

The Causes of Learners' Reticence and Passivity in English Classrooms in Taiwan

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This present study tries to find out the reasons why Taiwanese learners of English language behave passively in the classroom participation. A classroom-centered multiple-case approach was employed. Data were collected from a variety of sources: video-recorded classroom observation, interviewing with teachers and students, and a questionnaire to the students. In the data elicitation process, in order to obtain detailed information from learners, when interviewing with the subject students, the researcher used learners' answers on the questionnaire as prompts to ask for more explanations. This study identifies that learners' reticence can be explained by a variety of reasons including keeping group harmony, the fear of losing face, the fear of showing off, the teachers' intolerance of silence, and the insufficient wait-time. Based on these findings, suggestions are made for language teachers and educators to encourage more verbal contributions from learners.

Key words: reticence, passivity, learner's verbal participation

INTRODUCTION

Reticence on the part of students in second or foreign language classrooms has received increasing attention in recent decades (Jackson, 2002; Liu & Jackson, 2009; Tsui, 1996). It is, however, interpreted as a barrier for language learning practice since in-class participation is thought of as an

activity that can develop learners' ability to apply the newly- learnt knowledge (Sivan, Leung, Woon, & Kember, 2000) on the spot and learners' verbal contributions are also the important evidence that learners "move from semantic processing prevalent in comprehension, to the syntactic processing needed for production" (Swain & Lapkin, 1995, p. 375). By employing observation, interviewing, and surveys, research studies have revealed that learners, especially Asian learners, often seem reticent and quiet in language classes.

Unexceptionally, students' reticence is also common occurrence in language classrooms in Taiwan. Based on my sixteen-year learning experience in this island, among the classmates I have observed, few are active to participate in classroom activities, but most of them are indeed reticent and passive not only in English but also in other content classrooms (e.g., math classrooms). Triggered by my previous classroom experience, the study tries to find out what accounts for this phenomenon and how a language teacher can do to help learners take a more active role in class? In the following sections, a brief literature review will present the information which was found to have influences on learners' in-class oral practice in foreign language literature. Then, after the introductions to the employed methodological stance, the research tools, and the data analysis procedures respectively, the findings of the present study will be shown in the discussion section. Finally, the recommendations and suggestions made for language teachers to encourage more active roles on behalf of students will be shown in the conclusion part.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Educational researchers often attribute Asian students' reticence to 'Confucianism' (Kennedy, 2002; Scollon & Scollon, 1995). The legacies of Confucius, (551-479 BC) have influenced the cultures in many Asian countries for more than two thousand years (O'keefe & O'keefe, 1997). The

major tenets of Confucian legacies include “respect for hierarchy and age, group orientation and preservation of face...Confucian imperative of working to achieve harmony, to which all other goals are subordinate” (Chen & Pan, 1993, p. 13, quoted in O’keefe & O’keefe, 1997). Students in Asian countries respect their knowledgeable teachers. Obedience to authority, passivity in class, and lack of critical thinking (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) are all indications of this respect.

However, more and more researchers criticize this explanation and view it as a ‘cultural stereotype’ and a ‘questionable myth’ (Cheng, 2000; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Liu & Littlewood, 1997). They provide opposite research findings. First of all, students’ passivity does not only occur in classrooms in Asian countries. In some research studies, English speaking North American students do not actively participate in classroom interaction since they also experience some kind of anxiety when learning other foreign languages (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). In addition, some studies in language classrooms in Asian countries also find that students are active and enthusiastic to participate in classroom conversation and to respond to teachers’ questions (Littlewood & Liu, 1996). The statement that Asian students are passive is obviously over-generalized. As Cheng (2000) claims *some* researchers in *some* studies allege *some* Asian students are passive and reticent, but it does not mean *all* Asian students are passive and reticent in *all* classrooms. Moreover, Cheng (2000) also argues that Confucius does advocate respect for knowledgeable persons, and nobody can see anything wrong with this deserved respect. However, respecting knowledgeable teachers does not mean that students should be quiet and be reluctant to respond to teachers’ questions. He concludes the idea of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners’ reticence and passivity is a myth rather than a universal truth.

Except for Confucianism, researchers have discovered various reasons to explain this phenomenon. Based on the sociolinguistic theoretical stance and the combination of discourse analysis and ethnographic procedures, Westgate, Batey, Brownlee, and Butler (1985) claim that the structure of teacher-

fronted interaction in language classrooms might cause the poor behaviors on the part of students. Because of the “differentials in power relationships” (Stables & Wikeley, 1999) between teachers and students, little interactional space is being granted to the learners. The discourse patterns in language classrooms are under the control of the teacher and this makes classroom talk unnatural (Burns & Myhills, 2004; Musumeci, 1996; Seidlitz, 2003; Walsh, 2002). The students, according to Westgate's observation, attempted to avoid talking to deal with such classroom settings, which in turn exerts influences on the amount of learners' talk in class. The study conducted by Lee (2006) is also in support of the above findings. According to Lee's observation, there are strict behavioral rules between the teacher and students in English classrooms in Taiwan. In most cases, students only speak when they are spoken to. The character of the interaction between the teacher and students is that the teacher leads students initiatively and students' verbal participation is passive.

Moreover, language competence, previous negative speaking experiences in class, lack of confidence, personality, or cultural constrains are all possible reasons for this reticence to speak in foreign language classroom settings (Liu & Jackson, 2009; Tani, 2005; Tsui, 1996). As Jackson (2003) claims, reticence is a complex phenomenon in language classrooms, since it is provoked by a set of linguistic, psychological, cultural, and social factors. It deserves educational researchers making more effort on this issue. The present study, therefore, tries to explore this issue in more depth and to make new contributions to foreign language literature by especially focusing on the causes of passivity and reticence on the part of Taiwanese students in English classrooms.

METHODOLOGY

Methodological Stance

The methodological viewpoint was determined by the purpose of the

present research. This research tries to examine what elements may exert influences on learners' speaking and responding behaviors. Therefore, the approach of case studies was used. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000), it can provide unique examples of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly. Instead of a single-case-study model, the present research adopted a multiple-case design, since in multiple cases each individual case study is composed of a 'whole' study, in which facts are gathered from a variety of sources and conclusions are drawn on those facts (Tellis, 1997).

Educational research can be done either by observation or by introspection (Salmani-Nodoushan, 2006). However, I employed both of them, observation can help me to record the language use and behaviors of the teacher and students via technological tools for later transcription and analysis. On the other hand, introspection is also necessary in order to ask subjects to introspect and reflect on their experience. The researcher can do introspection by interviewing the subjects, giving them questionnaires to respond to, or conducting stimulated recall tasks with them.

In their earlier studies, Young (1990) and Fassinger (1995) employed a quantitative analysis to identify the factors which affect learners' classroom participation. Such an approach is useful to find possible factors behind learners' speaking behaviors. However, Schmidt (1995) states that research adopting qualitative techniques may more effectively generate insights which are closer to learners' views and interpretations. In Hsu's (2001) qualitative research, in order to discover the detailed information regarding the reasons which influenced learners' questioning and responding practice, four focal students were selected to respond to two questionnaires and to participate in two semi-structured interviews. The samples from such a qualitative research are not meant to represent large populations. Instead, small and purposeful samples of articulate respondents are used since they can provide useful information (Sale, Lohfeld, & Brazil, 2002).

Therefore, I decided to employ a classroom-centered multiple-case approach with the qualitative analysis. I tried to gather data using a variety of

techniques— classroom observation, interviewing with both teachers and students and a questionnaire to students so as to obtain multiple points of view.

Research Methods

Classroom observation can help me to gain an in-depth understanding of the classroom settings and discover how learners talk and participate in the classroom activities. I observed English classrooms in three senior high schools in Taiwan. Four teachers and twelve students (aged between 16-17) from four different classes (three students for each class) participated in this study in the second semester of the academic year 2006. When observing the classroom, I was a 'complete observer' (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtler, 2006) and I stood apart from which was being observed (Mulhall, 2003) and tried to remain as objective and unobtrusive as possible (Slavin, 1992). Video-recording was employed as well because of many non-verbal 'visual interactional cues' (Dufon, 2002) which can not be observed clearly by the human researcher.

Stimulated recall interview of video-recorded classroom observation is "an introspection procedure in which (normally) videotaped passages of behaviors are replayed to individuals to stimulate recall of their concurrent cognitive activity" (Lyle, 2003, p. 861). Therefore, the approach of the stimulated recall interview was conducted in the present study to ask for explanations from the teachers about learners' verbal participation in class. Two stimulated recall interviews were held for each teacher within three days after the recorded observation since I have to minimize the time delay between event and recall to increase data validity (Gass & Mackey, 2000).

A questionnaire was issued to students first and then a following audio-recorded interview was conducted with students individually. The reason why I conducted a questionnaire to students prior to interviewing is that students unfamiliar with the researcher may be reluctant to divulge relevant information (Hopkins, 2002). Therefore, I decided to carry out the

questionnaire and the subsequent interview with 12 ‘focal students’, in Hsu’s (2001) terms, respectively. During the interview with individual focal students, I used the items on the questionnaire that the focal subjects already answered beforehand as the prompts to elicit further information from them.

The questionnaire in the present research aims to acquaint the 12 focal students with the questions I am going to ask in the subsequent interviews in order to elicit detailed information from them. However, I did not design all question items. Instead, I modified most of them from other researchers. Because there are many similar questionnaires in existence, which can suit my purpose, there is no point in reinventing the wheel (Williams, 2003). In my questionnaire, the question items 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 were adapted from Young’s research (1990); the question items 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 15, 20, and 23 were modified from Hsu’s research (2001); the questionnaire items 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 21 were adjusted from Fassinger’s research (1995). The first nine question items are associated with learners’ attitudes towards speaking and responding in class, while the others are linked with the dynamic classroom interaction between teachers and students. The Likert scale was employed and was slightly re-modified as a 4-point scale: Strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The middle option ‘undecided’ between ‘agree’ and ‘disagree’ was eliminated in this research since Asian respondents prefer choosing it to answer all of the questions (Mitchell, 1999; cited in McGorry, 2000). In addition to the Likert scale, for each question item, I also leave space for respondents to write free comments in their own words to explain and to avoid the limitations of pre-set categories of response (Cohen et al., 2000). It is very suitable for seeking narrative information (Marshall, 2005) and for smaller scale research so as to invite genuine and personal comments from the respondents (Cohen et al., 2000).

Validity and Reliability

In this research study, a variety of research methods were employed, but the question is how we can know the measuring instruments measure what

we suppose to measure. That is, we need to ensure the repeatability of the research results. These are related to the notions of reliability and validity (Golafshani, 2003). However, as I mentioned earlier, the current study is classroom-centered multiple-case research which is primarily based on qualitative analysis. Many qualitative researchers claim that the concepts of reliability and validity in quantitative research should be considered before being applied in the qualitative research paradigm (Golafshani, 2003).

According to Stenbacka (2001), since reliability concerns measurements, it has no relevance in qualitative research. If reliability is discussed in qualitative research as a criterion, the consequence is that the study is not good. Other researchers such as Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that dependability in qualitative research closely corresponds to the notion of reliability in quantitative research and they also state that "since there can be no validity without reliability, a demonstration of the former [validity] is sufficient to establish the later" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316). This is supported by Golafshani (2003). Golafshani believes that to maximize the validity leads to the reliability of qualitative studies and suggests that the use of triangulation to maximize validity is appropriate. Triangulation conveys the idea that establishing a fact you need more than one source of information (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007), since to exclusively rely on one method may bias or distort the researcher's picture of the reality he/she is investigating (Lin, 1976, cited in Cohen et al., 2000). This triangulation in the process of interpretation of data as well as in the collection of them builds in layers of description, therefore leading to a "richly detailed description" (Lodico et al., 2006, p. 268) and validates the collected research data.

Data Analysis

The data for analysis came from the observation transcripts, the questionnaire results, and the retrieved information from the interviews with focal students and subject teachers. 24 class periods were videotaped and twenty of them which include teacher- student interaction were transcribed

verbatim for further analysis. All participants were assigned pseudonyms. Four subject teachers are TA, TB, TC, and TD. FS1, FS2, ... and FS12 stand for 12 focal students. All of the participant teachers are female. That is because the majority of English teachers in secondary schools in Taiwan are female. The current study, however, does not involve the investigation of 'female' language or anything related to gender issues. 12 focal students were selected based on their willingness, in some cases, if no one would like to be a volunteer, selections were held randomly. Among these subjects, there are more male students than female ones. This is because compared with their female classmates, male students were much more willing to be interviewed by me. Choosing focal students based on their willingness helps me to build a good relationship with them. I think it's especially important to demonstrate respect during the formal study for subjects (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). The twelve students helped me gain a more in-depth understanding of the causes that impact on the responding behaviors of different students. Their personal profiles are listed below.

TABLE 1
Focal Student Profiles

Student	English Teacher	Gender
FS1	TA	M
FS2	TA	F
FS3	TA	F
FS4	TB	F
FS5	TB	M
FS6	TB	M
FS7	TC	F
FS8	TC	M
FS9	TC	M
FS10	TD	M
FS11	TD	F
FS12	TD	M

In order to analyze the interview data, I try to familiarize myself with the transcribed data. This is done by listening to tapes and reading the transcripts

several times. The purpose of such familiarization is to immerse the researcher in the details and get a sense that every interview should be viewed as a whole before breaking it into parts (Rabiee, 2004). The students' answers to the questionnaire were counted and the illustration of the results were shown in Appendix A. I also checked the consistency in the written comments and narrative responses of focal students, and analyzed similarities and differences in their responses.

After I transcribed and analyzed all of the observed data, interviewing information and the questionnaire results, I tried to generate the causes which may exert influences on learners' speaking and responding behaviors by relying on naturally occurring data, with no attempt to 'fit' the data to predetermined classifications. Evidence that such categories exist and are utilized by the participants must be shown by examples from the data (Walsh, 2002). Here are three phases for me to generate the classifications in this study. First, I noted down important and tentative ideas associating with students' in-class verbal behaviors when I went over the transcribed data again and again. Second, I used the 'constant comparative method' (Thorne, 2000). That is, I compared all of the collected data from different sources. This strategy involves taking one piece of data and comparing it with the others which may be similar or different so as to develop conceptualizations of the relations between various data and to make my cause identification much more reliable. Third, I organized these naturally- occurring causes in a proper manner and modified them several times to ensure they captured the learners' in-class verbal behaviors as presented in the data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The generated causes which influenced on learners' in-class speaking practice in this study were identified by comparing and analyzing all of the related data from the different sources. These causes of learners' reticence and passivity in Taiwanese English classrooms are as follows:

Cause 1: Maintaining Group Harmony

When analyzing the research data, I found that the responses of the focal students towards the question item 2 are not in agreement. Half the students agreed while the other half of the students disagreed about this question. When interviewing the focal students so as to clarify their choices, I was impressed by the explanation from FS2.

FS2: For me, I am not willing to speak in class when I am the only person answering a question. Every single activity in school is a group activity.

I am concerning about the opinions of other students. Some students do not like someone speaking alone frequently. You should follow your classmates' rules and do not speak too much. Remember, you are a member of the group.

Maintaining group harmony in language classrooms is a reason which affects learners' speaking and responding behaviors (Cheng, 2000; Jackson, 2002; Kennedy, 2002). As Bond (1992, cited in Kennedy, 2002) said, there is strong pressure for some learners to conform and act in the interests of the group. Compromise, moderation, and the maintenance of harmonious relationships are approved while individualism is disapproved.

Cause 2: The Fear of 'Face Losing'

There is agreement among most of the focal students about the question item 3. Although some of the focal students (FS5, FS8 and FS9) claimed that speaking in front of the class makes them brave, most of the focal subjects stated that they cared about others' opinions and they were afraid of making mistakes in front of their classmates.

FS3: When I respond to the teacher's question privately, in spite of making mistakes, others cannot hear it. If I respond and make errors in public, I am humiliated, since everyone knows I make mistakes.

FS6: When responding in private, I do not need to care about others. However, when responding in front of other students, I feel everyone corrects my mistakes.

I: Do you feel uncomfortable?

FS6: Yes, their corrections make me lose face.

'Face' for Taiwanese students is not unlike that found in other countries. It means self-respect for one's feelings, dignity and how people viewed themselves socially in front of others (Babcock, 1993). The focal students above were concerned with how they are judged by others. They were very sensitive about making errors in public, which would be an obvious occasion of 'losing face' in the society in Taiwan. Clearly, the sensitivity of focal students to make mistakes, or fear of 'losing face' made them hold back from classroom conversation (Shumin, 2002).

Cause 3: The Fear of 'Showing Off'

In Jackson's (2002) explanations for reticent students, she points out that the subject students expressed concern about how their peers would regard them if they spoke up frequently in class. They did not want to be labeled as a 'show-off'. This occurrence is developed in language classes when learners are criticized or even ostracized by classmates if they are viewed as taking a more active role than the rest. Few focal students (e.g., FS8) agreed to the question item 9.

FS8: The students in Taiwan are very strange. When someone is trying to take a more active role, he/ she is thought of as being showing off.

Even though she disagreed to this question item, FS2 still believes more able students in class should not speak too much. Otherwise, they are bragging of their English ability.

FS2: My English is at the middle level in our class. I do not think other classmates

who have a better command of English will think I am showing off. However, if some more able students, like FS1, speak too much, I will think he is showing off.

Cause 4: Teachers' Uneven Allocation of Turns

Most of the focal students agreed with the question item 16 and they thought, in their classes, not only do their peers count on few more able students, but also their teachers prefer selecting the particular students who are able to provide the expected answers.

FS9: My teacher always chooses some particular students like FS8 to respond. These students are good at English.

I: Are you one of them?

FS9: Yes.

I: Do you think why your teacher would like to choose the students like you to answer her questions?

FS9: Because only we can offer the answers she needs.

Indeed, based on the following observed data taken from Teacher C's class, Teacher C very often relied on FS8 (Mark) to do all the verbal interaction with her.

Excerpt 1:

TC: ...Let's look at the questions. Page 223. Number one. Mother is always talking about the importance of water conservation. Let's get FS8 to answer all of the questions. He must know the answers. (All students laugh)

TC: (Laugh) FS8, come on.

FS8: Can I just do the question two, please?

TC: Ok. FS8, number 2....

During Teacher C's stimulated recall interview with me, she gave me the

following accounts for her preferences for FS8.

I: According to my observations, you usually call on more able students like Mark to answer your questions, right?

TC: Yes. I indeed prefer choosing more able students to respond. I asked Mark questions often since, on the basis of my experience, he often responds voluntarily in whole-class discussion. I want to save time and keep the classroom activities going well, so I choose him. I know he is able and willing to provide correct answers. I do not have faith in other students. If I select others, they won't reply and there will be an awkward tension in the air in the classroom.

From the interview data, TC revealed that she felt uneasy when she failed to get responses from students. In order to avoid these occasions, she tended to allocate turns to brighter students from whom she is sure of getting answers. As Tsui (1996) stated, some teachers' intolerance of silence in class and uneven allocation of turns might lead to reticence on the part of students in the language classroom.

Reason 5: Insufficient Wait-time after Teacher Questioning

When discussing his option on the questionnaire during face-to-face interviewing, FS12 commented on TD's teaching:

FS12: She is very nice and patient. Oh, there is one exception. She does not give me enough time to consider after posing questions. I cannot figure out the answers in time. I am quite frustrated in these situations.

The Situation mentioned by FS12 is demonstrated in the following observed classroom excerpt:

Excerpt 2:

TD: If you have a chance to go to Chiufen, what do you expect to see, FS12?

FS12: ...

TD: Have you been there? It is a beautiful city, isn't it? What kind of interesting things have you ever seen? As I know, there are many interesting things and gift shops there. Have you ever been to any stores?

FS12: ...

In these question-answer sequences, it can be found that Teacher D posed a series of questions at the same time and she did not wait for enough time for the FS12 to utter the replies. Insufficient wait-time after questions might be another possible reason why the students keep quiet in class.

Except the above findings, when analyzing the data, I also found that one focal student's written comments are inconsistent with what he later revealed during interviews.

In FS1's written comments in the questionnaire, FS1 dissented from the question item 7, but in his subsequent interview with me, he provided a contrary oral explanation.

FS1: Since the teacher selects respondents, not asks for volunteers, even if I know the answer, I don't respond.

I: Your answer is different from the written comment in the questionnaire.

FS1: Yes, I got confused, after a series of the repeated procedures of reading question items and choosing answers in the questionnaire.

By employing the questionnaire and interviewing techniques simultaneously to conduct research with young and inexperienced subjects, I eliminated possible problems and misunderstanding like this event demonstrated above. The implication here is that this combined research approach may be beneficial for future researchers to employ so as to verify the collected data.

On the basis of the research outcomes, five identified elements led to the focal students' passivity and reticence in Taiwanese classroom settings. They are 'the fear of losing face', 'maintaining group harmony', 'the fear of showing off', 'teachers' uneven turn allocation', and 'insufficient wait-time'. Among them, the last two elements are caused by the instructional demeanors

on the part of teachers. On the other hand, students revealed that the reasons such as 'face losing', 'group harmony', or 'showing off' may all affect their performance in the classroom, because Taiwanese students think they are members in a community. Those students care about others' opinions, try to behave properly, and follow the rules and the culture in their own classroom community.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

In accordance with the research findings, to encourage student in-class verbal participation, here are some suggestions not only for Taiwanese English teachers but also for English teachers in other countries, when they are aware of their students' passive verbal behaviors in classrooms. First of all, teachers can get students to write down their English answers and check the answers with their peers before offering them to the whole class. By doing so, the learners can not only rehearse their thoughts to each other in a low-risk situation, but also they can feel they have the support of their peers. Then, when they put their answers forward, the interrelationship among them would no longer inhibit them from speaking up in class (Tsui, 1996) and the problems of 'showing off' and 'group harmony maintenance' can be easily resolved. In addition, the majority of focal students expressed that 'the fear of making errors' and 'the fear of losing face' in public are the other reasons that inhibited them from responding to teacher's questions. Language teachers can encourage their students to speak by helping them establish positive attitudes towards speaking errors (Hsu, 2001). Teachers can explain to students that making mistakes while speaking the language they are learning is acceptable not only because everyone makes mistakes, but also because that is an inevitable part of language learning. Most importantly, teachers are recommended that they should lengthen the wait-time in their classroom lectures. This has been mentioned for a thousand times in language classroom research. It sounds like a cliché, but it is a real necessity. Take the

Excerpt 2 as an example, after Teacher D posed a question to the student, if Teacher D could have slowed down the speed of her initiations and have explicitly told FS8 to take his time to think about the answers, this would increase the percentage of the learner's successful and correct responses.

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APPENDIX

Results of Questionnaire

Item	Focal Subjects												Mean	All
	FS1	FS2	FS3	FS4	FS5	FS6	FS7	FS8	FS9	FS10	FS11	FS12		
1. I am more willing to respond in class if I prepare in advance.	2	1	1	3	2	3	2	2	2	1	3	1	1.9	*
2. I am more willing to speak in class if I am not the only person answering a question.	1	1	1	3	1	3	3	3	3	1	3	2	2.0	
3. I feel more comfortable answering the teacher's questions when I do not have to do it in front of the whole class.	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	2	2.0	*
4. I would not want to answer a question because I may not be correct.	3	4	4	2	4	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	2.9	#
5. I prefer being called upon by the teacher rather than volunteering an answer.	2	3	3	1	3	3	2	3	3	1	3	2	2.4	#
6. I feel less comfortable answering the teacher's questions in front of my classmates whom I know very well.	3	3	2	3	4	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	2.8	#
7. When the teacher asks a question in class, I prefer not to respond to it even if I know the answer	3	3	4	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	2	2.6	#
8. Usually, I do not respond to questions during whole-class discussion unless I am called upon.	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	2.4	*
9. If I often volunteer to answer questions, my classmates may think I am showing off.	2	4	4	3	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	2.8	#
10. Our teacher often encourages us to speak in class.	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1.6	**
11. My classmates in this class do not respect each other's views.	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	4	2	4	3	3	3.2	#
12. I feel pressure if I do not respond to the teachers' questions in class.	2	1	4	2	4	1	3	3	3	2	2	3	2.4	
13. Our English teacher is supportive.	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	3	1.5	*
14. My classmates are supportive of their peers in this class.	2	2	1	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	2	3	2.2	*
15. Our English teacher has a good sense of humor	2	1	1	2	2	3	2	1	2	1	2	2	1.8	*
16. When responding to the teacher's questions, my classmates depend on a few students to do it.	3	1	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	1	1	1	2.1	*

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17. Our teacher does not interrupt students when they are speaking.	2	3	1	3	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	1.8	*
18. My classmates discourage others from appearing too confident.	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	2.6	#
19. My classmates do not pay attention when others are speaking.	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2.5	#
20. Our teacher respects what we say.	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	1.4	**
21. Many of my friendships with others have been made through this class.	4	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	4	3	2	3	2.9	#
22. Our teacher praises students very often.	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1.8	**
23. Generally speaking, I think this class makes me feel comfortable to speak.	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	2	2	2	1	3	2.4	

Notes: 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=disagree, 4=strongly disagree,
 **=all agree, *=largely agree, #=largely disagree.

The tables above list the questionnaire items along with the responses from the focal subjects agreeing or disagreeing with each item (strongly agree=1, agree=2, disagree=3, and strongly disagree=4). The symbols ‘**’ and ‘*’ that appear in the last column indicate the degree of agreement which has been reached by all focal students or most of them on a particular item. ‘#’ represents disagreement among the majority of focal students. In addition, those items that do not have any symbols in the last column represent the inconsistency among the responses of focal students.

** = All agree (all the responses are ‘1=strongly agree’ or ‘2=agree’)

* = Largely agree (more than a half of the responses are ‘1=strongly agree’ or ‘2=agree’)

= Largely disagree (more than a half of the responses are ‘3=disagree’ or ‘4=strongly disagree’)