Classroom Interaction Patterns in English Foreign Learner (EFL) Study at Senior High School of As'ad Jambi

Fauzi Atunnisa[1], Failasofah[2], Bunga Ayu Wulandari[3]
[1,2,3]Universitas Jambi
Jl. Jambi-Muara Bulian No.KM. 15, Muaro Jambi, Jambi

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the patterns of classroom interaction and the speech functions used in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes at MAS As'ad, Kota Jambi. The research utilizes a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze spoken interactions between teachers and 11th-grade students, with data collected through classroom observations and video recordings. The analysis is guided by Sinclair and Coulthard's (1992) classroom interaction model, Walsh's (2011) framework on classroom interactional competence, and Eggins and Slade's (1997) categorization of speech functions. The study identifies the prevalent interaction patterns in the classroom and investigates how these patterns facilitate or hinder students' language learning. The findings revealed five distinct patterns of interaction: (1) teacher eliciting exchange, (2) teacher directing exchange, (3) teacher informing exchange, (4) student eliciting exchange, and (5) student informing exchange. The speech functions exhibited a variety of moves between the teacher and students, with both parties contributing almost equally to the interaction, indicating a well-maintained exchange process. These findings suggest that classroom interaction patterns significantly influence student participation, providing opportunities for comprehensible input and feedback. Further research is recommended to explore the impact of these interaction patterns on students' academic achievement. By highlighting the importance of balanced communication roles and the need for meaningful interaction, this research offers valuable insights for educators aiming to improve classroom dynamics and foster a more engaging learning experience.

Corresponding Author:
Fauzi Atunnisa
Universitas Jambi
Jl. Jambi-Muara Bulian No.KM. 15, Muaro Jambi, Jambi
Email:

1. INTRODUCTION

Language has long been a fundamental means of communication, serving as an essential tool for human interaction across various contexts. It enables individuals to engage in transactional and interpersonal exchanges, allowing them to convey thoughts, ideas, and emotions effectively. According to Eggins (2004), language has always been central to human communication, permeating every aspect of daily life—from conversations with family members to classroom instructions, customer service interactions, and beyond. In educational settings, language plays a multifaceted role, facilitating dynamic interactions between teachers and students. These

interactions are crucial for the transmission of knowledge and the overall effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.

In the classroom, the interaction between teachers and students is a complex, multifaceted process that involves both verbal and non-verbal communication. Teachers convey information through instructions, explanations, and feedback, while students engage by responding, asking questions, and participating in discussions. This dynamic exchange helps to build a shared framework of knowledge and fosters an environment conducive to learning. However, the effectiveness of these interactions depends on the clarity of communication roles between teachers and students. Teachers are often seen as leaders, communicators, and facilitators, while students are expected to be active learners and contributors to the classroom discourse.

This study focuses on analyzing classroom interactions in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting, specifically at MAS As'ad, Kota Jambi. The research aims to identify and classify the interaction patterns between teachers and students, as well as to explore the speech functions used in the classroom. By examining these aspects, the study seeks to provide insights into how classroom interactions can enhance or hinder the learning process, ultimately contributing to a more effective educational environment.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 The Nature of Classroom Interaction
Classroom interaction involves various forms of communication between teachers and students during the educational process. Walsh (2011) highlights that language use is essential in helping students acquire new knowledge, develop skills, address comprehension challenges, manage communication issues, and build relationships. Brown (2001) further underscores the significance of interaction, describing it as the core of communication, particularly within an educational setting. Classroom interaction is thus a reciprocal dynamic where both teachers and students mutually influence each other.

The classroom serves as a community for both teachers and students, where building and maintaining personal relationships are crucial. Each student develops unique relationships with the teacher and the group, and the teacher must establish rapport with each student. The primary goal of the classroom is the transfer of knowledge from teacher to students, distinguishing it from other social settings. Teachers play a pivotal role, spending considerable time speaking, lecturing, questioning, and providing instructions, often using language and mime for these purposes.

2.2 The Discourse Analysis Model
The discourse analysis model for classroom interaction, particularly at the exchange level, is encapsulated by the Initiation-Response-Follow-up (IRF) structure proposed by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975, 1992). According to them, classroom language exhibits a rigid sequence and structured speaking patterns. Classroom interactions can be classified into four key structural components: transaction, exchange, move, and act. Exchanges are further divided into Boundary exchanges, which mark transitions between lesson phases, and Teaching exchanges, which drive the lesson forward. The teacher's objectives often dictate these exchanges, which can include informing, directing, eliciting, or checking.

2.3 Teaching and Exchange Patterns
One of the most critical features of classroom interaction is the IRF structure, originally developed by Sinclair & Coulthard. This structure greatly enhances our understanding of teacher-student communication within the classroom, which often follows a rigid format. The IRF structure is characterized by three types of moves: initiation (where the teacher asks a question or provides information), response (where the student answers or reacts), and follow-up (where the teacher comments or evaluates). Brazil (1995) notes that while the teacher knows what they want to communicate, they often choose to do so by guiding students through orchestrated situations. For example, a teacher may ask, "What is Mr. Smith's job?" (initiation). The student may respond, "He is a lawyer" (response), and the teacher may follow up by confirming or correcting the response (follow-up). Sinclair & Coulthard (1975) also identified basic exchange types, such as question-and-answer, student responses to commands, and students listening to the teacher transferring information.

2.4 Basic Order of Classroom Analysis
Classroom interaction is governed by fixed mechanisms that participants (teachers and students) use to organize activities like teaching, asking, explaining, or assessing. Koole (2008) notes that social interaction requires participants to take turns to listen and respond to each other. Classroom interaction differs from everyday conversation, particularly in how turns are organized. The rules for turn-taking in classrooms often allow the teacher to control the interaction, limiting students' ability to choose the next speaker or self-select for a turn.

2.5 Speech Function
Language serves different functions depending on the context of communication. The discourse structure is crucial in effective communication, with speech functions helping to maintain interpersonal relationships and prevent communication breakdowns. Eggins and Slade (1997) classified speech functions into two categories: opening and sustaining, which help organize dialogue. Opening moves initiate negotiation, while sustaining

moves maintain it. Opening moves include attending, offering, commanding, and questioning, each serving a distinct purpose in initiating dialogue. Continuing moves, on the other hand, are employed to maintain ongoing negotiation by elaborating, extending, or enhancing the initial proposition. Responding moves manage a proposition and are categorized as either supporting or confronting, depending on whether they encourage or judge the response. Finally, rejoinder moves, as identified by Eggins and Slade (1997), are used to set or alter the course of a conversation, either by querying, clarifying, or challenging the initial speech function.

3. METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design to explore the patterns of classroom interaction and the speech functions used in EFL classes at MAS As'ad, Kota Jambi. The qualitative approach is well-suited to this research, as it allows for an in-depth examination of the complex dynamics of classroom interactions without imposing any pre-determined hypotheses or interventions. The study, conducted in an 11th-grade English classroom at MAS As'ad, Kota Jambi, employs a qualitative approach to explore classroom interactions. Data collection involved non-participant observations and video recordings, capturing real-time teacher-student interactions. These interactions were transcribed and analyzed using Sinclair and Coulthard's (1992) Classroom Interaction Analysis and Eggins and Slade's (1997) speech function framework. The data were categorized to identify interaction patterns and speech functions, with a focus on understanding their communicative purposes. To ensure validity, the study utilized Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) for credibility and dependability, complemented by theory triangulation, incorporating multiple theoretical perspectives such as Walsh's interactional competence and Hymes' code-mixing theories. This comprehensive approach provides a robust understanding of classroom dynamics in an EFL setting.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Classroom interaction in the 11th grade of science at MAS As'ad, particularly in the English class, reveals a dynamic pattern where the teacher predominantly controls the discourse, with students primarily reacting to the teacher's prompts. The interaction follows Sinclair and Coulthard's IRF structure, with teacher-led exchanges being the most common. In terms of speech functions, the teacher frequently initiated the interaction with opening moves, often in the form of questions or commands. These moves were followed by student reactions, which typically involved responding to the teacher's prompts or imitating the teacher's examples. Despite the teacher's dominance in initiating speech functions, the students actively engaged in continuing and reacting moves, demonstrating their enthusiasm and involvement in the learning process. The analysis suggests that while the teacher had the power to control classroom interaction, students still participated meaningfully, albeit mostly in response to the teacher's lead. This highlights the importance of providing more opportunities for students to initiate speech functions, thereby fostering a more balanced and interactive classroom environment that could further enhance language learning outcomes.

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