

The Analysis of Classroom Interaction in English Between Teachers and Students at a Kindergarten in Jambi

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: interaction, classroom interaction, teacher talk, student talk, verbal interaction.</p> <p>DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.22437/langue.v2i1.26646</p> <p>Received: June 27, 2023</p> <p>Reviewed: August 27, 2023</p> <p>Accepted: August 27, 2023</p>	<p><i>Interaction is a fundamental aspect of human life, with communication serving as a key component. In educational settings, classroom interaction plays a crucial role in facilitating effective knowledge transmission and fostering learning experiences. This study focuses on examining the patterns and quality of verbal interaction among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in a kindergarten classroom. This qualitative case study investigates the dynamics of classroom interaction in English between teachers and students at a kindergarten in Jambi. The research aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the patterns of interaction, describe the types of teacher talk, and explore the characteristics of student talk. Through close observation and analysis, the study reveals compelling findings regarding the dominance of teacher talk, the varied functions of both teacher and student talk, and the emergence of significant themes within the interactions. The results demonstrate that teacher talk holds a prominent role in the classroom, influencing the learning process and managing classroom activities. However, the level of dominance displayed by the teacher varies across different learning activities. Furthermore, the study uncovers distinct types and functions of teacher talk, encompassing accepting feelings, encouraging, accepting students' ideas, asking questions, lecturing, giving directions, criticizing, and silencing. Student talk involved responding, initiating, and silencing.</i></p>

1. Introduction

Interaction and communication are essential aspects of human life, particularly in a classroom environment. In the context of education, effective interaction between teachers and students is crucial for successful learning outcomes. Classroom interaction encompasses both verbal and non-verbal forms of communication. Verbal interaction includes teacher talk, student talk, and moments of silence, each playing a unique role in the learning process. While previous research focused on quantifying the percentages of interaction, this study takes a different

approach by examining the quality of classroom interaction.

This study specifically focuses on observing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in a kindergarten setting where English serves as the primary language of instruction. With English being a global language of communication, understanding the interaction patterns of young learners in an English-based classroom becomes essential. The researchers aim to explore and analyze the interaction patterns of these EFL students, identifying the various forms of verbal interaction that take place. By focusing on the kindergarten level, the study provides insights into early English language interaction and its impact on language acquisition at an early developmental stage.

The observation took place at Kinderfield School Jambi, a kindergarten known for its English-immersive educational environment. By selecting this specific institution, the researchers were able to explore the classroom interaction dynamics within a unique linguistic context. The study employed Flanders' Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC) as a framework to guide the observation process and analysis. This approach allows for a detailed examination of the observed interactions, enabling the identification and classification of different interaction patterns. By focusing on the quality of classroom interaction, this research provides valuable insights for enhancing teaching and learning practices in EFL classrooms.

Recently, there are so many research which brought the topic of analyzing classroom interaction by using Flanders' Interaction Analysis (1970) (e.g. Mardiana, F., et al, 2019; Ayunda, A., et al, 2021; Kapoe, S, 2021; Lestari, E., et al, 2022; Sudarna, P.N.R, 2019; Ratnawati, R., et al, 2022). Yet, most of them focused on finding the percentage of how much the teacher talk and student talk in the class. In another way to find out which one is the dominant speaker during the learning activity in the class. As example the research conducted by An, J., Macaro, E., & Childs, A. (2021) in China despite the teachers' high level of English proficiency, the classroom interaction in this study remained largely dominated by the teachers. This resulted in limited and restricted participation from the students, both in terms of quantity and quality.

Based on previous studies, this research study has chosen to shift its focus from quantifying the percentage of interaction to examining the quality of the classroom interaction itself. This study identified, classified and described the interaction that happened in the class. Additionally, it explores potential topics that warrant further discussion based on the observational results.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Interaction

Interaction is a fundamental aspect of human social life and knowledge exchange. It involves reciprocal events between individuals or groups, where they impact each other through communication and response (Wagner, 1994). This mutual impact is crucial for effective interaction, as it requires the sending and receiving of signals. When two or more people engage in a conversation or any social activity, they interact by exchanging thoughts, feelings, and views. It is through interaction that social groups are formed and social processes are built, contributing to the overall structure of society.

2.2 Verbal Interaction

Verbal interaction can be defined in various ways. According to Holmbreg (1986), it refers to the exchange of information through speech between individuals. Bunglowala (2015) further categorizes communication into verbal and nonverbal forms. Verbal communication involves the use of language, while nonverbal communication relies on expressions, gestures, and

actions. Chaudhry (2012) adds that nonverbal communication, which complements verbal messages, has a greater impact on students' minds and hearts compared to verbal communication alone.

2.3 Classroom Interaction

The relationship between teachers and students in the classroom is of growing significance. Interaction, defined as the collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings, or ideas between individuals, has a reciprocal impact on both parties (Brown, 2006). Classroom interaction plays a vital role in language skill development, as students are exposed to explanations, authentic materials, and group discussions facilitated by the teacher. It provides students with valuable opportunities to practice and apply their language knowledge. Tsui (2001) emphasizes that classroom interaction encompasses the interactions that occur within the classroom, involving both teachers and students.

2.4 Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System (FIACS)

Flanders (1970) introduced the Flanders System of Interaction Analysis (FIA), which revolutionized the analysis and improvement of education by focusing on verbal interactions between teachers and students. This system, known as the Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC), consists of ten categories that encompass various communication channels. The system primarily emphasizes verbal behavior due to its observable nature and assumed correlation with overall behavior. Within the FIAC, teacher talk is divided into categories such as indirect influence, including accepting feelings, praising or encouraging, and accepting or using student ideas, and direct influence, including asking questions, lecturing, giving directions, and criticizing or justifying authority. Student talk is categorized as response or initiation, while silence or confusion is classified as a separate category. The Flanders System provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing and understanding classroom interactions, facilitating effective teaching and learning.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The qualitative research design was used in this study. The study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to describe, investigate, and explore the real situation that occurs in the kindergarten classroom setting during teaching. Classroom observations were conducted as a method of gathering data within the context of this research. Additionally, a case study approach was employed as a qualitative method, in alignment with the definition provided by Fraenkel & Norman (2009). A case study involves studying a singular individual, group, or significant example to develop interpretations specific to that particular case or to generate valuable generalizations.

3.2 Participants

The researcher used purposive sampling for this study. Purposive sampling techniques were employed to ensure a focused and targeted selection of participants who could provide valuable insights into the research topic. In this study, qualitative data were collected through purposeful sampling, allowing the researcher to gain a deeper understanding and provide more accurate research findings. By specifically choosing participants who were likely to have relevant experiences and perspectives, the study aimed to enhance the comprehensiveness and richness of the data collected.

The research was conducted at Kinderfield School Jambi, which is known for its immersive English language instruction in the kindergarten setting. The study focused on a particular class within the school, KG B (Kindergarten B) Rocket, consisting of ten students aged

approximately five to six years old. The selection of this class as the study group was based on several factors, including their perceived level of advancement and their active interactions during learning activities. The recommendation from the school principal further reinforced the suitability of this class for the research, highlighting their intensive interaction and participation in the classroom. By conducting the study in this specific setting and selecting participants from KG B Rocket, the research aimed to gain insights into classroom interactions within an English-dominant context, providing valuable information for understanding the dynamics of interactions and learning processes in such an environment

3.3 Instruments

In this study, the primary technique employed for data collection was observation. The researcher actively observed and documented the behaviors and actions of the participants in their natural classroom setting. Video recordings were used to accurately capture and analyze the dynamics and communication patterns within the classroom environment. The researcher recorded various teaching and learning activities, providing a comprehensive understanding of the interactions between teachers and students during class sessions.

The observation in this study focused on six specific scenes within the classroom setting, including calendar setting, computer class, collaboration classes such as Physical Education (P.E.), Bahasa Indonesia, Mandarin, and snack time. By observing these diverse scenarios, the researcher gained insights into different aspects of classroom interactions, such as language instruction, collaborative activities, and routine classroom activities. This comprehensive approach facilitated a thorough understanding of the dynamics and communication patterns within the classroom across various contexts.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedures

There are some steps or procedure of the data analysis such as identifying, classifying, interpreting and analyzing. But before doing those kind of steps, after the data were collected, the first step involved dedicating time to watch the recorded video footage, engaging in a review to develop a comprehensive understanding of the captured material. This review process entailed closely examining the classroom interactions.

To facilitate a thorough and detailed analysis, the researcher proceeded to transcribe the contents of the recorded video. This transcription process involved carefully transcribing the spoken words, and overall communication observed in the video, aiming to create a textual representation of the dialogue and interaction patterns between the teacher and students.

Once the video transcriptions were completed, the researcher employed the Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System (1970) to conduct an in-depth analysis of the recorded video footage and transcriptions. This well-established analysis method provided a framework for the researcher to identify and classify different types of teacher talk and student talk that occurred during the observed classroom sessions. By utilizing this analysis system, the researcher was able to categorize and examine the various forms of communication and interaction between the teacher and students, enabling a comprehensive examination of the nature and patterns of their engagement within the classroom environment. By following these steps, the researcher could get deeply into the collected data, extracting valuable insights and understanding the intricate dynamics of communication and interaction between the teacher and students

4. Findings

In the initial phase of the study, the researcher identified four distinct forms of interaction that took place during various activities. These included teacher-class interaction, teacher-student interaction, student-teacher interaction, and student-student interactions. Each type of interaction demonstrated the dynamic nature of classroom conversations and the diverse ways in which learning can occur. These interactions served specific functions and contributed to the overall enrichment of the learning environment. Four forms of interactions are teacher-class, teacher-student, student-teacher, and student-student interactions. The observed interactions in this study were particularly interesting because they were interactive and engaging, involving both students and the teacher. This dynamic interaction between students and the teacher contributes to a more active and participatory learning environment.

Based on the observation, There are three types of interactions in the classroom, including those between the teacher and students, students and other students, and the teacher and the class as a whole. As for the interaction itself, everyone in the class including the teacher and the student talked at least two times in the class. As a result, it can be said that the teacher's and the student's participation in the classroom is entirely interactive. Each everyone in the classroom actively participated, speaking at least twice throughout the lesson, both the teacher and students. Due to the fact that both the teacher and the students are actively participating in verbal communication, this level of involvement reflects a high level of interaction in the classroom.

Besides, there are also the types of interactions that identified and classified in this study. The types of interactions are divided from the interactions made by the teacher which called the teacher talk and interactions by the students or student talk. The types of the teacher talk and student talk in this study are based on the Flanders Category Analysis System (FIACS). The types of teacher talk that has been identified in this study, namely accepting students' feelings, praising or encouraging, accepting students' ideas, asking questions, lecturing, giving direction, criticizing or justifying authority and silencing. Meanwhile, there are three types of student talk such as student's responses, student's initiation and silence.

4.1 Accepting Feeling

The concept of accepting feelings in the classroom involves acknowledging and understanding the emotional states of students in a supportive manner. Based on the observation, one student expressed annoyance when his name wasn't called despite requesting to go last. The teacher accepted his feelings and reassured him that his request was acknowledged. Similarly, another student exhibited shyness during his turn to set the year on the calendar, and the teacher provided encouragement. Another student shared feelings of sadness unrelated to the lesson, and the teacher empathetically acknowledged his emotions. Apart from the calendar activity, there were fewer instances where the teacher explicitly recognized or validated students' feelings, except when a student complained about a difficult game during the computer class..

4.2 Praising or Encouraging

The teacher employed praise and encouragement strategies to motivate and boost students' confidence. This was evident in the observation results, where phrases such as "good job," "come on," and repeating students' answers were used. In specific instances, the teacher utilized encouraging words like "come on" to support hesitant students in taking the right actions. For example, the teacher encouraged all students to follow the class leader and say the name of the day together. Similar encouragement through repetition of correct answers was observed in Mandarin and Bahasa Indonesia classes, helping students build their self-confidence by acknowledging their correct responses.

4.3 Accepting students' ideas

The observation results revealed two ways in which the teacher accepted students' ideas in the classroom. The first way was by agreeing with the student's ideas, which was indicated by saying "ok" or repeating the student's statements. Additionally, the teacher also accepted students' ideas by clarifying their statements. In one instance, a student mentioned that the weather changed to "raining" after initially setting it as cloudy. The student had heard the sound of raindrops outside and shared this with the teacher. The teacher responded by repeating the student's statement and asking the class to change the weather immediately, demonstrating acceptance and engagement with the student's idea.

4.4 Questioning

In the observation results, questioning played a significant role, encompassing various aspects of classroom interaction. The teacher used questioning when greeting the students with "good morning" and when calling them by their names. In terms of question types, two categories were identified: display questions and referential questions. Given the young age of the kindergarten students, the teacher primarily utilized display questions, where the teacher already knows the answer beforehand.

However, there were instances where the teacher employed referential questions, particularly when seeking information that was unpredictable or unknown to the teacher. These questions aimed to elicit responses from the students and engage them in active participation during the classroom activities.

4.5 Lecturing

Lecturing was observed as a prominent element in classroom interaction, particularly during English, Mandarin, and Bahasa Indonesia classes. It served as a method for providing students with key information, introducing new concepts, clarifying complex ideas, or offering an overview of a subject. Furthermore, the teacher utilized lecturing when students encountered unfamiliar words or expressions. This allowed the teacher to provide explanations and help students understand the meanings of the words in question. Moreover, lecturing was also employed by the teacher to offer suggestions or advice to the students. Through lecturing, the teacher effectively conveyed important information and provided insights to support the students' learning and development.

4.6 Giving direction

The category of giving directions involves the teacher providing instructions, commands, and guidance to the students. This interaction serves to direct and discipline student behavior in the classroom. Whether it's leading prayers, singing activities, or guiding physical education classes, the teacher plays a pivotal role in giving clear and straightforward directions for students to follow. Students are expected to obey and adhere to the teacher's instructions as they engage in various classroom activities.

4.7 Criticizing or justifying authority

The teacher actively criticizes students who display unacceptable or disruptive behavior. When students engage in activities such as talking loudly or using inappropriate language, the teacher intervenes by reminding them to be respectful and maintain discipline. In one instance, the teacher reprimanded a student for using a bad word, emphasizing the importance of appropriate

language. Additionally, the teacher addressed a student who frequently shared unrelated stories during the learning activity, redirecting him to save the storytelling for snack time. Moreover, during a physical education class, the teacher intervened when one student pushed another, disciplining the student and urging him to apologize, highlighting the significance of apologizing and showing concern for others.

4.8 Silencing

Silence plays a significant role in the classroom environment as teachers intentionally utilize it for various purposes. Research suggests that teachers employ silence to manage the classroom, observe and listen to students, and foster student participation. By embracing moments of silence, teachers can attentively observe and assess students' understanding of new material and identify any areas of confusion or uncertainty. Furthermore, silence serves as a powerful tool for classroom management, redirecting students' attention and addressing disruptive behavior, creating a focused and conducive learning atmosphere. Moreover, silence encourages active student participation, providing them with opportunities to initiate discussions, ask questions, and share their thoughts. This promotes critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and a sense of ownership in the learning process.

4.9 Student Response

This category focuses on students' responses to the teacher, particularly in the form of answering questions posed by the teacher. However, there are limitations to the extent to which students can express their opinions and engage in discussions. The observation results indicate that students primarily respond to the teacher's questions, whether it's greetings, attendance checks, following instructions, or even expressing complaints. The excerpts illustrate how students respond to the teacher's daily greetings and attendance checks with clear answers. However, there are instances where students respond mischievously, pretending to be someone else or not following the expected response. In such cases, the teacher maintains a calm approach, explaining the correct behavior to the student. Overall, the majority of students' responses revolve around answering the teacher's inquiries, which holds true for various activities both inside and outside the classroom.

4.10 Student Initiation

This category focuses on student-initiated talk, where students take the lead in expressing their ideas, initiating new topics, asking for clarification, and sharing their thoughts. During the learning process, many students initiate conversations by asking for the meaning of certain words or expressions, particularly when the teacher uses English as the medium of instruction. The excerpts provide evidence of students seeking clarification and actively engaging in understanding the language. Additionally, during snack time, students initiate discussions on various topics beyond just food. For instance, one student initiated a conversation about computers, showcasing their interest in exploring different subjects. These student-initiated discussions bring diversity and spontaneity to the classroom.

While these student-initiated interactions may deviate from the planned lesson, the teacher responds in a way that maintains engagement and creates a positive learning environment. The teacher values these opportunities for student expression and seeks to foster a supportive atmosphere, even when the conversation goes beyond the original topic.

4.11 Student Silence

Silence in the classroom refers to periods of no communication, while confusion arises when students struggle to understand or follow instructions. During the observed calendar-setting activity, moments of silence occurred when the teacher addressed excessive noise, caused by students, and when there were delays in finding a specific item. Additionally, instances of confusion arose when students encountered difficulty answering a teacher's question. These observations highlight the presence of both silence and confusion within the classroom, impacting communication and comprehension among students.

5. Discussion

The results of this research revealed a slight deviation from the categories proposed by Flanders (1970). While Flanders primarily focused on different types of verbal interactions in the classroom, this study introduced an additional category that encompasses the use of silence as a form of teacher talk. In this context, silence is deliberately employed by the teacher with specific purposes in mind. This refers to the deliberate use of silence by the teacher for class management or to actively listen to students' responses and ideas.

Therefore, while the inclusion of silence as a category of teacher talk in this research may deviate from Flanders' original framework, it expands our understanding of the diverse ways in which teachers engage with students during instructional interactions. This nuanced perspective highlights the intentional use of silence as an effective pedagogical strategy, adding depth and breadth to the analysis of classroom interactions and instructional practices..

6. Conclusion

Interactions in the classroom play a crucial role in the learning process. This study identified four forms of interactions: teacher-class, teacher-student, student-teacher, and student-student interactions. The observed interactions in this study were particularly interesting because they were interactive and engaging, involving both students and the teacher. This dynamic interaction between students and the teacher contributes to a more active and participatory learning environment. Additionally, this study identified and classified the types of interactions, which were divided into two categories: teacher talk and student talk. The classification of teacher talk and student talk in this study was based on the Flanders Category Analysis System (FIACS). Several types of teacher talk were identified, including accepting students' feelings, praising or encouraging, accepting students' ideas, asking questions, lecturing, giving directions, criticizing or justifying authority, and silencing. On the other hand, there were three types of student talk: student's responses, student's initiation, and silence.

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