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Encouraging student output: Getting more by asking less



James Bury
Associate Professor
Faculty of Tourism and Business Management
Shumei University

How are you?

I'm fine.

In agony
Depressed, sad,
Lonely, ignored,
Angry, frustrated,
Jealous, grieving
Embarrassed, sad
Jealous, hurt
Pained, Upset,
Pained, grieving
all alone
Sorrowful
Humiliated
d, consumed
by darkness
Shocked,
Sad, angry
lonely



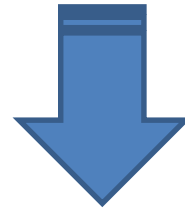
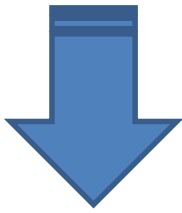
The I-R-F Model

Process

Example

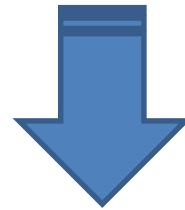
The teacher Initiates the first move

How are you today?



The student Responds in the second move

I am fine.



The teacher evaluates the response and makes a Follow up move

Good. What did you do last night?

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“they reduced the length of their answers to conform to [their perceived frame of] the teacher’s preferred composition of the answer”

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1. The students were producing short, accurate answers.
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2. The students were using English.

BUT

1. There was no clear development.
2. The students were speaking, but not actually *communicating*.

Research questions

How can we encourage students to:

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2. say more?

Research questions

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3. communicate their ideas and opinions?

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- Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participating teachers.

Teacher: What food do you like best?

(Initiation stage)

Student: I like Japanese food the best.

(Response stage)

Move type	Explanation	Example
Open question	A question that cannot be answered only 'Yes', or 'No'.	Why do you think that Japanese food is the best?
Closed question	A question that can be answered only 'Yes', or 'No'.	Can you cook any Japanese food?
Reflective statement	A restatement of the student's comment.	So you think Japanese food is the best.
Statement of mind	A reflection of the teacher's own views on the topic.	I think that English food is better.
Declarative statement	A thought that occurs as a result of what the student was saying.	Many people enjoy eating Japanese food.
Statement of interest	An expression of interest in the previous move.	That's interesting.
Speaker referral	A reference to a previous statement of a different speaker.	That is the same as Taro.
Back-channeling	A gesture, verbal signal or pause.	[Nodding]

Effect of open questions

Sample 1:

T: Where did the boy go?

S: (2.6) The cinema.

T: (1.5) Why do people go (.) why do they go to the cinema?

S: (1.3) Yes. (2.4) They likes the feelings. (1.6) (Japanese) (2.7) Uh. It makes them happy, (1.4) but it is (.) expensive.

Effect of closed questions

Sample 2:

T: How: often do you go: to the cinema?

S: (1.8) Sometimes I go.

T: (2.3) Do you like horror movies?

S: No, I didn't. (.) They are scary.

Effect of reflective statements

Sample 3:

T: What did her friends think?

S: (3.7) They were surprised () she wasn't scared.

T: (2.0) So they thought she would be scared.

S: (4.2) Yes, (2.1) she is always scare, (3.2) but this times she wasn't. (2.5) They were shocked.

Effect of statements of mind

Sample 4:

T: Where would you go on holiday, (1.7) Japan or America?

S: (3.2) I think Japan is [best.

T: [Really? I think most people ((cough)) most people would like to go abroad.

S: (5.2) (Oh). Yes.

Effect of speaker referrals

Sample 5:

T: What would you: say [Misato]?

S: (2.6) (Japanese) (1.7) I would say ‘no’.

T: (2.8) That’s the sa:me a:s [Yukie].

S: (3.4) She doesn’t like every insects. (2.2) I hate
(Japanese) (2.0) cockroaches just. They are crazy
and disgusting.

Effect of declarative statements

Sample 6:

T: What do people think is (.) scary?

S: (1.4) (Japanese) (1.9) They think (.) walking at night is scarer.

T: (2.5) Hmm. So:me people find it e:ven scarier when they are walking at night by themselves.

S: (1.7) Yes. (1.6) I don't like when it's (.) (Japanese) (2.6) just me.

Effect of statements of interest

Sample 7:

T: Would you: go to watch the horror mo:vie?

S: (1.9) No, (.) I wouldn't.

T: (2.6) Tell me mo:re.

S: (1.8) I don't like (.) horror. (.) They make me scary.
(2.4) I like action or romance (love) (2.6) or drama.

Effect of back-channeling

Sample 8:

T: When (.) would mo:st peo:ple (1.1) watch (.) a horror movie?

S: (1.2) (Japanese) (1.7) In Summer (.) people watch horror.

T: (2.9) Mmm.

S: (3.2) It makes them (.) colds.

Move	Words	Rank
Reflective statement	9.0	1
Speaker referral	8.5	2
Statement of interest	7.5	3
Open question	7.5	3
Declarative statement	6.1	5
Closed question	4.0	6
Statement of mind	3.5	7
Back-channeling	2.9	8
Average	6.1	

Table 2 - Average words per move for all classes

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- Furthermore, after reflective statements, it was noted that a wider variety of comments were produced that deviated from commonly found responses and structures.
- Statements of interest also showed recognition of students' comments and opinions, encouraging them to expand on their previous move. As a result, the students produced more output than was minimally required and expanded on their previous ideas.

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- Unlike previous research conducted at a university in which all alternatives prompted more student output than questions, in this study open questions prompted the third longest responses on average.
- This could be attributed to high school students taking longer to adapt to new methods being introduced in classroom interactions, especially in a second language.
- Therefore, familiarity with open questions being employed in the third move of the IRF model could have led to more output being produced than other unfamiliar moves not commonly encountered. This effect, however, may not be so noticeable in older or more experienced students.

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- This may be a finding that is emphasized by traditional teacher - student power roles and may also be less pronounced in more experienced, older students who are more confident in their own ideas and opinions.
- Back-channeling produced the shortest responses of all moves. It was noted that often the students did not realize what the teacher was attempting to do and did not produce any further output. This may have been caused by the unfamiliarity of the move.

What about the teachers?

- New initiatives for teaching and learning, such as encouraging teachers to use more varied language in their teaching, can be viewed as a potential threat to the ‘key meanings’ of teachers’ lives, such as their perceptions of status and group allegiances (Blacker & Shimmin, 1984).

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- Teachers can feel that new requirements are an implicit criticism of their existing approach (Craig, 2012).
- Thus, introducing new approaches and ideas into a course and school must be undertaken with great care.

What about the teachers?

- Traditionally in Japanese educational contexts, the approach to developing change is ‘heroic’ (Collinson & Collinson, 2009), where the leader of the proposed changes takes control and the credit, or blame, lies with them. However, for many teachers, that is not seen as an appropriate way to reach a successful outcome. Thus, the suggested changes were introduced using a mainly ‘collegial’ approach (Bush, 2011).

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- As the teachers were participating voluntarily, the theories of ‘shared’ (Conger & Pearce, 2010), ‘distributed’ (Mulford, 2010), ‘collaborative’ (Jameson, 2009) and ‘collegial’ development of the changes (Bush, 2011) were especially pertinent.

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- As the teachers were participating voluntarily, the theories of ‘shared’ (Conger & Pearce, 2010), ‘distributed’ (Mulford, 2010), ‘collaborative’ (Jameson, 2009) and ‘collegial’ development of the changes (Bush, 2011) were especially pertinent.
- By working with the teachers, it could be ensured that the suggested changes were not seen as being imposed and that the teachers were psychologically committed to seeing the implementation of the changes they had helped to prepare (Norton, 2009).

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- In order for teachers to feel a sense of shared ownership, a shared social identity needs to be developed. To do this, drawing on the work of Hinde (2004), the goals of the changes and their connection to the organisational culture of the school were discussed so that the participating teachers could understand their relevance and a commitment to the successful implementation of the changes could be developed.

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- A further way of achieving shared ownership is to follow the three R's of identity leadership highlighted by Haslam et al. (2011):
 - reflecting (listening to and understanding the views of the participating teachers)
 - representing (acting in a way that reflects the participating teachers' values)
 - realising (delivering what is important).

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 - the students seemed to misunderstand certain moves.
 - the teachers felt that their own use of the moves would improve with more practice and/or training.
- Despite some concern and doubts being expressed when the changes were suggested, all of the teachers stated that they would like to continue using alternative moves to questions in their classrooms.

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- At the school in which this research was undertaken, 12 full-time Native Teachers of English (NTEs) are employed. However, there is a large disconnect between the Japanese staff and NTEs. Unfortunately, little has been done to draw the two faculties closer together and, as this has always been the case at the school, the issue is often not addressed.

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- By aiming to first indicate the benefits of using alternatives to questions in the NTEs’ classrooms, it is hoped that the Japanese teachers could then be encouraged to implement the changes. Developing ‘social capital’ (Adler & Kwon, 2009) in this context would help to develop relations between the different faculties, which could improve the overall performance of both students and teachers.

Other possible effects

- Furthermore, Burden (2001) claims that by using English in a way that encourages students to see it as an effective tool for communication, it is being demonstrated that foreign language courses are not just a series of activities for language practice or a subject found on the Center Test.

Conclusions

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- Changes to teaching methods must be introduced with care and must be critically assessed in order to prevent them from being seen as unproblematic.

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Any...questions??!!