

The Contribution of Teacher Talk on Student Engagement in English Classroom

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ABSTRACT

Effective teacher-student communication is essential for fostering a positive learning environment and encouraging student engagement. Other than that, the influence of teacher talk on student engagement extends beyond academic achievement to social-emotional growth and overall student well-being. Therefore, this study investigates the relationship between teacher talk and student engagement in the classroom. To attain that purpose, this research used a case study with a qualitative approach. The data were obtained through non-participant observation with the 11th grade in an EFL classroom at one of the senior high schools in Garut. The observation was analyzed inductively using the framework of teacher talks in the system of foreign language interaction. The findings show that there were five categories of teacher talk in this classroom, such as praising and encouraging, using the ideas of students, asking questions, giving information, and giving direction. However, asking questions is the dominant talk type used by the teacher. In relation to the teacher talk found in the class, the result revealed that there was only one category of student engagement: cognitive engagement. It means that the teacher should manage her talk not only focusing on how students could be academically engaged, but also how students' emotion and behavior are also being the concern in the classroom setting.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher talk has a significant and decisive role in the success of education (Ebata, 2008; Mantiri, 2015). The teacher talk provides direction, explains the learning activity, and checks for student comprehension to identify parts of the teacher talk that occur during the learning activity (Solita, Harahap, and Lubis, 2021). Furthermore, it has been proven that many English as foreign language classrooms are dominated by teacher talk, as found by Nugroho (2009), Nurmasithah (2010), and Ogunleye (2010), cited in Putri (2015). According to Munns and Woodward (2006), substantive student engagement should undoubtedly most interest educators concerned with improving educational outcomes for their learners. Furthermore, the teacher speaks for a large part of each lesson (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975; cited in Sharpe, 2008). The teacher's speaking strategy leads to the development of student's skills and content related to certain subjects (Sharpe, 2008).

Therefore, it strengthens the potential of dialogic class talk as a primary means of supporting learning. According to Edwards & Mercer (1987) cited in Sharpe (2008), teachers talk can contribute to a principled understanding of students. These understandings arise out of activity in the classroom, and discourse that is dialogic in nature which contributes to the construction referred to as common knowledge. Therefore, teachers greatly influence the success of student education.

Moreover, the contribution of teacher talk toward student engagement is a critical issue in education. There are three issues that happen nowadays. First, there is the language barrier of the EFL students in an English classroom. According to Efriana (2021), pupils are unable to fully comprehend the subject matter. Furthermore, the way that each student interprets or views the material determines how well they comprehend it. Additionally, it might be brought on by Indonesian pupils' subpar English comprehension skills. Second, the differences of students' culture. In line with Lidia et al. (2018), divergent conceptions of culture and its ongoing impact on education have sparked debate over the approaches and perspectives that result. Third, the lack of teaching style used in the classroom Inayat and Ali (2020) state that understanding students' learning styles is essential to understanding their beliefs and perceptions, which will motivate them and make learning more engaging and significant. In conclusion, the issue of teacher talk and student engagement is complex and multifaceted, requiring a nuanced approach that takes into account various factors such as a student's language barrier, differences in culture, and the lack of teaching styles.

In the literature, teacher talk is a critical aspect of the English classroom, as it shapes the learning environment and can have a significant impact on student engagement (Fardhani, 2016). Furthermore, teacher talk is the language that a teacher uses to organize the class and communicate with students (Astuti, 2012; Gharbavi and Iravani, 2014; and Wasiah, 2016), and it is recognized as an important variable in student engagement in EFL classrooms (Nasir et al., 2019). Additionally, teacher talk has an essential role in students' learning engagement. Moreover, students are more likely to be engaged in English learning due to teacher talk. By scaffolding their language instruction, teachers can help students build the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the English classroom.

After exploring teacher talk, students' engagement also needs to be elaborated upon in this study. One of the most influential theoretical frameworks for understanding student engagement in the English classroom is the self-determination theory (SDT) (Reeve, 2012; Chiu, 2022; and Rosli et al., 2022). SDT is a theory of motivation that helps both researchers and practitioners comprehend and improve not only student motivation but also the engagement that results from that motivation (Reeve, 2012). In line with Martela and Riekkari (2018), student engagement is facilitated, according to the Student Development Theory, when three fundamental psychological requirements are met: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. By focusing on these three basic needs, teachers can promote student engagement in the English classroom, creating an environment that supports student motivation and achievement.

Many studies have documented the role of teacher talk in fostering student engagement in the English classroom. For instance, studies by Chase et al. (2019), Ramadani and Mursyid (2022), and Chen et al. (2020), found that teacher talk that was focused on students' interests and experiences was positively correlated with student engagement and motivation to learn. Moreover, in the study conducted by Izzati (2021), the focus was on identifying language usage characteristics. In addition, Narvacan and Metila (2022), investigated the characteristics of teacher speech in an online English classroom. Therefore, this paper aims to highlight the contribution of teacher talk on student engagement. The purpose of this paper is to examine the impact that teacher talk has on student engagement.

2. METHOD

a. Research design

This research was conducted using a case study, which is an investigation of the nature of a phenomenon by focusing on a single instance and providing a detailed description of the participants' thoughts and emotions in response to a situation. The core of this research is focused on teacher talk and interaction based on situations in classroom interaction. According to the categorization of research design by Yusida (2017), a qualitative approach in from a case study indicates that the data collected is not numerical but instead derived from classroom observation and recording. Additionally, this study shares similarities with case studies in a number of respects, such as being specific to a classroom where teacher talk and interaction were investigated, noting that a case study helps researchers describe data specifically from a small number of individuals as the subject of the study, and capturing the real phenomenon of classroom interaction without giving it any treatment or action.

b. Research site and participant

To collect the data for the research project, the researcher conducted field research at one of the senior high schools in Garut, West Java. The chosen school is one of the best public institutions in Garut (Fitri, 2023). Therefore, the researcher chose this location because this school is an ideal setting to investigate factors that contribute to student achievement in high-performing schools. However, there is still no English language research at the institution. Thus, the researcher has an interest in conducting research there. Yona (2019) states that the purpose of determining the research location is to facilitate or clarify the location of interest. The participants of this research were an English teacher and an eleventh-grade fashion major in English class, and 26 students were selected. In qualitative research, humans are the primary data collection instrument (Rahmasari, 2017).

c. Data collection

This study used observation and transcripts of interviews to document student engagement in the English classroom. Observation is a complex research method that requires the researcher to play several roles and uses several techniques, including their or his five senses. The type of transcripts created creates a text-based version of any original audio or video recording. To investigate the contribution of teacher's talk towards students' engagement, the researcher analyzed the transcript using recording analysis. The transcript will make it easier to figure out something the researcher did not recognize during observation, which fits the triangulation data.

d. Data Analysis

The qualitative data was analyzed using inductive analysis. This approach is used to condense extensive and varied raw text data into a brief, summary format, establish clear links between the research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data, and develop a model or theory about the underlying structure of experiences or processes. The data transcription provided a good first step in systematically arranging and analyzing the data. Spot-checking means taking a subset of the transcripts and listening to the entire taped interviews of those transcripts while checking the transcripts. After a transcript has been coded, the coders' decisions are compared for

reliability, and their data is analyzed either to describe the target variable(s) or to identify relationships between variables. It completely transcribes the video recordings of each class and records learning activities while in class. The recording for this study took about 30 minutes in two classes to compare the two classes, depending on what conversation the teacher and students had. In each record, there are several different numbers of students. This research must look carefully and intently at this step-in order to comprehend and interpret the transcripts correctly.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the researcher analyses classroom interaction data regarding teacher talk and student engagement (on 01 March, 2023). After identifying the categories of teacher talk and student engagement that occur during classroom interaction in a high school in Garut, the interaction between the teacher and students in the classroom was analyzed. The data were collected from one teacher and twenty-six students.

Based on the recording, it is described that the teacher talk and student engagement in the classroom is absolutely interactive. Moreover, the teacher explored the subject matter by interacting and communicating with the pupils. In addition, to encourage students' participation in the process of teaching and learning, it is necessary to implement effective interaction. In line with Ahmad (2019), to have effective interaction, teacher talk has a potential role; it is beneficial for stimulating them to think, comprehend, and respond to the stimulation provided.

3.1. Type of Teacher Talk

The teacher talk played a significant role in both the classroom interaction and the student engagement. Based on the result of the recording in the classroom, not all the aspects of interaction were applied in the classroom. However, the researcher found five categories from seven categories of teacher talk in the classroom. In addition, the five categories of teacher talk covers; praises and encourages, the use of ideas of students, asking questions, giving information, and giving direction.

1. Praises and encourages

Praising and encouraging were teacher talk carrying the value judgment of approval. This type of teacher talk occurred in the classes. Additionally, the teacher often gave praise and encouragement to the students during the learning process. Here is the data gotten from the transcription of interactions between teacher and learners in the teaching-learning process, it is as follows:

Teacher: "*sebutkan surat formal itu apa saja ya?*"

Student: "*surat bisnis, surat kabar.*"

Teacher: "***Kalian hebat-hebat dan jago-jago ya.***" (praises)

According to the research, it is crucial for the teacher to provide praise and encouragement, which makes students more confident, enjoy the courses, and have a strong desire to learn. The teacher has provided words of encouragement to increase the students' interest in learning English, thereby facilitating their comprehension of the lesson. In the research data, the teacher gives praise to make students enthusiastic about learning as the data "*kalian hebat dan jago-jago*". As a result, teacher talk increases students' confidence in answering and interacting in the classroom.

2. Use ideas of students

In classroom interactions, the teacher occasionally utilized student ideas. In addition, This type deals with the teacher responses toward the student's idea. Here is the data gotten from the transcription, it is as follows:

Teacher: "*Ini apa (menunjuk lembar kerja siswa)?*"

Student: "*Ini subjek.*"

Teacher: ***“Subjek teh topic nya, lalu?”*** (Use ideas of student)

Student: *“Resolution, sapaan, paragraf pertama, kedua, ketiga, penutup dan yang terakhir tanda tangan.”*

Based on the research, it can be concluded that using students' responses to determine their comprehension and guide them through the presented topic is effective. According to the data, "Subjek teh topic nya, lalu?" It is evident that the teacher uses the students' responses and relates them to students' background knowledge of the topic.

3. Asking questions

Asking questions was the most frequent type of teacher talk that occurred in classes. Through questioning, the teacher got the information about the student's comprehension of the lesson. Furthermore, the teacher was decided what the next move to teach the students is. In addition, questioning creates an atmosphere in the classroom. Here are the data gotten from the transcription, it is as follows:

Teacher: ***“Formal letter itu apa?”*** (Asking question)

Student: *“Professional bussines yang ditulis dengan spesifik”*

Teacher: ***“Perbedaan surat informal dan formal apa?”*** (Asking question)

Student: *“Tujuan, struktur, dan kebahasaan.”*

Based on the research, the questions posed by the teacher to determine whether students comprehend the meaning of formal letters are designed to determine whether students paid attention to the teacher's discussion. In addition, asking students queries to demonstrate their comprehension or knowledge.

4. Giving information

Gives information typically occurs when a teacher clarifies students' response and provides additional information or explanation on a previously discussed topic. Here are the data gotten from the transcription, it is as follows:

Teacher: ***“Kemarin waktu menulis surat personal ada subjeknya engga?”***

Student: *“Engga.”*

Teacher: ***“Soalnya itu temanya bebas aja. Tapi kalo surat formal harus jelas subjek nya untuk apa, kalu ini kan untuk pengadaan barang di toko Mr. James terus untuk resume nya kayak kemarin atau misalkan pake bahasa formal boleh ngga?”*** (Giving information)

Student: *“Boleh”*

Teacher: ***“Boleh yaa, yang ngga boleh itu pake bahasa informal.”*** (Giving information)

Based on the research, the teacher provides information about the topic that has been discussed, namely about writing formal letters. Moreover, when the teacher was explaining something related to lesson in the class like *“boleh yaa, yang engga itu pake bahasa informal”*. The teacher explained the use of language in formal letters. Then, the teacher kept giving information and lectured students to know more about the lesson.

5. Giving direction

Giving direction makes learners are focused and understand the material given. Here is the data gotten from the transcription, it is as follows:

Teacher: ***“Nah seperti ini misalnya contoh surat formal ada dua, mau ditulis dua-dua nya atau sebagian?”*** (Giving direction)

Student: *“dua-dua nya bu”*

According to the findings, the teacher has provided direction and instructions, such as telling students to write the material and providing directions for assignments to be given to students so that they can be completed successfully. Additionally, the teacher used direct instruction in both classes so that students understand what tasks they will be performing.

Based on the finding's explanation, the researcher found five categories of teacher talk in the classroom interaction, which are praises and encourages, uses ideas of

students, asks questions, gives information, and gives direction. Additionally, the teacher used Indonesian language to facilitate students' comprehension since most of the students are not able to comprehend the material presented in English in front of the class.

Based on the data from the recorder of the teacher's talk during the teaching and learning process, the class is interactive. According to Siregar (2019), the teacher's purpose in praising and encouraging students is to reward students who actively participate in the teaching and learning process. In addition, using students' ideas is used to explore topics that will be used according to students' abilities. Moreover, the teacher's goal in using students' ideas is to help students' concepts become more distinct (Siregar, 2019). Furthermore, asking questions is an interaction that often used in class by teachers. In line with Arrumaisa, et al. (2019), asking is one of the techniques most often used by teachers. The teacher asked questions in order to make classroom interaction more dynamic and students focus on learning. Additionally, giving information usually occurs when the teacher clarifies student responses and provides additional information or explanations about topics previously discussed (Arrumaisa, 2019).

Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that giving an excessive information makes students voiceless. Therefore, the teacher supposes to find a way of using question-and-answer interactions to make the class more interactive. Finally, providing directions guides the students to obey the whole learning process. A steady direction will ensure the success of the teaching and learning process (Aisyah, 2016). In addition, the teacher provides direction made the classroom interaction more conductive.

However, in the classroom, the teacher did not use the other two types of teacher talk, which are dealing with feelings and criticizing student behavior. In fact, the two types of teacher talk are very important to build emotional bonds between teachers and students that teacher provides criticism and suggestions to students. Furthermore, the understanding teacher and the right way of handling students feeling will comfort the teacher and students' interaction in the classroom (Sofyan & Mahmud, 2014).

3.2. Types of Student Engagement

There are three types of engagement, which are: cognitive engagement, behavioural engagement, and emotional engagement. According to the findings, the researcher found only one type of student engagement, which is cognitive engagement. Cognitive engagement is Students' motivation to comprehend in-depth knowledge and engage in learning. As found in the classroom, the teacher asked "*formal letter itu apa saja?*" and the students answered, "*Profesional business yang ditulis dengan spesifik*", and other evidence like the teacher question "*strukturnya gimana?*", the students answered, "*Pertama memiliki alasan bagaimana dituliskannya surat, kalimat yang digunakan dipikirkan dengan baik dan dirangkai sedemikian rupa untuk disampaikan dengan jelas*", then other students also answered, "*jadi surat yang ditulis itu harus dipikirkan dahulu secara jelas*".

Therefore, in this case, the teacher's way of teaching is certainly related to cognitive learning because the teacher involved students in the learning process such as giving time for students to ask and answer questions, giving students opportunities to correct their mistakes and letting them to self-reflect that the teacher helped them understand mental processes in the learning. Thus, it can increase perception and understanding in achieving learning goals by showing a student's behaviour.

Furthermore, the teacher used cognitive learning theory because it helps students master the learning material easily. Additionally, the existing system in cognitive theory teaches students to be active in implementing learning. They are be motivated because they have been taught how to learn, memorize, understand, and store knowledge. Furthermore, in which cognitive theory is used, students will be encouraged unconsciously to be more creative and active rather than just sit there and listen to the teacher. Nevertheless, students

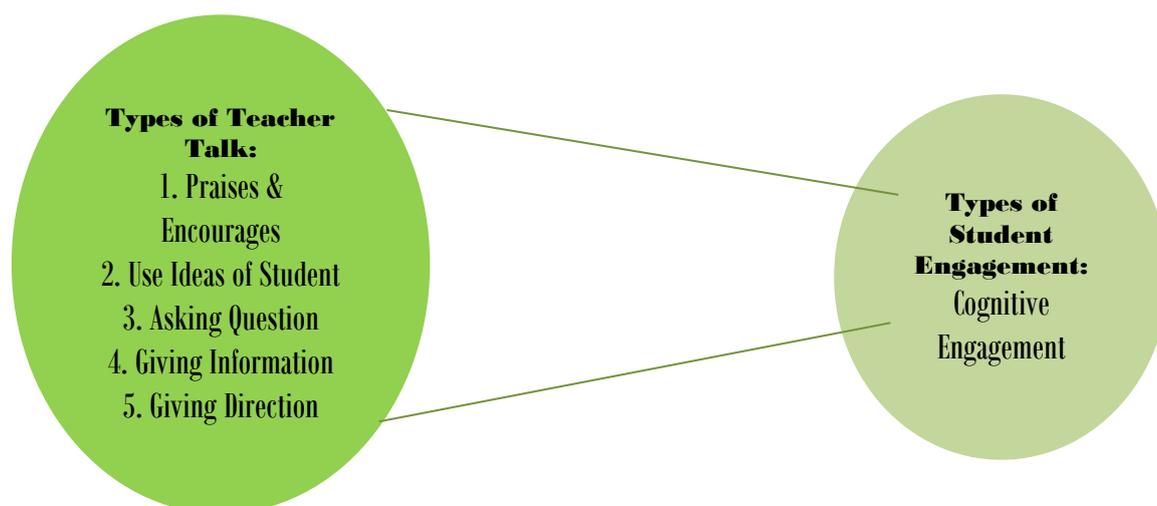
will learn while formulating a plan for applying the knowledge into practise. Consequentially, the students will also think independently while they are completing the tasks given. According to the cognitive learning theory, the focus of teaching and learning activities must be the pupils. As a result, the teacher facilitates learning by offering resources and direction.

According to the explanation of the findings above, there is 3 categories of student involvement, namely cognitive, behavioural, and emotional. However, the researcher only found the cognitive category to emerge, this category is students investing in learning and extending their mental efforts to understand and master content (Fredricks et al., 2004; Lester, 2013; cited in Schindler, Bukholder, Morad, and Mars, 2017).

In addition, it is crucial to address the issue of how little behaviour is involved in learning because pupils will actively engage in learning activities. In this case, students who are behaviourally involved will achieve higher achievement than students who are not involved (Archambault, Janosz, Fallu, and Pagani, 2009; Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris, 2004; Rumberger & Rotermund, 2012; cited in Hospel, Galand, and Janosz, 2016). Behavioral engagement is a key construct, which is a stronger predictor of long-term achievement than emotional engagement (Ladd, and Dinella, 2009) and mediates the relationship between academic competence and emotional engagement (Li, Lerner, and Lerner: 2010).

Furthermore, emotional involvement is also not found in learning. This issue will greatly affect students' engagement in the classroom. Moreover, emotional engagement must create a good communication and relationships between teacher and students. Thus, the development of connections and interactions between teachers and students, their interrelationships, and the characteristics that promote student involvement in carrying out learning activities all contribute to the cognitive engagement of students. Therefore, emotional involvement in the teacher-student relationship has also been found to have significant implications for student's future academic achievement, social outcomes, and behavior (Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004; Silver et al., 2005; Wang & Holcombe, 2010; cited in Pietarinen, Soini, and Pyhalto, 2014). Hence, emotional engagement and cognitive engagement is highly socially embedded.

3.3. The Contribution of Teacher Talk to Student Engagement



The distribution of instructor speaking to student interaction is discussed in this section. First, the teacher talk in this study that influenced student engagement, namely

in the form of questions to develop students' contributions in thinking and remembering the lessons that had been explained earlier, such as the question "formal letter itu apa saja?" This means that the teacher wants to know how far students remember the lesson. Then the students answered, "Professional business yang ditulis dengan spesifik."

By interacting and communicating with their students, teachers deepen the subject matter. To encourage student participation in the teaching and learning process, it is necessary to carry out effective interactions. Yusida (2017) states that teacher speech can encourage students to communicate, this is useful for stimulating them to think, understand, and respond to the stimuli given. Furthermore, a student who is cognitively engaged will be one who invests in their learning, embraces challenges to acquire new knowledge or skills, and goes beyond course requirements (Pickering, 2017).

Second, asking questions also triggers students' cognitive engagement. For example, when the teacher asks this question "Ini apa?" (Points to student worksheets). Then, the students answered "Subjek". The teacher asks again "Subjek itu topiknya" (Use ideas of student). The students think and are confused, then there are students who answer "Resolusi, sapaan, paragraph pertama, kedua, ketiga, penutup, dan yang terakhir tanda tangan". Thus, it triggers students' cognitive involvement (Suherdi, 2017), especially in the aspect of remembering, meaning that students are expected to know the structure of the formal letter that has been given by the teacher.

In addition, giving directions and praise is also very important for the process of student involvement in class. Directing students to more appropriate answers when students answer questions will increase student knowledge. Then, giving praise is also a form of appreciation to students who actively answer or ask questions. Thus, this will refer students to be interactive in class.

According to the research, there are five categories of teacher talk and one type of student engagement in the classroom. Concerning, is the absence of emotional interaction in the classroom, as this element is essential for nurturing a supportive and engaging learning environment (Gunuc, 2014). Educators must recognize the significance of emotional connection and investigate ways to incorporate it into their teaching practices moving forward. By cultivating a balanced combination of informative instruction and emotional engagement, it is expected to create a classroom that empowers students and improves their overall learning experience.

In this regard, several studies have revealed that behavioural engagement is centered on the involvement of academic tasks, behaviour, and persistence (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Skinner & Belmont, 1993). Then, according to Edwards & Mercer (1987) cited in Sharpe (2008), teacher talk can contribute to students' understanding of principles. These understandings arise from activities in the classroom, and dialogic discourse that contributes to construction which is referred to as general knowledge. Therefore, the teacher greatly influences the success of student education.

4. CONCLUSION

Learning at the high school level is still only focused on the academic field. Even though learning is interactive, teacher's talk content must involve all aspects of students because interactive learning alone is not enough. Actually, teachers and students must be attached to one another, not just teachers as humans who transfer knowledge, because teachers are not robots who only transfer knowledge, but teachers and students must have an emotional bond because this is related to character education. In addition, the teachers talk must pay attention to this by considering the content itself, that the aspects must be comprehensive because the direction of education in Indonesia is character building, so this character building is not visible in classroom learning. So, this is only focused on

academics, so the teacher's talk must be further improved in realizing the formation of children's character because one of the benchmarks of education in Indonesia is the development of good character formation.

The study found that there was no emotional involvement from the students due to their subpar English comprehension skills. To address this issue, teachers must develop teacher speech and enhance their teaching approaches to motivate students to develop their English skills. There are still many shortcomings in this research, so to improve the quality of teacher talk in the EFL classroom we need criticism and suggestions from readers and better and developing research for the future.

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