



Supporting oral language through talk moves

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Introduction

- Classroom talk could provide a **language-rich environment** for language and literacy development¹
- But, 'getting kids to talk' can be difficult
 - Teacher-led discussion²
 - Focused on recitation and right answers³
- Talk moves** are conversational tools and sentence starters that teachers (and students) can use to promote academic conversations and equitable participation⁴:

Goal	Talk Move	Sentence Starter
1. Students share ideas	Say More	"Tell me more..."
2. Students listen carefully	Repeat	"Who can repeat that?"
3. Students explain their reasoning	Support	"How do you know?"
4. Students think with each other	Agree/Disagree and Why	"Do you agree or disagree, and why?"

Research Questions:

- Are teachers' using talk moves in their current practice?
- Is the use of talk moves by teachers related to the quality of students' language skills and participation?

Methods

Participants: Secondary data analysis⁵. 209 math lessons from 21 teachers (15 primary grades; 8 female teachers)

Procedure:

- Minimal professional development on talk moves (e.g., reading materials provided)
- Teachers involved in larger study to develop TalkBack application
- Teachers recorded and uploaded math lessons to TalkBack application

Coding:

- Coded talk moves by goals⁴ for teachers and students:

Goal	Talk Move(s)
1. Students share ideas	Say More; Wait; Partner Talk; Revoice
2. Students listen carefully	Repeat
3. Students explain their reasoning	Support/Evidence; Challenge/Counterexample
4. Students think with each other	Agree/Disagree and Why; Add On
Evaluation moves	Evaluates response as correct/incorrect

- Students' responses
 - Language: mean length utterance, mental state verbs, sentence complexity
 - Participation: different students, relative participation

Analysis

- Bayesian linear mixed effects model⁶. Strong evidence would be indicated by a credible effect
 - Fixed effects = talk moves type and age group
 - Random effect = teacher
- Separate analysis for each student response variable

Results

Are teachers already using talk moves?

- Teachers used more talk moves than evaluation moves
- Goal 1 > Goals 3 and 4 > Goal 2

Are students' responses and participation influenced by teachers' talk moves?

- Talk moves, especially from Goal 4, linked to students' use of mental state verbs, complex sentences, and different students participating
- Goal 2 was negatively associated with relative student participation
- Age was negatively associated with different students participating

Variable	Younger group: Grades 4-5	Older group: Grades 6-12
Teachers (per 10 turns)	n = 15 teachers	n = 6 teachers
Talk moves	4.9 (4.0)	2.1 (0.7)
Goal 1	2.1 (1.8)	0.9 (4.0)
Goal 2	0.3 (0.2)	0.1 (0.1)
Goal 3	1.4 (1.4)	0.7 (0.2)
Goal 4	1.1 (0.7)	0.4 (0.3)
Evaluation moves	0.8 (0.6)	0.8 (0.5)
Students (per 10 turns)		
Mean length utterance per turn	7.53 (2.26)	5.89 (9.2)
Mean state verbs	3.2 (1.4)	2.3 (1.0)
Sentence complexity	3.1 (1.5)	2.3 (0.8)
Talk moves	1.0 (0.3)	1.3 (0.2)
Different students participating	2.2 (0.8)	1.4 (0.8)
Relative student participation	4.6 (0.4)	4.6 (0.2)

Conclusion

1) Are teachers already using talk moves?

- Yes!** Teachers are using talk moves in their practices
- We can encourage teachers to increase the frequency of and deliberate use of talk moves to promote rich conversations in class

2) Is use of talk moves by teachers related to the quality of students' language skills and participation?

- Yes!** When teachers used talk moves, especially from goal 4 (e.g., Agree/Disagree; Add On), students used more complex words and sentences, but not longer sentences
- Talk moves was also related to more different students participating, indexing equitable participation

Clinical Implications: Results from our study can help teachers as well as clinicians and parents encourage rich conversations with talk moves

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