



## Investigating EFL Teachers' Fulfillment of Interactional Requirements of L2 Classroom Modes and EFL Learners' Interaction

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### ABSTRACT

*The primary goal of this classroom-based observation was to assess the degree to which Iranian EFL teachers meet the interactional requirements of L2 classroom modes, materials, skills, and systems, as well as classroom context. In order to achieve the objectives, the researchers requested twelve EFL teachers at Iran Language Institute (ILI) to record twenty minutes of their classes. This was done to minimize disruptions to the teaching process and the communicative and interactional behaviors of the learners. The voice-recorded interactions were transcribed, and the required data were illustrated. The data analysis confidently demonstrated that the L2 classroom modes fulfilled the interactional requirements of Iranian EFL teachers, thereby promoting interaction among L2 learners. The findings assist novice and experienced teachers in understanding and incorporating these modes into their lesson plans and teaching experiences, enhancing their teaching skills in alignment with the syllabus and pedagogical goals.*

**KEYWORDS:** Classroom-Based Observation; Classroom Context Mode; Managerial Mode; Materials Mode; Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk (SETT); Skills and Systems Mode

### INTRODUCTION

Every English class is a new experience for EFL teachers, and they may face some problems in every new class. They should be capable enough to handle the situations well and create the suitable context and class discourse according to the learners' needs. Interaction establishes contexts and builds meanings collaboratively (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Interaction is the foundation of second language (L2) learning, in which learners engage in both increasing their communicative abilities and social skills (Brown, 2007). Teaching and learning L2 in the classroom should be carried out as an interaction to get language models and facilities. Huriyah and Agustiani (2018) state that interaction is one crucial point of success in the process of teaching and learning because it is an integrated exchange of thought, feeling or ideas between a teacher and learner or a learner and other learner consequent in complementary impact on each other. In the classroom, both teacher and learners should have the willingness to participate in the interaction. The teacher-learner and learner-learner interactions are required in classroom activities. Therefore, learning results from interaction with others (Long, 1981). Interaction is significant in English classes, and class conversations need to be analyzed to reinforce the strong points, make the weak ones ineffective, and improve learning through more efficient interactions.



Lee and Hellermann (2014) argue that conversation analysis in L2 acquisition seeks the relevance of learning through the actions of groups in each context of use because the processes of learning are conducted through the talk of the interlocutors; that is, learning occurs through interaction. Waring (2017) indicates that conversation analysts work with audio or video recordings and their transcripts by means of transcription notation system first advanced by Gail Jefferson (2015) to take into account a good number of interactional features, including volume, pitch, pace, intonation, overlap, inbreath, smiley voice, silence length, and nonverbal behavior. She goes on saying that the aim of conversation analysis is to explore the implied methods and procedures of social interaction. Analysis starts with the particular investigation of single utterances and is directed by the question “Why that now?” (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973), that is, why a specific instance of talk is uttered in that specific format at that specific time: What is it performing? It is in these exact particulars that one can find evidence of how social functions such as requesting or apologizing are accomplished by the participants themselves.

In the context of EFL education, influential classroom interaction is vital for language acquisition. However, there is a gap in understanding how well EFL teachers fulfill the interactional requirements of different L2 classroom modes (managerial, material, skills and systems, and the classroom context modes). These modes require different interactional strategies. The problem lies in the potential mismatch between the interactional demands of these modes and the actual practices of EFL teachers, which may affect learners' engagement and language development. Scholars have meticulously studied classroom interaction and students' language learning outcomes in several investigations (e.g., Barraja-Rohan, 2011; Namaziandoost & Nasri, 2019; Shamsipour & Allami, 2012; Teng & Singwongsuwat, 2015). However, only a few research studies examined how the managerial, material, skills and systems, as well as the classroom context modes, meet the interactional needs of EFL teachers and how they encourage their L2 students to interact.

Understanding how educators administer diverse classroom modalities can provide effective teaching strategies to enhance learners' language acquisition and interaction. The findings of this study can provide insights into the dynamics of classroom interaction by highlighting how various modes of interaction affect learners' engagement and participation (Sundari, 2018). This can assist in creating a more interactive and supportive learning atmosphere. Results from such research can affect curriculum design by focusing on the importance of interactional competence in language learning to develop curricula to better support interactive learning and communication skills (Zhang, 2023). The current study aimed to verify whether EFL teachers' use of language helps them to create a more efficient relationship with the learners through creating a suitable context and desired class discourse. Moreover, the researchers intended to observe if analyzing EFL teachers' class discourse could help them to achieve a better understanding of the classroom micro-contexts to change the discourse mode and increase learners' contributions and interaction to improve their general language proficiency. This study answers the following research questions.

**RQ1:** To what extent do EFL teachers fulfill the interactional requirements of each L2 classroom mode (managerial, material, skills and systems, and classroom context)?

**RQ2:** What are the most frequent modes to fulfill EFL teachers' interactional requirements?

**RQ3:** Which L2 classroom modes (managerial, material, skills and systems, and classroom context) are effective in increasing EFL learners' interaction?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **CONVERSATION ANALYSIS (CA)**

Conversation Analysis (CA) came into being out of extensive work done in sociology and later discourse analysis (Sacks et al., 1974). CA has an intricate, dynamic, highly practical standpoint on context; an extensive debate is available in Schegloff (1987) and Seedhouse (2004). It has enjoyed popularity among language educators and researchers over recent years (Seedhouse, 2005). According to Ghafarpour (2017), conversation analysis creates an understanding of the way talk-in-interaction is built systematically based on how speakers react to each other's turns-



at-talk. Based on Jocuns (2012), conversation analysts argue that understanding and reproducing social structures lie in the way interlocutors interact. The analytic units creating the conversation analysis procedure, including turn structure, repair, and interaction sequences should develop out of interaction between teachers and learners during class time and reflect some features of the social structure that holds classrooms together.

According to Ellis (2008), L2 classroom researchers have followed two general approaches, sometimes combining both descriptive and confirmatory methods. It was indicated that descriptive research focuses on “the form and functions of classroom interactions, how these interactions are shaped and become meaningful, and what the implications may be for students’ learning” (Ellis, 2008, p. 777). He believed that such research does not investigate how input/interaction leads to language learning although it has considered how it affords opportunities for learning. Descriptive studies of L2 classrooms can be qualitative or quantitative in which the frequency of specific descriptive categories such as ‘confirmation checks’ or ‘display questions’ can be calculated. Ellis (2008) referred to many great researchers who have presented their findings in each of the four different types of descriptive research (interaction analysis, discourse analysis, conversational analysis, ethnography of communication) without any statistical analysis, and just by counting the frequency of the specific descriptive categories.

### THE SETT FRAMEWORK

Based on Walsh (2011), the SETT (Self Evaluation of Teacher Talk) framework is intended to assist teachers in describing the classroom interaction practices during lessons and inform our understanding of how interactional processes help us become ‘better’ teachers. Walsh also believes that the beginning point is that L2 classroom context does not exist on its own, yet participants create contexts through and in their interaction after considering institutional goals in general and quick pedagogic objectives in particular. The idea of ‘the L2 lesson context’ is rather broad-brush; “contexts are locally created and transformable at any moment” (Drew & Heritage 1992, p. 19). The L2 classroom context is comprised of a number of micro-contexts, connected with several ‘external’ factors (Howard, 2010) including beliefs, attitudes, previous experience, etc. Under this procedure, four patterns or micro-contexts were recognized, which were known as *modes*, including managerial mode, materials mode, skills and systems mode, and classroom context mode. A description of every mode is presented in the following sections. (Transcription conventions appear in Appendix A). Each mode is made up of specific interactional features and particular pedagogic goals (See Appendix B).

**1) Managerial Mode:** According to Walsh (2011), managerial mode deals with how learning is organized. Its basic pedagogic object is to manage learning in time and space and to initiate or close classroom activities. In this mode, there are frequent repetitions, commands, and instructions. Upon ending managerial mode, the learners are given a pause and there is a movement into another mode. The utilization of fillers, such as so, OK, right, now, etc., is seen as aiding students in adhering to the subject matter and providing direction to the discourse. When managerial mode is initiated at the commencement of a lesson, the teacher's primary focus is to situate the learning temporally and pedagogically or spatially” (Walsh & O’Keeffe, 2007). Identifying learning is a crucial initial step in establishing a primary context; hence, in numerous instances, managerial mode serves a supportive function in sustaining micro-settings. It can be described as an ‘enabling’ mode (McCarthy & Walsh, 2003).

**2) Materials Mode:** Walsh (2011) discussed that in the materials mode, pedagogic objectives and language use are centered on the materials being utilized. All interaction normally develops around teaching materials such as texts, audio-visual aids, worksheets, etc. He indicates that, as a rule, the interaction closely monitors and models the IRF (Initial Response Feedback) exchange pattern. In this mode, turn-taking and topic choice are decided upon by the material. Walsh and O’Keeffe (2007) further argue that “in materials mode, interactional patterns develop from the material that mostly determines who may speak, when, and what they may say; the interaction may or may not be



managed exclusively by the teacher" (p. 110). They emphasize that, despite having changing degrees of interactional space, learners' contributions are still constrained by the task, which depends on the nature of the activity.

**3) Skills and Systems Mode:** Walsh (2011) points out that in skills and systems mode, pedagogic objectives are closely identified to provide language practice concerning a specific language system (phonology, grammar, vocabulary, discourse) or one of the four language skills and/or components. Having learners 'notice' patterns (Schmidt, 1990) and recognizing relationships is a main objective in this mode. Meaning and communicative function are given little consideration; the main objective is to enable learners to understand and produce target forms (Walsh, 2011). Form-focused instruction is widely acknowledged to have a vital role to play in the SLA process; obviously, the teacher's management of learner contributions through scaffolding and repair are key to that process (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Ellis, 2001).

**4) Classroom Context Mode:** In classroom context mode, local context determines the administration of turns and topics, that is "the communication potential of the L2 classroom *itself*" (van Lier, 1988, p. 30). There are frequent opportunities for communication and the teacher plays a less central role, taking more of a 'back seat' and having learners interact as much as they need. Walsh (2011) maintained that the key role of the teacher is to listen and encourage the interaction, which occurs in common exchanges. The learners are called on to share their thoughts. Learners almost handle turn taking, trying to compete for the floor and gain, hold, and pass turns, which are typical features of natural conversation. Based on Walsh, turns are significantly longer, contain more overlaps and latches and pausing is more noticeable. Topic shifts are also managed by the students with the equal teacher participation as a respondent, allowing the discourse to develop within the topics selected by the learners. The teacher just asks referential questions, and extended learner turns dominate the sequence. Error treatment is ignored; evaluative remarks are not used and the feedback is limited to the content, usually in the form of an individual rejoinder (Walsh, 2011).

#### MODE SIDE SEQUENCES

Walsh (2011) stated that a "commonly found type of mixed mode occurs when there is a brief departure from main to secondary mode and back to main mode again" (p. 133). For instance, side sequences could be exemplified as classroom-context- skills-and-systems-classroom-context, with classroom context functioning as the primary mode and skills and systems as the secondary mode. Walsh indicated that side sequences are a common feature of conversational exchange in which two speakers construct and negotiate the dialogue in tandem, "feeling their way forward together" (Cook, 1989, p. 54), and handling two topics and two exchange structures. Each of the participants aiming for a specific intention mostly related to that of the institution progress hesitantly in L2 classrooms (Walsh, 2011). Mode side sequences happen frequently, as exemplified in the following extract.

Learner: My father wants me to change my job because he thinks an ... um ... acting is not an honorable job.

**Wrong stress mark (3)**

Teacher: Honorable= *S & S Mode*

Learner: =Honorable.

In the above extract, the teacher established a context in which the learner talked about his real life, and simultaneously he tried to pay attention to the learner's production and corrected him in different ways whenever needed. Therefore, mode side sequence from classroom context to skills and systems occurred.



## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### SOCIOCULTURAL POINT OF VIEW ABOUT FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

The sociocultural theory (SCT) developed by Vygotsky has a significant impact on education. Despite his belief that biological variables play basic roles in core processes, he also holds that sociocultural factors play a significant part in the development of human mental processes. Vygotsky (1978) posits that sociocultural contexts are the fundamental and pivotal elements in the advancement of higher cognitive functions. Sociocultural theory posits that learning is a social phenomenon resulting from the interaction between the learner and the environment. SCT posits that human cognitive processes are mediated by cultural artifacts, behaviors, and concepts (Lantolf, 2000). Language serves as the primary medium of mediation. Developmental processes occur due to a child's engagement in cultural, linguistic, and historical contexts, including relationships within families, peer groups, educational institutions, workplaces, and sports activities (Veresov et al., 2024). While Vygotsky acknowledges the role of neurobiological variables in advanced cognitive abilities, he underscores the importance of social interactions in the evolution of human cognition (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007).

Ellis (2000) posits that sociocultural theory is predicated on the premise that learning occurs not through interaction but within interaction. When learners engage in specific tasks with the assistance of a peer or instructor, they internalize the methodology for executing the work independently, leading to learning outcomes. Consequently, social interaction is regarded as a facilitator or mediator of the learning process. According to Ellis (2000), the interactions via which learners scaffold new activities help their learning process.

A significant addition of sociocultural theory to language learning is the concept of participation (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000, as referenced in Davies, 2007), which integrates the social context with individual acquisition. An individual cannot attain proficiency in a language just via their own effort; rather, they require the engagement of others, particularly adults, for interaction within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

As Cook (2008) states, the prominent aspect of Vygotsky's ZPD is the fact that the gap between the learner's current state and their future knowledge is bridged by assistance from others. Learning requires social interaction for the learner to internalize knowledge out of external action. ZPD holds significance as it marks the transition from interpsychological functions, which occur between people, to intrapsychological functions, which occur within the individual. Learning causes different internal developmental functions to be activated, which happen only when the child is interacting with his peers or the adults in his environment. When the child internalizes the learning process, it becomes part of their internal knowledge. Vygotsky's perspective assumes that learning happens in the presence of other people: others who have better knowledge, "more knowledgeable others" (MKO) (1978, p. 86).

Learning a language is a continuous process involving classroom interactions with others in a context managed by the teachers. As MKOs, teachers utilize four L2 classroom modes to achieve pedagogic goals whenever necessary. These modes help learners in different ways by providing opportunities to foster their language skills, much like how parents engage in the conversation or play with their children. This interaction helps activate and gradually develop the individual's ZPD. In doing so, the students gradually learn how to have topic shift, topic nomination, continue others' stories, and many other things even from other peers who can function as MKO, too. When the learners try to retell a story, they may not learn new words, but their speech rate increases, so they maintain more fluency which is a pedagogic goal of using modes– to provide language practice around a piece of material (Walsh 2011). Therefore, teachers play key role in learners' participation and interaction, which lead to learning and promoting their engagement.

In view of the SETT framework, Suryati (2015) investigated 18 Indonesian EFL teachers' use of interaction strategies in a lower secondary level context. The teachers were observed for teaching 30 lessons in their practice. The findings showed that most of the teacher-student interaction was revolved around the materials mode and skills and systems mode. The most common strategies included initiation response, IRF patterns, display



questions, teacher echo, and extended teacher turns. It was discussed that improving the status of ELT in Indonesia required providing an alternative to classroom interaction.

In another study, Yauwangsa and Wijaya (2016) did an extensive study on the L2 classroom modes by an Indonesian senior English teacher. They attempted to find out what pedagogic goals, interactional features, and L2 classroom modes existed in the fourth graders' classroom taught by a senior English teacher. The findings showed that among 18 pedagogic goals, sixteen appeared. Moreover, all of 14 interactional features and all of four modes appeared. Among the four modes, managerial mode was the most frequent one (54.54%). The results indicated that the teacher could create an interactive class, for the learners were allowed to formulate responses for seconds so that they could contribute more. In addition, rarely did the teacher complete learners' responses and treat learners' errors directly so that they might feel confident to contribute to the class interaction.

In another investigation, Aşık and Kuru Gönen (2016) examined 23 Turkish pre-service EFL teachers' perceptions of their use of teacher talk and its contribution to their professional development using the SETT framework. Findings showed that the SETT assisted the teachers in enhancing awareness of what they did, how they did it and how they made use of language in the classroom context. The results provided important insights into teachers' language use and its influence upon developing classroom interaction. Although the results of the study were derived from teacher talk, the scope of study was limited in terms of the number of participants and data collection procedure.

In a case study, Tokdemir Demirel and Kaçar (2017) aimed at comparing English classroom modes used by six Turkish pre-service and in-service teachers based on the SETT framework, with classroom context mode in focus, in order to enhance interaction among EFL learners. There was also an attempt to investigate the extent to which novice teachers could take over the interaction to increase student talk and involvement. The findings revealed that in-service teachers used the managerial mode more frequently than in-service teachers. Moreover, it was indicated that both groups of teachers used managerial and materials modes among the others the most frequently.

Ghafarpour (2017) also utilized the framework to probe into critical reflective practice of an EFL teacher. Using conversation analysis, extracts taken from 12 hours of audio recording of a general English course were analyzed. The findings indicated that the SETT framework could serve language teachers well by raising their interactional awareness and improving the teachers' knowledge of pedagogy and practice. Although the research was not broad in scope regarding setting, teacher, and student participants, the results yielded useful information about instructors' critical reflective practice based on self-evaluation of teacher talk framework.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a qualitative research design to investigate how EFL teachers fulfill the interactional requirements of various L2 classroom modes and how EFL learners engage in these interactions.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

Through a random sampling method, 12 EFL teachers aged between 28 and 44 having 6 to 14 years of experience in English teaching were selected as the participants of the study. All teachers agreed to participate in the study. The researchers had to observe the Iran Language Institute classrooms in Sari and Babol branches in which the teachers passed some standard examinations and were of acceptable language proficiency. The number of students ranged from 19 to 25 in each class at the intermediate level.



**Table 1** *The Number of Students in Each Class*

Class No.	Number of Students
1	24
2	19
3	20
4	21
5	24
6	25
7	22
8	19
9	21
10	25
11	23
12	21

## INSTRUMENTS

- 1- A Sony voice recorder: In order to record 20 minutes of different sessions of teaching various parts of the materials in 12 classes, a Sony voice recorder was used.
- 2- The were transcripts of voice-recorded interactions between 12 EFL teachers and their students in different sessions of teaching in order to analyze them according to Walsh's (2011) Discourse Model.

## DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The current research study utilized a qualitative research design. Qualitative research is a primary way to best capture participants' lived experience (Narayanasamy, 2002). The rationale for employing a qualitative research design in this study is based on some factors. Qualitative research allows for a profound exploration of the intricate, significant interactions between teachers and learners in the classroom. It also captures the dynamics of classroom interactions that might be missed by quantitative methods (Stuckey, 2013). Choosing qualitative research helped gain a better understanding of the EFL teachers' fulfillment of interactional requirements of L2 classroom modes through doing observations to dig deeper for the teachers' preference of using materials mode as one of the elements of classroom micro-contexts.

## DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

To gather the data, the researchers asked 12 EFL teachers teaching English at Iran Language Institute, Sari and Babol branches, to record twenty minutes of one session of their class without having been made aware of the subject of the classroom-based observation in order for them not to change their behavior and reduce the Hawthorne effect (Mackey & Gass, 2016). In order to avoid influencing both the teaching process and the learners' feedback and to ensure the validity of the observation techniques, the researchers refrained from attending the classrooms.

Then the voice-recorded interactions of the teachers and their students were transcribed to examine the teachers' use of language. The researchers transcribed the voice-recordings by applying the transcription system adopted from van Lier (1988) and Johnson (1995). The SETT framework was designed to help the researchers develop a closer understanding of the intricate relationship between language, interaction, and learning. The framework could be seen as a tool that promoted and aided teachers' language use that resulted in changes in classroom discourse and ultimately for the students' benefit. Moreover, the researchers tried to examine how EFL teachers' interactional requirements of the classroom micro-contexts are fulfilled and L2 learners' engagement is enhanced. In the meantime, the researchers studied the pedagogic goals and interactional features of those L2



classroom modes in every sequence of the transcript and reported their other observations during the analysis. The transcripts of the records were studied meticulously by the researchers and reported at the end of the study. In order the research results to be reliable, an expert was asked to study all four modes in detail and determine the sequences, side sequences, and prominent mode in every sequence of all classes based on Walsh (2011), and count the number of teachers and learners' turns and words. Then the correlation between two sets of word counts was calculated indicating a high positive correlation between them.

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

The current study utilized conversation analysis to examine the collected data. Conversation analysis is a methodological framework that examines communication by analyzing the structure and organization of dialogue. It entails the methodical analysis of verbal and nonverbal behaviors, including turn taking, pauses, and gestures, to comprehend interpersonal communication. The classroom interactions between the EFL teachers and students throughout twelve class openings were audio-recorded and transcribed afterward. This study, which followed Ellis's (2008) classroom-based observation methodology, required the researchers to count the turns of the teachers and learners in each of the two L2 classroom modes. They also counted the words present in each learner's turn to describe their interaction behavior, which was a result of the learners' communicative language competency. This was done to determine which mode used a greater number of words. Simply put, a learner's turn-count may exceed that of a mode with a lower word count. The more the learners participated in verbal interaction in each mode, the more likely they encountered different contexts and were involved in authentic language use. This approach aided the learners in enhancing their engagement and interaction, as they endeavored to maintain their turn and express themselves in various ways.

### **RESULTS**

To answer the research questions, all the transcripts were carefully read and analyzed according to Walsh (2011) to find out how and to what extent the interactional needs of EFL teachers in L2 classroom modes are met and how much participation was encouraged by L2 learners. The researchers then depicted the teacher turn count, teacher word count, learner turn count, and learner word count in various sequences of L2 classrooms, highlighting each mode as the most prominent among the others. Every extract was taken from a twenty-minute of a ninety-minute intermediate class involving a group of twelve teachers from the Iran Language Institute of Sari and Babol in order to illustrate each mode.

### **ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

To answer the first research question and to find the extent to which EFL teachers fulfill the interactional requirements of each L2 classroom mode (managerial, material, skills and systems, and classroom context), the word count of the teachers and the learners' turns in each sequence, is displayed in Table 2 and Figure 1.

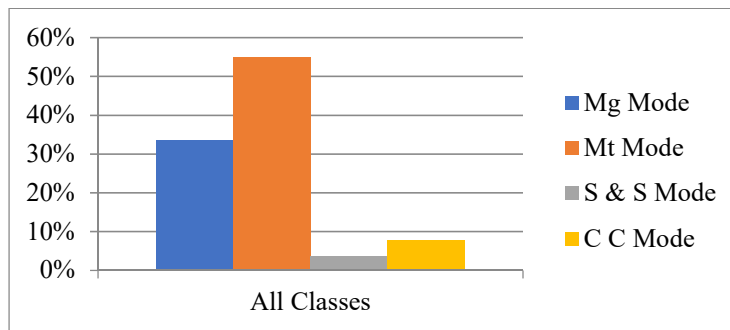




**Table 2** *The Percentages of L2 Classroom Modes*

Class No.	Managerial	Materials	Skills & Systems	Classroom Context
1	4.05	93.24	0.67	2.00
2	23.58	70.75	0.00	5.66
3	3.14	96.85	0.00	0.00
4	44.95	46.97	0.00	8.06
5	39.71	60.28	0.00	0.00
6	57.47	26.19	7.42	8.89
7	40.32	46.70	11.83	1.13
8	20.97	73.19	5.83	0.00
9	3.10	14.28	14.28	68.32
10	0.00	100	0.00	0.00
11	18.47	78.53	2.98	0.00
12	45.99	54.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Percentage</b>	33.47	55.08	3.58	7.83

As Table 2 indicates, EFL teachers fulfilled the interactional requirements of all four L2 classroom modes (managerial, material, skills and systems, and classroom context). As we can see, all modes with different percentage were used.



**Figure 1** *The Percentage of L2 Classroom Modes*

To answer the second research question, Table 2 illustrates the percentage of each L2 classroom mode. As can be seen, the most frequent modes to fulfill EFL teachers' interactional requirements are material and managerial modes with the percentages of 55.08 and 33.47 respectively. The classroom context and the skills and systems modes were the least used modes with the percentages of 7.83 and 3.58, respectively.

To answer the third question and find out which L2 classroom modes (managerial, material, skills and systems, and classroom context) were effective in increasing EFL learners' interaction, learners' word count in each classroom mode are presented in Tables 3-6. Considering the word count, it can be concluded that material mode was the most influential mode in enhancing EFL learners' interaction.

**Table 3** L2 Classroom Mode of Managerial

Class No. – Sequence No.	Prominent Sequence	Sequence Focus	Teacher turn count	Teacher word count	Learners turn count	Learners word count
2- S1	Managerial	transmitting information	6	69	5	15
6- S1	Managerial	transmitting information	37	460	42	149
6- S4	Managerial	Physical learning environment	10	46	16	111

Delving into the details of the data collected and based on the data analysis, it was found that when managerial mode occurred at the start of the unit, the teachers tried their best to position the learning spatially, or temporally and pedagogically. Locating the process of learning was a crucial first step in establishing the main context; thus, in many respects, managerial mode functioned as a support to the other three modes. The teachers spent some time to arrange the physical learning atmosphere, call the rolls, refer learners to the materials, introduce an activity, and whatever needed for the organization of learning; consequently, they as *more knowledgeable others* paved the way for the learners to have more interaction which fortified their interaction.

Here, an extract from sequence 1 of class 6 clarifies managerial mode as an example:

1. T: Aqaei, you're gonna make up another story using the words ... of unit 3... It goes ... one ... two ... three ... four ... [five] **Mg Mode**
2. L: [Teacher, ((2))]=
3. T: = Yes, yes. This is four. Just a second... five ... six ... seven ... (5) A student laughs. Eight. There you go. Parsa ... eight quarters (4). Describe them in a ... nice story.= **Mg Mode**
4. L1: = I was late on Mondays because ... um=
5. T: = On Mondays?= **Mg Mode**
6. L1:= Yes. =
7. T: =Every single Monday, you're gonna be late? (2). **Mg Mode**
8. L2: [Yes, yes.]
9. L: [school.]
10. L: [maybe.]=
11. L1: = Because my school ... ends at ... 2. =
12. L2: = Yeah, me too ... [on Mondays].
13. T: [The class starts at 2: 30]. ((5)). **Mg Mode**
14. L2: Teacher ... I should ... go to my home and ... change my clothes and ... eat ... eat food and ... and come to the class. (4).
15. T: why don't you come to this place ... directly? Why don't you come here directly? You wanna go home ... change clothes? ((3)) **Mg Mode**

**Table 4** L2 Classroom Mode of Materials

Class No. – Sequence No.	Prominent Sequence	Sequence Focus	Teacher turn count	Teacher word count	Learners turn count	Learners word count
1- S1	Materials	Grammar	12	64	26	168
1- S2	Materials	Pronunciation	45	110	44	45
1- S3	Materials	Vocabulary Meaning	32	344	39	136
1- S4	Materials	Reading Comprehension	32	334	35	231
1- S5	Materials	Reading Comprehension	14	361	13	37
2- S2	Materials	Vocabulary Review	47	887	48	262
2- S3	Materials	Reading	53	2124	52	107
3- S1	Materials	Conversation	53	828	58	208
3- S2	Materials	Listening	7	248	6	17
4- S1	Materials	Task of Repetition	31	41	30	36
4- S3	Materials	Reading Comprehension	23	843	20	66
5- S1	Materials	Reading Comprehension	86	1974	99	355
6- S3	Materials	Dialogue Reviewing	30	391	45	396
7- S1	Materials	Vocabulary Meaning	85	972	98	653
8- S1	Materials	Vocabulary Meaning	49	442	49	444
8- S2	Materials	Vocabulary Repetition	14	111	12	325
9- S3	Materials	Vocabulary Meaning	47	663	49	240
10- S1	Materials	Reading	19	3427	18	64
11- S1	Materials	Reading Comprehension	49	671	45	625
12- S1	Materials	Conversation	36	487	27	103

Based on Table 4, the researchers found out that most teachers tried their best to elicit answers associated with the material as much as possible, predominance of IRF pattern was perceived; thus, teacher turn outnumbered learners turn in most sequences. The teachers spent much time to follow the pedagogic goals, especially to clarify every point with very few learner contributions; nevertheless, they were able to manage the time to involve the learners in class interaction as *more knowledgeable others* and were successful enough to make opportunities for the learners to communicate and improve their interaction and engagement.

Here, an extract from sequence 3 of class 1 displays materials mode in which the teacher's intention was to provide vocabulary practice of the previous reading.

175. T: = Um, Mr. Shokrollahzadeh, (5) what does "loyal" mean? **Mt Mode**

176. L: Support for something.=

177. T: = Excuse me? **Mt Mode**

178. L: Support for something.



179. T: Su... What does “support” mean? “4” Aha! (3) Loyal. (3) Can you give us an example to clarify the meaning? **Mt Mode**
180. L: Like ... um ... so ... soldiers.=
181. T: = Aha?= **Mt Mode**
182. L: They are ... they are co-workers. (2) They work together and help ... help ... together.
183. T: help their country with safety. Maybe, you know? Some animals are loyal.= **Mt Mode**
184. L: =Yes.=
185. T: Dogs, **Mt Mode**
186. L: Ants.=
187. T: =horses. (2)They are loyal animals, yes? (3) Thank you. **Mt Mode**

In this extract, the interactional organization is almost determined by the materials and directed by the teacher. Teacher and learner turns are reflected by the material: the teacher elicits responses (175, 177, 179, 181, 183, 185, and 187) and learners respond (176, 178, 180, 182, 184, and 186). The sequence resembles ‘classic IRF’ (teacher Initiation, learner Response, teacher Feedback), the most concise way to move forward the interaction, with each teacher turn acting as both an evaluation of a learner’s participation and initiation of another one.

**Table 5** L2 Classroom Mode of Skills & Systems Distribution

Class No. – Sequence No. –Extract No.	Prominent Sequence	Sequence Focus	Teacher turn count	Teacher word count	Learners turn count	Learners word count
1– S3 – E1	Materials	vocabulary meaning	2	9	1	2
1– S3 – E2	Materials	vocabulary meaning	2	27	2	2
6– S2 – E1	Classroom Context	speaking	14	74	13	62
6– S3 – E1	Materials	dialogue	1	8	1	12
6– S3 – E2	Materials	dialogue	1	12	1	3
7– S1 – E1	Materials	vocabulary meaning	1	9	1	5
7– S1 – E2	Materials	vocabulary meaning	1	36	1	6
7– S1 – E3	Materials	vocabulary meaning	3	70	4	39
8– S1 – E1	Materials	vocabulary meaning	4	27	3	28
8– S1 – E2	Materials	vocabulary meaning	3	10	3	6
8– S1 – E3	Materials	vocabulary meaning	4	17	4	35
9– S1 – E1	Classroom Context	speaking	1	5	0	0
9– S1 – E2	Classroom Context	speaking	5	41	6	39
11– S1 – E1	Materials	reading comprehension	1	3	1	4
11– S1 – E2	Materials	reading comprehension	1	5	1	4
11– S1 – E3	Materials	reading comprehension	1	12	1	3

Based on Table 5, the evidence showed the influence of teachers’ fulfillment of interactional requirements of the skills and systems micro-context on L2 learners’ interaction. In side sequences mentioned in table 5, the teachers used direct repair and tried to enable learners to produce correct forms. Furthermore, their focus was enabling students to manipulate the L2 and provide appropriate feedback. Teachers’ accuracy-based handling the



classroom resulted less interaction and fluency among the learners but helped the learners to produce more correct forms as *more knowledgeable others* and consequently to promote learners' interaction in some ways.

Here, extract 1 from sequence 1 of class 11 delineates skills and systems mode as an example:

8. L1: And, when I ask her about her job and how he can do that?

9. T: She or he? **S & S Mode**

10. L1: *She, my father's aunt.*

**Table 6** L2 Classroom Mode of Classroom Context Distribution

Class No. – Sequence No.	Prominent Sequence	Sequence Focus	Teacher turn count	Teacher word count	Learners turn count	Learners word count
4- S2	Classroom Context	Speaking	81	878	93	653
7- S2	Classroom Context	Speaking	22	126	31	25
10- S1	Classroom Context	Speaking	35	322	93	933

Based on data analysis provided in Table 6 indicates that the teachers paid much attention to learners' communication, spent most of their time to establish a context in which they could negotiate and express themselves, make a bridge to their real lives and have them share their own ideas about experiencing similar situations. The teachers also dedicated much time to clarify and explain each part of the reading in order to elicit more responses from every student of the class. They enthusiastically tried to involve every learner in class discussion to accomplish the task of answering reading comprehension questions and ignore their grammatical errors and mistakes to let them comfortably express themselves and share ideas. Therefore, the teachers who managed these classrooms professionally as *more knowledgeable others* with classroom context micro-context, involved the learners in class interaction and helped them promote their oral fluency and engagement.

Here, an extract from sequence 2 of class 4 illuminates classroom context mode as an example:

78. T: =Have you ever had very forceful storms here? ... Setayesh ... have you ever had very forceful ... powerful storms in Mazandaran?=**C C Mode**

79. L1: No!

80. T: Never? ... We've had some, but you may not remember any ... But did we ... do you remember any ... Mahdis... or Khatereh? Remember any powerful storms in Mazandaran? **C C Mode**

81. LL: Yes.

82. L1: Yes I remember.

83. T: You remember?=**C C Mode**

84. L1: =Yes. I was child and we wa ... um we were ... my family and I were in my grandmother's house. =

85. L2: =Aha ... Yes. =

86. L1: =And when ... =

87. T: =Near Sari?=**C C Mode**

88. L1: =Um ... Yeah.=

89. T: =Aha.=**C C Mode**

90. L1: = then the storm is starting, we want to go home ... we want to ... go ... home, but ... um ... when we go ... when we ... when we went out ... we saw the storm and we ... can't come to house... our house ... came to house.=



91. T: Yes, ok. So you had to stay with your grandparents and ... had a good time, hah? = C C Mode  
92. L1: =Yes.=  
93. T: = You must have enjoyed a lot. = C C Mode  
94. L1: But, we are ... um we were ... so scared.=  
95. T: =Aha. Ok... um ... You weren't hurt, were you? C C Mode  
96. L1: No.  
97. T: Were any of you hurt?= C C Mode  
98. L2: No, but our ... our home ... our apartment ... have some (3)  
99. T: Damages?= C C Mode  
100. L2: =Damages, yeah.=

In this extract, learners have been given the chance to talk about their experiences. The learners completely took over turn taking, demonstrating their competition to have the floor, gain hold, and pass turns. These attempts could be witnessed during natural, everyday exchanges. The teacher sometimes provided feedback on the students' content-based responses and treated their errors.

## DISCUSSION

The aim of the study was to examine EFL teachers' fulfillment of interactional requirements of L2 classroom modes and EFL learners' interaction. To this end, the researchers' analysis on the issue was based on Walsh (2011), including teacher turn-count, teacher word-count, learners turn-count, and learner word-count in different sequences of L2 classrooms. The findings of the study revealed that materials mode was the prominent one among the others. Moreover, EFL teachers' interactional requirements of all four L2 classroom modes were fulfilled and L2 learners' interaction was promoted. The concept of 'materials mode' in classroom interaction provided by Walsh (2011) highlights how the use of materials can significantly increase learner engagement and interaction. This mode encourages focused interaction around certain content that helps learners engage more profoundly with the material and with each other. According to Alsaadi and Atar (2019), the main aim of the material mode is providing learners with an opportunity to practice language relevant to particular material. Thus, learners are afforded little interactional space in terms of topic management and turn taking. In terms of wait-time in the material mode, wait-time differs based on the level of question. For example, if the pedagogical goal is to show answers that are clearly stated in the material, extended pauses are not essential because learners are urged to recall information in the material. In contrast, wait time is less constrained when the aim is to engage learners in reflective or critical thinking.

The second most frequently used mode was managerial mode. Walsh's (2011) managerial mode is usually utilized by teachers who need to manage classroom activities and maintain order. This mode is identified by giving instructions, organizing tasks, and ensuring that learners are on track with their work. Moreover, teachers in early education or large classrooms might depend on the managerial mode to keep learners focused and maintain a productive learning condition (Sundari, 2018).

Analyzing the class modes showed that most teachers did their best to elicit responses concerning the materials as much as possible; predominance of IRF pattern was perceived. Thus, teacher turn outnumbered learners turn in most sequences. The teachers spent much time to follow the pedagogic goals, especially to clarify every point with very few learner contributions. Therefore, they were not able to manage the time to involve the learners in class interaction and were not successful enough to create opportunities for the learners to communicate and help them promote their language proficiency. This led the learners not to have enough mastery over communication and oral fluency. This is one of the most important problems in language learning nowadays. The findings of this study are directly or somehow indirectly in line with those of several previous studies investigating EFL teachers' fulfillment of interactional requirements of L2 classroom micro-contexts and L2 learners' language proficiency promotion (Shamsipour & Allami, 2012; Suryati, 2015).

The findings of the study showed that materials mode stands out as being more frequent than the other modes in teacher talk. This finding is congruent with that of previous research (Ghafarpour, 2017; Suryati, 2015; Tokdemir Demirel & Kaçar, 2017; Yauwangsa & Wijaya, 2016). Walsh (2011) argues that materials mode endures



for extended time. This might occur because of differences in settings and the requirements of institutions. The setting of the current research compels teachers to cover the material and all class interactions centers around it.

Another finding showed that classroom context mode prevails. This finding can indicate that context plays a key role in determining how to manage turn taking and topics, the potentialities of communication in the classroom, and provision of authentic resources for interaction. The result is contrary to that of some earlier research (Tokdemir Demirel & Kaçar, 2017; Yauwangsa & Wijaya, 2016). Classroom context mode tends to have longer durations (Walsh, 2011). In this mode, the interactional attempts are set in motion and endure resulting from interactional endeavors brought out of a variety of learning experiences and cultural backgrounds by L2 learners (Ghafarpour, 2017).

Based on Long (1981), learning is the result of interaction with others. Thus, the more the learners' interaction is observed in each L2 classroom mode, the more learning occurs, leading to more language proficiency. When the learners have more interaction, they obviously gain more ability to express themselves and communicate. Counting the frequency of the words uttered by the learners compared to that of teachers in the classes with different L2 modes indicates that the learners in classes with classroom context mode had more interaction than other modes. Therefore, it could be concluded that learners of classes in which the teacher manages the class based on classroom context mode increased learners' interaction more than in other modes.

### **CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

The purpose of this classroom-based observation was to determine EFL teachers' fulfillment of interactional requirements of L2 classroom micro-contexts and L2 learners' language proficiency promotion. The researcher tended to verify the extent to which L2 classroom micro-contexts help the teachers to create a more efficient relationship with the learners by the means of creating suitable context and desired class discourse based on pedagogic goals. Moreover, it was intended to observe if analyzing EFL teachers' class discourse helped them to gain a better understanding of interactional requirements of L2 classroom micro-contexts to change the discourse mode to increase learner contributions, and interaction between students in order to improve their language learning. This study has depicted the L2 classroom as a complex, dynamic and fluid blend of micro-contexts, and the researcher's findings based on the data collected using both corpus linguistics and conversation analysis ensured that classroom context mode in accordance with other modes could help the learners more improve their language proficiency.

In order for teachers to improve their own teaching according to the syllabus and pedagogical goals, all four different micro-contexts can be taught in both pre- and in-service teacher education programs, as it is needed for the novice, even experienced teachers to know more about and apply them during their classroom discourse. Furthermore, every English teacher can use the modes for any learners' level as a part of teachers' life experience. Therefore, the researchers suggest the teachers to consider and enjoy these L2 classroom modes in both their lesson plans and teaching experience.

Almost every research project suffers from some limitations in its design or in the way it is conducted which restricts its external validity in one way or another. This research study was no exception and the researchers believe that further research can be conducted on the learners of various language levels, and in other L2 learning contexts. More study can examine how the relationship between teachers and learners affects interaction in the classroom. Research studies have indicated that strong rapport can increase learner engagement and interaction. Further study can be conducted to investigate how teacher and learners interactional competence develops over time and how it influences classroom dynamics that include considering turn taking, feedback, and the use of questions.



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## Appendix A: Transcription Notation System

T:	– teacher
L:	– learner (not identified)
L1: L2: etc.	– identified learner
LL:	– several learners at once or the whole class
/ok/ok/ok/	– overlapping or simultaneous utterances by more than one learner
[do you understand?]	
[I see]	– overlap between teacher and learner
=	– turn continues, or one turn follows another without any pause.
. . .	– pause of one second or less marked by three periods.
(4 sec)	– Silence; length given in seconds
((4 sec))	– a stretch of unintelligible speech with the length given in seconds
Paul, Peter, Mary	– capitals are only used for proper nouns
?	– rising intonation, not necessarily a question
<b>T organizes groups</b>	– editor's comments (in bold type)



## Appendix B: Table of Pedagogic Goals and Interactional Features of Modes

<i>Mode</i>	<i>Pedagogic goals</i>	<i>Interactional features</i>
Managerial	To transmit information To organise the physical learning environment To refer learners to materials To introduce or conclude an activity To change from one mode of learning to another	A single, extended teacher turn that uses explanations and/or instructions The use of transitional markers The use of confirmation checks An absence of learner contributions
Materials	To provide language practice around a piece of material To elicit responses in relation to the material To check and display answers To clarify when necessary To evaluate contributions	Predominance of IRF pattern Extensive use of display questions Form-focused feedback Corrective repair The use of scaffolding
Skills and systems	To enable learners to produce correct forms To enable learners to manipulate the target language To provide corrective feedback To provide learners with practice in sub-skills To display correct answers	The use of direct repair The use of scaffolding Extended teacher turns Display questions Teacher echo Clarification requests Form-focused feedback
Classroom context	To enable learners to express themselves clearly To establish a context To promote oral fluency	Extended learner turns Short teacher turns Minimal repair Content feedback Referential questions Scaffolding Clarification requests

Source: Walsh 2006.