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Classroom Discourse: The Skills and Systems Mode in the Persian Reading and Writing Literacy Development Course

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AbstractText Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk (SETT), comprised of four modes and 14 interactures, aims to make teachers cognizant of the importance of their classroom interactions. This study specifically elaborates on the skills and systems mode, which generally gives primacy to accuracy and is pertinent to the reading and writing literacy development course. The data were collected from five experienced elementary teachers - one female and four males - taking part in the official 'Superior Teaching Style Contest' of the Ministry of Education in Iran. The data were analyzed using Walsh's (2006b) adapted SETT framework. The results showed that all of the interactures and pedagogic goals of the mode were observed in the analyzed data. Code-switching, as an added interacture to the mode, happened in all five teachers' recorded classes, especially when moving from one activity to another. The findings of the study provided robust evidence regarding the overuse of teacher echo in the mode.

Keywords: SETT framework, skills and systems mode, literacy development, code-switching, form-focused feedback

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1. Introduction

Classrooms, as one of the natural settings, are considered "the direct source of data" (Al- Seghayer, 2001, p. 350). A classroom is regarded a "unique social context" (Walsh, 2011, p. 25), and, as Seedhouse (2004) stated, it follows its own specific goals and communication rules. While Cullen (1998) referred to effective talk in classroom context as the one which is 'communicative' in nature, Walsh (2002) contended that more conditions, pedagogic goals, and language use need to be met to be able to examine classroom discourse. Therefore, classrooms have the potentiality to be defined as loci of social interactions (Navidinia et al., 2015); however, they can be distinguished from other social contexts like business meetings, owing to having specific recognizable interactional features or interactures. Through classroom interactions, what happens in the classroom becomes evident (Tian & Dumlao, 2020).

This, in turn, reveals more contextual information about the classroom such as the level, age, gender, teachers' power agency, learners' freedom in expressing their opinions and materials. More importantly, it enables teachers to continuously develop their knowledge about learning and teaching (Tian & Dumlao, 2020). Online decisions made in the classroom can be considered valuable sources of reflective practice for teachers and may also provide insightful understanding for them through some methods including stimulated recall (Gass & Mackey, 2017). The reason for the analysis of classroom interactions, in fact, is to improve teachers' teaching methodology and help them reach new understandings (Walsh, 2006b).

To underscore the importance of classroom interactions, Walsh (2006b) introduced 'classroom micro-contexts' and referred to them as 'modes'. The significance of modes is revealed through Walsh's (2006b, p. 110) assertion that what portrays classroom discourse is, in fact, "a series of complex and interrelated micro-contexts (modes), where meanings are co-constructed by teachers and learners and where learning occurs through the ensuing talk of teachers and learners." As it was just stated, a mode is defined as a certain classroom micro-context which possesses recognizable pedagogic goals and particular interactional features (Walsh, 2006b). Thus, each single mode consists of two elements: (a) pedagogic goals and (b) interactures.

This is indicative of the inextricable interrelationship between pedagogy and interactions, which is also the principal focus of the study - manifestation of pedagogic goals in the talk-in-interaction. Such areas have been explored by some

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Iranian scholars as well (e.g., Khatib & Saeedian, 2021a, 2021b; Rahimi Domakani & Mirzaei, 2013), but they have not investigated any one of the Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk (SETT) modes. There are four main modes, namely the managerial mode, classroom context mode, skills and systems mode, and materials mode proposed by Walsh (2006b); however, the present study aimed to elaborate merely on the skills and systems mode due to the high probability of the occurrence of the specific interactures of this mode in the classroom context of Iran (Rezvani & Sayyadi, 2015). Another reason is to provide a more detailed understanding of the manifestation of the pedagogic goals and interactures of this mode in a new context, namely Iran.

2. Literature Review

Classrooms are institutional contexts in which teachers and learners strive to reach a specific purpose. In any institutional context, individuals have to employ talk to interact with each other; classrooms are not an exception in this regard, undoubtedly. Classroom discourse, which is one of the forms of institutional talk (Garton, 2012) with its own special features (Walsh, 2006b), happens in the classroom context. Through gaining a deeper understanding of their discourse in classroom, teachers can boost their practice by reflecting on their classroom interactions, which can play a vital role in teaching effectively (Walsh, 2011).

Teacher evaluation, which is generally not a widespread research field in English language teaching (ELT) (Borg & Edmett, 2019), has been receiving more attention in recent years (e.g., Avalos-Bevan, 2018; Darling-Hammond, 2013) owing to the increasing concerns over teacher quality. Although one of the ways of implementing teacher evaluation is by external evaluators, teacher self-evaluation, which represents itself in different forms including questionnaires and teacher portfolios (Alwan, 2007), outweighs other-evaluation in terms of the quality of evaluation. The reason behind this argument lies in each teacher's broader understanding of himself or herself, which can thus give a richer picture of what teachers do in the classroom and also what they need to develop in further in the future (Marzano & Toth, 2013). To facilitate teacher self-evaluation, some frameworks such as the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL) and SETT have been introduced. This study specifically focuses on the 'skills and systems mode' of the SETT framework.

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2.1. The SETT Framework: Skills and Systems Mode

Proposed by Walsh (2006b), SETT aims to make teachers cognizant of the importance of their classroom interactions and the significant role that interactions play in their professional development. Comprising of four modes and 14 interactures, the SETT framework seeks to reach a threefold purpose: (a) to enable teachers to describe the interactions that take place in their classrooms, (b) to gain a richer understanding of their awareness of their own online decision making, and (c) to assist teachers to become 'better' teachers, to use Walsh's terms, through developing an understanding of their interactions. SETT, as Walsh warns, has to be viewed as a representative framework, which facilitates discussion, not a comprehensive one. Thus, although this available framework makes it much easier for teachers to examine their talk in classroom and check the consistency of that talk with the pedagogical purposes they are seeking for, they should exercise caution in using the SETT framework.

One major issue with the SETT framework is that some of the interactions or sequences cannot be located in any of the identified modes. This leads to a great deal of complexity in describing and analyzing the interactions. Nevertheless, the SETT framework, in general, facilitates teachers' responsibility to better understand their classroom by empowering them to identify modes and to analyze the data collected from their own classroom. In other words, the framework eases up teachers' responsibility because after recording their classroom, teachers only need to fill in the SETT grid to gain awareness of their verbal behaviour (Walsh & Mann, 2015). In fact, as Walsh (2006a, p. 139) puts it, this framework resembles "a springboard … (which) enable(s) some sense to be made of the interactional organization of the L2 classroom."

Due to the nature of the initiation-response-feedback (IRF) sequence (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975) and also the fact that the skills and systems mode seeks for accuracy, teachers have a really significant role to play in turn-taking and turn allocation and also in the selection of topics to be dealt with. The primacy of accuracy over fluency in this mode is evident as teachers strive to assist learners with producing accurate forms of language. This is mainly done through using some strategies, including direct repair and scaffolding which, based on Walsh (2011, p. 119), are "found extensively in skills and systems mode."

The skills and systems mode benefits from such interactional features as

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scaffolding and direct repair. Scaffolding, which is both a social interaction and provides assistance aligned to the needs of the learners and (Wright, 2018) and can be done through modelling (Oliveira & Brown, 2016), plays a significant role in helping learners to acquire a new language. Likewise, direct repair is also an influential interacture due to its negligible influence on the flow of the interactions.

Furthermore, this mode is characterized by other interactures such as extended teacher turns, teacher echo, clarification requests, and the use of display questions. This shows that the primary concern of the mode is accuracy and empowering the learners to produce accurate forms of language. Despite the argument that the form-focused instruction plays an influential role in the process of learning a second language (Ellis, 2002; Lyster, 2004; Shahani & Chalak, 2017), one of the reasons that extends teacher turns and stops learners from making more contributions in classrooms is providing form-focused feedback. For the reason of transparency and succinctness, Table 1, containing only the pedagogic goals and the interactures of the skills and systems mode, has been adapted from Walsh (2011, p. 113).

Table 1
Adapted Skills and Systems Mode

Mode	Pedagogic goals	Interactures
Skills and systems	To enable learners to produce correct forms	The use of direct repair
	To enable learners to manipulate the target language	The use of scaffolding
	To provide corrective feedback	Display questions
	To provide learners with practice in sub-skills	Teacher echo
	To display correct answers	Clarification requests
		Form-focused feedback
		Code-switching

2.2. Literacy Development of Reading and Writing

Literacy skills, which include all four language skills of reading, listening, writing, and speaking (McCloskey, 2018), are considered one of the prominent predictors of children's success in school. Therefore, a number of studies have sought to focus on these skills (Diamond et al., 2008). In line with this point, Roskos and Vukelich (2006) stated that the primary goal of education in elementary schools, especially in the early grades, is to assist students to acquire particular skills and knowledge

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germane to the students' later success. Reading, which is one of the literacy skills, is an essential base both for academic learning and also for joining the broader community as an educated member (Koda & Zehler, 2008). Due to the high significance of reading in today's academic contexts, if students fail to develop their reading literacy, they are more probable to drop behind in their schooling and studies (Koda & Zehler, 2008). This demands that special attention be given to reading skills until students achieve an adequate level of reading proficiency.

Writing, as another literacy skill, has been more underexplored in comparison to reading, especially among elementary children (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001). In contrary to this dated argumentation, recently, Scarcella et al. (2018, p. 1) stated that "Multiple books, articles, and policy reports on literacy development and second language writing development have been written in the past 10 years." Of course, Scarcella et al. (2018, p. 1) later underscored "the dearth of empirical studies" on development of writing and referred to that as a "nearly untapped" area of research. This is also indicative of the necessity to carry out studies on the writing literacy development, as is the case with reading. Thus, this study attempts to take the development of writing and reading among first to sixth grade Iranian students studying Persian into consideration.

The importance of examining literacy development, particularly in the early childhood, lies in the argument that early literacy development in children acts as a robust base for earning academic achievement, in general, and improving their reading abilities, in particular (Hammer et al., 2014; Scarborough, 2001). This is also the case in the writing skill because learners are good at segmenting words at the early age and based on White (2005, p. 3) the "ability to segment words is particularly important to the writing element of literacy development."

Due to the agreed-upon relationship between reading and writing, there are some resources which have proven useful in developing both skills. One of such reliable resources in developing literacy in children is making use of 'picture books' through which children, additionally, discover the process of reading as well (White, 2005). In addition to the many purposes (e.g., providing pleasure and enhancing information) that picture books are written for, they can help children in different ways. For instance, they offer an opportunity for an adult working with children to trace the development of the reading process in children.

This study aims to identify realization of pedagogic goals and interactures in the

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Persian reading and writing literacy development course using one of the four main modes of Walsh's SETT framework (i.e., skills and systems mode) in classroom interactions among Iranian teachers and learners. Identifying the realization of specific pedagogic goals and interactures in the skills and systems mode in a new socio-political context, Iran, can cast some light on this underexplored area of research. To do so, the following questions are addressed.

(1) To what extent are the pedagogic goals of skills and systems mode realized in interactions among Persian elementary teachers and learners?

(2) To what extent are the interactures of skills and systems mode realized in interactions among Persian elementary teachers and learners?

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The participants were five teachers, teaching elementary students (grades 1-6) at state-run schools in Iran. A total of 13 teachers with an age range of 28 to 42 and teaching experience of 11 to 24 years were briefed to see if they agreed to participate in the study. As Table 2 shows, among the contacted teachers, only one female, aged 31 with 13 years of teaching experience, and four male teachers expressed interest in the study. Two of the male teachers were both 33 years old and had taught elementary courses for 15 years, while the other two with an age range of 29 and 38 had experienced teaching elementary courses for 12 and 19 years. The teachers' chief reason for not taking part in the study was a new phenomenon called 'multi-grade classroom or Multi- Age Group' in the educational system of Iran. Based on this type of schooling, children of different ages who are studying in different grades in elementary school study together in one single classroom (i.e., the class time is divided into specific separate short time periods and each period is allocated to students of one particular grade). The 'multi-grade classroom' phenomenon has been due to the very low number of students in one class, which subsequently leads to teaching students of multiple grades simultaneously by one teacher in one single class.

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Table 2
The Demographic Information of the Participants

Participants	Gender	Teaching Experience	Age
1	Female	13	31
2	Male	15	33
3	Male	15	33
4	Male	29	12
5	Male	38	19

Convenience sampling was thus used to select the participants. No training session was held to instruct the participants how to record their classroom discourse because they were already familiar with such activities. In fact, the participants were preparing for an official type of contest named 'Superior Teaching Style Contest', which is annually held by the Ministry of Education. This led to doing their best while recording their classes. Based on the regulations of the contest, the teachers were all required to speak Persian in the time of recording. Regarding the ethical considerations, the teachers were given assurance by the researcher through promising them to keep their audio-recorded files and collected data confidential. In addition, they signed consent forms written in Persian, indicating they were informed about the research project.

3.2. Instrumentation

This study benefited from the adaption of the SETT grid, more specifically the section related to the skills and systems mode, developed by Walsh (2006b). Using the grid could add more systematic nature to the analysis of the classroom discourse which happened during the classroom interactions. In fact, the grid facilitated extracting specific excerpts from the relevant classroom data.

Despite the request from the participants to use Persian as the means of communication in their classrooms and, of course, the regulations of 'Superior Teaching Style Contest', the students kept asking questions in Kurdish and this made the teachers switch codes at some intervals to clarify the point in question to the students. This resulted in adding another element (i.e., code-switching) to the basic SETT grid. Of course, the inclusion of the extracts in which code-switching occurred depended on whether they were related to the skills and systems mode. In other words, there were many episodes that were excluded from the data analysis because in those episodes code-switching happened for reasons other than the ones

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included in the skills and systems mode. Adding code-switching to the SETT grid, which can be used as a resource for classroom interactions among teachers and learners (Sert, 2015), was already confirmed by Aşık and Gönen (2016).

3.3. Data Collection Procedure

To collect the data, the teachers were initially contacted to confirm their agreement on taking part in the study. Upon their voluntary agreement, they were requested to audio- or video-record three hours of their class time when teaching Persian reading and writing literacy courses. Because the participants were to take part in the official 'Superior Teaching Style Contest' of the Ministry of Education at the time of collecting the data, their recorded classroom videos were of high resolution. This concomitant occurrence was also beneficial in another respect in that it lessened the time of delivering the files to the present researcher. However, that could be considered one of the pitfalls of the study because the participants had prepared such an elaborate lesson plan that included various techniques of teaching one specific activity, and also they obviously had informed the children to show eagerness in taking part in the activities.

3.4. Data Analysis

Conversation analysis was utilized in this study. Out of the transcribed interactions between learners and teachers, some excerpts were initially extracted based on their relevance to the themes and analyzed by the researcher. To increase the reliability of the data, the extracts were given to another coder to ensure the intercoder agreement, which is necessary for objective interpretation of the data (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1984). Upon confirming the coding similarities, the agreed-upon extracts were checked to see to what extent the elements of Walsh's SETT framework, specifically skills and systems mode, were realized in reading and writing literacy development courses in elementary schools in Iran. Because Richards and Seedhouse's (2005) transcription conventions were used to transcribe the interactions, teachers are referred to as teacher 1, teacher 2, and so forth. This avoided using their real names or even pseudonyms.

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4. Results

The data collected through the video-recording of the participating teachers' classroom interactions were analyzed using the elements set in the SETT framework to respond to the two research questions of the study.

1. To what extent are the pedagogic goals of skills and systems mode realized in interactions among Persian elementary teachers and learners?

As previously shown in Table 1, the overall pedagogic goal in skills and systems mode can be synopsized as focusing on language practice in language skills and subskills. This makes the IRF sequence be overused throughout the mode because teachers want to reassure that learning has happened. To give a clear understanding of this and other goals of the mode, related extracts have been used.

Extract 1. *Empowering learners to produce correct forms*

126 T3: = well done guys… my dear girls… we said **I**ran /ایییییران/ **(with emphatic stress on I or /ای/ in a stretching way, with the vowel being lengthened**) … **I**ran /ایییییران/… **I**ran /ایییییران/… **I**ran /ایییییران/ where are all of us from guys?

129 LL: **I**ran /ایییییران/=

130 T3: =we are Iranian /ایییییرانی‌ی‌ی‌ی/ what nationality guys?

131 LL: Iranian /ایییییرانی‌ی‌ی‌ی/=

132 T3: = Iranian /ایییییرانی‌ی‌ی‌ی/

Iranian /ایییییرانی‌ی‌ی‌ی/… (bending to pick up the map of Iran) Iranian /ایییییرانی‌ی‌ی‌ی/… guys… **I**ran /ایییییران/ … Iranian /ایییییرانی‌ی‌ی‌ی/ (13) now my beautiful girls… we… Ms. teacher… shows you these pictures… look … what's this? =

136 LL: = shooter /تیییییرانداز/=

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137 T3: = guys… shoot…er /تیییییر…انداز/ / guys? what does it (sound or form) have?=

138 LL: it has e /یییییه/=

139 T3: = where's its e /یییییه/? =

140 LL: =in the middle=

141 T3: =very well… what's this guys? =

142 LL: =lion /شیییییر/ =

143 T3: = what's this guys? =

144 LL: = Iranian /اییییییرانی‌ی‌ی‌ی/ =

145 T3: = Iranian /اییییییرانی‌ی‌ی‌ی/… Iranian /اییییییرانی‌ی‌ی‌ی/… Iranian /اییییییرانی‌ی‌ی‌ی/ … Iranian /اییییییرانی‌ی‌ی‌ی/ where's its e /یییییه/ guys? =

147 LL: = ((6)) (**all students shouting**) =

148 L1: = it has both ایـ in the beginning and ی at the end =

149 T3: = well done! it has both ایـ in the beginning and ی at the end…(**continuing the interactions for other forms as well**)

The first pedagogic goal, which can be considered the core of the mode, is empowering learners to produce correct forms. The unit the learners are studying is about one of the letters in Persian alphabet (i.e., /e/ sounding like /e/ in the English alphabet), which is scribed in four forms (ای، ی، یـ، ایـ), each different from the other regarding its use, but the same in terms of sound. Each of the forms has its own specific name and function (ایـ in the beginning of words, یـ in the middle of words, ی at the end of words, ای independent but at the end of words); however, they all sound the same. In other words, the alphabet letter in question has four different written forms but one common sound.

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Through using emphatic stress in most of the concerned utterances (126, 127, 129, to name just a few), the teacher assisted the learners to distinguish the different forms of the letter in question and to correctly produce the related words. The teacher's major goal is to enable the whole class to correctly produce the four different forms of the alphabet letter being discussed by directing the learners' attention to the position in the specific discussed words. In general, longer turns, which are mainly in form of 'teacher echoes', in this extract all belong to the teacher (126-128), (132-135), and (145-146). Through asking a display question in (126-127), the teacher makes a conscious endeavor to use one word in which two of the /e/ forms are used (i.e., Iranian: ایرانی).

However, because the learners do not say the term in the teacher's mind, she tries to provide corrective feedback (130) and then changes her question (130). This gets the whole class to notice the difference and produce the correct form (131); thus, form-focused instruction is provided by the teacher. The teacher then shifts to another form (i.e., یـ in the middle of words) by showing them two pictures in (136) and (142) in which this form of the letter is used. She also asks them some display questions in (137) and (139) to ensure they have learnt it. This confirmation check was repeated in (146), which resulted in some hesitation among the learners in (147), but finally, L1 in (148) reassured the teacher, who echoed L1's utterance to the whole class (149).

In extract 2, teacher 2 (T2) is teaching second graders (N=9) a lesson entitled 'Our Friends'. This lesson aims to familiarize the learners with various occupations in the society such as nursing, street sweeping, and military service and the performers of those occupations (nurses, street sweepers, and police officers) who are to be known as friends by the learners. The classroom has been arranged in a horseshoe or U-shape format so that interactions with the whole class can be done easier and engaging the learners in the discussion is encouraged.

Extract 2. *Teacher echo and second language manipulation*

1 T2: dear Hasti! You are the representative of Laleh group… pick up your question

read it (4) and say its answer… loudly…

3 L1: how should we treat those who are kind with us and do something for us?

4 T2: how should we treat?

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5 L1: we should be kind with them … er … we should with them … er … when they are sick … with … with … be with them

7 T2: we should respect them. Is it right? (**facing the student who answered the question**)

Well done.

9 T2: guys! each one of you who answers correctly, I'll stick a stamp to your Sky Star profile.

well, thanks very much. was her answer right?

10 LL: yes (**in a stretching way**)

The primary pedagogic goal of the teacher in this extract is 'to display correct answers'. This is done through making three three-learner groups, choosing one of the learners as the representative, and asking that representative to go to the board, pick up a paper, and read it. The representative needed to provide a correct answer to the selected question. The teacher then involved the whole class by saying if the representatives answered the questions correctly. In this extract, the teacher echoed the question in (3) to give the learner more time to think and the whole class to understand the question. In another attempt to assist the learner, the teacher manipulated the target language in (7) by using the more common term in Persian and then tried to display the correct answer by facing the learner who responded to the question. To better display and confirm the correct answer, in (10) she asked the whole class if the learner's answer was correct. The same procedure was also repeated for the last group because the teacher initially thanked the representative of the group for her contribution and then asked the whole class if she answered the questions correctly.

To sum up, all of the pedagogic goals of skills and systems mode were used in the collected data. The main focus of all of the pedagogic goals, which is to help learners improve their accuracy rather than fluency regarding the target language, could be observed throughout the interactions between the five teachers and the learners concerning the mode in question. Although it was not directly mentioned in the extracts, one could easily see the IRF sequence to a great extent.

As regards the second question, the interactional features of skills and systems mode are mainly circulated around form-focused feedback, featured by some

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characteristics such as frequent use of display questions, direct repair, and scaffolding. This requires teachers to take more extended turns and request more clarification so that they can control the process of learning. As recommended by Aşık and Gönen (2016), code-switching was added to the list and extracts concerning that have been brought as well.

Extract 3. *Providing form-focused feedback*

331 L2: they are sensitivity to red color … that is they use red color a lot (3) =

332 T5: = sensitivity means they use (it) a lot? =

333 L2: = giving importance … I mean =

334 T5: = no sensitivity doesn't mean that… sensitivity is when a part of your body is hurt and gets red … plus sensitivity is a noun but your sentence needs an adjective=

335 L2: = sensitivity … sensitive … to red color and giving importance to the movements of neck and =

336 L1: = look … it means … when you show a guy a figure, they understand it =

337 T5: = body langUAGE (**speaking in English**) … she means=

338 L1: = body langUAGE … body langUAGE =

339 LL: = BODY LANGUAGE =

340 L1: = body langUAGE means body movements … like this (**starts moving her neck and hands like dancing**) =

342 LL: = ((11)) (laughter) =

343 T5: = guys?

344 L2: Koreans only use ((1)) internet… extreme studying and compulsory military service is the meaning of the flag of Korea. (**learners clap her**)

Because of the importance of form-focused feedback, extract 3 is concerned with how the teacher provides feedback on the word (not the content) used in interactions. The learners had supposedly written an essay about their previous unit (i.e., introducing one of the cities in Iran or other countries) and are reading it now in the class. Learner 2 (L2) is now reading her essay about people in Korea. In line

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(332) the teacher starts giving both content-focused and form-focused feedback on the word 'sensitivity'. The learner attempts to explain what she means in (333), but the teacher interrupts her and provides sufficient feedback on that by extending her own turn.

In fact, the teacher requested for more clarification from L2 but did not allow her to explain at all. This is indicative of the teacher's eagerness to provide feedback and scaffolding and directly repair the learner's utterance. Despite all this, L2 makes the same mistake initially but corrects her form-related mistake (using an adjective instead of a noun) immediately in (335). In another attempt to provide feedback, instead of using Persian, the teacher interestingly code-switched to English and directly repaired her again. Ensuing Persian language tendency toward putting stress on the last syllable, she wrongly pronounced the term in (337) and subsequently the whole class, particularly L1, started acting it out in the class.

As it can be seen from the extracts discussed so far, there are overlaps in both interactures and pedagogic goals from all of the modes, with skills and systems mode not being an exception. Therefore, to the other interactures a specific extract is not dedicated. However, due to adding code-switching to the list, more explanation has been provided here.

Extract 4. *Code-switching as a newly added interacture*

523 T1: ok… guys… now… pick up your books… all of you pick up your books… your PERSIAN book! (**preparing to run the computer**)

524 L1: (**speaking in Kurdish**) in the name of god

525 L2: (**speaking in Persian**) in the name of god

526 L3: (**speaking in Kurdish**) in the name of god

527 L4: (**speaking in Kurdish**) in the name of god

528 LL: (**some speaking in Kurdish and some in Persian**) in the name of god

529 T1: we start everything in the name of god … guys …

530 LL: (**some speaking in Kurdish and some in Persian**) in the name of god

(**Repeating the same repetitive interaction for 23 more seconds**)

562 L5: (**speaking in Kurdish**) this poem is very very good

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563 T1: ok guys… be quiet … which unit should we study guys?

564 LL: unit 6

565 T1: what's the name (**the title of the unit**)?

566 LL: /e/!

567 T1: /e/ or Iran?

568 LL: IRAN!

569 T2: Iran… guys… our dear country… IRAN

570 dear Mohammad Shookri, Araz, I'll read the words once for you…

dear Keihan, sit down.

I'll read (the words) once for you…

573 L6: Teacher? I…

574 T1: = one of you will read (these words) after me… wait for some seconds… I will read (these words) once and you repeat after me… ok, my dear kids?

575 T1: abad (**literal translation: well-constructed**)

576 LL: abad (**literal translation: well-constructed**)

577 T1: Iran … abad (**literal translation: well-constructed**)

578 LL: Iran … abad (**literal translation: well-constructed**)

579 T1: bidar (**literal translation: awake**) (**the teacher goes to the door**)

580 LL: bidar (**literal translation: awake**)

581 T1: ok guys… Irani bidar (**literal translation: Iranian awake**)

all of you… repeat once more (**there is some disharmony among the learners in repeating.**)

abad (**literal translation: well-constructed**)

585 LL: abad (**literal translation: well-constructed**)

Iran … abad (**literal translation: well-constructed**) (the learners do not wait and take the turn)

588 guys… you should not say anything until I read (the words) first (**the**

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interactions are run in order again)

612 L1: (**speaking in Kurdish**) teacher let me say=

613 T1: =ok dear guys… no that's enough (3) now we

614 L3: = teacher let me say the words=

614 T1: (**frowns to signal not to request him that and then continues**) = studied the new alphabet sign (letter)

Code-switching was another interacture, which happened in all five teachers' recorded classes, especially when interactions were lengthier and also when moving from one activity to another. The learners kept switching to their mother tongue, Kurdish, despite being told not to do so. In extract 4, there is a transition to materials mode because the teacher is trying to provide more language practice using the textbook (523). The main focus, however, is on providing scaffolding through modelling (i.e., giving more examples to learners) in (577-581) to help them manipulate their target language despite the students' persistence on using their mother tongue. The unit the learners are studying is about one of the letters in Persian alphabet (i.e., /ای، ی، ایه، یِ/ sounding like /e/ in the English alphabet) as previously mentioned.

As it can be noted from the interactions, the learners switched to their mother tongue in an uncontrolled way in many repetitive interactions (524-562) when they found out that their teacher was busy with the computer. In addition to offering scaffolding through modelling in (577-581), the teacher sought to provide the learners with more practice in vocabulary and also got them to produce correct forms of 'Iran' as a noun and 'Irani' (Iranian) as an adjective. This was fulfilled under such thoroughly careful surveillance of the teacher that some disharmony among the learners while repeating the words concluded in the teacher's harsh positioning; interrupting the learners, (indicated by = in the end and beginning of two consecutive lines), and not allowing anyone to take even a slight turn without his permission.

Transitioning to different modes was also apparent in this extract. The interactions initiated with materials mode (523) by referring to the books, continued with skills and systems mode (524-562) through the use of code-switching, shifted to managerial mode in (563) by discouraging learners' contributions, and again changed to materials mode in the same line (563). Although there was also a

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transition to the classroom context mode in (570) and longer learner turns were expected to occur, the teacher immediately in (571) took control of the turns more tightly again and avoided longer turns from learners. The transition to classroom context mode was indicated by calling the students' names (570-571). Managerial mode with its specific interacture, 'a single, extended teacher turn that uses explanations and/or instructions' (Walsh, 2011, p. 113), was what ensued the classroom context mode in (574). Of course, using extended teacher turns is also a common interacture in skills and systems mode.

In summary, as expected, the analysis of the interactures of the mode indicated that teachers extended their own turns because they aimed at helping learners to improve their accuracy. In addition to the frequency of other interactures such as direct repair and scaffolding, the new interacture added to the list (i.e., code-switching) was also frequently used mostly by learners and in one case by one of the teachers. Furthermore, the analysis of the data in both questions was indicative of the dominance of the IRF sequence as well.

5. Discussion

The findings indicated that analyzing interactions in one specific extract while aiming to find the interactures or pedagogic goals of any of the modes is not an easy task. Indeed, it requires much caution because of the notion that qualitative data are open to more interpretations. Although Walsh (2006b) suggested considering the SETT framework as a representative rather than a comprehensive one, the framework seems to have included many of the frequently occurring aspects of language learning. Walsh's warning regarding the non- comprehensiveness of the framework invites other researchers to add or remove any possible aspects to it. The current study backed up this argument by adding an additional aspect (i.e., code-switching) to that.

Quick shifts between modes transiting from one to another are other evident occurrences in most of the extracts. As argued above, analyzing interactions among learners and teachers cannot be an easy task, though it can be so, to some extent, provided that there is a systematic framework to follow (Walsh & Mann, 2015). Therefore, analyzers should interpret the data with great caution because of prompt transitions in modes. As in Walsh (2011), a plethora of instances were observed in this study that were indicative of rapid mode transitions. More specifically,

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transitions were not just restricted to the modes; swinging back and forth among interactures and pedagogic goals of the modes, particularly the skills and systems mode were frequent as well. This entails more emphasis on investigating pedagogic goals and interactures of each single mode. It is through the analysis of these modes that one can see how opportunities for learning take place in the classroom context and find out more transparently about the areas in which learners encounter some problems.

Scaffolding was one of the important interactures used in most of the extracts. Other forms of scaffolding, such as reformulation and extension were not frequently used in this study; scaffolding was mainly done through modelling (i.e., exemplification). Through modelling or exemplification, the teachers could extend their turn, and in line with what Oliveira and Brown (2016) and Khatib and Saeedian (2021a, 2021b) stated, it resulted in effective teaching. This is because it finally directed the learners' attention to the Persian alphabet letter by exemplifying more words in which that letter was used. Thus, by making use of scaffolding, the teachers aimed at facilitating learners' comprehension and keeping them focused on one point, which is in agreement with McCormick and Donato's (2000) study.

The findings of the study provided robust evidence regarding the overuse of the IRF sequence in skills and systems mode. Although the IRF sequence is predominantly common in materials mode of the SETT framework, it frequently occurs in skills and systems mode as well (Walsh, 2011). Of course, restricting the SETT framework only to the IRF sequence is in contrast with the notion of the framework, which has gone much beyond that by offering the four modes (Aşık & Gönen, 2016). The findings of this study were also in line with Walsh's (2011) argument regarding the presence of IRF in skills and systems mode.

One of the criticisms drawn against the SETT framework is excluding code-switching, which is a common phenomenon among teachers and learners in EFL classroom context, in either of the mode's interactures. In line with the critics of this argument, including Abello-Contesse (2008) and Kiasi and Hemmati (2014), this study offered additional support to Aşık and Gönen (2016) that added code-switching to the framework. In this regard, Walsh's (2006b) idea about the representativeness of the framework would support space for modification of that as well. Like teacher echo, which can play both a facilitative and a debilitative role, code-switching, though shown to be used systematically by bilinguals (Jin &

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Cortazzi, 2018), can have both functions.

This study was not an exception in this regard as well. The learners code-switched to their mother tongue, specifically when doing group work and sometimes when communicating with their teacher. Because the focus was on improving the learners' accuracy, code-switching could help them understand the point in question. However, the instance, in which the teacher initiated switching to another language, could be considered minimal but direct repair that signals both classroom context mode (minimal repair) and skills and systems mode (direct repair). In line with Sert (2015), this teacher-initiated code-switching instance in this study was to clarify the meaning not to develop the learners' accuracy. The difference between these two cases was that in Sert's (2015) study code-switching happened after long periods of silence by the learners, but in this study no silence was observed from the learners' side before code-switching.

Regarding the literacy development of leaners in reading and writing, the extracts yielded that the teachers were all trying to provide sufficient assistance to learners so that they would acquire that particular subject (letter /e/ in most of the instances) easier. This was in line with Roskos and Vukelich's (2006) idea, stating that students' future success entails cultivating some skills in them while receiving more support from their teachers. In a simultaneous move for literacy development, the learners needed to both read the alphabet letter in question and practice writing that letter in some selected words. Through writing the words, the learners both practiced the letter they studied in that session and reviewed other previously learned letters in form of bigger segments (i.e., complete words). This would support White's (2005) argument that enabling learners to segment words facilitates literacy development of writing in them.

6. Conclusion

Although it is a notoriously complex task to label utterances stated in classroom discourse (Walsh, 2011), the researcher has made use of the context of the classroom to offer the most likely labels or interpretations. This means the data is open to other interpretations, which may result in other plausible labels.

Taking Al- Seghayer's (2001) idea about considering classrooms, as one of the natural settings into account, it can be stated that one of the pitfalls of the study could be related to the participants and more specifically to the nature of the data

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collected. The teachers' motivation to participate in the 'Superior Teaching Style Contest' led them to design such an elaborate lesson plan that warns us to exercise caution in generalizing the yielded findings. However, observing such natural occurrences as code-switching in the classroom, while considering the Hawthorne effect (i.e., the observer effect), shows that the data could yet be reliable. Based on the Hawthorne effect, the contest regulations, which persisted on using Persian in the classroom as the only means of communication, could make for some modifications in the behaviour and utterances of the Kurdish participants being observed. Obviously, because this effect is true of all types of classrooms (i.e., natural or non-contest vs. contest), the data yielding from them might be either not different at all or negligibly different. Other researchers, nonetheless, are recommended to collect the data from natural classroom contexts because recorded interactions are neither natural nor representative of what naturally happens in classes as participants are geared up for contests.

The SETT framework with its four modes, each characterized by distinctive interactures and pedagogic goals, can be elaborately investigated in different contexts while underscoring only one of the modes. Studies of such type can be fruitful for teachers because each mode's focus is different from that of the other mode, and textbooks contain various activities in each unit that require using different modes. To meet a part of this need, this study investigated the data obtained from five teachers instructing the Persian writing and reading literacy development course to Kurdish learners studying grades one to six at elementary schools in Iran. This is supported by Walsh (2006), who stated there is an integral relationship between classroom activities and the follow-up interactions.

In sum, other researchers, thus, are suggested to shed more light on this field of study by either focusing merely on one of the modes or studying all of them together. The former can help knowing the classroom context in a richer way, but due to the interconnectedness of the modes and the possibility of seeing overlaps in the occurane of the modes, the latter can be of importance as well. Examining all of the modes in one single study can further highlight the borders beween them and help teachers notice the demarcations while they intend to self-evaluate their own classrooms. In addition, other researchers are recommended to observe and study naturally occurring interactions in the classroom contexts, not recorded ones for a specific aim.

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Appendix

Transcription conventions; adopted from Richards and Seedhouse's (2005, pp. xii-xiii)

Transcription Conventions

A full discussion of CA transcription notation is available in Atkinson and Heritage (1984). Punctuation marks are used to capture characteristics of speech delivery, *not* to mark grammatical units.

[	indicates the point of overlap onset
]	indicates the point of overlap termination
=	a) turn continues below, at the next identical symbol
	b) if inserted at the end of one speaker's turn and at the beginning of the next speaker's adjacent turn, it indicates that there is no gap at all between the two turns
(3.2)	an interval between utterances (3 seconds and 2 tenths in this case)
(.)	a very short untimed pause
word	underlining indicates speaker emphasis
e:r the:::	indicates lengthening of the preceding sound
-	a single dash indicates an abrupt cut-off
?	rising intonation, not necessarily a question
!	an animated or emphatic tone
,	a comma indicates low-rising intonation, suggesting continuation
.	a full stop (period) indicates falling (final) intonation
CAPITALS	especially loud sounds relative to surrounding talk
° °	utterances between degree signs are noticeably quieter than surrounding talk
°° °°	considerably quieter than surrounding talk
↑ ↓	indicate marked shifts into higher or lower pitch in the utterance following the arrow

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> <	indicate that the talk they surround is produced more quickly than neighbouring talk
( )	a stretch of unclear or unintelligible speech
(guess)	indicates transcriber doubt about a word
.hh	speaker in-breath
hh	speaker out-breath
→	arrows in the left margin pick out features of especial interest

Additional symbols

((T shows picture))	non-verbal actions or editor's comments
ja *yes*	translations into English are italicized and located on the line below the original utterance
[gibee]	in the case of inaccurate pronunciation of an English word, an approximation of the sound is given in square brackets
[æ]	phonetic transcriptions of sounds are given in square brackets
< >	indicate that the talk they surround is produced slowly and deliberately (typical of teachers' modelling forms)
☺	smiley voice
☹	serious tone (contrasts with smiley voice)
#	creaky voice
X_____	the gaze of the speaker is marked above an utterance and that of the addressee below it. An unbroken line (_____) indicates that the party marked is gazing towards the other; absence indicates lack of gaze. Dots (. . .) mark the transition from nongaze to gaze and the point where the gaze reaches the other is marked by X. Commas (,,,) indicate the moment when gaze is shifted.

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