

Spoken Language Teaching: What Do Teachers Believe in?

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Abstract

This paper is a qualitative case study that aims to explore beliefs and practices of four English lecturers, by focusing on two components related to content knowledge of spoken language teaching, namely spoken forms (grammar and vocabulary), and interactional skills. It also aims to see how their held beliefs influence their teaching practices. To fulfil this purpose, four English lecturers teaching communicative English subject, contextualized in one polytechnic in Malaysia, were purposively selected as participants of the study. The data were gathered through interviews, non-participant classroom observation, as well as collection of relevant documents. The Atlas t.i. program was used to manage the data and thematic analysis was applied in data analysis. Generally, the findings indicate that the participants viewed the knowledge about spoken form as a relevant exposure to students, but it should not be the focal attention of the lesson. They also believed that interactional skills could be acquired through frequent speaking practices, and these beliefs are consistent with their teaching practices. The data also revealed some misconceptions about certain concepts in spoken language, and the teaching of the components in focus is found to be limited. This indicates a lack of depth content knowledge among the lecturers in these specific areas, hence recommendations for appropriate trainings and professional development programs are made to facilitate teachers to be more well-informed with their pedagogical decisions in classroom. In conclusion, this study illuminates the salient role of content knowledge among practicing teachers, as it potentially affects their teaching practices.

Keywords: interactional skills, spoken forms, spoken language teaching, teachers' beliefs

Cite as: Abdul Rahim, S. , Yamat, H., & Shah, P. M. (2017). Spoken Language Teaching: What Do Teachers Believe in?. *Arab World English Journal*, 8 (3).

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol8no3.7>

Introduction

Teachers have a range of beliefs about the subject matter taught - what the subject is about, what it means to know the subject or to be able to carry out tasks effectively within the subject domain (Calderhead, 1996), and these beliefs contribute to the decisions made in their teaching (Richardson, 1996). Calderhead (1996) suggests variation in how teachers view their subject, from being very limited to being very eclectic depending on contexts. It potentially exposes the differences or similarities of how teachers make sense of their instructional practices, in particular language skills subsets, as compared to their conceptions of language teaching and learning in general (Borg, 2003). Beliefs about subject matter and teaching methods that teachers hold guide their beliefs about what students should learn and how the subject should be most effectively taught (Hall, 2005).

Beliefs about subject matter closely reflects teacher knowledge. Research on teacher knowledge commonly investigates Shulman's domains of knowledge and the knowledge base of specific subject matter possessed by both pre-service and in-service teachers. Teacher knowledge not only serves as the primary source of students' understanding, but their attitudes and values towards the subject potentially influence students' conceptions about the subject (Shulman, 1987). Thus Shulman (1987) asserts that "This responsibilities places special demands on the teachers' own depth of understanding of the structures of the subject matter, as well as on the teachers' attitudes towards and enthusiasms for what is being taught and learned" (p.9). Relating this to the context of this study, Goh et al. (2005) confirm that lacking of content knowledge (CK) of English language teaching may negatively affect students' literacy since oracy skills fundamentally related to the development of reading and writing. Besides, Baker (2014) finds that second language (L2) teachers who are pedagogically well equipped tend to apply a wider range of teaching techniques as compared those who are not. Insufficient knowledge of a broad range of techniques put teachers at disadvantage specifically in helping learners to learn the target language (TL) successfully.

Therefore, the study aims to investigate beliefs and practices of four English lecturers in a Malaysian polytechnic, in regard to spoken language teaching by specifically focusing on two essential concepts embedded in the CK of spoken English language teaching, namely spoken forms and interactional skills. Spoken form refers to lexical items and grammar used in English speech corpus, while interactional rules are sub skills required when involved in an interaction, such as opening conversation, turn-taking, interrupting, topic nomination, and etc. These two components are among the salient concepts encompassed in the teachers' CK of spoken language teaching.

In addition to this, studies in the domain of L2 teachers' beliefs about oral communication and speaking have been inadequate, except for pronunciation teaching which has recently received much attention (Baker, 2011; Baker & Murphy, 2011; Sifakis & Sougari, 2005; Timmis, 2002). In the area of beliefs and practices about spoken language teaching such as oral skills and conversation, relevant studies have been known to be "rare" (Borg, 2006, p.109) and "underrepresented" (Baker, 2014, p.137), and "relatively little has been documented" (Goh, 2013, p.36). Hence, the present study aims to add the literature in this area, and answers for the following research questions:

- i. What are the lecturers' beliefs about the teaching of spoken forms and interactional skills, as essential content knowledge components in spoken English language teaching?

ii. How do the beliefs affect their teaching practices?

Literature review

Speaking competence

Communicative competence plays a vital role in L2 pedagogy as it guides language teachers the types of knowledge and skills that should be taught to L2 learners. Furthermore, it provides basis for teachers to strategize their teaching approach, design and select materials that aim for communication in L2 teaching (Celce-Murcia, 2007). Communicative competence, however, has received several criticisms.

Young (2011) points out that the communicative competence model (Canale & Swain, 1980), attempts to establish a link between linguistic acts in social situations and a language user's underlying knowledge. This model views competence as "a characteristic of a single individual" (Young, 2011, p.429) that distinguish one individual from others. In other words, communicative competence ignores learners' ability, skills and knowledge to interact and co-construct meanings with others. This is also echoed by Walsh (2012) who stresses that much emphasis has been placed on individual performance than collective competence in language teaching and testing. As a result, learners' ability is constantly measured according to their accuracy, linguistic forms and range of vocabulary, but their interactional ability in co-constructing meanings with others is overlooked. Hence, interactional competence is conceptualized as the ability to perform the interactional resources mutually and reciprocally, with all participants in a particular context (Young, 2011). McCarthy (2005, p.27-28) refers this as "confluence", where "speakers contribute to each other's fluency; they scaffold each other's performance and make the whole conversation flow". Unlike other skills, competence in speaking or conversation depends on speakers' fluency, i.e. using formulaic chunks to collaboratively co-construct, manage and maintain the conversation. Chunks and incomplete sentences are not dysfluent, instead they contribute to fluency and speed up speech rate and conversational flow (McCarthy, 2005).

The plausible role of interactional competence suggests that it has an exceptional contribution to spoken interaction compared to writing skill. Therefore, interactional and communicative competence should be guidelines for language teachers, specifically in English courses where speaking and oral communication are primary. This may suggest that explicit instruction on conversational rules and interactional skills are imperative if teachers are achieving for interactional competence.

Spoken language instruction

Guiding by both interactional and communicative competence, the following language components are typically recommended in L2 teaching speaking and teaching conversation guide books and references. Among important components are the generic structure and rules of conversation. L2 learners need to be informed that a conversation has a generic structure (Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1994; Richards, 2008; Thornbury, 2007). Participants take part in a conversation have the responsibility to keep it going, ideally remain the interaction organized though there are interruptions and simultaneous talk, and adhere to conversational rules when interacting. Hence knowing the typical features of conversation, such as openings, turn-taking, interrupting, topic nomination, adjacency pairs and closings, raises learners' awareness on how to participate effectively in communication.

Similarly, Richards (2008) suggests teaching oral English according to the purposes of talk. Teaching talk for interaction (establishing and maintaining social relationship), for instance, should include opening and closing conversations, making small talk, recounting personal incidents and experiences, and giving feedback (or back channelling) to what others say. Meanwhile, the teaching of transactional talk (information-transferring function) could be implemented by first exposing students them to relevant lexical phrases and tasks that expose them to real-world situational contexts.

Another component is the linguistics features of spoken register. Thornbury (2007) suggests that L2 learners may not be taught rigorously the grammatical and lexical features of spoken discourse, but they have to be informed and possess the basic knowledge. For instance, employing lexical items of spoken language in the form of formulaic chunks and spoken grammar helps producing fast speed and natural speech. In the same vein, Romer (2008) recommends teachers to teach learners based on language corpora, i.e. exposing them to typical lexical items, the patterns and meanings of a language. This helps learners to improve their receptive and productive skills, compared to teaching uncommon words and structures that are seldom used in real life. Consequently, it enhances fluency and interactional competence. Thornbury (2007) also recommends including in the knowledge of speech acts as this knowledge helps them to recognize the purposes of using the language. Learning speech acts promotes learners to employ formulaic language e.g. lexical phrases, idioms, collocations; in a specific context (Celce-Murcia, 2007; Dörnyei, 2013; Richards, 2008). This is because competent language speakers possess ample of language chunks that become the basis of their speech and is useful for producing automatized, natural and fluent speech under real-time conditions (Dörnyei, 2013; Richards, 2008). According to Hunston (2002 as cited in McCarthy & O’Keeffe, 2004), if learners learn and store this specific feature systematically and holistically, it contributes significantly to their attainment of spoken fluency.

The language components recommended could better inform teachers on how to tailor their lessons and conform to what is supposed to be included in spoken language lessons. But research on classroom practice shows that despite all the theories and principles available, teachers still ground their teaching based on their personal assumptions about language and language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001), and how they interpret their surroundings (Borg, 2006; Pajares, 1992; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). For that reason, it is important to understand teachers’ teaching process and the basis that direct their actions. The relationship between belief and practice needs to be understood for the improvement of teachers’ professional development and efficacy particularly in spoken language teaching.

Studies on teacher knowledge related to oral English teaching

Zooming the scope into teaching speaking and oral English skills, several studies that specifically examined teacher knowledge related to oral English instruction have pointed out substantial contributions of knowledge base in teaching practices. Goh et al. (2005) investigate teacher knowledge and beliefs about the implementation of the new English language syllabus in Singapore. A part of the study explored teacher knowledge in speaking, listening, grammar, writing, reading and vocabulary teaching. The study discovered that the teachers were least familiar with concepts related to teaching oracy (speaking and listening) skills. Majority of the

teachers had little or no knowledge about significant concepts in teaching speaking (namely talk as performance, talk as process, meaning negotiation, management of interaction, and communicative competence) and only few declared applying the concepts into their teaching. It was deduced that pre- and in-service trainings that inclined to value other language areas more than the oracy skills led to knowledge inadequacy among the teachers, in which potentially influenced literacy since oracy skills is fundamental to the development of reading and writing. The study however did not include in teachers' actual practice since it relies on only teachers' self-reported writing and questionnaire.

Grounding on Shulman's framework of teacher knowledge, Deboer (2007) investigated teacher knowledge of oral language instruction among teachers teaching young children in Utah, USA. The results demonstrated that majority of the teachers had adequate or more than adequate knowledge in only one (general pedagogy) out of seven knowledge domains. Overall, nearly one third of the teachers had less than adequate knowledge of various aspects of oral language instruction. Teachers' specific knowledge was contributed by English as Second Language (ESL) endorsement, years of teaching experience and special education endorsement but not their level of education. Half of the teachers admitted having less than adequate knowledge of diagnosing students' language proficiency, which consequently affects their ability to decide appropriate concepts for students from different backgrounds and cognitive abilities (Shulman, 1987). Another relevant study conducted by Baker (2014) looked into pronunciation teaching. The findings demonstrated that teachers who had undergone a course on pronunciation pedagogy employed a wider range of teaching techniques compared to those who did not. This implies that intensive knowledge on specific subject matter positively shapes teachers' knowledge base particularly on the teaching techniques. In addition, having a limited range of teaching techniques is a drawback for both teachers and students, as it may restraint teachers from exploring further their teaching effectiveness with students.

Other than emphasizing the vital role of knowledge in oral English instruction, there are several other important points highlighted from the studies. First, it could be said that teaching experience may and may not determine teachers' knowledge development of oral English teaching. As shown in Chen and Goh (2014), though the teachers had more than 10 years of teaching experience, they claimed that they did not have sufficient experience in teaching oral English due to infrequent engagement in teaching and learning oral English. On the contrary, Deboer's (2007) study confirms that teaching experience lends a hand in the growth of the teachers' pedagogical knowledge. The diverged findings of both are probably resulted from where the studies are contextualized. Chen and Goh's (2014) contextualize in China where English is a foreign language which is rarely spoken in social context, but Deboer's (2007) study situates in the USA, where English is the spoken language. Hence, the context of both studies exerts influence on teachers' engagement in teaching oral English. Secondly, specific knowledge from professional programs and courses also lends a hand to how they approach the subject and their expansion of knowledge base as corroborated in Goh et al. (2005), Deboer (2007) and Baker (2014). Solid knowledge base facilitates teachers to apply wider range of techniques and strategies which in turn help boost their expertise and confidence to teach. Therefore, this highlights the role of teacher education and professional development programs to both pre- and in-service teachers. Also, it is a challenge for teachers to achieve successful instruction when theoretical guidance is not available, meaning,

lacking of knowledge base in certain subject matter is an obvious disadvantage for both teachers and students.

Methodology

Respondents and Data Collection Sites

As this study employed a Case Study research design, four English lecturers were purposively selected based on three criteria; i) having at least 4 years of teaching English language, ii) having taught English courses in polytechnic for at least 4 semesters, and iii) having bachelor degree in TESL at minimum so that they were equipped with academic knowledge about pedagogies, teaching methods and principles of language learning and teaching for English in L2 context. The research site of the study was a local polytechnic, which was chosen due to its accessibility.

Table 1 *Details of respondents*

Respondent (pseudonyms)	Age	Gender	Years of experience	Qualification
Azra	32	Female	8	B. Sc. with Ed. (TESL), M. Ed. TESL
Eliza	42	Female	21	B. Ed. TESL, M. Ed. TESL
Jiro	27	Male	4	B. Ed. TESL, currently pursuing Master's degree in TESL
Wirda	33	Female	8	B. Ed. TESL

The study employed multiple sources of data collection namely semi structured interview, stimulated recall interview, classroom observations and collected teaching documents. Multiple sources of data are useful for triangulation which ensures the validity of a qualitative study (Merriam, 2009). Interview intends to obtain matters which cannot be directly observed, such as feelings, thoughts and intentions. To avoid any form of coercion, semi structured interview was carried out during the respondents' free time or when they were willing to be interviewed. Each respondent was interviewed once, and the audio recording lasted between 32 to 53 minutes. Stimulated recall interview is a strategy where respondents were given a stimulus to verbalize their thoughts about teaching activities that took place during classroom observations. This was to explore their "interpretations of the events represented in the stimuli and of their reasons for the instructional decisions they were taking" (Borg, 2006, p.219). This strategy has been extensively applied in educational research, particularly in the area of language teachers' beliefs such as in Basturkmen et al. (2004), Wu (2006), Phipps (2009) and Baker (2014) to name a few. In this study, audio recordings, lessons' descriptions in field notes and instructional materials were the stimuli used to facilitate the respondents to verify their thought processes while teaching or performing certain activities. The first stimulated recall interview session was carried out after three to four observed lessons, and each respondent underwent three stimulated recall interview sessions. All interviews were audio recorded, transcribed for interpretation and then verified by the respondents.

Classroom observations allow researchers to identify routines practiced by individuals under observation which in turn helps to understand the context and occurring behaviours

(Merriam, 2009). Since the study was concerned with spoken language teaching, lessons that represented transactional and interactional functions of language were selected for observations. Each respondent was observed 7 to 8 times that totalled up to almost 39 hours of observations. The observations were audio recorded and illustrated in the field notes.

Data Analysis

All transcriptions of interview interactions were transferred into ATLAS.ti. (v7.5.3) to manage the data and observational data were manually analyzed. The data analysis was guided by Saldana's (2009) steps of identifying codes-codifying-categorizing-developing themes/concepts. Observational data were meant to record whether or not what the respondents said was consistent with what they did in the classroom. First, the field notes were read and re-read and the audio recordings were listened and re-listened to concurrently to make sense of the observed lessons. Next, significant instructional episodes were transcribed verbatim. In other words, the process of analyzing data in this study was continuous, cyclical and complex. It was continuous in the sense that the initial analysis actually began during the transcription process and ended before the writing-up phase. Grouping the codes into category, how categories formed themes, and the interrelatedness of categories with the identified themes went through multiple rounds of refining process and repeated many times across data sources and individual respondents.

In this paper, words that are italicized are original words used by the participants, meanwhile, () is used in conditions where words are added to enhance clarity of reader's understanding of the participants' original utterances. To ease reading, acronyms are used to describe the data sources such as A (Azra), E (Eliza), J (Jiro), W (Wirda), ssi (semi structured interview), sri (stimulated recall interview).

Results and discussion

Spoken form (Grammar and vocabulary components)

The data from interviews and observations demonstrate that the participants perceived spoken form as a supplementary component in spoken language teaching. For instance, Azra would only teach spoken form if she had more time available after covering all other sub skills stated in the syllabus. Meanwhile, both Wirda and Eliza felt that the information about spoken grammar and vocabulary should be integrated in their lessons, and inform students when only needed or incidentally related to the lesson/ topic discussed. For Wirda, spoken form *should not be the focus* of the lesson (W_sri3) and Eliza thought that it should be explained in passing and “...*not to the extent of giving notes* (to students)” (E_ssi). Although they perceived spoken form as supplemental in spoken language teaching, they felt that the component is a necessary exposure to learners. For instance, Jiro believed that components like colloquial *language* is necessary for oral communication skills teaching and Wirda expressed that students *need to know the differences between written and spoken language* (J_ssi; W_ssi). Even though Jiro mentioned colloquial language and Wirda was aware of the differences between spoken and written forms, all participants' classroom observations did not show any teaching of spoken grammar and vocabulary to students.

Misconceptions

Interestingly, the data gathered led to an interesting finding that exhibits the participants' misconceptions about spoken form which surprisingly shown by all participant. Eliza interpreted *jargons* as a part of spoken grammar and vocabulary, which she associated that with technical terms used by students related to their field of studies, as she said "*technical students, they have their own terms that they themselves should know* (E_ssi). Oxford dictionary defines jargon as "special words or expressions used by a profession or group that are difficult for others to understand", and it is typically contextualized to specific types of occupations. This differs from spoken form, which is rather general that includes both linguistic and paralinguistic cues produced during speaking, and atypically related to specific group of people or occupations.

Jiro also appeared to misconstrue a conception about spoken grammar. According to Jiro, group discussion is a task that requires formality, so that students need to be taught *proper grammar* (J_ssi). When he was asked the meaning of *proper grammar*, he explained that it is "*the one that we typically use and write* (J_sri3). This reflects his misinterpretation that interaction in group discussion requires proper grammar i.e. written grammar, which connotes certain level of formality. Instead, written grammar is typically used in talk-as-performance events that heavily resemble written language and highly value accuracy on forms, such as in classroom presentations, public speaking, and public announcement. The language used in these situations differs considerably from the language used in interpersonal and transactional situations (Richards, 2008). Jiro's misconception of spoken grammar seems to fit in Thornbury and Slade's (2006) statement that spoken grammar is assumed to be "...written grammar realized as speech" (p.73). They argue that traditionally, written grammar is thought to be sufficient for both spoken and written language teaching. In fact, written grammar seems to be the 'default' grammar for both learning speaking and writing. This is rather misleading since choices of language are not solely generated from written texts but also from oral production (ibid.).

Azra and Wirda also showed misconception pertaining to spoken form. In Azra's case, her misconception was identified in observation 6, where she was showing some language expressions of making and declining invitation on a power point slide. She explained that these expressions are normally used verbally, though she was aware that they were formal and scripted, as she further added "*maybe it's very polite, very formal, but that's how it should go actually*". These phrases are not typically expressed in social situations where the social distance among speakers is closer. In addition, the choice of lexical items clearly reflects written form. Likewise, Wirda's verbal data reveal interesting beliefs that indicate her misconception about spoken form. Personally, she felt that students need to be informed the existence of spoken form *but not to really focus that*. In addition, she believed that most importantly, students need to know the proper language construction as found in written texts as this is implied in this quotation "*They are just like ah as we goes by, 'ah they are actually like this'. The main thing is that thing* (proper language construction, expressions)" (W_sri3). Another excerpt shown below further indicates her misconception of spoken form.

W_sri3

...yeah there is tendency of us, like speaks words in chunks, so its habit of us, we tend to do that but actually for conversation maybe you need to consider of the use of full sentences to convey message, something like that. It's ok to expose them to that I guess

In this excerpt, she perceived speaking in chunks i.e. a feature of spoken form, is a result of speaker's habit and tendency. She also believed that one should *consider of the use of full sentences to convey message in conversation*. This implies her concern over producing proper syntax in learning language, her attitude towards spoken forms and her conception about spoken language.

This specific excerpt fits in a conventional argument that views spoken language as low standard and should not be a model for language teaching. Hughes (2011) argues that this negative impression affects how spoken language is treated in teachers' teaching practice since it is viewed as something that should not be learned and taught to students. Furthermore, this notion opposes the fact that humans speak in chunks, incomplete sentences due to the process of speaking itself, as they need to speed up their speech rate in order to remain fluent and spontaneous (Bygate, 2001; Louma, 2004; McCarthy, 2005). Unlike written language, speech production produced by native English speakers are commonly in simple syntax and the vocabulary are rather general. In fact, competent language speakers are defined by those who possess ample of language chunks that become the basis of their speech, which helps them produce automatized, natural and fluent speech under real-time conditions (Dörnyei, 2013; Richards, 2008). Furthermore, grammatical structure is also proven to be dynamic, contextualized and could be influenced by information structure and interpersonal patterns of interacting (Carter & Nunan, 2001). Hence teaching such information to learners is appropriate and useful for their speaking competence.

Reasons for misconceptions

Interview data show that lacking of CK possibly contributes to the participants' misconceptions. CK that typically gained during teacher training program did not contribute much to the formation of the participants' teaching knowledge as disclosed by all participants. For instance, subjects related to discourse in the postgraduate programs attended by Eliza and Jiro were not inclusive as core subjects therefore the subjects were not opted. Besides, programs attended by Jiro and Wirda, while they were in teaching preparatory institutions, such as School Orientation Program, microteaching and practical training, are not significantly useful for real teaching. For Jiro, microteaching and practical training are *not relevant* as what he learned during the programs *could not be assimilated into the real situation*. He said that *the ideas can be taken but in terms of practicality, it would be different* (J_ssi). This finding is comparable to teachers in past studies stated in Goh et al. (2005), Deboer (2007) and Baker (2014). Hence this confirms that professional programs from teacher training institutions potentially contribute to the foundation of teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge, which in turn, affects how they approach the subject.

Professional development trainings and courses also play a significant role in the construction of the participants' CK since it offers continuity in teacher professional learning (Goh et al., 2005). However, the courses and trainings organized by Polytechnic Education Department are not specifically related to CK, instead, they aimed for general pedagogy and classroom management as claimed by Wirda and Eliza. The only course that directly relates to the spoken language CK is an oracy course reported by Azra. She described the course as *helpful, the input*

given refreshes the insight of oracy and literacy and there are interesting ideas that she could apply (A_ssi). Although she claimed to benefit from the course, it is indeed insufficient. The participants strongly felt that the teaching knowledge particularly the ones related to spoken language teaching mostly formed by their former teaching experience, language learning experience, supplemental knowledge gained from internet-self-search, and people from the immediate surrounding such as superior and colleagues.

The participants' misconceptions about spoken form highlight the need for CK as it could rectify their conception of how spoken language is produced, learned and how it differs from written form. CK related to corpora for instance, informs teachers better about spoken form hence thoughtful considerations could be placed in planning teaching and preparing materials. Not only it benefits teachers, knowing the most common lexical items, the patterns and meanings of a language definitely facilitates learners to develop their receptive and productive skills, as compared to being taught with words and structures that are rarely used in reality (Romer, 2008). Meanwhile, learners also need to have the knowledge of spoken grammar, though conventional grammar knowledge is undeniably fundamental to the development of speaking skill. This knowledge enables them to speak naturally instead of entirely emulating written grammar in their speech production (McCarthy & Carter, 2001). In fact, it would not be effective for L2 and foreign language learners to learn spoken language that grounds on 'decontextualized written grammar' (Burns, 1998, p.113).

Interactional skills

Interactional skills are skills required when involved in small talk and conversation, which is another component embedded in spoken language teaching. To effectively function in these communicative events, learners have to master the skills including initiating a topic, opening and closing conversation, providing relevant feedbacks through back-channelling, taking turns at appropriate points, acquiring routines and formulaic expressions, using appropriate intonation to express meaning. The participants believed that such skills could be acquired by making students involved in frequent speaking practices. This belief is shared by Azra, Eliza and Wirda and it was reflected in their teaching practices.

Azra believed that interactional skills could be acquired through planned, rehearsed speaking practices where constant practices lead to fluency and help attain interactional skills. This principle is identified in observation 7, where she showed students a video of a small boy (around the age of 5-6 years old) attending phone enquiries. Her justification for the video verifies her belief that *speaking naturally* could actually be acquired through practices. As she said "...*that boy practiced that's why he managed to...look very natural.*" (A_sri3). The boy in the video appeared to be fluent and confident, manage and maintain the conversation successfully. The interaction seemed genuine hence; the phrase *look very natural* possibly refers to the boy's fluency, as he displayed certain degree of automaticity and produced effortless and smooth speech. The next evidence is exhibited in observation 5 where a group of students appeared to do group discussion assessment in a scripted dialogue and pre-planned turn taking, albeit it was an impromptu task. When she was asked why the students behaving such a way, she justified that "*they plan, they strategize the group discussion in such a way, they want to make sure that everybody speaks. Everybody takes turn*" (A_sri2). She also expressed concerns over the task

completion time that the students had. As a result, she reminded students to arrange their turns prior to the task as observed in observation 4.

To show how turn taking should be done, Azra utilized a video (used for Malaysian University English Test (MUET)) to display interactional skills. Handouts photocopied from MUET reference books, containing discussion scripts, along with outlines and language expressions were distributed to students. However, it was found that the MUET video was minimally utilized only for the purpose of showing how group discussion was conducted. The typical features of skills involved in small talk such as openings, turn-taking, interruption, topic nomination, adjacency pairs and closings demonstrated in the video were hardly highlighted. Meanwhile, notes on paralinguistic features were presented in the form of *tips of conducting group discussion* shown in a slide presentation (A_s2.1).

Similarly, Eliza echoed the same principle as she repeatedly stated that spoken language could be taught through *a lot of* (speaking) *practices* that aim to make students perform their *interactional skills* (E_ssi, E_sri2). When she was asked how to improve students' interactional skills, she expressed that *more role plays* and *practices* (communicative activities) that are *out of class activity* are needed, referring to activities that take place outside classroom or in real setting. Such activities require *students talking to real people*, which then develop their *confidence* to speak (E_sri2, E_sri3). This corresponds with her view on effective oral communication activities or tasks, which she mentioned *discussion, exchange dialogue, and role play* (E_sri3). Her teaching observation showed that the skill of opening conversation was highlighted through the phrase *how do you*, how it differs from the phrase *how are you*, and the proper way of responding to the phrases (observation 2). Paralinguistic features were briefly explained in observation 7 when discussing the topic 'enquiries about jobs'. She highlighted the importance of intonation and attitude in making phone enquiries since voice intonation gives people impression on callers' feelings and moods. Overall, classroom observations indicated that the teaching of interactional skills was implicit and in passing, whereby the skills were embedded in the explanation of language functions. The skills were also highlighted through feedback typically given after completion of activities. Input related to conversational rules was explained in brief, i.e. limited to what was included in the module. In fact, she admitted that teaching turn taking and language functions (e.g. giving suggestions) was done as *found in the module* (E_ssi). Students were given numerous group-mode speaking activities so that they practiced using the TL with their friends, which this reflects communicative approach principles.

In the similar vein, Wirda believed in giving students ample of speaking practices, so that students would literally use the TL. She opined impromptu speech conducted with students individually, is *an effective way* to improve students' interactional skills as the activity promotes spontaneity and *confidence* (W_ssi, W_sri3). In addition, she believed that speaking practices should not focus on forms; instead students should be encouraged to speak freely as long as the message is delivered. Wirda also stressed the importance of having *background knowledge* about topics discussed in improving interactional skills. In observation 3, she assigned students an assessed task, two weeks prior to the assessment day, so that students could research on the assigned topic. Ideally, students were expected to discuss extensively and confidently due to lengthy preparation time given. However, during the actual assessment observed, it was noticeable

that some students might have used the time, to write and memorize their discussion script. Thus, the distribution of speaking turns and their intonation appeared to be pre-planned, artificial and scripted, though it helped the weaker ones to accomplish the task. For this, she justified that knowing the discussion topic well *would give students confidence* and this would help them *to deliver points naturally* (W_sri2). Therefore, adequate time was given to student to search for points so that they would be confident to speak. Another component taught was speaker's role and intentions which was unintentionally taught (in observation 5). Strangely, this topic was taught in the final lesson of the unit oral communication skills. Finally, paralinguistic features were highlighted through feedback after practices done by students, as seen in observation 3.

Jiro's teaching practice exhibited that turn taking and providing appropriate feedback and responses were taught when students were preparing for their group discussion (observation 2 and 3). In observation 3, turn taking was highlighted while he was giving feedback to students after their group discussion practices, as he said, *"Don't wait for your friends to speak, because you only have 3 minutes"*. Another spotted example was when he taught student to interrupt only in the second round of the discussion, as he said *"interruption is not allowed in the second round. So you make interruption in the second round"*. Meanwhile, in observation 2, providing appropriate responses was taught on how to perform language functions such as through making and countering suggestions. However, he inclined to associate the targeted language functions to assessment and attaining marks. As seen in observation 2, he cautioned students, *"You cannot counter suggestion in the first round because you are given 2 minutes to introduce your points"*. Other than that, students were frequently reminded to use variety of phrases to perform speech acts so that they could achieve high marks for language (J_sri1). His teaching practice suggests his inclination towards assessment whereby lessons were meant to prepare students to attain high marks. Meanwhile, Jiro's explanation on paralinguistic features (voice projection, facial expressions and eye contact) was identified in observation 3, yet again; it was associated with scoring marks, reflecting his overriding concern for passing assessment. Unlike the other participants, Jiro seemed to be assessment oriented as his beliefs and teaching practiced were mostly guided by obtaining marks and completing assessments.

Azra, Eliza and Wirda's beliefs and practices grounded on the notion that frequent speaking practices would lead to acquisition of interactional skills, which consequently build their confidence to speak. This notion seems to be rooted from indirect approach that views communicative competence as the product of engaging learners in conversational interaction (Richards, 1990). Cook (1989) argues that this approach may provide learners the knowledge of language system but it does not provide learners with appropriate skills needed when interacting in small talk. In a multiple-speakers-interaction, learners should know their responsibility as a speaker and a listener, as speaking is reciprocal where meaning is jointly co-constructed, and turns and interaction are cooperatively contributed and maintained to achieve a smooth discussion (Tannen, 1989; McCarthy, 2005). In other words, a multiple-speakers-interaction is multifaceted and involves complicated skills, thus having confidence to express words fluently is insufficient. Besides, teachers and students need to know that real communication demands "more than knowledge of the language system and the factors creating coherence in one-way discourse" (Cook, 1989, p.117). Hence it rationalizes why interactional skills were not the focus of their instructions, as it was minimal, implicit and lacks of emphasis.

Conclusion

The findings exhibited that the lecturers believed the knowledge about spoken form as a relevant exposure to students but it is a peripheral component in spoken language teaching. This is reflected in their teaching practices whereby none of spoken forms were taught in their teaching practice, perhaps due to their belief that spoken form is a less significant component.

They also held several other discrete beliefs that indicate misconception about spoken form, which suggests lack of depth CK in these specific areas (spoken forms, conversational rules). For instance, there is an indication that they thought spoken grammar as a less formal version of written grammar. This notion is rather inaccurate, as corpora have confirmed that there are apparent differences between the two (their structures, in particular) even though they share similar foundational grammar (Biber, 2010). In addition, Wirda had the idea that spoken language that typically produced in chunks and incomplete, should not be a model taught to students because of its improper structures and features. On the contrary, speaking in chunks and incomplete nature of spoken language contribute to speakers' fluency as it accelerates speech rate and conversational flow (McCarthy, 2005). This is, in fact, a requirement of being a competent speaker of a language who should be in "in command of thousands (if not tens of thousands) of language chunks, and use them as basic building blocks in their speech and writing" (Dörnyei, 2013, p.168). These misconceptions are also representations of their beliefs which are reflected in their teaching practices .

Also, the lecturers believed that interactional skills could be attained through frequent speaking practices. This belief guided their teaching practices as students were immersed in ample of communicative activities to literally practice the TL. This approach, however, is proven to be less effective for interactional competence. Hence, the findings signal a need for the lecturers to re-examine their teaching strategies that promote interactional competence and prepare learners for more challenging communicative situations. Finally, since their beliefs about CK components of spoken language instruction have been linked to knowledge inadequacy, the findings of the study could illuminate the potential types of courses and trainings needed by in-service English lecturers in polytechnic. Providing courses related to content and pedagogical knowledge also seem to appropriately fill the needs of these lecturers.

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