

## **A STUDY OF TEACHER TALK AND STUDENT TALK IN VERBAL CLASSROOM INTERACTION TO DEVELOP SPEAKING SKILL FOR YOUNG LEARNERS**

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**Abstract:** This study aims at investigating the realization of verbal classroom interaction especially teacher talk and students talk that occurred during teaching speaking. The data were taken from one private school in Bandung in the form of observations and interviews. The data then were analyzed by the framework adapted from Flanders' Interaction Analysis Categories (1970) and FACCT from Kumpulainen and Wray (2002). The findings indicated that the teacher acted as the most dominant interlocutor during speaking activity. Besides, it also showed that the teacher's roles during interaction as director, manager, and facilitator. The study recommends the teacher to support students to have more opportunity to speak during the lesson. Finally, this study suggests further study to conduct similar research which covers different skills.

**Keywords:** *Classroom interaction, teacher talk, student talk, young learners*

### **Introduction**

In recent years, it is hard to resist the importance of teaching English in elementary school, including in Indonesia where English has a role as a foreign language (EFL) and is taught as a curricular requirement for further studies (Saville-Troike, 2006). Teaching English in Indonesia begins since elementary school, but its implementation in reality shows the different result. This is seen from some studies that were applied in young learners' classroom which unfortunately showed that the implementation of TEYL was still far from curricular expectation. One of the reasons is because of the laxity of teachers' qualification and teachers' training in teaching English to young learners (Kasihani, 2004:10; Musthafa, 2010) whereas in practice, TEYL has wide-

ranging benefits, such in term of cognitive, culture, social life, and second language acquisition aspects (Saville-Troike, 2006:4; Capitani, 2009).

Teaching English in this study focuses on teaching speaking. Teaching speaking plays important and appropriate roles for young learners because children can learn the language with the help of communicative interaction and contextual learning such as singing, storytelling, games, and interactive activities (Curtain and Pesola, 1994; as cited in Kasihani, 2004:7). Harmer suggests three main benefits of teaching speaking is helping students to practice their speaking in real situation, getting feedback for both teacher and students, and giving more opportunities to students in practicing their speaking (Harmer, 2002:123).

In the light of this matter, the purposes of this study are to find out the realization of teacher talk and students talk in developing verbal classroom interaction, the teacher's responses to students talk, and vice versa. The study is expected to give benefit as reference for teacher and colleagues in conducting similar research and find out strategies for teaching speaking to young learners.

### **Research Methodology**

The study employed descriptive qualitative in order to describe, investigate, and explore the real situation that happens in classroom especially in the primary school when teaching speaking is conducted (Strider, 2012). Meanwhile, in gathering the data, the researcher uses classroom observations and interviews.

The analysis of the data begins with the process of organizing data from observation and interview, transcribing data into paper-based transcriptions, coding the data, reporting the findings, interpreting the findings, and validating the accuracy of the finding in discussion (Creswell, 2008: 244).

The study also employs some verbal classroom frameworks from Flanders' Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC) (Flanders, 1965), Sinclair and Brazil (1982), and also Functional Analysis of Children Classroom Talk (FACCT) from

Kumpulainen and Wray (2002) (Sampath, Panneeselvam & Santhanam, 2007; Kumpulainen and Wray, 2002)

Silver and Kogout (2009) suggest that teacher talk as a part of classroom talk and interaction (Silver and Kogout, 2009:4). Meanwhile, students talk can be defined as the language that is used by the children to interact with the teacher or their peers in classroom interaction.

- The Realization of Classroom Verbal Interaction

The study shows that the realization of verbal classroom interaction is dominated by the teacher. This can be seen from the table below

**Table Classroom Interaction Results from Observation 1-4**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Teacher talk</b>		<b>Students talk</b>		<b>Silence</b>	
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>1</b>	152	65.53%	77	33.18%	3	1.29%
<b>2</b>	129	54.2%	108	45.37%	1	0.43%
<b>3</b>	110	61.8%	66	37.07%	2	1.12%
<b>4</b>	80	72.72%	28	25.45%	2	1.82%
<b>Average</b>	<b>117.75</b>	<b>62.13%</b>	<b>69.75</b>	<b>36.8%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1.07%</b>

The teacher dominated the interaction because he tended to initiate the interaction first, explained grammatical rules, and controlled students talk. From the pattern of teacher talk, it could be concluded that teacher acted as manager, facilitator, director, and controller (Brown, 2001). These results confirmed the interview result in the current research. In interview, teacher acknowledged that the interaction was dominated by him and it was hard to make the students talk more.

- Teacher Talk

There were several exchanges that mostly used by the teacher, namely: (1) prompting students' knowledge, (2) inviting students to talk, (3) praising or encouraging students, and (4) correcting students' talk.

Teacher tended to ask several questions in order to find out his/her students' prior knowledge. Resnick (1983) suggests that asking students' prior knowledge can help students to construct concepts (Resnick, 1983). Furthermore, Strike and Posner (1985) adds that prior knowledge view learning as conceptual change (Strike & Posner, 1985). Cashin (1995) pointed out several purposes of asking questions: to actively engage students in the lesson, to create students' interest in the topic, and also to create students' critical thinking. It is shown from the observation that teacher asked some questions because he wanted to know his students' prior knowledge, for example:

**Excerpt 1: Prompting Students' Prior Knowledge**

T: You know the different a stool and chair. A stool?

Regarding to the second exchange that is inviting students to talk, Brown (2001) proposed that automaticity appeared when the interaction focuses on meaning and messages rather than grammar or linguistic forms. By inviting his students to talk, the students are expected to get into the routines of constructing questions from noun clause even in achieving this automaticity the students took a long time. For the example:

### **Excerpt 2: Inviting Students to Talk**

T: Now, Ihsan. You? Aisyah. You? Raisa. Ok, Ihsan get  
Aisyah to ask Raisa. Is she like Durian?

On the other hand, Ginott (1965) highlighted that praising can create students' anxiety, invites dependency, and evokes defensiveness since praising comes up with judgment or evaluation (Ginott, 1965; as cited in Brenna, 2006). For example, in giving praises the teacher mostly uses “*very good*”, “*excellent*”, and so on. Meanwhile, encourage allows children to become self-motivated, faithful to themselves, and focused on following their own interest. For example, by saying “You tried very hard to be on time”, “You should be proud of yourself”, and so on (Grille, 2005; as cited in Brenna, 2006).

- **Student Talk**

The student talk is divided into four main exchanges: asking questions, creating talk exchanges, repeating, and answering teacher's or peers' question.

By asking questions, the students will not only get the answer of the questions, but also learn how to construct the meaning. Suherdi (2009) investigate that asking for repetition occurred because they request their peers to repeat the words (Suherdi, 2009).

Meanwhile, regarding to the second exchange, creating student talk has a good advantage. The advantage is by creating talk between students, they can acquire the knowledge and exchange the information through interaction. For example, a student who is talking with his/her peers can exchange the information about their experience, their hobbies, and many more (Moore, 2008).

Another exchange of student talk is repeating teacher talk or peers talk. Repetition that mostly occurred in the observation is drilling. This occurred since this strategy allowed students to process the information and follow teacher's model (Suherdi, 2009:68).

The last exchange of student talk is answering questions. Answering questions can help students to construct and develop their understanding of a topic.

**Excerpt 3: Answering Questions**

T: You know durian?

S: Yes, I know. It is smelly

In general, the conclusion of this study shows that mostly teacher uses prompting students' knowledge, inviting students to talk, and praising/ encouraging students, correcting students' talk when he talked to them. Meanwhile, students mostly use asking questions, creating student' talk, repeat teacher talk, and answer teacher's or peers' questions.

**Conclusion**

There are several points to be conducted in this study. Firsts, in line with the realization of verbal classroom interaction, there are several categories that are mostly used by the teacher and students during speaking activity. Second, in terms with the categories that are mostly used by the teacher, it can be concluded that the teacher's roles are as manager, director, facilitator, and controller.

The interaction between teacher and students mostly uses English language since the school adapted international curriculum. However based on the interaction, there are several problems that are encountered by the teacher. Although the interaction mostly used English for communication, the interaction is still dominated by the teacher which was shown from the observation and interview. Teacher expects students talk more and speak more. Teacher also finds it difficult to encourage students how to speak more and to find the strategies for that.

In order for further study about teacher talk and students' talk, there are some suggestions that can be used, namely: (1) teacher talk and students talk can be more meaningful, interesting and effective when teacher gives more opportunities to the students to talk, (2) the different teaching strategies in making student confident and

ready to talk are recommended since speaking is important skill which occurs in spontaneous situations, (3) for future study, it is suggested to capture teacher talk and students talk not only in speaking skill but also in different skills such as writing, listening and reading. It is because when teacher teaches writing, the teacher talk also will be different when s/he teaches reading and listening, (4) and also for further study that focused on classroom discourse analysis, it is recommended to find more various frameworks in analyzing classroom discourse.



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