

Arabic identity in English foreign language classroom conversation: language selection, patterns, and functions

Ibrahim Salama¹, *Didin Nuruddin Hidayat², Nida Husna², Alek²

¹International Arab Egyptian School (IAES), ²UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta

ABSTRACT

Conversation analysis is one of the practical strategies for discourse analysis in speaking that may be used to teach oral English in an English foreign language classroom. Through conversational analysis, this study intends to examine the theoretical foundations of Arabian social identity and the possibility of using a discourse way of speaking to educate a group of learners. The current study focuses on cultural disparities between Arabic-speaking and English-speaking populations, examining the impact of such cultural barriers on Arab-English foreign language learners' communication. A case study of English foreign language students from the International Arab Egyptian School (IAES) was conducted to achieve this purpose. Using contrastive rhetoric, several challenges in students' English speaking were explained. Qualitative data analysis of culturally bound distinctions in numerous linguistic features such as letters, vowels, writing style, word use, and syntax, as well as some rhetoric and structural styles such as coordinating, subordinating, and metaphoric styles, revealed the high potential for errors and issues faced by Egyptian EFL students when developing spoken English. Data was collected by recording some sessions and extracting some language from both teachers and students by analyzing the language used inside the classroom. The most significant finding of this research is the organizing training to differentiate the interaction medium in the language classroom. In other words, teachers should use an "interactive decision-making" method in which they must make rapid decisions on which media to use to meet emerging issues such as subject matter comprehension, classroom management, or building a good rapport in the classroom.

Keywords: *discourse, discourse analysis, ELT, conversation analysis*

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Introduction

Language is usually believed to be deeply rooted in culture. Then, in recent decades, there has been a more significant focus placed on introducing the cultural aspect into the L2 language classroom since it is seen to assist in solving contemporary economic problems. As a result, defining culture is crucial. In general, culture is described as "a combination of traits, rules, and beliefs that distinguish a particular country or group: the total of a country or group's most widely recognized works of literature, art, music, etc. (Said, 2012).

As (Samovar, Porter, & Jain, 1981) emphasize, a person's society is visible not just in their orally and writing output (speech), as well as in their attitudes (body posture),

resulting in a significant relationship between the inherited culture of a linguistic community and the way individuals interact (Catrileo, 2004).

Nowadays, the globalization process necessitates that the twenty-first-century foreign language student is interculturally competent, and capable of communicating successfully and pleasantly with individuals from various cultures (Treppe, 2013). This means that learning and speaking a language requires more than just linguistic knowledge; it also requires the capacity to use the language in social and cultural situations.

Learning and communicating in a second language, on the other hand, can be exceedingly difficult if the cultures of the source

and target languages are too far away, as is the case with Egyptian English learners. Indeed, historical and physical barriers have resulted in a broad spectrum of cultural contrasts between Egypt and English-speaking nations. This fact may inhibit effective English learning for Egyptian students and pupils since different cultures have distinct ways of thinking, behaving socially, and comprehending the world, generating cultural barriers for these learners and, as a result, increasing Egyptian learners' awareness of these inequalities and supporting them in overcoming them. The current study would be useful in the spoken discourse of English foreign learners and how that might be impacted by cultural transfer from the first language. The conversation is assumed to be founded in the culture of its linguistic community; nevertheless, speaking and pronunciation conventions differ from one cultural group to the next.

Discourse analysis is a discourse approach closely related to ethnomethodology and is based on the linguistic study of dialogue (Wooffitt & Robin, 2005). Conversational analysis is the study of participant answers to determine the language features of speech and how communication is used in everyday life. Conversation science is the investigation and evaluation of talk generated in regular human contact situations: speak-in-interaction (Wooffitt & Robin, 2005). (Sacks et al., 2015), pioneered conversation analysis by focusing on the smallest components of speech. Goffman's work is essential in the study of social conventions, rolling, and other elements of spoken communication. More crucially, comprehending conversational practices and systems is essential for linguistic skills. Conversational analysis is based on the North American discourse analysis approach. In American discourse analysis studies, the study technique of extensive monitoring of groups of individuals interacting in natural settings, including forms of speech events such as narrative, began experimenting, and oral duels in various cultural and socioeconomic situations are highlighted. Linguistic analysis deals with dialog structure, including subjects such as turn-taking, subject shift, and dialogue structure—the principles that govern the beginning and finish of talks have been carefully examined (Martínez, 2011).

The problem of this research is that the cultural difference can be shown in the conversational discourse analysis of the Egyptian students. This can affect not only the language production but also the language accusation.

Despite the significant efforts made by many organizations to ameliorate the problem, most writers have discovered that the language achievement of most Egyptian pupils is below average. Many studies have shown the association between L2 language acquisition and identity; nevertheless, there is a serious paucity of research studying the effects of student identities on their EFL motivation and achievement in an Egyptian and Arabian university context. In reality, there is a dearth of studies on the motivation of language learners.

Most of language learning motivation research focuses on determining the students' motivation level. Because of the impact of globalization worldwide, these motivational perspectives have proven insufficient in describing EFL motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013). As we consider English language as a global language, it is challenging to characterize EFL motivation as merely a process of students attempting to identify with a particular linguistic and cultural group (Huang, 2011). Students in Egypt are monolingual, and they have no contact with native speakers of the target language (Polyakov, 2014). The target group with which students wish to assimilate is ambiguous in a worldwide society where English is the *lingua franca* (Nagamine, 2012). They also study English as a school subject or as a college course. As a result, the integrative orientation fails to adequately explain EFL students' motivation in this situation (Bell & State, 2009). As previously shown, motivation is a complicated phenomenon that is completely linked to identity concerns.

Conversational analysis can investigate what really occurs between participants and what conversation rules and patterns develop as the participant progresses. Conversational analysis includes firstly, turn-taking which is associated with how and when participants take part in the spoken discussion, and it can be linked to many types of discussion or distinct components of communication, such as

Discussion overlaps indicating disagreement, impatience, displeasure, or a high level of competitiveness for just a turn. Secondly, adjacency pairs where there is a sequence of two connected statements uttered by 2 different speakers, with the second always responding to the first (Richards & Schmidt, 2013). Adjacency pairings develop in discussion when one

speaker's comment is predicted to be accompanied by a specific type of response, which might be either a liked or affective and emotional response. Thirdly, repair which is a term used in conversational analysis to describe how speakers or others correct errors, accidental forms, or misunderstandings during communication (Richards et al., 1992).

Research Method

This research used a qualitative method to analyze the identity of the Arabic language in English foreign language classrooms. The study was also conducted by using observation and recording taps to analyze the language usage inside the classroom in an Egyptian school in an Arabian country.

This research was conducted in Classroom teaching (4th and 5th grades) at the International Arab Egyptian School. Children in the fourth and fifth grades were selected since it was expected that they'd be more proficient in Speaking than pupils in prior grades. Using easy selection, different Egyptian teachers were chosen to participate in this study. They had 5 to 7 years experience and were between the ages of 28 and 33.

Over two weeks, 8 lessons were audio-recorded, lasting around 35 minutes. The eight sessions' voice tapes were already typed, then an analytical analysis was conducted to detect the observed phenomena using the medium of a classroom learning concept. The basic code for each interpersonal communication sequence was calculated and underlined in each interactional pattern (Sa'd, 2017). Language alternation was studied using the Conversational Analysis method. CA believes that all attributions of CS motivation should be dynamic, constructivist, and based on a fine-grained turn-by-turn examination of all relevant contextualization cues in the recordings.

Results & Discussion

Both teachers and students have discovered that Arabic is employed for various purposes. Arabic was utilized in all three interaction modes. For example, in a

The audio recordings and the voice tapes were transcribed from inside the classroom while the Arabian teachers explained the lessons and then typed by adding symbols for each of the speakers. As a result, the use of Conversational Analysis aids in effectively addressing the role of the speaker's CS in multilingual encounters by assessing all relevant contextualization cues from the audiotapes.

According to Catrileo (2004), chosen language in multilingual interaction is a social activity, and in an attempt to comprehend the sequence of speech in multilingual dialogues, researchers must identify its channel by examining participants' responses to their word choice. "Social contact is a standard act in that every interpersonal communication act is somehow an example of a specific 'scheme of perception' or an example of deviation," to put it differently (Trepte, 2013).

The concept of the language of classroom learning distinguishes between the strategy medium of education and the real language of teacher-student interaction. Instead of relying on the general classroom philosophy and the required language of teaching, it is essential to investigate the real means of classroom discourse in each event to explain instances of language substitution.

Jefferson's directions (2005) were followed for transcribing the data from the voice tapes (Fernández Martínez, 2011). Class CS practical criteria were utilized to assess each pattern's usefulness.

Monolingual English medium, students may switch to Arabic to access material (extract 1) or offer task instruction (extract 2). On the other hand, this switch would either be easy to repair (extract 3) or operational (as in extract 4).

Because English is the official language of teaching in this class, participants have decided on English as the code base for interaction. This collaborative agreement is evident since the teacher set their transition to Arabic or to fulfill a specified aim. These samples show that class members utilize English as a mono medium to acquire data and organize the classroom.

Pattern 1: English-only medium (Extract 1)

150T: could anyone tell me how to deal with endangered animals? (.)

((Students show their hands up))

151T: sure

152S: maybe in these specific parks

153T: yes, still, how do we treat these animals?

154S: nicely

155T: mmm, but what can we do to treat them nicely?

Feed them and allows them to drink also.

Both the teacher and the student are speaking English in the lesson. The teacher posed an English inquiry, which produced a student answer. The student responded to the question in turn 152. The teacher, however, did not recognize the answer and instead supplied an English explanation to assist the pupils in identifying a suitable answer. In step 154, the student offered a unique response, which was approved by the teacher, who asked for further information. The Language description in rounds 153 and 155 aided the learner in self-repair and appropriate reaction. As a consequence, the Monolingual English platform was used to access the curriculum and discuss the topic.

English monolingual medium Extract 2:

20T: Here is a matching question, try to match both verbs with photos, please have a look at the photos then answer.

21 Ss: All right, sir.

22 T: do it independently first, then collaborate with your pairs.

In extract 2, the lecturer again employed the Monolingual English channel to offer work instructions. In turn 20, the instructor informed the students what they had

been going to do, and in turn 21, the students recognized her with the conversation indicator (okay). After that, the teacher instructed them to work individually using the same material. The monolingual English media was used here to master the class by giving all the instructions.

English monolingual medium extract 3:

62T: Now, can anybody tell me what time is it?

63S : It is alwaheda wrobe (quarter past one)

64T: baen mn fadlek, can you kindly say it in English?

65S: (0.2)

66T: Anyone to help? go on , Salma?

67 S: it is a half past two.

68: Great, Sarah is extremely excellent

Throughout this scenario, both the instructor and the pupils are speaking English; in step 62, the student provided the second set of replies to the teacher's inquiry. As she began turn 63 in English, the student recognized that the acceptable mode was mono English. "However, in a bilingual conversation, a speaker may deviate from an initial option when presented with a vocabulary gap" (Torras & Gafaranga, 2002). The student briefly abandoned the former channel (English) and spoke Arabic to cover the vocabulary gap, as shown by the problem marker (halt) in round 63. She was having difficulty formulating the requisite English phrase. The instructor, in turn, 64, denied the deviant behavior and emphasized the Arabic word as a problem, asking the pupil to modify the aberrant act. There is a perceptible stillness at turn 65, indicating that the issue has not yet been resolved. As a consequence, the teacher asked for repair and assistance. The teacher delegated the task of responding to the question and initiating the necessary repair to the next student.

English monolingual medium Extract 4:

91T: Okay, this part of the class, says "anticipation."

92S: [anticipation]

93T: It means the action of anticipating something; expectation or prediction.

94T: great guys, look here, can anyone put it in a sentence?

95T: (.)

96T: Do you remember anticipation? We are now experiencing anticipation okay

97Ss: (0.1)

98T: Come on, girls, anticipation taraqub! (Anticipation)

99T: Yes, guys.. Ahmed, go on.

100S: it is an inner feeling of excitement about something that is going to occur in the near future.

101T: fantastic, really good, the police is anticipating the crime.

The teacher used a question/answer activity in monolingual English to get access to the curriculum. When an issue arose during one of the children's turns, the instructor saw the importance of using Arabic as a learning tool to promote comprehension and ensure understanding. As a result, to fix the problem, she temporarily altered the medium (medium suspension).

Pattern 2: Arabic-only media

The following recognized interaction type is Arabic solo communication. Both teachers and students have been spotted conversing solely in Arabic, with no usage of English. This medium was used for a variety of objectives, including clarifying task assignments (extract 5), discussing supplied textbook information (extract 6), and engagement in social dialogue unrelated to the lesson subject (extract 7).

Arabic monolingual medium Extract 5:

43T: now let's say the English alphabet come on.

44S: (saying the alphabet)

45T: now open page 20 of your book and do the exercise.

(Students' unintelligible voices)

46S: ostaza hal haza el soal twasel fakt ?

(Is this a matching exercise with the alphabet, teacher?)

47T: la wageb hwa al-nazar llsora thom tokamelo el huruf al anakesa be hurub bel loga el englizya)

(No, you must look at the image and write the missing letters of the words with the alphabetic letters.)

48T: do the workout very quick; I'm interested to see who is done first.

Despite the fact that the classroom discourse in extract 5 took place in an English monolingual media, medium shifting is obvious. "Medium shifting occurs when individuals quit use of one medium and select another for another reason," (Nafa, 2017) explained because the medium is practical (i.e. a component of conversation), the organizing sequence is split into 2 parts; the first component of the pair was uttered by the learner in turn 46, as she inquired out about exercise. The teacher completed the pair by addressing the student's question in turn 47. Consequently, the series of nearby pairings was carried out in an Egyptian mono medium to give task direction.

Arabic monolingual medium Extract 6:

40T: thus drivers must consume water before the race,, to consume what?

41Ss: water

42T: perfect they have to gobble a complete course and put on helmets.

43 S: Miss hal sawfa yahdos shi eza lam yelbso el khoza (teacher, will anything awful happen if they do not wear a helmet?)

44T: la bs el afdal ykono fe aman akthar wo wadaoha shart fi el sebaq (no, but for precautions, they must wear the helmet, because this is considered as a part of the race rules)

After a pupil in Arabic made a question about wearing a helmet during the race (step 43), the teacher answered in Arabic and began the next pair part in Arabic. In this occasion, the instructor discussed a material called "motor racing" in English. To assist the students in comprehending why they were wearing helmets, she switched to a monolingual Arabic medium and responded to the kid's query.

Arabic monolingual medium Extract 7:

06 T: Ahmed le maza kont gaeb? Hal kont mared?

(,what happened to you Ahmed, why were you absent? Where you tired?)

07 S:

miss kadami kanet twgaany wa aboya akazany ela el tabib (Miss, I had a pain in my leg and my father took me to the doctor yesterday)

08 T : Kayf anta ela'n? (tell me your condition now?)

09 S: Ana alan alhamdulillah bekir (I am fine, thank you)

10 T: Oh okay guys, now can I get your attention with me?

To discover out what really happened to the student, the instructor spoke to her in Arabic, showing concern and concern. She started the first pair portion by inquiring about the student's absence, and the student answered with the second pair component, which was the response. When the instructor inquired about student's present state of health in turn 8, she launched another Arabic round, to which the student answered in turn 9. The teacher changed the framing in turn 10, highlighting the shift from the socializing series to the lesson by asking a lesson-related question.

Pattern 3: Bilingual medium

The most recent interaction pattern uncovered is multilingual medium, in which students and professors blend both languages without regard for their being a separate reality. Students and teachers used a mixed-mode in this pattern; rounds were performed in one language, and cross-language alternation happened to explain grammar rules (extract 8) or task teaching (extract 9).

Extraction 8: bilingual medium

53T: Who can you use the word "never" in a sentence, guys?

(hands of students were up)

54T: Yes, Laila.

55S: She never go to the cinema.

56T: [she's always what]?

57S: go to the cinema

58T: maza qlna al feal ma'a never takes what (as I said, the verb with the word "always" always takes what)

59S: (.)

60T: Fine, add s el khasa be elfa'l go wa koli el gomala mra thanya (okay, add "s" for the verb "go," and say the entire sentence).

61S: she go / goes ... she always goes to school.

62T: Oh, absolutely, really good.

In this excerpt's classroom discourse, the teacher launched the first pair segment of the inquiry, asking for an English statement. In turn 55, the student used the same media to deliver the second pair part. On the other hand, the teacher thought her answer was repairable and hence requested a repair, as seen by her heightened intonation in turn 56. The student, 57, indicated that the problem had not yet been handled. Turn 58 saw the teacher describe grammatical concepts in Arabic and English as one language, supporting the learner's self-repair. The student's silence in turn 59 indicated that she was still struggling to understand her fault, so the teacher prepared another multilingual round (60) to assist students. The student began the necessary correction in step 61 by speaking the whole English sentence.

Bilingual medium (Extract 9)

T: Guys (.) Please open page 15 of your workbook, el soal yourid menkm taamelo khat taht el unusual words (.) guys fi udamkom three words, one of them you must circle. (Guys,, look at the books page 15 in the work book, this task needs you to underline the odd words (.) There are three words, and you must underline one of them, guys.)

The teacher, as seen, changed media and used the multilingual media to offer work orders, allowing students to completely understand what was necessary to complete the assignment properly.

Discussion

We gave a review of experimental research that examined language classroom dialogue from a conversation analytic standpoint. The research shows that language classroom discourse is not limited to learners' linguistic and interactional performance of specific tasks but rather displays a microcosm

of regionally relevant participant attitudes. Instructors and learners negotiate different roles in language classroom discourse, and such perceived and interactionally realized roles may alter participants' access to specific interactional resources in the process of teaching and or learning.

According to this research, the Arabic language can be used inside an English foreign language classroom for numerous reasons with various degrees of regularity. The most general purpose for employing Arabic was to translate abstract terms. This study's findings are consistent with previous research (e.g., Auerbach, 1993 Nation, 2003). Despite the literature and research (Turnbull 2001, Atkinson 1987, Kharma and Hajjaj 1989, Macdonald, 1993, and Sharma 2006) that describe the downsides of utilizing Mother tongue in an English classroom, there is total agreement and proof between instructors and students on the usage and usefulness of L1 in an English classroom, even though students sought greater Mother tongue use than educators. Many research has shown that both instructors and students should utilize the students' mother language and have good views regarding its use. Minor discrepancies were discovered in the occasions and purposes for which the pupils' native language should be employed. Some of the differences in the participants' replies were caused by the student's level of proficiency.

Instructors and students gave several reasons for using Arabic inside an English classroom; the most often reported ones were:

- Defining and simplifying complex religious, historical, and social beliefs and concerns.
- Making kids feel at ease, comfortable, and less anxious.
- Saying things that are tough to say in English.
- Defining and explaining complicated grammatical rules and vague terms.
- Providing directions for assignments and assessments
- Contrasting structure in Arabic to structure in English.

- Providing opportunities for weak students to improve.

This research further confirms results that "restricted the use of the mother language in an English classroom does neither diminish nor enhance the students' exposure to English, but can aid in the teaching and learning processes. The study also suggests that a total ban on speaking one's mother tongue in an English classroom will undoubtedly deprive pupils of some possibilities to learn more and better. When using Arabic in an English classroom, educators must be very cautious of when to use it and when not to use it.

Conclusion

The study's main conclusion is that instructors prefer to utilize a certain media for pre-planned tasks, but, unexpected circumstances and obstacles may compel them to react using a different format, either an Arab monolingual or a bilingual medium.

According to the findings of this study, teachers should keep in mind that including anticipated difficulties and solutions in lesson plans is crucial if they aim to use L2 widely in their language classroom. Teachers should develop a list of problems relating to student behavior, task teaching, language, and topic comprehension and try to anticipate how they will deal with them as they arise. In this way, teachers could limit their use of L1. This is not to argue that first language use should be ignored; as we've shown in several cases, first language use is critical for boosting student comprehension. Teachers should be aware that English monolingual media can be an effective medium in language classrooms. Although it is permitted to utilize L1, teachers should either try to rectify it or use it for certain activities. Then, to assist students in becoming acquainted with L2, a quick switch is required.

This research's most significant educational contribution is the significance of organizing training and seminars to raise instructors' understanding of the potential differences in interaction medium in their language classroom. Teachers must recognize that spontaneous classroom conditions and occurrences should shape the medium of participation. In other words, teachers should

use an "interactive decision-making" method in which they must make rapid decisions on which media to use to meet emerging issues such as subject matter comprehension, classroom management, or building a favorable rapport in the classroom.

Because the current study only included some teachers, the results may not apply to other EFL classrooms. As a consequence, future research with a more significant number of instructors to examine the

relationship between themes and goals of language choice is recommended, as a more in-depth examination of the issue may aid in generalizing the findings of this study. Furthermore, while the current study concentrated on the structures and features of choice of language in a teacher-centered language class, future studies may focus on student-centered teaching to investigate the interaction among students rather than only on teacher-student contact, in which the instructor dominates classroom conversation.

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