3. they used pair parts of the sequences that are conditionally relevant
4. the turns were adequately expanded and interactionally appropriate
5. the turns were sequentially accurate and appropriate
6. the participants used adequate and appropriate formulaic expressions in the different sequences of the conversation.

4.4.1.3.2. The use of role-plays in the experimental tests

Compared to other elicitation tools investigating oral skills and strategies, role-plays can be a very useful testing technique to investigate the conversational features that learners employ in different situational conditions (Kasper and Rose, 2002). According to Rintal and Mitchell (1989) cited in Gass and Houck(1999:104), role-plays are adequate tools to extract spoken data and a reasonable indication of subjects' 'natural' way of speaking. They (ibid) further add that role-plays

> allow the examination of speech act performance in its full discourse context and sequential organization in terms of organization, the strategy choice…which are strong characteristics of authentic conversations

In line with the claim above, Kasper and Rose (2002:89) maintain that role-plays are an important instrument to collect spoken data and are well-suited to elicit features of specific oral interactive discourse such as turn-taking, sequence organization and repair. Role-plays are also useful for interactive negotiation of meaning between speakers (Gass and Houck, 1999) and can offer participants greater opportunities to show their abilities in key conversational behaviors such as opening, closing, holding the floor, interrupting, etc. In addition, researchers believe that role-plays are important with respect to three points. First, when performed spontaneously (i.e., unscripted and unrehearsed) and where the topic is not predetermined or restrained, they may offer a more conceptually sound alternative to other elicitation techniques (e.g. interviews). Second, the features of the dialogues, such as turn-taking, back-channelling, adjacency pairs, and hesitation, can be relatively authentic. Third, role-plays provide a richer data source because the exchanges are two way rather than single utterances and because they require participants to be cooperative.

However, role-plays cannot be considered equivalent to naturally-occurring speech data because they are usually regarded as being a simulation methodology "that elicits spoken data in which two interlocutors assume roles under predefined experimental conditions" (Alcon and Martinez-Flor, 2008:85). In other words, role-playing can be invalidated as a technique to measure conversation proficiency because it may contain discourse that lack authenticity (McCarthy, 1991:128). This means that the speakers "act roles they have never played in real life" and "what they say and how they say may not reflect real speech" (Alcon and Marinez-Flor, 2008:86). In addition, the interactants are constantly aware that they are being observed, and, thus, what they would do or say may be different from what they would say or do in more relaxed or natural situations (Kasper and Rose, 2002:90). In other words, role-play encounters do not arise out of real situations, but portray artificial conversation requiring the participants to imagine the respective situation and its context.

Depending on the extent of the interaction (i.e., amount and variety of production involved), role-plays can be either closed or open (Kasper and Rose, 2002). Closed role-plays consist of a single turn in response to the description of a situation that involves specific instructions. Put differently, in a closed role-play, the participant responds to the situation without a reply from an interlocutor. In contrast, learners engaged in open role-plays are only presented with the situation and asked to perform it without any further guidelines. According to Mackey and Gass (1985:91), open role-plays differ from closed ones in two ways: a) they "involve interaction played out by two or more individuals in response to a particular situation" and b) they "reflect natural data more exactly". Bardovi-Harlig et al (1991) posit that even though open role-plays

are relatively controlled compared to closed role-plays, they are still interactive and allow for the negotiation of a speech act.

Given the facts above, this research study used open role-plays in both tests (pre-and post-tests). This choice was due to the fact that they allowed the observation of the target conversational features (the news announcements sequences and how they are sequentially and syntactically used in the students' conversations).

Before performing the role-plays, the participants were divided into ten pairs (five pairs for each group: experimental and control). The interactants were first asked to read a situational description and perform a role-play as they would in a real situation in face-to-face interaction. The situation included in the role-play contained sufficient contextualized information in order to make it clear and unambiguous for the participants. It should be noted here that the role-plays scenarios were piloted for content validity with four students, who did not take part in the experiment and who had an intermediate level. According to Mackey and Gass (2005:43), piloting is a necessary procedure for two reasons:

a) to test, revise and finalize the method,
b) to uncover any problems in view of addressing them before the main study is carried out.

The aim was to determine:

- whether the role-plays scenarios were confusing or difficult to understand and
- whether anything could be done to encourage a greater degree of similarity to 'natural' speech.

The results of the piloting gave no indication that the language used in the prompts was difficult to understand and that the scenarios contained ambiguous phrases.

The pre-test role-play prompts were short and did not include sufficient contextual parameters, compared to the post-test role plays. The role-play prompt used in the pre-test is the following:

> Role-card 1: You announce news to your friend on an event, studies, achievement, etc. about yourself or about someone you know. This news can be good or bad.
>
> Role-card 2: you react to your friend's announcement, asking more about the news.

However, after the treatment some elements were included to enrich the role-play scenarios. These elements were the following:

- The type of character they were to play
- Contextual information about the setting
- The relationship between the participants
- Recency of the event
- Prompts that would help the participants expand their turns

The role-play prompts used for the post-test are the following:

You are a University student

The other person is friend of yours (from the university or outside) whom you know very well

The situation:

Imagine a situation where you meet your friend at the club of the university and start a conversation with him. In the course of the conversation which should expand over an adequate number of turns you announce some good or bad news about yourself or about a common friend. You can announce more than one news about you or about the common friend. The event should be recent and worth being announced. However, you should expect that your friend may already know the news and respond in an unexpected way. You should also expect him/her to ask further questions for clarifications and more information. Your conversation should be as natural as possible.

You are a University student

Your interlocutor is a friend of yours (from the university or outside) whom you know very well

The situation:

Your friend sees you at the club of the university and starts a conversation with you. He announces some recent good or bad news about himself or about a common friend you both know. You react showing concern, surprise, etc. towards the news. May be you will hear more than one piece of news. The conversation should expand over many turns, asking for further details and providing feedback.

The researcher introduced the scenarios and assigned the roles to the participants, giving them time to map out the general plot of their roles. They

were given a card outlining the situation which they were to imagine. They were to read the situation and act out the role in a spontaneous, accurate and realistic manner. They were informed that the role-plays were recorded. In order to minimize the students' anxiety only the researcher and two students (one pair each time) were present when the role-play task was being audio recorded. Later, the data were analyzed in order to compare the performances of the two groups in terms of:

a- the sequential organization of the news announcements sequences

a- the syntactic organization of the news announcements sequences

b- the use of formulaic sequences related to the content of the conversation

4.5. Teaching procedure

As already mentioned in the rationale of this research, this study explores the extent to which teaching conversational features through consciousness-raising activities has any effect on developing learners' spoken discourse competence in comparison with the implicit teaching of conversational features. Through this section, thus, an attempt is made to provide a description of the teaching procedures for both the control group and the experimental group.

4.5.1. The Teaching Procedure for the control group:

Although both groups were exposed to the same input (i.e., conversations from films and sit-coms), they were submitted to different teaching procedures. While the experimental students were experiencing the interactional and conversational features of natural conversation in an explicit way using CA-informed consciousness-raising activities, the control students were being taught the conversational features in an implicit way through watching authentic conversation and doing the following activities:

1. Pre-listening/watching: Before listening or watching, the students were required to answer questions related to the topic such as: a) What do you think of…b) have you ever experienced…etc.
2. Listening and speaking: the students were required to answer comprehension questions like: a) What are the participants talking about? b) What is the problem of…? c) Why is…..angry? d) What news has he received?
3. Practice: the students were required to practice the conversational features by acting the dialogues out
4. Production: the students were asked to imagine a situation similar to the topic of the conversation they listened to or watched before and perform a role-play.

This teaching practice is based on the premise that learners' endeavour to communicate should be encouraged from the very beginning and that they should be exposed to the maximum amount of input. This is consistent with Mackey's (2007) claim that getting learners to participate in the interaction can make them fluent and well-versed in spoken language. Put differently, learners should spend most of the time interacting with their peers and the teacher in order to acquire the linguistic and conversational patterns which they will need to hold a conversation. This goes in tune with Long's (1985) view that when learners are engaged in conversation, they concentrate on form and process of the input they obtain, which promotes their speaking and conversational skills.

The teaching procedure in the conversation classes for the control group was characterized by the following features:

a) It emphasized the formal aspects of conversational language (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, etc.),

b) It lacked attention to the processes of conversational interaction,

c) It focused on teacher's error correction, and

d) It attached little attention to pragmatic considerations and socio-cultural features involved in the conversation

The types of activities used in the classroom did not, in fact, focus on the collaborative aspects of conversational interactions (e.g. how the participants took turns, how the different sequences were organized, how the participants expanded their turns, what specific formulaic sequences they used, etc). The teacher's role was to engage students in situations using the language for communicating meanings as efficiently as possible with some focus on good pronunciation and on 'linguistic correctness' in expressing themselves rather than on the conversational features.

4.5.2. The Teaching procedure for the experimental group

Traditional approaches to teaching conversation failed to enhance learners' conversational competence because they did not provide these learners with the opportunity to observe how native speakers use conversational skills in their social interaction and how these skills are structured in natural conversation. The underlying assumptions of these approaches were that when learners take part in language production on a frequent basis, they practise the different conversational skills and, thus, automatically acquire them. However, new trends in research (Nolasco and Arthur, 1987; Van Lier, 2002, Richards, 1990, Thornbury and Slade, 2006) have advocated the usefulness of the direct approach of teaching conversation. This approach focuses explicitly on the rules and features involved in natural conversation (Richards, 1990:79).

Thus, the teaching procedure for the experimental group adopts a consciousness-raising approach rather than unconscious practice of the different

features of conversation. The choice of the consciousness-raising activities is due to the fact that only exposing learners to language input and practising the conversational features in communicative activities may not be efficient to help learners acquire these skills and, thus, may not be conductive to subsequent automatic acquisition of the conversational features. This procedure consisted of the following objectives:

- Raising the learners' awareness of the specific rules, strategies and processes that are involved in fluent conversation
- More specifically, make them aware of how the speech actions of news-announcements occur sequentially in spoken interaction
- Providing them with authentic language input and raising their awareness to how these functions, which reflect the sociocultural norms of the target language culture, are shaped and used by native speakers
- Helping them be aware of the syntactic structure of news announcement sequences characterized by the use of the formulaic expressions or conversational routines in natural conversation

Following the perspective above to enhance learners' conversation skills and, thus, develop their spoken discourse, the experimental students were provided with activities that were adapted from the analytic model proposed by Barraja Rohan (2011:7). This model comprises five steps as shown in the following table:

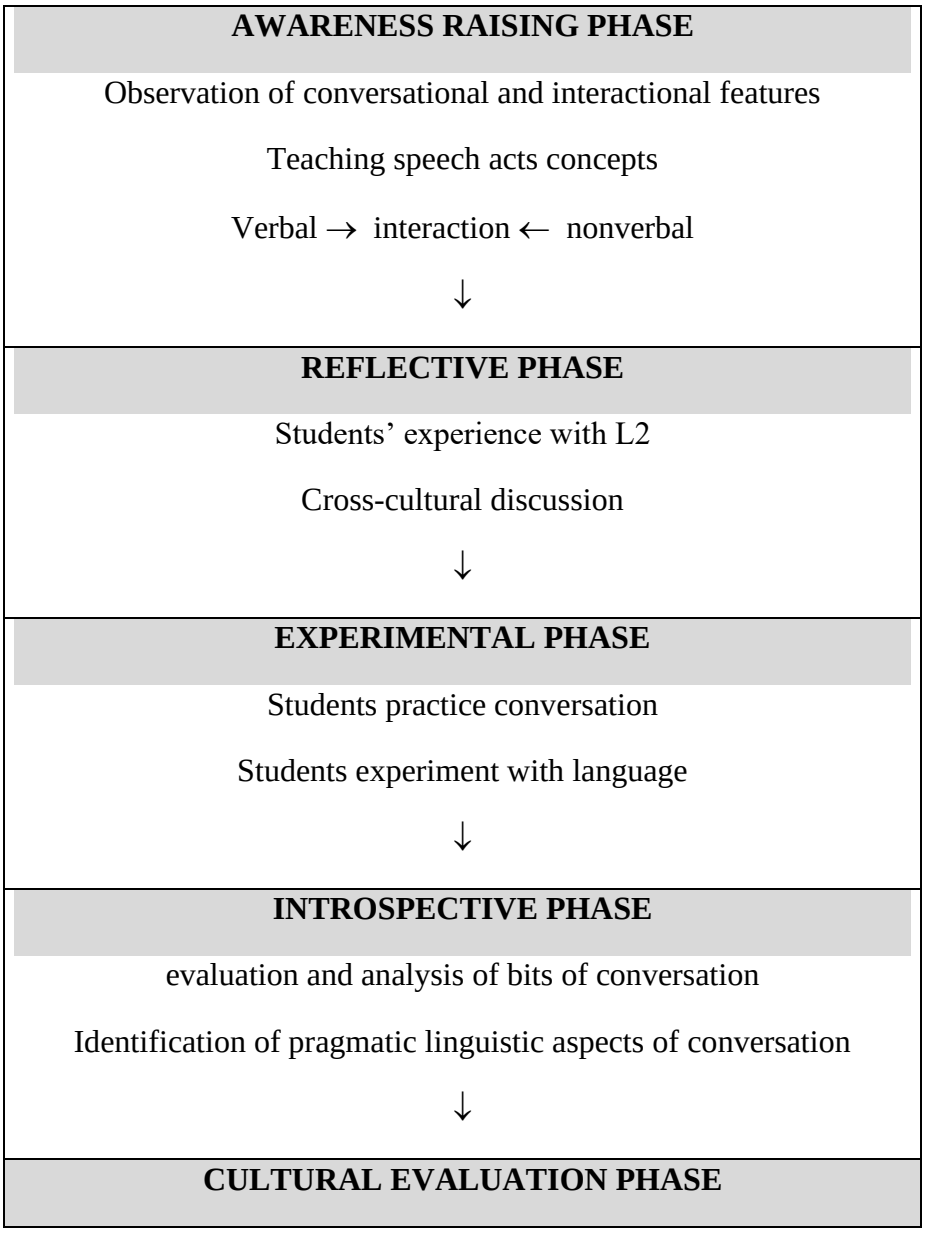

Figure 4.2: A framework of awareness-raising activities (Barraja-Rohan, 1997)

To meet the scope of the present study, the adapted framework of the awareness-raising activities above was slightly modified to incorporate the following stages:

1- **Observe:** Learners were exposed to authentic input (either authentic transcripts of conversation or video sequences) that contain rich and varied conversational features. The learners were made to notice the target conversational skills and the context in which they were used.

This was done first through questions such as: Where are the participants? What is their relationship? What is the topic of the conversation? It was also done through asking them to listen to or read extracts and observe how the linguistic and conversational features were used. The purpose of this step was to make learners observe the target conversational features involved in a conversation (e.g. how news are conveyed and responded to in a conversation)

2- **Analyze:** Once the learners had observed the conversational features in the context, their attention were directed towards the target features in naturally- occurring conversations that were either written or video-recorded. Then, the students were engaged in analytic activities in which the target features were isolated and analyzed from a conversation analysis perspective. This involved learners' analysis of the linguistic and conversational features: how they are realized in particular contexts and how the different sequences were structured and expanded. The students' attention was explicitly drawn to not only the verbal resources used by the participants along with the sociocultural norms and formulaic expressions but also the nonverbal resources such as gaze, gestures, etc. The aim of this analytic phase was to make the students notice the conversations in order to raise their consciousness to

- how language forms and conversational skills are used in context.
- how news are conveyed and responded to in a conversation

- how news delivery is sequentially and syntactically structured in conversation
- how formulaic expressions are used to announce and respond to news
- how pre-, insert-, and post-announcement are used in a conversation

3- **Practice:** After the analytic activities, the experimental group was engaged in activities in which they practised the different features involved in authentic conversations. These activities included a) form-based activities (accuracy-based activities which focus on presentation of structures, functions and conversational features) and b) communicative-based activities (fluency-based activities which focus on information sharing and information exchange). These activities consisted of a mixture of activities which included questions, filling gaps, completing sentences, etc.,. In other words, the learners were exposed to authentic language data so that they "develop the ability to see patterning in the target language and to form generalizations to account for that patterning" and/or were provided with activities in which learners directly practise aspects of conversational skills (Richards, 1990). The aim of the practice activities was to encourage students to provide "accurate production of the language features that learners have been focusing on in the consciousness-raising" as well as "to provide opportunities for free-flowing talk in real operating conditions" (Thornbury and Slade, 2006:300).

4- **Produce:** The experimental group was then to produce conversational utterances through both oral and written output processing activities. These activities aimed at developing learners' knowledge and use of the conversational features. In written production activities, they were provided with the opportunities to write down their own sentences or groups of sentences using techniques such as matching sentences or phrases, completing the sentences, choosing the target expressions and using them in sentences, reformulating and modifying the given conversation, etc. In oral production activities, the learners were asked to listen to the selected incomplete scenes from a video sequence from films or sitcoms in which characters were interacting. Then, they were requested to act them out in pairs providing a suitable completion. After this, they were asked to compare their performance with the one acted out in the video sequence and discuss the differences. The aim of the written and oral production activities was to help learners internalize the different structures and features involved in a conversation. When viewing the video sequences, the students were encouraged to observe aspects of the character's non-verbal behaviour (i.e., facial expression, body language, etc.), which have a key role in the successful acquisition of the conversational skills and strategies (Richards and Lockhar, 1996).

5- **Evaluate:** Once learners developed knowledge of the target feature through observation, analysis, practice and production activities, their attention was directed to the cultural and socio-pragmatic aspects of both L1 and L2 conversations. The learners were first set to think about how particular conversational skills and strategies function in

their own language and culture. Second, they were made aware of the differences between 'the rules, strategies and processes that distinguish their mother tongue speech from those of the target language. Through discussion and debates focusing on a particular situation, the learners were given the opportunity to develop a deep understanding of the linguistic and conversational skills and strategies and foster their ability to perform different conversational skills that are culturally appropriate.

4.5.3. Description and Rationale of the Experimental Teaching Materials

This section is devoted to the discussion of the teaching materials that have been used in the experiment of this study as well as the rationale behind using them. In order to examine how conversational features and instances of formulaic sequences are used in everyday communication, two kinds of materials are used:

1. Transcripted authentic conversations from different sources including Barraja-Rohan and Prichard, 1997; Pridham, 2001; Terasaki, 1976; Maynard,1997,2003; Schegloff et al. 2007; Liddicoat, 2007; Sydnell, 2010; Wong and Waring, 2010. These conversations are characterized by the following features: a) they reflect native discourse in everyday communication, b) they contain instances of how native speakers announce and respond to news, c) they are not intended for pedagogical purposes
2. Video sequences from films and TV series, mainly from F.R.I.E.N.D.S sitcom.

It is worth noting that the predominant sources are video sequences taken from sitcoms and films. Despite the fact that these visual materials might be

considered informal, unstructured language of everyday use, they include the most common features of conversation, sit- coms and film sequences are found to provide useful sources of input given the abundance of natural spoken language features. In the same vein, Fernandez and Martinez (2008) argue that learners' exposure to these visual materials can develop learners' conversation abilities because they provide them with the opportunity to see how native speakers verbally and non-verbally interact.

Indeed, the chosen audio-visual sequences not only offer more contextual information (i.e., clothing, posture, proxemics, setting) but also provide other features such as facial expressions, body language, stress, intonation and rhythm of the language. They can also offer a visual reinforcement of the target language and show how conversational skills such as how to take turn in a conversation, when it is appropriate to tell a long story or a joke, which register to use, etc.

Many researchers (Nunan, 1991; Ur, 1995; Tomlinson, 2010) have suggested that the selection of the sitcoms and films should be based on four criteria: a) comprehensibility, b) appropriateness, c) suitable genres and 'naturalness of language'. Comprehensibility is a major criterion in selecting a film for language-learning purposes. According to Gilmore (2007), it is important to choose scenes that balance dialogues with a high degree of visual support, appropriate speech delivery and clear picture and sound. Appropriateness means that films or TV series should not include explicit sex, gratuitous violence and excessive profanity. However, if some scenes are judged to be offensive, they should be skipped and fast forwarded. The third criterion of selecting the films and TV series is that they should be suitable to the learners' motivation and interests. For example, romances, comedies, and less-violent action movies with relatively simple plots and sub-plots may appeal to learners

better than films that include horror scenes and dramatic tension. The last criterion is related to the choice of language in the films. Indeed, the films and TV series should be selected on the basis of the naturalness of their language and length of the dialogue and of utterances (Rivers and Temperley, 1978:16). Tomlinson (2011) posits that films and TV series selected for language learning should include dialogues that contain natural and authentic language with different formulaic expressions, idioms, collocations that are often used by native speakers.

These sequences of authentic conversations contain data that would help learners observe and practise conversational utterances and that contain a) sequences of news announcement and b) conversational routines.

The video sequences from films and TV series used in the present experiment have three common characteristics:

1. They are taken from comedies which contain fragments of natural conversation in British and American accent.
2. The plots in all the sequences are hilarious and engaging and have an immediate appeal for students.
3. Most of the scenes are appropriate for language learners. Some offensive scenes have been cut out from the original scripts.
4. The scripts can help learners concentrate on the different aspects of the conversational language (including hesitations, fillers, and backchannelling.) in view of developing their conversational skills (Perry and Foley, 2016:53).
5. The video sequences contain data that help learner observe and practice conversational features of news announcement and formulaic expressions.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have been concerned with describing the research methodology employed in the present research. The data collected by the three research instruments (teacher questionnaire, classroom observation, and the experiment). The teacher questionnaire was used to elicit the teachers' objectives, techniques and methods in speaking sessions whereas classroom observation was used to crosscheck the findings of the teacher questionnaire and examine the teaching procedures prevalent in the oral expression sessions at the Department of English. The experiment submitted the subjects of both groups (a control group and an experimental group) to two different teaching procedures which were, along with the teaching materials, presented and described. This experiment was used to investigate the effect of conversation instruction through CA-informed consciousness-raising activities on developing learners' spoken discourse competence.

Chapter Five:

Data Analysis and Interpretation of the Teacher Questionnaire and Classroom Observation

Chapter Five: Data Analysis and Interpretation of the Teacher Questionnaire and Classroom Observation

Introduction

The previous chapter presented and described the research tools implemented in this research design, namely the questionnaire addressed to teachers, classroom observation, and the experimental tests. The present chapter is primarily structured around the research questions formulated for this study. Thus, the chapter will deal with the data analysis and discussion of the findings of the two research tools (namely, the teacher questionnaire and classroom observation). The questionnaire is used to obtain information from teachers to understand how teachers perceive the issue of teaching speaking and conversational skills in the EFL classroom while classroom observation aims at examining the teaching procedures used in the oral expression sessions and investigating whether these procedures promote learners' speaking and conversational skills. The procedure followed consists of the analysis of the question items of the teachers questionnaire separately as well as the discussion of the findings the eighteen questions classified into five: a) teachers' teaching background (2 questions), b) teachers' attitudes and practices in teaching speaking (7 questions), c) teachers' roles, activities and input materials in conversation classes (6 questions), d) teachers' assessment of learners' conversational competence (2 questions) , and e) teachers' suggestions to

improve learner's conversational skills (1 question). It also consists of classroom observation data analysis and interpretations of the findings. The analysis of the research data will follow the order shown in the first section of chapter four, Thus, we start with the analysis of the teacher questionnaire responses, which will be followed by that of the data obtained from the classroom observation, the results of which will be crosschecked with those obtained in the questionnaire.

5.1. Analysis of the Teachers Questionnaire Responses

The teachers' responses are presented using tables that include detailed numerical data and then analyzed. It should be noted here that the total of the responses in questions 4, 5 and 13 may exceed the number of teachers, (i.e., twelve teachers) because the teachers were required to tick one or more items.

Response to Question 1:

1-5	6-10	11-15	+15
3	5	3	1

Table 5.1: Teachers' experience

Nine teachers have a teaching experience that amounts to more than six years. The remaining three teachers taught between one and five years at the university. A part from the three teachers who graduated only recently, the majority of the teachers are quite experienced in teaching at the university level.

Response to Question 2:

4 years	6years	9 years	10 years
4	3	2	2

Table 5.2: experience of teachers in teaching oral expression

This question is of two-fold. It first provides us with information about whether the teachers have experience in teaching oral expression and how many years they have been teaching this module in the English Department. The

results in the above table show that nearly all the teachers (eleven teachers) have taught the module of oral expression. Seven teachers have an experience of six to ten years while four of them spent four years in teaching this module. This implies they all have a clear idea of what teaching oral expression entails.

Response to Question 3:

a) Improving learners' pronunciation	4
b) Using grammatically correct sentences	2
c) Helping them hold a conversation systematically and appropriately	1
d) Developing their oral communicative ability	5

Table 5.3: Teachers' objectives in oral expression sessions

The teachers' responses which are based on the teachers' ranking show that five teachers give priority to developing students' communicative ability. This means that their main objectives in teaching this module is to make their students fluent speakers of the language which implies that they focus more on fluency than on accuracy. The development of the students' pronunciation skills for four teachers is their priority in oral expression sessions. While two teachers indicate that their main objective to teach oral expression is to enable students to produce grammatically accurate sentences in their speech, only one teacher states that his objective to teach oral expression is to enhance their students' ability to carry out a conversation systematically and appropriately.

Response to question 4:

a) Make a lot of vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar mistakes	7
b) Unable to speak spontaneously and naturally in English	6
c) Lack confidence when speaking in the classroom	5
d) Negatively transfer features of the first language into English	5

Table 5.4: Students' speaking weaknesses

This question was asked for the purpose of eliciting information about the difficulties the learners generally encounter in speaking classes. The table above reveals that seven of the respondents indicate that mastering the linguistic aspects of the target language such as vocabulary, structure and pronunciation are the major difficulties facing their students. Six teachers state that most of their students cannot hold a simple conversation adequately; they usually resort to providing short responses to their interlocutors' questions. Five teachers state that many of their students are unable to speak English confidently in different situations. The remaining five teachers indicate that the main difficulties of their students lie in the negative transfer of L1 features. In other words they translate some language features of their L1 when expressing themselves in the target language.

Response to question 5:

a) Free discussions	7
b) Communicative tasks (games, information-gap filling, etc.)	3
c) Oral presentations	9
d) Role-plays and simulations	3

Table 5.5: teachers' activities to teach speaking

This question aims mainly to identify the teachers' activities in speaking classes. The table above shows that the majority of the teachers (nine out of twelve teachers) prefer to assign their students oral presentations; a practice that is considered by many teachers to be of crucial importance in enhancing students' oral proficiency. A considerable number of teachers (seven teachers) state that they focus on debates and discussions to make them use the language.

Like presentations, engaging students in discussions is a practice that is common to many teachers of oral expression who think it plays a significant role in developing students' oral proficiency. Three teachers state that they use role-plays and simulations and three other teachers state they use communicative tasks.

Response to question 6:

a) by promoting students' confidence in speaking to an audience	4
b) by maximizing student - student interaction	5
c) by exposing them to dialogues in movies, and TV show talks	3

Table 5.6: Teachers' views about the improvement of students' speaking competence

The results in the table above show that four teachers indicate that they improve their students' speaking competence by promoting their confidence in speaking to an audience. This may explain why many teachers opt for oral presentations and discussions in the classroom to teach speaking. Five teachers reveal they develop their students' competence by maximizing student-student interaction. Three teachers believe providing students with the opportunity to be exposed to dialogues in movies, TV show talks can enhance their speaking performance.

Response to question 7:

a) The list of topics is previously prepared by the teacher	6
b) The topics are chosen through negotiation	2
c) Students choose any topic they want	4

Table 5.7: Choice of topics of discussion

To start with, the way the question is phrased has a purpose. The aim is to see whether or not teachers interact with their students when selecting topics for oral presentations and discussions. Half of the teachers state that they themselves choose the topics of discussion in their language classrooms. This means that the list of topics is prepared by the teachers at the outset of the academic year. Two of the teachers say that of the choice of topics is subject to negotiation. These teachers seem to encourage their students to nominate the topics through discussions i.e., providing the students with the opportunity to show their preferences, needs and opinions about the topics and the reasons behind their choice, while four of the teachers say they allow their students to choose any topic they want.

Response to Question 8 :

a) Correct students if they've made a grammatical mistake or error	3
b) Encourage students to comment on the contribution of their peers	4
c) Intervene when the students discuss, argue with one other	3
d) Interrupt students if their responses deviate from the question or topic	2

Table 5.8: Teachers' roles in classroom discussion

The aim of asking such a question is to understand how teachers deal with discussions in the classroom. Phrased differently, the aim is to see how teachers organize these discussions and whether they control, interrupt students in discussion or promote interaction. The results obtained from the table above show that four teachers say they encourage students to comment on the contribution of their peers in the classroom while two teachers indicate that they interrupt students when their responses deviate from the question or topic. Three

teachers say they correct their students if they make a grammatical mistake or error. These teachers seem to focus on the grammatical aspects rather than on the interactional aspects. Other three teachers state that they intervene when the students discuss, argue with one other. This intervention is likely to aim at settling things or orienting the discussion.

Response to Question 9 :

a) Oral communication fluency	5
b) The content of the presentation	4
b) Grammar correctness	3

Table 5.9: Teachers' priorities in students' oral presentations

According to the responses obtained, six teachers give priority to oral communication fluency. This seems consistent with the teachers' responses to question three in which five of them state their main objective in teaching oral expression is to enhance their students' oral communicative ability. Four of them give importance to the content of the presentation whereas the remaining three teachers state they give importance to learners' linguistic performance.

Response to Question 10 :

a) Yes	9
b) No	3

Table 10: Teachers 'opinions about oral presentations and discussions

The question starts a new section which deals with the teachers' roles, techniques and input materials in conversation classes. This question aims at eliciting the teachers' views about oral presentations and discussions and whether they develop students' conversational competence. Nine of the teachers admit that these techniques enhance conversational competence. Only three indicate that

oral presentations and discussions have no effect on students' conversational competence.

Response to Question 11 :

This is an open-ended question which asks the teachers about how they think presentations and discussions develop their students' conversational competence. The teacher who stated that the oral presentation and discussions are suitable for enhancing the students'' conversational skills provide the following arguments:

- Enhance learners' confidence when speaking and therefore, enable them to interact with others.
- During a presentation, there are usually some conversational exchanges between the students about the topic of the presentation
- Some students do their oral presentation in an interactive way.

Response to Question 12 :

a) Exposing students to authentic conversational input?	7
b) Raising their awareness to how conversation works?	2
c) Both?	2

Table 5.11: How teachers improve their students' conversational competence

The aim of the question 12 is to examine how teachers deal with conversation in the classroom. In the results above, teachers seem to be divided on the issue of whether conversational skills should be presented to the students implicitly or explicitly. While eight teachers state that conversational competence can be developed only through engaging students in conversation (i.e., indirectly), two teachers believe that students should be directly taught the conversational skills and strategies involved in a conversation. The other two

teachers state that a combination of the two methods is mostly appropriate to develop students' conversational competence.

Response to Question 13 :

a) Authentic natural conversations from audio and video recordings	3
b) Scripted dialogues padded out with activities that appear in textbooks	10
c) Telephone conversations	3
d) No teaching materials at all	5

Table 5.12: Teachers' input materials in a conversation session

In this question, teachers are allowed to provide more than one answer. We got 22 responses. The majority of the teachers (ten teachers) show that they prefer to use scripted dialogues followed by activities that appear in language textbooks. Five teachers state that they use no materials at all in a conversation session. Three teachers prefer to use authentic natural conversations from audio and video recordings. The remaining three teachers state they use telephone conversations to enhance their students' conversational competence.

Response to Question 14:

a) Conversational behaviour (how to take turns, how to interrupt, how to overlap)	3
b) Structure of a conversation (how these turns are built on to each other)	2
c) Topic of the conversation and language proficiency	7

Table 5.13: Teachers' roles in conversation classes

This question is specifically asked to know the teachers roles when students engage in a conversation in the classroom. More than half of the teachers (7 teachers) state they focus on the content of the conversation as well as the students' linguistic proficiency. This means that they give importance to the information provided by the students in the conversation, focusing the linguistic

knowledge (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc.) of the students. In other words, the focus of the teachers is not only on the ideas provided but also on how accurate their oral production is. While only two teachers prefer to focus on the way students do the conversation i.e., the conversational features involved in conversation. Four of them state they focus on how the turns of the conversation are constructed such as students produce coherent sequences.

Response to Question 15 :

a) Local errors (omitted articles or pronouns, incorrect verb…..)	7
b) Global errors (the inadequate use of conversational features, wrong cohesive devices, cultural inappropriateness.)	5

Table 5.14: Teachers' error correction techniques

The results obtained from teachers' responses show that seven teachers focus on local errors. This seems in tune with the teachers' responses that indicate that students' linguistic knowledge is an important aspect that should be developed in speaking classes. Five teachers intervene only when students make global errors.

Response to Question 16 :

a) Face- to-face interaction with the examiner (teacher)	9
b) In small group discussion	3

Table 5.15: Teachers' assessment techniques

The results obtained from the teachers' responses above show that the majority of teachers (nine teachers out of twelve teachers) test their students individually (in other words, they test them one by one through face-to-face interaction). Only three of the teachers indicate that they test their students' speaking and conversational skills in small group discussions.

Response to Question 17 :

a) Grammar and vocabulary (including accuracy and appropriacy)	5
b) Discourse management (including coherence, length of the turn, relevance)	1
c) Pronunciation (including stress, rhythm, intonation…)	4
d) Interactive communication (including initiating, hesitation, turn-taking, ..)	2

Table 5.16: Teachers' criteria in testing students' speaking and conversational skills.

The table above reveals that five teachers state that assessing students' speaking and conversational skills is made on the basis of grammar accuracy and vocabulary richness. Four teachers believe that the test should focus on pronunciation skills. Whereas two teachers think that assessing students' conversation should be based on how they communicatively interact, only one teacher indicates that assessment should be based on the extent to which students can manage discourse, i.e., whether they produce coherent utterances , long turns and relevant sequences.

Response to Question 18 :

The teachers were invited to provide their suggestions to improve learners' ability to hold a conversation in English. Only eight teachers provided their suggestions which centered around the following points:

- Enhance learners' speaking abilities through supportive environment to encourage them engage in conversation inside and outside the classroom and to minimize psychological factors such as anxiety, inhibition, stress, etc. (4 teachers)

- Encourage learners to engage in conversations through role-plays, simulations, games, information-gap activities, etc. (3 teachers)
- Provide interesting topics that encourage interaction among students and provide them with the suitable functions (agreeing/ disagreeing, expressing opinions, etc. (2 teachers)
- Expose learners to authentic conversations between native speakers to draw their attention to how conversation is performed. (2 teachers)
- Provide learners with lists of useful expressions that reflect the sociocultural norms of the target language to use them in their own conversations (2 teachers).

5.2. Discussion of the Teachers' Questionnaire Responses

The following section discusses the teachers' responses in the questionnaire. These responses are divided into five main parts: a) teachers' teaching background, b) teachers' attitudes and practices in teaching speaking, c) teachers' roles, activities and input materials in conversation classes, d) teachers' assessment of learners' conversational competence, and e) teachers' suggestions to improve learner's conversational skills.

5.2.1. Teachers' teaching background (responses 1 and 2)

The data gathered from the teachers' questionnaire helped us to know some assumptions that lie behind the teachers' practices and attitudes in the classroom. The results obtained from Questions 1, and 2 indicate that most of the teachers have the necessary educational background and also a long experience in teaching English in general and oral expression in particular. These results reflect

that the teachers may be well aware of the different needs and interests of the students concerning English language learning. They also reveal that the teachers are in a good position to enhance learners' speaking and conversational skills. In addition, the fact that most of them have a long teaching experience implies that they are aware of the recent developments and trends in the field of teaching speaking.

5.2.2. Teachers' attitudes and practices in teaching speaking (responses from 3 to 9)

In the light of the teachers' responses to question 3 concerning their objectives in teaching oral expression, less than half of the teachers (5 teachers) privilege the development of learners' oral communicative ability. In other words, they believe that the oral expression sessions should be a medium through which their learners can develop their ability to use the language effectively and appropriately while communicating. This seems in tune with Littlewood's (1994:6) view, stating that learners should be helped to "develop skills and strategies for using language to communicate meanings as effectively as possible in concrete situations". However, many teachers (6 teachers) seem to prioritize oral production rather than the sociocultural features of the language. Putting focus on learners' knowledge of grammar and pronunciation rules may not be beneficial to learners who do not need simply to be accurate speakers of the language (i.e., being proficient in pronunciation, or producing grammatically correct sentences). They should also be able to be good communicators inside and outside the classroom. This can be achieved if teachers enhance their ability

to “use the language appropriately in social interactions” (Richards and Renandya, 2002:204), or through conversational interaction (Van lier, 1996).

The teachers’ responses to Question 4 show that teachers do not seem unanimous about their students’ problems in speaking. Nevertheless, their responses reflect the fact that their students appear to have weaknesses in every aspect of the speaking skill. Seven teachers state their students have low language proficiency, especially in the language forms such as vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar. This is consistent with the responses in question 3 provided by the teachers (7 teachers) whose main objective is to prioritize linguistic competence. The teachers who state that their students are unable to hold a spontaneous conversation (6 teachers) and those who indicate that their students usually transfer their first language conversational features into English (5 teachers) seem to consider the importance of interactional competence over linguistic proficiency.

The results obtained from teachers’ responses to Question 5 reveal that the majority of teachers (9 out of 12 teachers) give priority to students’ oral presentations, and seven teachers indicate that they engage their students in discussion to develop their speaking skills. It should be noted that presentations in oral expression sessions are a usual practice in language classrooms. Teachers prefer this activity for many reasons. First, it does not require much preparation. Second, students are quite motivated to make their own presentations about a topic they like. In fact, it is too often assumed that spoken language skills can be enhanced simply by assigning students general topics to discuss or by getting

them talk on certain subjects. However, these presentations may not be considered as spoken interaction because the students seem to present essays characterized mostly by formal written language.

The discussions that follow the presentations cannot be equated with interactive talk since they are only a mere session of question and answer patterns which have nothing to do with holding a conversation. The fact that teachers do not see the importance of communicative tasks (3 teachers) and role-plays(3 teachers) may indicate that teachers focus too much on accuracy and on content rather than on the interactional processes that may be generated by these speaking activities. In fact, the underuse of role plays in the classroom may limit the learners' opportunities to "practice speaking under conditions that as close as possible to those of normal communication" (Scott, 1981:77). It is worth noting here that that teachers need to be aware of the importance of role plays and communicative tasks. These teaching practices (communication tasks, and role-plays), according to many researchers including Richards (1991) and Thornbury and Slade (2006), may help students engage in a powerful social activity and, thus, enable them to enhance their speaking and conversational skills in different communicative situations.

The teachers' responses draw our attention to the fact that teaching speaking skills might present great challenges for teachers. One of these challenges is how to help learners use the target language fluently and appropriately. The teachers' responses to Question 6 show that five out of twelve teachers prefer to maximize student-student interaction. In fact, it is believed that

when teachers create a classroom environment where learners have real-life communication while interacting with one another, they can experience real communicative situations which can provide them with a lot of speaking opportunities to develop their oral fluency. Four teachers report that building up confidence in speaking to an audience is a factor that might strengthen their speaking performance. Research (Allwright, 1984; Nunan, 1991; Ellis, 2010) has shown that encouraging students to speak in a variety of situations can be an effective strategy to minimize anxiety, and thus maximize speaking confidence. Three teachers provide another task to enhance students' speaking competence. This task includes the use of songs , movies and talk shows in the classroom. In fact, it is reported by many researchers that these input materials not only help learners gain an understanding and familiarity with vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and comprehension, but also develop their social and conversational skills.

As concerning the choice of topics, teachers' responses (question 7) show that four teachers allow their students to choose whatever topics they want. However, half of them prefer to choose the topics themselves. In other words, they prepare the topics beforehand and ask their students to choose one from a list. This may reflect the fact that teachers 'impose' on their students topics that may not be relevant to their needs and interests. The fact that only two teachers allow their students to choose the topics through negotiating with one another may reveal that teachers are unaware of the positive effects of negotiating the choice of topics. This practice (negotiating the topics through conversation),

according to many researchers including Richards (1991) and Thornbury and Slade (1996, 2007), may help students engage in a powerful social activity and, thus, provide them with the opportunity to express their opinions and preferences freely and in different communicative situations. In negotiating what topics they will choose, students can practice the conversational strategies and the formulaic languages that are common features of natural conversation.

As concerns the teachers' roles in conversation classes, the findings show that four of them encourage their learners to comment on the contribution of their peers which is a good way to enhance interaction in the classroom. It can also lead to free-flowing chat where learners can feel free to express their opinions about a particular point or show disagreement with their partners. In this case, the teachers' roles will shift from just participating in the discussion to supporting, acknowledging, and extending their contribution. However, many teachers prefer to intervene in classroom discussions when students make grammar mistakes (3teachers) when they argue with one another (3 teachers), and when their responses deviate from the topic (2 teachers). These responses clearly indicate that teachers tend to favour teacher-centered practices: doing most of the talk and having control over learners' interaction. This implies that teachers tend to impart knowledge of the target language grammar to the learners rather than to enhance their conversation competence. This latter can be achieved if learners are provided with the opportunity to be in an environment " where conversation and negotiation are not only encouraged but carefully orchestrated,

supported and monitored by the teacher" (Ernest, 1994) cited in Thornbury and Slade (2006:266).

The teachers' responses to Q9 indicate that seven teachers give importance to either accuracy (3 teachers) or the content of the presentation (4 teachers). Five teachers prioritize oral communication fluency over accuracy in order to encourage, manage and sustain the flow of information. The fact that these focus on language fluency rather than language accuracy indicates that they are aware of the fact that they should provide their students with the opportunity to produce utterances that are comprehensible and free from breakdowns in communication. These teachers' main objective is not to assure grammar correctness but to foster students' ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in the target language.

5.2.3. Teachers' roles, techniques, activities and input materials in conversation classes (questions from 10 to 15)

The fact that nearly all teachers believe that oral presentation and discussions (questions 10 and 11) enhance learners' conversation skills is problematic: these teachers may not know what conversational competence entails. They usually think that learners' participating or speaking on the classroom as well as doing some conversational exchanges with one another can develop their conversational skills. However, engaging in conversation about a topic, according to Sayer (2005:32), does not necessarily generate natural interaction. In other words, the learners' discourse in presentation and discussions may not be interactive in the sense that the participants may not have equal rights to

produce utterances and may also lack “cooperative discourse” which , according to Dornyei and Thurrell (1994:18), is driven by “interactive rules and routines”. In addition, the “conversations’ performed by the students may not be free and spontaneous because they lack the social aspect of language which is expressed through wishes, feelings, attitudes, opinions and judgments. According to Sinclair and Coulthhard, this one-way discourse can be specific and controlled and, thus, not conducive to socially interactive conversation.

When asked about how to improve their students’ speaking and conversational competence (Question 12), nearly all the teachers (11teachers) state they proceed with teaching speaking and conversation skills implicitly (7 teachers) and explicitly (2 teachers). Put differently, seven teachers prefer engaging students in interaction through some kind of fluency work while two other teachers prefer providing students with the opportunity to be acquainted with conversational strategies and routines to practice them. These two ways of developing students’ speaking and conversational skills were first labeled by Richards (1990) as indirect and direct approaches of teaching conversation. The indirect way presupposes that students’ conversational competence can develop “peripherally” in the process of interaction, without the teacher explicitly presenting strategies for managing interaction or communication rules (i.e., only through engaging them in communication). However, there is evidence in the literature that engaging learners in conversation and practising the different conversational features may not be enough to enhance their conversational competence. Teachers should also raise their awareness of the nature, systems

and patterns involved in conversation. In this way, learners can gain knowledge on how conversation functions and how and where native speakers make use of certain conversational features. Only two teachers indicate that they combine both approaches when teaching speaking and conversational skills. These teachers seem to be aware of the current tendency towards teaching speaking and conversation. In fact, many researchers including Richards (1990) and Thornbury and Salde (1996) call for a balance for both approaches to teaching speaking and conversational skills in the classroom.

The findings from the teachers' responses to Question 13 reflect the types of input materials the teachers use in their classrooms. We noticed that four teachers use scripted dialogues followed with activities that appear in language textbooks. In fact, teachers prefer to use dialogues and conversations from textbooks that provide a lot of varied sources of data. Teachers' preference may be due to the fact that textbooks a) save time, b) make teaching easier, better organized and more convenient and c) guide discussion and provide homework. However, the scripted dialogues in many textbooks have received much criticism from researchers because they usually lack the features that occur in natural conversation. Bardovi-Harlig et al (1991:4) consider that textbook dialogues "do not provide natural or pragmatically appropriate conversational models for learners". In addition, scripted dialogues in textbooks may not assist learners to come to terms with the characteristics of conversational language. These dialogues may not enhance their conversational skills as "they rarely reflect the unpredictability and dynamism of conversation, or the features of natural spoken

discourse and dynamism of conversation" O'keefe et al., (2007:21). According to Joyce and Slade (2006:xii) the scripted dialogues are problematic for two reasons:

- They are based on the grammar of written language, without taking into account the features of spoken language
- They become a means of illustrating language functions or grammatical structures

Only two teachers state they use authentic natural conversations. These responses indicate that teachers are aware of the crucial role of authentic conversations on developing learners' oral proficiency. These materials are believed to have positive effects on learners' speaking skills and are more culturally rich and interesting due to the fact that they are prepared for native speakers, reflecting their cultural and societal values (Shrum and Glisan 1999: 58).

Teachers seem to ignore the effect of telephone conversations on developing learners' conversational competence since no teacher uses telephone conversations as input materials. However, relatively recent research emphasizes the fact that materials should include features of telephone conversation such as "summon-answer, identification, greetings, and how-are-you sequences' (Wong, 2002, cited in Thornbury and Slade, 1966:288). In addition, interactive phone conversations which are characterized by the absence of "physical proximity and face-to-face contact" can be useful means to practise conversational structures and options as well as formulaic language expressions (Sacks et al (1974). What is also worth commenting on is that half of the teachers (6 teachers) plan

conversation sessions with no input materials. In other words, these teachers usually allow their students to engage in free discussions without providing them with any materials support in view of getting them fully involved in natural and real communication. These teachers seem to believe that only free discussions can promote learners' conversational skills as revealed in in responses to question 10 (nine out of ten indicate that they use presentation and discussions in their classes). This may appear consistent with some researchers' assumptions that to initiate a conversation in the classroom "normally requires no teaching materials since in real life, conversation typically happens independently of any textual support" (Thornbury and Salde, 2006:288). However, a great number of researchers believe that because the classroom is not often an appropriate place to practice spontaneous interaction, input materials should be used to expose learners to authentic native speech not only to "know what native speakers do in conversation" (Nolasco and Arthur, 1987:51) but also introduce the features involved in a conversation such as turn taking, sequence organization and repairs " for the purposes of conscious study and internalization" (Thornbury and Slade, 2006:288).

The teachers' responses to question 14 reveal that most teachers (7 teachers) concentrate on the topic of the conversation and language conversation which means that they give much importance to the information the students provide rather than to practise the different interactional features involved in conversation. They do not seem to care about how the students collaboratively construct the conversation and how they address the interactional and social

dimension involved in conversation which implies that they are not aware of the fact that a conversation is by no means a string of utterances that are related to each other but is organized in an orderly fashion. This has, according to many researchers, negative consequences on EFL learners one of which is their inability to take part in a conversation in the target language (Faerch and Kasper, 1983). Another consequence is that learners usually tend to transfer their conversational competence in the mother tongue to use the target language, which makes their conversational utterances sound unnatural and inappropriate.

The aim of Question 15 was to investigate teachers' opinions concerning error gravity in a conversation class. We were particularly interested in knowing whether teachers give importance to local errors or global errors when assessing their students' oral productions. Burt and Kiparsky (cited in Celce-Murcia and Hilles, 1988:20) explain the two types of errors or mistakes in the following quotation:

> Global errors are those that violate the overall structure of a sentence, the relations among constituent clauses or, in a simple sentence, the relations among major constituents. Local mistakes cause trouble in a particular constituent or in a clause of a complex sentence

This is consistent with Celce-Murcia's (1991:465) claim that sentence-level errors (or local errors) usually do not compromise the overall intended meaning of the message while discourse-level errors interrupt understanding.

The teachers' responses reveal that most teachers (7 teachers) tend to focus on local errors rather than on global errors. Put differently, these teachers prioritize the intervention in local errors that are made at the sentence level and

give little importance to global errors which are usually described as discourse-level errors. Teachers do not seem aware of the new trends in research about error identification and detection. These new trends show that teachers should focus more on discourse-level errors because "they are more likely to be a source of miscommunication or confusion than sentence-level errors" (Celce-Murcia, 1991:470). In order to help learners comprehend and create real oral discourse and prepare them for the kinds of interactions that will occur outside the classroom or with native speakers, teachers are summoned to help their learners to recognize, localize and describe the discourse-level errors.

5.2.4. Teachers' assessment of learners' conversational competence. (responses 16 and 17)

As concerning the assessment of learners' conversational skills (Question 16), the majority of teachers (9 out of 12) reveal that they test their students through face-to-face interaction. The teachers seem to prefer testing students individually either through question- answer sessions or through asking them to describe a picture or to give a short talk about a given topic. However, oral interviews cannot be adequate since they assess learners' conversation abilities on linguistic structures, i.e., how accurate is their pronunciation and grammar. Teachers seem to ignore the fact that conversational interaction is too difficult to test in a face-to face interaction because it "involves multiple and overlapping skills and knowledge bases" (Thornbury and Slade, 2006:304). In addition, spontaneous speech which is often stigmatized with dysfluencies (hesitations, repetitions, false starts, incompletions, and irregularities) may be impossible to test in an oral

interview (i.e., student with a teacher as examiner). In the words of Thornbury and Slade (ibid):

> If candidates in test of oral interaction are tested in face-to-face interactions with an examiner, the lack of symmetry in the relationship both precludes a two-way exchange of information, and constraints the talk in terms of its tenor and field.

The fact that only two teachers indicate that they test their students' conversational skills in small group discussions may reveal that most of the teachers focus too much on testing learners' knowledge of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar, neglecting to test their learners' ability to carry out a conversation appropriately. According to Ross and Kasper (2013:108), testing conversational competence should include "the speaker's prompt delivery of second pair-parts, use of recipient token and discourse markers, topic management, and production of stories and descriptions". This can be achieved only through engaging students in small group conversation so that teachers can assess their students' ability to take turns appropriately, to use speech to backchannel, to ask clarification questions, to use coherent pieces of language, to repair communication breakdowns…etc.

Moreover, it appears that the focus of the teachers is on learners' linguistic competence (Question 17). Five of them indicate that they focus on grammar and vocabulary while four of them state they focus on pronunciation as the main criteria for testing classroom conversation. The other criteria seem unimportant for teachers: 1 response for discourse management (the examiner should look for evidence of the students' ability to express ideas and opinions in coherent and cohesive speech) and 2 responses for interactive communication (the examiner

should test the students' ability to interact with the interlocutor and the other students by initiating and responding). According to Thornbury and Slade (2006:305), these two criteria (discourse management and interactive communication) are “arguably most relevant to the ability to engage in natural conversation” because through the first one, learners can develop effective discourse while the second one enables them to “converse comfortably and appropriately, unhampered by any linguistic limitations” (ibid: 306).

5.2.5. Teachers’ suggestions to improve learner’s conversational skills (responses to question 18)

Finally, teachers’ responses to question 18 reveal that they hold different views on how to improve leaners’ abilities to hold a conversation in English. In fact, their suggestions seem to advocate teaching conversational features implicitly through providing leaners with the opportunities to practice conversation in supportive environment and engaging them in activities such as discussions, role-plays, simulations, information-gap activities to enhance their conversational abilities. These views seem to be consistent with the indirect approach of teaching conversation that emphasizes that conversation competence can be enhanced by exposing learners to authentic conversation and engaging them in conversational practice i.e. simply through “doing conversation” (Thornbury and Slade, 2006:275). These teachers seem to be unaware that exposing learners to authentic input and practicing conversation may not be enough as for them t hold a conversation effectively and appropriately.

5.3. Analysis of classroom observation data and discussions of the results

This section describes the design of the classroom observation and the analysis of the results obtained. The researcher directly examined and observed the target situation rather that asking teachers about their attitudes and the activities they usually use in their classrooms. In this way, he gathered data on the physical environment, the people or individuals being observed, the classroom talk as well as the interactional setting and the activities used.

As mentioned before, the main aim of classroom observation sessions was to crosscheck the teachers' responses in the questionnaire and also to explore the teachers' procedures, attitudes and behavior in oral expression sessions and investigate whether the teachers' ways of teaching oral expression promote learners' conversational skills.

The researcher observed each class in one session because of time constraints. He used a pre-established checklist in order to provide a careful description of the way teachers develop the students' speaking and conversational features. The observation grid consisted of eighteen points divided into four sections. The first section is meant to determine whether the techniques and activities used would provide opportunities for students to develop their speaking and conversational abilities. The second section was related to spoken interaction in the classroom. The third section was designed to observe what input materials were used and whether they were appropriate to develop learners' conversational competence. The last section dealt with

classroom talk and what impact it had on developing learners' conversational abilities.

The tasks done in teachers 1 and 2 included an oral presentation followed by a session of discussion about the topics chosen while the tasks done by teacher 3 consisted of different tasks, as shown below:

Teachers	Tasks	Time
1	Oral presentation+ discussion	1.30 h
2	Oral presentation+ discussion	1.30 h
3	Oral activities based on scripted dialogues	1.30 h

At the beginning of the observation session, the students in classrooms 1 and 2 were required to do oral presentations on topics selected by the teachers at the beginning of the semester. The topics were about 'the dangers of smoking' (classroom 1) and 'the importance of co-education' (classroom 2). It is worth noting that the practice of students' delivering oral presentations in oral expression sessions is common to all the teachers of oral expression in the University of Djelfa and also in many universities across Algeria. In fact, teachers usually resort to oral presentation as an efficient technique to enhance learners' oral proficiency. This seems consistent with Meloni and Thompson's (1980:503) claim that oral presentations are beneficial to ESL/EFL in their entire learning subject and later in their work and that they develop their abilities to communicate with others. However, many researchers (Rivers, 1987; Goh and Burns, 2012) claim that even though oral presentations may help learners gain confidence in speaking, they may not help them develop their speaking skills.

The fact that two of the three observed teachers use presentations in the classroom seems consistent with the teachers' responses to questions 5 and 10 in the teachers' questionnaire where the majority of them stated that they enhance their students' communication ability through assigning them oral presentations. However, this way of getting students talk for a definite period of time and allowing them to read from the paper seemed to have no impact on the development of students speaking and conversational skills as it allowed little opportunity to do some interactional exchanges. Indeed, the presentations were performed under full control of the teachers, the result of which was that students were reduced to passive listeners where they "find no room to speak as themselves, to use the language in communication encounters, to create texts, to stimulate responses from fellow learners" (Thornbury, 1996:23).

From time to time, the teachers intervened in the course of the presentations to ask about a particular point or to correct some grammar and pronunciation mistakes. This means that the teachers gave much importance to grammar accuracy and to the content of the presentation rather than to the students' language proficiency, as revealed in their responses to question 9 where they indicated that they give priority to grammar correctness(3 responses) and the content of the presentation (4 responses). While doing their presentations, the students used some ready-made expressions for the purpose of organizing their talk. For example, at the beginning of the presentation, they used expressions like: "Today, we are going to talk about", "this presentation is on how to", "what we propose today is", "our presentation is made up of", etc. Very little

interaction was made between the students; some exchanges were made only to highlight some points or ask about the meaning of certain words such as “I am sorry, what do you mean by…” In addition, the discussions that followed the presentations bore little resemblance to genuine interaction since they can be considered as mere question-answer exchanges between students where accuracy prevailed over fluency. The students in both classrooms seemed confined to make grammatically correct sentences rather than to engage in real conversation, a practice which gave the students a false picture of conversational discourse in the target language. The way the discussions were done did not help create spontaneous talk between the students nor did it help them practice the different conversational features that are involved in natural conversation. Their conversational interactions with the teacher and with their peers in the classroom were characterized by short turns, lack of communications strategies, and very few discourse markers. According to Ernest (1994) cited in Sze (1996:234), to develop their conversational ability, learners need “abundant practice in taking turns, interruptions and listening actively”. This means that teachers should not only get them engage in interaction but also provide them with the opportunities to know how to initiate and close a conversation, how to take and relinquish turns, how to produce coherent sequences of conversations, etc.

The fact that the teachers encouraged students to engage in discussions may be based on the teachers’ assumption that through the participation in interactive situations without raising their consciousness to the conversational features involved in conversation would automatically enhance their

conversational competence. This seemed consistent with the teachers' responses in the questionnaire (question 12) where half of the teachers stated that their students' conversational competence can be developed not through raising their attention to the different conversational features but through providing them with opportunities to interact and exposing them to enough comprehensible input. Put differently, the observed teachers seemed to adopt an indirect approach to teaching conversation which often occurs when "conversational competence is seen as the product of engaging learners in conversational interaction" (Richards, 1990:76)

However, the teaching practices in the third classroom were quite different from the ones in the other classrooms. The teacher started the session by providing the students with handouts which consisted of 2 dialogues taken from a course book (Interchange2) followed by multiple-choice questions that assess the students' comprehension of the conversation. These questions were also intended to draw the students' attention to new forms (vocabulary, grammar, and interaction patterns) in the language. In addition, the teacher seemed to concentrate on the transactional rather than the interpersonal purpose of language since the topics of the conversations were about giving directions to someone and buying a train ticket.

After examination of the materials used in this classroom, we noticed that the teachers used scripted dialogues that were selected from other textbooks (interchange). These results actually justify the teachers'

answers to Question 13 which clearly demonstrated the tendency of teachers to favor the use of scripted dialogues that appear in textbooks over authentic natural conversations (4 against 2 responses). The excessive reliance on these dialogues were criticized for many reasons, First, the dialogues are often decontextualized and lack feature of naturally occurring spoken discourse. (Bernsten, 2002: iii) argues that even though scripted dialogues provide models for conversations and introduce new functions and structures, they "lack authenticity because they are often based on native speakers' intuitions and rules of written language, rather than on research about spoken language use" Second, they provide little information about the dynamic, interactive nature of conversation. According to O'Keefe et al. (2007:21), if learners encounter only scripted spoken language, they will have little opportunity to extend their linguistic repertoire in ways that prepare them to be conversationally competent. Put differently, they do not provide sufficient information about how openings and closings are used and how the different sequence actions are organized in the conversation. Third, the focus of the dialogues is not on how conversation partners, as equal participants of talk, interact with one another for socializing purposes, but rather on how speakers express a specific language function by using certain language forms.

Later, the teacher required the students to practice the conversations first by acting them out and later by working in groups and

performing role plays about the same topic or slightly modifying some of the elements in the conversation. These activities seemed be useful for the learners as they provided them with the opportunity to engage in real interactions in order to promote their communicative skills and train them to speak in the classroom. However, in these speaking activities, the teacher's focus was just on checking learning of facts rather than on meaning negotiation and achieving conversational competence. For example, even though he required his students to work in groups, this task did not include real interaction, as the students did not negotiate meaning, build on one another's ideas and practise the conversational features involved in conversation. Put another way, the group work tasks were not real conversations because students merely exchanged questions and answers, with one student dominating the talk. In fact, research has shown that if activities based on group work and role-plays are done appropriately, they can enhance learners' speaking and conversational skills. Chaudron (2003: 781) notes for instance that role plays can provide learners with much more opportunities to enhance their conversational competence. According to Richards (1984: 83), communicative activities that include group work and role plays can enhance learners' conversational competence because:

- they provide opportunities to practise strategies for opening, developing, and terminating conversational encounters;
- they require learners to develop meaning collaboratively;
- they necessitate the use of turn taking rules;

- they practise use of conversational routines and expressions;
- they require negotiated completion of tasks.

The next part of the session was devoted to classroom discussion about the following topic: “Means of transport”. Here again the focus was on the content of the conversation rather than on how the conversation works. Nothing was said about the context of the conversation nor about the degree of formality and the relationships between the participants in the conversation.

The three teachers seemed to overlook the practice of conversational skills (how turns are done and maintained, how sequences of the conversation are organized, how breakdowns in communication are repaired, etc.), focusing only on points such as:

- How effectively can the learner understand and convey a message?
- How accurate is the language they use?
- How appropriate is the language they use?
- What are their areas of deficiency (in grammar, vocabulary, spelling pronunciation).

The discourse in the three classrooms cannot be interpreted as fully resembling conversation even though it contains many features of ordinary conversation such as false starts, hesitations, errors, silence, backchannelling, etc., A possible reason is that teachers devoted a large amount of the talk to impart knowledge to students rather than to develop their communication competence in general and their discourse

competence in particular. The dominance of teacher talk in language classrooms was the source of criticism for restricting learners' opportunities of language oral language production and classroom participation as it “reduces the opportunities for students to impose their own prior achievement, understanding, sequencing and questions” Hattie (2012: 73). According to Chaudron (1988:52), when teachers devote a large amount of talk to explanations and management, “learners will lose their opportunity to produce creative language”. These research findings seem to concur with what we found in the three observed classes. Indeed, the three teachers were found to have a full control of the classroom talk by providing a great deal of explanations, corrections and directives. The students’ responses, on the other hand, were brief, reactionary, and less conversational. The exchanges between the three teachers and their students and between the students themselves seemed to be artificial and unnatural due to the overuse of certain devices such as “OK”, “Have you understood?”, “Who can answer this?” and to the absence of the features involved in conversation such as adequate turn-taking. Thus may also be due to the fact that the teachers-students interactions were teacher-led and dominated and largely consisting of IRF interactional sequences such as the following exchange between teacher 3 and one of his students:

T: What do you mean by an overcrowded street?

S: It is when there are a lot of people in the street.

T: very good

According to Thornbury and Slade (2006:241), exposing learners to this type of talk may not "prepare learners for the kinds of interactions that will occur outside the classrooms". Nunan (1991:144) posits that teacher/ learners interactions usually initiated by display questions (like the example above) do not match the way native speakers initiate and maintain a conversation appropriately.

What is worth commenting is that the teachers in the three classrooms seemed to favour display questions in their interactional exchanges with the students. Cullen (1998) cited in Thornbury and Slade (2006:242) argues that these types of questions if used excessively have no communicative value and do not help students produce elaborated and long responses. It is for this reason that researchers advocate the use of referential questions to enhance learners' speaking and conversational skills. Brock (1986) argues that this type of questions "increases the amount of speaking learners do", while Nunan (1991:143) posts that referential questions increase the features of natural conversation and help learners produce longer and more complex turn.

In addition, the talk produced in the three classrooms was characterized by novel utterances and simple grammatical structures. Moreover, it was void of formulaic language which is an important feature of spoken language in general and conversation in particular (Thornbury and Slade, (2006:120). In fact, research has shown that the use of formulaic sequences in conversation can help learners achieve effective oral communication. According to Wood (2010:125),

formulaic sequences can increase the rate of speech, reduce false starts and reformulations and limit self-repetitions and frequent pauses for language learners. He (ibid) further explains that without these phrasal sequences at the ready of the language user, communication can become slow, disconnected and awkward.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have dealt with the analysis of the data obtained from the teachers' questions and classroom observation. The analysis of the data was followed by the discussions of the different findings. We have seen in this chapter that the teachers seem to be grounded with an indirect approach of teaching conversation which advocates exposing learners to conversational input followed by practice of the different conversational features without explicitly raising their awareness to the rules that govern these features. This chapter has also shown that teachers tend to dominate the talk in the classroom and control learners' interaction through traditional interactional sequences and through using more display questions than referential ones. They also tend to rely on activities and techniques that may not prepare learners to carry out natural and appropriate conversations in and outside the classroom. As a consequence of these teaching practices, learners' were not provided with the opportunities to develop their conversational competence.

Chapter Six: Data Analysis and Interpretation of the Experimental Tests and Pedagogical Implications

Chapter Six: Data Analysis and Interpretation of the Experimental Tests and Pedagogical Implications

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the results obtained from the teachers questionnaire and classroom observation were analyzed and discussed. It was concluded that teachers prioritize oral presentations and discussions to develop learners' conversational skills which implies that they adopt an indirect approach to teaching conversation which advocates exposing learners' to conversational input and getting them practise the different conversational features without explicitly raising their awareness to the rules that govern these features. The present chapter attempts to inform the main research question. It is concerned with the analysis and the interpretation of the data gathered from the experimental tests which consist of role-plays. Thus, it investigates the extent to which an explicit teaching of the conversational features in news delivery sequences can develop learners' spoken discourse competence. It also deals with the pedagogical implications of EFL conversation instruction and provides some recommendations for teachers to help them contribute to the development of their students' conversational competence.

6.1. Analysis of the experimental tests' results

In this section, the data analysis of both the pre-test results and the post-test-results will be dealt with in detail.

6.1.1. Analysis of the pre-test role-plays

Before and after the experiment got under way, the students' conversation abilities were assessed through a pre- and post-test in which they were asked to

carry out a common language action of news announcement. The tests were always performed in dyads, which were formed at random. Students in each pair received a different role card which contained instructions to conduct a short conversation using the target speech action of news announcement. As mentioned before, 20 students took part in the experiment. The first 10 (from one to 10) formed the control group while the last 10 (from 11 to 20) formed the experimental group. The students were always provided with the opportunity to read the task before the recording. Their performances were audio-taped for subsequent scoring with regard to features such as fluency and coherence in conversation, sociolinguistic appropriateness, grammar and pronunciation. The scores obtained were averaged and statistically processed for the mean and standard deviation, using the analytic parameters of spoken language scoring indicated by the Council of Europe (2001). This was done to determine significant differences, if any, in students' speech performance before and after the pedagogical intervention. However, the main aim of the tests was to proceed with close analysis of the students' audio-recorded conversation using CA principles in order to

a) To ascertain the participants' levels of familiarity with sequence organization prior to the experiment including the use of the different sequences related to news delivery in conversation (sequential organization).
b) To evaluate the learners' ability to use the formulaic sequences related to news announcement sequences in conversations (linguistic organization).

After the pre-test role- plays were completed, we proceeded with the analysis of the results which showed that the majority of the students have a weak level of English as their productions seemed to be stigmatized with

incoherent utterances, pronunciation mistakes, tense mistakes, and inadequate conversational skills. The means and standard deviation based on the scores obtained are statistically presented in the following table:

	Group	Number	Mean	Standard deviation
Pre-test	Control	10	4.58	0.85
	Experimental	10	4.55	0.78

Table 6.1: Statistics based on the scores obtained by students in the pre-test.

The test results above indicated there was no statistically significant difference in the oral performance of the students of both groups in the pre-test as they appeared to have a similar performance. This is evidenced by the fact that when calculated, the mean scores were 4.58 points for the control group and 4.55 points for the experimental group. The standard deviation was 0.85 for the control group and 0.78 for the experimental group. The analysis of the 10 role plays of both groups enabled us to notice the students' weak speaking performance as most of their productions were rife with inaccurate pronunciation and inappropriate utterances. These deficiencies are clearly reflected in the scores given in the table below which provides the mean scores and standard deviation of the different aspects tested : a) fluency and coherence in conversation, b) sociolinguistic appropriateness, c) grammar and d) pronunciation:

Aspects assessed	Group	N	Mean	S. D
Fluency/coherence in conversation	Control	10	1,7	0,42
	Experimental	10	1.73	0.35
Sociolinguistic appropriateness	Control	10	0,6	0,39
	Experimental	10	0.5	0.29
Grammar	Control	10	1,2	0,26

	Experimental	10	1.2	0.26
Pronunciation	Control	10	1,08	0,17
	Experimental	10	1.13	0.21

Table 6.2: The mean scores and standard deviation obtained in the pre-test

The low scores obtained by the students in both groups may be explained by the fact that the students produced the dialogues with a writing mode rather than with a speaking mode. In other words, the students seemed to make efforts to produce complete grammatical utterances rather than to produce conversationally appropriate ones. Their oral productions seemed to be inappropriate due to linguistic limitations, unawareness of the features of the spoken discourse and the lack of socio-cultural knowledge of the target language. The way they started the conversation, their use of sequences that were more like questions and answers rather than real interactions, and the negative transfer of the norms of their L1 to the target language are the main deficiencies which characterize most of the students' performances. Some of these deficiencies are clearly apparent in the following samples from the students' conversations:

1. "Hi, what is happen tell me quickly" (pair 2)
2. "Thank God they are alive that's all that matters" (pair 3)
3. "What happened? You are not as usually" (pair 5)
4. "You heard what happened yesterday?" (pair 6)
5. " No, Man. I am talking for real" (pair 8)

The students' weak performance may be due to the fact that they were not provided with the opportunity to engage in real conversational discourse which involves the effective management of the conversational features, knowledge of sociocultural norms of the target language and awareness of pragmatic conventions. It also involves the use of formulaic expressions that enables them

to avoid wordy utterances and negative transfer. According to Thornbury and Slade (2006:307), engaging learners in conversational discourse in the classroom with focus on the rules and strategies that govern the conversational skills can be a good teaching medium because it enables learners increase their learning opportunities and , hence, develop their conversational abilities. Besides making mistakes such as grammatical incorrectness, phonetic inaccuracy, and sometimes meaning ambiguity, the students' conversations were also characterized by the use of novel expressions that made the participants' conversation seem flat and unresponsive. Indeed, the students' use of formulaicity in their conversation was low as compared to their use of novel utterances in the different turns related to news announcement (4 formulaic sequences in the control group against 5 in the experimental group). The fact that the students used novel expressions rather than formulaic utterances in the different turns of the conversation may be due to the fact that they were not provided with the opportunity to notice how native speakers usually use them their daily talk when announcing news. They may not also be fully aware of what role these expressions play in the different sequences. In addition, the students' lack or underuse of formulaic sequences may be due to the students' unawareness of the cultural differences that exist between their own language and the target language. This seems consistent with Wray's (2002) claim that formulaic sequences are typically culture-loaded and their acquisition is subject to L1 influence. This is evidenced by the students' use of utterances which are negatively transferred from their L1 (i.e., Arabic). Examples of these utterances are: " You are not as usual", "I have good and bad news to say to you", "I have a surprise for you", "I tell you something" , "I'm talking for real" .

As concerning the way the students' turns were sequentially organized, the 10 role-plays (both groups), seemed to be unsatisfactory because elements

related to sequence organization in news delivery such as summons-answer, pre-announcement, announcement and assessment found in naturally occurring exchanges were very few or absent, incomplete, or problematic in the dialogues performed by the students. The analysis of the different role-plays revealed that nearly all the students seemed to be unaware of how news announcement sequences are produced as they used utterances that were based on their own intuitions or directly influenced by the way they usually produce them in their native language. The fact that none of the 10 role plays contained all of the sequences types of news delivery in mundane conversation made their conversations sound awkward and unnatural due to the fact that the sequences used by the students were not related to one another and do not form what Sacks and Schegloff (1974:72) call 'sequential implicativeness' which means that "the utterances implicate a range of possible next actions". In addition, the students of both groups were seemed unable to engage in natural conversation starting from a minimal pair part, consisting of a) the announcement of the news and b) its assessment which can be further expanded into multiple turns to contain specifiable components (Terasaki, 2004). Furthermore, the students of both groups seem to be unfamiliarized with the fact that when conveying news to someone, speakers can use turn series that follow a particular form that displays sequential features (the conversation being organized in specific parts: pre-sequences, insert sequences, and post sequences) as well as syntactic features (the use of formulaic expressions in the different sequences). The following graph shows the students' performance with regard to their use of news announcement sequences:

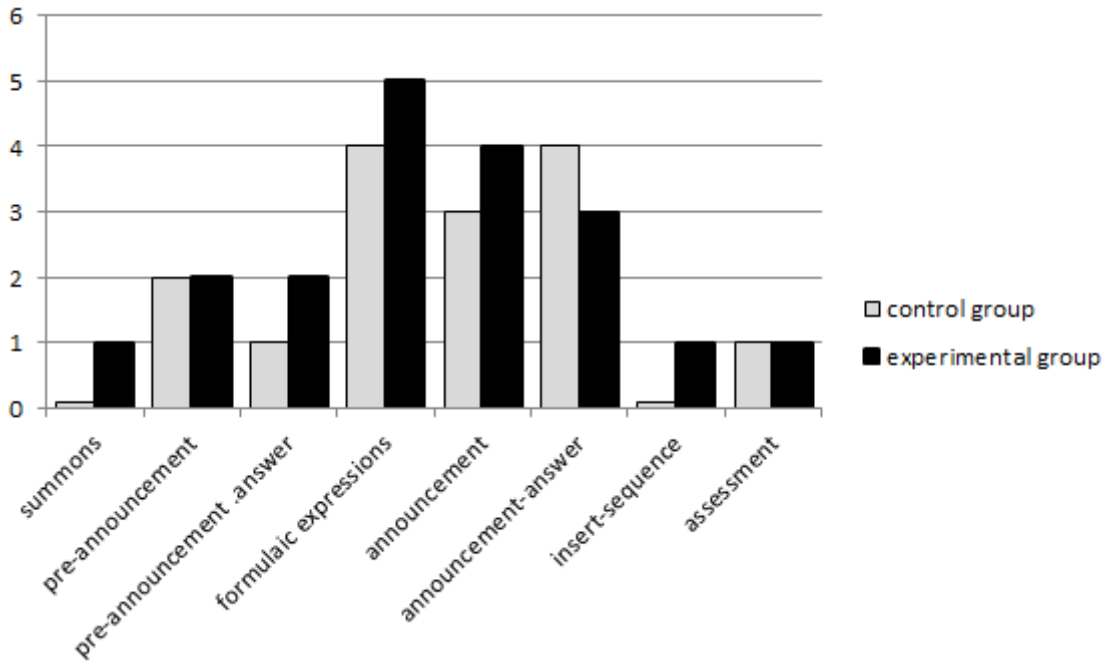

Figure 6.1: Frequency of news announcement sequences in the students' conversations

The results above indicate that only few sequential and syntactic features of the news announcement sequences in conversation were used by the students in both groups. For example, of all the 10 role-plays, the summons-answer sequence was used only once by students in the experimental group (students 19 and 20: Hi, Karim/ yeah?). In addition, 4 pre-announcement sequences were used by the participants (2 for the control group and 2 for the experimental group). However, these pre-sequences were not appropriately used by the students of both groups. For example, two role-plays contained the utterance "I have good and bad news to say to you" (students 5, 6, 13 and 14) in which the students announced that they had good and bad news at the same time. Another role-play contained the utterance "I am so happy" (students 7 and 8) to announce some good news. Such productions revealed that many of the students were not familiar with how to announce news to others. This may be because they lacked explicit teaching about the form and function of pre-sequences and also because

they were exposed to authentic and inauthentic dialogues that were based on native speakers' intuitions about the language which, according to Wong (2002) are insufficient for the development of natural language. As a consequence, most of the pre-sequences used by the students were interactionally inadequate in the sense that they do not form a resource for understanding what is going on in the talk (Wong, 2002:38). In other words, they do not project a range of next or second actions.

However, conversation analytic research does not indicate that the pre-sequences occur in every announcement in a given talk (Bernesten, 2002). Therefore, the focus here should not be merely counting the number of pre-announcement sequences in the role-plays performed by the participants but on the context in which they occur. The fact that these students did not use the pre-sequences show that they are unaware these pre-sequences are used in natural conversation for particular purposes. For example, a summons-answer sequence is usually used in news delivery sequences to enable the speaker to gain the attention of the recipient. According to Liddicoat (2007:126), this pre-sequence is a necessary interactional component because "interaction can only occur if the participants in the interaction are attending to each other and are available as speakers and recipients". Moreover, students seemed also not aware of the fact that announcements are frequently initiated with pre-announcement that "typically check on a condition for the successful accomplishment of the base FPP (i.e., the announcement of the news)" Sidnell (2010:220) and also project "a particular next activity as relevant for talk and makes relevant a particular type of SPP response" (Liddicoat, 2007:128).

In addition, the majority of them were not able to produce the pre-sequences in adequate formats which are mostly formulaic and which consist of

the use of a main verb (such as guess, tell, get, hear, etc.)+ WH-word +/- information. Besides, most of the sequences produced by the students were not "in a relationship of conditional relevance to one another" (Terasaki, 2004:172). In other words, the two parts of adjacency pairs do not fit together and, thus, are not conditionally relevant since the FPP does not clearly set up the relevance of the SPP. As in the following examples:

Role-play 2 (students 3 and 4)

A: I have good news to you

B: Hi what is happen tell me quickly

Role-play 4 (students 7 and 8)

A: I and my friend are going to watch a movie tonight

B: What is it?

Role-play 5 (students 9 and 10)

A: Hello.

B: What happened? You are not as usually.

Role-play 7 (students 13 and 14)

A: I have good and bad news to tell you.

B: Tell me the bad one.

As concerning the announcement sequences, even though 8 out of the 10 role-plays contained instances where speakers announce some news to the recipients, their dialogues seemed to lack variety because the students seemed to be unable to distinguish between announcing news and producing mere information or facts such as in the utterance "I will travel to Japan with my brother" (students 3 and 4) and "I and my friend are going to watch a movie tonight" (students 7 and 8). These utterances do not fit with the characteristics of the news delivery sequences. Announceable news, according to Terasaki (2004)

are specific events that are done through the auspices of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ news that usually range from births, deaths, and marriages, etc. (Terasaki (2004:174).

It should also be noted that the news announcement responses produced by both groups were inadequate and lacked variety in the sense that most of the students responded only with “Standardized oh+ prefaced assessment” and only one role play contained a “News mark” response (Do you?) used by students 3 and 4 from the control group and one role play by the experimental group (students 19 and 20) contained a “News receipt” (Really?). The results of the analysis of the role-plays indicated that the students were not able to use the announcement responses adequately or used them without being aware of the fact that depending on the types of the news announcement responses, a response can encourage, discourage elaboration or remain ambivalent.

6.1.2. Analysis of the post-test role-plays

The analysis of the students’ oral proficiency scores indicates that most of the students made overall gains in the post-test. The mean score of the control group rose from 4.58 points in the pre-test to 5.48 points in the post-test while that of the experimental group rose from 4.55 points in the pre-test to 6.30 points in the post-test as shown in the following table which presents the mean scores and standard deviation of both groups in the pre-test and post-test.

	Group	Number	Mean	Standard deviation
Pre-test	Control	10	4.58	0.85
	Experimental	10	4.55	0.78
Post-test	Control	10	5.48	0.75
	Experimental	10	6.30	0.59

Table 6.3: Statistics based on the scores obtained by both groups in the pre-test and the post-test

The table above summarizes the scores of the oral performance of both groups in the pre-test and post-test role-plays. The scores indicate that both groups showed a relatively good performance. Nevertheless, it is observed that, in spite of the improvement that both experimental and control group students were able to show after the teaching experiment of both groups, the mean scores in the post-test appear to be in favour of the consciousness-raising activities group because the improvement among this group (i.e., the experimental groups) was relatively better than that of the control group, especially with respect to the first two aspects tested i.e., fluency and coherence in conversation and sociolinguistic appropriateness as shown in table 5.4 which provides the mean scores and standard deviation of the aspects assessed in the post-test:

Test components	Group	N	Mean	S. D
Fluency/coherence in conversation	Control	10	2.08	0,35
	Experimental	10	2.53	0.40
Sociolinguistic appropriateness	Control	10	0,9	0,27
	Experimental	10	1.15	0.13
Grammar	Control	10	1,33	0,17
	Experimental	10	1.40	0.17
Pronunciation	Control	10	1,18	0,17
	Experimental	10	1.23	0.18

Table 6.4 : The mean and standard deviations obtained in the post-test

As shown above, the oral performance of both groups improved in all the aspects assessed (full details about the scores of both groups are found in appendix D). This may be due to the fact that the students from both groups were

exposed to authentic conversational input. However, the improvement of the experimental group seems to indicate that teaching conversation through consciousness-raising as well as engaging students in conversation in the classroom with particular emphasis on the formal aspects of conversational language have helped them to perform dialogues that ware more coherent, natural and sociolinguistically appropriate than those of the control group.

A close scrutiny of the post-test roleplays reveals that the control group appeared to have more difficulties than the experimental group to express themselves orally and to produce conversationally adequate utterances. One reason for this difference may be attributed to the type of activities each group was doing during the teaching experiment. For example, the experimental treatment of the conversational structures was marked by a considerable amount of speaking and required the students to analyze how the participants in the conversation performed the conversational features and then act out the dialogues they watched in the film sequences whereas the control treatment was marked by constant repetition and feedback obtained from the teacher and from the students' peers. The control group was also required to act out the dialogues but no focus was put on how and why the participants produced the different conversational features.

The statistical analysis of the role-plays revealed that students in the experimental group improved their speech performance by producing utterances that are socio-culturally and pragmatically appropriate due to the treatment they received. Submitted to a teaching methodology through consciousness-raising activities in news delivery in conversation, they significantly improved the way they syntactically and sequentially produced the sequences involved in news announcement. This does not mean that none of the control students showed

improvement in terms of conversational skills. The example below shows how a student from the control group (student 7) produced an appropriate utterance in the same way a students from the experimental group (student 11) did:

Students	Group	Pre-test	Post-test
Student 7	Control	Dude? I am so happy	Guess what.
Student 11	Experimental	You heard what happened yesterday	Did you hear the terrible news?

The examples above clearly show that both students improved their speech performance by producing utterances related to news announcement that are linguistically organized and conversationally appropriate. We mean by 'linguistically organized' all the linguistic features which are formulaic in nature and that are not only "linguistically characterizable" but also "occur in the environment of other sequentially-related utterances as part of a discourse unit" (Terasaki, 2004: 177).

As mentioned before, very few instances of formulaic utterances were used in the pre-test role plays. However, this weak performance with regard to the use of formulaic sequences was not maintained by both groups in the post-test role-plays. The findings reveal that there is an important variability in the use of formulaic sequences related to news announcement in conversation among both groups. While the students in the control group who were not explicitly taught conversation but received exposure to formulaic sequences through authentic conversation improved only slightly their use of formulaic sequences (producing only 10 formulaic sequences in the post-test against 4 in the pre-test), students belonging to the experimental group significantly improved in their use

of formulaic sequences (producing 24 formulaic sequences in the post-test against only 5 in the pre-test) as shown in the following table:

	Control group			Experimental group	
Pairs	Pre-test	Post-test	Pairs	Pre-test	Post-test
P 1	0	1	P 6	1	5
P 2	2	3	P 7	1	5
P 3	2	1	P 8	1	5
P 4	0	2	P 9	1	6
P 5	0	3	P 10	1	3
Total	4	10	Total	5	24

Table 6.5 : Frequency of formulaic sequences among individuals in both tests

The statistics in the table above show that the students in the experimental groups outperformed those of the control group in the frequency of use of formulaic sequences. Interestingly, the formulaic sequences counts revealed that the experimental students outperformed their control peers mainly through using many of the formulaic sequences encountered in the consciousness-raising activities. This might suggest that the experimental students' awareness of formulaic sequences was raised sufficiently for them to recognize and use these expressions. Even though some of the experimental students used new formulaic expressions that they noticed in the film sequences, this might not indicate that they have built a larger repertoire of formulaic sequences due to the fact that noticing the formulaic sequences in a conversation may not enable learners to acquire them. As put by Boers et al (2006:257), "noticing may be a prerequisite for learning, but it does not necessarily guarantee the acquisition of every single element that gets noticed". Boers et al (ibid) suggest that to help learners acquire formulaic sequences, the noticing activities should be complemented by activities

"with greater mnemonic potential to bring about a big enough change in students' formulaic sequences repertoires to be statistically measurable over such a relatively short time span".

However, the quantitative results also reveal that even though the students of both groups used more formulaic language in the post-test role-plays, they did not use them to the same degree. The analysis of the role-plays of both groups showed that while the control group ameliorated their frequency of use only slightly, four pairs (eight students from pairs 6, 7, 8, and 9) of the experimental group increased significantly their usage of formulaic sequences from pre-test to post-test, with the remaining pair (two students from pair 10) increased their use of formulaic sequences from 2 in the pre-test to 5 in the post-test. We may conclude that an instructional method that raises language students' awareness of L2 formulaic sequences used to announce news can increase their conversational competence. This is in harmony with what is proposed in the literature that raising learners' awareness as well as repeated exposure to authentic materials (from authentic scripted dialogues and video- sequences in films and sit-coms) is of great importance for the acquisition of formulaic language (e.g., Ellis, 2002; Wood, 2002; Wray, 2000).

As concerning the way the participants organized their conversation sequentially, the results show that there is a neat amelioration of the experimental group over the control group. The performance of the control group, who were exposed to authentic conversation but not explicitly taught how the conversation works, improved slightly but not as much as the experimental group. The frequency of the sequences used by both groups is shown in the following graph:

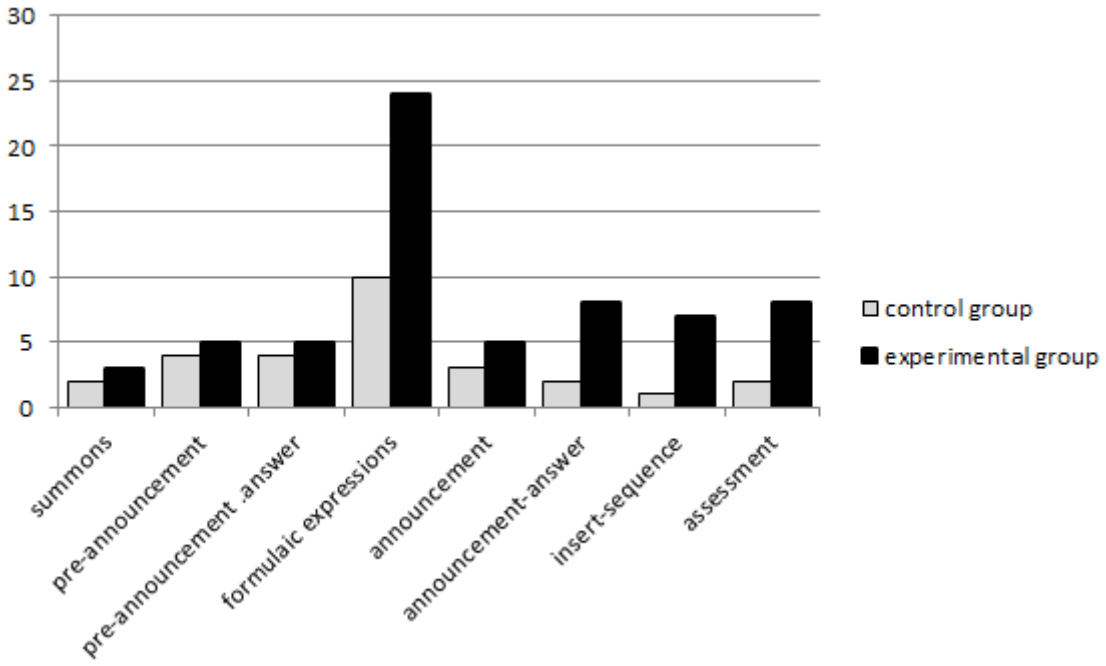

Figure 6.2: The participants' performance concerning the sequential organization in the post-test.

The graph above indicates that the experiment group used more news announcement sequences than the control groups in their conversation. However, there were significant differences between the two groups with regard to the degree of appropriacy in the use of the different news delivery sequences.

Indeed, the close analysis of the role-plays revealed that the experimental group who received explicit CA-informed explanations on the sequential organization of news announcement sequences through consciousness activities and were allowed to repeatedly see in the video sequences how the speech actions of news announcement were sequentially organized, outperformed the control group in initiating the conversation more naturally, responding to each other's turns more relevantly, and expanding upon the turns meaningfully. In other words, the pair in each conversation were able to converse more appropriately with one another and became not only more aware of the overall

structure of conversation but also able to perform the target actions more effectively and appropriately using the following pattern: pre-announcement sequence/ announcement sequence/ insert-sequences(or elaboration)/ post sequences or assessment (Maynard, 1997; Terasaki, 2004). However, even if the control group used more sequences that they did in the pre-test, they still seemed to be unaware that sequences of actions such as news delivery sequences in a conversation do not necessarily follow one another (i.e., question then an answer then question then answer and so forth) but are sometimes organized into groups that 'hang together' or cohere"(Schegloff, 2007b:1),

All of the 10 pairs of student (i.e., both groups) showed noticeable improvement particularly in their turn construction and conversation expansion. However, it is clearly noticed that CA-informed consciousness-raising activities have improved the conversation performance of the students belonging to the experimental group. These findings were further attested through the close analysis of two students' post-test conversations in both groups. The first is performed by students three and four from pair two in the control group where A is the Deliverer and B is the Receiver:

1. A: Hey. Our friend Ahmed had a car accident.
2. B: a car accident?
3. A: He was on his way home when his car crashed in a lorry.
4. B: Has he gone out of the hospital?
5. A: I don't know
6. B: Let's ask and visit him
7. A: Poor Ahmed.

In this role-play conversation, A (1) jumps into the news right after getting B's attention using a summon 'Hey,' without even preparing the latter for his delivery. Forced to respond immediately to the news, B in line 2 provides brief

repetition of the news, showing surprise a. The sequence is then abruptly ended with A's mere explanation of the accident (line 3), suggesting a failure to show concern to the partner's bad news. The way B (line four) responds does not reflect the interactional issues involved in announcement sequences. The conversation produced by the interactants sounds unnatural and does not seem linguistically appropriate and sequentially organized as it lacks a pre-announcement that projects that a base FPP will be produced and that makes relevant the production of a SPP (Bernsten, 2002:15). It also lacks formulaic language and adequate assessment.

However, the following conversation from the experimental group reveals that the two students (students 11 and 12 in pair 6) were able to carry out a more extended conversation using appropriate announcement sequences:

1. A: Listen, Rayane.
2. B: Yeah.
3. A: Did you hear the terrible news?
4. B: No. What?
5. A: Our friend Yasmine had a terrible accident
6. B: Oh dear!
7. A: Her car got stuck against a tree.
8. B: Oh. Was she injured?
9. A: Yes. She is in hospital now. Her doctors say her life is in danger
10. B: Oh, that's horrible!

Employing a summon (line 1), (A) mobilizes his partner's interest and gets him to pay close attention to the news he was going to deliver. (A) also receives evidence that (B) is attending (line 2), through the latter's response by "Yeah!". (A) proceeds with the pre-announcement (line 3) to which (B) offers a go-ahead

response (line 4), which is considered as a preferred response and which "provides for the further advance of the trajectory of the response on its course of action" (Schegloff, 2006:62). When (A) announces the news (line 5), (B) signals her concern about the bad news via the token of news receipt in line 6 (oh dear!). Via high pitch and intonation, both parties are able to convey their concern about the news being delivered. They not only respond to the news but also produce insert-sequences related to the news (lines 7, 8 and 9) making it possible for (B) to continue the conversation via the post-announcement sequence which in an assessment (line 10).

Compared to the role-play performed in the pre-test, the role-plays done by the control group in the post-test indicates that the students slightly improved their speaking performance (fluency, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation) but still failed to produce a conversation that is natural, coherent and sequentially organized. This is due to the fact that the sequences or (turns) they created do not have the characteristic features where "the first turn of the pair initiates some action and makes some next action relevant" (Liddicoat, 2007:107). This is illustrated by the following pairs from the post-test role-plays produced by the control group:

Control group: post-test role-plays:

Students 1 and 2 (pair 1)

1. A: There are many car accident in the roads these day
2. B: I know. It is a catastrophe

Students 5 and 6 (pair 3)

1. A: He was taken to hospital and now he is not in danger
2. Thank God.

Students 7 and 8 (paur 4)

1. A: It is said that the University will be closed next month.
2. Oh really? What you talking about?

The three examples above seem conversationally inappropriate and do not comply with the CA perspective. The first sequence in pair 1 does not appear to be announcement of news but rather a mere statement of fact; the second sequences produced by pair 3 lacks assessment while the third sequences in pair 4 makes use of negative transfer (what are you talking about?" even though it uses a "news receipt" . Even though the two utterances are made by two successive speakers, the second utterance cannot be identified as related to the first one. The inappropriate conversational performances may be due to two main reasons: (1) the students were not taught conversation explicitly so they often resorted to the use of their native cultural norms or simply answer the questions they receive in a direct way, and (2) the students were usually encouraged to produce isolated sentences focusing on a grammatical structure which may make the students' utterances appear flat and unresponsive.

However, the experiment group was able to produce dialogues that sound natural and comply with the rules of conversational analysis. In fact, the students did better on the post-test because they seemed to know "how successive turn or actions are formed up to be 'coherent' (Schegloff, 2006). In addition, many of the students' role-plays seemed to indicate that the students in the experimental group were able to produce news announcement sequences that are systematically structured. They, in fact, seem aware that most conversations "are structured in terms of four-turn-sequences: announcement-announcement response-elaboration-assessment" (Terasaki, 2004:178). Their productions were characterized by sequence expansions (pre-sequences, insert-sequences and post-

sequences) that make their turn conditionally relevant (i.e., one turn predicts the occurrence of the second) and coherent. This is evidenced by the fact that the majority of the students in the experimental group used a pre- announcement sequence which involves the expansion of a sequence prior to the occurrence of the news announcement sequence and which is used to prepare the listener to the announcement of the news and also to "check on a condition for the successful accomplishment of the base first pair part (i.e., the news announcement). This is illustrated by the following examples:

Experimental group: post-test role-plays

Students 13 and 14 (pair 7)

1. A: You will never guess what happened to me yesterday?
2. B: No. What happened?

Students 17 and 18 (pair 9)

1. Guess what?
2. What?

Students 19 and 20 (pair 10)

1. I have some good news to tell you about our colleagues Ahmed and Yasmine.
2. Oh Great. What are they?

While the control group used only 'Go ahead' responses (What?) in their role-plays, the students' in the experimental group used many utterances to vary their responses. In other words, they not only used 'go ahead' responses but also 'news inquiry' and 'blocking' (what are they? I don't want to know it……) responses.

Taken together, the findings above have demonstrated that the oral performance of both groups relatively improved in all the aspects assessed. The experimental students were able to better their scores in these aspects but

significantly outperformed the control group in the first two aspects which are: fluency and coherence in conversation and sociolinguistic appropriateness. The improvement of the experimental group seems to indicate that teaching conversation through consciousness-raising as well as engaging students in conversation in the classroom with particular emphasis on the formal aspects of conversational language have helped them to perform dialogues that ware more coherent, natural and sociolinguistically appropriate than those of the control group.

The findings have also revealed that in the post-test role-plays the experimental group outperformed the control group in performing dialogues that were linguistically and sequentially organized in the post-test role-plays as their productions were natural and coherent and follow to a great extent the rules of Conversation Analysis. In fact, the explicit CA-informed consciousness-raising activities and the regular exposure to authentic and naturally-occurring conversation in sitcoms and film sequences boosted these students' abilities to use more appropriate utterances in conversation, enabling them not only to construct grammatically accurate, conversationally suitable, and sequentially relevant turns but also to organize these turns into appropriate news announcement sequences. Therefore, it can be concluded that consciousness-raising activities have some beneficial effect on enhancing the students' spoken discourse competence.

6.2. Pedagogical implications and suggestions

The major finding of the present study revealed that conversation instruction has a positive impact on developing learners' spoken discourse competence. In fact, raising learners' awareness to the target conversational features seems to have enabled them to be not only aware of how the news

announcement sequences are syntactically and sequentially organized in conversation but also enhanced their ability to use these features appropriately in their own conversation and, therefore, improve their discourse competence.

Deficiencies in learners' conversational competence as discussed before herein suggest that requirements for effective conversational features instruction need to be reinforced in language classroom. In this research study, it has been underlined that there is urgent need to enable university level students to understand the dynamics involved in natural conversation and raise their awareness to how conversation works in order to improve their ability to hold a conversation effectively and appropriately. This assumption has emerged from the fact that substantial research in foreign language learning indicates that success in learning is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the target language (Thornbury and Slade, 2006) and to master all the aspects involved in a conversation. However, even if, nowadays, conversation classes seem to be 'widespread' in language classrooms focusing on the different aspects of conversation (whether it be in listening or speaking activities), they have not succeeded in making learners conversationally competent. One of main reasons of this is that teachers ignore that success or failure in enhancing their learners' conversational competence may be explained by the quality of classroom talk, rather than simply by considering their teaching skills or the ability of their learners.

Thus, a compelling pedagogical implication emerging from the outcomes of the present study is that classroom discourse and teacher talk should create opportunities for genuine interaction in the language classroom. This means that language talk in the classroom should not be centered around a static interactional pattern where the interactions between the teachers and the students

seem to be more " like interrogations rather than conversations" (Sze, 1995: 236) but should be geared towards creating a natural and coherent conversation in the classroom. Classroom talk should not be concentrated on transactional purposes only i.e., focusing only on transmitting subject-matter knowledge to learners which usually result in limiting learners' talk and ways of interacting. In fact, if teachers produce such talk, they may not prepare learners to interact appropriately with native or non-native speakers as they limit their opportunities to initiate a conversation, nominate topics for conversation, produce well-organized conversational sequences and repair their breakdowns in communication. To enhance their conversational competence, they should provide students with more opportunities to interact with one another to make the classroom talk spontaneous, reciprocal and natural. To achieve this, they should encourage them to be more collaborative in the talk where they can introduce topics of their own choice and take turns freely to maintain the flow of conversation.

The study attempts to highlight the fact that the teaching of conversation is a much more basic and comprehensive activity that does not only require making learners repeat or imitate what native speakers say or write. Rather, the indispensable principle of conversation instruction, as shown in this study, is that learners should be not only exposed to a rich repertoire of conversational features and practice them, but also explicitly taught how these conversational features function in native speech. Mere exposure to authentic conversational input may not help these learners acquire the sociolinguistic rules necessary to hold a conversation effectively and appropriately. Even if some learners who are considered as 'high memory learners' (Skehan, 1998) may have the ability to acquire conversational features related to the use of formulaic sequences in

speech actions like requesting, inviting and announcing news easily, they may not be conversationally competent due to the fact that they may not have been provided with the opportunity to know how these conversational features are used in native speech.

This current study tries to raise awareness among teachers that the ultimate goals of second/foreign language acquisition should include not only the learning of linguistic knowledge but also the mastery of the target language conversational features. Teachers should raise learners' awareness to how speech actions are used in native social interaction using insights from conversation analysis. In fact, the comprehension and production of speech actions such as requests, offers, invitations, complaints, news announcements etc. are areas of continual concern for language learners since they are constantly faced with the need to use speech actions appropriately and in the same way native speakers do. To get their learners acquire these speech actions, teachers should equip them with selected instances of casual conversation and provide them with the rules and strategies to understand them. In fact, learners can benefit from regular and constant exposure to natural conversation with opportunities of practice and explicit knowledge of the target language conversational features. The various interactional resources found in casual conversation can help them develop a rich repertoire of phrases and strategy types to accomplish many speech acts and help them approach native-like fluency and effective communication. They can also help them develop their listening skills and enhance their conversations abilities to interact with native speakers in appropriate ways.

Teaching conversation which is based on the findings of conversation analysis research should be wisely introduced in the language classroom to boost

L2 learners' conversational abilities to help them "acquire certain sociocultural rules necessary if conversation is to be sociolinguistically appropriate" (Thornbury and Slade, 2006:232). Therefore, to get prepared for natural, spontaneous communication, students should also be introduced to the skills and strategies involved in conversation. Their attention should be directed to the turn taking system and related features, such as openings and closures, backchannels, hedges, fillers, hesitation devices or pauses in conversation. They should also be acquainted with the other features of conversation and their purposes of use. For example, they should be explicitly taught the rules governing repair strategies and discourse markers. Raising learners' awareness on how these rules and strategies are used in native speakers' conversation will improve their fluency and reach native-like conversational competence.

The findings of the study reveal that there is a relationship between EFL learners' use of formulaic language and their fluency. In fact, raising learners' awareness to formulaic language in conversational discourse seems to have enabled them to improve their flow of language since they were able not only to acquire a rich repertoire of formulaic sequences but also to generate more complex and idiomatic language. Emerging from such outcomes teachers should provide their learners with corpus-based texts (recorded instances of spoken or written language as produced by native speakers) which form a suitable way to raise learners' awareness to the varieties of English and the way native speakers' speech functions in reality. Teachers can also provide their learners with authentic texts from various sources such as newspapers, magazines, movie sequences and audio-recorded sequences and the like. Since formulaic sequences are commonly found in all registers of language: spoken and written, formal and informal, this variety of the input is believed to offer teachers a more balanced

distribution of the registers to be presented to the learners. Moreover, to achieve maximum efficiency, it is important for teachers to use other techniques to integrate formulaic expressions as part of the classroom practices. One way would be to provide learners with a particular situation and with a list of formulaic sequences and their purposes of use and then require them to perform role plays. This is believed to foster learners' automatization of a repertoire of formulaic sequences. Later, learners should be required to discuss the activity to find out which role plays were best performed with regard to the topic and the use of formulaic sequences in each conversation.

In addition, the teachers should direct their students' attention to notice the coherence and cohesion aspects of conversation and how they contribute to the development of their conversational competence. They should also provide their students with the opportunity to notice the non-linguistic features such as the use of eye gaze, gestures, facial expressions, etc. that are used in natural conversation. They should also get the students be aware of how the participants use and interpret the prosodic features involved in conversation such as pause, pitch, timing, loudness, and also the non-linguistic features These features, as claimed by substantial amount of research, can not only help learners understand and use the different features of spoken discourse but also enhance their fluency and conversational competence.

Given this perspective, it seems quite feasible that teachers should maximize opportunities for students to use language interactively in the classroom to develop their spoken discourse competence. To reach this, the teachers' use of communicative activities should not totally rely on second language materials based on contrived and artificial dialogues as these types of materials cannot contribute to the development of learners' ability to engage in

genuine conversation in the target language (Sze, 1996:2). Rather, they should select authentic materials and give much importance to the teaching of aspects of conversation using the framework of conversation analysis. Teachers, in this connection, should see their role change from simply showing and 'explaining' the rules of conversation to their students to constantly collaborating with them to construct well-organized sequences in view of developing their conversational proficiency.

Learners should be encouraged to interact with the native speakers of the target language through the internet-based tools such as social media, forums, blogs, text chats, etc. Social media through instant audio and visual messaging can offer participation opportunities in varied settings and contexts and a shift from conversations between teacher and peers, to conversations between them and many other unfamiliar audiences that use more complicated turn-taking and other verbal and non-verbal features. This interaction should be followed by a session where the learners are required to attend to how native speakers converse and how the conversational features are used. These learning opportunities not only help them notice, analyze and process the linguistic forms, but also permit them to practise the conversational features while participating in meaningful social activities. In addition, when teachers use "conversation groups with L1 native speakers" through the Net (McDonough and Mackey, 2013:289) as a supplement to foreign language conversation instruction, learners can gain valuable speaking and listening practice and feel more comfortable in engaging in a conversation appropriately and effectively. When encouraged to participate in conversation groups with native speakers, learners can successfully learn native-like conversational structure and, thus, become more fluent to communicate in real-world contexts.

The pedagogical implications stated along the present section are such as to provoke within teachers a sense of awareness likely to provide learners with the essence of conversational discourse. Given that, making them aware of how the different conversational aspects are used in a given conversation using the various aspects and techniques proposed above will foster their ability to be near native-like when holding a conversation.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have dealt with the analysis of the data gathered from the experimental tests which consist of role-plays and the interpretation of the results. We have also investigated whether teaching conversational features involved in news announcement sequences through CA-informed consciousness-raising activities has any effect on developing learners' spoken discourse competence. The findings revealed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in the oral proficiency with respect to fluency and coherence in conversation as well as sociolinguistic appropriateness. The experimental group was also able to produce better syntactically and sequentially organized utterances. They seemed to have benefited from the explicit teaching of the conversational features of news announcement through consciousness-raising activities. The chapter has also dealt with the pedagogical implications of EFL conversation instruction and provided recommendations for teachers to help their students enhance their conversational skills and, therefore, develop their spoken discourse competence.

General Conclusion

General conclusion

Developing second language learners' conversational competence is not receiving the adequate attention in language classrooms as conversation is often considered as a less important aspect of language compared to other aspects such as pronunciation, grammar and writing. Even though the communicative approaches have introduced communicative activities such as information-gap filling, communicative games and role-plays that increase the amount of speaking in the classroom and provide the students with the opportunity to have favorable conditions to practice conversation, they have not given learners the opportunities to foster their conversational skills. In this research study, we have attempted to demonstrate that learners can acquire many mechanisms of conversation such as the allocation of turns, sequencing and repair strategies through conversational interaction in the classroom and through exposure to conversational input. We believe that helping learners be aware of the conversational features involved in natural conversation and getting them practise these conversational features would greatly help them understand how these mechanisms are organized and eventually use them in their own conversation. In other words, our students can learn to use conversational features adequately and appropriately by participating in conversations, just as they learn to read by reading or write by writing (Hatch, 1978).

In fact, recent research has shown that developing learners' conversational competence should be an integral part of language and that conversational competence should be dealt with not only over a lengthy process where learners

use the language in interacting with others in order to maintain a sustained and coherent dialogue but also through classroom instruction. This means that to become competent conversationalists, learners not only need to learn through conversation but also need to learn about conversation. Put differently, they need to be explicitly shown how conversation works and what mechanisms native speakers use to make their conversation natural and appropriate. It is within this perspective that we call for the incorporation of conversation instruction in language pedagogy to help learners develop not only their linguistic knowledge but also reach fluency in the target language in terms of the mastery of sociocultural rules and pragmatic conventions of spoken discourse to successfully manage their ability to hold a conversation accurately and appropriately. We strongly believe that learners can hold a conversation in appropriate ways if they acquire the necessary language forms as well as the conversational skills involved in natural conversation. They can attain this if they are made aware of how conversation is structured, how native speakers initiate, maintain and terminate a conversation and how they produce speech actions such as inviting, requesting and announcing news in ordinary conversation. In addition, this study has put the focus on the effectiveness of using casual conversation in the language classroom and advocated that understanding how native speakers engage in conversation can only be possible if there is a CA-informed awareness-raising to help learners achieve a clear understanding of the reality of casual conversation and eventually develop their oral discourse competence of the target language.

This research was designed to investigate teaching conversation. The basic issue was to investigate the effect of teaching conversation explicitly and its effect on developing learners' spoken discourse competence. This latter was

understood in this study as spoken discourse from interactional perspectives and , thus, the focus was put on conversation because spoken discourse is found essentially in dialogue. It is for this reason that we claim that engaging learners in conversation and explicitly teaching them the conversational features would help them develop their discourse competence which involves the speakers' ability to use a variety of discourse features to cooperatively achieve a unified spoken text. One of these discourse features is the learners' ability to manage the various conversational rules such as turn-taking mechanisms, sequence organization and repair strategies.

Thus, the main aim of this research study was to investigate whether teaching conversational features (namely how to understand and use sequences of news announcement) through consciousness-raising activities has any effect on developing learners' oral discourse competence. It was within this perspective that we tried to achieve some objectives such as getting them notice, analyze and practice oral and conversational input to help them produce a coherent and well elaborated conversation.

The need to develop language learners' ability to produce and understand different types of texts (such as conversations) has been the central focus of researchers since the emergence of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). In fact, proponents of CLT maintain the view that the main goal of language teaching is to equip learners with communicative competence so that they become able not only to understand the different utterances they hear but also to perform the social actions to respond to them appropriately. The construct of communicative competence was later refined in various proposed models. Central to these models, labelled in different ways, are the competencies considered necessary to communicate successfully in another language, including

linguistic knowledge; competence in rules of use; mastery of communication strategies; and the ability to combine grammatical forms and meanings to produce unified spoken or written texts. This means that it is not sufficient to engage learners in situations where they practice pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar but it is necessary to make them aware of sociocultural and pragmatic rules of the language.

However, these models were criticized for having dealt with the conversational competence only minimally or as dependent or included in other components. It was also suggested in the literature that although the current language teaching approach is considered to be genuinely communicative, learners are not provided with the opportunities to be aware of how the conversational features are organized in a conversation. Instead they are directed to depend only on dialogues that are either constructed to practise grammatical structures or dialogues based on native speakers' intuitions which cannot be considered as an adequate tool of description. It was within this perspective that many researchers have begun gathering empirical evidence to introduce conversational analysis as a research methodology into second language acquisition.

Following these assumptions we have understood that teaching conversation based on the findings of conversational analysis can enable learners not only to understand the mechanisms of conversation but also help them have adequate skills to understand and use conversational features appropriately. This is evidenced by the fact that holding a conversation successfully cannot be achieved only though the mastery of the different linguistic forms such as grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation but also, and most importantly, through

acquiring a range of sociocultural norms that are reflected in features such as turn-taking, openings, closings and sequence organization.

The insights from conversational analysis were thought to help teachers understand how turns are constructed and how actions are sequenced and organized. It was claimed that using conversational analysis in second language teaching can help enhance the learning of L2 conversational skills. Since the aspects of a conversation such as openings, closings , turn taking, repairs and adjacency pairs in greetings, leave-taking, invitations, requests, and news announcements reflect the sociocultural norms of the target language, recognizing and using these aspects can help learners use them in their L2. It is in this way that teachers can foster learners' discourse competence in speaking because the focus should be not only on teaching them to practise the linguistic features such as phonological patterns, grammatical forms and vocabulary but also helping them analyze the dialogues to be aware of the interactional processes involved in a conversation (turn taking, sequence organization and repair) to hold a conversation appropriately.

The need to undertake the present research emerged from our long experience in teaching in secondary schools and at the university level and also from our previous job as an inspector in National Education. Throughout the years, our regular observations of students as well as the complaints from the teachers and students nourished a growing awareness of the difficulties the students encountered with regard to their conversational competence. It has also stemmed from our realization that the teaching of speaking and conversational skills at the English Department of the University of Djelfa does not help the students to be conversationally competent. To be better informed about the teachers' attitudes, objectives and classroom practices, two research tools were

used (a teacher questionnaire and classroom observation). The data gathered from the questionnaire were crosschecked against those in the classroom observation. These two research tools enabled us to discover that the teachers adopted a rather traditional and teacher-centered way of teaching which emphasized the development of the learners' knowledge of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar and gave little importance to the development of their ability to carry out a conversation appropriately. This was evidenced by the fact that the majority of them gave priority to students' oral presentations and classroom discussions where the teachers dominated the talk and where students were not provided with the opportunity to know how conversation works i.e., how turns are done and maintained, how sequences of the conversation are organized, how breakdowns in communication are repaired, etc. These teaching practices were based on the teachers' assumptions that learners' conversational competence can develop only indirectly in the process of interaction i.e., through engaging the students in interaction and providing them with the opportunity to practice the conversational features. However, it was observed that the conversations performed in the classroom were not real and spontaneous and they lacked the social aspect of the language. The interactions in the classroom were largely dominated by the IRF sequences and were, indeed, a mere session of question and answer patterns which had nothing to do with holding a conversation.

Another area of research, which addressed the main research question, was to investigate the effect of conversation instruction through CA- informed consciousness-raising activities on developing students' spoken discourse competence. To achieve this, twenty second year students from the Department of English at the University of Djelfa participated in the research study where

two groups were formed: a control group and an experimental group. The former group were taught conversation using a teaching procedure that was characterized by exposing learners to conversational input and engaging them in discussions about a related topic. This was followed by practice of the conversational features involved in conversation without providing them with the rules that govern these features. The experimental group received a five-week training in which they were explicitly taught the target conversational features (sequencing organization in news announcement sequences along with formulaic sequences in conversation) through consciousness-raising activities.

The findings of the experimental tests which consisted of role-plays, provided us with interesting insights about the students' language performance. A comparison of the scores obtained by the students in the post-tests and the analysis of the role-plays from a conversation analytic perspective showed that both types of instruction were beneficial for both groups as they relatively ameliorated their speech performance. However, the study demonstrated that learners who were submitted to the experimental treatment made substantial gains with respect to the linguistic and sequential organization of the news announcement sequences. Indeed , the scores obtained in the post-test as well as our analysis of the students' role-plays with regard to the students' ability to produce news announcement sequences along with the use of formulaic sequences indicated a neat progress in the experimental groups' productions.

The experimental students appeared to have improved better than the control students. Not only did they ameliorate their speech performance but also performed dialogues that sounded natural and coherent. This was evidenced by the fact that most of them were able to produce dialogues that were well-structured and that to some extent complied with the findings of conversational

analysis research. Indeed their productions sounded more natural than those of the control group as they were characterized with the use of expanded sequences that were related to each other following the framework: pre-announcement-response, announcement-response, elaboration and assessment. For example, many of them used pre-announcement sequences to make the co-participant predict that in a given conversation a certain type of action (news-announcement) is coming. The experiment groups also used more formulaic expressions in the different sequences than their counterparts. This helped them produce announcement sequences that were syntactically structured and appropriately done.

The findings of the present study have led us to provide some recommendations for teachers of oral expression. These recommendations have centered on the following points: a) awareness of other linguistic and non-linguistic features in sequential organization, b) classroom talk as a motive to foster conversational competence, c) maximizing opportunities for students to use language interactively in the classroom, and finally d) integrating formulaic language in classroom conversational discourse.

Although it has provided a pedagogical methodology for teaching conversation including the benefits the benefits of raising learners' awareness to features related to sequence organization, this small-scale research was assumed to be limited in many ways. Perhaps the most prominent one is that it dealt with only sequence organization of news announcement with focus on formulaic sequences. Learners need more than only these aspects of conversation to develop their spoken discourse competence. Other aspects such as turn-taking strategies, topic shifting, repair strategies and backchannelling are equally important. Also, this study dealt with only a reduced number of formulaic

sequences (i.e., only those related to news announcement sequences), so it should not be generalized due to the considerable number of formulaic expressions that exist in the English language. Another important limitation is that the conclusions were drawn from an experimental research conducted with only two groups of learners (10 learners in each group) in an instructional setting at a single educational institution (University of Djelfa) and therefore cannot be generalized to other social and educational contexts. A further limitation is the time span in which the teaching procedure took place. The teaching and the assessment procedure took place over a month and a half, a short amount of time, considering the fact that language learning especially in the field of teaching conversational features is a complex and difficult process.

In spite of the above limitations, this study can bring some contribution to the field of EFL teaching and learning in the Algerian context as it can be seen as a starting point for future research in the field of EFL conversation teaching. Further research should consider examining the effect of teaching linguistic and sequential organization in a conversation on developing learners' spoken discourse over a long period of time. A longitudinal study that extends over two or three years to find out how university level students' conversational discourse develops can be an interesting investigation. In addition, dealing with a large number of students with different levels will provide more information regarding the benefits of conversation instruction. It would also be of value to investigate the effect of teaching casual conversation on developing learners' listening skills. Indeed, research should also consider how constant exposure to casual conversation followed by practice and consciousness-raising may make learners not only more proficient in listening comprehension but also increase their breadth and range of listening ability.

The current research study provides support to our claims concerning the positive effect of explicit teaching of conversation on developing learners' discourse competence. In fact, the findings of this study reveal that CA-informed consciousness-raising activities seem to have the potential to not only improve learners' conversational skills but also develop their spoken discourse competence.

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Appendices

Appendices

APPENDIX A: Teacher Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to elicit information about teachers' beliefs and assumptions on conversational practices in the classroom. We hope that your kind cooperation will help us understand these issues and suggest ideas to ensure the success of our study. Your responses will remain exclusively confidential and will be used only in this research study.

I am much grateful to you for your cooperation and help.

KHADROUN Salem

English Department

1. **How long have you been teaching at the English department:**

0-5	6-10	11-15	15+

2. **Have you taught oral expression?**

   If yes, how long?

3. **According to you, the objectives of oral expression sessions are:**

   (Rank the following in order of importance)

a) Improving learners' pronunciation	
b) Using grammatically correct sentences	
c) Helping them hold a conversation systematically and appropriately	
d) Developing their oral communicative ability	

4. **How do you situate your students' speaking weaknesses? (you can tick more than one)**

a) Make a lot of vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar mistakes	
b) Unable to speak spontaneously and naturally in English	
c) Unable to speak English confidently inside and outside the classroom	
d) Negatively transfer features of the first language into English	

5. **What are the speaking activities you focus on most to teach speaking?**

a) Free discussions	
b) Communicative tasks (games, information-gap filling, etc.)	
c) Oral presentations	
d) Role-plays and simulations	

6. **How do you think you can improve your students' speaking competence?**

a) by promoting students' confidence in speaking to an audience	
b) by maximizing student - student interaction	
c) by exposing them to songs, movies, TV and radio talks	

7. **How do you proceed with the selection of topics for discussion?**

a) The list of topics is previously prepared by the teacher	
b) The topics are chosen through negotiation	
c) Students choose any topic they want	

8. **When your students discuss a topic, do you usually**

a) Correct students if they've made a grammatical mistake or error	
b) Encourage students to comment on the contribution of their peers	
c) Intervene when the students argue with one other while discussing	
d) Interrupt students if their responses deviate from the topic	

9. When students do their oral presentations, you give priority to

a) Oral communication fluency	
b) The content of the presentation	
b) Grammar correctness	

10. Do you think presentations and discussions develop learners' conversational competence

a) Yes	
b) No	

11. If yes, in what ways?

……
……
……
……
……

12. Do you improve your students' conversational competence through:

a) Exposing students to authentic conversational input?	
b) Raising their awareness to how conversation works?	
c) both?	

13. Which input materials do you usually use in your conversation class?

a) Authentic natural conversations from audio and video recordings	
b) Scripted dialogues padded out with activities that appear in textbooks	
c) Telephone conversations	
d) No teaching materials at all	

14. When students are engaged in a conversation, which of these aspects do you usually focus on?

a) Conversational behaviour (how to take turns, how to interrupt, how to repair…etc)	
b) Structure of a conversation (how these turns are built on to each other)	
c) Topic of the conversation and language proficiency	

15. Which of these errors mostly require your intervention in a conversation session?

a) Local errors (omitted articles or pronouns, superfluous prepositions, incorrect verb…..)	
b) Global errors (faulty words order, wrong logical connectors, wrong cohesive devices , wrong discourse markers, cultural inappropriateness.)	

16. How do you assess your students' speaking and conversational skill?

a) Face- to-face interaction with the examiner (teacher)	
b) In small group discussion	

17. Which of the following criteria do you focus most when testing students' speaking and conversational skills?

a) Grammar and vocabulary (including accuracy and appropriacy)	
b) Discourse management (including coherence, length of the turn, relevance)	
c) Pronunciation (including stress, rhythm, intonation…)	
d) Interactive communication (including initiating, hesitation, turn-taking)	

18. What are your personal suggestions to improve learners' conversational skills?

……
……
……
……
……
……

APPENDIX B: Observation Checklist

Areas of focus	Teacher1	Teacher2	Teacher3
1. Activities and techniques - Types of activities and techniques - Practice of conversational features - Use of formulaic expressions - Use of communicative tasks - Group / pair work			
2. Spoken interaction - Teachers' intervention - Focus on linguistic knowledge - Focus on sociocultural aspects of language - Teachers encourage/discourage genuine interaction - Explicit /implicit teaching of conversational features			
3. Input materials - Types of input - Use of scripted dialogues - Authenticity - Effect of these materials on learners' conversation			
4. Classroom discourse - Teacher talk - Learner talk - Interactional sequences - The use of questions			

APPENDIX C: Samples of Lesson Units

INTRODUCTORY UNIT

Goals:

- Helping students to know the difference between casual and institutional conversation?
- Observing how conversations are structured.
- Enabling students to recognize the key elements of casual conversation

1. **Discuss with your partners the following points:**

a- When people talk to each other, what do they talk about?

b- Who do people talk to?

c- What is the impact of the relationships of the participants on the talk?

d- Do the conversations differ when the participants have different purposes?

2. **What is the difference between casual conversation and institutional conversation? Under each definition, put either casual conversation or institutional conversation.**

a- A conversation in which participants talk for social reasons to make friends, chat to family and friends (**interactional purposes**)

……

b- A conversation in which people use talk to do their work to buy things, order meals , do business, (**transactional purposes**)

……

3. **Where do participants have a casual conversation/ institutional talk?**

Conversations	**Participants**	**Places**	**Type of conversation**
Talking about your day	Family/friends	At home	……..
Buy a ticket	With employer	workplace	……..
Talking about anything	With other guests	At a party	……..
Talking about weather	With a passer-by	In the street	……..
Answering an exchange	To the teacher	At school	……..
Describing health problems	To the doctor	In hospital	……..
Describing health problems	To a friend	In campus	……..

4. **Any conversation has a structure like an essay. All conversations have a beginning (called the opening), a middle part (called the centering) and an end (called the closing)**

   What do the participants do

   a- In the opening? ……

   b- In the centering? …….

   c- In the closing?……..

5. **Watch the video and then indicate to your partner when the opening, the centering, and the closing are taking place.**

   You can ask your teacher to stop the video script any moment you want.

6. **Now look at the transcript of the conversation and then with your partner do the activity below:**

Transcript:

1. Monica: Bartleby, Hey
2. Bartleby: Hey, How are you, Monica?

3. Monica: Hey How are you?
4. Bartleby: Do you know Schrader?
5. Monica: No, I don't think so, oh!
6. Schrader: Yes, we, I actually. we had class….
7. Monica: oh, yeah?
8. Monica (to Bartleby): Um, anyway, I really wanted to ask you something
9. Bartleby: Sure, anything
10. Monica: Um, you know. I know, it's really late but , um, last minute and everything, but prom is coming soon, you know
11. Bartleby: It's okay, yes
12. Monica: And I'm actually having a party at my house beforehand,
13. Bartleby: Awesome!
14. Monica: I was wondering…..I'd like to….mow our lawn
15. Bartleby: Mow your lawn?
16. Monica: Yeah. I'm really embarrassed, but you know our mower's broken and my mum just like "ask Bartleby!"
17. Bartleby: That's cool. Yeah tell your mum I'd love to mow the lawn
18. Monica: Really?
19. Bartleby: Of course!
20. Monica: Thank you. Thank you so much
21. Bartleby: Yes sure
22. Monica: Sorry I got to go. But thank you again
23. Bartleby: Yes, sure

Cultural note:

A **prom** is a formal dance at the end of a school year. For many American high schools, the senior **prom** is a big deal. Kids get dressed up and then get embarrassed by parents who take too many photos. Students going to a **prom** will sometimes rent limousines to get there, and dress in fancy gowns and tuxedos.

a- Write the line numbers of the opening……..

b- How does the participants greet one another?

……

c- Write the line numbers of the centering……

d- What is the topic of the conversation?

……..

e- Write the line numbers of the closing……

f- How do the participants end the conversation?

……

7. Watch the video again and discuss with your partner the following features:

- ✓ The language used
- ✓ The verbal feedback used by the speakers
- ✓ The non-verbal feedback used by the speakers
- ✓ Overlaps
- ✓ Intonation and stress
- ✓ Formulaic expressions
- ✓ How the speakers take and relinquish turns
- ✓ Hesitation, pauses, gestures….

8. **How do you start a conversation in your culture? Is it similar to English or different? How do you initiate a topic?**

Unit One: News Announcement I

Sources :

- Film clips
- Authentic conversations

Goals:

- Noticing how news announcements are conveyed and responded to in a conversation.
- Raising students' awareness to how a basic news announcement sequence is structured in conversation
- Raising students' awareness to how the speakers use formulaic expressions to announce and assess the news.
- Practising and producing announcement sequences.

Observe

Watch and listen to the conversation and discuss with your partner the following points:

1. What is the topic of the conversation? What is its purpose?
2. Who are the participants in the conversation?
3. What is the relationship between the conversation partners?
4. In what way is this relationship important in such a conversation?

Analyse

1. **Watch the following two video sequences in the "f.r.i.e.n.d.s" series (season 4, episode 2) and then answer the questions below:**

Sequence One:

1. How does Ross start the conversation?
2. Is there in this conversation an exchange of greetings? Why?
3. What is the purpose of Ross's opening of the conversation?
4. What other expressions can be used here?
5. What the basic news announcement?
6. What assessment does Monica provide?

Sequence Two

a- Who are the participants in this dialogue?

b- What is the topic of the conversation?

c- How has the woman announced the news?

d- Which expression has she used?

e- How has Joey reacted to the news

f- How have the two participants completed the conversation?

2. **Watch the sit-com clips again and answer the following questions:**

1. How do the speakers take turns?
2. What role does intonation play here?

3. Is it important for the speaker to know that the listener is listening to him/her?
4. What do the listeners do or say to show they are listening to what Phoebe is saying?

3. What formulaic expressions are used in this conversation?

4. Discuss with your partners the meaning of these expressions

5. Read this short conversation and label the parts on bold type (announcement of the news/ assessment)

Rachel: Guys! Guess what, guess what! Chandler: Um, ok….the…the fifth dentist caved and now they're all recommending Trident? Rachel; Noooo…. The interview! I got it and the job is perfect. I can do this. I can do this well! ALL: That's great! That's wonderful:	……. …….

The announcement sequence consists minimally of the following adjacency pair:

D: Announcement of the News

R: Response to announcement

(D= deliverer; R= receiver)

Adjacency pair (or a minimal turn set of news announcement): two turns which are adjacently placed and produced by alternate speakers.

6. Read the following dialogue (from Maynard, 1997) and answer the following questions:

a) Underline the basic announcement of news

b) How does Jeff show surprise to the news announcement by Ellen?

c) How do the participants start the dialogue? Is it the same as the one done by Phoebe and her friends?

Jeff: Well, I hope it's not bad news?

Ellen: Oh no, it actually pretty good news.

Jeff: Oh good

Ellen: I mean well I think it's kinda good news

Jeff: Tell me

Ellen: um I decided that I wanted to oust my advisor

Jeff: You're kidding. He is not going to be your advisor?

Ellen: No.

Jeff: Oh, my God

Practise

---

1. **Watch the dialogue from the sit-com "friends" and write the basic announcement sequence (announcement/ assessment)**

2. **With your partner, act out the following announcement sequences which consists of a) announcement and b) assessment**.

D: I‘ve got a little gran’ daughter

R: Oh, how lovely?

…….

D: She was born early this morning

R: Oh, Jolly good?

3. **Now create a short dialogue in which you announce some news and your friend reacts to the announcement**

Produce

Assessments of the news occur in the turn directly following the announcement. Their aim is to display the recipient’s ratification of the announcement as news-for them and to display their understanding of it as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ news (Terasaki, 1997:176).

1. **React to the news using the following expressions**

Good news: (that’s) good, great, nice interesting/cool/ wonderful..etc.

Bad news (that’s) too bad, terrible…

1. A:I’m taking a karate class. We have a great teacher.

B: Oh, ……

2. A:I'm training eight hours a day and I am not sleeping.

   B: Really? ……

3. A: I'm playing on the college basket ball

   B: Hey, ……

4. A:I'm taking a karate class. We have a great teacher.

   B: Oh, ……

5. A: Our team is not playing well this season

   B: Oh, ……

Evaluate

Class discussion:

- How are announcement sequences used in your native language?
- How are they different from those in English language?
- In your culture, how do you show non-verbal feedback and verbal feedback to the speaker?

Unit TWO: News Announcement II

Sources :

- Film clips
- Authentic conversations

Goals:

- Raising students' awareness to how the speakers use pre-announcement and formulaic expressions to announce and respond to news.
- Raising students' awareness to how news announcement sequences are related to one another "conditional relevance"
- Practising and producing announcement sequences.

Observe

1. **Using what you have just observed in the previous lesson, Explain why the following exchange between A and B sounds funny. Share what you have found.**

Excerpt from "Everybody loves Raymond"

A: Guess what?

B: What?

A: Guess.

2. **What is missing in this short dialogue?**
3. **Read the dialogue between a mother and her son (Russ).**

a) Is the mother announcing some news to her son?

b) What expression can the mother use to make a clear announcement of the news?

c) What changes can be made in the dialogue to make is sound natural and appropriate?

Mother: Do you know who is going to that meeting?

Russ: Who?

Mother: I don't know!

Russ: Probably, Mr Murphy, Mrs Timpte and some other teachers.

Analyse

1. Watch the conversation between Phoebe, Rachel, Chandler and Joey in the "f.r.i.e.n.d.s" series (season 6, episode 4) and then answer the questions below:

1. How do the friends start the conversation?
2. Phoebe seems sad. What happened to her?
3. How did she announce the bad news?

4. Phoebe used the utterance “Listen to this” to Rachel. What‘s the purpose of this utterance?
5. Does Phoebe announce the news directly? Which expression is used by her? What is its purpose?
6. How does Chandler respond to the announcement?
7. Which non-verbal feedback Chandler uses in the conversation?
8. How do her friends react to her announcement?
9. Which of the expressions are used as assessment?

Pre-announcement sequence: is a turn set used prior to the announcement turn

A participant may use a pre-announcement to present some news to come without therein providing that news.

e.g.: D: Hey, I got something that’s wild…….pre-announcement

R: What?.....response

2. **Does the following short dialogue (from Terasaki, 2004) include the announcement of the news? Why?**

   D: How are you all?

   R: Oh very very well.

   D: Good.

   D: Hey we got good news!

   R: I know.

3. **Now refer back to the clip from the sit-com and find out the other fixed expressions (other than those used to announce and assess the news) used by the speakers. For example, Phoebe used the expression "I am kind of bummed about that". What does it mean?**

a- Find the other expressions used in the conversation?

b- What effect does the use of these expressions have on the speakers' oral discourse?

c- Practice the expressions used in the conversation

d- With your partner, discuss the meaning and use of these routines

- ***I am kind of bummed about that***
- ***That one is pretty much the worst you can get***
- ***That's crazy***
- ***I can' believe she would say that to you***
- ***Just out of curiosity***

Practise

1. The parts in the following dialogue are in disorder. With your partner put the different parts in order:

1 : Rachel!

2 : Oh, my God!

3 : Hi.

4 : You wouldn't believe who that was?

5: Who?

6: Hi.

2. **In a given conversation, all sequences should exhibit 'conditional relevance' (given the first pair, the second pair is expectable). In the table below , the second pair parts are in disorder. Can you find which one goes with the first pair part?**

First pair part	Second pair part
I've got two good news for you.	Oh dear
I thought you'd like to know I've got a little grand daughter	Who ?
Gordon didn't pass his test, I 'm afraid.	Oh , how lovely
You will never guess who's going to that meeting	Oh, super, what are they?

2. **Base yourself on the dialogue between the friends above and create a short dialogue using the following sequences**

   a- Pre-announcement……

   b- Response……..

   c- Announcement…….

   d- Assessment……..

Produce

1. **Make some modifications to the part played by Phoebe in the (f.r.i.e.n.d.s) sit-com clip and act it out.**

Example:

Phoebe: Y'wanna know what happened to me today?

Rachel: What?

Phoebe:My Psyche told me that…….

Monica: Phoebe, that's crazy

Phoebe: You will never guess the terrible news?

Joey: No. what is it?

Phoebe: My Psyche told me……

Monica: You don't believe her, do you?

1. Change this part to include other pre-announcement sequence to project some news to come. For example: you will never

guess….Guess what…you will never believe what…..Hey, I have got good news, I though you would like to know

2. Replace the news announcement by another one.
3. Use other responses to the announcement.
4. How would you complete the dialogue?

2. The following questions are beginnings of announcement of news. In the light of what you have studied, make a dialogue using

Pre-announcement/ response to pre-announcement

Announcement

Assessment.

Don't forget to use some formulaic expressions

1. Sam got caught cheating on the test.
2. The department store at the mall is hiring.
3. I won that photo contest I entered last week.

3. Go around the classroom and initiate a spontaneous conversation with a partner you choose. You can start with a greeting. You can announce the news in any way you like.

a- Tell the class what you received as response

b- The class with the help of the teacher will decide which sequences are more native-like

c- The class should also decide which pairs used negative transfer

Evaluate

Class discussion :

- What is the basic unit of sequencing in English conversation?
- How is news delivery structured in a conversation. Discuss.
- Are there pre-announcement sequences in your native language?
- How are these sequences different from those in English language?

Unit Three: News Announcement III

Sources :

- Film clips
- Authentic conversations

Goals:

- Discovering and recognizing announcement responses in a conversation
- Raising their awareness to the sequential organization of a conversation
- Raising their awareness to how pre-, insert-, and post-announcement are used in a conversation
- Practising and producing announcement sequences.

Observe

1. **Watch and listen to the conversation between William and a thief (Notting Hill). Then answer the following questions:**

1. Where are the participants,
2. What's the participants' relationship?
3. What is the topic of the conversation?
4. Why are they having the conversation?

2. **Watch and listen to the conversation again and discuss with your partner the following points:**

1. Eye contact of the participants
2. Intonation and stress
3. Hesitation
4. Pauses

Analyse

---

1. **Watch and listen to the conversation between William and a thief taken from Notting Hill movie. Then read the script to answer the questions below:**

1. William: Excuse me!
2. Thief: Yes?
3. William: BAD news.
4. Thief: What?
5. William: Ah we've got a security camera in this bit of the shop.
6. Thief: So?
7. William: So, I saw you put that book down your trousers.

1. In what way are the turns related to one another?
2. In which part does the announcement occur?
3. What is the purpose of William's question in line 1 of the dialogue?
4. Does William announce the news in line 3? What's the purpose of his question?
5. How did the thief solicit for the news?
6. In line 3, does William give the thief a chance to answer his question or does he continue his talking?
7. In line 6, could the thief use 'really?' instead of 'so?' Why?
8. What do the participants say to keep the conversation going?
9. Is the thief's response in line 4:
    a- A blocking response?
    b- A go-ahead response?
    c- A news inquiry?

2. Reading the following dialogue, then near each turn, write:

a) assessment , b) news mark, c) news announcement, elaboration

A: I met Jano yesterday. She got that form from the Company concerning the job …….

B: Oh she has? …….

A: Yes, and she is sending the form back …….

B: Oh that's good and so pleased she applied …….

3. **There is no pre-announcement sequence in the dialogue above.**

a) What effect does it have on the conversation?

b) What is the role of the Newsmark (Oh, she has?)?

Practise

1. **Watch the video sequence from Friends sit com. Phoebe is announcing some news to her friends.**

a- How is the news preannounced?

b- How does Monica respond to the announcement?

c- Did Phoebe announce the news? Why?

d- Act out the dialogue.

The news delivery sequences can take the following form:

- Announcement
- Response to the announcement
- Elaboration
- assessment

2. **Now read the following dialogue (adapted from Freese and Maynard, 1993) and put near each turn the corresponding element from the list above.**

1. **What other expressions could the thief have used to show that he wants to know more about the news?**

2. Read the two parts from different dialogues to find out the other two possible responses to a pre- announcement.

1. Fay: Did you hear about the pottery and lead poisoning

   Lor: Yeah Ethie was just telling us.

   Fay: I read an article in ….I don't know whether it was Newsweek or Time…

2. Del: Did you hear the terrible news?

   Rec: No. What?

3. Did you hear the terrible news?

   What happened?

3. Read the following dialogue. With your partner change the dialogue to include the points below:

A : Hi.

B : Hi.

A : You wouldn't believe who that was?

B : Who?

A: Rachel!

B: Oh, my God!

1. Change it to include another pre-announcement sequence to project some news to come.
2. Replace the news by another one.
3. Complete the dialogue by another go-ahead response.
4. The new dialogue should comprise at least 6 turns.

Produce

Choose a topic and create a dialogue with your partner according to the following structure:

…… greeting

……. greeting

……. pre-announcement

……. response

…… announcement

…… News receipt

…… confirmation

……. assessment

Evaluate

Class discussion:

Look for announcement sequences (e.g., how to announce and respond to news) in the dialogues taken from language textbooks. Compare them with what you have studied so far. Do you find pre-announcements, insert sequences, and post-announcements? Do you find newsmarks and news receipts?

APPENDIX D: Total scores, Mean, and Standard Deviation in both tests

	Students	Pre-test	F,C,C	SA	G	P	Post-test	F,C,C	SA	G	P
Control group	1	5,25	2	0,5	1,5	1,25	6,25	2,25	1,25	1,5	1,25
	2	5,5	2	1	1,5	1	6,5	2,5	1,25	1,5	1,25
	3	4,5	2	0	1,5	1	5	2	0,5	1,5	1
	4	3,5	1	0,5	1	1	4,75	1,5	0,75	1,5	1
	5	3	1	0	1	1	4,25	1,5	0,75	1	1
	6	4,5	1,5	0,5	1,5	1	5,5	2	1	1,25	1,25
	7	5	2	1	1	1	5,75	2,25	1	1,25	1,25
	8	5,5	2	1	1	1,5	6	2,25	1	1,25	1,5
	9	5	2	1	1	1	6	2,5	1	1,25	1,25
	10	4	1,5	0,5	1	1	4,75	2	0,5	1,25	1
	Mean	4,58	1,70	0,60	1,20	1,08	5,48	2,08	0,90	1,33	1,18
	SD	0,85	0,42	0,39	0,26	0,17	0,75	0,35	0,27	0,17	0,17
Experimental group	11	4,75	2	0,75	1	1	6,75	2,75	1,25	1,5	1,25
	12	4	1,5	0,5	1	1	5,75	2,5	1	1,25	1
	13	5,5	2	0,5	1,5	1,5	6,75	2,75	1,25	1,25	1,5
	14	5,75	2	0,75	1,5	1,5	7	2,75	1,25	1,5	1,5
	15	3	1	0	1	1	5,25	1,5	1,25	1,5	1
	16	4,5	1,25	0,5	1,5	1,25	6	2,25	1	1,5	1,25
	17	4,5	2	0,5	1	1	6	2,5	1	1,25	1,25
	18	4,75	2	0,75	1	1	6,5	2,75	1,25	1,25	1,25
	19	4	2	0	1	1	6	2,75	1	1,25	1
	20	4,75	1,5	0,75	1,5	1	7	2,75	1,25	1,75	1,25
	Mean	4,55	1,73	0,50	1,20	1,13	6,30	2,53	1,15	1,40	1,23
	SD	0,78	0,35	0,29	0,26	0,21	0,59	0,40	0,13	0,17	0,18

F,C,C : Fluency and Coherence in Conversation

SA: Sociolinguistic Appropriateness

G: Grammar

P: Pronunciation

APPENDIX E : Samples of students' Pre-test and post-test role plays

Pre-test role plays:

Students 1+2 control group

A: I was in a car accident last week.

B: Oh! Good that must be painful for you, wish you be fine

A: We wasn't study next week

B: Well that is good news for me because I need to go to the hospital.

A: Why what happened?

B: We are having strikes I guess

A: What are the strikes about?

B: I am not sure. All what matters is that we won't study.

Students 5+6 control group

A: I have good and bad news to say to you.

B: start by the bad news?

A: Our neighbor Ali died in a traffic accident

B: Oh dear! bad news. I didn't expect that

A: Yeah he was a wonderful man, everybody says that.

B: What is the good news?

A: His two daughters who were with him in the car were unhurt.

B: Thank God.

Students 9+10 control group

A: Hello.

B: What happened? you are not as usually.

A: I just heard that I lost my childhood friend!

B: oh I am so sorry for that. Do you need to talk about?

A: Well this is something that happens all the time you shouldn't depress about it

B: I know that is a normal thing I wasn't expecting that. I am in shock

A: I know that is hard to live with it, but I wanted to tell you

B: Thank you very much dear

Students 11+12 experimental group

A: You heard what happened yesterday

B: Yesterday?

A: our neighbor, Ali died yesterday in a traffic accident

B: Really? bad news, I didn't expect that.

A: Yes, he was a wonderful man, everybody says that

B: Does he have children?

A: Yes, unfortunately

B: Rest in peace

Students 13+14 experimental group

A: Hi. I have good and bad news to tell you

B: Tell me the bad news

A: I crushed my car yesterday, and the repairs are expensive

B: Oh, I am really sorry about that. I will help you to repair it.

A: the good news is that there is a Holiday next week.

B: Oh, this is great.

A: We need to repair the car. To travel in the Holiday

B: Okay, deal!

……

Post-test role plays:

Students 1+2	**control group**

A: Hi, Ahmed.

B: Hi. How are you

A: I have car accident last week.

B: Oh! I am so sorry.

A: There are many car accident in the roads these day

B: I know. It is a catastrophe.

A: what should we do?

B: I think there not solution

A: Why?

B: Because drivers like speed very much

Students 5+6	**control group**

A: I have good and bad news for you.

B: what are the bad news first?

A: Ali did a terrible accident this morning

B: who told you?

A: His neighbor informed me. He was very sad

B: and the good news?

A: He was taken to hospital and now he is not in danger

B: Thank God.

Students 11+12 experimental group

A: Listen, Rayane.

B: Yeah

A: Did you hear the terrible news?

B: No. What?

A: Our friend Yasmine had a terrible accident

B: Oh dear!

A: Her car got stuck against a tree.

B: Oh. Was she injured?

A: Yes. She is in hospital now. Her doctors say his life is in danger

B: Oh, that's horrible!

Students 15+16 experimental group

A: Hi.

B: Hi

A: Did you hear the news?

B: No. What?

A: Our cousin went into labor and have had her baby last week.

B: Oh, did she?

A: Well, she did

B: Oh my God, that's great!

How is she now?

A: Very happy and her baby is cute and healthy, weighing 8 pounds.

B: Wonderful! That’s really good news.

ملـــــــــخص

ينظر إلى القدرة على التواصل بكفاءة على أنها الهدف النهائي لتعلم اللغات الأجنبية. غير أنَّ مستوى القدرة على الحوار عند طلبة السنة الثانية لغة انجليزية بجامعة الجلفة يبدو بعيدا عن المرجو، الشيء الذي يعرقل تطورهم في كفاءة الخطاب الشفهي على الرغم من أنّ هؤلاء الطلبة قد تلقّوا تكوينا في كفاءة الحوار.قد يعود هذا إلى ان كل من الطّلبة والأساتذة، على حد سواء، لا يدركون أنّ إتقان كفاءة الحوار بشكل طبيعي وارتجالي يُعتبر أمرا معقدا، ذلِكَ أنَّ هذا لا يتطلب فقط إتقان اللغة وإنَّما يتعدَّى ذلِكَ إلى اتقان مميزات الحوار الأخرى. موضوع هذه الدراسة البحثية الحالية هو التدريس الصريح للمحادثة وتهدف ، على وجه الخصوص، إلى معرفة مدى تأثير تدريس اعلان الخبر في الحوار و كذألك عبارات روتينية من خلال نشاطات ترتكز على تقنيات تحليل الحوار و تثير وعي الطلبة على تحسين الكفاءة الخطابية لديهم. بالإضافة إلى استبيان المعلم والملاحظة الصفية التي تم إجراؤها للحصول على معلومات حول كيفية تدريس مهارات التحدث والمحادثة في مقياس التعبير الشفوي ، تم إجراء تجربة مع عشرون طالبا من السنة الثانية للتحقيق في مدى تأثير تدريس اعلان الخبر في الحوار من خلال انشطة اثارة الوعي المستمدة من نظرية تحليل الحوار من اجل تطوير كفاءة الخطاب المنطوق لديهم .تألفت الاختبارات التجريبية من لعب الأدوار ، وخضعت المجموعة التجريبية إلى تجربة تتكون من خمس وحدات على أساس إطار مكيف لتعليم مهارات المحادثة. و خلص البحث إلى مجموعة من النتائج تشير إلى أنَّ 1) الاساتذة يتبعون الطريقة التقليدية في تدريس التعبير الشفهي و الكفاء الحوارية للمتعلم 2) الحصص التجريبية ساهمت في تحسين الكفاءة التحاورية لدى اغلبية الطلبة ، غير أننا لاحظنا أن مجموعة التجربة قد تفوقت في أداء حوارات محكمة التنظيم من الناحية التركيبية واللغوية و استعمال العبارات الروتينية المناسبة.

الكلمات المفتاحية : حوار. تحليل الحوار. اعلان الخبر. عبارات روتنية. نشاطات اثارة الوعي. كفاءة الخطاب الشفهي و استعمال العبارات الروتينية