

STUDENTS' STRATEGIES TO MAINTAIN PARTICIPATION IN ONLINE SPEAKING TASKS: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract. The online teaching and learning have, to some extent, impacted participation of students in doing their classroom activities. This study is set out to shed light on students' use of strategies to maintain successfully their participation despite some setbacks of digital settings. Combining the Participation Framework and the Conversation Analysis methodology, the research carries out a microanalysis in the context of an online students' collaborative speaking task. This micro study analyses 24 recordings of an EFL lesson with total 80 senior students. The findings indicate that (1) verbal cues namely self-selecting, switching to mother tongue and repeatedly choosing a specific student; (2) non-verbal strategies such as smile/laugh, hand motions, leaving cameras/microphones on facilitate students in their direct participation of the online discussion. The study also suggests some implications for educational purposes.

Keywords: online learning, student's participation, Participation Framework, Conversation Analysis, verbal/non-verbal strategies.

1. Introduction

Online class has become an indispensable part in institutional settings, especially during Covid-19 pandemic with many research carried out in this topic. (Hasan, N. & Khan, N.H., 2020 [1]; Shetty, S., Shilpa, C., Dey, D. et al., 2020 [2]; Mishra, L., Gupta, T. & Shree, A. 2021[3]). The interaction between teacher-student and student-student, which exerts a significant influence on the success of a lesson, is performed via computer-mediated communication (CMC). With a host of communication platforms, traditional classroom activities, one of which is students' discussion without the teacher's interference, can still be organized. This task serves as a learning opportunity in which students can practice their target language (Gardner, 2013) [4] as well as negotiate their participation in the discussion.

Goffman (1981) [5] proposes the Participation Framework that highlights the relationship between speakers and hearers. The model is competent in helping participants in a conversation recognize their role, which can be "asserted, resisted, and otherwise negotiated" (Boblett, 2012:45) [7] with a view to maintaining the conversation. Meanwhile, to examine classroom interaction, researchers have applied Conversation Analysis (CA) – an approach that is capable of explaining the "common set of methods or procedures" (Heritage, 1984: 241) [7] which participants interpret and follow. That students work in groups offers "a range of speech-exchange systems" (Markee & Kasper, 2004: 492) [8] and CA has the capability to disclose the collaborative essence of classroom interaction as He (2004) [9] states. Therefore, the combination

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of the participation framework and CA will elaborate on various strategies that speakers and hearers – in this study: students themselves - employ to engage in their conversation.

Currently, investigating how students sustain their participation in their online discussion tasks using these approaches has not obtained much attention from researchers in Vietnam contexts. Consequently, this study not only offers scholars an overview into EFL classroom discourse in Vietnam but also suggests implications to improve classroom interaction during virtual learning. Accordingly, with all the mentioned reasons, this research is carried out to answer the following research question “*What are the strategies that students adopt to sustain participation in their online discussion in EFL lessons?*”.

2. Content

2.1. Literature Review

2.1.1. Participation framework

Participation is termed as “actions demonstrating forms of engagement performed by parties within evolving structures of talk” (Goodwin and Goodwin, 2004: 222) [10]. That is, participation is a process in which participants engage in a conversation to exchange their ideas and thoughts. Goffman (1981: 137) [5] suggests the Participation Framework that details features of speaker and hearer as “the relation between any single participant and his or her utterance in a gathering at a particular moment”. This model has been devised by Levinson (1988) [11] and Goodwin (2007) [12]. While Levinson (1988: 176) [11] believes that the role of speakers and hearers can be negotiated, rather than “unilaterally assigned”, Goodwin (2007) [12] puts a stronger emphasis on the position of the hearer and his nonverbal influence on communication (as cited in Boblett, 2012). [6]

The following table summarizes the roles of conversationalists in the Participation Framework in addition to their characteristics:

Table 1. Participation roles

Hearer	Ratified	Participants have an official place in the encounter	Addressed	The one to whom the speaker addresses his visual attention and to whom he expects to turn over his speaking role
			Unaddressed	The rest of the ‘official hearers’, who may or may not be listening
	Unratified	Someone who may have access to the encounter, but not an official place	Over-hearers	‘Inadvertent’, ‘non-official’ listeners (also bystanders)
			Eavesdroppers	‘Engineered’, ‘non-official’ followers of talk
Speaker	Principal	The party that is socially responsible for what is said	Speakers may perform all three roles, but they do not need to, and may not do so at the same time.	
	Author	The party who is responsible for constructing the words and sentences at issue (who can be someone different from the current speaker)		
	Animator	The person who actually produces an utterance		

(Adapted from Goffman 1981 [5], Levinson, 1988 [11] and Annie, 2012 [13])

According to Goodwin and Goodwin (2004) [10], speakers and hearers have a mechanism to execute their talk. Speakers tend to perform their role with more initiation with their selection of the next speaker. Meanwhile, hearers have such ways to display whether they are attentive to the speakers or not as gazing toward the speaker (Goodwin, 1981), producing brief vocalizations such as continuers (Schegloff 1982), or showing facial expressions (Goodwin 1980), as cited in Goodwin and Goodwin (2004) [10]. However, the participant status is not always mutually conformed to by those in a certain talk, and this can be observed in students' interaction (Boblette, 2012) [6]. Hence, the Participant Framework has been central to the analysis of interaction in a range of institutional settings.

In the context of online learning, CMC can display gestures and body language – features that are greatly dominant in social activities (Mazur, 2004) [14] through cameras and microphones. Nevertheless, participation has encountered several issues such as accessibility to interaction, technological problems and the lack of immediacy in space and timing (van Braak, Huiskes, Schaepekens, and Veen, 2021) [15]. Therefore, investigating how students deal with the arisen matters of participation in digital settings will be of great significance.

2.1.2. Conversation analysis in classroom contexts

Scholars namely Sacks & Schegloff (1974) [16] and Garfinkel (1967) [17] believe underlying the principle of CA is the hypothesis that conversations do not originate spontaneously or impulsively; on the contrary, they comply with rules, which vary in different cultures and contexts. Researchers of CA would examine the transcribed data to “yield descriptions of recurrent structures and practices of social interaction” (Enyi, 2015:173) [18]. Remarkably, as Seedhouse (2004) [19] emphasizes, interactional patterns emerging from the data via CA would provide researchers significant findings, in substitution of pre-formulating any conclusions.

In Conversation Analysis, turn taking is apparently a key feature in which participants are aware of their role when to take the floor (Barraja-Rohan, 2011) [20]. The decision to allocate the turn can be made by the participants, rather than having been pre-distributed in advance (Seedhouse, 2004) [19]. Conversation is a series of turns made up of units that are coined as turn constructional units (TCU). Liddicoat (2007:54) [21] likens TCU to grammatical units namely words, phrases, clauses and sentences. When TCU is completed, it is likely to be followed by Transition Relevance Place (TRP) – points where a speaker's talk is completed and speaker's changes could be appropriate. The norms applied for TRPs can be illustrated as follows: (Seedhouse, 2004: 28) [19].

- (1) In the TRP where Speaker A stops talking and selects the particular Speaker B to continue the conversation, Speaker B has the right and obligation to speak.
- (2) In the TRP where Speaker A transfers the turn to the next speaker but no one is selected, whoever speaks first gains the right to speak.
- (3) In the TRP when Speaker A stops, no one is selected and no one actually continues, Speaker A may (but need not to) continue until others speak or the conversation comes to the end. Table 1. Norms applied during TRPs

Briefly, the Participation Framework and CA share the same basic principle of turn-taking, which can be used to investigate institutional interactions. Accordingly, the combination of the role-oriented Participation Framework and line-by-line Conversation Analysis is expected to shed light on the ways students keep their conversation going.

2.1.3. Previous studies

With respect to studies that examine online interaction in classrooms using CA, a fundamental paper on spoken CMC belongs to Jenks (2014) [22] who investigates

conversations among several speakers via Skype. The study's result lists different ways participants use to achieve mutual understanding such as production of vocal cues, pauses to avoid overlapping. While computer-mediated spoken interaction is becoming increasingly popular, the dominant form of social interaction is written online discourse (Tudini, 2010 [23]; Warren, 2018 [24]). However, written interaction is beyond the scope of this research.

Lehtimaja & Kurhila (2021) [25] publish a study that employs the same approach as this study; however, the subjects are patients and doctors in Western hospitals, a context which is very much different from the one this study takes place. Their findings show that patients deploy strategies of producing responsive turns and repair initiations, thus becoming more active in the talk. They also produce their own initiatives, although sequential and multimodal constraints affect their possibilities for modifying the participation framework. The same tendency goes to van Braak, Huiskes, Schaepkens, and Veen (2021) [15] who describe the specific practices that participants use can prove useful for online education, but their participants are general practitioners (residents).

Concerning the Vietnam context, very few scholars have conducted research in students' interaction in online teaching and learning using the proposed approach. Tran (2016) [26] applies the principles of CA into classroom interaction; however, the research examines students' responsive turns in discussion tasks in the traditional classroom setting. While Pham and Tran (2019) [27] present the advantages and disadvantages of online learning, Ho et al. (2021) [28] examines key factors that affect students' acceptance of e-learning during the Covid-19 period by using a technology acceptance model (TAM) on survey. Briefly, the studies covering how students maintain their participation in online discussion tasks are very rare in the Vietnamese context. Consequently, studies into how students interact in online speaking tasks to maintain their participation in Vietnam is of vital importance for both domestic and foreign academic sphere.

2.2. Methods

2.2.1. Subjects of the study

This micro study analyses 24 recordings of an EFL lesson with total 80 senior students. They attend language skill lessons via Zoom – a video teleconferencing software program. Student are divided into 24 Breakout Rooms, where they perform their task of discussing a topic before each of the student present their talk. The time limit for this activity is 20 minutes.

There are three to four students in each room without the presence of the teacher. The length of the recordings vary from 10 minutes to 20 minutes, with some rooms experiencing technological troubles.

2.2.2. Analytic procedure

This research is investigated under the Participation Framework and Conversation Analysis approach. Initially, the recordings are observed with the focus on students' methods to maintain their participation in the online environment. The recordings are then transcribed using the Conversation Analysis transcription conventions (Jefferson 2004) [29] with multimodal features of the interaction to be noted if visible. Afterward, the recordings are revisited with the combination of the role-oriented Participation Framework and line-by-line Conversation Analysis in order to disclose the patterns that are exhibited by students to engage in their speaking task.

2.3. Findings and discussions

2.3.1. Findings

Since the task requires all the students to participate in the discussion, it is apparent that the

hearers in the talk are ratified addressed participants. The strategies that students use to maintain their online participation can be divided into two domains, namely verbal and non-verbal strategies.

2.3.1.1. Verbal strategies

2.3.1.1.1. Self-selecting

Extract 1 (Room 19): This group now commences their talk.

- 1 S1: Ok now let's start
- 2 S2: Me first↑
- 3 S1: [Yes
- 4 S3: [Yes
- 5 S2: Ok so my name is ...(purposely removed by the researcher)

In this extract, in response to the request in the first adjacency part given by Student 1, Student 2 replies quickly by nominating herself as the next speaker as in line 3. Student 2, as an addressed ratified hearer, becomes the next speaker with no visible pauses. Student 2's suggestion is immediately accepted by both Student 1 and Student 3 when they agree at the request simultaneously. Briefly, Student 2 self-selects to transform her role from an addressed ratified participant to a speaker and orderly follows the turn-taking system of a conversation, allowing the talk to continue.

2.3.1.1.2. Switching to mother tongue

Extract 2 (Room 9): Student 1 is talking about her topic. All the participants have their camera switched off.

- 1 S1: It's good for my mental health::
- 2 S2: [hai phút rồi cậu
- 3 S1: ok, it's that↓ (6s) ok xong rồi cậu ạ (.) Các cậu, các cậu có ai nói không ↑
- 4 S2: Thù nói đi
- 5 S1: Ai (.) \$comment cho em\$ ((audible breathing)) kiểu bài như thế nào (.) Không
- 6 thì mọi người cứ nói đi xong rồi comment sau↓
- 7 S2: Rồi
- 8 (40s)
- 9 S2: Thế thì tớ nói luôn nhớ (.) bạn nào có thể bấm giờ giúp tớ không↑
- 10 S1: À đây đợi tớ một tí↓ (3s) rồi (.) ok cậu nói đi
- 11 S2: I would like to ...

In this extract, Student 1 keeps talking about her topic, not knowing that her time limit of 2 minutes is over. In line 2, Student 2 as a ratified addressed hearer interrupts Student 1's turn to let the speaker – Student 1 know about the overtime. Although the language in target is English, Student 2 uses her native language to participate in the talk without being given the permission to talk. Realizing the situation, Student 1 maintains her participation by replying in a brief English utterance as in line 3, denoting that she wants to change her role from a speaker to a ratified hearer. However, after a wait time of 6 seconds with no other hearers voicing, Student 1 continues her speaker role by using Vietnamese to request the next speaker in line 3. A contradiction occurs in line 5-6 when Student 1 disregards her previous request of choosing the next speaker and wants to receive the comment on her talk in a smiley tone. However, Student 1 immediately changes her mind as line 6 she suggests commenting when everyone finishes their talk. This recommendation is followed by a long pause of 40 seconds when no hearers engage in the talk. In line 9, when Student 2 decides to participate in the talk, she uses her Vietnamese to signal that she wants to become a speaker. It is noteworthy that except for the speaking task of each individual, the participation of speakers in this extract is performed in Vietnamese. In addition to this, no camera is turned on so participants cannot see each other; hence, their participation entirely depends on their vocal cues.

2.3.1.1.3. *Choosing the next speaker*

Extract 3 (Room 8): This group has finished their one-minute preparation.

- ...(purposely removed by the researcher)
- 1 S1: Finished ↑ (2s) I think it's more than 1 minute.
- 2 (12s)
- 3 S2: Cái sân là gì ý nhi? Yard ờ đúng không ờ
- 4 S2: ừ yard
- 5 (7s)
- 6 S3: Oh internet connection. Mạng ở chỗ tớ: kém quá các cậu ạ.
- 7 (10s)
- 8 S1: Ok Hoai first. (5s)
- 9 S2: ((frowning))
- 10 S1: Hoai, can you start first? ↑The previous time was mine
- 11 S1: Ok first Hoa, then Hue, then me. OK, [°then I °
- 12 S2: [OK
- 13 S1: Đầu tiên là [Hoài ((pen fiddling))
- 14 S2: [Give me for 1 minute
- 15 S1: (.) I think it's more than 1 minute [already ((pen fiddling))
- 16 S3: [Đề ấy đã
- 17 S1: Okay↓
- 18 (10s)
- 19 S2: Well, I would like to introduce ...(purposely removed by the researcher)

The silence is broken by Student 1 when she initiatively speaks out a short word “finished” with a high tone to let her group members know about the time for speaking. However, in response to that, a pause of 12 seconds is noted and Student 2 takes part in the talk by asking about a word in Vietnamese; no second pair part is replied to Student 1’s first pair request. The supposedly addressed hearers then become the unaddressed ones to avoid having to speak. After waiting for two more turns as in line 5 and 7 with no hearers speaking up, Student 1 – one more time – selects the next speaker with an order “Ok Hoai first”. Hearing this, the appointed hearer – Student 2 (Hoai) – shows a frowning face, indicating a disagreement. However, not receiving any response, Student 1 continues her request in line 11. This time, Student 1 allots the turn for the whole group in English and repeats in Vietnamese as in line 13, specifically to Hoai as the next speaker. It is noted that Student 1 insists on Hoai as the next speaker in both English and Vietnamese, and keeps repeating that request since she wants to sustain the participation in the talk. However, Student 2 (Hoai) needs more time to prepare, so she refuses to take part in the talk by keeping silence, showing a disagreement expression, and eventually asking for more time. Briefly, Student 1 keeps the conversation going while other participants engage in talk passively.

2.3.1.2. *Non-verbal strategies*

2.3.1.2.1. *Smile/Laugh*

Extract 4 (Room 4): Student 1 begins her talk.

- 1 S1: Well, to be honest (.) I'm not (.) a kind of person who have (.)
- 2 gi:: ((looking at the notebook))
- 3 S2: {(gazing at the screen)} [s::
- 4 S1: [sedentary lifestyle
- 5 S2: {(1s)} ((smiling))
- 6 S3: {(writing and looking down)}

Student 1 starts her talk but some minor gaps in her utterance. In line 2, in search of the next word, Student bursts out in Vietnamese though she is speaking English, looking at the notebook. Realizing the struggle of Student 1, Student 2 displays her participation by trying to say the word, pronouncing an “s” sound in line 3. At that time, Student 1 has uttered the phrase “sedentary lifestyle”, followed by a smile of Student 2, denoting that Student 2 is satisfied with

Student 1. The participation is shown though a non-verbal action of smiling. On the contrary, the assumed addressed hearer – Student 3 – exhibits no participation in the talk as she keeps writing and looking down, paying no attention to the speaker.

Extract 5 (Room 1): Student 1 is reaching toward her turn.

- 1 S1: I recommend you should not eat any junk food [which is unhealthy
- 2 S2: [yeah
- 3 S1: for:: your:: body↓(2s) yeah ((audible laughing))
- 4 S2: ((smiling))
- 5 S3: ((smiling)) (.) everyone, to have a good health, you should
...(purposely removed by the researcher)
- 6 S3: If you don't have much time, you just need to do morning exercise ((alarming
going off)) °regularly°↓ Thank you
- 7 S2: ((smiling))
- 8 S1: ((hands clapping)) ((laughing))
- 9 S3: ((smiling))

This excerpt shows Student 1 approach the end of her turn as prolonged words are uttered as in line 3. She continues her turn by a 2-second pause, an 1-word utterance “yeah” and an audible laughing, denoting her talk has ended. Student 2 and Student 3 both show their participation through a responsive smile, subsequent by an instant talk by Student 3. The non-verbal smile is also repeated when Student 3 finishes her talk, Student 2 and Student 1 respond with a smile - knowing when the speaker has stopped. This indicates that they have paid attention to the speaker, thus performing their addressed ratified hearers throughout the talk.

2.3.1.2.2. *Hand gestures*

Extract 6 (Room 23): Student 1 is talking about her topic. All of the participants are muted except Student 1.

- ...(purposely removed by the researcher)
- 1 S1: {The atmosphere in the park is really nice::
 - 2 S2: {{{practicing by herself, not looking at the screen}}}
 - 3 S3: {{{camera turned off}}}
 - 4 S4: {{{gazing at the screen}}}
 - 5 S1: and I also (.) need ah this ah a lot (.) actually (3s)
 - 6 S4: ((hands clapping))
 - 7 S2: (2s) [((hands clapping))
 - 8 S1: [and yeah that's all about my leisure \$activity\$ that I used to do in the past
 - 9 S3: ((camera turned on, putting thumbs up and making a heart shape))
 - 10 S1: ((smiling))
 - 11 S2: ((smiling))
 - 12 S4: ((smiling and making a heart shape))

There are four students in this room and Student 1 is the speaker while the rest are theoretically addressed hearers. However, only Student 4 is gazing at the screen, potentially paying attention to Student 1's speech. In the meantime, the remainders show no involvement in the talk as Student 3 has the camera turned off and Student 2 is seen practicing her own talk, not looking at the screen. In line 5, when there is a short pause of 3 seconds in Student 1's speech, to which Student 4 claps the hands to exhibit the participation and attention. Two seconds after Student 4's action, as in line 7, Student 2, who has been practicing her own speech, realizes the situation and also claps the hands to show her participation. It is noteworthy that all the hearers still keep their microphone muted, and only show their non-verbal actions through the screen. These actions seem to cheer Student 1 up as she ends her talk in a smiley voice in line 8. This is when Student 3, who turns off her camera, now turns it on and displays a series of participation through hand gestures such as putting her thumbs up – which means good, according to Healey

& Braun (2013) [30] and making a heart shape – which signifies Student 3’s love to the speaker, based on Yalom (2019) [31]. Following this, in line 12, Student 4 also makes a hand heart as a result of seeing Student 3’s action. Briefly, hand gestures without making any interference to the current speaker can be used as strategies to denote participation in the talk.

2.4. Discussions

This study aims to discover the methods students adopt to manage their participation in an online speaking task. Two main strategies emerge from the data namely verbal and non-verbal cues, with detailed strategies discussed below.

It is clearly seen that students’ verbal use adheres to the CA principal of turn-taking system despite the new online learning environment. This situation has been observed in Earnshaw’s research (2017) [32] though the research only confirms the application of CA turn-taking rules to the audio segment. In particular, in the first situation, students can self-select to initiate their turn in the talk. Although the self-selected student is not the socially responsible speaker, in order to keep the conversation going, this student chooses himself/herself to be the first speaker of the group. Secondly, when the speaker calls out the specific name of the hearer, this addressed hearer has the obligation and the right to continue the talk. However, as in Extract 2 and 3, in spite of being requested several times with name calling and long wait time, the supposedly addressed hearers avoid speaking up, thus intentionally changing their role to unaddressed hearers. All of the students in the speaking task are ratified hearers since their talk is to practicing their speaking skill. Ultimately, these ratified hearers take on their role as the speaker in the next turn, but their prolonged reception to the turn transfer weakens their participation of the talk. Another noteworthy feature recorded in Extract 2 and 3 is that students code switch to Vietnamese to perform their participation management, as opposed to the requirement of using English as the target language. This can be explained as students with lower level of language proficiency feel more comfortable with their L1 and L1 offers them more assistance in terms of their cognition (Debreli and Oyman, 2016) [33]. Nevertheless, Littlewood & Yu (2011) [34] consider the use of L1 as a negative habit in which students have to transfer from L1 to L2. The L1 used in some extracts in this study occurs when students look for an equivalent word in English or when they take the floor in the turn transference. Although these practices have no direct impact on their focus task, L1 should be limited.

In addition to verbal cues, non-verbal strategies are also recorded in the data. In Extract 4,5, and 6, smiling/laughing and hand gestures are prominent non-verbal behaviors. The hearers who display these kinds of behaviors fulfill their role of a ratified addressed participant, contributing to the success of the online speaking task. However, this strategy is not seen in recent online education communication (Melander & Svahn 2020) [35]. Moreover, the status of the microphone is also a remarkable feature. In Extract 6, the participants mute their microphone to offer the respect and avoid interference toward the speaker who is delivering the talk. On the contrary, some other circumstances in the data witness participants leaving the microphone unmuted for swift and timely responses in the conversation. van Braak, Huiskes, Schaepkens, and Veen (2021)’s findings [15] show that when the microphone is on, the conversation receives better participation despite some background noises. However, when the microphone is muted, it is impossible to record the verbal interaction, which is the goal of the speaking activity. Therefore, during the entire student-to-student discussions, students should be required to turn on their microphone to facilitate direct participation. Another important detail is that in order to perform and recognize non-verbal cues, it is essential that participants turn on their camera. Without the camera, van Braak, Huiskes, Schaepkens, and Veen (2021) [15] state that participants depend verbal cues for turn selection and participation joining. It can be seen in Extract 2 where interaction among participants are fragmented with requested not being granted,

adjacency pairs not being followed and long pauses. In other extracts, the use of non-verbal and verbal cues facilitate the participation process, making it easier for all participants to interpret and join the conversation. Accordingly, the new environment creates affordances (in case of switched on cameras allowing non-verbal gestures, muted/unmuted microphone) that support participants to exhibit the non-verbal cues, leading to increased participation. The digital learning also poses challenges (in case of turned off cameras resulting in fragmented conversations).

There are some reasons underlying the use of the strategies mentioned above. First, students are given time limit to complete the task; therefore, within the given time, all participants are obliged to take part in the discussion. In Extract 3 where possible failure of participation are realized, Student 1 repeatedly tries to add new segments to her turn through the use of Vietnamese or the repetition of next-speaker's name, although she have already completed her turn and have finished assigning the speaker role to other addressed hearer. This behavior is seen as a way to adapt to changes in the participation status of their hearers (Goodwin and Goodwin 2004) [10]. Secondly, all the participants are doing the same task with their need for collaboration. Hence, if their interaction is well-connected, there is a likelihood that their conversation is a successful one. This is mentioned in Goffman's (1981) paper [5] as if participants share alignment, the conversation is prone to be considered successful. As a result, the participants make an effort to maintain the participation in the talk, despite some inattentive or hesitating behaviors.

The discussion for the use of the strategies leads to some implications in online teaching and learning. Firstly, setting time for students' discussions is necessary. This will raise the awareness of students regarding their time management, autonomy as well as their need for cooperation in order to complete the given task. Teachers should make a clear announcement before the task is carried out. Secondly, cameras and microphones are advised to be switched on to facilitate the interpersonal communication. Under this circumstance, the virtual task can resemble the authentic one the most. Hence, verbal and non-verbal cues can be explicitly established to and recognized by participants. Thirdly, students' role in their group work is equal, of which students should be self-conscious so that their collaborative task is performed effectively. Therefore, educating students about their duty and right in group work is vital.

3. Conclusions

This study aims to reveal how students manage their participation in a speaking task in digital settings. Employing the Participation Framework and the Conversation Analysis approach, the research conducts a case study of an online students' collaborative speaking task. With 24 groups being investigated, the findings indicate that both verbal and non-verbal cues support students in their direct participation of the online discussion. In particular, students adopt verbal cues specifically self-selecting, switching to mother tongue and repeatedly choosing a specific student to sustain their interaction in the online setting. In addition, non-verbal strategies such as smile/laugh, hand motions, leaving cameras/microphones on also facilitate students in their direct participation of the online discussion. Based on these findings, some implications for educational purposes are recommended. Teachers are advised to introduce or set the rules before assigning students into their groups in order to maximize student's interactional competences during the lessons.

Although this research has obtained significant results, limitations are existent. Firstly, this micro study merely examines a small number of students in one lesson; therefore, the findings are hard to be generalized. Second, by dint of limited time, the study covers a few aspects of the participation. Accordingly, these limitations should be addressed in future research. Future studies may employ longitudinal designs to evaluate techniques students embrace to maintain

their interaction in the speaking task. Further studies are also needed to determine whether these findings can be applied to other groups of data.

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