A Systematic Review of Teacher Talk and Its Effects on English Language Learning Outcomes

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Abstract

Teacher talk in language classes plays a crucial role in students' understanding and development within the discipline. This study systematically reviews previous research on teacher talk and its impact on students' learning outcomes in English language classrooms. 25 articles, published between 2018 and 2023, focusing on teacher talk and students' learning outcomes, were selected and reviewed. The aim was to discern the publication trends regarding teacher talk and its influence on students' learning achievement. The results indicated that research on teacher talk is predominantly welcomed in English-speaking countries. Additionally, the study participants in the 25 selected articles are primarily teachers and students from kindergarten, primary, and secondary schools. The research outcomes vary across the selected articles, with the majority highlighting the positive effects of teacher talk on students' learning outcomes, such as enhancement of English language skills and development of social and emotional skills, although some articles also report null or negative effects. Further research is recommended to investigate the detailed characteristics of teacher talk and their impact on student learning outcomes in secondary school and university classrooms.

Keywords: Teacher talk, EFL classroom, Teaching English, systematic review

1. Introduction

The increasing number of English language learners worldwide has created the need to support their English language development and educational outcomes. Lamas (2015) suggests that students' educational results and academic achievement may be affected by factors such as intellectual level, personality, study habits, skills, and school-related factors like curriculum, teaching plans, class size, and activities. Among these, the role of teachers, especially teacher talk, is considered one of the most influential factors in students' learning outcomes (Stronge & Hindman, 2003).

As Nunan (1991) described, teacher talk is the language teachers use to manage classrooms and implement teaching plans in language education. Current research on teacher talk has largely focused on analyzing different features of such talk. For instance, studies have examined teacher talk for language input purposes, analyzing aspects like speed, pauses, tone, stress, and adjustments in vocabulary, syntax, and discourse (Khong, Saito, & Gillies, 2019; Torres, Whitebread, & McLellan, 2018). Other research indicates a close relationship between teacher talk and learners' language acquisition processes (Topalov & Radić-Bojanić, 2019). However, studies exploring the direct relationship between teacher talk and learners' outcomes are still scarce. Moreover, systematic research on how teacher talk influences students' learning achievements is underdeveloped, with a lack of direct examination of the relationship between teacher talk and students' learning outcomes, particularly regarding the roles teachers and students play in the interaction process and the impact of teacher talk on English language learning.

In light of this, the present study investigates articles on the features of teacher talk and its effects on students' learning outcomes, particularly in English language classrooms. This systematic review aims to understand how teacher talk influences learners' achievement by collating relevant studies conducted from 2018 to 2023. The research questions driving this study are:

RQ1: What are the publication trends, including publication year, geographic locale, and study methods, on the topic of teacher talk and students' learning outcomes in English language classrooms over the past six years? RQ2: What are the effects of teacher talk on students' learning outcomes in English language classrooms as concluded from the selected studies over the past six years?

To answer these questions, we first synthesized research findings from the selected articles on the features of teacher talk and learners' development. Then, gaps in the literature were identified, and future research directions were determined. Through this systematic review, we aim to determine the breadth and coverage of the literature on the features of teacher talk and their effects on learners' outcomes in English language classrooms. We believe that the findings from this study will provide greater insight into the language learning process and, to some extent, help enhance the effectiveness of teaching quality.

2. Review of Literature

Research on teacher talk traces back to Henzel (1979), who pioneered comparative studies in this field. Since then, the subject has captivated scholars, particularly focusing on discourse patterns within English language education. These studies primarily examine various attributes of teacher talk as language input, such as speed, pauses, tone, stress, and adjustments in vocabulary, syntax, and discourse (He, 2003; Hu, 2007). Recently, the focus has shifted toward the quality of teacher talk, with studies investigating specific aspects such as question types, teacher feedback, and classroom interaction (Scull, Paatsch, & Raban, 2013). Additionally, there is growing research on how teacher talk influences students' social competencies and scientific achievements (Brock, Kim, Kelly, Mashburn, & Grissmer, 2019; van der Wilt, Bouwer, & van der Veen, 2020). Studies also increasingly explore the relationship between teacher talk and the development of students' language skills, such as writing, reading comprehension, and communicative competence (Al-Adeimi & O'Connor, 2021; Siraj-Blatchford & Asani, 2015).

These studies typically focus on various facets of teacher talk using diverse techniques and data collection methods. For example, some delve into the intricate language patterns employed by teachers, which is advantageous for educators aiming to refine their teacher talk. However, a noted gap exists in understanding how specific classroom dialogue modes contribute to student learning outcomes. Howe and Abedin (2013) pointed out that there is more detailed information on "how classroom dialogue is organized than on whether certain organizational modes are more beneficial than others" (p. 325).

While numerous studies and review articles on teacher talk exist, previous reviews in language classrooms have largely centered on distinct types or features of teacher talk, such as feedback formats (Herona, Medlanda, Winstonea, & Pitt, 2023; Howe & Abedin, 2013; Mercer & Dawes, 2014; Munn et al., 2018), but they lack a comprehensive synthesis of these studies. Additionally, reviews on the direct impact of teacher talk on learner outcomes remain scarce. Thus, this study aims to synthesize recent findings on teacher talk and its influence on students' learning outcomes in English language classrooms, identify existing gaps, and suggest directions for future research. This systematic review seeks to enrich the academic understanding of teacher talk's role in language learning and teaching effectiveness.

3. Method

The methodology used in this study adheres to the systematic literature review guidelines established by Higgins and Green (2008). The primary databases searched were the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), Google Scholar, and Scopus. This review specifically focused on journal articles published between 2018 and 2023, aiming to synthesize the latest empirical research on teacher talk in English language classrooms. The research included various study designs—quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods—each given equal consideration to comprehensively explore the impacts of teacher talk on learners' achievements in English language settings.

To organize and conduct this review, the "five-stage method" outlined by Dohale, Gunasekaran, Akarte, & Verma (2020) was employed. This method consists of searching, locating, selecting, reviewing, and analyzing the existing literature on the topic of teacher talk and its effects on students' outcomes. The initial stages of searching and locating relevant studies were performed in strict accordance with the PRISMA guidelines for systematic reviews, as illustrated in Figure 1. This structured approach ensures a thorough and unbiased exploration of the field, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics between teacher talk and student learning outcomes.

3.1 Collection of Articles

The initial stage of the methodology entailed conducting a comprehensive search for articles that provided relevant data to address the research questions, specifically focusing on teacher talk and students' learning outcomes in English language classrooms. To facilitate this, a set of keywords was utilized to select pertinent articles. The keywords included terms such as "teacher talk and students' outcomes," "teacher talk and students' achievements," and "teacher talk in improving students' learning." The search strategy involved identifying articles whose titles or abstracts contained key phrases like ("teacher talk" OR "teacher discourse" OR "classroom discourse" OR "teacher instruction" OR "teacher speech") AND ("learning outcomes" OR "learning achievement" OR "language gains").

These keywords were entered into the search fields of selected databases. During the search process, it was noted that some articles, despite featuring relevant terms like "teacher talk" and "students' outcomes" in their titles, were not actually pertinent to the focus of this study upon closer inspection of their abstracts and, in some cases, the full articles. Thus, abstracts were meticulously reviewed to ensure the inclusion of studies that contained data relevant to the study's research questions. The initial search yielded a large number of related articles, totaling 279 studies across three databases: ERIC with 27, Google Scholar with 163, and Scopus with 89. This initial abundance necessitated a more selective approach to refining and narrowing down the articles for inclusion in the study.
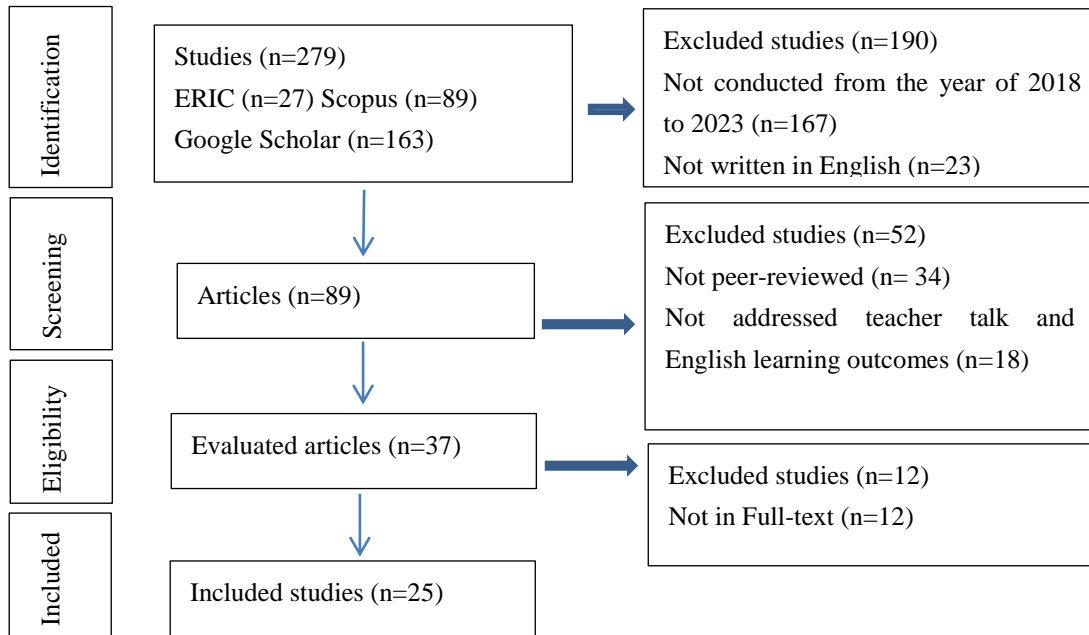
Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart for Systematic Literature Review and Study Selection

3.2 Selection of the Articles

At this stage, selection criteria recommended by Howe and Abedin (2013) were adopted to identify appropriate articles for review. The criteria included:

1. Articles must be written in English and published within the last six years, from 2018 to 2023. This timeframe narrowed the selection to 89 articles, comprising nine from ERIC, 59 from Google Scholar, and 21 from Scopus.

2. Only peer-reviewed articles were considered to ensure a threshold of quality. Additionally, the content of the articles needed to specifically address the influence of teacher talk on learners' outcomes in English language classrooms. This criterion further refined the selection to 37 articles, including three from ERIC, 27 from Google Scholar, and seven from Scopus.

3. Full-text availability was required, although the studies did not need to be conducted in English-speaking countries. This reduced the pool to 25 articles, with three from ERIC, 14 from Google Scholar, and eight from Scopus. Ultimately, 25 articles focusing on teacher talk and students' learning outcomes were selected for review.

3.3 Review of the Articles

Details of the 25 articles, including the research topic, years and researchers, purpose/objective, population/subjects, research method, and results, are presented in the Appendix. Each article was thoroughly reviewed to highlight trends in studies on teacher talk and students' English language outcomes, the methodologies employed, and the core topics and results, with a focus on the significant contributions of each study.

3.4 Analysis of the Articles

This phase involved a systematic review, including the creation of a template to collect bibliometric data. The analysis covered publication trends, such as the studies' annual distribution and geographic spread. Keyword analysis was performed to identify prevalent topics within these articles. Additionally, the research methodologies and results were scrutinised in the selected articles.

3.5 Suggestion for Future Research

The research gaps identified from the analysis are discussed in the concluding section of this paper. Suggestions for future studies are provided based on these identified gaps. The implications of the theoretical and practical findings are also outlined at the end of the review, offering directions for future research and practical applications in the field of English language education.

4. Results

In this section, we present the findings from the review of the 25 selected articles in this study. The results are organized according to several dimensions: yearly publication trends, analysis of study locations, distribution of participants, analysis of authors' keywords, examination of the tools and methods adopted, fundamental research topics, and an analysis of the results reported in the articles.

4.1 Yearly Trend of Publication

As depicted in Figure 2, studies on the topic of teacher talk and students' learning outcomes in English language classrooms were primarily conducted in the years 2019 and 2020. However, there was a notable decline in the number of studies between 2021 and 2022, with only one study conducted in 2022. Subsequently, there was an increase in research activity in 2023, with five studies conducted.
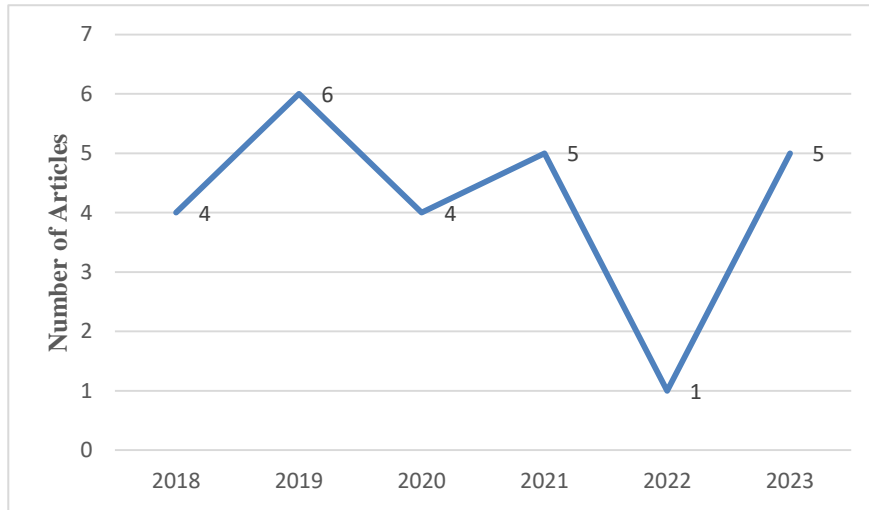

Figure 2. Yearly publication trends

4.2 Study Location

Figure 3 outlines the geographic distribution of the 25 selected articles on teacher talk and students' language outcomes in English language classrooms over the past six years. The United States led with eight articles (32% of the total), making it the most common location for research on teacher talk. The United Kingdom and China followed it, each contributing three articles (12%). Australia and Norway each produced two articles (8%), underscoring the prevalence of this research topic in native English-speaking countries. Contributions from other countries, including Chile, Iran, Indonesia, Pakistan, Switzerland, Serbia, and Singapore, were minimal, with each contributing one article (4%).
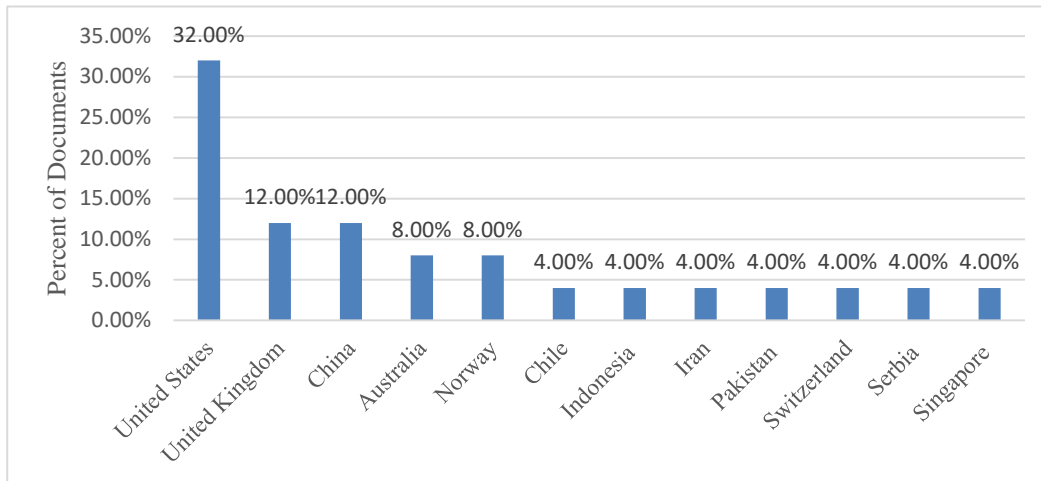
Figure 3. Analysis of study location

4.3 Distribution of Participants

Figure 4 illustrates the distribution of participants in the selected studies. Out of the 24 articles with clear participant descriptions, the majority were conducted in primary school classrooms, accounting for 11 articles, or 44% of the total. The next largest group comprised studies involving kindergarteners, with seven articles representing 28% of the total. Studies conducted in secondary school classrooms accounted for four articles (16%), making them the third most common setting. The least represented were university classrooms, with only two articles out of the total 24. This distribution highlights a focus on younger learners in research concerning teacher talk and students' language outcomes.

Figure 4. Distributions of participants

4.4 Analysis of Authors' Keywords

Based on the keywords from the 25 selected articles on teacher talk and learners' outcomes in language classrooms from 2018 to 2023, Figure 5 prese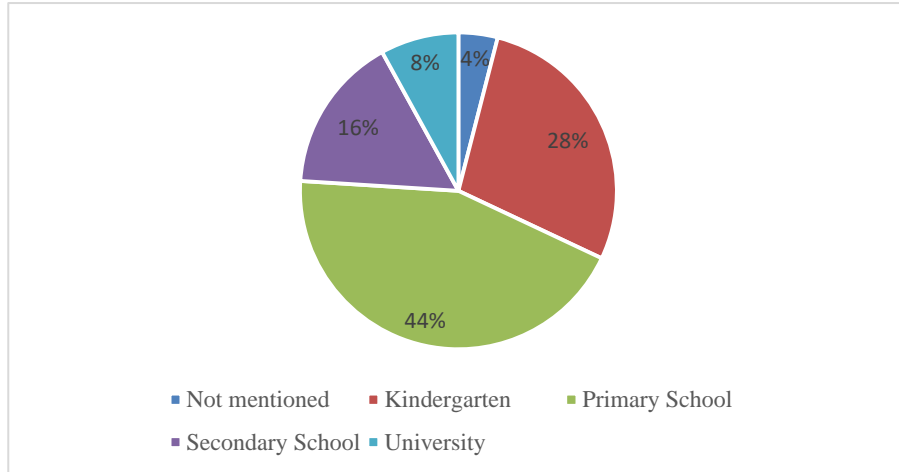nts a word cloud. This visualization shows that "teacher talk" is the most prominently featured keyword, evident from its largest font and brightest color in the word cloud. Other frequently mentioned terms include "language," "classroom talk," "classroom discourse," and "discourse." In contrast, terms like "instruction," "interaction," "development," and "outcomes" appeared less frequently. Additionally, words such as "component," "relationship," "engagement," "spontaneous," and "development" are depicted with smaller fonts and lighter colors, indicating their lesser frequency.

This analysis indicates that the bulk of the research on teacher talk from 2018 to 2023 focused on the features of teacher talk, especially regarding teacher-student interactions or instructional methods in classrooms. However, the word cloud suggests that the relationship between teacher talk and students' language development and classroom engagement has received comparatively less attention. Future research should therefore emphasise these aspects to enrich the understanding of how teacher talk influences students' language learning and engagement in classroom settings.

Table 1. Keywords from the selected articles

Article No.	Author's keywords
1	teacher talk; EFL classroom; young learners; attitudes; behavior
2	dialogic discourse; teacher talk; persuasive writing
3	teacher talk; spoken-language; classroom
4	Teachers; language outcomes; engagement
5	role of teacher' regulatory talk; development
6	teacher talk; children's responses; oral language
7	language literacy; early childhood classrooms
8	classroom talk; dialogic interaction; talk pedagogy; talk intervention
9	spontaneous teacher talk; classrooms; teacher-student relationships
10	teacher-child interactions; externalizing behaviors; preschool emotion talk
11	classroom talk; academically productive talk; discursive engagement
12	instructional talk; oral language learning; interventions
13	teacher–student dialogue; student outcomes
14	classroom discourse; dialogically-based instruction; literacy practices
15	conversation analysis; EFL classroom; teacher talk
16	effects; teacher talk; enjoyment in class
17	ESL classroom; quality of teacher talk; multilingual learners;
18	interaction; teacher questions; teacher talk
19	L1 vocabulary skills; teacher-led group talk; peer-play talk; L2 vocabulary
20	classroom talk; cooperative learning; student outcomes; scaffolding
21	early literacy; classroom talk; lexical diversity; teacher language input
22	computational thinking; teacher talk; technology
23	dialogic teaching; teacher questioning; classroom talk; discourse analysis
24	feedback talk; teacher feedback literacy; discourse analysis
25	teacher talk; learners' engagement; behavioral engagement; emotional engagement; cognitive engagement; agentic engagement

Figure 5: Word Cloud by Author's Keywords

4.5 Analysis of Tools/Methods Adopted

Previous research on teacher talk has utilized a range of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research designs to explore its impact on English language educational outcomes (Luk, 2008; Mercer & Dawes, 2014; van Dijk, 1997). Among the 25 articles selected for review, published between 2018 and 2023, various methods have been used to investigate this topic. According to Figure 6, the quantitative method is the most commonly employed, excluding the two review articles (Ramírez, Huang, Palomin, & McCarty, 2021; Khong et al., 2019). Indeed, 15 out of the 23 primary research articles on teacher talk use quantitative approaches (Al-Adeimi & O'Connor, 2021; Alamos & Williford, 2020; Chan, 2020; Chen et al., 2020; Duncan & Lederberg, 2018; Grøver, Lawrence & Rydland, 2018; Heller & Grøver, 2022; Hollo, Staubitz & Chow, 2020; Howe, Hennessy, Mercer, Vrikki, & Wheatley, 2019; Hu, Chiu, Yelland, & Liang, 2023; Meneses, Uccelli, & Valeri, 2023; Studhalter et al., 2021; Topalov & Radić-Bojanić, 2019; Torres, Whitehead & McLellan, 2018; Zucker, Bowles, Pentimonti & Tambyraja, 2021).

In contrast, qualitative methods are less frequently used, with only 7 of the 25 articles employing qualitative approaches (Ahmad, Shakir & Arshad, 2020; Aliabadi & Weisi, 2023; Eisenring & Margana, 2018; Herona et al., 2023; Leighton, Connors, Proctor, & Wyatt, 2021; Paatsch, Scull & Nolan, 2019; Yang & Brindley, 2023). Additionally, only one study combines both methodologies, employing a mixed-methods approach (Connor et al., 2019). Researchers using quantitative methods have utilized various tools such as questionnaires, empirical investigations, observational and longitudinal studies, and exploratory studies. Meanwhile, qualitative research on this topic has often involved case studies, conversation analysis, and descriptive methods to delve into how teacher talk influences students' outcomes in English language classrooms.

Figure 6. Analysis on Tools/Methods Adopted

4.6 Fundamental and Core Research Topic Analysis

An analysis of 25 selected articles from 2018 to 2023 demonstrates the extensive global focus on the role of teacher talk in affecting learners' outcomes. The research highlights various focal areas:

A number of studies have explored the characteristics and specifics of teacher talk. This includes analyzing elements such as teacher questioning styles, features of teacher-student interactions, and instructional approaches (Eisenring & Margana, 2018; Heller & Grøver, 2022; Hollo et al., 2020; Topalov & Radić-Bojanić, 2019; Yang & Brindley, 2023).

Other research has focused on the connection between teacher talk and learners' achievements. These studies assess how teacher talk influences students' writing, speaking, reading skills, vocabulary, and their reasoning and cognitive skills (Ahmad et al., 2020; Al-Adeimi & O'Connor, 2021; Alamos & Williford, 2020; Duncan & Lederberg, 2018; Chen et al., 2020; Howe et al., 2019; Hu et al., 2023; Leighton et al., 2021; Paatsch et al., 2019; Studhalter et al., 2021; Torres, Whitebread & McLellan, 2018; Zucker et al., 2021).

4.7 Analysis of the Effects of Teacher Talk on Students' Outcomes

In recent years, research on the impact of teacher talk on student achievements has yielded varied findings. Some studies have confirmed a positive relationship between teacher talk and student outcomes (Applebee, Langer, Nystrand, & Gamoran, 2003; Muhonen, Pakarinen, Poikkeus, Lerkkanen, & Rasku-Puttonen, 2019), while others have reported mixed results (Michener, 2014). Among the 25 articles reviewed, Alamos and Williford (2020) and Duncan and Lederberg (2018) identified relationships between teacher talk and student outcomes but did not determine whether these relationships were positive or negative. These findings emphasize the need to understand how different aspects of teacher talk affect students' learning outcomes. Detailed summaries of the research results from some of these studies are presented in the following section.

4.7.1 Positive Effects on Students' English Language Skills Leaning

From the research results of the 25 selected articles, a relationship between teacher talk and students' learning outcomes, particularly in English language classrooms, has been documented. However, the outcomes among these studies vary. The majority of the research indicates that teacher talk significantly influences students' learning outcomes. For example, excluding the two review articles, 10 of the 25 articles demonstrate positive effects of teacher talk on learners' language outcomes. This includes correlations with students' improved expressive vocabulary, enhanced writing skills, stronger oral communicative competence, and better reasoning and thinking skills (Al-Adeimi & O'Connor, 2021; Chen et al., 2020; Grøver et al., 2018; Heller & Grøver, 2020; Howe et al., 2019; Hu et al., 2023; Leighton et al., 2021; Meneses et al., 2023; Studhalter et al., 2021; Paatsch et al., 2019). In their study, Paatsch et al. (2019) examined teacher talk behavior and explored how teachers support children's oral language through strategies like questioning, instructing, and responding in both preschool and foundation school settings. However, they found limited evidence of teacher-student interactions that engaged students in rich dialogues, highlighting a need for more dynamic teacher talk to foster deeper student engagement and enhance oral competence.

4.7.2 Positive Effects on Students' Social and Emotional Skills Development

Beyond language skills, previous research also focuses on students' holistic development. Nelson, Welsh, Trup, & Greenberg (2011) highlighted that "language learning is a system which may be strongly affected by relatively small shifts in the details of ongoing conversational exchange and social emotional engagement" (p.166). Consequently, the significance of teacher talk in enhancing students' social and emotional skills has become a focal point in some studies. For instance, in a qualitative study by Leighton et al. (2021), researchers demonstrated that teachers play a crucial role in facilitating students' participation in team discussions and interactions with both teachers and peers. Through strategic teacher talk moves, the teacher in this study helped young students engage in critical thinking, particularly during group discussions.

Another example is found in the study by Alamos and Williford (2020), which employed a quantitative method to examine the influence of teachers' emotion talk on preschool children's social cognitive skills. The study explored four types of emotion talk, including emotion labeling and explaining by teachers, and emotion labeling and explaining elicited from children. The results indicated that teacher emotional talk significantly impacted children's social and emotional skill development. This underscores the importance of teacher talk in language acquisition and broader developmental areas, further emphasizing the multifaceted impact of teacher interactions in the classroom.

4.7.3 Null or Negative Effects on Students' Language Leaning

While several studies have highlighted the positive effects of teacher talk on students' English learning outcomes, there are also studies suggesting that teacher talk does not always positively impact students' English language learning. Among the 25 selected articles, four studies indicated that teacher talk either had no effect or even some negative effects on students' outcomes (Ahmad et al., 2020; Chan, 2020; Connor et al., 2019; Zucker et al., 2021).

Connor et al. (2019) explored both student and teacher talk through video-recorded observations of literacy instruction in Grade 2 and Grade 3 classes. They focused on four major categories of teacher talk: encouraging participation, prompting students to reason, facilitating extended talk, and building knowledge. The study found that while increased student talk correlated with greater reading comprehension gains, more teacher talk did not show a similar positive relationship to students' reading comprehension.

In another quantitative study, Chan (2020) conducted a survey on five aspects of classroom talk and teacher scaffolding, examining how classroom talk contributed to learning outcomes related to students' cooperative orientation and academic achievement. The findings indicated that performative talk was the most prevalent form of teacher questioning in classrooms. However, there was no significant association between students' achievement and any type of classroom talk.

Furthermore, Ahmad et al. (2020) highlighted a negative relationship between teacher talk and the language development of Grade 10 learners. The study revealed that classrooms dominated by teacher talk, especially those using content-based and limited response questions, might hinder interactions and negotiations in ESL classrooms. As a result, students might not benefit from such teacher talk,

indicating a potential negative impact on language development.

These studies collectively suggest that the nature and quality of teacher talk are crucial, and that merely increasing teacher talk does not guarantee positive learning outcomes. Instead, the focus should be on optimizing the effectiveness of teacher talk to enhance student engagement and learning.

4.7.4 Both Positive and Negative Effects

Aside from the previously discussed research results, both positive and negative effects are evident in some of the 25 selected articles. For example, Torres et al. (2018) examined how teachers from Chile and England regulated the thinking and activity of their 8 to 9-year-old students. The research results showed that guiding talk had a uniformly positive effect across different cultures. However, directive talk had a negative effect in England, but it had no effect in Chile. In the study by Studhalter et al. (2021), the researchers demonstrated that the teacher played a crucial role in facilitating productive interactions between students with content and with each other. Using quantitative methods, the researchers examined teacher talk from two aspects: the occurrence of vocabulary related to content-specific language and the occurrence of scaffolding utterances. The findings indicated that content-specific language and scaffolding utterances positively affected children's learning outcomes. However, if conflicts and confusion arose in the class, scaffolding utterances had the potential to negatively affect students' learning. Therefore, to provide students with positive effects, teacher talk should be based on the actual needs of the students.

In addition to the previously mentioned research results, some of the 25 selected articles present studies that show both positive and negative effects of teacher talk. For instance, Torres et al. (2018) investigated how teachers in Chile and England regulated the thinking and activities of their 8 to 9-year-old students. The research revealed that guiding talk had a positive effect across different cultures. However, directive talk negatively affected students in England but showed no significant effect in Chile. Another study by Studhalter et al. (2021) demonstrated the critical role of teachers in facilitating productive interactions among students, both with the content and with each other. Employing quantitative methods, the researchers examined teacher talk from two perspectives: the occurrence of vocabulary related to content-specific language and the occurrence of scaffolding utterances. Their findings indicated that content-specific language and scaffolding utterances positively affected children's learning outcomes. However, in instances of conflict and confusion in the classroom, scaffolding utterances could potentially cause negative effects on students' learning.

These examples suggest that the impact of teacher talk on students' learning outcomes is complex and can vary significantly depending on the context and the manner in which the talk is employed. Therefore, for teacher talk to have a positive effect, it should be tailored to the actual needs of the students, considering the specific classroom environment and cultural context.

5. Discussion

Teacher talk and students' learning outcomes have been the primary focus of our review, underscoring its significance in the field of English language teaching and learning. Drawing on articles published over the past six years, this review covers aspects such as publication trends, study locations, participant distribution, analysis of authors' keywords, adopted tools/methods, fundamental research topics, and the impacts of teacher talk on students. Our goal was to identify trends and outcomes related to teacher talk and student learning. Here are the summarized findings:

Most research on teacher talk and students' learning outcomes in English language classrooms focuses on young learners, particularly in kindergarten and primary schools. This emphasis is likely due to the unique dynamics and management needs of classrooms for young learners, as noted by Rahayu and Syahrizal (2020). Young students are typically more energetic and unpredictable, posing challenges for teachers in effectively managing classroom dynamics, as Cameron (2001) discussed. These settings provide rich insights into how teachers navigate these challenges through teacher talk, explaining the concentration of research at these educational levels.

The review reveals a scarcity of studies on the impact of teacher talk on learning outcomes among secondary and university students. Despite increasing interest in how teacher talk influences student achievement across various academic disciplines (Studhalter et al., 2021), more research is needed. Future studies should investigate the specifics of teacher talk in secondary and university settings to better understand its effects on student learning.

The analysis of publication trends over the last six years indicates that research on teacher talk peaked between 2019 and 2020, with a decline noted post-2021 and an increase in 2023. This pattern may be linked to global shifts in the educational landscape, notably the rise of online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has emphasized the importance of studying teacher-student interactions in digital settings (Ameiratrini & Kurniawan, 2020; Bali & Liu, 2018). Despite advancements in educational technology, a significant gap remains in understanding online teacher-student interactions, suggesting an area ripe for future research.

While many studies demonstrate positive impacts of teacher talk on learner outcomes, others report no significant or negative effects. This indicates that not all teacher talk is beneficial, and its effectiveness may depend on how it is implemented. Understanding the nuances of teacher talk and its relationship with student achievements requires more detailed exploration.

Most research on teacher talk has been conducted in native English-speaking countries like the USA, Australia, and the UK. However, there is also significant potential for research in non-native English-speaking countries, where English is learned as a second or foreign language. Given the global role of English, as discussed by Crystal (1997) and Jenkins (2007), expanding research to these contexts could provide deeper insights into the nuances of English language teaching and learning globally.

6. Conclusion

This study involved a systematic review of 25 articles on teacher talk and students' learning outcomes in English language classrooms from 2018 to 2023. The results highlight the crucial role of teacher talk and its varied impacts on learners' outcomes.

The significance of teacher talk in influencing learners' outcomes has been a focal point among scholars. By selecting articles from the past six years and synthesizing their data, this review contributes to both theoretical and practical aspects of education. It sheds light on teacher talk's role in enhancing students' language development and enhances teachers' awareness of their speech's impact, offering valuable insights into effective teaching strategies.

This study, however, has some notable limitations. First, it includes only a limited selection of articles from three databases, and the findings are primarily descriptive. Future research should encompass a wider array of sources to gain a more comprehensive understanding. Second, the review focuses exclusively on teacher talk within English language learning contexts, omitting studies in other languages. Future studies should broaden their scope to include various language learning environments to better understand the effects of teacher talk as a critical language input. Third, the existing literature mainly addresses the linguistic features of teacher talk in educational settings up to middle school. There is a scarcity of discussion on the language patterns employed by teachers at the university and college level. Future research should extend into higher education settings to explore how teacher talk aids in enhancing both language skills and academic achievements, thereby deepening our understanding of teacher talk's mechanisms in university and college classrooms.

By addressing these gaps, future research can provide deeper insights into the complexities of teacher talk and its pivotal role in shaping educational outcomes across all levels of language education.

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Authors contributions

Dr. Joanna Joseph Jeyaraj and Associate Professor Dr. Lilliati Ismail were responsible for study design and revising. Linlin Zou was responsible for data collection and drafting the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Appendix

Information of the Selected Articles from 2018 to 2023

	Topic	Researcher(s) & Years	Research Objective(s)	Population/ subjection	Research Method	Research Result
1	Teacher Talk in Young Learners' English Classroom	Topalov & Radić-Bojanić, 2019	To explore attitudes and behaviors of teachers	86 kindergarten and elementary school English teachers	quantitative research using questionnaire	Attitude towards teacher talk is generally positive, but little or no variation in teacher talks across different contexts.
2	Dialogic Teacher Talk and Persuasive Writing	Al-Adeimi & O'Connor, 2021	To explore relationship between specific features of classroom talk and student outcomes	42 audiotapes of classroom discussions, students' corresponding essays	quantitative	High dialogic teacher talk positively predicts persuasive essay scores, low for negative predicts.
3	Teacher Talk Characteristics and Child Language	Duncan & Lederberg, 2018	To examine conversational techniques and students' language gains	25 kindergartens,68 children	quantitative	Teachers' reformulations and vocabulary instruction were related to gains.
4	Teachers and Language Outcomes of Young Bilinguals	Ramίrez et al., 2021	synthesize the research findings and identify gaps	peer-reviewed journal articles from 2000 to 2019	a scoping review	Relationship between teacher knowledge and bilinguals' language outcomes.
5	Regulatory Talk in Self-Regulation Development	Torres et al., 2018	To see how teachers from Chile and England regulated students' thinking and activities for learning through talk	49students, 8 teachers in primary schools	quantitative study	Guiding talk had positive effect across cultures. Directive talk had a negative effect in England but a null effect in Chile.
6	Teacher Talk and Children's Oral Language	Paatsch et al., 2019	To explore teacher, talk behaviors that facilitate children's language use	3 preschool teachers an 6 Foundation Year teachers	a qualitative video methodology	Closed questions, verbal and related to the immediate context of the lesson.
7	Profiles of Teacher & Child Talk	Zucker et al., 2021	To examine profiles of teacher, talk and their relation to students' language and literacy performance.	98 pre-k teachers and kindergarten teachers	a latent profile analysis, a multisite quantitative study	Teachers and children distribute similar timing of their talk. Profiles were not related to children's language and literacy gains.
8	Productive Classroom Talk and Interventions	Khong et al., 2019	To explore classroom, talk and talk pedagogies	several online databases	review	Exploratory talk improves children's reasoning.
9	Spontaneous Teacher Talk In Elementary Classrooms	Hollo et al., 2020	To assess sources of error and identify spontaneous teacher talk	14 special education and 14 general education teachers	quantitative exploratory study	Some elements of instructional language were stable, but the methods were imprecise.
10	Teacher-Child Emotion Talk in Preschool Children	Alamos & Williford, 2020	To examine emotion talk and the quality of teacher-child	470 preschool children and 183 teachers.	Quantitative study, a regression model	Emotion talk was infrequent and was associated with children's engagement.

#	Title	Author	Aim	Participants	Method	Findings
11	Teacher Talk and Student Enjoyment, Anxiety and Discursive Engagement	Chen et al., 2020	interactions To examine emotional connection of teachers' productive talk with student learning	2,225 student participants 7th grade and 8th grade	quantitative stratified random sampling	APT was positively associated with discursive engagement with classmates.
12	Instructional Talk in Targeting Learners: Developments	Heller & Grøver, 2022	To examine features of instructional talk	elementary years 15 teachers and 65 students	comparison quantitative	More word definitions and extended discourse
13	Teacher–Student Dialogue and Impact on Students' Outcomes	Howe et al., 2019;	To see how lesson-level ratings affect outcome variables	72 demographically diverse classrooms (10–11 years)	quantitative	Elaboration and querying were positively associated with curriculum mastery
14	Teacher Talk That Supports Students' Participation	Leighton et al., 2021	To see how teacher talk moves supported students' participation	a second-grade teacher and her students	qualitative method	Important role in facilitating students' productive interactions.
15	Teacher Talk Through the Self-evaluation of Talk	Eisenring & Margana, 2018	To examine language teaching and learning by classroom interaction	2 teachers who teach grade X and XI	a qualitative case study research design	Features of teacher talk in SETT were performed by English teachers
16	Effects of Teacher Talk and Instruction	Studhalter, et al. 2021	To explore how content-specific language in the form of scaffolding utterances	32 kindergarten teachers and their classes	quantitative modeling approaches	Positive effects of content-specific language and activation of prior knowledge and on children's learning
17	Teacher Talk and Learners' Involvement	Ahmad et al., 2020	To examine the effects of the amount of teacher talk, teacher questions on language acquisition	A teacher and students in grade 10	descriptive and qualitative methods	Teacher talk was obstructive to language acquisition and poses hindrance to interaction and negotiation process
18 19	Reading Comprehension Gains and Students' and Classmates Talk	Connor et al., 2019	To explore the effects of teacher talk on students' literacy skills developments	video-recorded observations, 2nd–3rd grade literacy instruction	mixed method: a longitudinal study, multilevel structural equation modeling	11 types of teacher talk Teacher talk did not predict students' reading comprehension achievements
20	First-language(L1) Vocabulary Skills and Second-language (L2) Talk Input	Grøver et al., 2018	To explore L2 teacher-led group talk and peer-play talk on L1 vocabulary skills	26 bilingual children	quantitative method: a longitudinal study	More developed L1 vocabulary skills exposed to teacher-led talk with a high density of tokens had more developed L2 vocabulary skills
	Classroom Talk on Cooperative Learning and Academic Achievement	Chan,2020	To explore features of different modes of classroom talk, and contributions to learning outcomes	a random sample of 30 secondary schools	a quantitative approach	Performative talk was the most important form of teacher questions. No relation between any classroom talk variable and students' gains
21	Teacher Talk and Literacy Gains	Meneses et al., 2023	To examine conceptual, interac-tive, and linguistic features of classroom talk and relation to students' literacy	16 Chilean classrooms in elementary schools	HLM analysis, quantitative , video-recorded lessons from 16 elementary-school classrooms	A positive quadratic effect of teachers' lexical diversity on early literacy gains and a negative effect of teacher-student talk ratio

					outcomes
22	Young children's computational thinking with teacher talk	Hu et al., 2023	To examine how specific types of teacher talk can scaffold young children's CT processes	3 ethnic Chinese children in elementary schools.	Exploratory study, quantitative, Seven videotaped 90-minute sessions of weekly project-based activities	teacher command, the children more often executed a sequence of actions toward a solution but less often demonstrated problem understanding than otherwise. teacher's open question, the children were more likely to offer logically organized ideas.
23	Dialogic talk encouraged through questioning	Yang &Sue, 2023	To examine how teachers successfully elicited productive talk through questioning	11 teaching staffs in a university	a qualitative approach, observation	first, teachers drew on a series of display or convergent questions to create dialogic momentum; second, teachers persistently used explorative questions with multiple questioning strategies
24	Linguistic and rhetorical indicators of feedback talk	Heron et al., 2023	To surface the role of feedback talk in developing classroom relationships.	6 teachers from social science and humanities disciplines in universities,	a qualitative approach, seminar was audio recorded and observed, interviews,	a number of rhetorical moves, such as elaboration, probing and consolidation
25	Teachers' strategies to promote learners' engagement via teachers' talk analysis	Aliabadi &Weisi, 2023	To explore strategies Iranian EFL teachers use in their talk to promote EFL learners' behavioral, emotional, cognitive and agentic engagement	10 EFL teachers at three language institutes,	a qualitative approach, a video of a whole class time lasting 90 minutes for each teacher was obtained	Teachers used strategies such as employing encouraging language chunks, to promote learners' behavioral engagement; trying positive thinking, for promoting emotional engagement; being more collaborative to promote cognitive engagement; thinking about language learning needs to promote agentic engagement.