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Classroom Interaction: Teacher and Student Talk in International Class Program (ICP)

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Abstract

This study is an attempt to examine classroom interaction which specifies teacher and student talk in International Class Program (ICP) at non-English departments at State Islamic University Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. ICP class is different from regular class in which English and Arabic are used as medium of instruction in the teaching and learning process. This study is intended to answer two questions: (1) What categories of teacher talk are used by the teacher in giving stimuli in the process of teaching and learning? and (2) How do the students respond to the teacher's instruction in the process of teaching and learning? The subjects of the study are the teacher and the students in ICP class. The data are elicited through non-participant observation, interview with the teacher and the students, field notes and recording of utterances between the teacher and the students. Data are analyzed using the 'interaction model' of Miles and Huberman, following FLINT system. This article reports the results of the analysis of classroom interaction that focuses on teacher and student talk in ICP class.

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1. Introduction

Some research reveal that most English classrooms are still of teacher-dominated ones and students only play passive roles. In [1] reported their research finding on teacher talk time that teacher talk dominated a large proportion of class time that it is almost 75% while student talk time comprised less than 20% of the class time. In [3] revealed that the teacher was not successful to create genuine or authentic communication. The talk was repetitive and monotonous and it followed the IRF sequence which allowed the teacher more turns and talk. A research conducted in ESP classroom by [8] showed a similar result that on average 71% of the talk was done by the teacher whereas 29% of the classroom talk was filled by student talk. These research findings support the previous researches which were conducted by (Chaudron, 1988) as cited in [1].

Besides, studies on verbal language employed by teachers in the classroom also reveal some findings. A study conducted by [9] showed that a major portion of class time is employed by the teacher to give directions, explain activities and check students' understanding. Similar research findings [6, 7] reported that most of teacher talks were used to elicit students' knowledge (questions) which were classified under

three categories, namely procedural, convergent, and divergent. Teacher talk was also used to give feedback such as praise with comments, repetition plus praise and guide to self-repair, which is of great significance for language learners to stimulate their learning motives and enthusiasm [4]. Meanwhile, according to [5] there were several exchanges that are 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. In addition to teacher talk, she found that student talk is divided into four main exchanges: asking questions, creating talk exchanges, repeating, and answering teacher's or peers' question. From those previous research findings, it can be concluded that teacher talk is dominated by teacher question as it could be one of the best strategies used by the teacher to initiate verbal interaction with the students [2].

Considering the importance of classroom interaction in terms of teacher and student talk, this present study aims to investigate the teacher and student talk in ICP class, which is different from other classes at State Islamic University Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. The difference lies on the use of English as the medium of instruction. Specifically, this study attempts to investigate whether or not the characteristics of teacher and student talk in the ICP class are different from that of the regular class. The researcher's assumption of the result of the study is that teacher and student talk will be different in ICP class will be difference since ICP class is an English class program in which the teacher and the students are required to speak English in the classroom and the teacher will give many opportunities for the student to speak up. This study is intended to answer two questions:

1. What categories of teacher talk are used by the teacher in stimulating the students in the process of teaching and learning?

2. How do the students respond based on the teacher's instruction in the process of teaching and learning?

2. Method

This study was an attempt to examine classroom interaction specifically the teacher and student talk in International Class Program (ICP) at non-English departments at State Islamic University Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. It employed a descriptive case study design. In line with the objectives of the study, the data were classified into two types with reference to the research problems. The first data was the way the teacher stimulates the interaction of the students using the teacher talk which was shown in the FLINT system. The second data was the students' response based on the teacher's instruction in the process of teaching and learning. The participants of the present study included 2 teachers who taught English at ICP classes of two different

non-English departments, together with their students in EFL classes at State Islamic University Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Each teacher had several years of teaching experience

Since the study is a descriptive case study, the instruments of the study were a recorder, an interview guide, and field notes. The recorder was used to record the data of the teacher and student talk in the teaching and learning process. The verbal interactions which are going on in the teaching and learning process are usually very fast and complex. It is difficult to observe the verbal interaction without using a recorder. By utilizing the recorder, the collected data are more accurate and the data collection becomes more precise. Then the data collected from the recording were transcribed into a written form to facilitate the researcher in analyzing them. To keep the validity of the transcription into a written form, the researcher played back the recorder several times during the transcription. Interview was conducted to get information from the teacher and the students as the subject of the study. It was done when the data obtained from the observation was considered not clear or insufficient. In this case, the interview was aimed at complementing the data collected from observation and verifying the trustworthiness of the data. The last instrument was field notes. In the study, field notes were conducted to complement the data which were not covered in the recording such as the activities during the teaching and learning process and the use of non verbal language by the teacher and the students.

3. Findings and Discussion

This section reports the results of class observation that tells what each of the two teachers and their students did in their observed classes. The percentages were worked out based on records of what they did and the frequencies of each talk, then average numbers of each teacher and the students were calculated.

As Table 1 indicates, teacher talk was dominant in most of the class time and student talk is less dominant. Teacher 1 devoted class time to talk averagely 74.9 %. Similar result is also obtained from the record of classroom interaction between Teacher 2 and her students in which 70.7 % of the class time was used to talk. Compared to teacher 1, teacher 2 talked less than teacher 1. It means that the students received more opportunity to talk from the class time with the percentage of 29.3 % in teacher 2 classroom whereas the students in teacher 1's classroom had less chance to talk with an average percentage of 25.2%. In conclusion, in the classes under investigation, teacher talk constituted a large proportion of class time.

The categories of teacher talk and student talk in the process of teaching and learning can be shown in Table 2 and Table 3. From the tables, the pattern of teacher talk that was dominant is asking questions. Meanwhile, based on the patterns of student talk as stated in FLINT System, only two categories were occupied by student talk,

Teacher	Teacher Talk (%)	Student Talk (%)
Teacher 1	74.9	25.2
Teacher 2	70.7	29.3

TABLE 1: The Proportion of Teacher and Student Talk Time.

Pattern of Talk	Teacher Talk (%)	
	Teacher 1	Teacher 2
Praising or encouraging	5.4	4.3
Joking	-	1.4
Using ideas from students	14.1	10
Repeating student response verbatim	11.9	2.8
Asking questions	35.9	44.3
Giving information	19.6	21.4
Correcting without rejection	19.6	10
Giving directions	10.87	5.7

TABLE 2: The Proportion of Teacher Talk Pattern.

namely: student response with a specific and limited range of answer (67.7%) and student response with an open-ended answer (32.3%). There were some categories that did not exist during classroom interaction, i.e. teacher talk that was intended to ask about feelings and to criticize students' response or behavior. To sum up, asking questions and responding to teacher's specific questions are the patterns of teacher and student talk that dominated during the teaching and learning process in Teacher 1's classroom.

Table 2 and Table 3 also reveal that the patterns of teacher and student talk in Teacher 2's classroom are similar to those in Teacher 1's classroom except for joking. In this matter, Teacher 1 did not spend the class time to make jokes. Asking question was the dominant pattern that the teacher employed during the interaction by 44.3%. Meanwhile, regarding the pattern of student talk, the pattern was similar to the finding in Teacher 1's classroom in which student response with a specific and limited range of answer (62%) and student response with an open ended answer (38) were the categories that emerged all the time during the teaching and learning process.

Pattern of Talk	Student Talk (%)	
	Teacher 1 Class	Teacher 2 Class
Student response, specific	67.7	62
Student response, open ended, student initiated	32.3	38

TABLE 3: The Proportion of Student Talk Pattern.

Types of Questions	Teacher 1 (%)	Teacher 2 (%)
Display	81.8	80.7
Referential	18.2	19,2

TABLE 4: Types and Proportion of Questions Asked by the Teachers.

As shown in Table 4, the whole questions posed by the teachers are classified under two categories, namely display questions and referential questions [4]. The former refers to the question that the teacher has already known the answer to, while the latter refers to those open ended questions. The majority of questions (81.8) asked by Teacher 1 in her teacher talk was display questions while referential questions just occupied a very small percentage (18.2%). Teacher 2 allocated her class time to pose display questions (80.7%) and referential questions (19.2%) which were slightly higher than the percentage of type of questions delivered by Teacher 1. In conclusion, display questions was asked more often than referential questions by both Teacher 1 and 2.

As can be seen from the findings related to the proportion of teacher talk and student talk, teacher talk constituted a large proportion of class time and the previous research findings which claimed that teacher talk took a large proportion of class time is confirmed. The result of the current study is consistent with the findings of previous studies, e.g. [1, 3, 8] which came to the conclusion that teacher talk dominated language classrooms. The teachers might intentionally talk using a large proportion of class time to achieve the ultimate objectives of a course of study. For example, the teachers talked a lot because they wanted to initiate classroom interaction since the students were sometimes reluctant to initiate the interaction and they were just quietly waiting for the teacher to talk.

The student talk patterns that emerged from the classroom interaction were specific responses and open-ended responses in which specific responses dominated the student talk. The students tended to give specific responses because the teachers asked display questions. The kind of responses given is in line with the type of question that the teachers posed. When they were asked with referential questions, the students were forced to respond it with open-ended answers. Therefore, the role of teachers in asking question is very essential to make students talk a lot and to give them opportunity to think a lot as well. In (Nystrand and Gamoran, 1997) as cited in [10] stated that only authentic discourse can engage students, and authentic questions must stimulate pupils to think and reflect on the consequences of their ideas, not just recall their past experiences.

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, this study revealed some patterns of classroom interaction. First, the interaction between the teachers and students mostly used English language since the

program employed a bilingual system with English and Arabic language as medium of instruction. Although the interaction mostly used English for communication, it was still dominated by the teachers as shown from the observation and recording. Based on the interview with the lecturers, by asking questions to initiate the interaction they expected that the students talk more and speak more.

Second, in line with the realization of verbal classroom interaction, there were several categories of talk that the teacher and students mostly used during the teaching and learning process. The category that occurred most frequently was asking questions. The questions have a number of purposes, one of which was to review the lesson. Moreover, authentic questions should be structured to encourage thoughtful answers, and further student are able to practice their language in meaningful context.

Finally, considering the results of the current study and the findings of the previous studies on teacher talk, it can be concluded that teachers should contemplate whether too much teacher talk fulfills the predetermined goals of a course or not; if it doesn't, they should probably listen more and talk less. It is suggested that rather than deciding whether we should or should not talk excessively, teachers would do well to consider the appropriate amount of their speech in relation to their intended goals through critical reflection on classroom processes. Teachers are encouraged to follow the skills and principles of reflective teaching to monitor the effectiveness of their speech on a daily basis.

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