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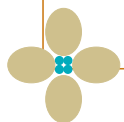
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# WHICH TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTION TRIGGERS STUDENTS' UPTAKE

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## ABSTRACT

*The pattern of interaction between the teacher and the students will determine the students' uptake (i.e. the students' incorporating correction into an utterance of their own). This paper examines the type of teacher-student interaction which will likely trigger the students' uptake. The data was taken from the recordings of 10 non-native English lessons at university level and different types of subjects (literature, grammar, discourse, semantics, and classroom management). 500 minutes of lessons were transcribed and 50 focus on form episodes were chosen to be analyzed. The study revealed that the dominant type of interaction was reactive focus on form which was followed by metalinguistic feedback.*

**Keywords:** *focus on form, reactive, pre-emptive, feedback, uptake*

## ABSTRAK

*Pola interaksi antara guru dan murid akan menentukan 'uptake' (yakni murid mengintegrasikan koreksi yang diberikan guru menjadi ujaran mereka sendiri). Artikel ini mengeksplorasi jenis jenis interaksi guru-murid apa sajakah yang akan mencetuskan 'uptake' pada murid. Data diambil dari rekaman 10 sesi kegiatan belajar mengajar bahasa Inggris di tingkat universitas dan berbagai jenis mata kuliah (sastra, grammar, wacana, semantik, dan manajemen kelas). Rekaman pelajaran selama 500 menit ditranskripsikan dan 50 episode focus on form (focus pada struktur) dipilih untuk dianalisis. Riset mengungkapkan bahwa tipe interaksi yang paling dominan adalah focus on form reactive yang diikuti oleh umpanbalik metalinguistik.*

**Kata kunci:** *focus on form, reaktif, pre-emptive, umpan balik, uptake*

## INTRODUCTION

Classroom interaction is one of the primary means by which learning is accomplished. Through this interaction, teachers and students construct a common body of knowledge (Hall & Walsh, 2002). Teacher – student interaction also helps define the norm by which individual student achievement is assessed. Such interaction usually follows a typical pattern of interaction, i.e. the turns of the teacher and the student talks.

Earlier research on teacher-student interaction revealed that one particular pattern which characterizes most western schooling was IRE pattern (Barnes, 1992; Cazden, 1988). This pattern consists of teacher-led three part sequences of Initiate – Response and Evaluation. In initiation phase, the teacher begins by posing a question to a student to which he or she already knows the answer. Students are expected to provide a brief but correct response to the question. This question will then be evaluated by the teacher by saying “Good”, “That’s right”, or “That’s not right.” The main purpose of IRE pattern is to elicit information from the students in order to ascertain whether they have understood the materials. A sample of teacher-led interaction in IRE is like the following:

T: Who’s about?            (initiate)  
S: Phil Collins            (response)  
T: Yeah                    (evaluation)

The IRE pattern was then considered insufficient in the sense that the teacher would not have any proof whether the students have really accomplished their learning or not. Thus, Wells (1993) proposed a reconceptualization of the IRE pattern by changing the last E into F, thus forming IRF pattern. Instead of evaluating students’ responses, the teacher followed up their responses (F) by asking them to expand on their thinking, justify or clarify their opinions. With this follow up move, the teacher directed the pattern of interaction to enhance opportunities for learning. A sample of an IRF pattern can be like the following

T: What does Phil Collins do? (initiate)  
S: He ..singer            (response)  
T: He is a singer            (follow up – feedback)

The follow up (F) move in the IRF pattern can be done by providing the appropriate feedback to the students. Feedback usually takes the form of error correction. A number of studies have shown that corrective feedback can lead to successful learner repair in immediate response to feedback (Lyster & Ranta 1997; Hee Sheen, 2004; Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen 2001; Tsang 2004). Subsequently, if the students notice the feedback given by the teacher, they will achieve an ‘uptake’, defined as ‘ a student’s utterance that immediately follows the teacher’s feedback and that constitutes a reaction in some ways to the teacher’s attention to draw attention to some aspect of the student’s initial utterance’ (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

Following Lyster and Ranta’s (1997) framework of types of feedback and Tsang’s (2004) framework of uptake categories, this study examines the interaction pattern of 10 English lecturers of BINUS University. It further investigates the effects of corrective feedback on learner uptake and student-generated repair in teacher-student interaction in English classrooms. The following questions are applied to guide the investigations: (1) What kinds of teacher-learner interaction occur in English classrooms in Bina Nusantara University; (2) How do different kinds of teachers’ corrective feedback relate to learners’ uptake.

## Focus on Form Episodes

To analyze the teacher-learner interactions in this study, several focus on form episodes have been chosen as the data. Long (1991) defined 'focus on form' as follows:

Focus on form...overtly draws students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication.

What is meant by the term 'form' here does not refer exclusively to grammar, but can also be directed at phonology, vocabulary, grammar or discourse. A focus on form episode in this study is defined as an episode of teacher –student interaction which focuses on a specific linguistic item.

## Types of Teacher-Student Interaction

Focus on form can be divided into two types: 'reactive' and 'pre-emptive' (Long & Robinson, 1998). Reactive focus on form arises when learners produce an utterance containing an actual perceived error, which is then addressed usually by the teacher but sometimes by another learner. The following sample of reactive focus on form was taken from Ellis, Basturkmen, and Loewen (2001).

S: I was in pub.  
T: in the pub?  
S: Yeah and I was drinking beer with my friend

In this interaction, the teacher intentionally drew attention to the student's error, that is eliminating the article 'the', even though the teacher perfectly understood his utterance. To put it another way, reactive focus on form addresses a performance problem (which may or may not reflect a competence problem).

Pre-emptive focus on form, on the other hand, addresses an actual or a perceived gap in the students' knowledge. Teachers sometimes predict a gap in their students' knowledge and seek to address it. This can be seen in the following example:

S: What is sacked?  
T: Sacked is when you lose your job, you do something wrong maybe, you steal something, and your boss says, right, leave the job.

(Ellis, Basturkmen, and Loewen, *ibid*)

Pre-emptive focus on form can be initiated by either the teacher or the student, thus they are termed as: student-initiate and teacher-initiate. Preemptive student initiate is an episode in which a student initiates a focus on a specific linguistic feature because there is a gap in his/her knowledge. Student initiated FFE is typically began with a question of some kind. Preemptive teacher initiated FFE is an episode in which a teacher initiates a focus on a specific linguistic features because she things the feature may be problematic to the students. Typically this was achieved by a teacher query.

In teacher-initiated exchanges there will be two possibilities: (a) the students might answer the question, in which case no gap in the student's knowledge was evident, or (b) students might fail to answer the question. If the student did not answer the question, the teacher might choose to answer the question herself, or she might choose not to respond.

## **The Relation between Feedback and Uptake**

In a teacher-student interaction, the most important move is the feedback given by the teacher as a response toward the students' query. Teacher's feedback can be categorized in several types, as proposed by Lyster and Ranta (1997): (1) Explicit correction (i.e., the teacher supplies the correct form and clearly indicates that what the student said was incorrect); (2) Recast (i.e. the teacher implicitly reformulates all or part of the student's utterance); (3) Clarification requests (i.e., the teacher uses phrases such as "Pardon?"); (4) Metalinguistic feedback (i.e., the teacher provides comments or questions related to the well-formedness of the students' utterances); (5) Elicitation (i.e., the teacher directly elicits a reformulation from the students); (6) Repetition (i.e. the teacher repeats the student's ill-formed utterance, adjusting intonation to highlight the error).

Lyster and Ranta (1997) opined that a corrective feedback can lead to the students' uptake. They defined uptake as:

Uptake ... refers to a student's utterance that immediately follows the teacher's feedback and that constitutes a reaction in some way to the teacher's intention to draw attention to some aspect of the students's initial utterance.

Similarly, Ellis, Basturkmen, and Loewen (2001) freely defined as students incorporating correction into an utterance of their own. The terminology appears following the discussion on language learning and focus on form, in which students' initiated discussion on a particular word or vocabulary often are the examples of these. In the previous studies, focus on form dealt with teachers' correction but in the recent developments, more attention has been directed to other interactions in the classroom. It turned out to be that students' often responded to particular words or certain new information, in which they asked the teachers for more explanation or to have more understanding about the form.

The steps to uptake are as follows: First, the student addresses a grammatical problem or a student may raise a question. The second step would be student formulates the problem, initially preceded by teacher's question or back channeling for clarification. The third step would be the teacher's response indicating the correct form and the last step would be further or metalingual explanation. The student's uptake will be apparent in which students would acknowledge the teacher's answer with their own utterance.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Ten English Department Lecturers and 300 students in Bina Nusantara University, Jakarta, were chosen randomly as the participants of this research. The subjects taught by the lecturers are varied, i.e. English Grammar, Discourse, Travel Management, Literature, Semantics, and Classroom Management. All the participants were non-native speakers of English; their first language was Indonesian. Lecturers used English and Indonesian as the medium of instruction. The materials for this research were the transcripts of the recordings of 10 lesson sessions. Each session consisted of 50 minutes, thus the total recording were 500 minutes. First of all, 10 English Department lecturers were chosen randomly as the participants of this research. Then, the researchers sat in each lecturer's class and record all the interactions that occurred between the lecturers and their students. The recordings of each teacher's lesson were transcribed. The transcriptions were then trimmed by eliminating some parts which were unintelligible without reducing the content of the materials. The final transcription results were used as the data for this research. The transcription data were selected and classified into 50 focus on form episodes (FFE). These focus on form episodes were analyzed using the framework by Lyster and Ranta (1997): reactive and preemptive focus on form. Using the same framework, teachers' feedback were coded into six categories: (1) recast; (2) explicit correction; (3) elicitation; (4) clarification requests; (5) metalinguistic feedback; and (6) repetition.



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study are divided into three major headings according to the three types of teacher-student interaction: reactive teacher feedback, preemptive teacher-initiate, and preemptive student-initiate.

### Reactive Teacher Feedback

In this reactive focus on form interaction, the teacher used five types of feedback: recast, explicit correction, elicitation, repetition and metalinguistic feedback. A *recast* involves the reformulation of all or part of the student's utterance. The teacher reformulates or expands an ill-formed or incomplete utterance in an obtrusive way.

(example 1)

- S: For the first he forget to close.  
T: He forgot  
S: For the first he forgot to close the door

The teacher in this interaction corrected the use of 'forget' in the student's sentence into 'forgot' because they were talking about something happened in the past. *Recast* is an indirect way to correct the student's mistakes in grammar or pronunciation. The teacher did not directly respond 'you're wrong' or 'that's right', instead he/she implicitly reformulate the student's sentence. However, there is a possibility that the student does not notice the correction given by the teacher. In this interaction, the student used the correction given by the teacher, by integrating the teacher's correction into his own sentence. This indicated that an uptake has taken place.

*Explicit correction* provides explicit signals to the student that there is an error in his utterance. In this type of feedback the teacher supplies the correct form and clearly indicates that what the student said was incorrect.

(example 2)

- T: Tom remembered to close the door.  
S: Tom remembered that he has to close the door but he hasn't closed the door yet.  
T: Because this happened in the past. 'Tom remembered to close the door'. Ya, the first explanation was OK, uh nearly correct. You said Tom remembered that he needed to close the door, he needed to close the door because it, this happened in the past.

In this interaction, the teacher asked the student about the meaning of *Tom remembered to close the door*. The student answered, but the teacher was dissatisfied with the answer. He said, 'Ya, the first explanation was OK' but then he rectified it by adding 'uh, nearly correct'. Then, he gave the explanation of the meaning. The students did not respond after listening to the teacher's explanation; instead they only smiled. From this interaction, we cannot detect an uptake since the students did not show their understanding.

A *metalinguistic feedback* involves the teacher providing comments, information or questions related to the well-formedness of the students' utterances without explicitly providing the correct answer. In this category we also include the explanation about grammar or the theory provided by the teacher as the response for the students' questions. In the following example, the teacher was discussing the difference of gerund and infinitive.

(example 3)

S: I like to eat pizza

T: Uh OK I give you these examples: 'to eat' - 'for eating'. 'To eat too much sugar is unhealthy' - 'Eating too much sugar is unhealthy.' So infinitive and gerunds as objects and subjects sometimes have equal meanings; 'to eat' - 'eating', 'to smoke' - 'smoking' *ya*. Sometimes uh have... equal meanings.

In response to the student's sentence, the teacher did not directly correct the student's utterance. Instead, he explained that infinitive and gerund sometimes have equal meaning. However, he did not explain when to use infinitive and when to use gerund forms. However, this type of feedback also did not show an occurrence of uptake since students did not respond to the teacher's explanation.

*Elicitation* is a type of feedback which requires the teacher to directly elicit a reformulation from the students. We also include here the elicitation of the student's knowledge of the materials. Elicitation can occur in the middle or at the end of the session as a way to measure the students' comprehension of the lesson. According to Lyster and Ranta (1997) there are three ways of eliciting the correct form from the students: (a) when the teacher pauses and lets the student complete the utterance, (b) when the teacher asks an open question, and (c) when the teacher requests a reformulation of the ill-formed utterance. Example (4) shows an instance of (c), in which the teacher asks the student to reformulate his sentence and (a) in which he pauses and lets the student finish the sentence.

(example 4)

S: He forgot to close the door. But in the middle he remembered that to close....

T: in the middle of what?

S: In the middle oh *kan contohnya nggak ada*. (There's no example of that)

T: and finally he...

S: and finally he closed the door.

In this example, the teacher did not correct the student's ill utterance "he remembered that to close..."; otherwise he pursued the misplacement of "in the middle" by asking the student "in the middle of what?". It turned out that the phrase "in the middle" was not necessary and the student seemed to realize that too. Here, the teacher used an open question to focus the student's attention to the topic of the discussion. Then, the teacher redirected the student to the previous topic by giving the clue sentence "and finally he...", which the student successfully added the remaining "and finally he closed the door". In this interaction, the student managed to integrate the teacher's feedback in his utterance, thus an uptake was likely taking place.

*Repetition* requires teacher to repeat the student's ill-formed utterance, usually by adjusting intonation to highlight the error, as can be seen in the following example.

(example 5)

S: Tom remembered, *maksudnya si Tom udah inget nutup pintu, buat nutup pintu* and second one someone asked Tom to close the door.

(Tom remembered, *I mean Tom has remembered closing the door, to close the door* and second someone asked Tom to close the door)

T: Someone asked Tom to close the door?

S: Uh Tom is

T: Tom remembered to close the door?

The topic of this interaction is also the same, it was about the meaning difference of 'Tom remembered closing the door' and 'Tom remembered to close the door'. In his response, the teacher repeated the student's utterance "Someone asked Tom to close the door" with different intonation. While the student used the intonation for statement, the teacher used the intonation for question. The purpose of this repetition was not to highlight the student's ill-formed sentence since his sentence was perfectly grammatical. Rather, the teacher wanted to emphasize the meaning of the student's sentence. The first part of the discussion was the meaning of 'Tom remembered closing the door'. Thus, when the student included 'someone' in his explanation, the teacher directly repeated the sentence by emphasizing the word 'someone' and changing the sentence into question intonation. This kind of interaction also did not produce an appropriate uptake since the student responded by showing her hesitation "Uh Tom is..". She did not finish her sentence. Moreover, the teacher did not follow with another feedback or correction or explanation, instead he continued the discussion by asking the meaning of the other sentence.

### Preemptive Teacher Initiate

Preemptive focus on form typically consists of exchanges involving a query and response. In teacher initiate interaction, the teacher usually asks the students about the materials or the lessons. In this interaction, teacher can also give feedback which can lead to successful and unsuccessful uptake.

(example 6)

T: *'popped out'* is literal or non literal?  
 S: *non*  
 T: --

In the above example, the teacher asked whether the phrase 'popped out' has literal or non-literal meaning. The student could answer that 'popped out' was non literal. Ellis, Basturkmen, and Loewen (2001b) mentioned that one of the problems of such teacher-initiated preemption, is that the perceived gap may not be an actual gap. In the example above, the fact that the student was able to answer the teacher's question showed that the student already knew that the phrase 'popped out' is non literal. Thus there was no actual gap. Consequently, there was no need for the teacher to follow up this query. In fact she did not make any comment. Since no feedback occurred, no uptake would follow.

Another preemptive teacher initiate is shown in the following example. In this interaction, the teacher used metalinguistic feedback.

(example 7)

T: *Sekarang saya tanyain dulu consider itu memakai gerund or infinitive?*  
 (I will ask you now: 'consider' is using gerund or infinitive?)  
 S: Gerund.... Gerund  
 T: Ya! Consider *itu harus gerund, jangan terjebak dengan melihat -ingnya di belakang*  
*considering kemudian belakangnya ga bisa -ing*  
 (Yes! Consider should use gerund, don't be confused by the -ing form behind considering then you think it cannot be followed by another -ing)  
 T: *untuk Gerund and Infinitive, nounnya ditaro di depan. So, not changing... so, considering, not changing have...*  
 (for gerund and infinitive, the noun should be put in front. So, not changing... so, considering, not changing..)  
 S: Oooh

T: *Mau nanti mau tiga tetep aja, harus considering, going, cleaning... Mau tiga –ing, –ing, –ing juga harus noun auxiliary seperti itu ya. Jadi consider belakangnya kan noun –ing berarti consider going ya kan?*

(Even though there are three verbs, they should be considering going cleaning. Even though there are three ing, ing, ing for noun or auxiliary, it should be like that. So consider should be followed by noun – ing, it means consider going, isn't it?)

S: *Iya..yah.. hahaha.*  
(That's right. Hahaha.)

The topic of the interaction is 'gerund and infinitive'. The teacher began by asking her students whether the word 'consider' was followed by a gerund or an infinitive. Even though the students can answer correctly that 'consider' was followed by a gerund, the teacher continued her explanation. This explanation was considered as metalinguistic feedback since the teacher provided further comments or information about a specific linguistic item. The students' responses toward this feedback came in the form of backchannel such as "Ooh" (line 5) and "Iyaya" (line 7) indicating that they have understood what their teacher have said. Thus, this example shows that the uptake has taken place.

### **Preemptive Student Initiate**

Student-initiated exchange is illustrated in example 8. In this exchange, the teacher was discussing the elements of literature. The student initiated this interaction by asking about one element that was still not clear for her. The teacher response can be categorized as explicit explanation feedback.

(Example 8)

T: *Ya, kamu tahunya dari mana? Dari dialognya, dari karakternya, jadi kamu ambil elemennya, karakternya aja, yang lain gak usah. Tapi theme tetep harus, theme itu tetep ikut.*

(Yes, how do you know? From the dialog, from the character, so you take the elements, only the character, not the others. But, theme should be taken, theme should exist)

S: *jadi plot gak harus?*

(So, we don't have to take the plot?)

T: *enggga... jadi dilihat. Jadi kalo nanti major kamu tuk discussion itu apa dulu. Kamu mau ngomong satire ya uda kalo seperti itu ambil dari karakter dan characterization aja yang penting, yang lain engga.*

(No...so you see. So decide on your topic of discussion first. If you want to talk about satire, if it is like that take the character and the characterization. That's important, the other is not important).

In this literature class, the students asked about the elements of literature to discuss in their thesis. When the student asked whether plot was necessary or not, the teacher provided an explicit explanation about what to discuss and what not to discuss. However, we cannot determine the student's uptake move after this explanation because she did not comment or respond to the teacher.

## CONCLUSION

This study revealed that the dominant type of interaction that happened in university level was reactive focus on form, in which the teachers give comment or feedback towards the students' ill-utterance. The type of feedback that the teachers provide was mostly recast, i.e. reformulating the incorrect utterance. However, not all types of feedback can lead to the students' uptake. Most of the time, this happens because the students did not provide further responses after the teacher's feedback. Thus, it is difficult to determine whether an uptake has taken place or not. This result indicated that the teacher student interaction only stops at IRF pattern (teacher initiation, student response and teacher follow up) as discussed by Lee and Ng (2010).

The preemptive focus on form interaction also showed that teacher-initiated interactions were higher in number than student-initiated exchanges. Again, an uptake was accomplished in a teacher-initiated interaction, in which the teacher provided metalingual feedback. On the contrary, student-initiated exchanges failed to generate the expected uptake.

This study has attempted to investigate which teacher-student interaction and which type of feedback can generate the students' uptake. However, it is not always easy to determine whether an uptake has been established. Various contextual, linguistic, cognitive factors of the learners will determine their achievements.

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