

# A Survey of English Teacher Talk in Junior High School Based on the SETT Framework

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**Abstract:** In foreign language teaching, teacher talk is not only a medium used to impart knowledge and manage classrooms, but also an important source of comprehensible input for students. The Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk (SETT) framework proposed by Walsh provides a new approach for the study of teacher talk. Therefore, this study applies the SETT framework to the research of English teacher talk in junior high school, aiming to discover the typical interactional features of English teacher talk in junior high school and put forward some suggestions for the teachers, hoping to facilitate them to use the SETT framework for self-evaluation and other-evaluation of teacher talk.

**Keywords:** SETT framework; Teacher talk; Junior high school English; Interaction modes; Interactional feature

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## 1. Introduction

According to the English Curriculum Standards for Senior High School, the professional level of teachers is the key to the effective implementation of English curriculum. In 2006, Steve Walsh first proposed the Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk (SETT) framework in his book *Investigating Classroom Discourse* in 2006, which includes four interaction modes and fourteen interactional features.<sup>[1]</sup> Each interaction mode contains specific pedagogic goals and micro-contexts of interactional features.

The core content of SETT consists of two parts, one is the macro-level four types of interaction modes (managerial mode, materials mode, skills and systems mode, and classroom context mode).<sup>[2]</sup> The other part is the teaching objectives and interactional features of the four modes.

Therefore, based on Walsh's SETT framework, this study attempts to conduct research on junior high school English classes, identify and analyze teacher talk in different junior high school English classes, and explore their interaction modes and interactional features.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Research question and subject

This research selected the teaching videos from the Excellent Course Evaluation Activity of junior high school English in Jiangsu Province in 2023. It analyzed teacher talk under four classes (reading, grammar, integrated skills, writing) in junior high school.

The research question is: What are the typical interactional features of English teacher talk in junior high school under each interaction mode based on the SETT framework?

After selecting the basic sample, it was divided into four levels in the same unit (reading, grammar, integrated skills, task), and stratified random sampling was used to select one from each of the four levels. Four English classes were identified, each with a class time of about 40 minutes, for a total of 160 minutes, which together constituted the group of subjects of this study.

### 2.2 Research method and procedure

In order to better solve the research problem, this study used the method of classroom observation macroscopically. After obtaining the text of teacher talk, it used the microgenetic method<sup>[3]</sup> and conversation analysis, and analyzed the discourse text with the help of relevant research tools.

First, the author collected the competition videos of four classes. In the case of ensuring authenticity and validity, this study used "Iflytek software" to transcribe text. On the basis of machine transcription, the author revised the text several times until the final draft. Walsh adapted the transcription system of van Lier (1988) and Johnson (1995) during his work on the SETT framework.<sup>[4]</sup> So this study referred to Walsh's text transcription system (see Table 1).

**Table 1 Text Transcription Instructions**

code	meaning
T:	teacher
L:	learner (not identified)
L1, L2, etc.:	identified learner
LL:	several learners at once or the whole class
/ok/ok/ok	overlapping or simultaneous utterances by more than one learner
[do you understand?] [I see]	overlapping between teacher and learner
=	turn continues, or one turn follows another without any pause.
...	pause of one second or less marked by three periods.
(4)	silence, length given in seconds
?	rising intonation-question or other
!	emphatic speech: falling intonation
((4))	unintelligible 4 seconds a stretch of unintelligible speech with the length given in seconds
Paul, Peter, Mary	capitals are only used for proper nouns
T organizes groups	Editor's comments (job bold type)

Based on the teaching objectives of the four interaction modes proposed by Walsh, the author preliminarily determined the interaction modes to which each teacher's turn belongs, and used the four interaction modes as first-level nodes in NVivo. So the managerial mode was encoded as A, the materials mode as B, the skills and systems mode as C, and the classroom context mode as D. In the process of analyzing the teacher talk, this research used the teacher's turn as the basic segmentation unit. If there are signals of other interaction modes or interactional features in the middle of a teacher's turn, the sub-segmentation of the turn is performed. That is to say, a new line in the text will be started in the middle of a teacher's turn to clarify the boundaries between interaction modes.

In order to clearly describe the performance of each interaction mode and to verify whether the encoding of the above interaction modes is accurate, the author encoded the interactional features of the four interaction modes according to Walsh's detailed description of the interactional features in the SETT framework, and the interactional features were used as secondary nodes in NVivo (see Table 2)<sup>[5]</sup>.

**Table 2 Coding of the Interactional Features**

Interaction mode (primary node)	Interaction mode coding	Interactional features (secondary node)	Interactional features coding
Managerial	A	teacher using explanatory or instructional language for extended periods of time	a1
		transitional discourse markers	a2
		doing a confirmation check	a3
		lack of learner discourse contribution (a co-occurrence feature and not encoded)	
Materials	B	IRF structure	b1
		displayed questions	b2
		form-focused feedback	b3
		corrective repair	b4
		scaffolding	b5
Skills and systems	C	direct repair	c1
		scaffolding	c2
		extended teacher turn	c3
		displayed questions	c4
		teacher echo	c5
		seeking clarification	c6
		form-focused feedback	c7
Classroom context	D	extended learner turn	d1
		short teacher turn	d2
		minimum correction	d3
		content feedback	d4
		referential questions	d5
		scaffolding	d6
		seeking clarification	d7

After encoding, the individual analysis of the text about the teacher talk in four classes was conducted one by one, mainly including the individual analysis of the interaction modes and the individual analysis of the interactional features.

Finally, it explored the typical interactional features of English teacher talk in junior high school and put forward some suggestions for the teachers.

### 3. Results and discussion

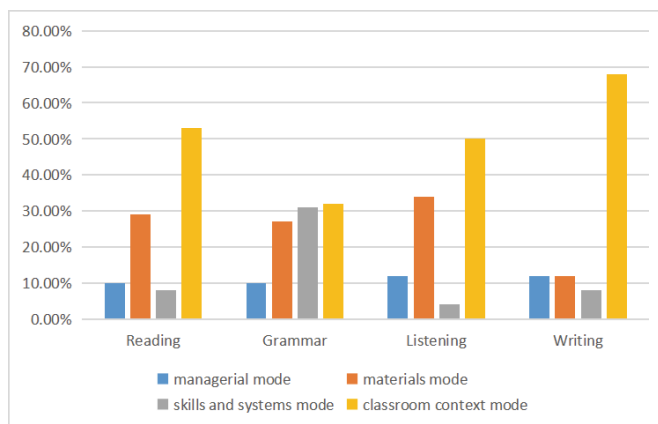
#### 3.1 The analysis of interaction mode

According to the data, the distribution of four interaction modes of four classes were drawn through the pie chart. After that, in order to make a comparison between the four classes, the average frequency of four modes in different classes is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3 The Average Frequency of Four Modes in Different Classes**

Interaction modes	reading	grammar	integrated skills	writing	average
Managerial mode	10.00%	10.00%	12.00%	12.00%	11.00%
Materials mode	29.00%	27.00%	34.00%	12.00%	25.50%
Skills and systems mode	8.00%	31.00%	4.00%	8.00%	12.75%
Classroom context mode	53.00%	32.00%	50.00%	68.00%	50.75%

The comparison use of four modes between different classes is shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1**

#### 3.2 The analysis of interactional features

It could be seen that the classroom interactions of four classes had the characteristics of stability in the use of materials mode and classroom context mode. And on the whole, the classroom context mode was used in different stages of teaching. Therefore, in the future teaching process, we should promote the stability of the classroom context mode, the stability of the independent use of the materials mode (meaning construction), and the stability of the intersection of skills and systems mode and other modes. In the process of different classroom generation, according to different teaching objectives, the four modes are “arbitrarily matched”, which is exactly a complete portrayal of “teaching indefinite methods”. But no matter how “indeterminate” the teachings are, they should all revolve around a common goal, which is known as the effective teaching. The use of different interaction modes should be based on the realization of specific teaching objectives under different classes.

#### 3.3 Typical interactional features

According to the data of the interactional features of the four classes, this thesis combined the interactional features proposed by Walsh to summarize the typical (most frequently used) interactional features of the current teacher talk in junior high school English, hoping to facilitate junior high school English teachers to use the SETT framework for self-evaluation and other-revaluation of teacher talk, which could be seen in the following table 4.

### 4. Conclusion

Using the SETT framework, the thesis has conducted the analysis about interaction modes and interactional features of teacher talk under different classes in junior high school. What’s more, this study provides a new framework of teacher talk, which can give some inspirations and suggestions for in-service and trainee teachers.

**Table 4**

Interaction mode	Typical interactional features
Managerial	teacher using explanatory or instructional language
	transitional discourse markers
	doing a confirmation check
Materials	displayed questions
	form-focused feedback
	scaffolding
Skills and systems	scaffolding
	extended teacher turn
	displayed questions
	seeking clarification
	form-focused feedback
Classroom context	minimum correction
	content feedback
	referential questions
	scaffolding
	seeking clarification

Teachers should pay attention to the important role of the evaluation of teacher talk in the development of personal professionalism. According to this research, the SETT framework can be used to analyze local teacher talk, so teachers can use the SETT framework in self-evaluation and other-evaluation of teacher talk, through which teachers can identify problems and conduct self-reflection to better improve their teaching ability.

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