

# TEACHER TALK IN CLASSROOM INTERACTION

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper explains about the types of teachers' talk in classroom interaction. This research was case study. In this research, the writer applied Descriptive Research Design which applied observation method. It aimed to gain the data that were observed during Teaching and learning process. The data were presented by analyzing the teacher talk and the speech act used by the informant. The source of data was the lecturer of ICP FMIPA UNM Makassar. The instrument of this study was observation where the writer used video cam to record and shoot the speech of the lecturer and also transcribing it. This research instrument was applied to acquire the data about teacher talk and speech act used by the lecturer at ICP FMIPA UNM Makassar. The result of the research shows that there are some types of teachers' talk performed by the lecturer during classroom interaction, they are greeting student, reviewing the previous material, introducing the new material, giving direction and instruction, encouraging and motivating, giving advice and closing the class.

**KEYWORDS:** Teacher's Talk, Classroom Interaction

## A. INTRODUCTION

**D**iscourse analysis studies how spoken and written language form larger meaningful units such as paragraphs, conversations, interviews, etc. (Richard and Richard, 2002: 161). While according to McCarthy (1991:5) discourse analysts study language in use: written texts of all kinds, and spoken data, from conversation to highly institutionalized forms of talk. In discourse is an extremely complex process, comprised of many interacting components or elements. It arises out of mental constructs that interact with, for example, the psychological, social, cultural, situational, political, and personal aspects of life.

Discourse can be categorized into two kinds of discourse; spoken and written discourse. Spoken discourse is possibly the form of discourse that poses the great problem in terms of analysis. A spoken discourse is often considered to be less planned and as we know that there are many factors can influence the way people speak or use the spoken discourse like the speech events.

Related to the spoken discourse, there are many areas in discourse such as talk-in-interaction in everyday conversation, children's conversations, parent-child discourse, news interviews, classroom interactions, courtroom interactions, meetings, conversational storytelling, verbal duelling, puns and jokes, rumours and gossiping.

In relation to classroom interaction, teachers play important roles as language input providers and language models to be imitated by the students in teaching and learning classroom. It cannot be denied that a teacher in teaching carries out some specific communicative acts, such as lecturing, asking and responding questions, explaining, and giving direction or instruction. These activities will inevitably facilitate the students to perform the same or similar things in communicating with each other accordingly in all varied classroom interactions assigned by the teacher. Therefore, teacher talk should be clear and intelligible, which should contain no errors. Noni (1994:1) stated that the instructional language used by teachers should always serve the objectives of providing students' acquisition and acquaintance with the language, of promoting learning among them, and of initiating class-interaction leading to communication. These objectives will be attained if the teacher language is appropriate in terms of pronunciation, grammar, and word collocation for the students in accordance with their language competence, experience, and proficiency.

Furthermore, other aspects that can be analyzed in spoken discourse analysis such as the turn taking, politeness, and speech act. Speech act is one of the functional activities of human beings as creatures who have language. Because of its functional, every human being tries to do the best, either through acquisition and learning. Language acquisition typically done in non-formal, while the learning is mostly done in the form of formal.

By considering the explanation above, the writer was interested to analyze a formal spoken discourse in classroom interaction through observing teaching and learning process in the case of teachers' talk.

## **B. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

For foreign language learner's classroom is the main place where they are frequently exposed to the target language. The kind of language used by the teacher or instruction in the classroom is known as teacher talk (TT). For this term, *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* defines it as "that variety of language sometimes used by teachers when they are in the process of teaching. In trying to communicate with learners, teachers often simplify their speech, giving it many of the characteristics of foreigner talk and other simplified styles of speech addressed to language learners" (Richards, 1992: 471).

In addition, Rod Ellis states that Teacher talk is the special language that teachers use when addressing L2 learners in the classroom. There is systematic simplification of the formal properties of the teacher's language. The studies of teacher talk can be divided into those that investigate the type of language that teachers use in language classrooms and those that investigate in the type of language they use in subject lessons. The language that teachers address to L2 learner is treated as a register, with its own specific formal and

linguistics properties (Ellis, 1985: 145). Therefore, teacher talk is the language produced by teachers addressed to the students in classroom interaction.

In relation to teacher talk, Rasyid (1997: 7-8) states that talking is one of the most outstanding behaviors revealed by teachers in the classroom which may become the most difficult thing for teachers to avoid. The reason is quite obvious. If we, for example, ask an EFL classroom teacher what he does in his class, we will likely hear from him such things below:

*I greet students;*

*I review the previous lesson;*

*I introduce new materials;*

*I explain, describe, exemplify, compare, analyze, and synthesize ideas;*

*I give instruction and direction;*

*I give pronunciation models;*

*I dictate words, phrases, sentences, and short passages;*

*I encourage, motivate and give prompts to students;*

*I give advice, and offer suggestions;*

*I respond to students' questions and ask students questions as well to take a part in classroom interaction;*

*I give feedback, etc.*

In terms of the function of teacher talk in teaching and learning classroom interaction, Celcia-Murcia (1989) distinguishes teacher talk into indirect and direct teacher talk. Indirect teacher talk covers four areas of teaching and learning process, that is (1) accepting students' feeling, (2) stimulating students' motivation and interest, (3) using students' perception, and (4) offering questions. Direct teacher talk may come out in terms of (1) informing something, (2) giving direction, and (3) justifying students' authority

Furthermore, Cook (1991) assumed that teacher supplies more speech rather than students in classroom interaction. It is obviously reasonable since the teaching under the teacher overall guidance takes, not surprisingly, 70% of the utterances in most classroom. This can be clearly illustrated in the following three main parts of the exchange of turn in classroom interaction:

- 1) *Initiation.* The teacher takes the initiative by requiring something of the students through a question. The move starts of the exchange; the teacher acts a leader
- 2) *Response.* The students answer the question whatever is required. So the move responds to teacher's initiation; the students act as follower.
- 3) *Feedback.* The teacher does not directly take another initiation, but she/he gives feedback to the student's response whether it is acceptable or not.

With regard to defining the notion of 'communicative teacher talk', *teacher talk: a* would suggest that rather than comparing the way teachers talk in the *way forward* classroom

with the way people talk outside it, a more productive approach would be to identify categories of teachers' verbal behavior in the classroom, and attempt to determine what it means to be communicative in each one, and what might constitute a communicative balance of behaviours for different teaching and learning purposes. The following six categories are adapted from a list of categories of classroom verbal behaviour in Bowers (1980), cited in Malamah-Thomas (1987), identified through a process of classroom observation and analysis of lesson transcripts:

- questioning/eliciting
- responding to students' contributions
- presenting/explaining
- organizing/giving instructions
- evaluating/correcting
- 'sociating'/establishing and maintaining classroom rapport.

Futhermore, in relation to the classroom interaction, different lessons have different structures. Mehan (1979) found that the general subject lessons consist of three components, (1) an opening phase, where the participants inform each other that they are, in fact, going to conduct a lesson as opposed to some other activity, (2) a business phase, where information is exchanged between teacher and students, and (3) a closing phase, where participants are reminded of what went on in the core of the lesson. In the phase of business, teachers usually do three things (Sinclair & Brazil, 1982): telling things to students, getting students to do and say things, evaluating the things that students do and say.

If we pursue the case for replicating communicative behaviour outside *teacher talk* the classroom, there are a number of characteristics of teacher talk which we might identify as being communicative (see Thornbury 1996). Some of these are:

1. The use of 'referential' questions, where the teacher asks the class something (e.g. 'What did you do at the weekend?') to which he or she does not know the answer, and which therefore has a genuine communicative purpose. This is in contrast to typical 'display' questions (e.g. comprehension questions on a reading text) to which the teacher already has the answer, and only asks so that the class can display their understanding or knowledge. Insights from analyses of discourse inside and outside the classroom (e.g. Long and Sato 1983) have revealed very marked differences between typical classroom talk and non-classroom talk in this respect.
2. Content feedback by the teacher, where the teacher's response to student contributions focuses on the content of what the student says-the message-rather than on the form (e.g. the correctness of the grammar or pronunciation).

3. The use of speech modifications, hesitations, and rephrasing in the teacher's own talk, e.g. when explaining, asking questions, giving instructions, etc.
4. Attempts to negotiate meaning with the students, e.g. through requests for clarification and repetition, and giving opportunities for the students to interrupt the teacher and do the same.

### C. METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

In this research, the writer applied Descriptive Research Design which applied observation method. It aimed to gain the data that were observed during Teaching and learning process. The data were presented by analyzing the teacher talk and the speech act used by the informant. The source of data was the lecturer of ICP FMIPA UNM Makassar. The instrument of this study was observation where the writer used video cam to record and shoot the speech of the lecturer and also transcribing it. This research instrument was applied to acquire the data about teacher talk and speech act used by the lecturer at ICP FMIPA UNM Makassar.

In collecting the data, the writer became a passive participant observer meant that the observer had no any responsibilities in the process of teaching and learning process and she only saw what is going on around her. She only focused on collecting data.

In analyzing the data collected through observation, firstly the writer transcribes the spoken discourse and then after transcribing, the writer analyze the use of teacher talk based on the theory of Celce Murcia and speech act based on the theory of Austin and Searle.

### D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the observation, the writer could present seven extract that can be analyzed.

#### Extract 1: Starting the class

Lecturer: good morning everybody, as I hope you all gain this, yess, read first, @how ways@, yess.. Last week I gave you gap filling lecturer, so that ee that this week I emphasize lecture to everybody. As I recognized, everybody is reached do the same thing... What we are going to do today is, while I got you to do the task..

5 there was some exercises.. some knowledge did you to read... in class today we

10 just to try on to.. to this story.. read through them.. if you cannot understand the clear pronunciation.. I guide first, explain some words.. making interesting story to show you perhaps how you can remember word. as I talking to you last week, that, you have making interesting story making, exiting person emotion, so that you can remember word, increasing vocabulary. the story is about disaster,

earthquake, tsunami. another one is landslides, poisonous mud, missing adam  
air.  
15 ... The second one what you would you to do is. in pairs, in pairs, is you ask  
question about the stories.. if you are not confident, you can read, but I want  
you to try and do pre train. you are a journalist, you are instructor.. you have to  
20 ask what is happen, making it interesting, you ask about your family, how do you  
survive. if you have a bit little time to practice questions well, the types of the  
question can be used is what, where, when, how, and why

**Analysis:**

Based on the extract, the kind of teacher' talk that the lecturer performed are, greeting (line 1), reviewing the previous lesson (line, 2, 3, 4, and 5), introducing new material (line 12 and 13), and giving instruction and direction (the rest of the utterances).

**Extract 2: During the class**

Lecturer: ... so needn't introduce yourself, and just ask question.. so if you are an actress,  
actress, and actresses, you do imagination a little bit. use this information here as  
a guide, just as guide, to help you ask question, ask other question, but you can  
5 <XfixX> you can <XfixX> outside a box. As a reporter, I am asking whether  
you, how did you survive, the word [while the lecturer was writing the word on  
white board], how did you survive, why are you alive, how about you family,  
how about your parents, what happen.. I'm going to know now, If you going to  
10 do there, this is a step up.. if you are not confident, just using the information  
from the text, just reading information, if you do this, I'm going to listen to you,  
[while the lecture ask student to work in pair by bogy language] right, together  
[by showing students to arrange their seat]

**Analysis:**

Based on the extract, the kind of teacher' talk that the lecturer performed is giving instruction and direction.

**Extract 3: Giving explanation to the students**

...you are a stranger, and don't expect to be friends, don't expect to do business,  
don't expect to meet <XforeignX>, you're not necessary to introduce your self  
5 ee for.. formally ' hi, my name is and how are you?.' In that situation, you will  
meet very quickly then part [showing gesture], the person doing interview just  
say' excuse me, I'm reporter, could I ask you some questions, do you have time  
to answer the questions, [for several minutes, the lecturer gave example] [and  
then deliver about the activity next week]

**Analysis:**

Based on the extract, the kind of teacher' talk that the lecturer performed is giving

reinforcement to the activity that students have performed.

**Extract 4: Giving instruction**

Next week, what I want you to do, for next week ee for next week. I want you in pairs to write animal play. You may two or three people. Ten sentences each. Use this conversation and write < > and you guide< >. Practice,  
 5 write.. write it down, and you have to have changed mind each on one page, as you have to make story one page about.. what is, based on everybody's home situation, everybody's story, what is everybody's play. You have to practice speaking English < > if you have a story about I lost my family and the  
 10 family is @a dog@ funny?@... [the lecture are quite for a while then continuing giving example]

**Analysis:**

Based on the extract, the kind of teacher' talk that the lecturer performed is introducing what activity that will be done next week by giving task.

**Extract 5: Asking and answering question**

Lecturer : Any question? If you ask me how do you say this just follow this  
 < >  
 Student : [raise his hand]  
 Lecturer : Yeah  
 Students : Both of stand up there for next week?  
 Lecturer : uh  
 Students : both of us?  
 Lecture : yeah so you must presentate?  
 Student : we make the same story?  
 Lecturer : you can, may you can share the story  
 Students : I mean ee I mean  
 Lecturer : if you have the same story, you must make different story

**Analysis:**

Based on the extract, the kind of teacher' talk that the lecturer performed is asking and answering activity.

**Extract 6: Encouraging students**

I got to not be afraid to speak aloud, if you are aloud, it's going your intonation well, because you are guys, the guys are same of you, so you are going to be  
 5 teacher... you are going to have to be like me, you have to speak aloud like me, whatever languages, to control your students, actually I understand you. Sometimes I may not understand you not because its control but <  
 > all speaking... just speak up

**Analysis:**

Based on the extract, the kind of teacher' talk that the lecturer performed is encouraging and motivating students to practice speaking.

**Extract 7: Closing the class**

... Happy?...yeach.. [go to his desk get the attendance list, calling students' name, after calling students' name] okay.. and sometimes the next people to guide informal test.. guide to inform word substitution, just something like a bit story, just get word to help, okay you have to correct word, just <xrequireX> simple test will be doing. I really want you.. first try outside the class, particularly discuss the story, practicing your topic. Just read the stories, return and you can aaa stay practice aaa word to word, thank you very much, thanks for this [while looking for one student]

**Analysis:**

Based on the extract, the kind of teacher' talk that the lecturer performed is giving suggestion and closing the lecturer by saying thanks.

Based on the finding it can be concluded that the types of teacher's talk that the lecturer performed in classroom interaction are, greeting student, reviewing the previous material, introducing the new material, giving direction and instruction, encouraging and motivating, giving advice and closing the class.

What has found through observation is similar with what the previous research found. With regard to teacher talk categories, the following six categories are adapted from a list of categories of classroom verbal behaviour in Bowers (1980), cited in Malamah-Thomas (1987), identified through a process of classroom observation and analysis of lesson transcripts: questioning/eliciting, responding to students' contributions, presenting/explaining, organizing/giving instructions, evaluating/correcting, 'sociating'/establishing and maintaining classroom rapport.

In relation to Rasyid activities in classroom interaction, the kind of teachers talk performed by the lecturer is also similar. Eventhough not all teacher talk performed by Rasyid in his class also performed by the lecturer.

Based on the theory of Celce Murcia, the kind of teacher's talk performed by the lecturer is also categorized direct teacher talk and indirect teacher talk.

Teacher talk used by the lecturer based on the purposes of the lecture. The lecturer tries to communicate to the students in order that the students can enjoy joining the class, so that the students can study well. Lecturer gave instruction or direction in order that the students can follow lecture step well. It indicates that when the students do the instruction, so the communication run successfully.

Lecturer supplies more speech during classroom interaction. Based the seven extract, six of them are monologues and only one of them is dialogues. According to Cook (1991) teacher supplies more speech rather than students in classroom interaction. It is obviously

reasonable since the teaching under the teacher overall guidance takes, not surprisingly, 70% of the utterances in most classroom.

## E. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, the writer puts forward conclusion as follows  
There are some types of teachers' talk performed by the lecturer during classroom interaction, they are greeting student, reviewing the previous material, introducing the new material, giving direction and instruction, encouraging and motivating, giving advice and closing the class.

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