NATURE AND LANGUAGE APPROACH TO AN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) ONLINECLASSROOM: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The study explored an English as a Second Language (ESL) online classroom to identify the nature of its platform and the language approaches practiced by an ESL teacher. The analysis was operated through a classroom discourse where a recorded video of an online classroom was manipulated for the collection and transcription of data. The speech event was transcribed for the purpose of analysis and discussion of discourse. Results show the distinguished features of an online classroom, wherein it is thematic as the target language (English) is directly used in instruction and presentation of the lesson. Furthermore, online classroom features a virtual experience of electronic reward system and interactive screen as the appealing nature of the education setting. The language approach covered elicitive, directive and informative instruction, as well as moves, hand gestures and other non-verbal cues to support the facilitation of learning by the teacher. In regard to the varying theories applied in communication between the teacher and learner, the language approach was generalized to follow the eclectic approach that frames the concept of using different methods in language teaching in accordance to the needs of the learners and to the suitability of the class.

Keywords: Classroom Discourse, ESL Online Classroom, Activity Theory, Interactional Sociolinguistics, Eclectic Approach

1. Introduction

The term "online classroom" is defined as an environment created using a learning management system that allows synchronous and asynchronous connection with teachers and learners that are generally separated by location (IGI Global, 2021). It has its roots in distance education, but with the advent of the Internet and the World Wide Web, the potential for reaching learners around the world increased greatly, (Bakia, et.al, 2010). This platform continues to emerge as one of the growing trends in education tourism in the Philippines, highlighting English as a Second Language (ESL) classes as the leading course program in the informal education industry.

On the other hand, online classes, alongside modular and blended learning modality, marks the sudden shift in the Philippines' formal education due to Covid-19 outbreak. Aside from the problems occurring with weak internet connectivity and inability of gadgets, online classes pose problems on the organization of lessons. Since this teaching modality was put into immediate effect to continue education amidst Covid-19 crisis, online classes may have been adopted but are stuck in the old methods of teaching. In this abrupt change from traditional face-to-face class to online class, the delivery of teaching-learning procedures may be viewed as experimental and not fully structured.

In line to this, this study aimed to describe the nature and language approach of an ESL online classroom through a classroom discourse analysis. ESL online teaching companies (in the Philippines, such as 51Talk, Acadsoc, ABC360, Weblio, Native Camp, RareJob, Palfish, etc.) supported the virtual interface with distinguished features. ESL teachers have also undergone official trainings for linguistic functions that would help them facilitate the delivery of instruction. The findings of the study would provide an overview about an ESL online classroom that could contribute to a redesigning of an online teaching modality in formal education. Also, knowing its background and orientation could help teachers to model their approaches and strategies to deliver an efficient instruction.

1.1 Review of Related Literature

The post-pandemic that started during the early month of year 2019 has greatly affected the education system. In the Philippines, majority of the public schools cannot fully grant the implementation of online learning because of financial strains and insufficient technical support. Seeking to make the formal education into advancement would pose a lot of adjustments and careful planning to have its implementation in full capacity. Google Meet, MS Teams and Zoom are the common platforms applied to deliver learning management systems. These platforms may be familiar to both teachers and learners; however, these weren't completely adopted in the past formal education. Teachers and students mostly rely on books and direct classroom interaction before, given little opportunity to use online telecommunications, where there are only few has exposure to substantial e-learning infrastructures and only utilize it for output submission.

In a research study by Moralista and Oducado (2020) regarding the faculty's perception towards online education shows that they are unsure if they favor online education. Accordingly, the ambivalent and negative impressions of the faculty results from being left with less options as they are required to adopt to the new educational landscape. As faculty perceptions can affect their engagement and potential in their teaching, they must be provided with ways to fully understand and expand the opportunities that online education presents. This view was earlier noted by Burge & Polec (2008, in Arinto, 2013), saying that some teachers, coming from transmission modes of teaching face-to-face in conventional higher education, have realized after some online trials that they may need some new teaching models (pp. 246). Thus, according to Arinto (2014), this calls for them to increase their understanding in the "dynamics of pedagogical change in online learning environment." Furthermore, her literature review sees online learning as a complex situated process which requires the integration of content, pedagogy, context, and technology.

One of the biggest concerns about moving to online learning is that one cannot replicate the experience of being in the same room as the teacher. Most teachers were trained to teach in class and not online (APEC Schools, 2020). With that, the study of Bojovic et.al (2020, in Chakraborty, 2021) shows that learners feel that they would learn better in a physical classroom compared to the virtual classroom. Reportedly, it is because the professors lack confidence and assessment techniques. Also, it was believed that traditional classes could provide more opportunities for students to interact with the teacher and peers (other students) and could, therefore, be more beneficial for learning (Most of the time, teachers aid their teaching with the sharing of slide presentations. However, this approach displays the shortcomings of online learning covering direct instruction and limited interaction only. According to the survey conducted by Kaisare et.al. (2020), teachers and learners shared introduction to the new features as one of their concerns. Features to adopt better assessment techniques, notetaking and control of visual display are some of the things suggested.

With further research, it was found out that there have been not enough references focusing on the virtual environment of the ESL online teaching companies, even though much success has been attained by these teaching platforms seeing ESL as a booming industry in the Philippines. With the results of the study, certain guidelines could be adopted from ESL online classrooms that could help in the restructuring and redesigning of teaching modality specific to online education.

1.2 Research Questions

This study gives significance and relevance to teachers, learners, and education agencies for a theory of having online schools as the future of education is greatly anticipated. Furthermore, the results of the study provide essential information to deeply understand the process of teaching and learning online. Observation reports were put into a great deal of analysis to cater appropriate approaches and strategies in the delivery of instruction. This study is to answer the following:

1. What is the nature of an ESL classroom as to:
   a) Online Classroom Features; and
   b) Language Approaches?
2. What is the instructional approach applied by the ESL online teachers?

2. Methods

2.1 Design

This study used discourse analysis to explore an ESL online classroom. Discourse analysis is a research approach that analyzes language in use. In the context of having a communication between a teacher and a learner, classroom discourse specifies the broad field of discourse analysis. Classroom Discourse, as defined by Amy Tsui (2015), refers to all forms of discourse that take place in the classroom. Accordingly, it encompasses the linguistic as well as the non-linguistic elements of discourse. The former includes the interactions and language used by the teacher and the learners. The latter includes paralinguistic gestures, prosody, and silence—all of which are integral parts of the discourse. On the other hand, Valsiner (1997, in Luo, 2013) views classroom discourse as a process of co-construction that enables teachers and students to create new forms of semiotic mediation and action.

In the present study, the analysis is multifaceted as such that the classroom discourse to be studied was not practiced in traditional face-to-face class, rather in a virtual interface specific to a platform designed by the selected ESL teaching platform. In line with this view, Wells (1999, in Luo 2013) suggested that to understand the role of the classroom discourse, researchers should attend to the contribution it makes to the classroom activities, structures of participation, and the functions that discourse performs in mediating the objectives in class.

2.2 Data Analysis

The domain of inquiry is centered to define the nature of an online classroom applied by the ESL teacher. Furthermore, the approach/es of the English language will be analyzed in the classroom discourse. Sample recordings of online teachings are set in the perspective of Activity Theory by the Soviet psychologists (in Hung and Wong, 2000) to manage the complexity of the study. The indicators of the theory's model were converted into the context of an online classroom. Tools, which can be perceived as mediator between subjects (English) and objects (English language). Rules form the basis for working between subjects in the community, and it will be regarded as the set of policies agreed between the teacher and learner. Division of labor is the means through which members in the community (teacher and students) work through the object to be achieved, which then results in an outcome. However, the community will only circle between the teacher and learner since the setting of the discourse is a one-to-one online class. This is one of the concepts that would set up the orientation of the online classroom.

On the other hand, certain approaches of discourse analysis were applied in the study. According to Rampton (2017), Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS) developed as the expression of John Gumperz's approach to research, and it usually focuses on face-to-face interactions in which there are significant differences in the participants' sociolinguistic resources and/or institutional power. It focusses on language in its social context, and the present research will analyze the case of the speech event happening in the online classroom. There are seven different factors that all serve a particular function in a certain 'speech event' associated with interactional sociolinguistics known as the "Ethnography of Communication" by Gumperz and Hymes, (Spolsky, 1998 in AAL, 2021):

a) Speaker – Writer
a) Hearer – Reader
b) The message that is passed between them
c) The topic expressed by the message form
d) Location of speech event
e) Emotive/ expressive function which is the speaker – writer attitude
f) Referential/ denotative function stressing the topic

In addition, the concept of discourse is associated through the descriptive concepts of bringing discourse to the language classroom as extracted by Cots (1995):

a) Speech Event
b) Turn-Taking
c) Topic-Management
d) Communicative Event

Structural-Oral-Situational Approach was used to answer the problem about what approaches of language are used in the online classroom applied by the ESL teacher. Another approach could According to the study of R. Vanitha (2017), Structural approach is known for selection, gradation, and presentation. These structural and vocabulary items were selected according to their usefulness, frequency, teachability and productivity. This approach was mostly used with the Oral Approach. The oral approach introduces the structural and vocabulary items to the learner to discuss texts. Lastly, is the Situational Approach which was designed based on the theory that language lives in situations and language is employed according to the needs of the situation so, the teacher of English should present the language with meaningful situations. In this approach the situations are selected which are familiar to the students. To make the situation alive, the teacher should use objects, graphics, models, etc. With that, this approach is used with structural and oral approaches. Hence these approaches are combined and called Structural-Oral-Situational Approach (S-O-S Approach). This

design caters to the needs of the learner in order for them to achieve the competencies they ought to learn in the lesson (situational); the corpora to be used is a video corpus where the command language is on focus for the delivery of instruction (oral); and aside from the ESL teachers and aural activity, the class is supported with presentations (structural).

3. Results and Discussion

According to Hymes (in Communication/General, 2021), language cannot be studied in isolation. It has to be studied in the wider context of cultural and social aspects. Language is not limited to a mere technical set of grammatical rules. Hymes divides speech into two components: 'means of speech' and 'speech economy'. 'Means of speech' means 'the features that enter into styles, as well as the styles themselves'. For the present study, it is featured as the nature of the classroom. 'Speech economy' refers to the relationships within a speech community where the people use their means of speech. This component will be featured as the study for the language approaches used by the ESL teacher in the discourse of online classrooms.

3.1 The Nature of the Classroom
3.1.1 Activity Theory in the Classroom

To define the descriptive system of the nature of the discourse, the variables of the Activity Theory has been decoded based on the online classroom. Leont'ev (Wertsch, 1981 in Hung and Wong, 2000) claimed that activity should be analyzed at various levels - activities, actions, and operations (the hierarchical structure of an activity). Activities are distinguished based on their motive and the object toward which they are oriented; actions, based on their goals; and operations, on the basis of the conditions under which they are carried out.
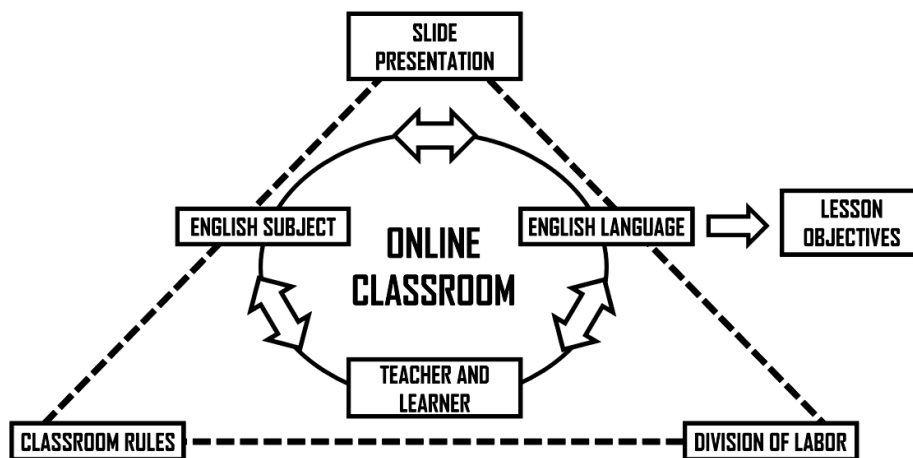

Figure 1. Process of Activity in the Online Classroom

Following the given table anchored on the Vygotskian School's framework, the outer variables comprising the classroom rules, tools and division of labor are considered as the basic units involved in the virtual setup. The rules are termed as classroom rules for it should be specified that policies in the conduct of the activity are not generalized. In the classroom discourse, the ESL teacher has setup the classroom rules designed by the affiliated company, given in the first episode below as a sample:

Legend:

T is for the ESL Teacher; S is for the Student

Dialogue in *Red color implies intervention on the part of the subject while the other is speaking/finishing her dialogue.

The signs "_____" are utterances that are unclear and cannot be interpreted.

Table 1: Episode 2 – Preparation

Episode	Time Frame	Conversation	Code
2	02:14 –02:37	T: Alright. So, there you go. Linda, today we will be learning another lesson again. So, are you ready? S: Yes, I'm ready. T: <u>Alright. So, I want you to listen to me carefully.</u> *(With hand gestures of listening)* <u>And then, eyes at our lesson.</u> *(With hand gestures like google eyes).* S: Look to me.* T: Look at our lesson. Okay, here we go.	Preparation

The class would start at the course of setting rules and policies. The ESL teacher had around 2 minutes of greetings and short conversation with the student before officially signaling the start of their lesson. The teacher (T), who is a Filipino but fluent in English, used hand gestures, like the act of listening and google eyes, to illustrate the rules to her learner (S) who is not native to the English language. Classroom rules are said to be the foundation for a functional and successful classroom in any setting. Rules vary from procedures as they determine what the classroom looks like, what type of behavior is acceptable and encouraged, and help learners work towards a common goal. In other words, they set the tone (LearnWell, 2017). Other ESL class provided at most 1 minute only to make a short conversation with the learners such as exchanging of greetings, asking them about their day and asking them if ever they have a homework. Another ESL class would only give their learners and ask them if they can be heard or seen. After that, they would proceed immediately with the lesson without wasting any more time.

The tools are correlated to the idea of presentations templates customized per ESL company. The common templates are presented like slide presentations, while there are some ESL class which are presented like a modular/book presentation with a scrolling up/down effect to move on to the next page. This tool will give mediation to any language barrier as well as the motivation and interest in the part of the learners. The slide presentation vary to both ends. In the T's end, prepared scripts are projected in the screen to guide the dialogues of the teachers. It gives instructions and steps to teachers like the given sample below:

> Step 1. Greet the student.
> T: Hello!
> T: Are you ready for class?

> Step 2. ask the S to listen.
> Tips: Ears
> T: Listen to me. Can you hear me?

Sample response of the learners are also presented, like:

> S can say:
> -Hello, teacher!
> -Yes, I'm ready!

The visual display includes the video capture on the end of the teacher and the learner on the right side, while the slide presentation covers most of the space. Some elements are also presented to further guide the teacher, such as illustration for actions and gestures, the present slide the teacher is viewing, the navigation panels, and the notes like the example below:

> Suggested time allocation:
> Transitional pages: <0.5 min
> Content pages: about 1 min.

Other than that, sample answers and definition of difficult terms included in the lesson are also projected in the teacher's end which are not visible to the learner's screen. There are buttons in the teacher's screen for moving to the next slide or page, for a pen tool that can let the teacher draw on the screen, and buttons to reward the learners with stars and other stickers. Also, for learners in the English beginner level, the presentations illustrated a lot of pictures and supporting audios for pronunciation. The higher the English level of the learner, the more complex the lessons are.

The division of labor will be the shared work and activities between the teacher and the learner, the perceived community in the activity of discourse, to achieve the outer variable which is the lesson objective. The application of this term is inferred as the roles of the teacher and the learners, wherein, the teacher will serve as the facilitator in the learning process of the learners through teaching instruction with the topic and activity presentations. The learner will serve as the actor of the class that will receive and do the assigned tasks given in the lesson. The lesson objectives, which is the outer variable, will only be perceived as an existent outcome once the process is successfully done. For this class, the presentation of lesson objectives is in the episode 4 of the discourse:

Table 2: Episode 4 – Lesson's Task/Objectives

Episode	Time Frame	Conversation	Code
4	03:50 – 04:20	T: Don't forget and always remember Linda, that ___ *(With two hands pointing to herself)* you are going to read a fun story. S: *(Imitating the teacher)* Read a fun story. T: Learn the sounds of prr prr prr P-R… S: __ Pra pra pra *(Imitating the teacher while playing with her hands and a tissue)* T: Uh. P-L. Pah. Pla. Pah. And also get to know some words that contain the sound of P-R or P-L. Let's go to the next page.	Lesson's Task/ Objectives

The online classroom further revolves around interior variables that complete the discourse. English is the subject or the factor that created the main agenda of the session. Since this is an ESL classroom, English courses are being diverted to use the English language in instruction. This is aligned into Thematic Teaching wherein the teaching in a single context forms the basis of a unit of learning (Saraswathi & Stanly, 2018).

Having the English as the subject or the acting theme, the overall course of the lesson aligns to the English Language. This approach has its benchmark that it will cater to competence (the belief that learners are capable of completing a task); Autonomy/control (the learners' ability to set appropriate goals and see a correlation between their effort and the outcome); Interest/value (learners having a vested interest in the task and a feeling that its value is worth the effort to complete it); and Relatedness (the need to be part of a group or social context and exhibit behavior appropriate to that group). The approach is evident all throughout the lesson, from the medium of instruction where English is used, motivation such as songs about the English phonics, preparation, title introduction, motivational songs, activities, guided practice and assessments.

3.1.2 Descriptive Concepts in the Online Classroom (Cots, 1995)
a) Speech Act

Definition: An utterance considered from the point of view of its function(s) in the process of communication.

Usefulness: In the analysis of an utterance as a speech act that can be incorporated, besides the (i) basic literal meaning of the words contained in the utterance (locutionary meaning), two kinds of meaning which have to

do with (ii) the intended effect of the utterance by the speaker (illocutionary force) and (iii) the interpretation of that intended effect by the listener (perlocutionary force). Furthermore, the concept of speech act allows us, in the first place, to make our learners aware that there is not a one-to-one relationship between form and function and that sometimes messages can be expressed in indirect ways.

Examples:

(i) *T: Hello there, Linda. Good to see you today. Alright. Linda, today is Monday. So, what did you do today?*

During the "Greetings" in episode 1, T made an introduction of herself and start a short conversation by asking what the learner did that day. In this, no implicit agenda is expected from the learner since the dialogue is in literal sense.

(ii) *T: How about this? "Read and Match."*

S: (Showing a disgusted expression) I don't like you. I like me. (Rubbing her chin while encircling the lady cartoons on screen)

T: (Smiling) You don't like this one? (Encircling a lady cartoon on the slide).

S: No. I like your pink *___. I like you pink. I don't like the hair and the dress.

T: Oh, I see. (Laugh a little)

S: I like yellow hair. Blue dress. Princess.

T: Alright. So, you like it. Uh, you like to have a yellow hair.

In the given dialogue, S could not express clearly what she meant. Because of the language barrier, the illocutionary force has acted upon the speech of S. What is actually meant by S is that she liked the princess with golden hair, but she does not like that it is paired with blue dress. Instead, she wanted to have the princess with a golden hair to wear the pink dress which is from the other cartoon princess.

(iii) *T: And let's sing that phonics song from A to M first. Do you know how to sing this one?*

S: (Singing) A B C D E F G H I J K L M (Scratching the head) N O P Q R S T V U E W X Y Z. Now you know you ABC, *_____ (Touching the tissue on her forehead)

T: Very good, Linda.

Background Utterances

…but this one is a different song, also. This one is different. So, can you sing with teacher?

In this case, the intended perlocutionary force of T has not met by S. T only wanted to ask if S knows the phonic song, but S proceed in singing the ABC song as a response to the question of T. T then complimented S, and later added that the present song in the slide presentation is different from what S had sung.

Below is the distribution of the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary forces acting on the speech event per dialogue of the classroom discourse:

Table 3: Distribution of Locutionary, Illocutionary, and Perlocutionary Forces in Classroom Discourse

Episode	Code	Speech Event Forces		
		Locutionary	**Illocutionary**	**Perlocutionary**
1.	Greetings	20	2	*1
2.	Preparation	2	2	0
3.	Lesson Introduction	15	0	0
4.	Lesson Tasks/Objectives	3	2	0

5.	Motivation	26	1	*1
6.	Story Title Introduction	10	1	0
7.	Story Reading	64	1	0
8.	Pre-Activity/Guided Practice	19	0	0
9.	Application	59	0	0
10.	Post-Activity/Games	63	2	0
11.	Closing Activity	27	1	0
12.	Farewell	5	0	0
Total Dialogue Lines in Discourse:			**325**	

*The number implies the occurrence of an event that the intended perlocutionary in act of a locutionary force was not met.

It can be inferred from the data that in the case of an ESL classroom, literal converse is usually the medium vehicle of the communication between the teacher and the learner. Illocutionary is evident through a language barrier, but through the linguistic competence of a teacher, conflict in interpretation can be easily handled. Simple vocabularies and instruction are utilized inside the class for effective communication since the learner is not in her advanced level in her knowledge and use of the English language. Through attending to the level of the learners, problems in communication at both ends will be utilized.

b) Turn-Taking

Definition: The set of signals and rules which allow the participants in a verbal interaction to make an efficient and effective use of the turn system in which conversation is based.

Usefulness: When one pay attention to turn-taking we look at conversation as the result of the successful application not only of the rules of grammar but also of other types of rules. In this case, these rules have to do with the fact that a conversation is a cooperative enterprise in which the participants must perform in a coordinated way.

Examples:

A. *T: (Moving on to the next slide) Okay. Now...uh, let's answer the question, Linda. What sounds do these letters make? P-R (Underlining pr on the screen) P-R makes the sound of (Pointing forefinger to her lower lip) prrr, prr, prrr. Now, let's read the words, Linda. "Primo." (Reading each word and underlining each one by one).*

S: "Primo."

T: "Prince."

S: "Prince."

T: "Princess."

S: "Princess."

B. *S: I can see a prince and a princess and a… (Scratching forehead) a *__.*

T: Alright. We can see a prince. We can see a princess (Drawing a box the characters in the slide).

S: (Encircling the tress). What's that?

T: We can see some trees. (Drawing a box around trees)

S: Yes. It's trees.

T: *__ Trees. Okay? Now Linda, let's read…*__ (Drawing a box around the story dialogue/line).

S: The story.

The first example above shows a successful turn-taking where T directed S to repeat after T in reading the words with P-R sounds. While the second shows the occurrence of S' interruption and overlapping while T is still talking. Below is the table showing the number of interruptions T and S have made:

Table 4: Number of Interruptions and Overlapping by the Teacher and Learner in the Classroom Discourse

Episode	Code	Interruptions and Overlapping in Turn-Taking		
		Teacher (T)	Learner (S)	Number of Dialogue Lines
1.	Greetings	0	3	22
2.	Preparation	0	1	4
3.	Lesson Introduction	0	4	15
4.	Lesson Tasks/Objectives	0	2	5
5.	Motivation	0	1	27
6.	Story Title Introduction	0	3	11
7.	Story Reading	0	6	65
8.	Pre-Activity/Guided Practice	1	4	19
9.	Application	2	7	59
10.	Post-Activity/Games	1	5	65
11.	Closing Activity	0	1	28
12.	Farewell	0	0	5
Total Dialogue Lines in Discourse:		**4**	**37**	**325**

The table shows the total number of interruptions made by the teacher and the learner during the class. It can be noted that the learner (S) have made 37 interruptions while the teacher is presenting the lesson., while the teacher (T) have made 4 interruptions also. The reasons for the interruptions made the learners include her shift of interest, especially in the visual presentations (such as the character of the princess cartoon), when the learner already knows the answer and was excited to respond, and when the learner repeated words because of confusion or a delay in understanding the matter. The common reason for a teacher's interruption is to end the learner's too much talking and to divert the learner to move on to the next activity.

c) Topic Management

Definition: The set of signals used by the speakers to introduce and manipulate different referents in a communicative event.

Usefulness: The notion of topic is important, in the first place, because the subjects can approach more systematically another notion which is very difficult to grasp: coherence. Coherence should not be understood as a pre-existing relationship between different referents from reality. Rather, coherence is verbally created by the participants in a communicative event. In the second place, a topic is the basis for interaction; without a topic there is no interaction. What people talk about, how they talk about it and how long constitute three very important aspects of communication. The function of topic management markers in general is to contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of the message by signaling explicitly the relationship in terms of topical coherence between the different parts of the message.

The examples in the classroom discourse include when the teacher is saying "next slide" for the next topic or activity. Some presentations are supported with hand gestures, such as laying a hand as if addressing the learners or putting the hand near an ear with an action of listening to ask for the learner's answer. In the research paper of Elfatihi (2006) entitled "The Role of Nonverbal Communication in Beginners' EFL Classrooms," he identified acquired gestures as socially generated gestures. They differentiate societies and communities. Examples are the "O.K" sign, the hand wave as in Hello or Goodbye. Just like language, the relationship between these gestures and their meaning is usually arbitrary. In the discourse, acquired gestures such as showing a thumbs up implies a job well done for the part of the learners. Another example is the pointing of the teacher to her lips that is indicating that the learner must repeat after her.

There are also coded or technical gestures which are considered specialized gestures. They are agreed upon by groups of individuals sharing the same activity. These gestures are often used and understood only by exclusive groups of individuals. They can be compared to jargon or specialized vocabulary in verbal language. In the discourse, the teacher used this gesture with the support of verbal cue "Good job," to compliment a learner. Other acquired gestures are done for the cues "Eyes on me," and "Ears on me," which is a thumbnail to the ESL company.

Other examples were done through the use of writing features included in the virtual system of the online class, in which the teacher and learners can use a pen tool to draw or make shapes on the screen. Anything that is drawn is visible on the screen of both sides. In addition, the teacher can also erase what is drawn by both parties. These features are commonly used to make the lesson more interactive. This was applied like in the given example below:

Examples:

> *T: Alright. So good job. Now, let's go to the next page. (Moving to the next page)*
>
> *T: And let's explore the sounds. Here we go. These letters are P-R and P-L. (Underlining pr and pl on the slide) Letters P-R/P-L make the sound… P-R makes the sound of prr, prr.*
>
> *S: *__.*
>
> *T: Now, kindly read the word, Linda. (Acting like sounding out the given words)*
>
> *S: Prince. Prince. Prettier*

d) Communicative Event

Definition: A particular instance of communication, which the speakers recognize and distinguish from other communicative events and which is defined by a unified set of components which tend to keep stable throughout: the setting, the general purpose of communication, the sequence of speech acts, the participants, the instruments (channel, language variety), the tone or key, the genre and the rules for interaction.

Usefulness: The notion of communicative event allows one to systematically analyze the physical, verbal and socio-cultural context of communication and its relationship with the form and the content of the message. In this way, communication can be presented as the result of not only the individual's decision to convey a message but also the contextual constraints which appear in a specific communicative situation.

The factors concerning the communicative event revolves around the following:

(i)   Chanel

The channel of the classroom discourse is a virtual setup termed as online classroom. It is considered a nontraditional classroom in which learners and instructors are not in physical proximity with each other (IGI Global, 2021). This online class was conducted synchronously for the teacher and learner interaction is greatly employed. The online course, which is commonly about lessons for learning English as a Second Language is

managed and communication is conducted through various electronic methods. In the discourse, the online classroom is supported through the application software of the affiliated ESL company.

(ii)   *Norms of Interaction*

The norms of interaction posit between the teacher as the facilitator of learning and the learner as the activator of learning. In regard to the given roles, the interaction always starts with the teacher's initiation and presentation of the topic or activity, except when the learner will alter it with interruptions and overlapping. Repetition with the teacher and answering of teacher's questions are the usual techniques in interacting.

(iii)   *Purpose of Communication*

There is a formal presentation for the purpose of communication. However, the general purpose should be distinguished to a specialized purpose. The general purpose is visible in the online teaching platform, which showcases that this online course aims to teach non-English speakers to learn English as a Second Language. The specialized purpose is reflected in every lesson chosen by the learners. In the selected discourse, the purpose is to learn the sounds or P-R and P-L and their sample words.

In an interview, the teacher described the nature of the class as a routine since the template of the online classroom are in the same pace. It only varies on the point of discussion based on the chosen lesson of the learner. The teacher also finds it challenging since the learner is Chinese and a beginner who does not understand simple instruction. The teacher also supports the instruction with a translation feature in the chat box, sign language and the Total Physical Response (TPR) to solve any language gap.

3.1.3 Ethnography of Communication

According to Carbaugh (2007), ethnographers of communication start their analyses by focusing on uses of the means and meanings of communication in particular socio-cultural lives. Accordingly, the concept of communication event has become a prominent starting point for these analyses, for it draws attention to communicative action as formative of social processes and sequences. Like gossip sessions, talk shows, and political meetings, communication events typically involve a sequential structuring of acts, can be understood by formulating norms or rules about them, and involve culturally bounded aspects of social life which have a beginning and ending. The classroom discourse has clearly aligned its concepts with this approach, converting the component of culture into the course of language learning.

Ethnography of communication has two main purposes, according to Hymes (Carbaugh, 2007):

a. "to investigate directly the use of language in contexts of situations so as to discern patterns proper to speech activity;" and
b. "to take as framework a community, exploring its unrestrained habits as a whole"

Hymes has presented the following as the ethnography of communication which is abbreviated into SPEAKING (Biswas and Ray, 2011):

a) *S-setting and Scene.* Hymes has considered that "the setting refers to the time and place while the scene describes the environment of the situation. The setting reflects a real time virtual setup, and the scene of the chosen discourse is set in an online classroom.

b) *P-Participants*. This refers to who is involved in the speech including the speaker and the audience. For the present classroom discourse, the roles of speaker and audience were shared between the teacher as the facilitator of learning, who is the main subject of the study, and the learner as the activator of the study.

c) *E-Ends*. The purpose and goals of the speech along with any outcomes of the speech. The purpose of the communication is basically the learning of English as the Second Language for the part of the learner. It is specified for the course of the lesson that the objective for the conduct of the class is to

learn the phonic sound for P-R and P-L. At the teacher's end, the purpose of communication is to facilitate the learners in the learning activity.

d) **A-Act Sequence**. The order of events that took place during the speech. The following list below is the sequence of the discourse termed as the episodes on the phases of the online classroom:

1) *Greetings* – In this phase, the teacher is on standby, waiting for the learners to enter the virtual classroom and set herself to start the lesson. This includes short chitchats with the learners.

2) *Preparation* – In this phase, the teacher has set the rules for the class.

3) *Lesson Introduction* – In this phase, the topic title of the lesson was introduced.

4) *Lesson Tasks/Objectives* – In this phase, the goals, tasks or objectives of the chosen lesson were presented.

5) *Motivation* – In this phase, a phonic song was introduced and sung by the learner.

6) *Story Title Introduction* – In line to the task of reading a fun story, the title of the story was presented in this phase.

7) *Story Reading* – In this phase, the first task was given to the part of the learner guided by the teacher.

8) *Pre-Activity/Guided Practice* – In this phase, the practice of sounding out the phonics were done before proceeding to the main activities.

9) *Application* – Application of the practiced task was done through reading the words and identifying meaning through supported pictures.

10) *Post-Activity/Games* **–** In this phase, games were provided to keep the learner on track. It is not limited to reading, rather, it is supported with drawings and matching for the learner to assess the knowledge in different ways.

11) *Closing Activity* – In this phase, the motivational song had continued.

12) *Farewell* – In this phase, the teacher ended the class with her remarks, feedback, awards and farewell.

3.1 Language Approaches to Classroom Discourse
3.2.1 Language Approaches through Sinclair and Coulthard's Model

From the study of Cockayne (2010) Sinclair and Coulthard has stated to set out to investigate the 'organization of linguistic units above the rank of clause,' and explore the intermediary levels of language 'between context and phonetic substance (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975, in Cockayne, 2010). The S&C model has served as a 'starting point' for Discourse Analysis and a 'basis for more current models' of Discourse Analysis (de Boer, 2007, in Cockayne, 2010), and 'certainly appears to have been adopted by respected TEFL and linguistics researchers' (Raine, 2010, in Cockayne, 2010). *Lessons* were not examined in the process of analysis. Moreover, they were considered 'an act of faith' (Coulthard, 1985, in Stojković) and no defined structure regarding their constituent units with *transactions* that followed their placement in the rank scale. Defining transactions in detail also 'proved to be difficult' (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1992: 31).

a) Acts

Acts are used "…to initiate succeeding discourse activity or respond to earlier discourse activity" (Coulthard, 1977, in Dailey, 2010). There is always a main act in the opening move labeled as the head act. There are three primary head acts, which frequently appear in opening moves; elicitation, directive, and informative (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1992,in Dailey, 2010).

For the elicitation, the teacher in the discourse uses simple hand gestures to support her instruction and to elicit response. For example:

> *T: One more time. Let's read this word (Underlining the word castle) Castle. (Putting the forefinger into her lower lip) Castle.*
>
> *S: Castle*
>
> *T: Very good. (Shows thumbs up) Alright.*

The act of *"Putting the forefinger into her lower lip"* elicits a response for the learners to repeat after the teacher.

In the opening of moves for the directive speech event present in the classroom discourse, the teacher the drawing tools to direct a response from the learner and to emphasize the given instruction such as the example below, wherein the teacher asks the learners to draw a line:

> *T: Alright. So good job. I will give you three…and three magical stars. (Moving to the next slide) Alright. Here we go. Another game. It's "Draw a Line." (Underlining the title, and the pr and pl) Now we have P-L here, and P-R on the other side.*
>
> *S: Okay!*
>
> *T: (Drawing a box around the pl) This side wants to have the P-L words.*
>
> *S: (Draw a line)*
>
> *T: Very good. You got it. "Placid."*

Lastly, for the informative, the opening moves present were the presentation of the slides. Moving the deck to the next slide informed both parties that new or continuing topic or activity will be done in that certain phase. The language approach present here is the Situational Approach to language, wherein to cater the needs of the learner in the learning process, slide presentations, nonverbal cues and application tool were manipulated.

b) Moves

This consists of acts combined to form exchanges. There are five classes of moves, which make up exchanges. Firstly, there are framing moves, which are used to structure the lesson. The framing moves are presented as the set up for the classroom rules in the preparation episode. These moves are often followed by focusing moves, which are there to draw learners' attention to the direction of the lesson. In this support, the episode of motivational songs were provided in the slide. The other three moves are labeled as opening, answering, and follow-up. Sinclair and Coulthard (1992, pg.22 in Dailey, 2010) state that, "[t]he purpose of a given opening may be passing on information or directing an action or eliciting a fact." The opening move is to direct the learners to participate in the discourse. The answering move, usually a response from the learners, is determined by the head act within the opening move. The follow-up move, which is typically produced by the teacher, takes place after the answering move as a reaction to the learner's response. This move is considered vital in telling the learners whether they have done what the teacher wanted them to do. With such importance, if the follow-up is withheld, the learners might think that they produced the wrong answer or that there is a problem (McCarthy, 1991, pg.16-17). An example on the application of the follow-up move is given below:

> *S: (Drawing a circle around the words "placid" and "plum" and laugh)*
>
> *T: (Drawing a check mark beside the word "placid" and "plums") Yes, exactly Linda. So, the P-L words here are "placid, plums," another "plums."*
>
> *S: Plums!*
>
> *T: Alright. So good job. I will give you three…and three magical stars.*

The follow-up move was reflected with the drawing of the check mark on the work of the learner as well as giving the learner a reward of three magical stars. This concept correlated to the behaviorist's approach to

learning like Audio-Lingual Approach. The underlying principle theory of this approach is language is primarily speech and the second language can be learnt in the same way how we learn the first language like starting with monosyllabic, disyllabic and so on. Though the practice given in the discourse was not meant for oral activity, it is anchored on the behaviorists' beliefs that the learning becomes a habit if the response is reinforced properly. This is where the reward and feedback are seated.

c) Exchange

The three principal teaching exchanges described by Sinclair and Coulthard are informing, directing, and eliciting exchanges. Sinclair and Coulthard state that, "A typical exchange in the classroom consists of an initiation by the teacher, followed by a response from the pupil, followed by feedback, to the pupil's response from the teacher…" (1992, pg.3, in Dailey, 2010). This coined the term Initiation, Response, and Feedback (IRF) but it is also emphasized that this does not mean that each exchange must include all three parts.

1) Informing Exchange

Informing exchanges take place when the teacher needs to tell his/her learners about new information, facts, or just simply say something to them. The opening move will therefore begin with an informative act and can but does not necessarily need to be followed by a reply by the learners (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1992, pg.26, in Dailey, 2010). For instance, when T would not expect any response when she said that they were to move on the next page, like the example below:

> *S: Plum, plum, plum.*
> *T: Great job, Linda. (Showing a thumbs up) Let's go the next page. (Moving to the next slide)*

2) Directing Exchange

A directing exchange is "…designed to get the pupils to do but not to say something" (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1992, pg.26, in Dailey 2010). Therefore, the response from the learners is the 'doing' part, which will most likely but not always be a non-verbal response. Even though it is non-verbal, the learners respond to the direction the teacher has given. For example,

> *T: Okay. I will be reading the sentence, Linda. Please listen to me carefully. "A long time ago,…"*
> *S: Plum?*
> *T: …a prince…*
> *S: prince*

In the first line of the, T is implying to have the learner repeat after her even without saying the instruction. On the second line which is for S, it showed that S is still occupied with another subject *(plum).* T continued the reading until S was directed to repeat after the teacher.

3) Eliciting Exchange

The most common exchange in the classroom is an eliciting exchange (Willis, 1992, in Dailey, 2010). These exchanges begin with the teacher asking a question (usually one they already know the answer to). An answer is then given by the learner, and finally a follow-up evaluation by the teacher. (Hellermann, 2003, in Dailey 2010). Here is an example from the discourse:

> *Excellent. (Showing thumbs up) Alright. (Moving to the next slide) Now, how about this one? "Read and Match"*
> *S: Place. (Drawing lines on the screen)*
> *T: Place. This is correct. (Draw a check mark on the screen) How about the next word?*
> *S: (Drawing lines on the screen)*
> *T: Okay? Alright. So plenty is… this one. (drawing a check mark on the screen) It's correct. So, we can see plenty of plum trees.*

In the given dialogue, further instructions were not needed. Also, T has given an affirmative response to S for getting the activity done correctly. The course of exchange follows an Information-Based Approach in teaching which lets the learner elicit information about the text presented in the slide deck. Furthermore, teacher asked questions to check learner's knowledge based on what they have read and also provide the learners with background information (Lebar, Mustakim, & Mustapha)

Overall, the language approach is reflected to use the Eclectic Approach. Eclectic approach is defined on the principle that the teacher does not follow any particular method to teach but the teacher can follow a mixture of various methods according to the needs of the learners. The teacher can choose different techniques from different language teaching theories which effectively suit the class (Vanitha, 2017).

Conclusion

This study investigated the nature of an online classroom as well as the language approaches used by the ESL teacher. Based on the analysis and interpretation of results, it can be concluded that the online classroom is thematic in the nature of the lesson, wherein the instruction, virtual learning space, objectives, activities and other components revolves around the single theme of learning English as a Second Language. Furthermore, the experience of learning may differ from a face-to-face classroom in terms of physical proximity and demonstration of skills, learning opportunities have been extended through the classroom's features such as electronic rewards of magic stars, creative animation displays of the lesson, interactive screen deck and the difference in the manner of communication and instruction. However, just like in the general education settings, the lesson centers on the purpose of the lesson or known as the objectives, and classroom rules, reward system and feedbacking were evident. For the second problem, the language approach is contextualized into Eclectic Approach because the teaching strategies of the teacher vary from time to time, based on what is needed and best suited in the learning episodes. It followed the notion that through this approach of collective theories in teaching, the teacher can use the best and the most effective techniques and achieve success in the language classroom.

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