Investigating the Nature of Interaction at Elementary and Intermediate EFL Classes

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Abstract—**Classroom research mainly concentrates on what happens in classrooms and tries to explore these events. One aspect that has been under investigation in this area is 'classroom interaction'. The current work was inspired by Kumaravadivelu's (2006) classification of interaction types: textual, interpersonal and ideational interaction. The main objective of the present study was to investigate the nature of interaction types proposed by Kumaravadivelu, the extent of their occurrence and their contribution to L2 development regarding two levels of Elementary and Intermediate. During data collection process, 20 sessions of EFL classes in a Language Institute were observed and the main events regarding the types of interaction under investigation were written in the form of field notes and audio-recorded for later reflection. The results were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The quantitative data from the observation were analyzed through inferential statistics. Qualitative analysis of data was carried out through transcription of important events. The quantitative results indicated that the difference between means of time spent on three types of interaction regarding two levels was not significant. For the qualitative analysis, the nature of these three types of interaction was compared based on two levels and some similarities and differences were found.**

Index Terms—**interaction, interaction analysis, textual interaction, interpersonal interaction, ideational interaction**

I. INTRODUCTION

Successful L2 learning and being able to communicate in target language both fluently and accurately have been one of the most significant parts of L2 learning for learners. The factors influencing this important goal of L2 learners have been under consideration for long and various areas have been under investigation. One of the main areas that has received much attention in recent years is 'Interaction analysis' in EFL classroom. The term 'interaction' according to Oxford Dictionary is defined as 'reciprocal action or influence'. Based on this definition, it can be concluded that, interaction is a two- way process. It happens when both sides of interaction are involved: The sender and the receiver. Although numerous factors are effective in efficient teaching and learning, it is claimed that real learning can occur to a great extent through the interaction that takes place between all participants in the classroom. However, Allwright & Bailey (2000, cited in Preston, 2010), claimed that classroom interaction can facilitate or hinder L2 development. According to this statement and as it was mentioned by Allwright and Bailey (1991), Management of interaction is considered as an important event due to its impact on management of learning. If it is managed tactfully in class context, it will lead to successful L2 outcome, while it will lead to an opposite result if it is not applied well. So, one of the fundamental problems in classroom interaction is that although EFL teachers may try to motivate learners to participate in classroom interaction and consequently provide a better opportunity for them through interaction to improve their target language, they sometimes fail to reach this goal and in many situations they are not able to foster learners who are competent in L2. It can be due to teachers' lack of knowledge toward the nature of different types of interaction that may occur in EFL classes, the extent of their contribution to L2 development, and the amount of time which is needed to be given to each type in different levels. Consequently, they may lack the ability to manage classroom interaction efficiently.

In this regard, the current research focused on the nature of EFL classroom interaction and its crucial role in L2 development. Although this investigation could be done through different perspectives, the current study has focused on Kumaravadivelu's (2006) point of view towards the nature of interaction. He suggested that in the context of classroom communication, we can speak of three types of interaction: textual interaction, interpersonal interaction, and ideational interaction. As he explained textual interaction is treated by most studies primarily as a textual activity in which learners and their interlocutors modify their speech phonologically, morphologically, lexically & syntactically in order to maximize chances of mutual understanding and minimize instances of communication breakdowns. So, textual activity

is preoccupied with linguistic aspects of interaction. Interpersonal interaction deals with interpersonal communication. It refers to the participants' potential to establish and maintain social relationships. Classroom community is considered as a mini society within a larger society. Interaction in this mini society is a social process with its own rules, regulations, & role relationships. Ideational interaction refers to an expression of one's self-identity based on one's experience of real and imaginary world in and outside the classroom. It focuses on ideas and emotions participants bring with them.

A. Literature Review

Allwright and Bailey (1991) defined classroom research as a, "research centered on the classroom, as distinct from research that concentrates on the inputs to the classroom or on the outputs from the classroom" (p. 2). Although this type of research does not deny the significance of inputs and outputs, it mainly focuses on what actually happens in the classroom and tries to explore these events. So, its main objective is to understand what really goes on in the classroom from different perspectives toward language learning and teaching. One aspect that has been under investigation in this area is 'classroom interaction'.

Interaction analysis was developed by the mid-1968s with the development of sociological investigations. Two factors were mentioned about the nature of this approach: first, an interest in the fact that learners' behaviors in EFL classrooms depend on the atmosphere and interaction with teachers. Second, the researchers in this approach have not concentrated on quantitative analysis although frequency measurement of behaviors can be implied as a quantitative one. They are more concerned with qualitative approaches such as the description of classroom behaviors with more subjective interpretations and focus on the process of EFL classrooms (Chaudron, 1988). This does not mean that researchers in this area ignore quantification but as Mackey and Gass (2005) asserted, although some researchers are not interested in quantification while conducting a qualitative research, others do not reject the use of numbers and statistics found in quantitative studies.

The nature of interaction in EFL classroom has been under investigation from different perspectives for long. Aubrey (2011) focused in his work on classroom conditions that enhances EFL students' willingness to communicate in English (WTC). He suggested that in order to facilitate classroom interaction, students with a high willingness to communicate who must be ready to interact with other students, have low anxiety while interaction, find the topic lesson personally relevant, etc. must be fostered. Related to the development of interaction in EFL classroom another study by Dagarin (2004) proposed that teachers can help students to develop their interaction skills and students themselves can apply various strategies to become effective communicators in a foreign language. He concluded that through different ways classroom interaction can be encouraged including taking a variety of roles by teachers, providing a variety of teacher and student talk in the classroom, using different activities for developing accuracy and fluency etc. Dukmak (2010) investigated the frequency, types of and reasons for both student-initiated and teacher-initiated interactions in relation to levels of students' academic achievement, their gender, special educational needs and disability. The results showed that in comparison with girls, boys initiated more interactions. Also high achieving students revealed more interaction than low achievers with different types of interaction. At the end he proposed that these differences are due to cultural factors and may vary in different studies. Another study in the area of interaction analysis was done by Jing and Yu-hong (2013). They focused on the amount of teacher talk and interaction, the type of teacher questions and teacher feedbacks, the amount and forms of meaning negotiation and their contribution to L2 development. Their findings revealed that teacher talk does not facilitate interaction. They also found that there is not much negotiation of meaning initiated by the teacher. Finally they proposed that to promote language learning, EFL teachers should cut down the amount of teacher talk, should pay attention to whether the types of questions and feedbacks that they give to the students lead to more students' responses. There was also an investigation on interaction strategies. The results revealed that four types of interaction strategies such as control of interaction or interaction management, elicitation or questioning, speech modification or feedback, and repairing or error treatment were used by master teachers. It proved that these strategies were able to promote interactive learning. So they are important in EFL classroom (Akhyar etal., 2014). Patterns of interaction have also been under investigation from various pints of view. Kharaghani (2013) focused on three types of interaction in EFL setting: Native speakers- Native speakers, Native speakers-Non-native speakers, Non-native speakers-Non-native speakers. The effectiveness of each type of interaction mentioned was under investigation. She claimed that although NNS-NNS interactions produce quantitative and qualitative input, output, and feedback, Ns-NNs types are more desirable. She suggested that teacher can use NNS-NNS group work. But they must avoid over reliance upon them. Another investigation into classroom interaction was done by concentrating on an EFL teacher's questioning behavior, the purpose of asking such questions and the kind of answers they provoked. It was concluded that coded/display and yes/no questions were used more than open/referential questions. And the answers were limited to just a single word or simple phrases. This result was claimed to be due to the proficiency level of students and inexperienced teachers in order to avoid circumstances under which they have to make complex structured sentences. Finally it was mentioned that although referential questions are more desirable, one cannot conclude that just referential questions are useful for language learning and display ones are not (Farahani, & Rezaee, 2012). Rahman (2014) conducted a research in the area of learning English through interaction in EFL classrooms. He limited it to two types of interaction called 'recast and repetition'. The results indicated that through interaction (repetition and recast),

learners could improve their English. Through recast, the learners could correct their mistakes and repetition helped them notice the errors, consequently develop their speaking skills.

B. Research Questions

Based on the mentioned theoretical framework the following research questions were investigated in this thesis:

1. Is there statistically significant difference between Elementary and Intermediate classes regarding the amount of time spent on textual interaction?

2. Is there statistically significant difference between Elementary and Intermediate classes regarding the amount of time spent on interpersonal interaction?

3. Is there statistically significant difference between Elementary and Intermediate classes regarding the amount of time spent on ideational interaction?

4. What is the nature of textual interaction in these classes?

5. What is the nature of interpersonal interaction in these classes?

6. What is the nature of ideational interaction in these classes?

C. Research Hypotheses

As the first three questions could be answered quantitatively, three hypotheses were mentioned here:

H01. There is no statistically significant difference between Elementary and Intermediate classes regarding textual interaction.

H02. There is no statistically significant difference between Elementary and Intermediate classes regarding interpersonal interaction.

H03. There is no statistically significant difference between Elementary and Intermediate classes regarding ideational interaction.

II. METHOD

A. Participant

Three hundred Iranian female students, ranging from 13 to 19 years old, based on two levels of Elementary and Intermediate from Rasht Kish Language Institute participated in this study. The proficiency level of students was determined in this institute based on provided criteria by Common European Framework (CEF) (2015) in order to reach homogeneity in each level.

B. Instrument

Observation

The main research tool used in the present study was 'observation'. According to Mackey and Gass (2005) researchers using observational techniques while gathering data, try to prepare a careful description of learners' behaviors. Observation technique was considered by them as a useful tool for collecting in-depth data on phenomena such as 'interaction' in EFL classes. Then, it was mentioned that various kinds of observations can be carried out regarding their degree of structure: a highly structured observation done by the help of a detailed checklist or a rating scale as well as a less structured observation through the use of field notes and transcriptions. The second type of observation mentioned by them was the one used in the current study as more flexibility was required for a work on the types of interaction under investigation here (textual interaction, interpersonal interaction, and ideational interaction). As the current work used both quantitative and qualitative methods to answer the research questions, during observation phase, particular data regarding the nature of three interaction types proposed by Kumaravadivelu (2006), related to qualitative part of the current work, were gathered. In addition, some data related to amount of time given to each type of interaction in both levels, related to quantitative part of this study, were collected.

Field Notes

Mackey and Gass (2005) defined field notes as notes, "which can involve detailed impressions of the researchers' intuitions, impressions, and even questions as they emerge" (p. 175). In this regard, during observation sessions, important events related to the three types of interaction under investigation in the current work (textual interaction, interpersonal interaction, and ideational interaction) were written in the form of field notes for later transcription of those events taken place in EFL classes under observation.

Checklist

During the phase of observation, a checklist consisted of different activities related to textual interaction, interpersonal interaction and ideational interaction was prepared to be applied for later qualitative as well as quantitative data analysis. Validity of this checklist was proved by some experts in the field of TEFL. The point to be considered about the mentioned checklist is that there is no hard and fast borderline between the three functions and there can be an overlap particularly between interpersonal and ideational interaction. For instance, an activity through which the learners were supposed to talk about their personal problems as an interpersonal interaction could be considered as a textual interaction if the focus was on the use of particular linguistic structure. Also, it could be accepted as an

ideational interaction if the learners tried to make suggestions and express their opinions toward the possible solutions for those problems (The checklist has been presented in appendix A).

Audio- Recording

According to Mackey and Gass (2005), it is common in EFL class observations to use not only field notes or observation schemes but also audio or video recordings for the matter of 'triangulation' which means "using multiple research techniques and multiple sources of data in order to explore the issues from all feasible perspectives"(p. 181). In this regard, all 20 sessions under observation were audio-recorded for later reflection, detailed transcription of what happened in each session of observation considering the types of interactions under investigation in the current work and determining the amount of time given to each type of interaction in two levels of Elementary and Intermediate.

Interview

In order to determine students' proficiency level as Elementary and Intermediate, they were interviewed orally by two interviewers in Kish Language Institute.

CEF (Common European Framework)

CEF (Common European Framework) (2015) provides the standard definition for English students' abilities required to be placed in a particular level. The main proficiency levels introduced by CEF are divided to three levels of Basic User, Independent user and Proficient User which corresponds to Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced levels used by English teaching books. These mentioned main levels are also subdivided into smaller units with more precise description which starts from A1 and continues as A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2. These subcategories are introduced by Kish Language Institute as starter, Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate, Upper-Intermediate, and Advanced levels. The placement test in this institute was done orally with more focus on speaking skill and its subcategories, provided by CEF. In order to conduct this oral placement test, specific level descriptors were determined based on CEF by Kish Language Institute (n.d.) for the interviewers to follow. Two of them related to the current study can be considered in following paragraphs.

An interviewee is placed at Elementary level if he/ she:

a. has a very basic repertoire of words and simple phrases related to personal details and particular concrete situations. (Range)

b. shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a memorized repertoire. (Accuracy)

c. can manage very short isolated utterances with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words and to repair communication.(Fluency)

d. can ask and answer about personal details. He/she can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition, rephrasing, and repair. (Interaction)

e. can link words or group of words with basic connectors like 'and' or 'then'. (Coherence)

An interviewee is placed at Intermediate level if he/she:

a. has sufficient vocabulary to conduct routine, every day transactions involving familiar situations and topics, though he/she will generally have to compromise the message and search for words. (Range)

b. can adapt rehearsed memorized simple phrases to particular situations with sufficient ease to handle short routine exchanges without undo effort, despite very noticeable hesitation and false starters. (Fluency)

c. can initiate, maintain and close simple restricted face-face conversation, asking and answering questions on topics of interest and past activities. He/she can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations, given some help, but participation in open discussion is fairly restricted. (Interaction)

d. can use the most frequently occurring connectors to link simple sentences in order to tell a story or describe something as a simple list of points. (Coherence)

C. Procedure

As it was mentioned previously, the proficiency level of students was determined in this institute based on provided criteria by Common European Framework (CEF) (2015) in order to reach homogeneity in each level. In this regard, all students were interviewed by two interviewers orally. The interviewers asked students some questions which were determined by this language institute based on criteria provided by CEF. The reliability of scores given by interviewers to each interviewee in order to place them in an appropriate level was determined through Inter-rater Reliability which indicated about 80% agreement of scores given by them. In order to collect the data, 20 sessions (10 elementary and 10 intermediate classes) of EFL classes in Kish Language Institute were observed. As it was a kind of open observation, no particular criteria in the form of checklist were determined in order to be completed while observation. In this regard, while the process of observation, the major events related to three types of interaction proposed by Kumaravadivelu (2006) mentioned previously, were only written in the form of field notes in order to investigate the nature of these types of interaction in two levels of Elementary and Intermediate. Also, the whole sessions were audio- recorded for later reflection on what happened, as providing a thick transcription of some important events (to answer the last three questions) as well as determining the time spent on each type of interaction in each level (to answer the first three questions) were needed. After the phase of observation, recordings were analyzed in details based on the types of interaction under investigation here, their nature, and the time given to each type in each session of two levels. Finally, based on these gathered data the analysis was done to answer the research questions and to come to conclusion.

D. Design of the Study

Mackey and Gass (2005) asserted that qualitative studies may be clearer as they are accompanied by some quantitative analysis. So, this study used both qualitative and quantitative methods as the combination of them can be considered as complementary means of investigating the complicated phenomena such as 'interaction analysis' in EFL classes.

III. RESULT

The results of this research were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The current work compared elementary versus Intermediate EFL learners with respect to their types of textual, interpersonal and ideational interaction. The quantitative data from the observation was analyzed using SPSS to obtain inferential statistical results.

A. Questions1: Is There Statistically Significant Difference between Elementary and Intermediate Classes Regarding the Amount of Time Spent on Textual Interaction?

To address the first research question and to test the first null hypothesis, an Independent Sample T-test was applied to compare the mean ranks of the amount of time spent on textual interaction for two groups under investigation (elementary and Intermediate) based on the results of observation and audio- recordings. According to results shown in table 1 , it was indicated that there was no significant difference between Elementary and Intermediate classes regarding time spent on textual interaction (sig (2- tailed)= 0.107, p>0.05, 0.107>0.05). So, the first hypothesis was rejected and the first null hypothesis was accepted.

TABLE 1.
INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST

Textual:	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Equal variances Assumed	.157	.696	-1.697	18	.107
Equal variances Not Assumed			-1.697	17.973	.107

B. Question 2: Is There Statistically Significant Difference between Elementary and Intermediate Classes Regarding the Amount of Time Spent on Interpersonal Interaction?

To address the second research question and to test the second null hypothesis, an Independent Sample T-test was applied to compare the mean ranks of the amount of time spent on interpersonal interaction for two groups under investigation (elementary and Intermediate). According to results shown in table 2, it was indicated that there was no significant difference between Elementary and Intermediate classes regarding time spent on interpersonal interaction (sig (2- tailed)= 0.345, p>0.05, 0.345 >0.05). So, the second hypothesis was rejected and the second null hypothesis was accepted.

TABLE 2.
INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST

Interpersonal:	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Equal variances Assumed	1.817	.194	.969	18	.345
Equal variances Not Assumed			.969	14.577	.348

C. Question 3: Is There Statistically Significant Difference between Elementary and Intermediate Classes Regarding the Amount of Time Spent on Ideational Interaction?

To address the third research question and to test the third null hypothesis, an Independent Sample T-test was applied to compare the mean ranks of the amount of time spent on ideational interaction for two groups under investigation (elementary and Intermediate). According to results shown in table 3, it was indicated that there was no significant difference between Elementary and Intermediate classes regarding time spent on ideational interaction (sig (2- tailed)= 0.523, p>0.05, 0.523>0.05). So, the third hypothesis was rejected and the third null hypothesis was accepted.

TABLE 3.
INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST

Ideational:	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Equal variances Assumed	5.426	.032	.651	18	.523
Equal variances Not Assumed			.651	14.180	.526

IV. DISCUSSION / CONCLUSION

A. First Three Quantitative Research Questions

Based on the results of Independent Sample T-test in result section, it was indicated that although there was a difference between Elementary and Intermediate classes regarding the amount of time spent on textual interactions, interpersonal interactions, and ideational interactions, it was not significant.

The presented results can be due to one of the main policies of the language institute under investigation in the current study which is to provide so friendly atmosphere for all learners from Elementary to advanced levels that they would be able to learn English through fun. In this regard, during teacher training courses, all teachers are requested to try to create such an opportunity in their classes which causes the learners to consider their teachers as a friend and not to feel the approximate distance that they mainly face at schools in Iran. So, the teachers usually try to foster the learners who are enthusiastic about sharing their personal experiences and ideas freely in classes from the beginning levels. In this regard, EFL teachers in the current institute should adopt a methodology that considers meaning-focused activities as a crucial factor in their classes (all levels including both Elementary and Intermediate levels). These more meaning-focused activities could be observed in pure type of interpersonal interactions that occurred in both levels although in different degrees.

On the other hand, during these teacher training courses, the teachers are asked not to ignore the real aim of EFL classes which is learning English (from the Elementary to advanced levels). So, form-focused activities should also be considered by teachers in their classes in this language institute. Such activities could be observed in pure type of textual interaction and sometimes in its combination with interpersonal and ideational types of interaction in both levels although in different degrees.

According to what has been discussed above, it can be claimed that the teachers' methodologies in this particular institute was mainly toward learner-centered method proposed by Kumaravadivelu (2006) as the second item in his classification of methods: Language-centered method, Learner-centered method, and Learning-centered method.

As Kumaravadivelu (2006) asserted, language-centered methods such as audiolingual method are those which basically concentrate on linguistic structures. Their first policy is to provide situation for L2 learners to practice some pre-determined linguistic forms through form-focused exercises only. They believe that focus on form is sufficient to make EFL learners ready to communicate in L2 outside the classroom.

Kumaravadivelu (2006) introduced learner-centered methods as the second type of methods. He claimed that the main goal of learner-centered method such as CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) is to foster language learners who are grammatically accurate and communicatively fluent. This method tries to provide a situation for learners to practice both preselected structures and communicative functions. It is believed that concentration on both form and function will result in development of target language in a way that fulfills learners' communicative needs out of classroom boundaries. In this regard, the mentioned method considers the learners' real life language use in social interaction as well as linguistic structures required in communicative contexts.

Finally, Kumaravadivelu (2006) presented the third type of methods as language-centered methods such as natural approach. He asserted that these methods are basically concerned with providing such opportunities for L2 learners that make them take part in open ended meaningful interactions. They believe that concentration on meaning-focused activities and communicative use will lead to successful acquisition of both linguistic and pragmatic systems of the target language. Generally, they believe in incidental learning.

Based on all mentioned above, it can be claimed that the teachers in this particular institute mainly took the second type of method proposed by Kumaravadivelu (2006) as they considered all three types of interaction under investigation in the current study in their classes and applied them in both levels of Elementary and Intermediate although in different degrees which means that they concentrated on both form and meaning to foster competent EFL learners. As it was mentioned previously, pure types of textual interaction were mainly form-focused, while pure types of interpersonal or ideational interaction were mainly meaning-focused. In addition, combination of textual interaction with two other types was due to concentration on both form and meaning. So, approximate similarities regarding the amount of time spent on textual, interpersonal and ideational interactions in two levels of Elementary and Intermediate can be somehow reasonable from these perspectives.

B. Last Three Qualitative Research Questions

The Nature of Textual Interaction

1. According to the observations, it was found that in the case of pure textual interaction (pure textual interaction was the case where the focus was mainly on language itself without use of interpersonal or ideational type of interaction) students in Intermediate levels mainly ignored their ability to communicate through the use of some complex sentences and even they sometimes limited their responses in interaction to just a short phrase or a word and it was mainly telegraphic the same as students in Elementary level. So, from this perspective the nature of textual interaction was somehow the same in two levels. The transcriptions below can confirm this claim. (T: Teacher, LLL: Whole class, LL: Unidentified subgroups of class, F1, 2…: Identified female learner, F: Unidentified female learner. More detailed transcription convention for classroom discourse extracted from Allwright and Bailey (1991) is presented in appendix B)

T: Look, look at this text, which one we use when we just see that for the first time in a sentence?

F1: a.

T: a/ an or the? Which one?

LLL: a.

T: Just a?
LLL: No, an
T: What about second time?
F2: The.
T: second time?
LLL: The. ...

The above example was extracted from on Elementary class which illustrates the case where the teacher wanted to teach English articles (a/an/the). As it was observed students interacted with their teacher mainly through the use of some words, phrases or a simple-stru ctured sentence which was telegraphic to some extent.

The following transcription is extracted from one of the Intermediate classes:

T: so, in the first part of your question here, is Tony here?
LL: No.
T: Look at your questions. The first question.
LLL: No.
T: what about the next one? "Where have you been?" Ok. Now Tony has come back. Now he is here and I can ask him… So, where have you…
LLL: been?
T: All right, thank you. So, now I want… Tarane, go out, please. [The student went out.]
So, ask each other question about Tarane.
LLL: Where is Tarane?
T: where is Tarane? or…
LLL: Where has she go?
T: No....

The transcription above provided an example of a pure type of textual interaction from one of the Intermediate classes through which the teacher was supposed to teach the use of "been & gone" in present perfect. As it can be observed, students interacted with their teacher mainly through words, phrases or simple-structured sentences in the same way as Elementary students above. It was mainly telegraphic.

2. Considering the role of teacher in the pure textual interaction, it was observed that this type of interaction was mainly teacher initiated and the role of teachers was prominent in continuity of this type of interaction in both levels. Although there were cases in Intermediate level where students had significant roles, they were rare. (The transcriptions provided in the first section confirm this claim to some extent.)

3. It was also determined that mainly the objective of the particular lesson in specific session had a direct impact on the occurrence of both pure textual interaction and the combination of textual and interpersonal or ideational interaction. (The transcriptions provided in the first section confirm this claim to some extent.)

The Nature of Interpersonal Interaction

1. Based on investigation on the nature of interpersonal interaction here, it has been proved that the sequence of interpersonal interaction in Intermediate level was mainly longer than the sequence of the same type of interaction in Elementary level. Based on this observation, it can be claimed that both students and teachers in Intermediate levels were more eager to continue the interaction that focuses on interpersonal events. This claim can be more vivid through the following transcriptions:

T: So, good question, about the cake. Ok, the first thing coming to the mind is birthday party cake. Isn't it?
F1: No, dress.
T: Your dress?
LLL: Yes. Yes.
T: All of you, dress?
LLL: Yes.
T: But the first thing for me is cake.
F2: After that make up.
LLL: Yes, xxx.
T: Nail polish, xxx. At the end, cake. [Students are laughing]
LLL: Yes....

It was the example of a mainly interpersonal interaction extracted from one of the Elementary classes under observation which lasted about 1': 25".

The transcription below is extracted from an Intermediate class:

T: I can see you are still in uniform and still you are so tired. Why are you wearing school uniform?
F1: Because after school, I went to my grandmother's house and I was tired and didn't go to house to change my clothes.
F2: Teacher, I want to go to dentist.
T: Why?
LL: Toothache.

T: Why?

F2: Because of this my head is … I have headache, too.

T: Ok, Did you take something or go to dentist?

F3: Teacher, today is so boring.

F2: Teacher, on Saturday, I'm going to the dentist.

LL: Oh, on Saturday? You will die. [Students are laughing]

T: Oh, Thursday, Friday…

F3: Teacher, today is boring.

LLL: Yes. Yes.

T: Why is it boring for you?

F3: I'm not ok. Xxx.

F6: Today is a good day. We have lots of dead and we did that dead.

F7: Teacher, last night I went to the doctor and he gave me two injections.

F7: And I feel very bad. Xxx.

F8: Teacher, in the morning I went to the doctor and I have glasses.

T: Did you get your glasses?

F8: Yes, Saturday…

F9: Teacher, tomorrow I have match and I must…

T: What match?

F9: Tennis and I must wake up at 7 o' clock....

T: One of the reasons that you are bored is the color of the clothes you are wearing. Do you agree? Just look at yourself, black… . Why don't you wear colorful uniforms?

F: Because black makes you thinner. Think that I wear a pink T- shirt. It's so… It makes me like this [she pantomimes the shape of a circle]… a circle.

T: Why do you pay attention to what other people say? It's important that what you think of yourself.

F: It's not nice. But I love something I wear is nice from my idea and other idea, because it's really important, because I live with others.

The provided transcription was the example of a mainly interpersonal interaction extracted from one of the Intermediate classes observed which lasted for about 18':00. It indicates the students' enthusiasm to speak about some personal subjects in the classroom as they tried to continue the discussion.

2. Related to the first section, it was observed that in Intermediate level, in the case of interpersonal interaction students were mainly able to interact with each other or with their teacher through the use of more complex sentences using connectors while students in Elementary level were mostly able to communicate through simple-structured sentences and even through the use of phrases (incomplete sentences) which were mainly telegraphic. The transcriptions provided in the first section can confirm this claim to some extent.

3. Considering the role of teachers in interpersonal interaction, it was observed that although this type of interaction was mainly teacher-initiated in both levels, the role of teachers was more prominent in Elementary level than Intermediate level to maintain the process of interaction. It was considered that the teachers were mainly controller of interaction in Elementary level. But in Intermediate level students were able to control the discussion in class themselves and teachers used to just manage the events (particularly in the case of pure interpersonal). The transcriptions provided in the first section can confirm this claim to some extent.

4. It was determined that mainly the objective of the particular lesson in specific session had a direct impact on the type of pure interpersonal interaction or combined with textual interaction applied in that session. On the other hand, it was also considered that teachers' different methodologies were another important factor to create a situation for pure type of interpersonal interaction (pure type of interpersonal interaction here means the type of interpersonal interaction which happens mainly without specific focus on language itself). For example, some teachers considered establishing a friendly atmosphere in class as their priority and tried to initiate interaction with students based on their fields of interest through which they did not concentrate on a specific language or a lesson objective. So it mainly led to a kind of purely interpersonal interaction. The two situations discussed here happened in both levels but in different degrees which means that students in Intermediate level were mainly able to take part in deeper interaction than those in Elementary level as they could interact more easily than Elementary students who used to participate in class discussion in mainly telegraphic way as discussed in previous sections.

5. Interpersonal interactions in Elementary levels were mainly form-focused which means that they happened due to practicing a specific structure or language. However, in Intermediate level, although there were some cases in which interpersonal interaction happened due to focusing on specific form, mainly this type of interaction happened without a particular concentration on a specific form and even if the goal might be concentration on specific form, students were able to go beyond it and they mostly did not limit themselves to that specific purpose which means that the process of interaction was more natural, not mechanical. It can be clear through the following transcriptions:

T: Ok, one by one tell me your plans. Who wants to start?... Aida.

F1: Ok, I'm going to study in university on another country.

T: Which country?

F1: USA… Teacher, I'm going to see my best actor.

T: Thank you. Shaghaiegh…

F2: I'm going to play another sport.

T: What sport?

F2: I don't know.

F3: I'm going to study at university.

In the above example from an Elementary class, it can be observed that students limited themselves to that specific form practicing a particular language (be going to) and they did not go beyond that structure. However, the transcriptions provided in previous sections can make this point clear that interpersonal interactions in Intermediate classes were not mainly form focused.

The Nature of Ideational Interaction

1. It was observed that mainly the objective of the particular lesson in specific session had a direct impact on the use of ideational interaction applied in that session in both levels. In this regard, the case of ideational interaction happening on its own was not observed in any of the levels which means that students did not try to express their ideas freely about subjects happening in class or about whatever they liked and they expressed their thoughts and ideas whenever they were asked. So, the nature of ideational interaction from this perspective was somehow the same in two levels under investigation here. Transcriptions below can make this claim more comprehensible:

T: Who is a volunteer? Fateme, you start. What do you think about story A?

F1: I think story A is more impossible because I can't believe that a ghost…

T: Is it impossible? Ok.

F1: A ghost send a message.

T: Ok, you think that's impossible. Ok. Do you think… Which one is creepier?

F1: Story B.

T: Story B is creepier. Why?

F1: Because another girl… the ghost of another girl came to Sumitra's body.

T: That's creepy. Ok, which one is more fascinating?

F1: I think story B is more fascinating because a dead person become alive.

T: Yes, a person came from… from death. Ok, thank you very much.

The transcription above is extracted from an Elementary class through which students were supposed to express their ideas about two stories read in class to practice a kind of reasoning gap activity. So, the objective was to practice this structure: I think… because…

The following is an extract from an Intermediate class:

F1: If I was judge, I would send this rubber to the prison plus community service and for example work in the mine.

T: How long?

F2: What's mine?

F1: The hole in the mountain.

F3: I don't agree.

T: Why not?

F3: Because I think prison and community service is a lot.

T: Ok, what would you do?

F3: I would send him to prison for two years.

T: Two years? For bank robbery?

F3: Yes. Bank… a lot of money… People trust them.

F4: And the he becomes xx.

T: What do you mean?

F4: You know, when you don't punish, so they do that things for years.

T: All right, the other ideas? A good punishment?

F5: I think it's better for him to clean the bank.

T: Could you trust the bank robber in the bank?

LLL: No.

F5: We ask the court to check him.

T: So, you need a guard. That's expensive for the government to have a guard for only one prisoner.

F6: Maybe, the robber says, "I give you some money, I can run away."

T: Ok, so I haven't heard a good punishment for this.

F7: If I was the judge, I would send him to prison for 8 years.

T: Why? Because I think it's fair for the bank robber.

T: Others… What do you think?

F8: That's absolutely right.

Here, the objective was to use second conditional (If I were you… I would…) to express their ideas about an imaginary situation.

2. Ideational interactions mainly happened due to practicing a specific structure or a new language. In other words, they were mainly form-focused in both levels. However, in Intermediate level, although the goal might be concentration on specific form, students were able to go beyond it and they mostly did not limit themselves to that specific purpose which means that the process of interaction was more natural, not mechanical. This claim can be confirmed by looking closely at transcriptions in the previous section. In the first extract from the Elementary class, it can be observed that students tried to express their opinions about the story as they were asked through I think… because… structure and they mainly did not go beyond it.

However, in the extract from an Intermediate class which happened with the purpose of practicing second conditional (If I were… I would…) and it was mainly ideational interaction as the students tried to express their opinions, it can be observed that the complete ' second conditional' form happened only twice in the sequence of interaction and students went beyond this structure to express their ideas.

3. Considering the role of teacher in ideational interaction, it was observed that mostly this type of interaction was teacher initiated and mainly students were asked to express their opinions by the teacher in both levels. So, teachers had significant roles in continuity of this type of interaction. The above extracts can confirm this claim to some extent.

4. It was also observed that in Intermediate level, in the case of ideational interaction students were mostly able to explain their opinions in more than one sentence which means that when they took turn to speak they tried to use more sentences in the form of a discussion mostly through the use of some connectors while students in Elementary level only tried to express their opinions in one sentence or a simple-structured sentence. Also, in cases where they used a more complex sentence, it was the use of the form which was asked by the teacher to be used in their speaking and they did not go beyond that (for e.g. in some cases teacher wanted them to use I think… because…). The transcription from an Elementary level below can make this point more comprehensible:

T: You read all four texts. Which one was the most interesting for you? Which character was the most interesting?
F1: A
T: A? Parizad? Why A?
F1: Because I don't know, it's…
T: Exciting to kill a lot of people?
F1: Yes.
F2: Teacher, I think B is interesting, because he started first bank in Egypt.

As it can be observed students mainly did not express their opinions in more than one simple structured sentence and the case of more complex structured sentence happened just when they wanted to use the structure asked by the teacher to be applied in their speaking(I think… because…).

The following transcription is extracted from an Intermediate class:
F1: I think the main problem is air pollution.
T: Go on about that.
F1: I think air pollution is important because we…
T: Breathe
F1: the oxygen should be clean and if the oxygen don't be clean, when we smell it, our xx and it's not good. It will kill us.
F3: I think cutting down the trees is more important that air pollution. Because if we've got trees. The trees make oxygen. And trees make oxygen, if we…
T: cut down
F3: Yes, if we cut down the trees, we've got air pollution, as she said.
T: Avishan, what do you think about it?
F4: I think the water xx is the problem because…
T: Water pollution.
F4: Yes, because many fish are living in the water and when the water is polluted, many fish die and fish are polluted. And when the humans eat the fish, they are sick and they die. Many humans die and I think it's very bad.

In the above example, students were supposed to express their opinions about the most important problem in the world using the structure I think… because… as a kind of reasoning gap activity. It can be observed that students expressed their opinions in a way that their interaction became a kind of discussion to some extent as they tried to use more than one sentence in expressing their ideas.

Based on all discussed above, there can be an implication here for EFL teachers. As it was mentioned previously, the main objective of the current work was to investigate the nature of three types of interaction proposed by Kumaravadivelue in two levels of Elementary and Intermediate as well as their contribution to L2 development. The nature of interaction types regarding two levels was discussed to some extent in previous sections. For the matter of their contribution to L2 development, based on the observed data, it can be claimed that all three types of interaction under investigation are required to promote L2 learning in both levels. However, concentration on all three types of interaction in the same proportion should be taken into consideration. On one hand, as it was observed in those classes

where pure type of textual interaction was dominant, although students could speak accurately (specifically on the practiced language of that particular session such as the new grammar, new language, vocabulary and pronunciation…), they were not able to speak fluently enough (in both levels). Such classes mainly lead to a kind of mechanical L2 speakers. On the other hand, there were classes where students were allowed to take part in interpersonal and ideational interaction with approximate ignorance of textual interaction. In such classes, although students were encouraged directly or indirectly to speak freely without particular emphasis on specific structure or language and they were able to speak fluently to some degree, they usually lacked the ability to speak accurately enough, even on the new language or structure of that session. Sometimes, it is a good choice to combine interpersonal or ideational interaction with textual interaction and in other cases it is preferable to apply each type of interaction on its own. In this regard, EFL teachers should be cautious enough in their methodologies toward various types of interaction under investigation in the current study and try not to fall on extremes. They should keep balance in order to foster students who are able to speak both fluently and accurately (in both levels, although in different degrees). Consequently, the role of teachers, their class management and methodologies can have significant impact on L2 development from this perspective.

Finally, there is a suggestion for further researches. As the current work concentrated on Kumaravadivelue's classification of interaction types, it was observed that three types of interaction proposed by him (textual, interpersonal, & ideational) can occur in their pure form as well as their combination with each other. So, working on a new framework as a result expanding Kumaravadivelue's classification might be worthy of investigation. The new framework can consist of the following categories: A. pure textual interaction B. pure interpersonal interaction C. pure ideational interaction D. textual and interpersonal interaction E. textual and ideational interaction. Further researches can work on the mentioned categories to find out the extent of their occurrence in different classes and their contribution to L2 development in more details.

APPENDIX A

Types of activities considered as a textual interaction, interpersonal interaction & ideational interaction in the form of a checklist:

Activities as a textual interaction:	Activities as an interpersonal interaction:	Activities as an ideational interaction:
*Comprehension checks *Confirmation checks *Clarification checks *Meaning clarification *Grammar teaching *Working on new languages *Pronunciation practice *Giving sentence repetition *Sentence-completion activities *Review of previous session language *Playing game to practice a new language *Summary telling *Correction *Pre-teaching vocabulary *Working on writing models *Picture description *Modeling for doing an exercise	*Sharing personal experiences *Sharing general knowledge *Talking about likes & dislikes *Talking about favorites/interests *Talking about problems in the world *Talking about family members *Talking about personal life	*Reasoning-gap activities *Making suggestions *Talking about imaginary situation (If I were you… I would…) *Giving advice *Expressing agreement & disagreement with reason *Expressing opinions about advantages & disadvantages/good points & bad points with reasons

Notice: There is no hard and fast borderline between these three functions and there can be overlap particularly between interpersonal and ideational interaction.

APPENDIX B

Transcription conventions for classroom discourse

General layout

1 Leave generous margins, at least at first, to permit legible annotations as transcription gets refined.
2 Double space everything, for the same reason.
3 Number every fifth line in the left-hand margin, *but* do so only in pencil until transcription is complete, unless you are using wordprocessing with automatic line numbering.
4 Identify transcripts at the top of each page with some economical reference number.
5 Number all pages in the top right corner.
6 Identify participants, date and location on a separate sheet (separate in case participants' identities need to be kept confidential).
7 Decide whether to supply pseudonyms for participants' names, or to substitute numbers.
8 Enter participants' pseudonyms, where used, with gender, classroom layout, etc., also on a separate sheet (especially if using computer, since computer analysis must not include this page as data).
9 If using numbers, enter real name and associated numbers (with gender information) on a separate sheet.
10 On transcript pages, justify identifying material to the right, justify text to the left, as below.

Symbols to identify who is speaking:

T   teacher
∧   aide
M1   identified male learner, using numbers (M1, M2, etc.)
F1   identified female learner, using numbers (F1, F2, etc.)
Su   use such two-letter abbreviations for pseudonyms, where used (note: gender information may be lost by this method)
M   unidentified male learner
F   unidentified female learner
MV   male voice from, for example, an audio or videotape
FV   female voice, as above
LL   unidentified subgroup of class
LL   unidentified subgroup speaking in chorus
LLL   whole class
LLL   whole class speaking in chorus

Symbols for relationships between lines of transcript

⎰ M3
⎱ F7   use curly brackets to indicate simultaneous speech

⎡ M
⎢ T
⎣ M   use to indicate same unidentified male speaker

⎡ F
⎢ T
⎣ F   use to indicate same unidentified female speaker

-T   use hyphen to indicate continuation of a turn without a pause, where overlapping speech intervenes.

Symbols to use in text

[   ]   use for commentary of any kind (e.g. to indicate point in discourse where T writes on blackboard)
[=   ]   use to introduce a gloss, or translation, of speech
/   /   use for phonemic transcription instead of standard orthography, where pronunciation deviant. Use with gloss if meaning also obscured.

(   )   use for uncertain transcription
(/   /) use for uncertain phonemic transcription
⟦   ⟧   use for uncertain gloss

X   incomprehensible item, probably one word only
XX   incomprehensible item of phrase length
XXX   incomprehensible item beyond phrase length
X——X   use optionally at early stages to indicate extent of incomprehensible item, as guide to future attempts to improve transcription

. . . .   use dots to indicate pauses, giving length in seconds in extreme cases, if potentially relevant to aims
"   "   use to indicate anything read rather than spoken without direct text support

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