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Functions of ESP Teachers' Classroom Language: A Conversation Analysis Perspective

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***Abstract*—The language used by foreign language teachers in the classroom serves a dual role: as a means of communication and as a source of rich, meaningful input for learners. From a Conversation Analysis (CA) perspective, EFL teachers' classroom language actively shapes interaction with learners, as it can either facilitate or hinder their oral performance and may discourage or encourage their initiation to use the language. This study explores the classroom language functions of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teachers in Vietnamese universities. Sixteen hours of classroom time, drawn from English for Transportation and English for Tourism and Hospitality courses taught by eight ESP teachers, were recorded, transcribed and analyzed using CA approach. The data analysis showed three main functions of teachers' classroom language: classroom management, pedagogical function, and feedback provision. Quantitative results indicated that classroom management accounted for only a small proportion of classroom discourse, while pedagogical function and feedback provision were almost equally dominant. Qualitative findings further highlighted specific sub-functions within each category. For classroom management, ESP teachers primarily used discourse to monitor time and regulate learning pace. Within pedagogical function, delivering instructions emerged as the most common sub-function, whereas providing corrective feedback was most frequent in the feedback provision category. The analysis also revealed how teachers integrated different sub-functions and functions of their discourse to facilitate students' speaking. These findings underscore the crucial role of ESP teachers' classroom language and point to the need for training in classroom discourse for both EFL and ESP teachers.**

***Index Terms*—functions, ESP, classroom language, conversation analysis, teacher talk**

I. Introduction

In the context of modern second and foreign language education, teacher classroom discourse has become more widely acknowledged as crucial. The language that teachers use in their classroom is considered not only as an indicator of language communication and classroom management but also a source of input for language knowledge (Freeman et al., 2015; Nasir et al., 2019; Nguyen & Pham, 2024). In addition to using language to convey instructional content, teachers provide learners with essential linguistic input and create opportunities for them to develop their own language skills through teacher–student interactions (Freeman et al., 2015; Pham, 2018; Walsh, 2002).

As "an approach to language teaching that targets the current and/or future academic or occupational needs of learners" (Anthony, 2015, p. 2), English for Specific Purposes (ESP) differs from general English in that it places more emphasis on preparing university graduates to succeed in real communication in specific academic or professional situations rather than formal language use (Freeman et al., 2015; Kirkgöz & Dikilitaş, 2018). As such, it puts ESP teachers under more pressure in balancing between linguistic scaffolding and facilitating students in disciplinary domains (Anthony, 2015). Furthermore, the English that teachers use for instruction can be regarded as a special type of ESP, since classroom language contains features that may not be found in language use outside the school context (Cullen, 2002; Nguyen & Pham, 2024; Pham, 2018). Consequently, the classroom language of ESP teachers carries greater significance, and it requires even bigger attention.

Conversation Analysis (CA) has recently emerged as a valuable approach for examining classroom discourse in general and teachers' discourse in particular, attracting increasing scholarly attention (Allami et al., 2022; Derakhshan et al., 2023; Le & Pham, 2025; Narvacan & Metila, 2022). Originally introduced by Garfinkel (1967), CA was further developed by Sacks et al. (1974) and later advanced by Schegloff (2007), who emphasized its focus on the fine details of talk-in-interaction. This approach provides a potent means of comprehending how conversation features such as turn-taking, repairs, and sequential organization are used by participants (i.e., teachers and students) to regulate social interaction and create meaning. As pointed out by Raclaw (2015), the main strength of CA is its capacity to examine the sequential structure of conversations in its natural setting, offering insights into how classroom interaction both shapes

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and is shaped by teachers' classroom language. In ESP contexts, research adopting CA to examine teachers' classroom discourse can also help shed light on whether teachers can authentically scaffold students' comprehension of specialized knowledge or not. Therefore, CA is particularly well-suited for investigating ESP classroom interactions.

Although teacher oral discourse is viewed to be important (Freeman et al., 2015; Le & Pham, 2025; Narvacan & Metila, 2022; Pham, 2018; Walsh, 2002), significant gaps in research on teachers' classroom discourse persist. First, there is a wealth of research on classroom discourse in general English (e.g., Allami et al., 2022; Bui & Cao, 2023; Derakhshan et al., 2023; Hidayatullah, 2024; Nafisah & Setianingsih, 2024), but very few studies have looked at ESP contexts, where the dual focus on language and content may cause teacher discourse to serve different functions. Second, there is still a dearth of pertinent research on teachers' classroom language in ESP classrooms. Third, while several studies have adopted different frameworks for analyzing classroom discourse use (e.g., Gee, 2014; Hidayatullah, 2024; Rymes, 2022; Van Dijk, 2015), research that applies CA to ESP classroom interactions remains limited. The current study fills these gaps by examining the functions of ESP teachers' classroom language from a CA perspective. Specifically, it examines how teachers' oral discourse performs key functions that are well established in the literature on EFL classrooms. More importantly, it investigates how the adoption of CA can shed light on the ways these functions are realized in ESP classrooms, and how ESP teachers may either facilitate or constrain learners' oral performance through their language.

II. Literature Review

A. Defining Teachers' Classroom Language

Teachers' classroom language is often used interchangeably with *teacher talk* or *oral teacher discourse*. It is a type of instructional speech with a defined goal that can motivate and enlighten students, not just a chat or random talk (Song & Cheng, 2022). In the classroom setting, teachers utilize a unique language to engage and communicate with students, give instructions, raise questions, provide oral feedback, and elicit suggestions from students as well (Cullen, 2002; Dekker-Groen et al., 2014; Lilydahl, 2015; Noor et al., 2010). The characteristics of English used in the classroom are determined by the nature of teaching, its contents, objects, and surroundings. In this study, teachers' classroom language focuses on the language the teacher uses in ESP classrooms, especially in interactions with students through the lens of CA approach.

B. Functions of Teachers' Classroom Language in ESP Contexts

According to Cullen (2002), teachers' classroom language can take several functions, such as knowledge instruction, answering questions from students, lesson planning, and classroom management. More systematically, Freeman et al. (2015) classified EFL teachers' classroom language into three functional areas, including managing the classroom, teaching (i.e., communicating lesson contents) and giving feedback to language learners.

(a). Classroom Management

Managing classroom is an educational component that many aspiring teachers, new teachers, and even experienced instructors are most concerned about (Yunita et al., 2020). Primarily through their talk, teachers control what goes on in educational settings by organizing, facilitating, and regulating various tasks and activities that take place in the classrooms (Narvacan & Metila, 2022; Scrivener, 2012). With good classroom management, learning activities are well organized and the instructional goals can be met. Through teacher discourse, classroom management encompasses a range of sub-functions to ensure that the learning environment is conducive to achieving educational objectives (Scrivener, 2012; Yunita et al., 2020). Freeman et al. (2015) categorized the classroom routines of greeting students and organizing students into activities for classroom management. Terada (2019) claimed that teacher discourse can help improve classroom management and get rid of disruptive student behaviour. The goal of class management activities is to establish and preserve the classroom environment and conditions necessary for an effective teaching and learning process such as establishing productive group norms, fostering relationships between teachers and students, and offering reinforcement (Yunita et al., 2020). Although there are a variety of ways classifying classroom management through teacher talk, its widely accepted sub-functions highlight on how it is used for greetings, discipline maintaining, misbehaviour addressing, time and pace management, pair or group work organization, seating arrangement, and fostering a positive learning environment (Emmer & Evertson, 2016; Freeman et al., 2015; Harmer, 2015; Sabornie & Espelage, 2023; Scrivener, 2012; Sowell, 2017; Terada, 2019). Understanding diverse roles of oral discourse in classroom management highlights its values as a useful instrument that helps teachers successfully negotiate the dynamics of educational environment.

(b). Pedagogical – Teaching Function

In addition to classroom management, teachers' classroom language is central to the nature of teaching function, including delivering instructions, modelling the target language, explaining complex concepts, giving scaffolding, and promoting critical thinking. First of all, clear and concise instructions are essential for effective teaching. Freeman et al. (2015) claim that teachers, through their oral discourse, instruct learners to accomplish particular curricular and interactional ends in classrooms. Secondly, teachers' oral discourse is used in classrooms to model the target language

(Walsh, 2011). Teacher talk allows ESP instructors to impart knowledge and skills, resulting to the development of students' language and subject-related learning (Anthony, 2015; Kirkgöz & Dikilitaş, 2018). In addition to teaching grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, teacher talk in ESP settings also helps students understand how language functions in their disciplines. Thirdly, explaining complex concepts is one of teachers' roles in the educational process. Teachers frequently employ oral discourse to break down complicated themes into accessible components and demonstrate them with examples in contexts. This sub-function is often used in grammar explanation and introducing new terminology with definitions (Freeman et al., 2015; Walsh, 2002; Yanfen & Yuqin, 2010). Fourthly, teacher discourse is used as a tool to offer scaffolding to students' response (Vygotsky, 1978; Walsh, 2002). Naturally, a teacher is in charge of directing and assisting students in each learning process that occurs during teaching and learning activities (Yunita et al., 2020). Most often, communication breakdowns happen in classrooms because students are unfamiliar with a word or phrase or lack necessary communication skills. It is the ESP teacher's responsibility to intervene and give scaffolding by bridging the language and knowledge gaps, especially when undergraduate students are required to advance their proficiency in ESP skills and knowledge to secure their occupation opportunities in the globalized world (Kirkgöz & Dikilitaş, 2018; Stan, 2022). In addition, promoting critical thinking is another pedagogical sub-function of language teaching. Using critical questions and discussion prompts to elicit students' responses promotes them to engage in reasoning and debate (Choy & Oo, 2012; Mercer, 2000), and as a result develop learners' critical thinking skill. Therefore, ESP teachers' classroom language underscores its pedagogical function in teaching both disciplines and language skills.

(c). Feedback Provision

One of the most important aspects of teachers' classroom language use is offering feedback (Salima, 2016). In classrooms, providing feedback covers multiple sub-functions. One of the most important ones is to provide corrective feedback, which acts as a roadmap for improving students' understanding of the subject matter if they run into issues or make mistakes while studying (Anaktototy & Latumeten, 2022). As such, corrective feedback can bridge the gap between learners' actual performance levels and desired learning goals (Ko, 2019; Lizzio & Wilson, 2008). Secondly, giving feedback involves praising and motivating good answers. In order to promote a constructive learning environment and reinforce positive behaviour, praise and encouragement are essential (Syafitri & Khairunnisa, 2025). After answering teachers' questions, the students eagerly await their teachers' reply. Praise and encouragement make the students feel appreciated and inspired to keep up their good work and more confident to contribute to classroom interaction (Alali et al., 2020). Thirdly, checking comprehension and clarifying misunderstandings is one key sub-function of teacher discourse. When students become confused, teachers can solve the problem by using repetition, echoing, rephrasing, paraphrasing, asking for clarification, and so on (Alali et al., 2020; Walsh, 2011). Last but not least, extending student contribution is another important sub-function in delivering feedback discourse. Walsh (2006) contends that teacher discourse should not only evaluate student responses but also encourage additional elaboration, allowing for extended debate and exploration. This method pushes the learner to think more critically and support their arguments in addition to validating their first contribution. Including peer feedback in the conversation is another way to extend student involvement (Bozbiyik & Daşkin, 2022). Teachers can encourage other students to comment on or expand upon the ideas of their peers. This not only enriches the conversation, but also fosters a climate of mutual respect and cooperation. Therefore, providing feedback on language learners' performance is one of the pivotal functions in teacher classroom language and is commonly used in foreign language classroom (Freeman et al., 2015).

In summary, oral teacher discourse is a vital tool for controlling the classroom, imparting knowledge, and delivering meaningful feedback. Through its sub-functions, teacher discourse can transform ESP classrooms into a dynamic, and successful environment where language is used as a tool for content discovery and communication.

C. Review of Previous Studies

Previous studies on the functions of EFL teachers' classroom discourse has shown some common tendencies. First, studies have frequently examined various roles of teacher talk in different contexts. While Nafisah and Setianingsih (2024) found that the EFL high school teacher is primarily responsible for lecturing and giving directions during the lesson (e.g., providing students with further knowledge and issuing instructions or orders), Kim's (2021) findings showed that university teachers utilized a variety of sentences and forms to execute certain functions such as managing the classroom, giving instructions and explanations, assessing and providing feedback. Bui and Cao (2023) demonstrated that teacher talk served a variety of purposes in all classrooms such as tools of classroom management (e.g., controlling the classroom activities and generating a learning environment), instruction delivery (e.g., explaining concepts) and providing feedback.

Second, some researchers put more concern in investigating a specific function of teacher discourse and its impacts on learner involvement. Specifically, Alkhammash and Gulnaz (2019) revealed EFL university teachers' preferences and frequent use of oral corrective feedback techniques such as elicitation, repetition and recast in their classrooms whereas Anaktototy and Latumeten (2022) explored students' high recognition of EFL teachers' oral feedback value in their educational process and improvement. In a similar vein, Zhang et al. (2025) discovered that elicitation, metalinguistic feedback and explicit correction were more helpful in fostering learner repair than recast which accounted for over two thirds of oral corrective feedback instances. More comprehensively, Ha and Nguyen (2021)

asserted discrepancy in EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of corrective feedback in which students' desire to receive all kinds of errors while teachers were selective in correcting certain mistakes. Syafitri and Khairunnisa (2025) put more concern on investigating the motivational benefits of praise and encouragement in maintaining student effort. In general, these studies demonstrated the range of studies on functions of EFL teachers' classroom language and how it affects students' participation and academic performance.

D. Research Questions

As reviewed and presented above, the majority of the research on teachers' classroom discourse has been undertaken in general EFL classrooms, with little focus on ESP contexts where teachers' classroom language is expected to mediate both linguistic development and disciplinary knowledge (Kirkgöz & Dikilitaş, 2018). To this end, the present study aims to bridge this gap by answering the following research questions:

1. What are the functions of ESP teachers' classroom language?
2. How are ESP teachers' language functions manifested from a CA perspective?

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Setting and Participants

Data were collected at three Vietnamese universities where English is taught as an ESP course to undergraduates majoring in Transportation and Tourism and Hospitality. The classes had from 40 to 42 students each and were taught in formal classroom settings with teacher-selected supplemental resources.

Eight teachers who participated in this study were full-time lecturers between the ages of 30 and 40 with more than 5-year experience in teaching ESP classes. Four of them taught English for Tourism and Hospitality, and the other four taught English for Transportation. Five of them had a Masters' degree in Linguistics and the rest had an MA in TESOL. As part of their university professional development procedure, they all had received ESP instruction training before teaching these ESP courses. Each participant had 8 ESP teaching hours each week. They were chosen on a voluntary basis after they had been well informed of the study goal and data collection procedure. The teachers are coded from T1 to T8 to protect their confidentiality.

B. Data Collection Method

A recording device was placed in the center of the classrooms to guarantee high-quality audios of teacher-student interactions. In addition, during their class time, the teachers were requested to wear a portable, self-recording speaker. Sixteen hours of classroom recordings, each lasting around thirty minutes, throughout a single academic semester comprise the main data set.

As an appropriate approach for investigating natural talk-in-interactions as well as embodied construct (Schegloff, 2007), CA approach is used as the analytical framework in this study. Through moment-by-moment interaction, CA has been demonstrated in classroom discourse research in shedding light on how teachers and students co-contribute learning possibilities (Seedhouse, 2004; Walsh, 2002, 2011). The recorded lessons were transcribed using Walsh's (2002) CA-based transcription framework (see Appendix).

C. Data Analysis Method

Three steps were taken in the analysis process. First, each teacher and learner turn was separated using CA analysis, paying close attention to sequential organization and interactional effects. Second, all of the transcripts were read repeatedly to find recurring themes in the teachers' classroom language. Then, the data were grouped under the main functions and sub-functions of teacher talk with illustrated extracts. For example, the function of classroom management was labelled by letter M, pedagogical-teaching function was coded with letter P, feedback provision by letter F. For each function, sub-categories were also coded such as MG for greeting students in classroom management. Table 1 illustrates the coding scheme for all functions and sub-functions identified in this study.

TABLE 1
CODING SCHEME FOR CLASSIFYING FUNCTIONS AND SUB-FUNCTIONS OF TEACHERS' CLASSROOM LANGUAGE

Functions	Sub-functions	Language Exemplars	Codes
Classroom Management (M)	Greeting students	*Hello!*	MG
	Establishing and maintaining discipline	*When you come in, always start by comparing your homework answers with the person next to you.*	MD
	Addressing misbehaviour	*You were very rude to Margit in the group work.*	MM
	Managing time and pace	*You have ten minutes.*	MT
	Organizing pair/group work	*Make a pair with an A and B.*	MO
	Arranging seating	*Bring your chair over here.*	MS
	Creating supportive classroom environment	*Is there anything I can help you so that…?*	MC
Pedagogical – Teaching Function (P)	Delivering instruction	*Read the paragraph. Then, underline the words you don't know.*	PI
	Modeling target language	*Listen. I went to Spain. Repeat.*	PM
	Explaining concepts	*First, I'm going to tell you how to make passive sentences about the past…*	PE
	Scaffolding student response	*Which continent is the largest? It starts with an 'A', and it's home to Everest mountain.*	PS
	Encouraging critical thinking	*Why do you think the main character acted that way? Would you do differently?*	PC
Feedback Provision (F)	Providing corrective feedback	*You should say, 'She has a cat'.*	FF
	Providing praise and encouragement	*Those are great ideas.*	FP
	Comprehension checking and misunderstanding clarifying	*What do you mean by…?*	FC
	Extending student contribution	*Do you agree with him or her, or neither?*	FE

IV. FINDINGS

A. General Findings Regarding the Functions of ESP Teachers' Classroom Language

After 16 hours of classroom recordings were analyzed, it was found that the language used by participants in ESP courses carried three main functions as established in the literature, namely classroom management, pedagogical function and feedback provision. Across these categories, 1,968 instances of teachers' classroom language were identified and coded.

TABLE 2
DISTRIBUTION OF MAIN FUNCTIONS OF ESP TEACHERS' CLASSROOM LANGUAGE

Function	Occurrences	Percentage
Classroom Management (M)	268/1968	13.62%
Pedagogical – Teaching Function (P)	840/1968	42.68%
Feedback Provision (F)	860/1968	43.70%

As seen in Table 2, providing feedback was the most frequently employed function in ESP classrooms with 860 occurrences (43.70%). Teaching/pedagogical function predictably occurred almost as frequently with 840 occurrences, taking up to 42.68%. This suggests that providing feedback and pedagogical function were nearly equally crucial components of teacher-student interactions. Classroom management, on the other hand, was far less common, with 268 occurrences at 13.62% and mostly played a supporting role. The results show that pedagogical function and providing feedback dominated the classroom language of ESP teachers, with classroom management having a facilitating role as expected. The high frequency of feedback provision underscores the indispensable role of ESP teachers' language in offering learners' regular input on their performance and contributions - an inherent feature of communication itself.

The section below describes in more details how these functions were performed as emerging from the collected data.

B. Sub-Functions of ESP Teachers' Classroom Language

(a). Classroom Management

The sub-functions of classroom management function are demonstrated in Table 3.

TABLE 3
DISTRIBUTION OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT IN ESP TEACHERS' CLASSROOM LANGUAGE

Sub-functions	Codes	Occurrences	Percentage
Greeting students	MG	16/268/1968	0.81%
Establishing and maintaining discipline	MD	44/268/1968	2.24%
Addressing misbehaviour	MM	14/268/1968	0.71%
Managing time and pace	MT	87/268/1968	4.42%
Organizing pair/group work	MO	33/268/1968	1.68%
Arranging seating	MS	39/268/1968	1.98%
Creating supportive classroom environment	MC	35/268/1968	1.78%

Time and pace management was found the most prevalent, with 87 occurrences (4.42%) from recorded data, indicating the pressure for the teachers to control the flow of the lessons and guarantee that tasks are completed on time. Discipline establishment and maintenance with 44 occurrences (2.24%), seating arrangement with 39 occurrences (1.98%), establishing a supportive classroom environment at 35 occurrences (1.78%) and organizing pair/group work at 33 occurrences (1.68%) emphasize the importance of teachers in upholding order and setting up classrooms to support task completion. Except for time and pace management, all these subfunctions were not significantly different from one another in terms of their prevalence.

The least common sub-functions in ESP teachers' classroom language found were greeting students (16 occurrences, 0.81%) and addressing misbehaviour (14 occurrences, 0.71%). Greetings were mainly observed at the beginning of lessons, as students entered the classroom. Instances of noticeable misbehaviour among university students were predictably rare, which may explain the limited occurrence of this sub-function in the collected data.

Excerpt 1 illustrates how all these sub-functions of classroom management are carried out in a class of English for Tourism and Hospitality.

Excerpt 1

Turn	Teacher's language	Learners' language	Function	Sub-function
405	T2: =*Now, work in pairs, everyone, work in pairs, come on.* (16) =		M	MO
406	T2: =*Where's your book? No book? Uh huh.* = **(3 minutes)**	**(LL work in pairs)**	M	MM
407	T2: = *Okay everyone, what are you writing? Hello, what are you writing? We are studying speaking everyone, don't write anything everyone. Now everyone, put away your pen, okay? If I see any pen or pencil or marker, something else on the table, so it becomes MINE. Now let's see, collect the pens. Everyone, come on, now put away your pen. It's mine?* (7) *Wow, thank you* (**T collects a student's pen**) (3) *Oh, thank you*. (**3 minutes) =**	**(LL work in pairs)**	M	MD
408	T2: =*Yeah, finish everyone?*		M	MT
409		LL: *No*.=		
410	T2: =*Okay. Quickly! One more minute, everyone!*		M	MT

In Excerpt 1, at least 4 sub-functions of classroom management were identified, namely organizing pair/group work, addressing misbehaviour, establishing and maintaining discipline, and managing time and pace, among which time and pace management occurred twice. First, in Turn 405, the teacher (T2) organized pair work by repeatedly ordering students to "*work in pairs*" and encouraging their participation ("*everyone…come on*") (MO). When a student did not have the required textbook, misbehaviour was then directly addressed (MM), emphasizing the teacher's monitoring role (Turn 406). In the subsequently extended teacher turn (Turn 407), discipline was established and maintained when T2 told the students to stop writing, put away their pens, and concentrate on speaking. In this scenario, authority was reinforced through explicit warnings and humorous threats ("*it becomes mine*") as well as action (picking up a student's pen). After waiting for students to discuss in pairs for three minutes, T2 used a transitional check ("*Yeah, finish, everyone?*") to control the time and pace of the activity (MT). Lastly, in turn 410, T2 decided to extend the time for more discussing in pair work after knowing that the students were not ready (MT). Overall, although classroom management occurred less frequently than pedagogical and feedback functions, this excerpt showed its importance in organizing tasks, addressing misbehaviour, maintaining discipline, and pacing the activities, thereby enabling the smooth regulation of other teacher discourse functions.

(b). Pedagogical – Teaching Function

The pedagogical function was highly prominent in ESP teachers' classroom language. The distribution of its sub-functions is summarized in Table 4.

TABLE 4
DISTRIBUTION OF PEDAGOGICAL FUNCTION IN ESP TEACHERS' CLASSROOM LANGUAGE

Sub-functions	Codes	Occurrences	Percentage
Delivering instructions	PI	708/840/1968	35.97%
Modeling target language	PM	23/840/1968	1.17%
Explaining concepts	PE	39/840/1968	1.98%
Scaffolding student response	PS	69/840/1968	3.51%
Encouraging critical thinking	PC	1/840/1968	0.05%

Within this category, an overwhelmingly dominant percentage of turns, with 708 occurrences (35.97%) involved delivering instructions, showing that while teaching ESP, teachers spend much of their time and save a considerable amount of their classroom language for giving instructions, leading students through ESP contents and learning activities. Other less frequently occurring sub-functions were scaffolding student response (69 occurrences, 3.51%), explaining concepts (39 occurrences, 1.98%), modeling target language (23 occurrences, 1.17%) and encouraging critical thinking (1 occurrence, 0.05%). The extremely low frequency of critical thinking simulation, with only a single recorded case, indicates that ESP teachers did not prioritize providing opportunities for higher-order cognitive engagement.

Excerpt 2 illustrates how T1 shifted her classroom language across multiple sub-functions to accomplish pedagogical objectives in an English for Transportation class.

Excerpt 2

Turn	Teacher's language	Learners' language	Function	Sub-function
193	T1: *=Now everyone. You look at this. Look at your book. You have some special modes of transportation. Okay. Now the first one, what is it? Everyone, the first one?*		P	PI
194		LL: *Ferry*		
195	T1: *Ferry. =*		F	FF
196	T1: *= So ferry. You know ferry? What is it?*		F	FC
197		LL: *A kind of ship*		
198	T1: *So normally it's a boat… OK… carries people or maybe a vehicle across a river or the sea. =*		P	PE

As seen in turn 193 in Excerpt 2, T1 employed pedagogical instruction (PI) to draw the learners' focus to the textbook and eliciting the first vocabulary item through repetition ("*the first one, what is it? Everyone, the first one*?"). In addition, the sub-function of explaining concepts (PE) was demonstrated in turn 198 by T1's more thorough explanation of learners' answers with practical usage ("*carries people or maybe a vehicle across a river or the sea*").

In Excerpt 3, similar to T1, T6 in turn 2509, began pedagogical instruction (PI) by eliciting the meaning of the word "*port town,*" using a question to initiate students' concentration and engagement on the task. The question "*Where is it*?" gave instruction on the possible location of the town. T6 waited for learners' answer in 3 seconds and continued to provide scaffolding (PS), in which T6 presented a localized example ("*Hai Phong*") to better situate the lexical term in the learners' sociocultural context, resulting a student's (L13) definition of "*port town"* (turn 2511). Turn 2513 broadens this to a concept explanation (PE), in which T6 elaborated on L13's response with more disciplinary detail ("*facilities for docking*"). The subsequent turn (Turn 2514) continued with pedagogical focus when T6 launched instruction (PI) with the new term ("*resort town*"). Finally, T6 consolidated with another concept explanation (PE), providing a more precise definition related to the professional domain ("*providing facilities for summer or winter sports and hotel for tourists*") in Turn 2519. Through the sequential organization, T6 guided learners moving from partial responses to increasingly correct and contextually grounded definitions.

These moves illustrate how ESP teachers gave instructions, scaffolded students' responses and used explanations to assist students in building disciplinary knowledge and apply specialized terminology in context.

Excerpt 3

Turn	Teacher's language	Learners' language	Function	Sub-function
2509	T6: *=Now, next one, port town. What does it mean? A town? Where is it?* (3)=		P	PI
2510	T6: *=For example, Hai Phong, right? Yes, you!*		P	PS
2511		L13: *A port town is a town near a river or sea. It has a port.*		
2512	T6: *Ah, okay, so you mean a town has a port, is it right?=*		F	FF
2513	T6: *=Okay, so here, a town located by a valley of water and has facilities for docking, okay.=*		P	PE
2514	T6: *=Now, next one. The next word, resort town. What does it mean?*		P	PI
2515		L14: *It's … It's a town for tourists and vacationing.*		
2516	T6: *Ah, for tourists and?*		F	FC
2517		L14: *Vacations*		
2518	T6: *Ah, okay, good job. =*		F	FP
2519	T6: *=So here, providing facilities for summer or winter sports and hotels for tourists, okay.=*		P	PE

(c). Feedback Provision

Four sub-functions were found within providing feedback as shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5
DISTRIBUTION OF PROVIDING FEEDBACK IN ESP TEACHERS' CLASSROOM LANGUAGE

Sub-function	Codes	Occurrences	Percentage
Providing corrective feedback	FF	471/860/1968	23.93%
Providing praise and encouragement	FP	100/860/1968	5.08%
Comprehension checking and misunderstanding clarifying	FC	157/860/1968	7.98%
Extending student contribution	FE	132/860/1968	6.71%

This function witnessed the dominance of corrective feedback provision (471 instances, 23.93%), underscoring the crucial importance that error correction plays in ESP classes. To guarantee accuracy in disciplinary communication, ESP teachers regularly repaired students' language forms, especially pronunciation and grammatical structures. The

next most commonly seen sub-function is checking comprehension and clarifying misunderstanding, which accounts for 7.98% (157 occurrences). It illustrates teachers' attempts to ensure students' comprehension and avoid any misunderstandings in classroom interaction, particularly in task-based activities. In order to promote greater engagement with the ESP content, teachers encouraged students to elaborate on their comments, as seen by the 132 instances (6.71%) of extending students' responses. Last but not least, praise and encouragement were provided 100 times (5.08%), suggesting that although positive feedback existed, it was not as prioritized as correction and clarification techniques. According to these results, the majority of feedback in ESP classes is corrective and comprehension-focused, with little focus on affective or motivational support.

Analyzing the function of providing feedback in T1's language classroom as seen in Excerpt 2 above echoed the students' response "*ferry*" (turn 195) as a way to confirm the students' correct answer (FF), which keeps the class continuity and prevents it from breaking down. The subsequent utterance (Turn 196), ("*So ferry, you know ferry? What is it?*"), functions as a comprehension check (FC), transferring learning responsibility back to students and urging them to express meaning of the word "*ferry"*. In the same way, T6 in Turn 2512 (Excerpt 3) used a repair-check structure ("*so you mean a town has a port, is it right*?") to reformulate and clarify the student's response as a way to provide corrective feedback (FF). When a student (L14) answered (in Turns 2515 and 2517), T6 used comprehension check (FC) in Turn 2516 ("*Ah, for tourists and*?") to validate contributions and urge elaboration, and praise (FP) in Turn 2518 ("*good job*").

In short, these excerpts demonstrate how ESP teachers employed a comparable cycle of instruction, learner response, corrective feedback/understanding check, and explanation while customizing their classroom language to the particular communicative requirements of the course. CA-based analysis of turn-taking, repair, reformulation, and scaffolding shows that teachers' classroom language not only promotes vocabulary learning but also embeds disciplinary relevance, aligning classroom communication with the goals of ESP education.

V. Discussion

The current study investigated the functions of ESP teachers' classroom language in Vietnamese tertiary courses on English for Transportation and English for Tourism and Hospitality. The study discovered that ESP teachers' classroom language focuses on three main areas: classroom management, pedagogical function and feedback provision. The findings offer a number of crucial insights into the characteristics of ESP classroom discourse and how it affects instruction and learning.

The most notable result was that feedback provision and pedagogical function were overwhelmingly dominant. These categories collectively made up almost 85% of all teacher classroom discourse. These results are in line with Khany and Malmir's (2017) findings in which the common functions of teachers' classroom language were exposing students to contextually relevant and linguistically rich input. The harmony between these two areas also implies that ESP teachers focus on disciplinary knowledge and linguistic accuracy simultaneously, as both are equally important in preparing students for communication in the workplace (Stan, 2022).

The most common sub-function was found to provide corrective feedback, suggesting that ESP teachers regularly prioritized accuracy. This bolsters the claim made by Anaktototy and Latumeten (2022) that corrective feedback is essential to students' understanding of their areas for improvement. The fact that ESP teachers relied substantially on directing talk to introduce tasks and explain contents reinforces Bui and Cao's (2023) findings that teacher talk in English language classrooms was frequently used in giving instructions in classroom activities.

The lack of critical thinking prompts and target language modelling was an important aspect of the findings. Throughout 16 hours of classroom recordings, there was just one instance of critical thinking encouragement. This trend supports Choy and Oo's (2012) suggestion that efforts to include critical thinking in educational settings have been challenging. This mismatch may limit learners' ability to practice higher-order reasoning in ESP contexts.

Furthermore, although classroom management was important, it is not the main purpose of teachers' classroom talk. Only 13.62% of teacher discourse was about classroom management with the most common sub-function being time and pace control. This result emphasizes how ESP teaching is efficiency-focused, maximizing classroom time for language and disciplinary education. The low number of greeting students, creating a supportive classroom environment or dealing with misbehaviour suggests that explicit management was not very important. While this method reduces disruption, it runs the danger of ignoring the affective aspects of classroom interaction that support student engagement and motivation (Syafitri & Khairunnisa, 2025).

As shown in their classroom discourse, the ESP teachers had relatively equal concerns for pedagogical function and feedback provision, two crucial roles in specialized contexts where misinterpretations of discourse or terminology can have practical adverse effects. However, the nearly half percentage of providing feedback in ESP teachers' classroom language highlights the significance of training them how to use English for feedback delivery more effectively. Moreover, the sparse use of critical engagement and modelling target language points to the necessity of professional development to promote more exploratory and communicative forms of teachers' classroom language. Encouraging critical thinking through problem-solving tasks or discussion prompts would better match classroom discourse with the communication requirements of professional settings.

VI. Conclusion

This study examined the functions of teachers' language use in ESP courses of Tourism and Hospitality and Transportation at tertiary level. Based on 16 hours of classroom recordings and CA-based analysis, the study found that teachers' classroom language fulfilled three primary functions: classroom management, teaching function and providing feedback. The two most common categories among these were feedback and pedagogical discourse with much lower frequency of classroom management. The results highlight the crucial role that teacher talk plays as a pedagogical and interactional tool that simultaneously achieves content, accuracy, and classroom order. Teachers' considerable focus on language accuracy in ESP contexts was seen in the prevalence of corrective feedback. Pedagogical moves, particularly in giving instructions and explaining specialized concepts, emphasized the significance of comprehension and clarity in assisting learners' acquisition of disciplinary content and language. Nonetheless, the relative lack of discourse modelling and critical thinking prompts indicates that learners had few opportunities to engage in exploratory or authentic professional communication. Through the use of CA, the study was able to shed light on the micro-level interactional strategies that teachers use to align with both educational and disciplinary objectives.

The study contributes to the literature in numerous ways. First, this study adds actual data from Vietnamese ESP situations, a setting that is overlooked in international academia, and fills a gap in classroom discourse research. By adopting a CA perspective, the study draws attention to the interactional sub-functions used by ESP teachers to control language, disciplinary, and classroom dynamics. Second, it emphasizes how teachers' classroom language in ESP classes reflects the advantages of accuracy, clarity and control and disadvantages of limited communicative authenticity and encouragement of critical thinking.

However, there are certain limitations to the study. The generalizability of the findings is limited because the data were focused on eight teachers and two domains of ESP (i.e., English for Transportation and English for Tourism and Hospitality). Future studies should include larger samples from other fields across various institutions, investigate learner perspectives on teachers' classroom language, or discover how professional development interventions could promote more varied and authentic use of ESP teachers' classroom language.

To sum up, this study emphasizes the role of ESP teachers' classroom language as a tool for instruction and interaction. While the lack of critical thinking encouragement and language modelling highlights areas where classroom practice could be improved to align with more general ESP objectives, the predominance of feedback and pedagogical delivery demonstrates ESP teachers' orientation toward accuracy and comprehension in disciplinary contexts. The study contributes to the literature on classroom discourse by illuminating the micro-interactional functioning of teacher talk. It also establishes a foundation for further research on how ESP teachers may better strike a balance between instruction, correction, and disciplinary communicative skills.

Appendix. Transcription System

Walsh's (2002) transcription system is used in this study while transcribing teachers' feedback discourse and students' responses with some symbols and abbreviations as follows:

T:	- teacher
L:	- learner (not identified)
L1: L2: etc.,	- identified learner
LL:	- several learners at once or the whole class
/ ok/ ok/ ok/	- overlapping or simultaneously utterances by more than one learner
[do you understand?]	- overlap between teacher and learner
=	- turn continues, or one turn follows another without any pause
…	- pause of one second or less marked by three periods
(4)	- silence; length in seconds
((4))	- unintelligible 4 seconds: a stretch of unintelligible speech with the length given in seconds
Paul, Peter, Mary	- capitals are only used for proper nouns
?	- rising intonation – not necessarily a question
acCUSED	- indicated that a syllable or word is given extra stress
T organizes groups	- researchers' comments (in bold type)

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