Teacher Online Talk: Scale Development and Validation in English Language Teaching Context

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Abstract

The development of online teaching drives ELT researcher to design valid and reliable scales to assess the effectiveness of online teaching. There were two important aims of the study – to develop and to validate the practice of teacher's online talk and to introduce a comprehensive account of online talk constructs primarily used to ELT context. An analysis based on some relevant literature review and the theme of teacher talk under the online context was applied as basic consideration of developing the design on teacher online talk. As results, a valid and reliable result of teacher online talk instrument was developed. Pilotting the instrument was done involving 239 ELT teachers and for final valiadation the scale was rated by ELT practitioner. The validation process of the online talk scale was also applied using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. The results revealed that four constructed category and the 22-developed items were meaningful to teacher, practitioners, candidate of teachers as well as effectiveness indication of teacher online talk.

Keywords: ELT teacher, online talk, perceptions, scale development, EFL student

Introduction

The topic of teacher talk that was popular among scholars in 1990 to 2017 received less attention in the current era of information and technology. This is due in part to the shift in traditional learning models into internet-based learning models such as e-learning and blended / hybrid learning. If at first EFL teachers were considered as 'source of knowledge' as well as 'an idol' because of their ability to manage classroom communication and talk in the teaching and learning process or 'charisma' but with the shifting model of internet-based learning, these factors began to fade due to the face-to-face process began to decrease with the emergence of a blended-based learning model. Further, in the teaching and learning model that implements full e-learning mode has made it impossible for face-to-face learning to occur, so that face-to-face teacher talks must experience a shift to become teacher online talk and text.

Teacher talk and teacher online talk are two terms that literally have some similarities and differences. In the context of traditional face-to-face ELT teaching, teacher talk is basically defined as an effort of ELT teachers' teaching abilities to manage and control the use of target language, and language awareness. It also covers the language that is used to talk to students (Khany & Malmir, 2017; Kumaravadivelu, 2006). But in the context of e-learning, the definition of teacher talk also adapts to the context of online learning become teacher online talk. Then, it can be similarly defined as ELT teachers' efforts to manage and control language use, language awareness, and language used to talk to learners through electronic media such as teleconferencing, video material, and other similar media. Meanwhile, teacher-text is a non-verbal electronic message applied by the ELT teachers to interact with their learners through electronic media in the form of written messages.

Research on teacher talks has been documented remarkable issues on learners' language skills, classroom interaction, motivation, native and non-native comparisons, and learning output (Bristol, 2014; Ernst-Slavit, & Mason, 2011; Muñoz, 2017; Pogue & AhYun, 2006; Walsh, 2002). The focus of these studies was investigating the activities of EFL teachers during their classroom talks and look at whether the quantity and quality of the teacher talks have impacted the aforementioned variables or not. Most of the studies illustrated the positive impact of teacher talks in the traditional face-to-face classroom setting. Pedagogical merits of teacher talks, concepts, teaching practices also echoed from the previous studies. Given the significance of classroom teacher talks, EFL teachers need to enhance their understanding and to reflect the reflective practices of their talks during classroom teaching practices. Accordingly, the availability of teacher talks instrument deems necessary to assess, report, and follow up the quality of EFL teacher talk.

When we discuss teacher talk assessment tools, we will find many different types of assessment tools because scholars design and develop their instruments using different perspective and dimensions (Kim and Elder, 2005; Khany & Malmir, 2017; Walsh, 2003). However, with the shifting of the learning model from classroom-based teaching to online-based teaching, automatically several dimensions of the assessment instrument tolls will also change, so it is necessary to develop teacher online talk and text instruments which are relevant to current online teaching context.

Accordingly, to extend and to fullfil for lack of an assessment instrument of the English language teaching (ELT) teacher online talk and text in terms of its main functions that has already existed, the present study was intended to develop and validate an ELT teacher online talk and text functional scale. Regarding to the description above, two research questions were proposed as follows:
1. What theory is used underlying of the teacher online talk?
2. To what extend the developed an assessment scale can be used to assess the effectiveness of ELT teacher online talk?

Literature Review

The concepts of teacher talks were proposed in the Self Evaluation of Teacher Talk scale (SETT) by Walsh (2003) and English Language Teacher Talk Functional Scale (TTFS) by Khany and Malmir (2017). These two grids, SETT and TTFS were mainly developed based on the social constructivist framework of learning initiated by Vygotsky (1980) and sociocultural theory of language learning by Lantolf (2000). Walsh (2003) defined SETT in terms of four modes: 1) managerial mode, 2) materials mode, 3) skills and system mode, and 4) classroom context mode. All these four modes are specifically measured by two main features. They are pedagogical and interactional features. Using some theoretical frameworks proposed by Kumaravadivelu (1999) and Ellis (1999), he criticizes the existence of teacher talking time which is currently still used by some researchers. In his critics, he mentions that teacher talking time becomes meaningless when it is viewed from the quality of teacher talks (Kumaravadivelu, 1999). His idea comes up as the teacher has a vital role in maintaining classroom communicative competence.

In a classroom instructional setting, the SETT proposed by Walsh (2003) provides a broader horizon towards measuring the quality of classroom teacher talks and classroom interaction as well. Some pedagogical features from the four modes like organizing physical learning environment, eliciting oral responses, corrective feedback, and promoting oral fluency become vital features in the classroom instructional context. However, with the changes in teaching mode from classroom based-teacher talk into online based-teaching mode eliminates those essential features. Teacher verbal language model, fluency, pronunciation, intonation, physical arrangement, oral feedback, and some other essential features of classroom communicative competence need to be adjusted in online teaching mode. In online teaching mode, teacher talk will no longer exist and it will be replaced by the existence of teacher online talk in the form of a teacher–talks such as video, audio, or even teacher e-text.

Another study of teacher talk proposed by Khany and Malmir (2017), initiate an English Language Teacher Talk Functional Scale (TTFS) that is designed specifically for assessing teacher talk in the English language teaching context. Different from their predecessors, they propose three essential components of EFL teacher talk, namely: 1) representational EFL teacher talk 2) interactional function of EFL teacher talk, and 3) rapport-building of EFL teacher talk. Different from Walsh's (2003), Khany and Malmir (2017) view the quality of EFL teacher talk from linguistics and comprehensible input for their first component. They also include the roles of scaffolding, engagement and interaction within the second component of EFL teacher talk. In the third component of EFL teacher talk, they involve positive classroom atmosphere, motivating tone speech as part of vital elements of it.

By looking at the development of online instructional context, some of the elements proposed by Khany and Malmir (2017) need to be evaluated following the shift of teaching modes. From the first EFL teacher talk component, for example, some indicators like exposing EFL learners to accurate and natural pronunciation, and organizing physical environment are considered less relevant in an online instructional context since the online teaching was dominated by written exposures. Meanwhile, in the second component of EFL teacher talk such as creating classroom chances to use target language to conduct interaction is also hard to apply in the online teaching model. Furthermore, the last component such as establishing and maintaining friendly classroom rapport is another point that needs to be adjusted within the online learning mode.

The above previous studies describe an instrument used to assess the ELT teacher talk delivery quality that is traditional classroom teaching, rendering several aspects which are found in the aforementioned instrument as the main reason of conducting the present study. However, in assessing teacher online talk it needs more different characteristics that are significantly different including the use of technical computer skills, online learning management, and interaction qualities that, indeed, were absent from the above two studies. The current paper reviews some dimensions or factors to be involved in determining the concept of teacher online talk. The factors identified in this paper are based on the ideas taken from SETT framework proposed by Walsh (2003), Khany and Malmir (2017) and Lewis & Abdul-Hamid (2006). The factors gained from the aforementioned theories above are, then, used as a tentative concept of a scale for assessing ELT teacher online talk developed as the aim this research. The following table

illustrated the tentative theoretical conceptualization of ELT teacher online talk developed in this study.

Table 1. Tentative conceptual framework of ELT teacher online talk

Component and sub-component of EFL teacher online talk
• **Fostering online interaction**
To promote dynamic online interaction between teacher and learners
To promote dynamic online interaction among learners
To provide learners online chance to learn with and from their peers collaboratively
To promote a higher level of understanding through online scaffolding
To provide online input talk modification and elaboration
To provide learners with good English model in the target language
To stimulate online friendly interaction and communication patterns
To establish online interaction between learners and online course material
To increase the frequency of online interaction with peers
• **Providing online feedback**
To provide learners' relevant individual feedback
To provide online prompt feedback on learners online contributions and tasks
To provide online substantive feedback on learners online contributions and task
To provide interesting and stimulating online feedback
• **Facilitating online learning**
To reiterate the course objectives through online learning
To establish helpful guidance in online discussion
To encourage learners to develop new concepts or ideas through online activities
To help learners actively participate in productive dialogue
To enable all learners to have opportunity to involves themselves in online dialogue with an expert
To facilitate learners online learning collaboration
• **Maintaining online enthusiasm**
To create well-organized and interactive online classes that are joyful and manageable
To build learners' confidence in the online discussion forum
To appreciate learners' online learning progress
To establish and maintain a friendly online learning atmosphere
To control learners' frustration in online learning activities and task
To build learners' learning enjoyment

Method

Contexts and Participants

The present study involved English lecturers and ELT practitioners to dig out their views about teacher online talk and text comprehensively.Those views, later, were used as a conceptual means to validate the instrument. That is why, four English lecturers and two ELT practitioners from three different universities who were teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate programs were purposively selected to be interviewed and observed. The representativeness of the four ELT teachers (participants) was considered in terms of

gender (2 male and 2 female), online teaching experience (3-5 years), age (35-50 years old), English proficiency level, and (4 PhD) degree (Khany & Malmir, 2017). This was conducted to get insights on the essential issues related to the development of teacher online talks and text in ELT online teaching contexts.

Besides English lecturers and practitioners, EFL learners who took online courses under the English education/literature department from three universities in Indonesia were involved as participants. There were two ways of distributing the total of 250 questionnaires distributed by either paper or email at the end of the online learning courses. A sample of 239 (95.6%) responses was obtained from undergraduate EFL students who attended either blended learning or e-learning course. Each of the EFL students was asked to describe him/herself in reference to a 5-point Likert-scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Regarding the gender, the responded were classified into more female respondents (169, 70.7%) than male respondents (70, 29.3%). Regarding the course taken, 86 (35.98%) participants were from the reading course, 92 (38.49%) participants were from introduction to quantitative and qualitative research in ELT, and 61 (25.52%) participants were from intro to literature.

The three online courses surveyed in this study were part of blended learning courses with both synchronous (direct online communication and discussion) and asynchronous (online quizzes, assignments, teachers and students responses, and comments which were not directly responded) formats. Three courses were all compulsory subjects so that students had to enrol in the four online meetings and twelve traditional classroom meetings (by considering there are sixteen meetings in one semester). Before taking the online course, students would already have been informed both the online and traditional course formats through blended lesson plan made by the EFL teachers. Thus, they would be able to prepare and adjust their schedule concerning the online course format. The online course format was implemented via the Moodle learning management system.

Data Collection Procedures

Online learning observations of 4 ELT teachers from English education/literature department from seven different universities who implemented blended/hybrid and on-line learning were conducted by participating the courses. To gain more comprehensible data about the teachers' insights dealing with the features of ELT teacher online talk and text those 4 ELT teachers were also interviewed. The significant factors were generated following four syntaxes introduced by Khany and Malmir (2017). The four syntaxes which were drawn during the study involved richness, appropriateness, effectiveness and the quality of teacher online talk and text. Other participants to be interviewed were 2 university professors or teacher educators in which they were experts in education. Interviewing these two experts were intended to dig out their opinions on, in general, teacher online talk and text and particularly ELT teacher online talk and text. In addition, the newly developed teacher online talk and text functional scale used in this study was an observational scale using a Likert scale assessing the main features of ELT teacher online talk and text to which both the teacher online talk and text are effective in terms of their empirically accepted specific features adapted from Khany and Malmir (2017).

Finally, to draw EFL learner perceptions on the developed teacher online talk and text functional scale and for the final validation of the scale, 239 EFL students (161 female and 78 male) who attended online courses as part of the blended learning courses were asked to fill the questionnaire.

Results and Discussion

The first step of this developmental study was developing a framework of theory about teacher online talk representing the context-specific features of teacher online talk in English language context. This theoretical framework was useful to generate of 22 potential items for the online talk scale. Table 2 depicts the series of online talk items within the component of the theoretical underpinning of the study. The reliability measure using the Cronbach's alpha indicated that the reliability of the 22 items questionnaire was .76, which arrives at a satisfactory coefficient level. Also, an exploratory and a confirmatory factor analysis test were applied to test the construct validity of the newly developed online talk scale in terms of its fundamental construction and classification (Brown, 2015; Khany and Malmir, (2017).

Table 2 Number of items in each component of teacher online talk scale

The dimension of teacher online talk	Items
Fostering online interaction	9
Providing online feedback	5
Facilitating online learning	6
Maintaining online enthusiasm	5
Total	22

The results of the exploratory factor analysis revealed the existence of four factors unlike the tentative conceptual framework of online teacher talks which were presented in Table 1 with the four factors comprising 59%. A number of confirmatory factor analysis was also applied using constant factors ranging from two to eight to find the most acceptable results. Based on the confirmatory factor analysis using Varimax patterns, it was found that the best model of loading factor matrix was the four-factor model constituted 64% of the total variance (Table 3). Further, the KMO and Bartlett's test of Spericity for the four factors was 0.76 (p<.05) which described that the original components were significantly correlated although there were some amendments of the items proposed on the aforementioned conceptual framework. Consequently, the changes led to a few alterations in the original conceptual framework as depicted in Table 4.

Table 3. Matrix of teacher online talk scale

Item no	Item dimension	Factors
1	Teacher and learner online interaction	.49
2	Learners' online interaction	.56
3	Online collaborative opportunity	.47

		Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
4	Higher-order thinking	.52			
5	Online input elaboration	.48			
6	Teacher's online English model	.56			
7	Online interaction stimulation	.62			
8	Online course content interaction	.52			
9	Individual online feedback		.61		
10	Fast response feedback		.79		
11	Feedback focus		.82		
12	Feedback form		.72		
13	Course objective			.62	
14	Online discussion			.79	
15	Concept development			.77	
16	Productive online dialogue			.73	
17	Online participation opportunity			.67	
18	Joyful online learning				.68
19	Learner's confidence				.77
20	Online progress				.74
21	Interactive online learning				.62
22	Frustration control				.62

Based on the obtained results from the factor analysis and in order to achieve adequate reliability of the scale, three items were discarded from the 25-item instrument. Under the three different components of online interaction, facilitating online learning, and maintaining online enthusiasm, items of 'to increase the frequency of online interaction with peers', 'to facilitate learners online learning collaboration', and to build learners' learning enjoyment' were deleted from the instrument. The deletions of the three above items would improve the Cronbach's alpha coefficient into .84 (appendix A). These changes did not alter the construct validity of the teacher online talk scale (TOTS).

Table 4.

Finalized teacher online talk Instrument
Fostering online interaction (factor 1): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Providing online feedback (factor 2): 9, 10, 11, 12
Facilitating online learning (factor 3): 13, 14, 15, 16, 17
Maintaining online enthusiasm (factor 4): 18, 19, 20, 22

These items were the finalized scale for assessing teacher online talks, the deliberative features of teacher online talk cover four categories such as fostering interaction, online feedback, facilitating learner and online enthusiasm.

Table 5 illustrates the mean and standard deviation (SD) derived from the participants' ratings in each of the components and the whole of the teacher online talks scale developed from the study. The participants' ratings were then calculated using five Likert's scale ranged from 1 *very little* and 5 *very much*.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of teacher online talks scale

The dimension of teacher online talk	Items	Mean	SD
Fostering online interaction	9	92.24	11.27
Providing online feedback	5	60.35	10.70
Facilitating online learning	6	17.97	5.19
Maintaining online enthusiasm	5	59.48	9.72
Total	22	186,62	17,58

As mention previously, the teacher online talk items generation process was partly initiated by Walsh (2003) and Khany and Malmir (2017). The developed items, however, were generated based on several vital components of teacher online talks which cover the use of teacher online talks to foster interaction, feedback, facilitate learning and maintain online enthusiasm. Based on the observed factors, it can be critically argued that the main objectives of teacher online talks are to foster learners' online learning interaction quality, enthusiasm, online learning activities, and online feedback in which it was quite different from the previous study conducted by Khany and Malmir (2017) which emphasizes four important components of teacher talk within the traditional classroom context, such as managerial, material, skills and system through the use of language classroom. Since its inexistence, the language classroom was replaced by the emergence of online learning. Some important features such as the role of the teacher as manager and rapport building in terms of personality traits or 'teacher's aura' (in the traditional classroom context) would automatically be replaced by online teaching activities such as teacher online text and talk which focus mainly on learners' learning improvement. Teacher's sense of humour, friendliness was also difficult to find within the online learning context. These findings were also echoed from Arifani, Khaja, Suryanti, and Wardhono (2019). From the online learning survey they conducted to the blended learning context, they found out that students could not find teachers' sense of humour in online learning. These results strengthen the development of teacher online talks to claim the elimination of building rapport from Khany and Malmir (2017).

Next, what is missing in Walh's (2003) and by Khany and Malmir (2017) SETT and STTFS is the teacher-learner rapport which has the highest contribution to learners' motivation but through this study, it was replaced by the quality of online interaction using online texting and talks. If motivation is established using rapport building between teacher and learner, in the online talks this category is established through online learning activities and interesting online feedback.

The category which remains between the newly developed and the previous one proposed by Khany and Malmir (2017) refers to the interaction category. The proposed eight sub-categories of interactional dimension were used for measuring the effectiveness of teacher talk under the traditional ELT instruction. **Their concept discussed how ELT teachers made use of their classroom language as meaningful input and exposures for the learners through language simplification, verbal language modelling, oral stress and fluency. However, within the online talks some elements of the interaction were amended, such as oral fluency could only be used through video and online conferencing so that some of the sub-categories were modified and altered into written language modelling, *the accuracy of the written message*.** Some of the similar sub-categories like language simplification used by the ELT teachers in online talk and

text is still maintained for the purpose of learners' comprehension. Regarding the use of simplification, Siegel (2019) and Allen (2009) points out that this strategy is considered as an effective way to make learners easy to understand the message from the teachers. Therefore, these results put this simplification as one of the sub-categories of online interaction.

Similar findings echoed from the present study is that the feedback category remain exists within the teacher online talk discussion. One of the reasons is the vital role of feedback asserted by several ELT expert is to reflect towards learners' comprehension toward executed the learning activities. Therefore, it is vital to put feedback into teacher online talk scale. If the feedback in the previous scale proposed by Khany and Malmir (2017) refers to classroom feedback, in this study feedback is narrowed into the online feedback which consists of several essential sub-categories such as quality of feedback, promptness, content, and format. Further, a new insight of feedback was put into this study namely interesting and stimulating online feedback which was absent from the previous scale. This aims to assess the effectiveness of ELT teacher online talk in implementing effective feedback in the online learning activities and to keep up learners' spirit and motivation when the feedback is appropriate to their needs. Regarding this point, Lee (2008) argued that feedback from ELT teachers could influence students' learning motivation and response. Further, he claims that positive feedbacks would cause a positive impact on the learners. Consequently, this addition benefitted ELT teachers to assess their ability in promoting online feedback for their learners.

Conclusion

The shifting of ELT instruction from traditional teaching into online instruction brings consequences towards the alteration of teaching effectiveness in the traditional model and the effectiveness of teaching in an online context. The present study aimed at developing and validating a teacher online talk scale. The rating of teacher, practitioners, learners, and scores received by ELT teachers indicated that the developed items and the conceptualization of the category and construct were meaningful to teachers, practitioners, and candidate of ELT teachers to assess their effectiveness of online talk activities. It was generate four main underlying dimensions of teacher online talk, namely fostering online interaction, providing online feedback, facilitating online learning, and maintaining online enthusiasm.

Meaningful and practical pedagogical implications were also echoed from this study. First, this teacher online talk scale can be used as an instrument to develop teachers' reflective practices to portray ELT teachers teaching strengths and weaknesses. Second, this scale can also be used as an instrument for the teacher for the sake of teacher recruitments and remedial teaching mirrored from teacher online talk.

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Appendix A
Teacher Online Talk Scale

Dear colleague
The aim of this observational instrument is to assess the effectiveness of teacher online talk in of English Language Teaching (ELT) contexts. This scale is applied as an instrument for providing feedback to ELT teachers and ELT teachers' candidate on their online teaching practices.

Name : _____
Age : _____
Gender : _____
Length on online teaching : _____
Degree : _____
Students' level : _____
Students' age : _____

Please read each item carefully and indicate the extent to which each item is true about the online talk of the ELT teachers you are observing. Strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), moderate (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5)

N	Questions	1	2	3	4	5
	Fostering online interaction					
1	The teacher promotes dynamic online interaction between teacher and learners					
2	The teacher promotes dynamic online interaction among learners					
3	The teacher provides learners online opportunity to learn from and with their peers collaboratively					
4	The teacher promotes higher level of understanding through online scaffolding					
5	The teacher provides online input talk modification and elaboration					
6	The teacher provides learners with good English model in the target language					

7	The teacher stimulates online friendly interaction and communication patterns					
8	The teacher establishes online interaction between learners and online course material					
Providing online feedback						
9	The teacher provides learners' relevant individual feedback					
10	The teacher provides online prompt feedback on learners online contributions and tasks					
11	The teacher provides online substantive feedback on learners online contributions and task					
12	The teacher provides interesting and stimulating online feedback					
Facilitating online learning						
13	The teacher reiterates the course objectives through online learning					
14	The teacher establishes helpful guidance in online discussion					
15	The teacher encourages learners to develop new concepts or ideas through online activities					
16	The teacher helps learners actively participate in productive dialogue					
17	The teacher enables all learners the opportunity to participate online dialogue with an expert					
Maintaining online enthusiasm						
18	The teacher creates well-organized and interactive classes are joyful and manageable					
19	The teacher builds learners' confidence in the online discussion forum					
20	The teacher appreciates learners' online learning progress					
21	The teacher establishes and maintain a friendly online learning atmosphere					
22	The teacher controls learners' frustration in online learning activities and tasks					

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