Digital Classroom Discourses in Pakistan: A Descriptive Study

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Abstract

The present study showcases the influence of Digital Classroom Discourses, and the factors contributed to the digital classroom learning environment in Pakistan. The objective of the present study is to find out the challenges of digitalized environment in terms of interactional variation between teachers and students. This study is qualitative descriptive in nature and purposive sampling type has been used. Moreover, this study is inspired by Sinclair and Coulthard's (1992) model to find out answer to the research questions. The implementation of online classes during Pandemic Covid-19 was considered as a challenging task because most of the tutors and pupils were not acquainted with the latest technology. The present research focused more on the impact of digital classrooms as the virtual learning format was novel to everyone. In accord, the researcher collected and analyzed data of online classes from different universities i.e. University of Lahore, Foundation university etc. Furthermore, the researcher identified the interactional patterns of teachers and students' communication in the collected extracts. By applying Sinclair and Coulthard's model (1992), the researcher figured out some new categories i.e. repetition (rpt) & confirmation (conf) and some online mending strategies like Presence Ensure Technique (PET) & Self-Elicit Strategy which may be considered as useful in the successful conduction of online classes. The researcher found that the above-mentioned findings regarding digital classes are unlike traditional face to face learning format. The present study coined the new dimension of observing digital classroom discourses from Sinclair and Coulthard's perspective.

Keywords: *Digital, Classroom Discourses, Descriptive study, Pakistan*

1.Introduction

Language is considered as the most powerful tool as it makes or breaks relations in the world. There are important connections between saying something (informing), doing something (action)and being someone (identity) in a language. If something is said to anyone, it cannot be comprehended fully until one is not aware of what a person tried to say (intention) and who the person was addressing i.e. identity (Gee, 2001). Discourse analysis is the study of language-in-use. In general, there are many different approaches to discourse analysis in general. Some of the approaches are called "descriptive" and their objective is just to describe how language works to comprehend it. Quite the reverse, other approaches are termed as critical and "Critical discourse analysis" answers the questions in a different way. Their goal is not merely to describe how language works or even to offer deep explanations, but they penetrate in social and political issues, problems and confrontations in the world. They aim to put forward their work in some fashion to the world (Gee, 2011).

In recent years, there has been flourishing interest in examining educational discourse about online learning as pandemic Covid-19 compelled educational institutions including universities to switch from typical (traditional) classroom learning to virtual classroom learning which is facilitated by advancement in technology. Consequently, there was a sudden drift of two different teaching modalities and both the stakeholders' i.e. teachers and students, in universities are influenced with digitalized environment.

Digital literacy has experienced swift development recently and accumulated significant attention because Pandemic Covid-19 has an influence on all departments, especially education. Consequently, many universities provided guidelines to the faculty and educators to opt transitions to live synchronous web meetings/classes by utilizing applications and web conferencing tools like Zoom. It can be said

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that Pandemic Covid-19 conducted a test for the implementation of online education that was carried out everywhere (Sun, et.al, 2020). Mostly teachers and students were unfamiliar with virtual learning environment. Consequently, the effects have brought a rapid change or shift from the most familiar traditional learning to instructional learning that consolidates online and traditional classroom modalities (Purwanto & Pelita, 2020). Numerous characteristics of educational institutions make communication a focal point (central). Most of the teaching takes place through the spoken language (medium) and the same medium allows students to demonstrate to teachers much of what they have practiced. Classroom discourse occurs between students and teacher, but the most imperative (important) objective of education is to induce change within each pupil that is called learning (Cazden, 2001).

The researcher has opted for the IRF model of Sinclair and Coulthard's (1992) to describe digital classroom discourses to answer the research questions. This model is taken by the researcher because it covers the elements which constitute classroom discourse and is helpful in observing interactional patterns of teachers' and students' communication. The researcher has taken teachers' perspective to analyze their roles in managing digital classes and encountered challenges to answer the research questions as it is a newly established virtual system.

Significance of the study

The careful observation of the data has revealed that virtual learning environment did not only produce results rather it has been considered as source of survival in a situation when one must cope with pandemic situation like Covid-19 and in that situation educational field could maintain the flow of knowledge acquisition. It has been demonstrated that despite unfamiliarity with Technology-based Learning Teachers and students have attempted to participate actively online learning community. This study has helped the readers to notice the fact that there were many factors which contributed to making digital classrooms effective. The current study has paved the way for the descriptive study of virtual classroom learning modality through IRF model. In the previous studies, this model was applied only to traditional classroom discourses only but this study has implemented it on digital classroom discourses. The present study about virtual learning environment enabled the readers to know the influence of implementation of online classes in the current scenario.

Research Objectives

1. To describe the influence of digital classroom learning environment and the factors which contribute to the digital classroom discourses in Pakistan
2. To find out the challenges of virtual learning environment in Pakistan

Research Questions

1. What is the impact of digital classrooms and the factors contributing to its effectiveness in Pakistan?
2. What are the challenges of digitalized environment in terms of interactional variation between teachers and students in digital classes?

2.Literature Review

This chapter elucidates the details about the previous research findings which have been conducted in the domain of digital classroom discourses and how these studies influenced both the stakeholder's i.e. teachers and students in terms of opportunities, challenges and transformations in online learning and much other related research. This chapter highlighted the previous research about classroom and digital classroom discourses from different perspectives.

Language is considered as a bridge between participants to communicate with each other. In a study, it is mentioned that language serves various roles in our lives. One of the functions of language is to give and get information. It allows us to inform each other but it also permits us to perform (action) things and authorize things to be things. In other words, saying something in language is accompanied by doing things and being things. It grants us to execute things. Language concedes us to remain absorbed in activities and pursuits. It authorizes us to be things. It sanctions us to take on various important identities in society. There are significant interrelations among stating (informing), performing (action) and being i.e. identity (Gee, 2001). "The constant unity of language and other social matters ensure that language is entwined in social power in a number of ways: language indexes power, expresses power, is involved where there is contention over power and where power is challenged. Power does not derive from language, but language can be used to challenge power, to subvert it, to alter distributions of power both in the short and the long term. Language provides a finely articulated vehicle for differences in power within hierarchical social structures" (Wodak, 2015). This study highlighted the engrossment in the course of action in which linguistics forms are used in different manners and delude of power. "Power is signaled out not only by grammatical forms within a

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text, but also by a person's control of a social occasion by means of the genre of a text. It aims at investigating social inequality as it is expressed; constituted, legitimized, and so on, by language use" (Wodak, 2015).

Habermas's (1967) claimed that language is also a medium of domination and social force. It serves to legitimize relations of organized power. Legitimizations of power relations, ..., are not articulated, language is also ideological".

Discourse refers to any type of 'language in use' in its most general usage. There are many interpretations of the word 'discourse' with similar relevant meanings. This term can also refer specifically to the spoken mode of language, though speech is referred by the term discourse marker. There is divergence among discourse, interactive one, and text (written), which is non-interactive monologue. Stubbs (1983) floated the concept of this distinction. It can also be used to refer to specific framework of language use and in this way, it becomes similar to other concepts like text or genre. For instance, media discourse is the language which is used in the media.

Mostly, a form of social practice is viewed as discourse, so it implicates a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the prevailing situation, institution and social structure which organizes it, the discursive event is not only framed by them but also it modifies them. In this study, it is mentioned that discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned- it makes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and connections among people and their groups. In this way, it supports retaining and reproducing social status, and in the sense

of contributing to modify it. It is further elaborated that discourse creates consequences socially because it provides boost to main issues of power. Moreover, discursive practices can help for production and reproduction of unjustified power relations among social classes, minorities and majorities etc through the medium in which they demonstrate things along with positioning people as these practices have more ideological effects (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997).

3.Research Methodology
This section demonstrates the research methodology of the present study which employed qualitative method to describe digital classroom discourses in Pakistan. The advent of Web-based education has made it accessible for students to take classes anywhere around the world through internet applications. This study described the factors which contributed to digital classroom discourse effectively.

"A typical exchange in the classroom consists of an initiation by the teacher, followed by a response from the pupil, followed by feedback, to the pupil's response from the teacher" (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992)

The present study is predicated on interlinked objectives i.e. the first was to identify the factors which contributed to the digital classroom discourses in Pakistan. The second objective was to examine the role of teachers in managing digital classrooms with their communication skills, strategies or techniques.

The overall aim was to examine the selected digital classroom discourses from different universities to describe its influence pertaining to web-based educational system in Pakistan.

Theoretical Framework
Classroom Discourse Analysis
Discourse is 'language in use' and analysis is breaking down information into pieces and then observing the extracts separately to understand the meaning. There are numerous conceptualizations of discourse analysis, which have been changing with the passage of time. Brown and Yule (1983) refer to discourse analysis like 'how humans use language to communicate'. It is basically a qualitative form of analysis as it has included a 'close reading of a small amount of text' such as detailed transcription of a conversation etc.

The language used by teachers and students to interact with each other in the classroom is defined as classroom discourse (Baker, 2011). It varies in functions and forms from language used in some other contexts or situations as both the stakeholders' i.e. teachers and students have objectives and they remained absorbed in numerous activities in the classroom (Al-smadi & Rashid, 2017).

The theoretical framework for this research has been mainly inspired by Sinclair and Coulthard's (1992) model of classroom discourse which intermingle discourse elements involving hierarchical layers, each layer consists of units from preceding layer: "Lesson-Transaction-Exchange-Move- Act". Lesson is the main discourse element, and the lowest element is act. Within the exchange layer, Sinclair and Coulthard (1992) recognize the following interactional features: the sequence of question and answer, replying to teacher's instructions by pupils and listening to teacher's instructions. The sequence of questions and answers directs Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) model: initiation by instructor, response by pupils and feedback by instructor. The IRF model is generally aimed to be prominent in classroom discourses (Nunan & Bailey, 2009).

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Many studies have been trying to examine classroom discourses from the perspective of Sinclair's model (1992) but the present study has implemented it from the spectacle of digital classroom discourses by describing the factors contributing to it, the role played by teachers to manage digital classes with some useful techniques. However, this new paradigm allows the researcher to discover those factors or new categories and their potential to describe digital classroom discourses in Pakistan.

Criteria for Selection of the Data

The criterion which has been employed for the selection of data is mentioned as follows: First, the data consisted of recorded lectures which were collected by the researcher from different educational institutes of five individuals (Three females and two males) in Pakistan. Secondly, the extracts included main interactions between students and teachers which affected the educational discourse, in one way or the other, were scrutinized.

Sampling Technique
Purposive sampling

A non-probability sampling technique has been employed in the present study. Sampling in qualitative research is usually purposive. There are many specific sampling techniques that can be used in qualitative research. The researcher has opted for convenience sampling with heterogeneous approach in heterogeneous approach, all the items in the sample have been chosen because they had different traits. For instance, the researcher collected data of BS and MS online classes (English, Linguistics) from different universities i.e. University of Lahore, Foundation University etc. in Pakistan.

Data Collection Tools

The researcher required large data –gathering tools and techniques. These may vary in the level of complexity, interpretation, design and administration. The tool used by the researcher was Observation technique as Sinclair's model (1992) has been implemented to observe digital classroom discourses. This technique helped the researcher to describe and identify speech act categories (Characterized by Sinclair, 1992) in recorded data which was gathered for analysis. Analysis has been done on digital classroom discourses. The audio-video data of BS and MS online classes (English, Linguistics) has been analyzed from the perspective of Sinclair and Coulthard's model (1992) and it would fit into speech act categories identified by them.

Analysis and Discussion

This section includes analysis of the data which was collected to sort out answers to the research questions. In the process of analysis, extracts were taken from digital classrooms and new categories and strategies were identified. The analysis of this study is conducted in a way as it dealt with the application of Sinclair and Coulthard's (1992) model on digital classroom discourses.

To attain a great understanding of how teachers and students communicate with each other and the influence of that communication in digital classrooms affecting teachers and students, the researcher took recorded lectures of different universities and transcribed the lessons. By using Sinclair and Coulthard's (1992) rank scale model, the researcher identified the speech act categories between teachers and students' interaction and analyzed the digital classroom discourses through the application of their model. This section dealt with the discussion of data gathered and the analysis of the transcription. The researcher applied Sinclair & Coulthard's rank scale model (1992) which shed light on the speech act categories identified by them and some other categories which the researcher coined to be part of digital classroom discourses. The observation technique was used by the researcher to implement this model on digital classroom discourses.

The researcher has gathered the data of BS and M.Phil classes of English departments which were conducted online in different universities and analyzed the transcription of audio/video recorded lessons. Once transcribing the lessons, it was then analyzed by the researcher through the application of Sinclair and Coulthard's rank scale (1992). During the analysis, the researcher came across few variations in interactional patterns, techniques and some categories which may be part of digital classroom discourses The researcher followed the criteria followed in Brazil (1995) as it appeared appropriate. The researcher observed the data and separated it into moves. Moreover, framing and focusing moves along with opening, answering and follow-up moves have been identified. In the beginning, the analysis was quite straight forward followed by the complexity as it progressed. It was then mandatory to split the moves into acts and label them. This stage was the most time-taking, but also the most enlightening as the researcher got chance to explore it in depth. After spending a great deal of time, most of the act labels had been assigned.

Sinclair and Coulthard's model (1922) discovered the term Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) which is considered as typical exchange in classroom. When this model is applied on digital

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classrooms, the researcher has coined some interesting findings as there were some factors which might not be mandatory for face-to-face classes, but those factors played an important role in online classes. In digital classes, lack of physical appearance created a loophole between teachers and students. In classrooms, teachers could see the facial expressions and body language of students as non- verbal communication leaves an impact on both listeners and speakers. Similarly, students could get some positive energy from the physical presence of teachers in front of them. In this way, both the participants remained conscious about the choice of words and the content which was being shared with each other during exchanges in class, but digital classrooms lack such presence, so teachers had to apply some strategies to make students active and alert throughout the sessions. In other words, teachers had to put some extra effort into making the digital classes smooth and continuous.

The researcher has observed digital classroom discourses of five different individuals (two male and three female teachers) and found the huge variation across the board which is based on their experience, comfort zone, self-consciousness, and self-control, pressure of being monitored by high-ups, digital anxiety and many other such things. The purpose of the researcher was not only to categorize the collected data in speech acts stated by Sinclair (1992) rather than to coin something novel (categories) in digital classrooms. For example, there were many instances when teachers used self-elicit as gap-filler in order to keep the students engaged and to avoid silence along with elicitations which are mentioned in analysis. In Sinclair and Coulthard's model (1992), Initiation is directly followed by a response, but it is not always the case as being observed from the collected data which compelled the researcher to dig out those new factors or categories which contributed to digital classroom discourses. The following are the few examples of self-elicit by teacher and students:

Self-Elicit (Teacher)

Exchange # 19
Example 1
T : Let me see.. If I can find out... (self-elicit)
Example 2
T : Mmm.. Manage teams.. Pending requests.. I have got two pending requests.
Exchange # 21

Example 3
T: Let me see. How can i? Example 4
T: Hmm. I am trying to figure out... Example 5
T: Where do I get the list of participants?
Exchange # 23

Example 6
T: I see someone is raising hand.. may be it's a mistake.
Exchange # 49
Example 7
T: So we are right on the dot.
Exchange # 50
Example 8
T: I don't know if you are happy.
Exchange # 51
Example 9
T: But I am quite happy with what we have discussed today.
Exchange # 52
Example 10
T : And I hope things make sense now.
Exchange # 69
Example 11
T: I think I have already told you.
Exchange # 70
Example 12
T: Hmm. We have talked about language and dialect.
Exchange # 86
Example 13
T: If we could have scientific formula to decide about dialect..
Exchange # 99

Example 14
T: Hmm.. I hope everyone has marked attendance.
Exchange # 138
Example 15
T: I think you have understood it.
Exchange # 139
Example 16
T: Well, we will do these exercises in next class may be.
Exchange # 141
Example 17
T : I am emphasizing vowels.
Exchange # 164
Example 18
T: Should I mute you? I am going to mute you all.
Exchange # 186
Example 19
T: Ahmm.. I should unmute you for a while. Example 20
T: This is what I wanted to check.

There are many instances from the collected data of digital classroom discourses where teachers used self-elicit strategy and the researcher has found extracts which revealed that initiation by teacher is coupled with self-elicit at times during the class as gap-filler. Accordingly, Initiation by the teacher is not directly followed by the response of students as suggested by Sinclair and Coulthard's model (1992) rather there may be some other factors between them. For instance, the researcher has proposed

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self-elicit strategy by teacher may be considered as important factor in teaching exchanges as it somehow compensated the temporary communication gap between teachers and students. Since the teachers were using self-elicit strategy to cope with the situation, shifting from traditional classrooms to digital classrooms was novel to them. For instance, 'If I can find…. , I am trying to figure out , Hmmm.. Pending requests…, I hope you have understood it… , I don't know if you are happy… , This is what I wanted to check. These examples somehow show digitalanxiety or may be a try to manage with the uncertain changes in digital classrooms like digital intrusions or arriving students randomly for class or unfamiliarity with the new technology- dependent virtual learning set-up.

Many examples of self-elicit by students were also found in digital classroom discourses by the researcher which clearly showed that Initiation by the teacher was not directly followed by the response of students as desired by the teacher in response to his/her elicit rather it could be self – elicit by the students at times for some reasons like may be audibility, digital interruption or many individuals speaking at a time etc.

Students (Self-Elicit)
Example 1
S: Hmm. I have. Example 2
S: They are removing us from meeting again. Example 3
S: Hmm. There are two logs.
Example 4 S: It's me. Example 5
S: Voice is not clear to me. Example 6
S: I can't hear at all Example 7
S: We can hear each other but we can't hear Sir. Example 8
S: Hmm.. Getting better Example 9
S: Is distribution a variety? Ok. Example 10
S: I couldn't understand.

Sinclair and Coulthard (1992) lack clarity about the possibility for a student or a teacher to Self- elicit. Sinclair and Coulthard (1992) suggested that this category was perplexed for items and they have trouble dealing with (Atkins, 2001). The researcher has found that self-elicit may be considered as the managerial skill in digital classrooms as most of the students and teachers were unfamiliar with digital classroom setups. Though it is not elucidated as the mandatory part of every exchange between teachers and students but it was highly required when there was some interruption in online classes and the researcher observed that there were many such instances where both the teachers and students were required to use self-elicit strategy. The teachers' role is usually defined to the opening and follow-up move in classrooms either physical or digital classrooms, and there is no doubt that

distinct role is always played by the teacher. Sinclair and Coulthard (1992) stated, "A typical exchange in the classroom consists of an initiation by the teacher, followed by a response from the pupil" .

The researcher has found some of the instances where students initiated after the initiation of teacher rather than giving response to the teacher's elicitation as suggested by Sinclair and Coulthard's (1992) model in digital discourses. It has been observed that the initiation of teacher may be followed by the initiation of student in online classes instead of the desired response to the elicitation by the teacher. The researcher has coined the term Re-initiation (re-in) for it. The following are the examples of initiation followed by another initiation:

Example 11
T: Can we say social distribution for a variety? (Initiation)
S: What is the link of social distribution and individuality? (Re-Initiation) Example 12
T: Dialect is different from standard language (Initiation).
S: Can we say standard language an official language? (Re-Initiation) Example 13
T: So, we can say that language is mixture of sounds (Initiation).
S: Ma'am can we say that language is mixture of different dialects? (Re-Initiation) Example 14
T: Idiolect is individual speech variety of a speaker (Initiation).
S: Are systematic and phonological contrary to each other? (Re-Initiation)

Example 15
T: But there is point where non-native speakers become helpless to achieve RP (Initiation). S: Are we talking about learning a second language? (Re-Initiation

Example 16
T: One individual is different from other individual even in the same dialect (Initiation). S: Can dialect be different in the same society? (Re-Initiation)

The three moves labeled by Sinclair and Coulthard's (1992) model are Opening, Answering and Follow-up. Sinclair and Coulthard (1992) mentioned that the objective of a given opening may be transferring information or guiding an action or stating a fact. The opening move is generally to give directions to the students to actively participate in the discourse. The answering move is generally a response from the students as required by the teacher. The researcher has found that response may not be the relevant answer to the teacher's elicitation rather it could be another initiation, and the teacher dealt with great concern to compensate physical presence in virtual learning environment. It can be seen from the above examples that Initiation is not only part of the teacher's speech but rather it may

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be opted by the students when required. There were many instances which showed that student's initiation demanded teacher's response so it is not only meant for students rather it may be required from both sides in digital classroom as these virtual classes lack physical presence. Somehow it may be indicated that the level of uncertainty is high in online classes as it is a new practice for both the stakeholders.

The researcher has also found many instances in digital classroom discourses where teachers used reinforcement to ensure that students comprehended the content. Thus, the researcher has suggested a new exchange, and it is labeled as a 'reinforcement exchange' which may be imposed by the teacher after initiation and sometimes after response of students. The researcher believed that Reinforcement may be considered as pre-requisite in digital classrooms as it somehow compensates for the physical presence of students. The following are the examples of the teacher's reinforcement after Initiation (Elicitation).

Example 17
T: Well, I shared some of interesting clips with you. Did you watch them? Example 18
T: Next point is very important. You need to understand. Okay. Example 19
T: We still have time… Don't we? Example 20
T: Dialect is an expression of language. Did you understand? Example 21
T: Let me summarize for you again. Example 22
T: It also tells you that the weather is heating up day by day. Okay? Example 23
T: Have you read arbitrariness? Can you tell me? Example 24
T: You cannot change the date of exam. Do it? Why don't you do it?

Following are the examples of teacher's reinforcement after answering move of students.
Example 25
S: Listening. (Response)
T: This is what I wanted to check. (Reinforcement) Example 26
S: Yes Sir (Response)
T: OK. Got it? (Reinforcement) Example 27
S: It is related to psychology (Response).
T: Yes! It is related to psychology (Reinforcement). Example 28
S: To make it understandable (Response).
T: Yes! To make it memorable (Reinforcement). Example 29
S: We are bound (Response).
T: You are bound (Reinforcement) Example 30
S: Choices (Response)
T: Choices. Yes! (Reinforcement)

In this analysis, follow-up was common but not mandatory (optional) and included Sinclair and Coulthard's (1992) acts. The researcher has included a new teaching exchange labeled as "Reinforcement exchange' to this analysis in order to look for the 'speak and reinforce' aspect of the lesson and have structured it as SR (F). This exchange is implemented by the teacher as he/she is required to speak and reinforce in digital classes. Furthermore, the researcher has found few instances in digital classroom discourses when there was digital interruption and students kept on complaining to teachers about the distorted voice as they were unable to listen to the teacher may be because of internet connectivity, zoom hang over or any other issue. The researcher has observed those statements of teachers to settle down the situation and make students comfortable with the online session as the main responsibility lied with the teachers for the successful conduction of online classes. The following are the instances when teachers tried to cope with the digital interruption:

Example 31
S: Excuse me Sir T: Yes!
S: Sir please accept the pending request. T: Sorry, say it again.
S: Sir, accept the pending request. T: Just hang on. Let me see.
Example 32
S: Excuse me sir.
T. Yes
S: Sir please make us attendee. T: Ok. Let me do that.
T: Can anybody tell me where I can see these options? Example 33
S: You are not audible sir.
T: Am I not audible to everyone or two, three students. S: Sir your voice is breaking.
T: Breaking? Let me check my internet connection. Example 34
S: Sir, you video is getting paused again and again. T: How is it now?
S: Sir, it is much better now.
T: Much better now. Wonderful Example 35
S: Sir, attendance?
T: You remained my attendees so isn't it marked already? Example 36
S: Ma'am, we can't hear you at all
T: Hmm... Should I call off and arrange your class in the evening? S: No ma'am

It can be seen from the above examples that teachers keep on addressing students' concerns because the dynamics of online classes are different from face-to face classes. Teachers had to put more effort into encountering challenges of online classes and making students comfortable with virtual learning set-up.

While implementing Sinclair and Coulthard's (1992) model on recorded online lectures, two more categories are proposed by the researcher which may be useful for describing digital

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classroom discourses and may be considered as an addition to Sinclair's speech act (1992) categories when applied for digital classes. The first identified category is named as 'Confirmation' (conf) and the other one is titled as 'Repetition' (rpt) in digital classroom discourses. The following extracts are taken from the data:

Example 37

T: Am I not audible to everyone? (conf) S: Excuse me sir! Your voice is breaking. T: Breaking? (rpt)

Example 38

T: Am I audible now? (Conf) Example 39

S: Sir it is much better now. T: Much better now (rpt). Example 40

T: We still have time. Don't we? (Conf) Example 41

T: You remained my attendee so isn't it marked already? (Conf) Example 42

T: Got it? (conf) Example 43

S: It is related to psychology.

T: It is related to psychology (rpt). Example 43

S: Like word cuckoo T: Cuckoo (rpt) Example 44

T: Is it so? (conf) Example 45

Did you understand? (rpt) Example 46

S: Language is not a by-product.

T: Language is not a by-product (rpt). Example 47

T: Is that clear? (conf) Example 48

T: You there. Hello? (Conf) Example 49

T: Is someone saying anything? (Conf)

It can be seen from the above-mentioned extracts that these categories were frequently identified in digital classroom discourses. It is evident that teachers were required to use 'Confirmation and Repetition' to make students comfortable with digital content. These categories were not found from Sinclair's speech act categories (1992) and were not considered in classroom discourse analysis as those might not be required for traditional classroom learning. The researcher has coined these categories as they may be considered mandatory for online classes and digital classroom discourses may be described in a better way. The phrases like Am I not audible to everyone…, Got it., Is it so., Is that clear., showed that teachers were concerned with the comprehension of students to a great extent. Moreover, they kept on doing repetition after students many times to keep them engaged and absorbed in the consumption of digital content. In addition, it may be considered that teachers were keeping students in comfort zone by doing repetition to encourage them to participate actively in virtual learning environment.

This type of analysis can play an important role in helping teachers to become aware of how structure of the language and language affects digital classrooms. The researcher has found that teachers used language consciously because they knew that all lectures are being recorded and monitored by the top management. Teachers can structure the language for better communication if they know about its functions properly.

Research Findings

The conduction of virtual learning set-up was challenging and laborious for both the stake-holders such as coping with digital anxiety digital intrusions and unplanned interruptions etc.

The researcher coined two new terms which were observed as pre-requisite for the conduction of online classes as these were frequently used in online classes.

Conclusion

The present study discusses how digital classroom discourses fit into Sinclair and Coulthard's (1992) rank scale model, but unfortunately, the researcher has concluded that the model does not fully cover what was happening in digital classrooms. The researcher has encountered some obstacles in trying to apply this model to digital classrooms and proposed concisely few adaptations which could be compiled to account for the complicated nature of discourse which occurs in digital classrooms. Apart from the problems, the researcher observed that most of the data does seem to fit in the given categories. The researcher believes that the exercise of this model is useful for the teachers who desire to get great understanding and feedback about the digital classes which they conduct.

The researcher has proposed that if this model may be modified a bit from IRF to I (S) RRF, where S may be optional along and two more categories Confirmation (Conf) and Repetition (rpt) may be added in Sinclair's (1992) speech act categories; a better description of digital classrooms may be presented.

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