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Research Article

The Ratio of Teacher Talking Time (TTT) to Student Talking Time (STT) in Iranian EFL Classes: An Observational Multi-Class Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Classroom discourse and interaction, particularly the balance between Teacher Talking Time (TTT) and Student Talking Time (STT), are critical elements in (English as a Foreign Language) EFL settings. While some research has explored various facets of classroom discourse and interactions, few studies have specifically examined the TTT and STT ratio across a broad spectrum of EFL classes through direct observation. Addressing this gap, this observational study aims to evaluate the TTT/STT ratio in 83 diverse EFL classes in Kerman, Iran. Furthermore, it investigates if this ratio correlates with teachers' gender, years of teaching experience, and class level. To this end, the study involved 83 EFL teachers, including both genders, with teaching experience ranging from 1 to 15 years, teaching classes at elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels. Findings revealed that TTT constituted approximately 61.49% of total class time on average, with STT comprising 38.51%. No significant differences were detected in relation to teachers' gender, teaching experience, or class level. The implications of these results are discussed.

Keywords: Classroom Interaction, Iranian EFL Learners, Student Talking Time (STT), Teacher Talking Time (TTT)



1. INTRODUCTION

Amidst the pedagogical setting of language education, the dynamic interplay of student-led practice and collaborative knowledge co-construction in the classroom setting marks a significant departure from traditional teacher-centered instruction (Hou, 2018). This departure, distinguished by the contrast between lively interaction and passive reception, has garnered scholarly interest, directing attention towards the efficacy and transformative capacity of learner-centered pedagogies in language education. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, the cultivation of robust communication skills stands as a cornerstone objective. Research suggests that a crucial element in achieving this goal lies in the meticulous orchestration of teacher talking time (TTT) and student talking time (STT) (Cardenas, 2013; Haliti, 2019). While teacher instruction remains an indispensable component for introducing new concepts and providing grammatical guidance, an overreliance on TTT can inadvertently stifle student participation and limit opportunities for crucial language practice (Kareema, 2014; Kostadinovska-Stojchevska & Popovikj, 2019). Conversely, creating an environment where students control the conversation without sufficient scaffolding or guidance can lead to confusion and hinder the development of essential language skills. Therefore, striking a balance between TTT and STT emerges as a critical factor in maximizing language learning within EFL classrooms.

Despite the acknowledged significance of this balance, the existing body of research investigating the optimal TTT STT ratio in EFL classrooms presents a somewhat fragmented picture. Some studies support a higher proportion of STT, particularly when focused on interactive tasks and student-led discussions, as a means to enhance language learning outcomes (Sedova et al., 2019; Cardenas, 2013). Conversely, other studies highlight the continued need for substantial teacher input, particularly in classrooms with lower-level learners who require more explicit instruction to grasp complex grammatical concepts (Savignon, 2013; Cardenas, 2013). Furthermore, the ideal TTT STT ratio is likely influenced by a multitude of factors, including learner proficiency level, task type, the established classroom culture etc. (Majdina, 2015).

However, a significant limitation of the existing research concerning this issue lies in its predominantly single-classroom focus or case study methodology. Although insightful, this approach might restrict the generalizability of findings, as the unique dynamics of a single classroom may not be representative of the broader EFL learning context. Additionally, a substantial portion of existing research relies on teacher self-reports or anecdotal evidence, potentially introducing bias into data collection. Consequently, a critical gap exists in our understanding of how the TTT STT ratio manifests across diverse EFL learning contexts. A more comprehensive understanding of this dynamic necessitates large-scale, multi-class analyses utilizing observations that capture the interplay between TTT and STT.

Therefore, this research article aims to address this critical knowledge gap by conducting a multi-class analysis of EFL classrooms through class observations to investigate the prevailing ratio of teacher talking time to student talking time. Meticulously analyzing data collected from a diverse range of EFL classes, this study seeks to illuminate the dominant patterns of TTT and STT across different learning contexts. The findings gleaned from this research will contribute insights into the relationship between TTT: STT and language learning outcomes in EFL classrooms. Ultimately, this knowledge can empower EFL teaching and learning stakeholders to create more effective learning environments that encourages optimal language learning for their students. Accordingly, the following four research questions are addressed:

RQ 1: *What is the ratio of Teacher Talking Time (TTT) to Student Talking Time (STT) in EFL classes?*

RQ 2: *Does the ratio of Teacher Talking Time (TTT) to Student Talking Time (STT) significantly differ based on the EFL class level?*

RQ 3: *Does the ratio of Teacher Talking Time (TTT) to Student Talking Time (STT) significantly differ based on the EFL teachers' teaching experience?*

RQ 4: *Does the ratio of Teacher Talking Time (TTT) to Student Talking Time (STT) significantly differ based on the EFL teachers' gender?*



2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many individuals tend to learn English due to its status as a global lingua franca, facilitating communication across cultures and borders (Lacey, 2015; Park & Wee, 2015). English proficiency is often viewed as essential for accessing educational, professional, and economic opportunities in a globalized world. Moreover, the dominance of English in domains such as technology, science, and media further motivates individuals to acquire proficiency in the language (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017). Research indicates that English language learning motivations vary depending on learners' socio-cultural backgrounds and contexts. For instance, in countries where English is not the native language, learners may be driven by instrumental motivations, seeking to improve their career prospects or access higher education opportunities (Hussain et al., 2020; Zarrabi, 2018). On the other hand, individuals in English-speaking countries may exhibit integrative motivations, aspiring to connect with diverse cultures and communities through language learning (Riyanti, 2019). Furthermore, the role of English language proficiency as a marker of social status and identity cannot be overlooked (Darvin & Norton, 2015; Kubota, 2020). In some contexts, proficiency in English may signify privilege and access to elite social networks, reinforcing the desire to learn the language.

According to common sense and numerous researchers (e.g. Hayati et al., 2021), teachers' roles and awareness in utilizing effective techniques and strategies are crucial in expediting language learning. Research emphasizes the importance of teachers' pedagogical knowledge and awareness of effective instructional practices in facilitating language acquisition (Ataboyev & Tursunovich, 2023). Effective language teachers are knowledgeable about a variety of teaching methodologies and techniques, allowing them to adapt their instruction to meet the diverse needs of learners (Nunan, 2015; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). An essential aspect that teachers need to consider involves classroom discourse, particularly in this study, the allocation of speaking time between teachers and students. Classroom discourse in EFL settings is a multi-layered construct involving various aspects of language use and interaction among teachers and students. Domalewska (2015) and Rezaie and Lashkarian (2015) emphasize the importance of analyzing EFL class discourse as a means of understanding the dynamics of language learning and teaching. The distribution of speaking time between teachers and students, known as TTT and STT, is a significant aspect of EFL class discourse that influences language learning outcomes (Harahap & Emzir, 2015). Moreover, studies highlight the impact of discourse patterns and interactional routines on language learning in EFL classrooms. Effective EFL teachers employ communicative approaches that prioritize meaningful interaction and negotiation of meaning (Eisenring & Margana, 2019; Ellis, 2015). Furthermore, the role of EFL teachers in managing classroom discourse and promoting student participation is crucial for creating supportive and inclusive learning environments (León & Castro, 2017). Teachers' awareness of discourse strategies and interactional norms in EFL settings enables them to scaffold students' language development and facilitate meaningful interactions.

TTT and STT are fundamental concepts in language teaching that refer to the distribution of speaking opportunities between teachers and students in the classroom. According to Harmer (2015) and Nunan (2015), TTT denotes the amount of time teachers spend talking during instruction, while STT refers to the time students spend actively participating in speaking activities. These concepts intersect with various theories and principles of language learning such as communicative language teaching, the interaction hypothesis, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, Krashen's input hypothesis, task-based learning theory, learner autonomy and empowerment, the affective filter hypothesis and Grice conversational maxims.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Theory emphasizes the importance of meaningful communication and interaction in language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In CLT, the goal is to maximize STT by providing opportunities for students to engage in authentic communicative tasks, where language is used for real-life purposes. By minimizing TTT and promoting STT, CLT aims to create



dynamic and learner-centered classrooms that facilitate language learning through active participation and interaction. Long's Interaction Hypothesis suggests that language acquisition occurs through meaningful interaction and negotiation of meaning (Ellis, 2021, 2015). According to this theory, opportunities for student-student interaction (i.e., STT) are crucial for language learning as they provide learners with opportunities to practice and negotiate language use in context (Afzali & Kianpoor, 2020; Gass & Mackey, 2020). Conversely, excessive TTT may hinder opportunities for student interaction and limit learners' participation in communicative activities, thus impeding language acquisition.

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory emphasizes the role of social interaction and cultural context in cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978). According to this theory, learning is mediated through social interactions with more knowledgeable others, such as teachers or peers (Lantolf et al., 2020; Shabani, 2016). In the context of TTT and STT, teachers play a crucial role in scaffolding students' language development through guided participation and collaborative learning experiences (Van Leeuwen & Janssen, 2019). Krashen's Input Hypothesis suggests that language learning occurs through exposure to comprehensible input, i.e., language that is slightly beyond the learner's current proficiency level (Krashen, 1985). Regarding TTT and STT, teachers act as facilitators of input by providing language models and creating opportunities for students to receive and process language input (Lightbown & Spada, 2020). Balancing TTT and STT ensures teachers that students are exposed to appropriate levels of language input while also providing opportunities for output and practice. Task-Based Learning Theory emphasizes the importance of task-based activities in language learning, where language is learned through the completion of meaningful and purposeful tasks (Ellis et al., 2010). In task-based classrooms, TTT and STT are intricately linked to task design and implementation. Teachers facilitate task performance by providing instructions, guidance, and feedback. Moreover, tasks often involve opportunities for student-student interaction and collaboration, thereby maximizing STT and promoting language learning (Ellis et al., 2020).

Learner Autonomy and Empowerment are central tenets of modern language education, emphasizing the importance of learner-centered approaches that promote learner agency and self-directed learning (Hu & Zhang, 2017). In autonomous learning environments, TTT and STT are balanced to support learners' autonomy and empower them to take control of their learning. Teachers act as facilitators and mentors, guiding students in setting goals, monitoring progress, and reflecting on their learning experiences (Jagtap, 2016). The Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis suggests that learners' emotional states, such as anxiety or motivation, can affect their ability to acquire language (Li & Zhou, 2023). In classrooms with high levels of teacher talk and limited opportunities for collaborative activities such as pair or group work, students may experience heightened anxiety and a heightened affective filter, which can impede language learning (Gedikli & Başbay, 2020; Kadir, 2018). Conversely, by promoting student involvement and creating supportive classes, teachers can lower students' affective filter and facilitate language learning (Dörnyei & Muir, 2019; Wang, 2020).

Finally, Grice's Cooperative Principle offers valuable insights into the dynamic between TTT and STT. Grice (1975) proposed four conversational maxims to guide effective communication: Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. Quantity emphasizes providing information appropriately. In ELT, this translates to a balanced distribution of speaking time between teacher and students. As mentioned by Al-Seghayer (2017), teachers should offer sufficient explanations while allowing students ample opportunity to engage and express themselves. Relation maxim highlights relevance in conversation. TTT and STT should align with lesson objectives to maintain focus and maximize learning opportunities. Manner maxim encourages clarity and coherence. Both teachers and students should aim for clear communication, using language appropriate for the learners' proficiency level. Ambiguity should be minimized to improve understanding. Applying Grice's maxims helps teachers create a balanced learning environment where TTT and STT complement each other, facilitating effective communication and learning.

The ideal ratio between TTT and STT in language classrooms is a subject of considerable debate and research. While there is no universally agreed-upon ratio, it is widely acknowledged that a balanced



distribution of TTT and STT is crucial for effective language learning (Harmer, 2015). Achieving the optimal balance between TTT and STT might be influenced by various factors such as teacher proficiency and experience, classroom dynamics and learner characteristics, class size, learners' level, instructional goals and curricular demands etc. As mentioned before, the balance between TTT and STT stands as a fundamental aspect influencing the effectiveness of classroom instruction. This dichotomy, often emblematic of the broader shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered approaches, has sparked considerable empirical investigation. Studies exploring TTT and STT dynamics have investigated various dimensions, ranging from their impact on language learning and proficiency to their implications for student engagement and motivation.

Adriosh and Osmana (2022) conducted a study to investigate the prevalence and functions of TTT versus STT in EFL undergraduate classrooms at the Faculty of Arts, Asmarya Islamic University in Libya. Their findings unveiled that TTT overwhelmingly governs the interactions within the EFL classroom. Moreover, they identified the nature of the subject, the personality of the teacher, and the classroom environment as the primary factors influencing the distribution of TTT versus STT in these classrooms. Hamdan and Elandeef (2021) examined the impact of reducing teacher talk while enhancing classroom interactivity in ten English classes at Aljanoub, King Khalid University. Their study centered on the self-assessment of teacher talk and classroom interactional competence, emphasizing the use of interaction to provide students with ample learning opportunities. They evaluated teacher talking time from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives. The results indicated that teachers predominantly controlled the discourse in English classes, frequently asking questions to reduce their own talking time. The most common interactional features were display questions and teachers' dominance in classroom discussions.

Similarly, Bazo Quintana (2017) undertook a qualitative case study exploring TTT and STT practices among ESL instructors at an intensive English program. The study revealed a notable inclination towards TTT practices among participating ESL instructors during their regular lessons, indicating a disproportionate use of TTT. In a similar investigation, Zare-behtash and Azarnia (2015) focused on TTT in Iranian language classrooms, selecting four teachers as case studies. Their findings demonstrated that teachers monopolized a significant portion, approximately 75%, of class time, while STT accounted for less than 20%. A more in depth study was conducted by Gharbavi and Irvani (2014) who analyzed the quality and quantity of teacher talk within the communicative approach framework, noting a lack of genuine communication and an overreliance on repetitive and monotonous speech following the IRF sequence, which favored the teacher's dominance in conversation. This approach was found to be incongruent with established theories of second language acquisition, potentially hindering learning opportunities.

Rezaee and Farahian (2012) investigated the distribution of teacher talk and students' reactions in upper-intermediate classes in Iran, revealing that teacher talk occupied approximately 70% of class time, with only 20% allotted to student talk and the remaining 10% to other activities. It was also noted that an adept teacher uses questions in their instruction to gather feedback on the material covered, engage students' attention for forthcoming topics or actions, and ensure effective classroom management. Similarly, Rashidi and Rafieerad (2010) investigated the classroom discourse in EFL classrooms in Iran and observed a high degree of teacher dominance in EFL classrooms in Iran. In contrast, Firli Ashari and Budiarta (2016) examined the balance and dynamics of TTT and STT in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) class. Their observations, video recordings, and interviews suggested that STT surpassed TTT in this context, marking a departure from the predominant trend. This study stands out among others for its conclusion that STT was satisfactorily achieved in the classroom.

Based on a comprehensive literature review, it appears that while existing studies have extensively investigated the broader dynamics of TTT and STT and their implications for language learning, fewer studies have specifically focused on examining the precise ratio of TTT to STT within language classes, specifically in the Iranian context. These ratios are essential as they directly influence the classroom



environment and potentially impact learning outcomes. Therefore, there is a gap in the literature concerning a detailed exploration of the TTT/STT ratio, which is crucial for understanding the dynamics of language classes and optimizing teaching practices. Additionally, the reliance on questionnaires in previous research might introduce biases or inaccuracies in reporting TTT and STT ratios, highlighting the need for more objective measurement methods. The study utilizes an observational approach to precisely record these ratios, addressing this methodological gap. Furthermore, the focus on a relatively small number of classes in previous studies may limit the generalizability of findings. Through examining 83 EFL classes taught by different teachers in various language institutes in Kerman, Iran and considering factors such as class proficiency level, teacher experience, and teacher gender, this study aims to provide a more representative understanding of the relationship between TTT/STT ratios and language learning outcomes.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Design

This research engaged EFL teachers in Kerman, Iran and employed a quantitative observational approach to address the research questions.

3.2. Participants

To investigate the average ratio of TTT to STT in EFL classes, with a specific focus on exploring variations based on class level and teaching experience among EFL teachers in Kerman, Iran, the study included a total of 83 EFL teachers corresponding to 83 classes, comprising 32 male and 51 female teachers, teaching across elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation across different demographics. Firstly, the population of EFL teachers in Kerman, Iran, was categorized based on gender (male and female) and teaching experience (1-5 years (N: 41), 6-10 years (N: 30), and 11-15 (N: 12) years). Subsequently, classes were stratified into elementary (34), intermediate (30), and advanced (19) levels. From each stratum, a proportional number of teachers were randomly selected to participate in the study. Prior to data collection, informed consent including the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of their responses was obtained from all participating teachers. Nevertheless, they were not informed of the study's objectives, as this disclosure might influence the teachers' performance, potentially leading to biased results.

3.3. Instruments and Materials

The only instrument utilized in this study was the observation protocol to record audio of classroom interactions between teachers and students. This protocol facilitated the collection of data on TTT and STT during EFL classes in Kerman, Iran. Additionally, demographic information was collected to analyze the relationship between TTT, STT, class proficiency levels, teachers' experience, and gender.

3.4. Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

The data collection process for this research aimed to ensure a thorough and representative sampling of EFL teachers and their classes in Kerman, Iran. Initially, the population of EFL teachers was segmented by gender (male and female) and teaching experience (1-5 years, 6-10 years, and 11-15 years). Simultaneously, classes were categorized into elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels according to the educational context. To achieve a balanced representation across demographics, a proportional number of teachers were randomly chosen from each stratum to participate in the study. Invitations were extended to selected EFL teachers in-person, with prior coordination done with language institutes' managers.



Upon contact, teachers received a general overview of the research objectives, procedures, and their anticipated role in data collection. However, the exact purpose of the observation was withheld to prevent potential alterations in teaching behavior, ensuring authenticity in the recorded classroom discourse. Before commencing their involvement, teachers were required to provide informed consent, acknowledging their voluntary participation. Every class was recorded, and a thorough review of each recording was conducted to determine the duration of TTT and STT. During the class, there were three distinct phases: TTT, STT, and silence. Observations only focused on TTT and STT, excluding silence. The duration of each phase was converted into percentages, ensuring that TTT and STT combined always sum to 100%. Given the focus on class proficiency levels, teachers' experience and gender, demographic information was collected to facilitate subsequent analysis.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study focused on the dynamics of TTT and STT within EFL classes, addressing four key research questions. Initially, it explores the overall ratio of TTT to STT, revealing insights into the distribution of communication between teachers and learners. Subsequently, the analysis examined whether this ratio significantly varied across different EFL class levels. Furthermore, it investigated the potential influence of EFL teachers' teaching experience on the TTT to STT ratio, providing valuable insights into the role of teachers' experience in classroom discourse. Lastly, the study explored potential differences in the TTT to STT ratio based on EFL teachers' gender, shedding light on possible gender-related differences in teaching approaches.

RQ1: What is the ratio of Teacher Talking Time (TTT) to Student Talking Time (STT) in EFL classes?

The first research question examines the fundamental dynamics of language teaching by exploring the distribution of communication between teachers and students in EFL classes. Quantifying the ratio of TTT to STT demonstrates the balance of discourse within the classroom setting.

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for TTT and STT in 83 EFL classes. On average, TTT comprises approximately 61.49% of the total class time, while STT accounts for 38.51%. The median values reveal a similar distribution, with TTT at 62.00% and STT at 38.00%. The mode for TTT is 67%, indicating that this percentage of class time is most frequently observed, while for STT, the mode is 33%. The standard deviation is 7.176 for both TTT and STT, indicating relatively low variability around the mean. The range for both variables spans from a minimum of 49% to a maximum of 73% for TTT, and from 27% to 51% for STT.

Table 1

Distribution of Teacher Talking Time (TTT) and Student Talking Time (STT) in EFL Classes

	Teacher Talking Time (TTT)	Student Talking Time (STT)
N	83	83
Valid	83	83
Missing	0	0
Mean	61.49	38.51
Median	62.00	38.00
Mode	67	33
Std. Deviation	7.176	7.176
Minimum Range	49	27



RQ2: Does the ratio of Teacher Talking Time (TTT) to Student Talking Time (STT) significantly differ based on the EFL class level?

The second research question investigates whether the ratio of TTT to STT significantly differs based on class level. Before conducting inferential analysis, it was essential to assess the normality of the data. Table 2 presents the outcomes of the normality test which was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. The Shapiro-Wilk test results reveal that, for both TTT and STT across all class levels, the data deviate significantly from a normal distribution ($p < 0.05$). Similarly, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test corroborates these findings. These results indicate a violation of the normality assumption for TTT and STT across class levels. Given the non-normal distribution of the data, the Kruskal-Wallis test, which is a non-parametric equivalent of one-way ANOVA was conducted to assess whether there are statistically significant differences in TTT and STT across the different class levels.

Table 2

Normality Tests for Teacher and Student Talking Time across Class Levels

	Class Levels	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Teacher Talking Time	Elementary	.138	34	.097	.948	34	.105
	Intermediate	.127	30	.200*	.930	30	.049
	Advanced	.121	19	.200*	.971	19	.801
Student Talking Time	Elementary	.138	34	.097	.948	34	.105
	Intermediate	.127	30	.200*	.930	30	.049
	Advanced	.121	19	.200*	.971	19	.801

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

As can be seen in Table 3, The Kruskal-Wallis test is conducted to assess whether there are statistically significant differences in TTT across different class levels (Elementary, Intermediate, and Advanced). The results indicate that the test statistic is 0.723 with 2 degrees of freedom, yielding an asymptotic significance value (p-value) of 0.697. The test statistic adjusted for ties is 0.723, and the p-value associated with this statistic is 0.697. Since the p-value is greater than the conventional significance level of 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. This suggests that there are no statistically significant differences in TTT across the Elementary, Intermediate, and Advanced class levels. This implies that the distribution of TTT does not significantly differ across the various class levels examined.

Table 3

Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test for TTT across Class Levels

Total N	83
Test Statistic	.723 ^{a,b}
Degree Of Freedom	2
Asymptotic Sig.(2-sided test)	.697

a. The test statistic is adjusted for ties.

b. Multiple comparisons are not performed because the overall test does not show significant differences across samples.

Table 4 presents the results of the Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test conducted to assess potential



differences in STT across different class levels (Elementary, Intermediate, and Advanced). The analysis yields a test statistic of 0.723 with 2 degrees of freedom, resulting in an asymptotic significance value (p-value) of 0.697. Consequently, based on these findings, there is insufficient evidence to conclude that there are statistically significant differences in STT among the Elementary, Intermediate, and Advanced class levels. Thus, it can be inferred that the distribution of STT does not significantly vary across the examined class levels.

Table 4

Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test for STT across Class Levels

Total N	83
Test Statistic	.723 ^{a,b}
Degree Of Freedom	2
Asymptotic Sig.(2-sided test)	.697

a. The test statistic is adjusted for ties.

b. Multiple comparisons are not performed because the overall test does not show significant differences across samples.

RQ 3: Does the ratio of Teacher Talking Time (TTT) to Student Talking Time (STT) significantly differ based on the EFL teachers' teaching experience?

The third research question focuses on examining potential differences in TTT and STT concerning teachers' teaching experience. Before conducting inferential analysis, it was essential to assess the normality of the data. Table 5 presents the outcomes of normality tests for TTT and STT across different teaching experience levels (1-5 years, 6-10 years, and 11-15 years), utilizing the Shapiro-Wilk test. The results indicate a departure from normality for both TTT and STT across all experience levels, with statistically significant p-values ($p < 0.05$), except for TTT among teachers with 11-15 years of experience ($p = 0.582$). Given these findings, implying a violation of the normality assumption in most cases, the Kruskal-Wallis test is utilized to ascertain whether there is statistically significant differences among the three categories of teacher teaching experience.

Table 5

Normality Tests for Teacher and Student Talking Time across Teaching Experience Levels

	Teaching Experience	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Teacher Talking Time (TTT)	1-5 years	.119	41	.150	.938	41	.027
	6-10 years	.108	30	.200*	.937	30	.074
	11-15 years	.158	12	.200*	.946	12	.582
Student Talking Time (STT)	1-5 years	.119	41	.150	.938	41	.027
	6-10 years	.108	30	.200*	.937	30	.074
	11-15 years	.158	12	.200*	.946	12	.582

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 6 presents the results of the Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test conducted to assess potential differences in TTT across different categories of teacher experience. The test statistic was calculated as 1.364, with 2 degrees of freedom, resulting in an asymptotic significance value (p-value) of 0.506. Consequently, based on these results, there is insufficient evidence to support the presence of statistically significant differences in TTT among the different categories of teacher experience. Thus, it can be inferred



that the distribution of TTT does not significantly vary across the examined levels of teacher experience.

Table 6

Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test for TTT across Teacher Experiences

Total N	83
Test Statistic	1.364 ^{a,b}
Degree Of Freedom	2
Asymptotic Sig.(2-sided test)	.506

a. The test statistic is adjusted for ties.

b. Multiple comparisons are not performed because the overall test does not show significant differences across samples.

Table 7 displays the outcomes of the Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test aimed at investigating potential differences in STT across various categories of teacher experience. Incorporating data from a total of 83 participants, the test statistic computed was 1.364, with 2 degrees of freedom, resulting in an asymptotic significance value (p-value) of 0.506. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the distribution of STT does not significantly vary across the examined levels of teacher experience.

Table 7

Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test for STT across Teacher Experiences

Total N	83
Test Statistic	1.364 ^{a,b}
Degree Of Freedom	2
Asymptotic Sig.(2-sided test)	.506

a. The test statistic is adjusted for ties.

b. Multiple comparisons are not performed because the overall test does not show significant differences across samples.

RQ 4: Does the ratio of Teacher Talking Time (TTT) to Student Talking Time (STT) significantly differ based on the EFL teachers' gender?

The last research question focuses on examining potential differences in TTT and STT concerning teachers' gender. Before conducting inferential analysis, it was essential to assess the normality of the data. Table 8 presents the normality of TTT and STT assessed across different genders using the Shapiro-Wilk test. The Shapiro-Wilk test statistics for TTT are 0.951 for males and 0.954 for females, with p-values of 0.157 and 0.046, respectively. Test statistics for STT are 0.951 for males and 0.954 for females, with corresponding p-values of 0.157 and 0.046. All reported p-values are below the conventional significance level of 0.05, indicating a departure from normality for both TTT and STT across genders. Thus, the assumption of normality is violated. Given these findings, implying a violation of the normality assumption, the Mann-Whitney U test is utilized to ascertain whether there is statistically significant differences between the male and female teachers.

Table 8

Tests of Normality for Teacher and Student Talking Time by Gender

	Gender	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Teacher Talking Time	Male	.132	32	.167	.951	32	.157
	Female	.092	51	.200*	.954	51	.046



Student Talking Time	Male	.132	32	.167	.951	32	.157
	Female	.092	51	.200*	.954	51	.046

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 9 presents the key findings from the Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test, examining the ratio of TTT across EFL teachers' gender. The Mann-Whitney U statistic is 722.500, with a corresponding Wilcoxon W statistic of 2048.500. The test statistic (U) has a standard error of 106.736 and a standardized test statistic of -0.876. The asymptotic significance value (p-value) for the two-sided test is 0.381. Since this p-value exceeds the conventional significance level of 0.05, there is insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Consequently, no statistically significant differences are found in the ratio of TTT to STT between male and female EFL teachers, indicating that the distribution of this ratio does not significantly vary across gender groups.

Table 9

Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test for TTT across Gender

Total N	83
Mann-Whitney U	722.500
Wilcoxon W	2048.500
Test Statistic	722.500
Standard Error	106.736
Standardized Test Statistic	-.876
Asymptotic Sig.(2-sided test)	.381

As can be seen in Table 10, The Mann-Whitney U statistic was computed as 909.500, accompanied by a Wilcoxon W statistic of 2235.500. The test statistic (U) of 909.500 has a standard error of 106.736, and a standardized test statistic of 0.876. The asymptotic significance value (p-value) associated with the two-sided test is 0.381. As this p-value exceeds the conventional significance level of 0.05, there is inadequate evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, based on these results, it is inferred that no statistically significant differences exist in the ratio of STT across male and female EFL teachers. Thus, the distribution of this ratio does not significantly vary between male and female EFL teachers.

Table 10

Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test for STT across Gender

Total N	83
Mann-Whitney U	909.500
Wilcoxon W	2235.500
Test Statistic	909.500
Standard Error	106.736
Standardized Test Statistic	.876
Asymptotic Sig.(2-sided test)	.381

The distribution of communication between teachers and students in EFL classes is a fundamental aspect of language teaching dynamics which was examined in the first research question. On average, the findings showed that TTT constitutes approximately 61.49% of total class time, with STT comprising the remaining 38.51%. This suggests that teachers dominate the discourse, accounting for a substantial portion of



classroom communication. The relatively low standard deviation of 7.176 for both TTT and STT indicated limited variability around the mean. This suggests that, while there may be some variation in the distribution of TTT and STT across different classes, the overall pattern remains relatively consistent. The phenomenon of disproportionate TTT relative to STT in language classes has been widely observed in EFL classes and critiqued in contemporary educational discourse. Despite pedagogical theories advocating for increased STT to enhance language learning, several underlying reasons contribute to the persistence of high TTT.

Firstly, According to Kaymakamoglu (2018), the traditional teacher-centered approach has deeply rooted itself in many educational systems. This model positions the teacher as the primary knowledge bearer and students as passive recipients. Consequently, teachers often feel obligated to deliver extensive explanations and maintain a strong verbal presence to ensure content is covered comprehensively. This approach, however, limits students' opportunities to actively engage in language use, which is crucial for developing communicative competence. Secondly, according to Kostadinovska-Stojchevska, and Popovikj (2019) and Haliti (2019), teachers may overestimate the necessity of their verbal input for effective learning. They might believe that constant teacher talk is essential for modeling correct language forms, providing clear instructions, and correcting errors. While these are important aspects of teaching, overemphasis on teacher talk can inadvertently suppress students' attempts to produce language, thereby hindering their speaking practice and confidence.

Additionally, as mentioned by Todorova and Ivanova (2020) Ibrahim (2016), concerns about classroom management can lead to increased TTT. Teachers might feel that maintaining a teacher-dominated discourse helps keep the class orderly and focused. In larger classes or those with varied proficiency levels, this approach might seem practical to ensure control and clarity. However, this overlooks the fact that student engagement and interaction can also improve a well-managed and dynamic learning environment. Moreover, teachers may lack confidence in their students' ability to sustain meaningful conversations in the target language, particularly in beginner or intermediate levels. This can result in teachers preemptively dominating discussions to avoid potential misunderstandings or communication breakdowns. While well-intentioned, this practice denies students the essential practice they need to improve their language skills. Finally according to Nilufar (2023), this trend might be related to teachers' low awareness of teaching techniques and procedures which promote collaboration and STT. The findings align with the studies conducted by Adriosh and Osmana (2022), Hamdan and Elandeed (2021), Zare-behtash and Azarnia (2015), Gharbavi and Irvani (2014), Rezaee and Farahian (2012), and Rashidi and Rafieerad (2010), which all unanimously indicated that TTT was significantly more prevalent than STT.

Regarding research questions two, three, and four, which assessed whether the ratio of TTT to STT differs significantly across class levels, based on teachers' teaching experience, and teachers' gender respectively in EFL teaching, it was found that the distribution of TTT and STT remains consistent across these variables. Specifically, the investigation revealed no statistically significant differences in the balance between teacher-led and student-led communication across various class levels, teachers' experience, and teachers' gender. This can be attributed to several potential reasons. Firstly, the persistence of traditional teaching methodologies across different class levels might play a significant role. Many educational systems and institutions emphasize a teacher-centered approach, where the teacher is viewed as the primary authority and source of knowledge (Agrahari, 2016). This model, deeply ingrained in educational practices, often leads teachers to dominate classroom discourse regardless of the students' proficiency levels. Consequently, whether teaching beginners or advanced students, teachers might feel compelled to maintain control over the conversation to ensure that instructional goals are met, leading to consistently high TTT. Secondly, the consistency in TTT and STT ratios across varying levels of teaching experience suggests that newer and more experienced teachers alike may adhere to similar instructional norms and practices. According to Mac Iver (2004), this could be due to the influence of institutional culture and standardized curricula that emphasize coverage of material through direct instruction. Moreover, novice teachers often model their teaching practices on those of their more experienced colleagues, perpetuating a cycle of teacher-dominated



classroom interactions.

Additionally, the lack of significant differences based on teachers' gender indicates that both male and female teachers might face similar pedagogical pressures and adhere to comparable teaching styles in EFL classrooms. Gender-related expectations and stereotypes about teaching roles may not significantly impact the amount of TTT. Instead, systemic factors such as curriculum requirements, institutional expectations, and cultural attitudes toward education likely play a more substantial role in shaping teaching practices (Banks, 2015). Moreover, the consistently higher TTT compared to STT can be attributed to several factors inherent in language teaching. Teachers might perceive their extensive talking time as necessary for providing clear explanations, modeling correct language use, managing classroom behavior etc. They might also feel the need to cover a significant amount of material within limited class time, leading to a lecture-heavy approach. Additionally, teachers may underestimate students' abilities to engage in meaningful conversation, particularly in lower proficiency levels, although not significant differences were observed in this study among levels, prompting them to take a more dominant role in classroom discourse. Despite extensive literature searches, no studies were found that directly align with or contrast the findings of the current study regarding questions two, three and four which investigated whether gender, teacher experience, and class level can affect STT and TTT. This suggests that the present research offers novel insights into this topic highlighting the need for further investigation in this area. The unique aspects of our findings, particularly if gender, teacher experience, and class level can affect STT and TTT, suggest potential new directions for future research.

5. CONCLUSION

Classroom discourse and interaction, especially the balance between TTT and STT, are essential components in EFL settings (Adriosh & Osmana, 2022). Although existing research has investigated various aspects of classroom discourse and interaction, there is a paucity of studies specifically examining the TTT and STT ratio across a wide range of EFL classes through direct observation. To address this gap, the present observational study aimed to assess the TTT/STT ratio in 83 diverse EFL classes in Kerman, Iran. Additionally, the study explored whether this ratio correlates with variables such as teachers' gender, years of teaching experience, and class level. This study included 83 EFL teachers of both genders, with teaching experience ranging from 1 to 15 years, and who were teaching at elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels. The findings revealed that, on average, TTT accounted for approximately 61.49% of total class time, while STT comprised 38.51%. No significant differences were found in the TTT/STT ratio when considering teachers' gender, teaching experience, or class level.

One of the immediate implications is the need for a balanced approach to classroom interaction. The predominance of TTT suggests that students may not be receiving ample opportunities to practice speaking English, which is crucial for language learning. According to Walsh (2022), active student participation is essential in improving communicative competence, encouraging spontaneous use of the language, developing confidence in speaking and other language skills. Therefore, EFL teachers might need to adopt strategies that intentionally increase STT. Techniques such as structured pair work, group discussions, and student-led activities can help redistribute speaking time more equitably. Another significant implication relates to teacher training and professional development. The study's finding that the TTT/STT ratio does not significantly vary with teachers' gender, years of teaching experience, or class level indicates that this issue is pervasive across different demographics and contexts. This suggests that teacher education programs should emphasize the importance of interactive and student-centered teaching methodologies (Muganga & Ssenkusu, 2019). Training should include practical tools and techniques for teachers to facilitate more student talk, ensuring that they are well-equipped to create a more balanced and engaging classroom environment.



Moreover, the lack of variation in TTT/STT ratios across different class levels points to a potential gap in instructional design tailored to students' proficiency levels. Teachers need to recognize that beginner, intermediate, and advanced students might benefit from different types of talking time. For instance, beginners may require more guided practice and scaffolding, whereas advanced students might need opportunities for extended discourse and debate. As mentioned by Oviedo Gómez and Álvarez Guayara (2019), customizing the interaction patterns to suit the students' needs at each level could enhance language learning outcomes. The study also highlights the importance of continuous classroom observation and feedback mechanisms. Regular monitoring of classroom interactions can help teachers become more aware of their speaking patterns and adjust them accordingly (Walsh, 2003). Schools and language institutions might consider implementing peer observation programs, where teachers can observe each other's classes and provide constructive feedback on interaction dynamics. Finally, these findings have policy implications. Educational policymakers should consider the ratio of TTT to STT as one of the key indicators of classroom quality in EFL contexts. Policies that promote a balanced approach to classroom talk can lead to more effective language teaching and learning. This could involve setting guidelines for optimal TTT/STT ratios and incorporating these metrics into teacher evaluation and professional development frameworks.

In practice, several practical factors must be considered to maximize STT in EFL classrooms. Effective language techniques and procedures can significantly increase STT, provided they are well-prepared and incorporated into lesson plans (Cardenas, 2013; Mohammed et al., 2020). EFL teachers without prepared lesson plans or knowledge of teaching techniques and procedures often rely heavily on their language proficiency alone. This approach is akin to a native speaker teaching a class solely by speaking English, which can lead to higher TTT as they default to lengthy explanations. For example, bringing a picture to class to teach a vocabulary concept can save time and reduce ambiguity compared to providing long verbal explanations, thus decreasing TTT. Similarly, planned teachers are more likely to effectively use pair work, group work, and other interactive activities at appropriate times, which increases STT. Therefore, a crucial factor in promoting more STT is the awareness and implementation of student-centered techniques and procedures. These include pair and group work, collaborative activities, CCQs, ICQs, elicitation techniques, having learners recap the lesson, simulations, wait time, peer and self-error correction, role-plays etc. Moreover, having a professional lesson plan that integrates these techniques is essential. Additionally, being observed and briefed by an experienced observer or a teacher trainer, maintaining a reflective attitude, and participating in ongoing professional development programs are significant factors that can lead to higher STT (Wragg, 2011). Regular observations and feedback can help teachers become more aware of their TTT/STT balance and refine their teaching strategies to promote a more interactive and student-centered learning environment.

To enhance the understanding of classroom discourse and interaction in EFL settings, several recommendations for further studies emerge from the findings. First, extending the research to include EFL classes in different regions or countries is essential. This approach would determine if the TTT/STT ratio and its determinants vary across different cultural and educational contexts, providing a more global perspective on classroom interaction dynamics. Additionally, complementing quantitative findings with qualitative research can offer deeper insights into the nature of teacher-student interactions. This could involve in-depth interviews with teachers and students to investigate their perceptions and attitudes towards the balance of TTT and STT. Detailed analysis of classroom discourse such as TTT quality would also help understand the quality and effectiveness of these interactions, highlighting best practices and areas needing improvement. Moreover, implementing and evaluating interventions aimed at increasing STT is crucial. For instance, providing teachers with specific training on interactive teaching techniques could be a practical intervention. Measuring the impact of these interventions on the TTT/STT ratio and student engagement help researchers identify effective strategies to promote more balanced and interactive classroom environments.



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Conflicts of interest

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