

An Exploration of the EFL Teachers' Styles in Classroom Interaction at the Secondary Schools of Misurata

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استكشاف أساليب معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية في التفاعل الصفّي في المدارس
الثانوية في مدينة مصراتة

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Abstract

This research is conducted to find out teaching styles of English teachers in EFL classroom which highlights the importance of adapting teaching styles to meet the needs of students. It covers four research questions; This research used a qualitative and quantitative research design. The participants were ten English teachers and a hundred students of Zahrat Alwatan secondary school. The data were obtained through observation, recording and interview. The results of the finding indicate that teachers employ a spectrum of styles, ranging from authoritative to facilitative and the student-centered approaches, particularly those that encourage active participation, the paper is concluded by recommending reflective teaching practices, targeted professional development, and interactional flexibility to meet diverse learners' needs in EFL settings.

Keywords: Teaching styles, EFL, Classroom interaction .

المخلص

اجري هذا البحث للتعرف على أساليب التدريس التي يستخدمها معلمو اللغة الإنجليزية في صفوف تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية، مع التركيز على أهمية تكيف أساليب التدريس لتلبية احتياجات الطلاب. يتناول البحث أربعة أسئلة بحثية، وقد استخدم فيه تصميم بحثي نوعي وكمي. شملت العينة عشرة معلمين للغة الإنجليزية ومائة طالب من مدرسة زهرات الوطن الثانوية. تم جمع البيانات من خلال الملاحظة والتسجيل والمقابلة.

تشير نتائج الدراسة الى ان المعلمين يستخدمون مجموعة من الأساليب تتراوح بين التسلط والتهيئية، فضلا عن اتباع الأساليب التي تركز على الطالب، خاصة تلك التي تشجع على المشاركة النشطة. ويختتم البحث بالتوصية بتبني ممارسات تعليمية تعكس التفكير التأملي، والتطوير المهني المستهدف والمرونة في التفاعل لتلبية احتياجات المتعلمين المتنوعة في بيئات تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: أساليب التدريس، تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية، التفاعل الصفي.

1.Introduction

Effective classroom interaction is a cornerstone of successful English as a foreign language (EFL) instruction. Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping how students communicate, participate, and learn. This research investigates the diverse interaction styles adopted by EFL teachers and how these styles influence the dynamics of the language learning environment. by exploring real-world classroom settings, the study aims to contribute to better understanding of the pedagogical practices that foster active learning and meaningful communication.

1.2 The problem and its Background

Teaching English as a foreign language can be challenging for teachers since it requires different techniques and strategies. Foreign language teaching may not be suitable for all because of misunderstanding of different teaching styles.

2.3 Statement of the Problem

This paper aims to determine the various teaching styles employed by English teachers of Zahrat Alwatan secondary school, focusing on their impact on student engagement, learning outcomes. Teaching styles are an essential component of the educational process.

2.4 Research Questions

In this paper the researcher tries to answer the following questions.

- 1- What are the predominate interaction styles used by EFL teachers in classroom settings?
- 2- How do these interaction styles affect students' engagement and participation?
- 3- What are the perceived challenges and benefits of different interaction strategies from the teachers' perspective?
- 4- How can understanding interaction styles improve teaching effectiveness in EFL context?

Chapter Two

Literature review

Classroom interaction is a central component of the teaching and learning process, especially in English as a foreign language context. It encompasses the dynamic exchange between teachers and learners that fosters language acquisition, critical thinking, and communicative competence (Chaudron, 1988). Interaction styles- how teachers communicate, give feedback, manage classroom discourse, and facilitate student engagement, significantly influence the quality of instruction and learning outcomes (Ninan, 1991; Allwright & Bailey, 1991). The concept of teaching style has been widely discussed by many researchers.

Teacher interaction styles refer to the habitual ways teachers engage with students during classroom discourse. According to Grasha (1996), these styles can be categorized as expert, formal authority, personal model, facilitator and delegator. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory emphasize the importance of interaction in learning.

EFL classrooms differ from other instructional settings in that they involve learning a target language while using it (Littlewood 1981). Research suggests that when teachers use

more communicative styles, such as questioning, eliciting, and encouraging peer discussion, students show increased engagement and language use (Nunan, 1991; Ellis, 1994). In contrast, classrooms dominated by teacher-fronted, lecture style interaction often result in limited student participation (Chaudron, 1988; Walsh, 2006).

2.1 Types of teaching styles

There are many researchers who have divided the teaching style into five models as Grasha (1996).

2.1.1 Expert style

An expert teaching style is one where the instructor goes deep subject matter expertise and uses that knowledge to guide learners toward mastery of language. It is an in-depth exploration of what expert-level teaching has.

2.1.2 Format Authority style

Format Authority style is what is known as the traditional teacher-centered approach, where the teacher holds a position of power and control within the learning environment.

2.1.3 Personal Model Style

This style is characterized by the teacher acting as a role model for students, demonstrating behaviors, skills, and attitudes that students are encouraged to adopt. This style focuses on learning through observation and imitation.

2.1.4 Facilitator style

It is the student-centered approach where the teacher's primary role is to guide and support learners in their journey toward understanding, rather than directly delivering content.

2.1.5 Delegator

The delegator teaching style is a highly student-centered approach where the teacher assigns responsibility for learning to the students themselves, encouraging them to take initiative, collaborate, and manage their own learning process.

The study of teaching styles in EFL classroom interactions has been a significant research focus, particularly in understanding how different approaches affect student engagement and language acquisition. Here are some key studies and findings related to teaching styles in EFL classrooms:

Chaudron (1988) found that classrooms where teachers dominated interaction had less student output. Conversely, student-centered teaching styles encouraged greater student participation and language use. Wales's research (2002) investigates how teacher talk either promotes or hinders learner interaction in EFL classrooms. Teachers often dominate classroom discourse, limiting opportunities for meaningful student engagement.

The study of Littlewood (1981) conducted that shift from grammar-focused instructions to interactive teaching, where students are encouraged to use language in real-life contexts. Borg's research reviews the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices, showing how deeply rooted beliefs about language learning influence teaching styles. Borg (2003).

Nunan (1991) explores the role of culture in shaping EFL teaching styles, noting that what works in one cultural context may not work in another, for example, in East Asian classrooms, where teachers are viewed as authoritative figures, teacher-centered methods are often

preferred, in contrast Western classrooms tend to favor more collaborative, student-centered approach.

Hampel (2005) examined how online and digital learning environments have reshaped EFL teaching styles. Technology can facilitate more interactive and dynamic classroom interaction, allowing students to engage with authentic language materials and communicate in real time with peers and teachers.

2.2 The Gap of Literature:

Although numerous studies have explored classroom interaction and communicative language in EFL settings, few empirical studies have combined these models with classroom observation or teacher reflection to assess their practical impact on EFL learners' engagement, participation and language development.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

This study takes mixed-methods combining qualitative and quantitative data to provide a more comprehensive view of teaching styles and classroom interaction. The instrument used in this study is a questionnaire as well as a classroom observation, semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns and categorize interaction styles based on fluency, function and impact on learning.

The data collection took place over a three-month period during the academic year. All participants provided informed consent, and the study followed ethical research practices to ensure confidentiality and voluntary participation. Classroom sessions were observed without interference, focusing on verbal communication, questions techniques, feedback styles, and turn taking behaviors

3.1 Participants

This research was conducted in Zahrat Alwatan secondary school. The participants were the 2024/2025 academic year teachers of first grade of secondary school. They were observed then a questionnaire was submitted to 100 secondary school students.

3.2 Data Analysis

After the data were collected, the steps of analyzing data were as follows the points of the responses. The questionnaire consists of 10 multiple choice questions. Which employs a Likert scale ranging from 1(often) to 5 (rarely). It was given to the teachers to conduct their teaching styles during their lessons. (see Appendix A)

3.3 Data Collection Methods

Three main tools were used for data collection:

3.3.1 Classroom Observation

Each teacher was observed over three sessions. A classroom interaction observation checklist was used. The most interactive sessions occurred when teachers deliberately encouraged students to express opinions and discuss in pairs.

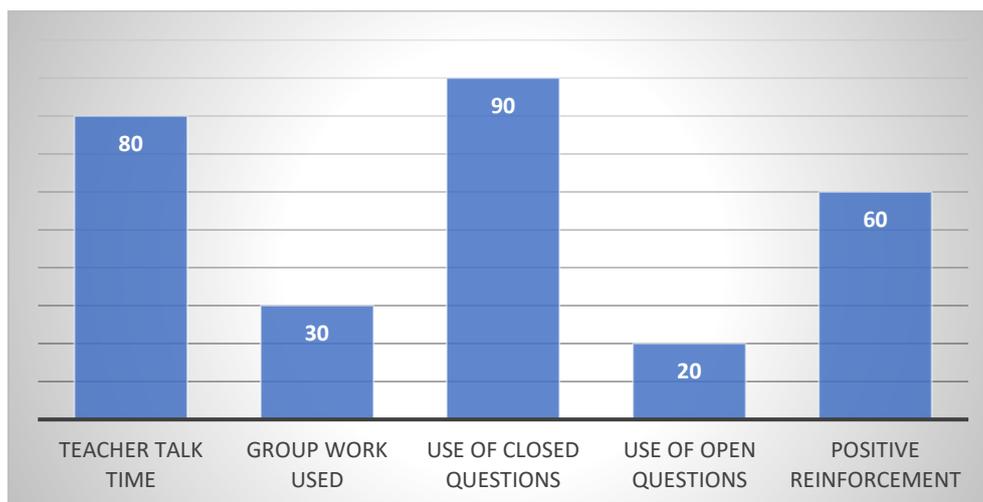


Figure 1. Classroom observation findings.

It is clearly from figure 1, about 80% of teachers observed dominated classroom talk. Few opportunities were given for extended student responses. 30% of teachers use group work activities, they mostly depend on individual responses. Most questions aimed at checking factual understanding, not critical thinking. Feedback and praise were mostly generic like: good job, correct.

3.3.2 Student Questionnaire Analysis:

A total of 100 students participated in the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 10 key statements related to teachers' interaction styles. Students responded using a 5-point Likert scale.

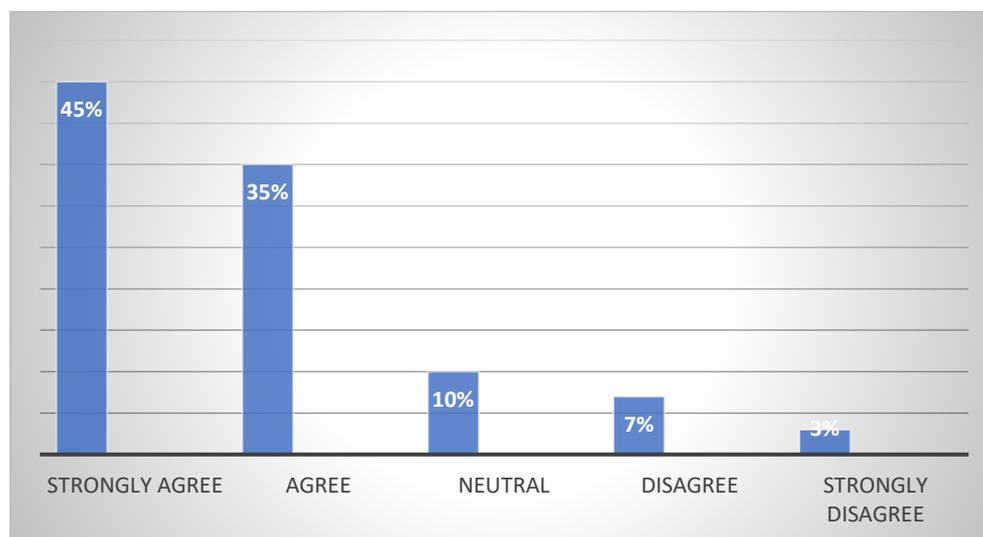


Figure 2. The teacher dominates classroom talk

In figure 2, 45 students were a strongly agree that the teachers dominate classroom talk, 35 were agree while 10 were neutral about the teachers dominate talk, 7 disagreed that their classes are teacher centered, 3 were strongly disagree.

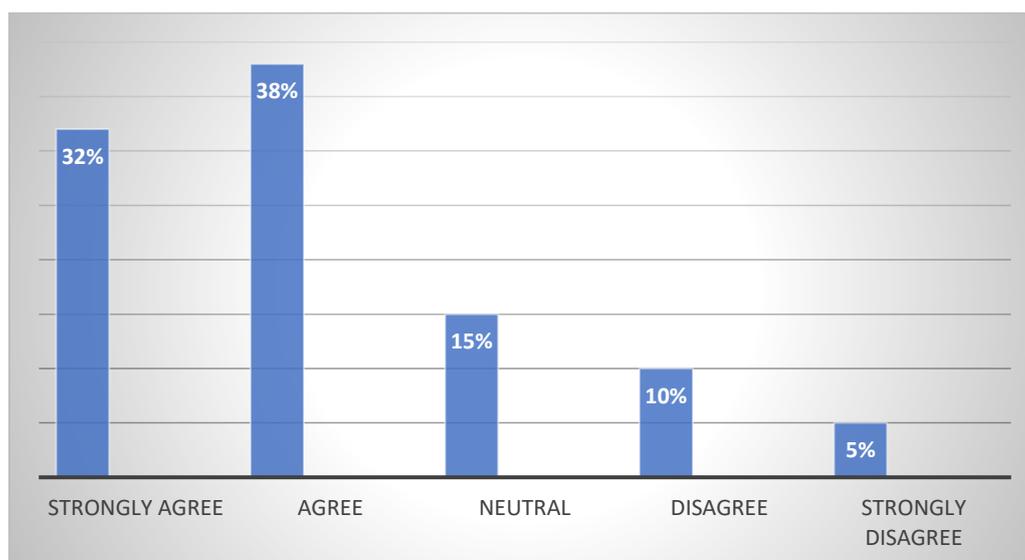


Figure 3. I feel comfortable participating in classroom discussions.

In figure 3, 33 students were a strongly about their feeling comfortable participating in classroom interactions, 37 were agree while 15 were neutral about feeling comfortable participating in classroom discussion, 10 disagreed, 5 were strongly disagree.

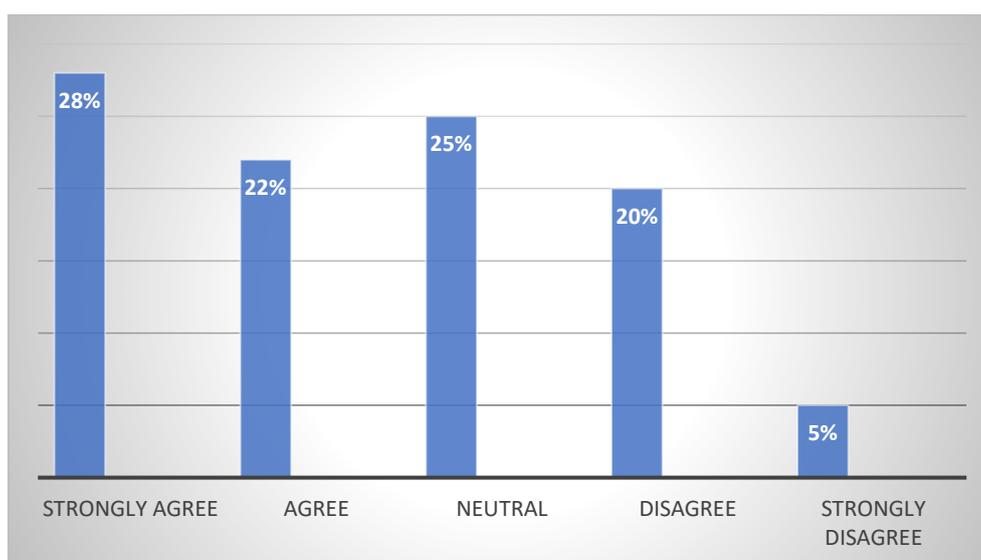


Figure 4. The teacher encourages group/pair work.

In figure 4, 28 students were a strongly about the encouragement of their work by teachers, 22 were agree while 25 were neutral about the encouragement of their teachers, 20 disagreed that their teachers encourage them, 5 were strongly disagree.

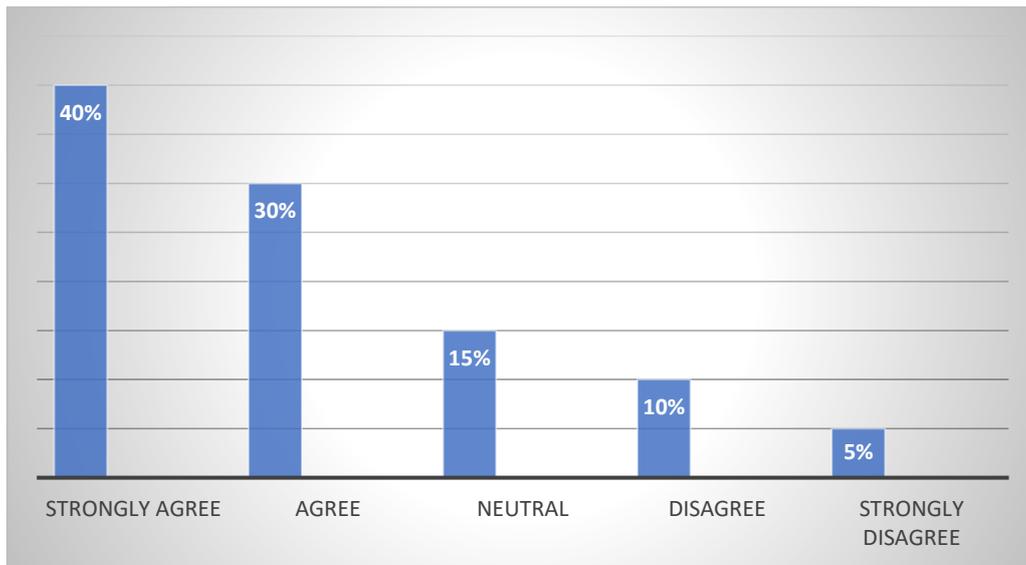


Figure 5. My teacher corrects mistakes in a friendly way.

In figure 5, 40 students were a strongly about the way of correcting mistakes which was friendly, 30 were agree while 15 were neutral about the teachers' way of correcting mistakes, 10 disagreed that their teachers correct them kindly, 5 were strongly disagree.

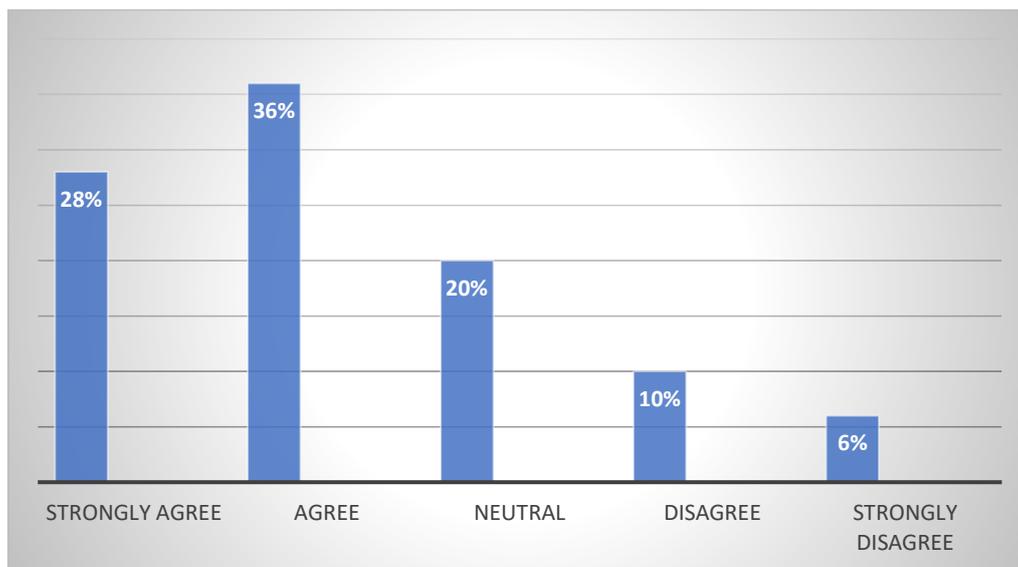


Figure 6. Students are given equal chances to speak

In figure 6, 27 students were a strongly about their chance to speak, 36 were agree while 20 were neutral about the chance to speak, 10 disagreed that they have a good chance to speak, 7 were strongly disagree.

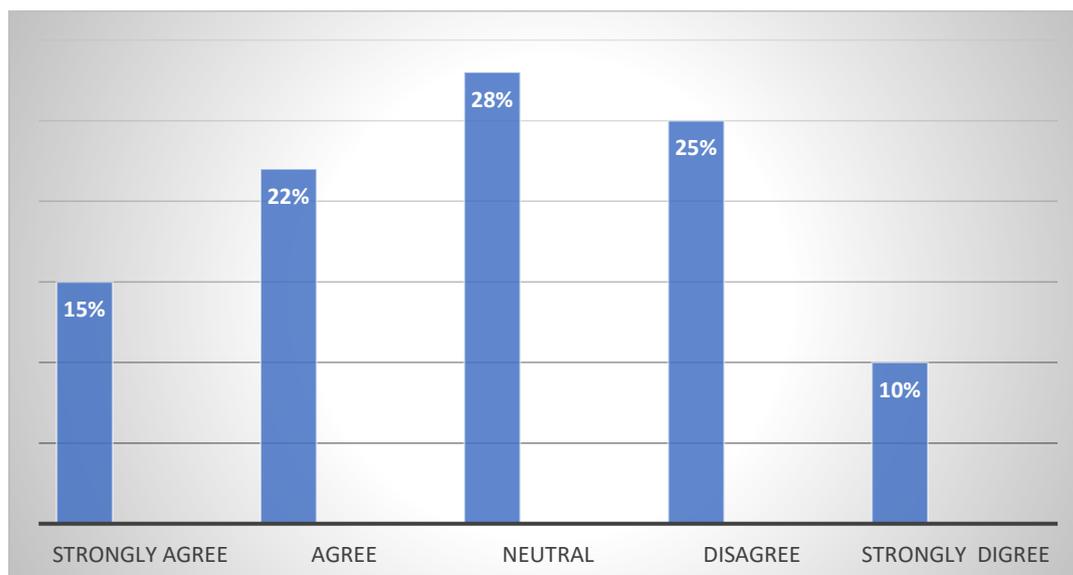


Figure 7. The teacher asks open ended questions.

In figure 7, 15 students were a strongly about their teachers ask open ended questions, 23 were agree while 27 were neutral about the use of open-ended questions, 25 disagreed that their teachers use open ended questions, 10 were strongly disagree.

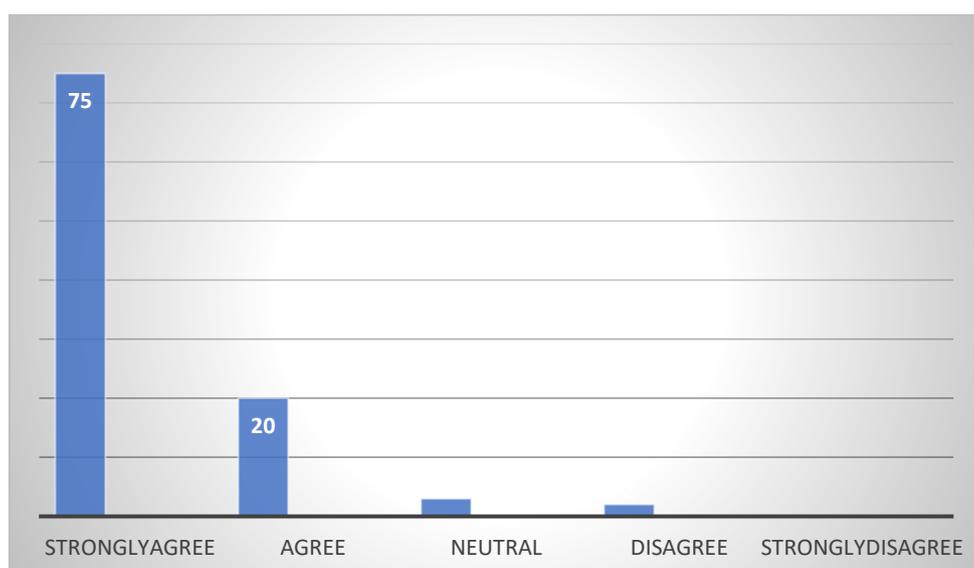


Figure 8. Questions asked by the teachers encourage critical thinking rather than short answers.

In figure 8, 75 students were a strongly about their teachers' questions, 20 were agree while 3 were neutral about the use of critical thinking questions, 2 disagreed that their teachers use critical thinking questions, none were strongly disagree.

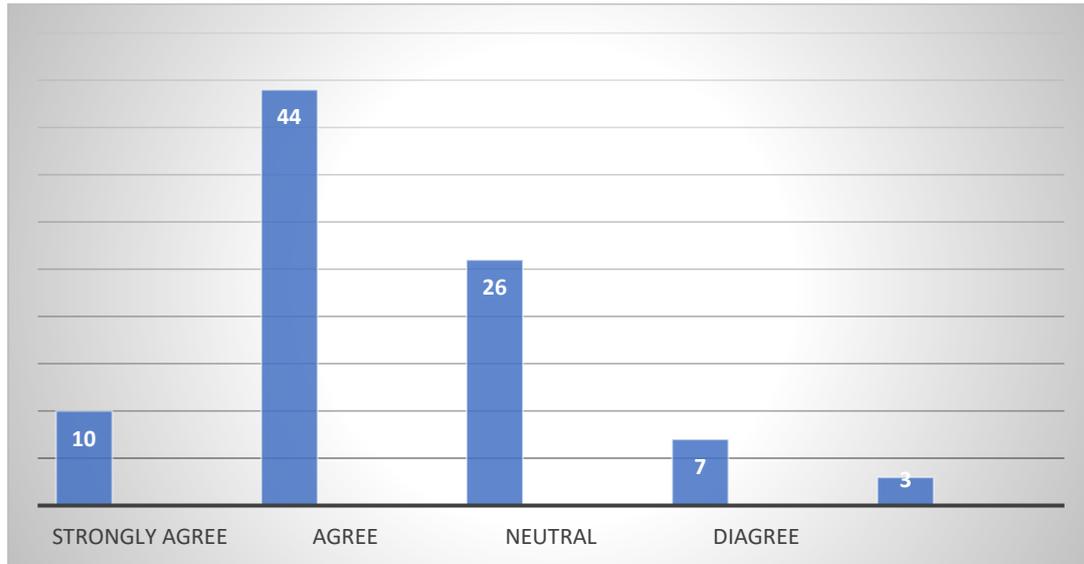


Figure 9. Students are allowed to self-correct or peer-correct their mistakes.

In figure 9, 10 students were a strongly agree about the they correct their mistakes, 44 were agree while 26 were neutral about the way they correct their mistakes, 7 disagreed that they correct their mistakes, 3 were strongly disagree.

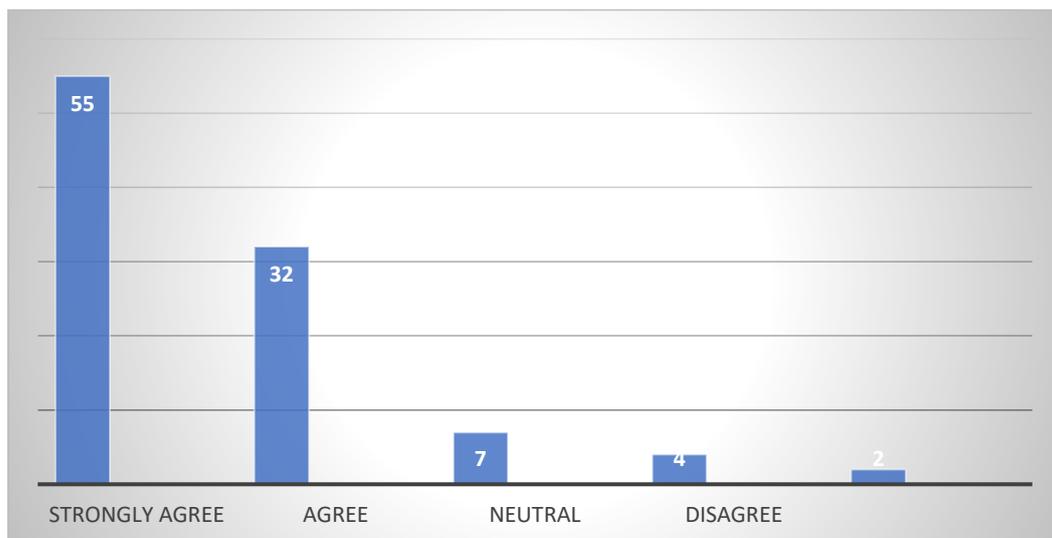


Figure 10. Pair and group work activities are regularly used.

Students are allowed to self-correct or peer-correct their mistakes

In figure 10, 55students were a strongly agree about the ability of using pair and group activities, 32 were agree while 7 were neutral about the using of group works, 4 disagreed that they are asked to work in groups or in pairs, 2 were strongly disagree.

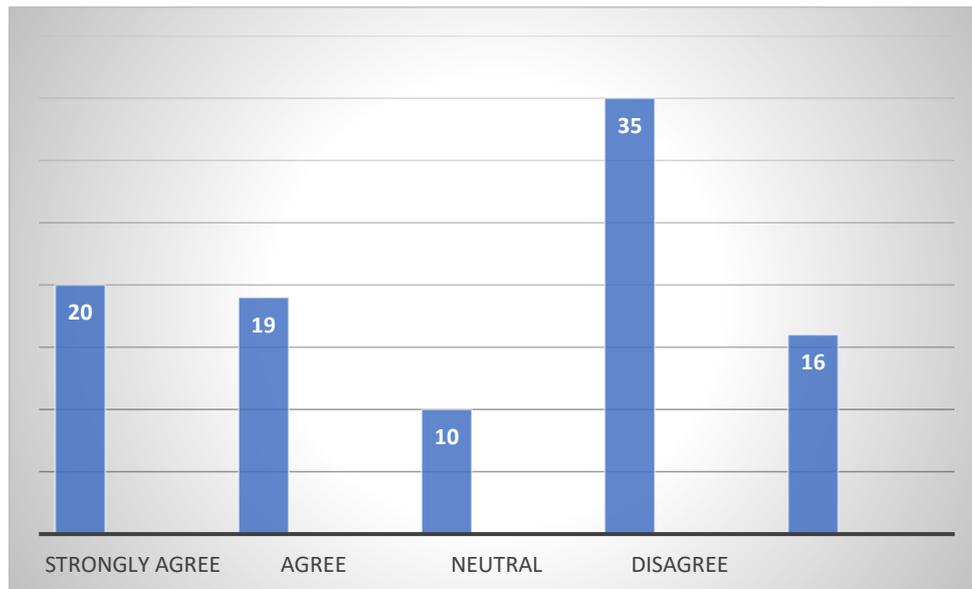


Figure11. The teachers feedback encourages students to continue participating in class.

In figure 11, 20 students were a strongly agree about the teachers feedback that encourage them to continue, 19 were agree while 10 were neutral about the teachers' feedback, 35 disagreed that they are encouraged to continue, 16 were strongly disagree.

3.3.3 Teacher Interview Analysis:

10 teachers were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. The qualitative responses revealed.

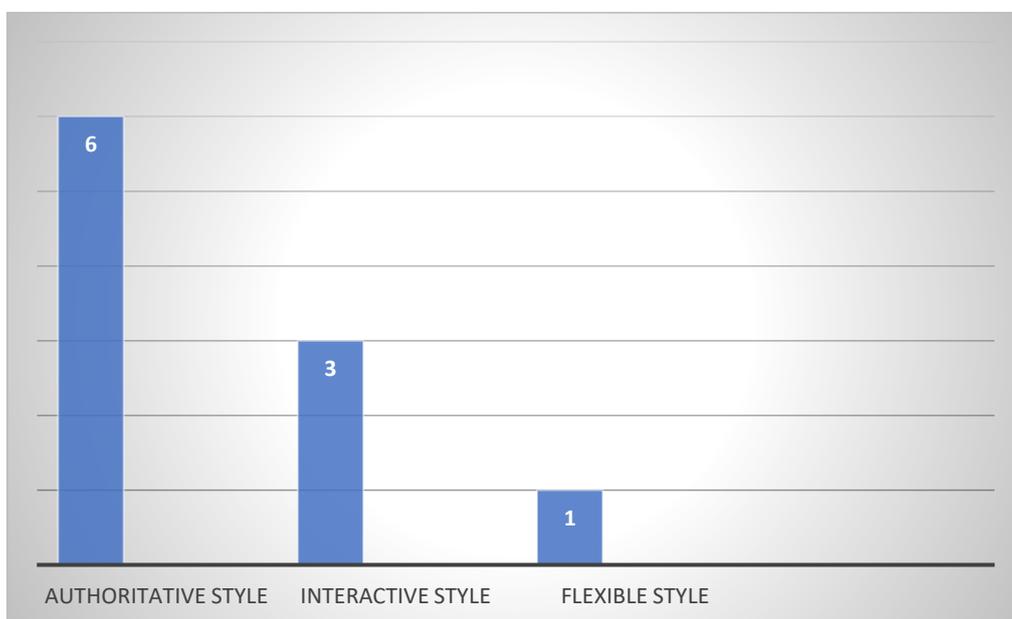


Figure 12. Preferred style.

The analysis of teachers' preferred interaction styles reveals that the authority style is the most dominant among the participants. As shown in the results, ten teachers indicated a

preference for an authority-oriented teaching style. This finding suggests that majority of the teachers tend to maintain strong control over classroom interaction.

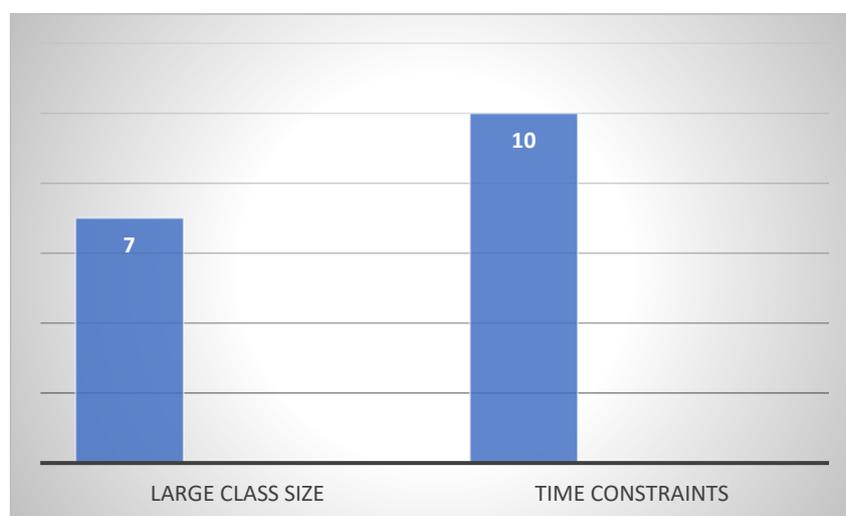


Figure 13. Challenges faced by teachers

3.4 Result and Discussion

Research findings:

This chapter synthesizes the results of the study to provide a clearer understanding of the interaction styles adopted by EFL teachers and how these are perceived by students. The findings are drawn from the triangulated analysis of three main tools: student questionnaires, classroom observations, and teacher interviews.

The results of the questionnaire:

- 1- Teacher-centered interaction still dominates that 80% of students agreed that teachers dominate classroom talk.
- 2- Limited use of group and pair work, only 35% of students agreed that they regularly participated in group/pair work.
- 3- Interaction style is often display-driven, in 9 out of 10 classrooms the majority of questions asked were display questions.
- 4- Praise and motivation vary greatly, 73% of students agreed that teachers use praise and motivation.
- 5- Teachers are aware of interactive methods but face barriers. 80% of teachers cited external constraints like curriculum demands, class size and time pressure.

The results of classroom observation:

Classroom observations were conducted to investigate teachers' classroom interaction styles and the nature of teacher-student interaction during EFL lessons. The observations reveal noticeable variations in interaction patterns; however, several dominant trends were identified across the observed classrooms.

The findings showed that relied heavily on explanation, instruction, and correction, while students' opportunities for extended oral participation were limited.

The results of semi-structured interviews with teachers:

Most teachers reported that they believed classroom interaction was essential for language learning. Several teachers stated that excessive student talk might lead to noise.

The interview results revealed a gap between teachers' beliefs about the importance of interaction and their actual classroom practices.

CHAPTER FOUR CONCLUSION

4.1 Introduction:

This chapter presents the final conclusions of the study and directly answers the research questions. It also offers pedagogical implications, recommendations for teaching practice, and suggestions for future research. The data showed that the most commonly used interaction style is teacher-centered or authoritative. Students generally recognized that teachers control classroom talk and limit opportunities for open interaction.

The main challenges identified by the teachers include:

- 1- Large class sizes that make interaction hard to manage.
- 2- Limited time and pressure to complete exam-based syllabi.
- 3- Student passivity, especially among shy or less proficient learners.
- 4- Lack of training in student-centered methods.

4.2 Pedagogical Implications:

- 1- Professional development program should help teachers apply interactive teaching strategies, especially in large or exam-driven classrooms.
- 2- Schools should promote smaller class sizes. Where possible, to support more student engagement.
- 3- Teachers should aim to balance structure with student involvement, incorporating pair work, role plays, and open-ended questions.

4.3 Recommendations:

- 1- Future studies could explore how technology might enhance interaction in EFL classrooms.
- 2- Studies should also focus on student strategies for participating in teacher-centered classrooms

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Compliance with ethical standards*Disclosure of conflict of interest*

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