RESEARCH ARTICLE

INVESTIGATING EFL TEACHERS AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES OF PATTERNS OF INTERACTION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to explore the teachers' perceptions and practices of patterns of interaction in the classroom in Sudanese context. The study adopted the descriptive and qualitative methods. The data of the article were collected through two questionnaires. The first one was submitted to (40) EFL teachers at ALAHFAD University for Women. The second questionnaire was submitted to (40) EFL students at different colleges at ALAHFAD University for Women. The number of the participants was (40) males and females teachers and (40) male students. The obtained data were analysed by using (SPSS). The findings manifested that ESL/ EFL teachers have affinity employing interactional strategies in classrooms. There is a gap between EFL teachers' knowledge and practice. Development training program and reflection are assisting the implementation of interactional strategies successfully. Collaborative teaching strategy is a key for EFL classroom interaction. Interactional strategies challenges appear in whole class teaching, large size classroom and large group work. Interactional strategies reinforce learning practicability and incubate EFL students' language proficiency.

Keywords: Teachers and Students' Perceptions, Patterns of Interaction in Language Learning

Introduction

It's widely acknowledged that the main aim of learning a language is using it in communication whether in its spoken or written forms. Classroom interaction is a key to reaching that goal. Rivers states that through interaction, students can increase their language store as they listen to or read the authentic linguistic material, or even output of their fellow students in discussions, skits, joint-problem solving tasks, or dialogue journals. In interaction, students can use all they possess of the language- all they have learned or casually absorbed in real life exchanges.

In addition, theories of communicative competence emphasise and highly- estimate the effect of classroom interaction on second language acquisition SLA and linguistic competence. For example, Angelo (1993) asserts that classroom interaction is one of ten principles for effective L2 teaching. Surely, TEFL is always a shared- relationship job that involves two main active and effective participants, i.e. a teacher and learners.

Through observation, the authors realised that there's some kind of separation between what teachers already know and believe about the effectiveness of employing interactional strategies and their perceptions

on the ground of teaching practices. The quality and quantity of ESL/ EFL teachers' practical utilisation of patterns of interaction in their classrooms are generally very limited and inadequate. The authors believe that this significant discrepancy has to be thoroughly investigated to describe Saudi ESL/EFL teachers' actual use of interaction and its correlation to SLA and identify barriers to application.

Aims and Scope of Study

The aim of this paper is to identify and justify the gap between teachers' practices and perceptions' of patterns of interaction in Sudanese EFL classroom, to reflect EFL teachers' perceptions/ attitudes towards interactional strategies, also to show EFL teachers' on ground practices of using patterns of interaction, identify EFL teachers' dominant patterns of interaction in their classes, pinpoint barriers of using interactional strategies in EFL classroom, identify the correlation between interaction and EFL students language learning, and finally, to determine whether teachers' preparation programs give priority to classroom interactional strategies or not.

This study focuses mainly on exploring and reflecting EFL teachers and students' perceptions towards the patterns of interaction they follow in the process of language learning by virtue of two questionnaires; the first one was submitted to (40) at ALAHFAD University for Women. The second questionnaire was submitted to (40) EFL students at different colleges at ALAHFAD University for Women. The overall number of the participants was (80) out of which is (40) males and females teachers and (40) male students.

Literature Review

It has been often noted that patterns of interaction have a significant place in enhancing language teaching and learning. The advantages of activities carried out through interaction have been listed by many researchers.

Brown, (2001) & Lynch, (1996), pointed out that "one of the concerns of English language teachers is to provide students with rich interaction opportunities in the classroom. They use patterns of interaction in their classes in order to reach the goals they have set for the lesson. Problems may arise, however, if students do not regard these interactional strategies as effective learning tools, or do not have positive feelings towards the interaction types used in classes. It is necessary therefore to know how students evaluate the interaction types, what they feel about them and how different or similar the students' and their teachers' opinions are. By taking these factors into consideration, teachers may find alternative ways to the typical practice of patterns of interaction and make changes in their practices to mitigate the negative feelings of the students". Hence, this study aims to investigate perceptions of EFL teachers at various practices toward interactional strategies used in EFL classes, exploring students' and teachers' affective reactions to interaction, along with their impressions of their effectiveness as learning tools.

Patterns of Interaction in Communicative Approaches

Current communicative approaches to language teaching have attributed a major role to communication and interaction in language classes since the emergence of communicative methodologies in the 1980s.

Richards & Rodgers, (2001) pointed out that emphasis on communication has led to a shift in classrooms to student-centeredness, thus the teacher's role has become less dominant than in traditional teacher-fronted methods, and students are expected to take on more responsibility for their own learning. The focus of instruction has been directed in interaction, rather than form in communication. The participants of a conversation are supposed to convey their knowledge, opinions, and feelings to each other, and in turn, understand each other to avoid breakdowns in communication. In today's communicative classrooms, therefore, one of the teacher's main duties is to introduce situations likely to promote communication, in which students interact with one another, find opportunities to work on the negotiation of meaning and increase their communicative competence.

Larsen-Freeman, (1986) found out that "students are expected to interact in various ways such as in dyads, triads, small groups, or as a whole class. In fact, interaction is not a new phenomenon, and it has long been addressed, both in the first language and second language acquisition, as an important factor in studies of how languages are learned. Emphasizing the importance of comprehensible input in his interaction

hypothesis claims that conversational interaction is necessary in order for second language acquisition to take place, and that input is made comprehensible through interaction with other speakers.

Patterns of Interaction in Cooperative Learning Approaches

With the advent of cooperative learning approaches, there has been a shift from teacher-fronted learning to student-centered learning and concepts such as communication, collaboration and interaction have been increasingly emphasised. Among these concepts, especially the place of interactional strategy in the classroom and the benefits it provides for learners have been widely addressed in the recent literature.

Brown, (2001) agreed that interaction means the exchange of information, opinions or feelings collaboratively between two or more people, leading to a positive mutual effect on the participants. It involves both the expression of one's own ideas and the comprehension of those of others. During the interaction, negotiation of meaning is accomplished through comprehension checks, clarification requests, confirmation checks and recasts. In other words, speakers amend what they say in order to be comprehensible for the listeners, and this contributes to the acquisition of the information gained through the negotiation of meaning. In language classrooms, interaction occurs between teacher and students, students and students, or students and authors of texts. Through interaction, students can raise their knowledge of the language as they listen to their teachers and classmates or read the linguistic materials, and they can learn and produce the language by means of negotiating meaning with each other during the tasks or exercises carried out in the classroom.

In order to improve interaction, free discussions, role plays, dramas, simulations, information gap activities, stories as pair work, group work or whole-class can be incorporated into the learning process in the classroom. Particularly, getting students to perform tasks or exercises in pairs or groups is believed to have many advantages, among which are extended conversational

exchanges, opportunities for student initiation, practice in the negotiation of meaning, increase in students' motivation, and promoting learners' responsibility and autonomy.

Interaction in EFL Classroom

The concept of language classroom interaction has undergone various interpretations. Interaction in the language classroom is a matter of the oral use of language in the classrooms. At least 35 years ago, an important direction in applied linguistics and education research sought to understand the nature and implications of classroom interactions, or what is commonly referred to as classroom discourse. Larsen-Freeman, (1986) suggested a three-tier approach, *beginning-middle-end*, to focus on the distinct (moves) that take place in interaction, which can be considered as *question-answer-comment* in the classroom environment, or *command-acknowledgement-polite formality*, as occurs in a shop between the client and the shopkeeper. Broadly speaking, EFL classroom studies can be viewed from three different perspectives:

1. From the perspective of interaction (between teacher/learners with each other)
2. From the perspective of the effects of instruction on language development.
3. From the perspective of whether different methods of instruction have different effects on language development.

Patterns of Interaction

Storch (2002), identified and explored that four distinct patterns of student-student interaction, which are collaborative, dominant-dominant, dominant-passive and expert-novice. In identifying and analysing interaction, studies generally have focused on the outcomes of activities or tasks performed in the classroom.

Wu (1998), claims that "examining just the observable activities of interpersonal verbal exchanges is not sufficient to draw conclusions about interaction. Rather, considering as well the unobservable activities of intrapersonal mental processes such as perceiving, understanding and inferring is also necessary". Furthermore, it may be useful for teachers to ask students' opinions about classroom activities in order to raise their awareness about how certain activities can be helpful in achieving the objectives of the course, in order to meet the need for exploring how students perceive the effectiveness of activities carried out in the classroom.

Interactional strategy

As the interactional strategy is noted for creating opportunities for students in language learning, it has been the subject of many studies in the ELT field. Dobinson, (2001) argued that to investigate whether students of upper-intermediate to advanced level learn from EFL classroom interaction, EFL students benefit from the interaction in the lesson even if they are not involved overtly in it. Moreover, EFL students frequently recalled and retained new vocabulary that they attended to during the interaction in the class.

Bitchener, (2004) claims that the relationship between negotiation of meaning and language learning in a study carried out with pre-intermediate EFL learners and suggested that even low proficiency learners use negotiation when there are communication problems, and that language learning which takes place in negotiation during interaction is able to be retained over several months. In the light of these two studies, interaction helps learners retain the information gained during the lessons. The interaction may play an important role in the acquisition of grammar, as well.

Mackey and Philip, (1998) suggested that EFL teachers should make use of negotiated interaction on the production and development of question forms in EFL beginner and lower intermediate learners, with the focus on recasts during the interaction. EFL learners made great gains when they were developmentally ready to learn the items, and that recasts used during an interaction may be beneficial for short-term interlanguage development in the acquisition of grammar. It results on whether conversational interaction facilitates foreign/second language development in EFL/ESL learners from beginner and lower intermediate classes.

Mackey (1999) support this claim, there is a link between interaction and grammatical development. However, while investigating the effect of interaction in acquiring the grammar of a second language". Further, different aspects of interaction have been investigated to get more detailed information about such multifunctional interaction.

Mackey and Silver (2005) sought to uncover the connection between interactional strategy and English L2 learning by immigrant children in Singapore and found out that feedback provided through negotiations during task interaction assisted language development, and those who received interactional feedback during the tasks showed stage development in question forms.

Oliver and Mackey, (2003) gave a new dimension to this issue by asserting that interactional context is important in assessing the impact of interaction. They describe four categories of interactional context, which are communication-focused interaction, content-focused interaction, classroom management-focused interaction, and explicit language-focused interaction. They assert that the type and amount of feedback in the classroom differ according to the context of interaction, and the opportunities for students to use the feedback and their use of the feedback are directly affected from this, in turn. For example, EFL learners had the most opportunities to use the feedback they received in explicit language-focused exchanges and the fewest opportunities in management-related exchanges.

Interactional Strategies and Meanings

Questioning another aspect of interactional strategy, namely, pragmatics. According to Soler, (2002) points out that the relationship between teacher-led versus learners' interaction and the development of pragmatics in the EFL classroom. Both teacher-students and peer interaction may help to build pragmatic knowledge, although learners' development of pragmatic knowledge is not immediate. Depending on the results of various studies on interaction, it is clear that interaction is really useful in students' language learning process, and it can be used extensively in language classrooms. Employing interactional strategy in different ways for specific purposes may promote the effectiveness of the EFL learning environment, and contribute to the use of the target language.

Interactional Strategy Types

Jacobs and Ball (1996) stated that the strongly emphasised advantages of group work and pair work in theoretical books are taken into consideration by the writers of language learning books, and hence frequently used in the organisation of activities or exercises presented. They analysed the use of group activities in ELT course books published since 1990, and not surprisingly, they found that group activities are extensively

employed in current ELT course books. They also noticed that authors used many good ideas and imaginative means in the activities in order to encourage learners to gain the most benefit from cooperation.

The fact that teachers generally follow a course book in their lessons and the current course books accommodate many activities or exercises to be performed in pairs or groups reveals that implementation of pair and group work in addition to whole-class teaching is almost unavoidable in language classrooms. Both the theoretical grounds for group work and pair work and the practice of them in real classroom settings have inspired researchers to explore the use and effectiveness of these interactional strategy types. Since these interactional strategy types are also practised frequently in task-based learning, collaborative learning, and cooperative learning, the scope of the research studies on interactional strategy types has broadened, contributing to the availability and diversity of research. Due to the fact that the aim of this study is associated with interaction types, which are believed to promote interactional strategy, and performed in pairs, groups, or as a whole-class, any study focusing or comparing on interaction in pair work, group work, or whole-class teaching can provide valuable insights. Whole-class teaching still tends to reign over current teaching practices.

According to McDonough (2004) affirmed that group work is useful for EFL learning. EFL learners performed information-gap and opinion exchange activities in pairs and groups, focusing on conditional clauses. learners' language production improved during pair work and group work. Feedback and modified input which occurred in interaction. Like group work, pair work- the other interaction type- has been investigated at different levels for various aims.

According to Harris, (2005) investigated whether pair work is applicable and effective in beginning EFL classes, and revealed that pair work is possible even in beginning levels, creating interaction which encompasses negotiation of meaning and form.

Moreover, Storch, (2002) suggested that the relationship between pair work and grammatical accuracy at levels from intermediate to advanced, and reported that collaboration generated in pair work led to an improvement in the overall grammatical accuracy of the texts produced by learners".

Interactional Strategy Training

Naughton (2006) stressed that exploring the effectiveness of strategy training of EFL students in enhancing interaction in group work, and arrived at the finding that strategy training enabled students to produce more comprehensible input and output during group work. This means that teaching students interaction strategies before working in pairs or groups can contribute to the negotiation of meaning and form among students, and sustain the interaction which occurs during negotiations. This assumption can be confirmed in the literature with the study of Naughton (2006), who discovered that cooperative strategy training enhanced small group communication in the language classroom. Interaction Patterns During teacher-student interaction and student-student interaction, there are certain patterns of interaction which affect the quality and quantity of interaction in the EFL classroom. In teacher-student interaction, the way teachers teach the lessons or the opportunities they create for students to speak and produce the target language shape the interaction pattern. For example, the dialogue between teacher and student can take place in different combinations such as student-teacher, student-teacher-student, teacher-student, teacher-student-teacher, or teacher-student-teacher-another student. This, in turn, may affect the features and amount of students' production of the target language during interaction between teacher and student. On the other hand, in student-student interaction, generally, students' language proficiency level and the amount of participation are influential in determining the pattern of interaction.

Interactional Strategy Patterns

In the literature, a few studies have examined the strategy patterns of teacher-student and student-student interaction and have given suggestions about them in order to contribute more to the learning process of learners.

Myers (2000) claimed that teacher-student interaction in the classroom, and suggested that when the third part of the standard Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE) sequence of the teacher is replaced with Follow-up, a significant difference in students' participation in interaction with the teacher occurs. In other words,

instead of evaluating students' answers to the posed questions in terms of whether they are right or wrong, the teacher can follow up on the responses by asking students to expand on their thinking, justify their opinions, or relate the answers to their own experiences. This slight difference supports and promotes teacher-student interaction a great deal. As for student-student interaction, interaction patterns have been studied with regard to whether and how students interact with each other in group work or pair work. In group work". According to Myers, (2000) identified four patterns of interaction while observing students working in groups: leader and followers, turn-taking, cooperative production, and individual production. In leader and followers, one student initiated the talk, the other students followed him/her; in turn-taking, students answered the questions in turns; in cooperative production, students worked together throughout the task; and in individual production, students worked on their own. It was observed that the most common interaction pattern was cooperative production, and students constantly were engaged in the negotiation of form and meaning in order to accomplish the task during cooperative production.

Storch, (2002) suggested that the nature of the dyadic interaction, can be represented in four patterns of interaction: collaborative, dominant-dominant, dominant passive, and expert-novice, suggesting that not all students work cooperatively when assigned to pair work. In another study. Storch explored the dominant-dominant and collaborative patterns closely and found out that the collaborative interaction pattern was more efficient than the dominant-dominant one as it enabled transfer of knowledge from pair to talk to subsequent individual performance.

Yule and Macdonald, (1990) followed another criterion and identified patterns by taking the language proficiency level of students into consideration. They claimed that "low proficient and high proficient students should be paired together, and the more proficient one should be given the less dominant role so as to create more interactive cooperation and to enable them to negotiate together.

Perception of interactional strategy

EFL teachers' perceptions were largely neglected and few focuses were drawn to them. However, the increasing prominence of students' perceptions as a result of the learner-centeredness movement has urged researchers to take the perception factor into account in their studies via questionnaires or interviews. The researchers have begun to support their views by using learners' insights in their studies. They have generally focused on how students perceive learning English. The present study is a mixture of both views EFL teachers and learners.

Ghaith, (2001) remarked that teachers' perceptions of interactional strategy have been explored to a small extent as well. However, researchers have examined students' perceptions of cooperative or collaborative learning, pair work and group work, or teacher-fronted and learner-centered activities without naming these as an interactional strategy.

Ghaith, (2001) found that learners' perceptions of the enjoyableness and effectiveness of a specific cooperative learning experience. Learners were generally positive about their experience and willing to recommend its use. This suggests that students found working in groups useful and effective, and they were enthusiastic to continue group work in their classes.

Savignon and Wang (2003), claimed that teacher-learner attitudes to and perceptions of communicative teaching and arrived at the result that both had positive attitudes toward communicative teaching and learning.

According to Rao (2002) examined the perceptions of university students majoring in English of communicative and non-communicative activities, and found that almost all of the students liked group and pair work. Even the results of a study on collaborative software development by Layman, (2000) showed that students preferred to work in pairs, and perceived pair work as more practical than individual work.

Interactional Display Questions vs. Referential Questions

Brown, (2001), stated that "display refers to questions for which the teacher knows the answer and which demand a single or short response of the low-level thinking kind. Referential questions, by contrast, demand more thought and generate a longer response and for which the teacher does not know the answer in advance.

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Display Questions

According to Widdowson, (1990) suppose you ask your students something you already know. The answer will not satisfy the criterion of providing information. For instance, if you hold up your marker and ask students «What is this?» the answer will not solve a problem. Even less valuable are those questions to which the answers are provided beforehand. Some teachers give their students the information and then try to ask them questions. For example, «This is a marker. What is this? such questions can test the students' memory, not their comprehension. In addition, such questions are not in harmony with conversational maxims (unwritten rules about the conversation which people know and which influence the form of conversational exchanges) which is agreed by many researchers.

Referential Questions

According to Talebinezhad, (1999) real language does not consist only of questions from one party and answers from another. The real language circles around referents or world knowledge in order to create messages and therefore is not form-based but meaning-based. Thus, questions in the language classrooms should be Referential or meaning-based, and not focus only on form. The following examples are meaning-based questions:

Examples (1):

1. What would you do if you saw a burglar in your house late at night?

2. How do you spend your holiday?

Examples (2):

T: Last week we were reading «Kee Knock Stan»[title of a story]. What is «Kee Knock Stan?» Janice. (Display Question)

P: I cannot understand.

T: Yes.

T: What do you think the postman at the post office would do? (Referential question)

P: I think I would divide it if the letters are to Hong Kong or other places.

T: Yes, I think that's a sensible way, right? Good.

It has been suggested that one way for teachers to make classes more communicative is by asking fewer Display questions and more Referential questions.

Patterns of Interaction Types

In language classrooms, EFL teachers who are advocates of communicative methods seek ways to generate and sustain successful interaction. The challenge is to find activities and procedures which will create spontaneous interaction for students and which will ease the acquisition process. As declared by Hedge,(2000).

Teacher-Student Interaction: Whole-class Teaching

Whole-class teaching is a teacher-fronted interaction type which imputes a major role to the teacher in the classroom. Teachers may prefer this interaction type for several reasons. First, students are under the direct authority of the teacher, and both teachers and students may feel more secure when the whole class is working together. Second, it allows teachers to get a general understanding of student progress. Moreover, it is suitable for activities in which the teacher is acting as a controller or giving explanations and instructions. In addition, such teaching tends not to be time-consuming, and it is easy to conduct in terms of organisation and material production. Despite these advantages, whole-class teaching has many limitations, as well. Harmer, (2004).

To begin with, all the students are required to do the same thing at the same time and pace. It brings the risk of public failure; therefore, students may be discouraged to participate in front of the whole class. Moreover, individual students do not have many opportunities to speak, and they may be disinclined to take responsibility for their own learning. Further, students do not discover things for themselves; on the contrary, the teacher transmits knowledge to students. Lastly, it is not very appropriate for communicative language teaching, which favours more student talk and less teacher talk. As Harmer claimed, (2004).

Student-Student Interaction: Group Work and Pair Work

Davis, (1997) stressed that Group work, which involves three or more students who perform a task collaboratively, is entrenched in almost all language classrooms because it offers many advantages for students. Its most significant feature is that it is learner-centered. The teacher acts as a designer of the activity before the class, and as a facilitator during the implementation of the activity. Students have more opportunities to speak, and therefore to be involved more actively in language use. Furthermore, group work increases students' autonomy since they make their own decisions in the group in enabling students to go beyond sentence-level discourse into genuine communication acts. Davis added that it provides opportunities for student initiation, face-to-face give and take, practice in the negotiation of meaning, extended conversational exchanges, and student adoption of roles that would otherwise be impossible.

Brown, (2001) asserted that Group work can also help diminish anxiety by promoting a positive atmosphere in the classroom, which can contribute to student motivation. In group work, students can work either cooperatively or collaboratively. In cooperative work, students work together on every item whereas, in collaborative work, they are given different responsibilities of the task. Teachers can arrange whether cooperative or collaborative learning will take place depending on the nature of the task. When the number of the participants is limited to two students, the interaction type is called pair work. Sometimes, pair work is not regarded as different from group work because it is learner-centered, too, and like group work, it provides students with great interaction opportunities. However, there are some slight differences. For example, pair work is comparatively quick and easy to arrange, noticeably increases students' amount of speaking time, and gives students even more responsibility.

Group and Pair Work

Salies, (1995) claimed that there are many activities which are generally performed as group work or pair work in language classrooms. Among the most commonly used ones are role plays, dramas, project work, information gap activities, and discussions/debates. The general characteristics of these activities are as follows:

Role-play: It prepares students for real communication, contextualises language use, provides conversational routines, fosters retention of language structures, and adds emotion, inventiveness and listener awareness to language teaching.

Drama: It allows students to develop creativity, use their imaginations, discover the value of cooperation, enhance their self-esteem, develop autonomy, and have a sense of accomplishment. Students can perform dramas by using pre-existing plays, or by writing and using their own plays.

Project work: It enables students to actively engage in information gathering, processing, and reporting over a period of time. It increases students' content knowledge, language mastery and motivation. Moreover, it enhances students' autonomy and contributes to developing positive attitudes toward English.

Information gap activity

Nakahama, Tyler, & van Lier, (2001) stressed that this is a controlled activity which is goal convergent, and which creates learning opportunities for students. In an information gap activity, generally, student A has some information and Student B asks questions to find that information. During the activity, students negotiate with each other focusing on primarily information transaction, and they try to establish a mutual understanding to accomplish the task.

Discussion/debate

Ur, (1981) stated that it is a natural and efficient way of practising talking freely in English by thinking out some problem or situation together through the oral exchange of ideas". It enables students to practice fluency while speaking, to learn new information and ideas from their peers, and to develop debating skills.

Teachers can choose whether to employ pair work or group work in the execution of these activities, taking the nature and goal of the activity into consideration. Brown (2001) suggested that pair work goes better with "tasks that are short, linguistically simple and quite controlled in terms of the structure of the task".

Brown (2001) maintained that there are some activities appropriate for pair work such as practising dialogues with a partner, simple question-and-answer exercises, quick brainstorming activities, or preparation for

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merging with a larger group. As for group work, it may be more appropriate for activities which require collaboration and interdependence such as project work, or many information and opinion exchanges such as debate and discussion. Students can also perform dramas in groups since dramas generally involve more than two persons. In addition to these, if the teacher wants to follow students' performance closely, getting students to work in groups is more convenient than pair work.

Role-play

According to Salies (1995), students are not overly keen on role-plays.

In order to get more enthusiastic interaction from students in role-play activities, the suggested steps can be followed:

• introduce role-play and explain its advantages to your students

• develop ideas and vocabulary briefly

• assign roles

• perform the role-play

• debrief

• evaluate

• address the difficulties in the following lessons. In this way, students will become aware of the benefits of role-plays and will know what they are expected to do while acting out the role-play. By having feedback after their performance, they will also see their mistakes and they will perform better next time. Moreover, in the questionnaires students reported that they do not want unreal situations and over guidance, and they feel that creating their own situations is fun in role-plays. Therefore, in addition to Salas' suggestions, students should be allowed to be freer in terms of situations and guidance in role-plays.

Patterns of Interaction and EFL Teachers' Perceptions

Barkhuizen, (1998) remarked that teachers have their own perceptions toward interaction patterns to evaluate the activities. The way they perceive them may directly influence their classroom practices. The perceptions of the teachers are important for several reasons. First, the way teachers perceive teaching methods and techniques shapes the way they teach Therefore, their perceptions may give deeper insights about the real classroom practices, and the type of activities used in the class. To illustrate, teachers dedicating themselves to accuracy may mainly deal with grammatical exercises and activities, or teachers in favour of communicative approaches may use learner-centered activities more frequently than teacher-fronted activities. Second, teachers' perceptions may reveal whether there is congruence between their and their students' perceptions. This fact is very important in the education field since a lack of congruence may negatively affect the effectiveness of learning. Third, once a lack of congruence is diagnosed, teachers and students can be encouraged to seek a common understanding. This may lead to making differences in the way that classroom practices are carried out to make both parties contented. Taking the above-mentioned factors into consideration, researchers have explored how teachers and their students perceive particular activities.

 Kasap (2005) pointed out that " the opinions of a participant teacher and students at the lower intermediate level while investigating the effects of task-based instruction on the improvement of learners' speaking skills, and her study demonstrated that both students' and their teacher's perceptions were positive towards task-based instruction.

Teachers-Students Perceptions and Practices

Yang and Lau (2003), argue that students and teachers are likely to have different expectations in the classroom. If there is a mismatch between the perceptions of teachers and students, what is considered as effective for teachers may not be welcomed by students, and the goals and objectives of the course may not be fully achieved. One solution to this may be that teachers should discuss what they think with students, ask their ideas and find solutions to satisfy the students' needs and expectations. In this way, students may be more willing to participate in the activities and utilise all the opportunities interaction presents to them.

 In my opinion, simply collecting students' and teachers' perceptions is not sufficient to decide on the effectiveness of interaction types as it does not take into consideration other factors that may affect these perceptions. For example, the proficiency level of the class may play an important role in determining

students' thoughts and feelings and their teachers' opinions about the interaction types employed in the classroom. In their study "Learners' evaluations of teacher-fronted and student-centered classroom activities". Garrett and Shortall (2002) found that there were some significant differences among beginner, elementary, and intermediate level students in terms of their perceived value of and affective reactions towards the teacher-fronted and student-centered classroom activities. In terms of specifically interaction based activities, it can be argued that students at upper proficiency levels may feel comfortable and competent to speak and interact, and their teachers may find the interaction types used in classes effective whereas students at lower proficiency levels may feel hesitant or not competent to produce the language, and their teachers may find the interaction types ineffective". There is no study in the literature which sheds light on whether there are differences in perceptions both between teachers and students as well as between students of different proficiency levels and considers how effective these students and teachers find various interaction patterns as learning tools.

Advantages of Interaction patterns

Allwright, (1984) indicated that interaction patterns in language classrooms endow learners whose overall aim is to produce and use the target language with many advantages. Through interaction, students can increase their language knowledge as they listen to their teachers and classmates or read the texts. They can have the chance to practice new aspects of language they have learned; giving feedback to each other while interacting. They may also develop social relations among themselves, and they may become more cooperative while performing tasks. In language classrooms, interaction requires management of learning jointly by both teachers and learners, therefore, learners are not simply learners anymore; they become the managers of their learning.

Brown (2000) lists the features of interaction which are beneficial for learners as follows:

• As the focus is on meanings and messages, learners are released from using language in a controlled mode and can attain automaticity more smoothly.

• While students are busy with each other in communication, they see their own language competence and thus become intrinsically motivated.

• The nature of interactive communication involves careful use of several strategies for production and understanding.

• Interaction necessitates taking risks of misunderstanding or being unable to convey the intended meaning, but the outcomes are invaluable and worth the risks.

• Interactive speech enables students to see the connection between culture and language.

• The complexity of interaction upholds the development of interlanguage of learners. A review of these features of interaction patterns may suggest that a successful interaction in the language classroom is useful for learners in many ways. interaction does not contribute to the learning process in only one aspect; on the contrary, it supports language learning with its many aspects such as communication, negotiation or strategy use. For this reason, the interaction may be accepted as a multifunctional concept, enabling students to enhance more smoothly in their learning route.

Materials and Methods

Hypotheses of the Study

The researchers have hypothesised the following:

1. There are positive attitudes towards using interactional strategies in EFL classrooms.
2. There are some discrepancies between what teachers already know and what they already do.
3. The dominant interactional strategy in EFL classroom is posing questions.
4. There are different barriers for utilising patterns of interaction, related to learners, educational setting, and teachers.
5. There is a strong correlation between using the interactional strategies and EFL students language proficiency.
6. There is some inadequacy in curricula of teachers' preparation program to enhance interactional skills.

Questions of the Study

The research questions are formulated as follows:

1. What are EFL teachers' attitudes towards using patterns of interaction in EFL classroom?
2. Do EFL teachers effectively and adequately employ interactional strategies in their classes?
3. What is the dominant pattern of interaction in Saudi EFL classrooms?
4. What are barriers to utilisation of different patterns of interaction?
5. Is there a correlation between using patterns of interaction and EFL students language proficiency?
6. Is there adequate training materials for fostering interactional skills in EFL teachers preparation programs in Saudi Arabia?

Pilot Study

In order to check the validity of the questionnaire, the researchers ran a pilot study. Twenty copies of the questionnaire were distributed to some EFL teachers and some EFL students from, the International University of Sudan. The EFL teachers filled in the questionnaire and wrote down their comments, suggestions, notes and advice, at the end of the questionnaire as requested by the researcher. According to their comments, suggestions, notes and advice, the number of the statements were reduced from twenty in the pilot questionnaire to fourteen statements submitted to EFL teachers and twelve statements submitted to EFL students in the final version.

Questionnaire Reliability

The reliability of the questionnaire was measured statistically by using SPSS program. The Cronbach's alpha formula was used as stated below:

Table (1): Reliability Statistics: the questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items	N of Items
.969	.971	16

Table (1) shows that The value of reliability lies between 0 and 1. The reliability increases according to the increase of alpha value up to 1. Generally, if the alpha value is more than or equal 0.4 the reliability is considered and the questionnaire is reliable. In such case; it was noticeable that $\alpha = 0.971$ which means that the questionnaire has a high reliability.

Questionnaire Validity

Validity is the extent to which a questionnaire measures what it claims to measure. It is vital for the questionnaire to be valid. It will serve in making accurate results to be interpreted and applied.

Five associate professors were requested to comment on the questionnaires in terms of clarity and validity of the items and their relevance. The questionnaires items were reduced in the light of associate professors' judgments. The items became fourteen instead of twenty in the EFL teachers' questionnaire and twelve instead of fifteen in the EFL students' questionnaire to achieve the purpose. Some statements were dropped. Whereas, complicated or ambiguous ones were reworded and simplified in order to make them concise and precise. Moreover, the length of the questionnaires and the time needed for administration were taken into consideration.

Discussion and Results

The two versions of the questionnaire were distributed to the subjects and they were requested to fill it in their free time. The subjects were given three days to fill in the questionnaire. The descriptive and interpretive analysis was used to analyse qualitative data gathered through a questionnaire. The obtained data were analysed by using basic descriptive statistics and factor analysis, using SPSS as illustrated below as follows:

Part One: General information

This part is concerned with the presentation of the general information about the questionnaire participants. It gives a description of gender, years of experiences in teaching the English language. It presents academic qualifications and teachers' view towards the interactional strategies.

Table (2)below manifests the gender of the subjects. By having a look at the above table, about (80%) of the subjects were males, (20%) of them were females.

Gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Male	32	80.0	80.0	80.0 20.0
	Female	8	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	
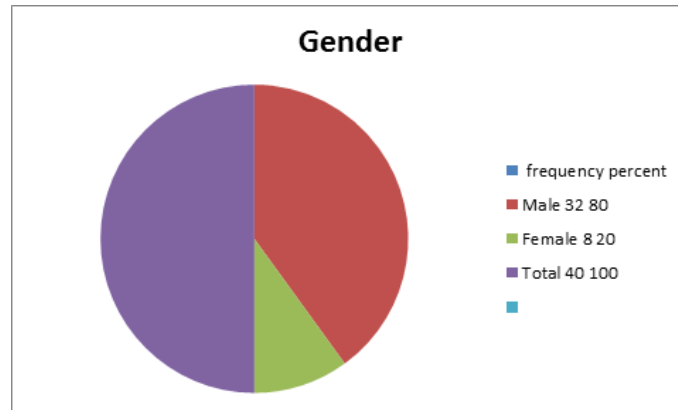
Graph (1): shows the gender of the subjects in which the frequency percent indicates that (32) of the sample were males who outnumbered (8) the females gender of the subjects.

Years		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 – 5	16	40.0	40.0	40.0
	6 -10	15	37.5	37.5	37.5
	11 – 15	5	12.5	12.5	12.5
	16 -20	2	5.0	5.0	5.0 5.0
	21 – more	2	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

The table above (3) above shows the subjects' years of experience in ELT. (40 %) represents the experiences between one to five years. (37.5%) represents the experiences six to ten years. (12.5%) represents experiences between eleven to fifteen years. (5%) represents those who taught English between sixteen to twenty years and the rest have experienced more than twenty years which represents (5.0%). According to the table (4.3.2), we can see about (60.0%) of the sample have teaching experience from six and more than twenty years. This is a good factor because these teachers can give reliable judgment to support the hypotheses of the research due to their long experiences in ELT.

Years of experience of the subjects
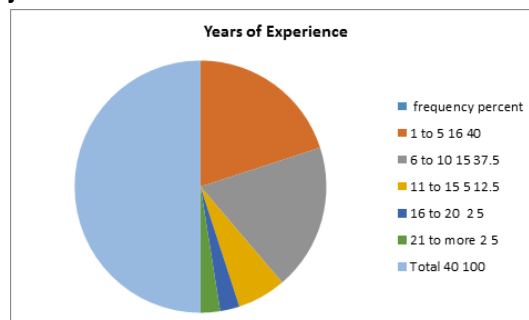
Graph (2) above shows the subjects' years of experience in ELT. (40 %) represents the experiences between one to five years. (37.5%) represents the experiences six to ten years. (12.5%) represents experiences between eleven to fifteen years. (5%) represents those who taught English between sixteen to twenty years and the rest

have experienced more than twenty years which represents (5.0%). According to the table (4), it can be seen that about (60.0%) of the sample have teaching experience from six and more than twenty years. This is a good factor because these teachers can give reliable judgment to support the hypotheses of the research due to their long experiences in ELT.

Qualifications of the subjects
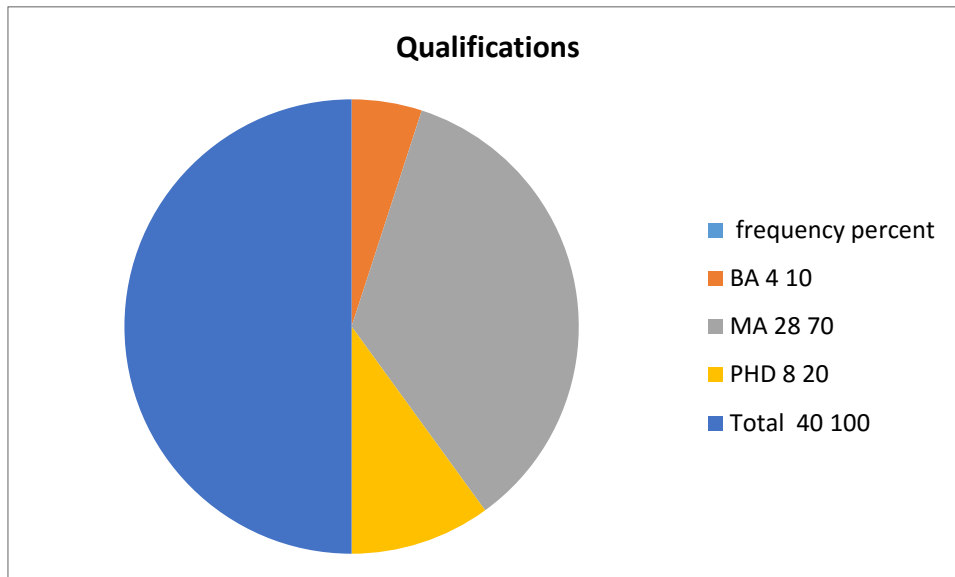
Degree		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	BA	4	10.0	10.0	10.0
	MA	28	70.0	70.0	70.0 / 20.0
	PhD	8	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

The table (4) and graph (3) above, manifest qualifications of the subjects. By having a look at the above table, about (10.0%) of the subjects hold Bachelor degree, (70%) of them hold Master degree and (20%) of the subjects hold PhD. From table (4.3.3) we can see that the majority of the subjects hold PHD and master's degree which can enable them to judge on the topic of the research.

Assigned level of the subjects
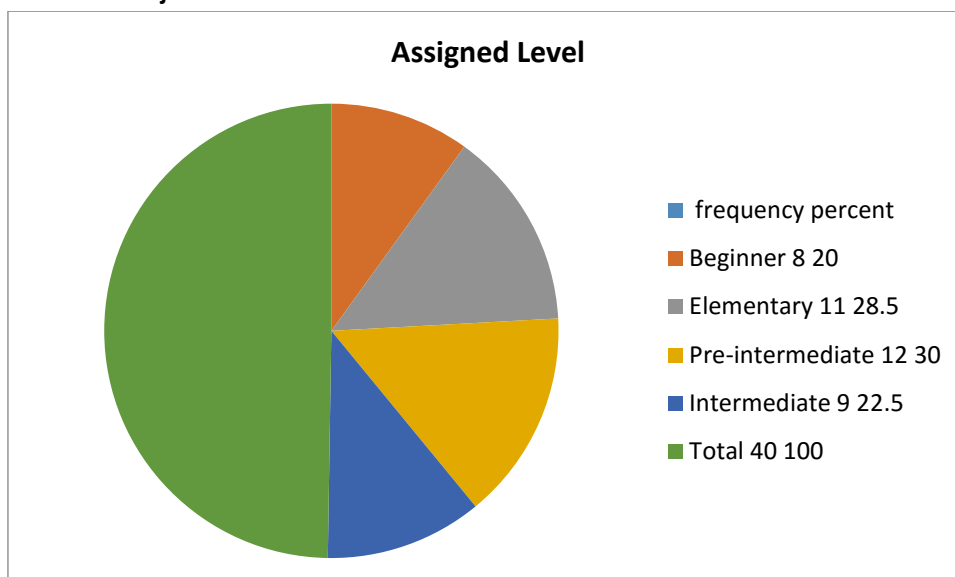
Stage		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Beginner	8	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Elementary	11	27.5	27.5	27.5 / 20.0
	Pre-intermediate	12	30.0	30.0	30.0
	intermediate Total	9 / 40	22.5 / 100.0	22.5 / 100.0	22.5 / 100.0

The table (5) and graph (4) above, reflect the assigned level of the subjects. By having a look at the above table, about (20%) of the subjects teach beginners levels, (27.5%) of them teach elementary levels. (30%) of the subjects teach pre-intermediate levels and (22.5%) teach intermediate levels. This distribution shows that subjects are assigned to different levels.

Section 2: Analysis of the Questionnaire Statements

This section presents the analysis of the questionnaire. The questionnaire includes fourteen statements to cover the research hypotheses.

Keys: SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, N=Neutral, SD= Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree.

Teacher-centered teaching is the best strategy in EFL classroom.

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	N	7	17. 5	17.5	17.5
	A	12	30.0	30.0	30.0
	DA	21	52.5	52.5	52.5 / 100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (6) Almost of the sample (52.5%) are disagree with teacher-centered teaching in EFL classroom. (30%) are agree with the statement and (17.5%) are not sure.

Students-centered learning is useful in EFL classroom

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SDA	1	2.5	25	2.5
	DS	4	10.0	10.0	10.0
	N	7	17.5	17.5	17.5
	A	17	42.5	42.5	42.5
	SA	11	27.5	27.5	27.5 / 100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (7) high percentage of the respondents (42.5%) agrees and (27.5%) strongly agree that student-centered learning can absolutely enhance EFL learners while few respondents (10%) of respondents disagreed upon that and (17.5%) are not sure.

Training in interactional strategies makes EFL students enthusiastic to learn.

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	N	3	7.5	7.5	7.5
	A	21	52.5	52.5	52.5
	SA	16	40.0	40.0	40.0 / 100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (8) The table above shows an extremely large percent of the subjects (52.5%) are agree and (40%) agree strongly that interactional strategy training surely enriches skills among EFL learners. (7.5%) of the participants are not sure.

Interactional strategies make EFL students reluctant to learn

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DS	24	60.0	60.0	60.0
	N	8	20.0	20.0	20.0
	A	8	20.0	20.0	20.0
			.	.	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (9) A majority of subjects (60%) disagreed with that interactional strategy could be a cause of demonization for EFL Learners. (20%) agreed whereas (20%) were not sure.

Having training and workshops in interactional strategy is required

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SDA	1	2.5	25	2.5
	DA	7	17.5	17.5	17.5
	N	4	10.0	10.0	10.0
	A	16	40.0	40.0	40.0
	SA	12	30.0	30.0	30.0 100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (10) reflects a high percentage of subjects represents (40%) are in need to attend development training program and workshops related to interactional strategy. A small percentage of subjects represents (17.5%) are disagree and (10%) are not sure.

The English of students at this level is good enough to participate in a large group work

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SDA	3	7.5	75	7.5
	DS	15	37.5	37.5	37.5
	A	17	42.5	42.5	42.5
	SA	5	12.5	12.5	12.5 100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (11) shows approximately similar views among EFL teachers in distributing students in a large group work. By having a look the percentages (37.5%) disagree upon that while (42.5) agree.

Students prefer real life situations in role-plays

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DS	14	35.0	35.0	35.0
	A	19	47.5	47.5	47.5
	SA	7	17.5	17.5	17.5 100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (12) shows (47.5%) of subjects are agree with that real life situation activities instil students language learning whereas (35.0%) are disagree and (17.5%) are strongly agree.

It is useful for EFL students to have pair work

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SDA	3	7.5	7.5	7.5
	DS	4	10.0	10.0	10.0
	N	6	15.0	15.0	15.0
	A	17	42.5	42.5	42.5

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	SA	10	25.0	25.0	25.0 100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (13) the big number of participants with (42.5%) percent agree and (25%) are strongly agree with pair work activities is enjoyable. (10%) are disagree and (15%) are not sure.

In a large group work, students' interaction is not efficient

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DS	14	35.0	35.0	35.0
	A	20	50.0	50.0	50.0
	SA	6	15.0	15.0	15.0 100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (14) a lot of participants (50%) agree and (15%) are strongly agree upon that increasing the number of students in one group work has a negative impact while (35.0%) of them disagree.

Cooperative strategies arouse students' creativity

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DS	8	20.0	20.0	20.0
	N	2	5.0	5.0	5.0
	A	21	52.5	52.5	52.5
	SA	9	22.5	22.5	22.5 100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (15) shows (52.5%) of subjects agrees with cooperative learning strategy enable students to be more creative and (22.5) of them are strongly support that while (20%) disagree with this statement.

Students work the most efficiently with whole-class teaching

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SDA	6	15.0	15.0	15.0
	DS	23	57.5	57.5	57.5
	N	5	12.5	12.5	12.5
	A	6	15.0	15.0	15.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (16) extremely the biggest percentage (57.5%) shows the disagreement of the subjects toward the efficiency of whole class teaching and (15%) strongly disagrees. In contrary, (15%) are supporting the statement while (12.5) of the subjects are not sure.

Having students work together on every item in group work is efficient

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DS	11	28.5	28.5	28.5
	N	9	22.5	22.5	22.5
	A	11	28.5	28.5	28.5
	SA	9	22.5	22.5	22.5 100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (17) shows similar percentages regarding of subjects' views toward involving students in the group to do all activities. (28.5%) of subjects are agree and the same percent of them disagree while (22.5%) are not sure.

The smaller the number of students in a group, the better their performance is.

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DS	13	32.5	32.5	32.5
	A	15	37.5	37.5	37.5

SA	12	30.0	30.0	30.0 100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (18) indicates extremely large percentage of the participants (37.5%) agreed and (30%) strongly agreed that small group is beneficial for learning in EFL classroom while (32.5%) disagreed.

**Collaborative teaching strategies are efficient**

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SDA	1	2.5	25	2.5
	DS	12	30.0	30.0	30.0
	A	18	45.0	45.5	45.0
	SA	9	22.5	22.5	22.5 100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (19) shows (45.0%) are agree and 922.5%) disagree with that the accomplished learning outcomes are efficient when collaborative teaching strategy is used while (30%) disagree with the statement.

Part two: Section (1):

This section is concerned with providing the subjects' information. EFL students are representing the subjects of this questionnaire.

Gender of the subjects
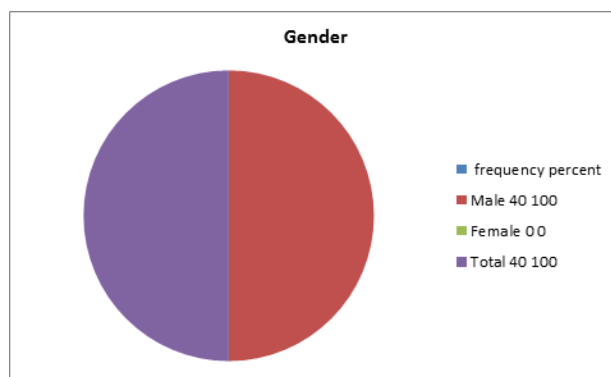
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	40	100.0	100.0	100.0 0.0
	Female	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (20) and graph (5) as shown above manifest the gender of the subjects in which, it can be seen that (100%) of the subjects were males.

Ages
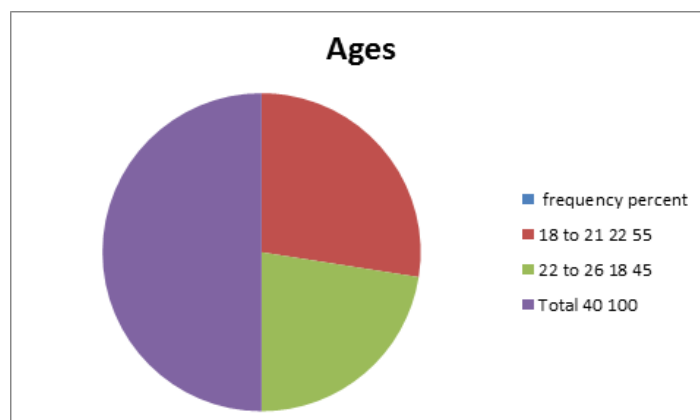
Age		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-21	22	55.0	55.0	55.0 45.0
	23-26	18	45.0	45.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (21) represents the ages of the participants. It can be seen that large percentage of subjects (55%) are between the age of 18 to 21. (45%) of the subjects are between 21 to 26 years.

The level of the subjects
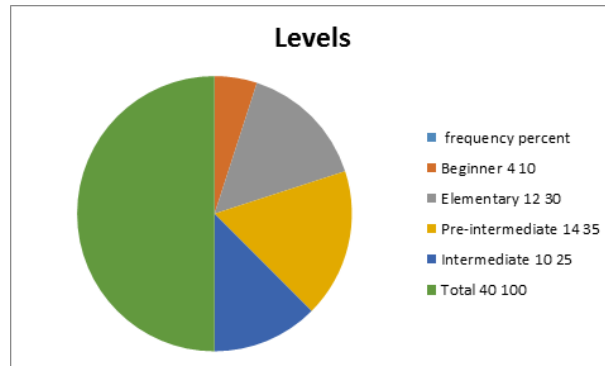

Stage		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Beginner	4	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Elementary	12	30.0	30.0	30.0 20.0
	Pre-intermediate	14	35.0	35.0	35.0
	intermediate	10	25.0	25.0	25.0 100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

The table above (22) shows that the majority of subjects are above elementary level. It can be seen that about (35.%) of the subjects in pre-intermediate levels, (25%) of them are in intermediate levels. (30%) of the subjects are in elementary levels and (10 %) are in beginner levels.

Section 2: Analysis of the Questionnaire Statements

This section presents the analysis of the questionnaire. The questionnaire includes twelve statements.

Keys: SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, N=Neutral, SDA= Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree.

I learn new things in group work.

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	DS	9	22.5	22.5	22.5
	N	6	15.0	15.0	15.0
	A	17	42.5	42.5	42.5
	SA	8	20.0	20.0	20.0 100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (23) large percentage (42.5%) of participants are agree and (20%) are strongly agree with that learning in a group is useful to get new information. (22.5%) disagree while (15%) are not sure.

I trust the feedback my peers give in group work.

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SDA	5	12.5	12.5	12.5
	DS	10	25.0	25.0	25.0
	N	3	7.5	7.5	7.5
	A	12	30.0	30.0	30.0

SA	10	25.0	25.0	25.0 100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (24) shows (30%) of subjects are agree and (25%) are strongly agree with that collaborative feedback is trustable. (25%) disagree and (12.5%) strongly disagree with this statement whereas (7.5%) are not sure.

I participate in role-plays enthusiastically

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SDA	6	15.0	15.0	15.0
	DS	13	32.5	32.5	32.5
	A	21	52.5	52.5	52.5
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (25) extremely the biggest percentage reaches (52.5%) of participants are supporting participation via role-play while (32.5%) disagree and (15%) strongly disagree.

It is useful to have pair work.

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SDA	4	10.0	10.0	10.0
	DS	4	10.0	10.0	10.0
	N	8	20.0	20.0	20.0
	A	8	20.0	20.0	20.0
	SA	16	40.0	40.0	40.0 100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (26) illustrates that the majority of subjects strongly agree with the percentage of (40%) and (20%) agree that pair work activities are beneficial. Disagree and Strongly disagree reaches the same percentage (10%) while (20%) of the subjects are not sure.

My English is good enough to participate in group work

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SDA	11	28.5	28.5	28.5
	DS	17	42.5	42.5	42.5
	N	1	2.5	2.5	2.5
	A	4	10.0	10.0	10.0
	SA	17.5	17.5	17.5	17.5 100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (27) shows that (42%) of subjects disagree and 28.5%) are strongly agree with the above statement. (17.5) are strongly agree and (10%) are agree while (2.5%) of them are not sure.

I prefer real life situations in role-plays

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DS	12	30.0	30.0	30.0
	A	24	60.0	60.0	60.0
	SA	4	10.0	10.0	10.0 100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (28) obviously a lot of participants are supporting the activities of real life situations with (60%) while (30%) of them disagree.

It is useful to work in small groups before whole-class discussions

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DS	14	35.0	35.0	35.0

N	12	30.0	30.0	30.0
A	14	35.0	35.0	35.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (29) reflects the same percentage (35%) of the subjects as agree and disagree with the above-mentioned statement while (30%) are not sure.

In group work, learning is not affected by the proficiency level of peers

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DS	8	20.0	20.0	20.0
	N	6	15	15	15
	A	26	75.0	75.0	75.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (30) clearly shows the biggest percentage of the subject (75%) are agree with that group work gets rid of proficiency problem. (20%) are disagree while (15%) are not sure.

Role-plays arouse creativity of the learner.

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SDA	4	10.0	10.0	10.0
	DS	12	30	30.0	30.0
	N	4	10.0	10.0	10.0
	A	14	35.0	35.0	35.0
	SA	6	15.0	15.0	15.0 100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (31) reflects that (35%) of subjects are agree and (15%) strongly agree wi.th role plays help in generating creativity. (30%) are disagree and (10%) are strongly disagree whereas (10%) are not sure.

I work the most efficiently with whole-class teaching

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SDA	18	45.0	45.0	45.0
	DS	10	25.0	25.0	25.0
	N	4	10.0	10.0	10.0
	A	8	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (32) a lot of participants (45%) strongly disagree and (25%) disagree with whole class work teaching is practical. (20%) of subjects are agree with the statement while (10%) are not sure.

The smaller the number of students in a group, the better the performance is

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DS	11	28.5	28.5	28.5
	N	7	17.5	17.5	17.5
	A	10	25.0	25.0	25.0
	SA	12	30.0	30.0	30.0 100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (33)shows (30%) of subjects are strongly agree and (25%) are agree with that small group work is useful. (28.5%) are disagree while (17.5%) are not sure.

Too much-guided situations decrease the eagerness to speak in role-plays.

Scale		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DS	10	25.0	25.0	25.0
	N	10	25.0	25.0	25.0
	A	12	30.0	30.0	30.0

	SA	8	20.0	20.0	20.0 100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table (**4.4.15**) almost of the subjects (30%) are agree and (20%) are strongly agree with above-mentioned statement whereas (25%) are disagree and (25%) of them are not sure.

Report Discussion

The paper investigates the EFL teachers and students' perceptions and practices of patterns of interaction in EFL classes in Sudan. The results of the paper showed that most of the EFL teachers have positive attitudes towards employing interactional strategies in EFL classroom. They realised that through experiences in TEFL and reflected by the obtained data. The data indicated that most EFL teacher is against teacher-centered teaching strategy in EFL classroom.

Most of them support students-centered learning strategy in EFL classroom. Development training program and workshops in interactional strategies are desirable by EFL teachers. A large number of the teachers agreed that interactional strategy makes EFL students enthusiastic to learn. However, most of EFL students agreed upon that a large group or whole class teaching hinder the classroom interaction. Most of them agreed upon that pair work and small group work has positive learning outcomes. Several studies have been done in different countries also found similar findings. Positive attitudes are the key to achieve this potential. The findings of this study revealed that patterns of interaction can be employed as a collaborative teaching tool in EFL classroom. The findings also reflect the enthusiasms of EFL students to attend an interactive classroom. In addition to, both EFL teachers and EFL students have positive attitudes towards having the training to make use of interaction patterns. Therefore, interactional strategies are beneficial in EFL teaching and learning. This suggests the need for effective guidance, support and training for EFL teachers and EFL students. The implementation of such strategies will generate suitable teaching and learning environment.

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