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Análisis del Discurso del Profesor de Inglés

AUTOR: JUAN MARÍA PÉREZ MORÓN

Resumen:

Este ensayo demostrará con el análisis del discurso de un profesor de inglés que su discurso - su forma de hablar - es diferente de otros discursos. Esto se justifica observando los singulares mecanismos lingüísticos propios de su discurso: interactivo, en inglés, con diferentes formas de actuar, con unidades diferentes, con cambios en la entonación y en la gramática,...Por lo tanto, con esto llegamos a la conclusión que el discurso de un profesor es un **registro** ya que muestra sus propias características lingüísticas.

Analysis of Teacher Discourse

According to Halliday, teacher speech can be considered a register since it is a variety of the language in the sense that it uses certain language mechanisms to achieve a certain purpose. When a teacher teaches something, he wants to be as efficient as possible, that is, he or she wants to get optimal relevance. The goal of teacher speech is to look for a way of easy and quick learning. This goal is achieved through different language devices that will be analysed in that paper. So, this paper will try to show that teacher speech is a register and, in doing so, this paper will rely on an analysis of a particular teacher discourse. This analysis will show the different parts of a teacher discourse and will prove that it can be considered a register since it has its own features.

The main features of a teacher discourse to be effective are that it has to be interactive and made in L2. The normal way of giving a meaningful input is through interaction. That interaction is based on the communication of both the students and the teacher. If the discourse is not interactive it is not communicative and one part does not work. Therefore, the teacher must prepare a certain type of activities. That interactive nature of the teacher discourse can be seen in the talk analysed. The teacher designs different activities that range from more controlled activities to freer activities: the teacher makes questions and the students answer (8-100; 120- 240; 280-440 (time in cassette)), and there is also pair work between students (100-270; 440-480); there is little group work.

This teacher talk is highly interactive since there is a big amount of time devoted to those activities, although there is a lack of group work. Being native is also very important in that class since the teacher will try to speak only in L2; so that is a positive aspect of this teacher talk.

Other features belonging exclusively to the teacher speech are the specific purposes the teacher achieves when he or she utters a sentence. To analyse those purposes, it is necessary to analyse what the teacher can do in the classroom. According to Sinclair and Brazil (1982), a teacher can show the following behaviours: telling, controlling, stimulating and rewarding. And besides, those “actions” are inserted into different areas of attention: content, organisation and discipline.

In the teacher talk analysed, telling is what the teacher does more frequently since she is asking students all the time in order to teach a specific grammatical point. The teacher is making demonstrations and she does not explain very much. Therefore, the teacher tries to get an inductive-deductive learning. Controlling is also frequently used – though less – in the teacher speech analysed, for instance: “(...) *here, six students, six students! (...) Oh, but speak English! (...) Right, good, silence, ... Now! (...) Everybody! (...) Listen, listen (...)*” The teacher tries to get the attention from the students in order to organise the classroom and do the exercises in a proper way. Finally, stimulating is rarely used – *good, right, fine* – and rewarding is never used.

As it has been stated, those teacher's behaviours are inserted in three different areas of attention. In the teacher discourse analysed, one can realise that content does not appear many times since there is little importance to the theory and high importance to practice. On the other hand organisation and discipline appear frequently since when there is a lot of practise the information has to be channelled and guided. For that reason, both organisation and discipline tend to be related to controlling in the speech analysed. Some instances of organisation are "*you stand up and you say (...) here, six students, six students! (...) listen, listen! (...) question (...) Right, give me a sentence about Cecilia (...) try again! (...)*" and some instances of discipline are "*Oh, but speak English! (...) stop! (...) silence! (...) listen! (...) You two (...)*"

The especial characteristics of the structure of the teacher discourse are another feature that proves that it is a variety of language. According to Sinclair and Brazil (1982), transactions – related to frames – exchanges and sequences are some important discourse units. Those units have especial features that only the teacher discourse has. To show that, those units will be analysed in the following paragraphs.

Any discourse has frames, which are the different signposts used to divide the discourse (Sinclair and Brazil, 1982). Teacher discourse is oral, so frames function as boundary makers; they are expressions that mark that "*at this point I finish one part of what I want to say, and open up another part of the discourse.*" The teacher discourse analysed shows that they use frames very frequently, and the main ones are: "*listen, OK, right, good, now, so, stop, look.*"

Those frames have been analysed and they have two main features: they are followed by a measured pause and they are words that take an especial meaning when used as frames, that is, the structure controls the meaning. Teachers also use some other signals in order to let the students see what's to follow. Those signals are called focus, which are normally preceded by a frame. That focus can be seen in the speech analysed as: "*can you play...? six students! Question, Answer, In twos, give me a sentence.*" In that discourse analysed, the focus is a word or a phrase that refers to a teaching unit.

Transactions are the parts in which a discourse can be divided (Sinclair and Brazil, 1982). The teacher talk analysed has different transactions that are frequently separated by frames. The first transaction is the introduction of the pattern, so presentation and practise stage are done at the same time; the second is pairwork; the third is the introduction of the new topic, which is the third person; and the last transaction is the introduction of the alternative "*yes but no.*" Therefore, one can see that the structure of the teacher discourse analysed is based mainly on practise.

Finally, exchanges and sequences are also discourse units very typical from teacher discourse. According to Sinclair and Brazil (1982), exchanges are less controlled by the teacher than sequences; that is, in exchanges students give an approximation to the answer, whereas in sequences students are not so sure about the answer.

That can be seen in the teacher talk analysed through the following examples: as an exchange “*Can you play the piano? No, I can’t. Can you play the recorder? No, I can’t. Can you play the drum? No, I can’t*” and as a sequence “*Can you play the piano? No. No, what? No, I can’t.*” In the teacher talk analysed, there are more exchanges than sequences, and what is more, exchanges are used at the beginning and then sequences. Sequences tend to be used in order to correct students’ errors, but sometimes they do not appear, since it seems that the teacher is trying to avoid too many corrections.

According to R. Ellis (1992) teachers adapt their speech to students’ transitional linguistic competence (Sinclair and Brazil, 1982). For that reason, the teacher will change intonation and grammar. Therefore, those changes will be another source that helps to distinguish teacher discourse as a register.

In the teacher talk analysed, a rising intonation is used in questions and to imply surprise, that is to say, to entail that something is wrong. That rising tone is done to catch attention or to emphasise something: “*Javier! Can you play the guitar? Six students! Stop! Yes, what? José Carlos!*” On the other hand, a falling intonation is used to entail rewarding, that is, to imply that the answer has been good. That falling tone is used to indicate that the teacher has the power when giving the answer: “*Good answer. All right, English. Right, good. Listen. Very good Cecilia. Caaaan’t.*” And finally, this discourse also shows a great amount of repetitions, a change of the normal melodic contour when giving new information and more careful pronunciation.

To conclude, teacher discourse is different from other discourses. To account for that, there are several linguistic features that are specific from that discourse: interactive, made in L2, shows different behaviours of a teacher in a classroom (telling, controlling, stimulating and rewarding) which are inserted into different areas of attention (content, organisation and discipline), has different units (transactions, exchanges and sequences), has frames and focus, and finally, there is a change of intonation and grammar. Therefore, teacher speech is a register since the analysis of a particular teacher discourse shows that it has its own features

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