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Hymes provides a framework for exploring speech events (Hymes, D. (1971) 'Sociolinguistics and the ethnography of speaking' in Ardener: 47-93; Hymes, D. (1972) 'Models of the interaction of language and social life', in Gumperz and Hymes: 35-71). Use this framework to summarise the distinguishing features of:

- a) an English classroom activity (e.g., a presentation activity, drill, small group discussion, or role-play) that you use in your teaching. (You should record your own data for this.)

- b) casual conversation (you may either record your own data or use published data for this, but whichever you choose, the conversation should be natural and not 'set up' or elicited by you or another researcher.)

Which of (a) or (b) has the features which are the easiest to identify, and why? Discuss the usefulness of this kind of analysis for understanding different kinds of communication.

You should include short real-life examples to illustrate distinguishing features but you are not advised to collect and analyse extensive quantities of data.

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1. Introduction

Teaching English in an EFL context can involve numerous difficulties for both the teacher and the learner and what is often seen as being the most important element is to prepare the learner for real life and real situational conversations outside the classroom. To try to produce better teaching practice within the classroom, it is necessary to study and analysis discourse within the ESL setting. In order to try to facilitate a better understanding of discourse, which McCarthy (2001: 48) recognises as being “...the study of language independently of the notion of the sentence”, Hymes (1972) proposes seven distinguishable features of spoken discourse in his ‘Ethnography of speaking’, (reviewed in Coulthard, 1985: 44-55, Brazil, 1995: 101-109) which are setting, purpose, participants, key, channels, message content and message form. These allow us to examine spoken discourse in detail in varying settings, in turn potentially producing better teaching practices with what we hope will be better end results for the learner. As Brazil, D. (1992:2) clarifies:

“...we all know that being able to read and write in English does not mean being able to converse in that language. ...(having) a better understanding of how spoken language really works might help us to avoid a situation that many of us regard as unsatisfactory: a situation in which proficient readers and writers of English lack both the confidence to speak it and also the ability to follow it when it is spoken.”

The focus of this paper will be to look at, and briefly summarise, the seven features in turn, both in a classroom presentation activity and in a casual conversation between a group of friends. Through looking at each individual sub-heading within the proposed guidelines, varying pedagogic implications will also be discussed and how these might benefit the learners involved. Each section will then conclude with a brief discussion as to the distinguishing features of Hymes’ framework both in the classroom and in casual discourse, and in which setting this framework was easier to apply.

The first recorded and transcribed sample comes from an upper-intermediate discussion class in a foreign language high school with 32 students, all selected by the school on their language ability. The average IELTS score for these students is 6 to 6.5, suggesting they are nearly all capable of conversing relatively fluently and their understanding should be very good. The second sample comes from a small group of EFL teachers in a casual conversation in one of the teacher’s homes. Here, genuine conversation has been used, which Nunan (1987: 137) describes as ‘genuine conversation’ where “...decisions about who says what to whom and when are (non-sequential and negotiable)”.

The action zone, as defined by Richards (1999: 138), is the area within which the students have regular eye contact with the teacher, and includes those students to whom the teacher asks questions and students who are asked to take an active part in the lesson. This zone, in smaller classes is likely to be very different in size to that of bigger classes. The classroom setting here clearly delineates the control the teacher has in relation to the students, which in turn highlights the different roles and privileges of the teacher and the students. Cultural upbringing, as recognised by Richards and Lockhart (1994: 108), affects the participants' assumptions and expectations of the ESL setting and as Widdowson reinforces (1984, cited by Willis, 2000:8):

“One cannot expect that learners will very readily adopt a pattern of behaviour in the English class which is at variance with the roles they are required to play in their other lessons.”

Cullen (1998: 181) describes the classroom as being a:

“...typically large, formal gathering which comes together for pedagogic rather than social reasons, it will have its own rules and conventions of communication, understood by all those present; these established patterns are likely to be very different from the norms of turn-taking and communicative interaction which operate in small, informal gatherings outside.”

Transcript 1 below begins to illustrate the teacher's controlling of the direction in which he wishes the class to go and also to delineate the content of that particular class. Brazil (1995: 119) states that the “...decision as to where significant boundaries occur in a stretch of discourse is one that only dominant speakers can make.”

Transcript 1- Controlling

T: Right, thank you. Sit please.

(Pause whilst students go to their seats)

T: *(Slightly raised voice)* Sit down quickly!

T: Homework away please. Close your books. This is not a maths class.

(Students clear desks)

(T waits for all attention.)

T: Right. Books.

(Students look confused)

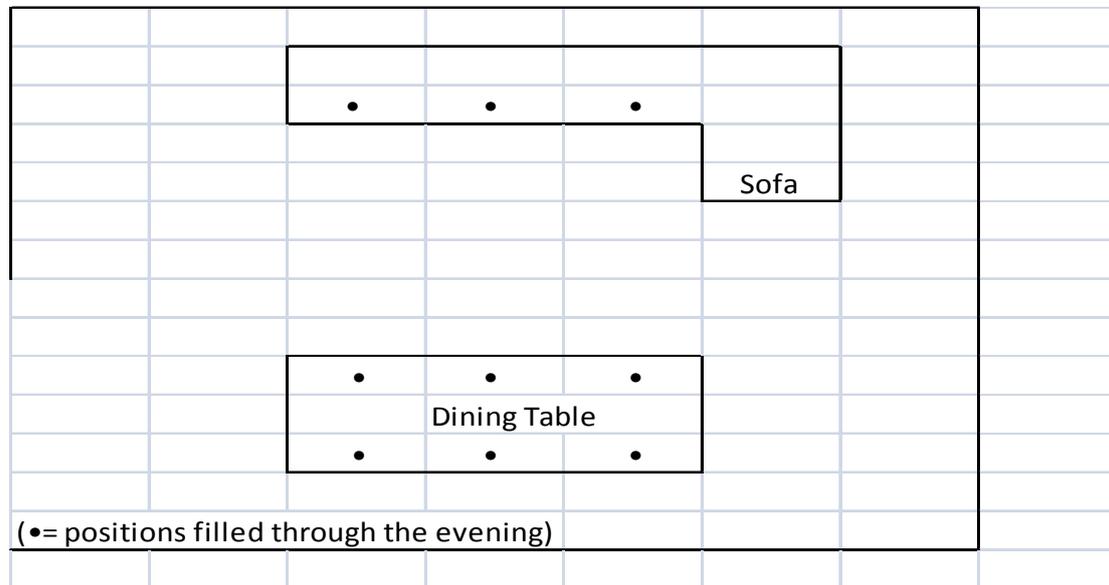
T: Why do we buy books? Not academic books, but novels.

S1: Study!

T: Not academic books.

The setting for the casual conversation was over dinner in the home of one of the teachers; it had no predetermined duration and, whilst students in the classroom were assigned certain seats, the conversation involved the interlocuters often trading seats and positions in the room through the course of the evening (table 2).

Table 2 – Seating arrangement during casual conversation



Here, the people involved in the conversations taking place through the course of the evening were not controlled by any one person, having conversations that were not prepared in the way a lesson would be planned and here the speakers were able to ‘make the contribution he or she (wished) to make’ Wardhaugh (2006:310). The group consisted of three EFL teachers and their respective wives.

In summary, the discourse within the classroom consisted of the most easily recognised distinctions making the language more distinguishable than the casual setting. In the classroom, it becomes clear very quickly that one person is dominant and has authority over the others, which again shows the classroom setting to have a more easily recognised pattern of discourse.

2.2 Purpose

Purpose pertains to the final outcome of a class, or more specifically, a ‘speech event’, which is reached through completion of smaller individual goals, or ‘speech acts’ (Gumperz and Hymes, 1972: 61).

At speech event level, it can be seen that the classroom activity and the casual conversation were clearly different. The classroom activity was to share and impart knowledge deemed necessary by the teacher – a purely pedagogical exercise. The casual conversation was phatic which Cook (1989: 51) defines as a conversation which “...(is) not primarily necessitated by a practical task”, unlike the classroom activity. Transcript 2 of the classroom activity below illustrates that the students are directed to answer questions to which the ‘primary knower’ (Berry, 1981), or in this case, the teacher, already knows.

Transcript 2 - Direction

T: Why do we buy books? Not academic books, but novels.

S1: Study!

T: *Not* academic books.

(Students laugh)

T: So?

S2: Picture.

T: Picture?

S2: Yes. The picture.

T: *(Sarcastic tone)* So you buy a book if the picture is pretty?

S2: Yes.

T: *(Sarcastic tone)* Really?

(Students laugh)

T: I think not. So? Why?

S2: To read.

T: *(Sarcastic tone)* Really?

(Students laugh)

S3: Yes. To read.

T: *(Stronger sarcastic tone)* Really?

T: But why *that* book? Why not *this* one?

S4: Title.

T: *(Looking slightly confused)* The title?

S4: Yes. The title.

T: So you buy a book for the title?

S2: Yes.

The teacher is also directing the class at this point to try and elicit the exact information he is looking for through the use of display questions, and this is done, as can be seen in transcript 3, through steering when the students start to get close to the answer the teacher is looking for.

Transcript 3 - Direction & eliciting

- S5:** Review.
T: Yes. Good. What review? (*directing*)
S4: Newspaper.
T: Newspaper what?
S4: Newspaper review.
T: Yes. Good. And?
S5: Back review.
T: *Back* review?
S5: Back of book review.
T: A review about the back of the book? (*friendly key*)
(*Students laugh*)
-

“Teacher talk” often consists largely of display questions (Brazil, 1995: 19; Wardhaugh, 1998: 302). Teachers, however, already know the answers to display questions (Thornbury, 1996: 282) which often have a double function; teachers can check learners’ general understanding of topical content; teachers can elicit response from the students in order to stimulate feedback which will enable discussion to develop.

Casual conversations, conversely, generally have a phatic function and contain ‘mechanisms’ (Brazil, 1995: 123) that allow everyone to contribute. One such example is “back-channeling” in which participants in the conversation can support, be involved with and make comments without interfering or being overly forward. Transcript 4 (*acknowledging* words in **bold**) illustrates this.

Transcript 4 – Back-channeling

- A:** Jeez, traffic was solid on Friday.
B: **Yep.**
A: So it was bad up your way too?
C: **Mmm.**
B: **Yep.**
A: It took well over the hour for me to get in, an’ you know how I hate being stuck in traffic.
B&C: (*Laughing*)**Yep.**
-

In regular classroom conversation, this ‘back-channeling’ is unlikely to occur unless the teacher is supporting what the students is saying and is using it by way of encouragement, as can be seen in transcript 5, which was taken from a student’s speaking test, in which high level students were given a minute and a half to talk about a topic.

Transcript 5 - Encouragement

T: Ok. Off you go.

S1: My topic is a memorable event in my life. When I was 14 I got a chance to visit to France. My best friend emigrated to France so she invited me and my parents couldn’t go with me because of their jobs, so I had to go alone.

T: I see.

S1: I was a little bit afraid but also I was so excited because there was my first travel by airplane. Everything I saw at the airport and on the plane was surprising. One thing I had a hard time to travelling by airplane was writing landing card. I was so poor at English so I couldn’t understand what it says.

T: Ah.

S1: Fortunately, my woman sitting next me was so friendly so she wrote my card instead of me. Also she gave me a paper dollar of France for a souvenir. After ten hours passed I arrived at the airport on France and I was so proud of myself because I did it.

T: Good.

In summary therefore, both classroom conversations contained more easily distinguishable features than the casual conversation, primarily highlighted by eliciting and directing, neither of which occurred in the conversation at the teacher’s home. Brazil (1995: 109) and Wardhaugh (1998: 302) both point out however that many teacher’s speech acts are not suitable for casual or social speech as people might well believe that they were being manipulated. Also, the quantity of display and closed questions in many presentations does not allow the learners to formulate the meaningful responses that open and referential questions are needed in casual conversation (Nunan, 1989: 30).

2.3 Participants

With an asymmetrical balance of power in the majority of ESL classrooms between the teacher and students, the contrast between the casual conversation and classroom activity is indeed very noticeable. Participant roles within both settings strongly affect the language utilized (Nunan, 1999: 74); both bring with them different social expectations and cultural assumptions which in turn affect relationships with others in each setting. Richards and

Nunan note (1990: 83) that “Learning a language is a social activity...and in a classroom setting it is subject to a unique set of social conventions.” Brazil (1995: 118) tells us “whatever the relationship between teacher and taught may be outside, it is customary for the teacher to be deemed in charge within it i.e. the relationship is asymmetrical”. Conversely, in a social setting, Stubbs (1983: 101) tells us that “Rules for initiation will be different, since everyone will be expected to chip in, and this will clearly affect discourse sequencing.”

An EFL classroom is often very teacher led and may well consist of teacher-learner exchanges comprised of a three-part exchange which Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) named the ‘Initiate, Response, Follow up’, or IRF, exchange. There are varying advantages and disadvantages for the IRF exchange, as detailed in table 3.

Table 3: Advantages and disadvantages of IRF

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Teachers can ‘scaffold’ learners’ thinking, allowing development from basic forms of thought to more critically aware and independent ones (Chaudron, 1988: 10) ~ IRF provides teachers and learners with a familiar interactive structure (Edwards & Westgate, 1994: 38) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ IRF exchange can be interpreted as acting rather than genuine communication – a ritual, making it very limited. (van Lier, 1996: 157) ~ Limited opportunities as output is restricted to answering turn. Can’t provide feedback for themselves

Cullen (2002: 118) recognises that the follow-up turn is an inevitable process in most classrooms. Whilst it provides learners with feedback on their L2 development (Chaudron, 1988: 133) and time for teachers to assess their learners’ progress, learners may also be restricted in their answers in certain societies where power distance (Hofstede, 1986) is prevalent and fear of making mistakes actually prevents learners from answering in full. Chaudron (1988: 176) also notes that evaluative, acknowledging and turn-passing feedback are the most regularly used follow-up turns engaged by teachers and in asymmetrical situations, evaluative feedback is more common. Transcript 6 below shows an example of evaluative feedback in order to elicit more information from the students, whilst transcript 7 is an example of acknowledging and turn-passing used within a casual conversation.

Transcript 6 – Evaluative feedback

- T:** So. What else? Why might you buy a book?
S5: Review.
T: Yes. Good. What review? (*evaluating & eliciting*)
S4: Newspaper.
T: Newspaper what?
S4: Newspaper review.
T: Yes. Good. And? (*evaluating and eliciting*)
-

Transcript 7 – Acknowledging and turn-passing

- A:** They altered all the contracts last month. Was yours done too? (*turn-passing*)
B: Nah. Not as yet.
A: Lucky git.
C: Mmm.
A: Do you think they're gonna? (*turn-passing*)
-

In summary therefore, the teacher was certainly the dominating participant in the classroom, through directing, eliciting and evaluating; the casual conversation however shows that the participants played much more symmetrical roles in what was an equally 'power' balanced conversation, without anyone purposefully dominating the direction in which it took through the course of the evening.

2.4 Key

'Key' specifically refers to the "‘tone, manner or spirit’ in which (a speech) act or event is performed" (Coulthard, 1985: 48-49) which is often recognised through non-verbal and verbal cues. Hymes (cited in Coulthard, 1996: 48) stresses the importance of key, telling us that "when it is in conflict with the overt content of an act, it often over-rides it". A teacher new to a group, or even new to EFL itself, will often be "over explicit" (Brazil, 1995: 122) both by markedly slowing down and through stressing words more, in order to make questions and points of pedagogic importance clearer than they might otherwise need to be with familiar groups or students.

Within many EFL classrooms, relatively limited keys may be used as teachers need to praise yet control, be friendly yet maintain authority and to elicit without suppressing. Brazil (1995: 108) suggests that we need to “evoke ‘togetherness’ or a shared perspective” through our key within the classroom, yet such a tone, when mixed with disciplinary and praising keys, might be deemed inappropriate within a casual setting, where participants are usually thought to be equal. Key can also indicate dominance within a casual setting, but is usually used for this purpose in a teaching situation. Rising and falling tones have meaning too (Roach, 1996: 177) and whilst these make be difficult to recognise so clearly within casual conversation, he states “ ...writers on discourse intonation have proposed that the falling tone indicates new information while rising tones indicate ‘shared’ or ‘given’ information”.

Varying keys within a classroom setting are often essential to convey messages effectively, to maintain interest, to elicit information and to praise the students. As can be seen from transcript 8, sarcasm was used to elicit information which would then hopefully lead on to the main aim of the planned lesson. Edwards and Westgate (1994: 98) make the observation that humour within the classroom will often ‘warm’ and ‘informalize’ an otherwise regular teaching climate, which may not otherwise be conducive to effective learning. As Brown (1994a: 240) states:

“Intonation patterns are very significant...not just for interpreting such straightforward elements as questions and statements and emphasis but more subtle messages like sarcasm, endearment, insult, solicitation, praise, etc.”

Transcript 8 – Humour key

S2: Yes. The picture.

T: (*Sarcastic tone*) So you buy a book if the picture is pretty?

S2: Yes.

T: (*Sarcastic tone*) Really?

(*Students laugh*)

T: I think not. So? Why?

S2: To read.

T: (*Sarcastic tone*) Really?

(*Students laugh*)

S3: Yes. To read.

T: (*Stronger sarcastic tone*) Really?

Within the casual conversation, numerous keys were also used, ranging from serious, or academic, in transcript 9, to gossiping in transcript 10 and humorous in transcript 11.

Transcript 9 – Serious/academic

- A:** It's very different t' the last place.
B: Y' reckon?
A: There's much less of the hierarchal (sic) stuff goin' on, which is great.
C: You're lucky then. My school is full of it.
-

Transcript 10 – Gossiping

- D:** His wife can be really difficult at times.
A: *(Smiling)* Ain't that the truth!
C: She's the same with you then?
D: I sometimes feel sorry for him though.
A: Why's that?
D: Because they're like, you know, two totally different people.
-

Transcript 11 - Humorous

- A:** It's a bus and you know it!
B: It ain't!
A: How many can you get in it? 50?
B: *(Sarcastically)* Ha-ha. Me an' the wife are more than comfortable in it, an' the dog loves it.
C: And it's as aero-dynamic as a breeze block right?
A & C: Laughing together.
-

Whilst the gossiping key is common amongst friends or colleagues, it will often be deemed to be inappropriate within the classroom situation as it doesn't follow the regular tone therein. In summary therefore, key in both situations was easy to identify even though

they had very different duties. Numerous keys were used throughout both situations, with the casual conversation probably having a wider selection. The teacher used the same key repeatedly in order to maintain a lively and light-hearted atmosphere, but within the casual conversation, due to the speed at which topics changed and the seriousness denoted within each, no key was actually used to encourage the participants, but was used for emphasis, humour and more serious discussion. Relationships built between students and teachers will also bear an important role in the key of a class, due to students feeling relaxed and comfortable to talk with the teacher without fear of losing face, which will be discussed further in 2.7.

2.5 Channel

Hymes (1972a: 63) defines channel as '(the) choice of oral, written, telegraphic, semaphore, or other medium of transmission of speech', or, simply, the medium of transmission through which any given discourse occurs. Language in the classroom is used for both content and instruction, so channels are important when discussing classroom discourse; they don't however, play the same importance for casual conversation.

Classrooms, and the channels used therein, are maybe more distinctive than regular conversation due to the differing media that many teachers facilitate on a daily basis, such as blackboards, textbooks, overhead projectors, whiteboards and video. A regular conversation may commonly only use speech as the main channel, unless specific things are being looked at or discussed, such as looking at photographs, watching a video or maybe looking at something on a computer. These then are not necessarily additional channels employed in the conversation, but may be seen as adjuncts to the conversation.

With the development of technology in many countries and with many schools endeavouring to enhance the learning environment by supplying up to date equipment, teachers should in turn make full use of facilities such as video, OHP's and computer projectors where available as students all learn in different ways (McDonough & Shaw, 1993: 55). With interactive whiteboards becoming more popular in some institutions, students can now actually learn through touch, which is hopefully furthering the learning and helping to maintain interest within the students themselves, resulting in what is hoped to be a rich SLA environment.

Given that students have a preferred channel through which they will learn, (McDonough & Shaw, 1993: 55) transcript 12 shows that in some teaching situations, where students may be particularly talkative or 'energetic' something as simple as an oral channel

can actually carry the class without the need for any supporting channels. The class which was recorded for this particular example comprised of seventeen year old students, several of whom have lived abroad and are relatively fluent as a result. A humorous key was used, which set the tone for the introduction for the class.

Transcript 12 – Humour key

T: Right. Look at the first one. In what way, if any, are men and women different? And don't say their bodies. I kind of know that already – I am married.

Pause

T: How are they different? Men and women.

S1: (f) Physically

T: Not physically. I know physically. I am aware of that. I have a wife and she is a woman.

Laughter

T: We share a house. You kind of realize the physical differences. How else are they different? In what ways are they different?

S2: (f) Shopping style.

T: *Questioning.* Shopping style? *Laughter.* How shopping style?

S2: (f) Errrrr.

Laughter

T: Shhh. Shhh.

S2: (f) Women look around the shop (pause) ...men...

Laughter

T: Shhh. Shhh.

T: But men ...?

S2: (f) Men just take one. Pick one.

T: Men is this true? Yes or no?

S3: (m) I haven't been.

T: (*surprised*) You haven't been shopping?

Laughter

T: You're seventeen years old and you haven't been shopping?

Note: (m) = male student, (f) = female student

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However, within the selection of channels available, some are more conducive to effective use of teacher time as a medium such as a blackboard can result in the teacher spending a lot of time facing the board and not the students, which in some classes, from experience, can result in discipline problems which can then disrupt the whole class dynamic. The computer projectors are an excellent channel to use, as are the interactive whiteboards, provided that the teacher concerned is well versed in how to use them; of course the teacher

has to rely on nothing technical going wrong, which is something that we know can't be guaranteed.

The casual conversation, in this example, did not utilise any particular channel other than speech; this is an intrinsic part of casual speech due to conversation being unrehearsed and unprepared. There may be instances where other channels are introduced, such as a computer, a camera or pictures, but these are invariably spontaneous. It is therefore much easier to recognise channels within a teaching environment as teachers will usually utilise different channels in order for the students to benefit from as much variety as possible.

2.6 Message Content

Message content, loosely, can be described as the 'topic' and also 'change of topic' of the speech event (Gumperz & Hymes, 1972a: 60), and as McCarthy (1991: 132) states, "...topics can be the reason for talk or they can arise because people are already talking." Within the classroom Brazil (1995: 107) tells us that it is "...perhaps the clearest example of an event, in which, what is spoken about is under virtually total control of one participant". Classroom topics are invariably predetermined by the teacher, with transcript 12 showing how the teacher directed the class right from the beginning. It may be the case that teachers would like more choice of content input from students, but with time constraints and mixed curricula, this becomes a very difficult task and "...because the classroom is an institutional setting, the teacher is the person vested with the most talking rights, a fact that has been demonstrated by a myriad of studies" (Cazden, 1998; cited by Gill, 2002: 277). The characteristics of a conversation however are the abundance of rapid, negotiated topic selections (Brazil, 1995: 123).

Within message content, the IRF exchange structure becomes evident again, and transcript 6 shows this within the classroom setting. Depending on the exercise, the IRF exchange can really encourage more speaking and hopefully elicit more interaction between students and the teacher whilst still focusing on the message content. However, when we compare this with a conversation and the speed at which topics change and also the use of idiomatic language, as noted in transcript 13, we can see that they change for any number of reasons, often just to keep the flow of conversation going and because people are together and chatting (McCarthy, 1991: 133). In stark contrast to this though, Burns (2001: 125) points out that classroom discourse "...represents interaction as smooth, predictable, and trouble free. Utterances are polite and neat and occur as complete sentences; speakers do not interrupt each other; utterances are short and well formed."

- D:** Have you seen it?
A: Kung Fu Panda?
C: Yep. Could live wi'out it.
D: Yongsan is impossible now. (*topic change*)
C: Why?
D: Can't find DVD's anywhere now. They've gone underground somewhere.
A: You had that problem too? Man. We did the whole market looking for them.
-

Gilmore's (2004) research into casual conversation and its representation in coursebooks shows that a small number of coursebooks are now beginning to represent features of authentic discourse in their respective roleplays and dialogues. If materials continue to progress, this could possibly contribute to raising teachers' and students' awareness of the subject area. The research further highlights that the evident lack of such materials is attributed historically to writers using dialogues to emphasise grammar points, and to present new language or language functions. Tannen (1994: 39-40) highlights that if one person in a casual conversation had initiated more topics than others, then that doesn't automatically mean that that person dominated the conversation in the same way a teacher might within a classroom or teaching situation. Topic is something which is usually unconstrained within casual discourse (Coulthard, 1985: 49) which is something that students need to be able to follow as it is a major feature of conversation (Dornyei & Thurrell, 1994: 43).

In summary, message content in the classroom, whilst easy to recognise due to the eliciting and directing given by the teacher, was relatively limited. The casual conversation, whilst having no set message content, was also relatively easy to distinguish, even though the topics changed regularly and fluently, with all participants equally controlling the conversation and topics therein.

2.7 Message Form

Message form, as Brazil (1995: 123) explains, correlates to the fact that "...the language system provides us with many ways of saying the same thing; there is therefore interest in asking why one way is chosen rather than others." Brown and Levinson (1987: 61) state that we use positive and negative politeness strategies whilst trying to preserve the

public self-image that everyone wants to claim for themselves. Within these parameters, the concept of *face* is essential and is something that Brown and Levinson, as cited in Coulthard, (1985: 50) define as “...something that is emotionally invested and that can be lost, maintained or enhanced.” Cultures such as that in Korea place heavy emphasis on the need for collectivism (Hofstede, 1986) and will often go to great lengths to “...(maintain) harmony among the members of their in-group and are thus likely to avoid face-threatening situations that might cause conflict or disagreement” (Ting-Toomey, 1988; Park, 1979; cited in Lee, 2002: 9). Wardhaugh (1998: 272) tells us that:

“*Positive face* as being the desire to gain the approval of others (whilst) *negative face* is the desire to be unimpeded by one’s actions...*Positive politeness* leads to moves which achieve solidarity through offers of friendship, the use of compliments, and informal language use (whilst) *negative politeness* leads to deference, apologising, indirectness, and formality in language use.”

Coulthard (1985: 50) develops this further by describing ‘Face Threatening Acts’ (FTAs) (Goffman, 1976, cited by Coulthard, *ibid.*) which are things like requests, offers and disagreements. Positive politeness allows us to minimize these, and the use of words such as “Let’s” and “Can you..” convert commands into offers to further the conversation which then hopefully reduces the students’ feeling of independence. Positive politeness is something which Brazil (1995: 108) identifies as a feeling of “togetherness” and a “shared perspective”, especially when using the ‘inclusive we’, for those within the EFL classroom. An example of this in transcript 14 shows that when asking “What else is different?” the teacher is asking for more examples without commanding the students, especially as this was following something already offered by a different student.

Transcript 14 – Positive politeness

T: OK. Shopping style is different. What else is different? Men and women.

S3: (m) Hairstyle.

The use of humour as seen in transcript 2,3,8 and 12, and encouraging praise as seen in transcript 3 and 6, within the classroom are also forms of positive politeness that are frequently employed by teachers to try and enrich the learning environment. However, McCarthy (1991: 137) tells us that being able “...to tell a good joke or story is a highly regarded talent probably in all cultures...” which is something that realistically many people can’t do in their first language. Transcript 11 shows a light hearted quip at someone about

their car which if used as authentic material within a classroom, might still prove to be a source of confusion, even after lengthy explanations. This therefore poses a problem to EFL material writers of how authentic their material should really be as a representation of natural discourse.

The casual conversation involved people who had known each other for some time, were from similar cultures and were in similar working situations. The type of derogatory humour used about one participant's car is a form of positive politeness that probably wouldn't be used within the classroom; due to cultural differences that many EFL teachers experience, it could actually be seen as a direct insult, especially in countries where the social hierarchal system and power distance is prevalent, such as Korea and Japan (Hofstede, 1986).

Recognition of message form was therefore easier within the classroom as the asymmetrical teacher-learner relationship allowed frequent use of negative politeness strategies, an example of which is shown in transcript 1. The teacher sought autonomy and control within the classroom and this was also done through directing students in order to reach the pedagogic goals of the class. The casual conversation was held in a totally social atmosphere where participants knew each other well enough to base the conversation on positive politeness rather than trying to seek autonomy.

3. A comparison of different discourse types – a summary

By working within set parameters we are able to compare data (Brazil, 1995: 128), and using the framework from Hymes' seven categories of speech analysis, examination of discourse can be thorough. Although some categories were easier to distinguish than others, such as setting and participants, other categories were relatively broad and harder to draw firm conclusions from, due to the relatively general descriptors given by Hymes. One example would be 'Key' which is defined as 'the tone, manner or spirit of a speech event' which is exceptionally general making it harder to be concise in drawing conclusions. Table 4 is a brief and simplified tabular form of the differences of classroom discourse and casual conversation, based on data collected by the author.

Table 4 – Distinctive features of the classroom and the casual conversation.

Category	Classroom	Casual conversation
Setting	~ Institutional	~ Non-institutional
Purpose	~ Pedagogical	~ Social
Participants	~ Large number ~ Asymmetrical roles ~ Similar social background	~ Small, intimate number ~ Symmetrical roles ~ Similar professional background
Key	~ Light-hearted with serious undertones	~ Friendly
Channels	~ Oral, written (blackboard)	~ Oral
Message Content	~ Predetermined, planned	~ Spontaneous
Message Form	~ Negative politeness	~ Positive politeness

There is no doubt that the two settings varied considerably in both given situations, with the classroom activity being restricted by time and relative formality while the casual conversation had no time boundaries or dominating participant. Classrooms are often deemed to be highly structured places and have easily recognisable roles of the participants therein. Turns were directed and controlled by the teacher and topics were pre-planned and chosen in advance. In contrast, it was evident within the casual conversation that no one was in control in any way. This was clear through participants interrupting one another, talking over each other and using humour throughout the majority of the evening. The classroom was a place for learning and practicing English with specific emphasis on the differences between men and women, whereas the casual conversation had no clear topic or direction. Hesitation devices, such as ‘erm’ and ‘err’ were evident in the classroom discourse which is something that could possibly be attributed to students having lived abroad and been immersed in English for a certain period of their lives. These are important linguistic elements which are rarely found in EFL textbooks, but writers need to be increasingly aware of this material (Gilmore, 2004).

4. Conclusion

This paper has looked Hymes’ seven features of discourse and has applied them to both a classroom setting and a casual conversation. Using these seven steps, namely setting, purpose, participants, key, channels, message content and message form, it has become evident through studying data that these discourse activities differed enormously. Working in an environment where the level of English might be considered by some to be higher than in

many other educational situations, certainly allows a lot more interaction between teacher and students and also demonstrates some good examples of both key and channels used within the classroom. It could also be said, that whilst the teacher used both negative and positive politeness both to control and encourage, the symmetrical balance between the participants might not have been as stark as could be found in classes other than EFL class. Also, using ambiguously broad questions, such as “What is the difference between men and women?” might also have contributed to the general key of the classroom.

Through using the framework, it becomes evident that the role of the conversation teacher within the EFL classroom can be divided into three parts namely: give instruction, give opportunity and provide feedback. This loosely fits with the IRF exchange and if the teacher is able to employ the IRF exchange in an efficient and productive way, then hopefully the students will be in an environment that is conducive to constructive and beneficial learning.

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