



Teacher Talk in Mixed Abilities Students Using the Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System at Grade Ninth SMP Gajah Mada Medan

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history:</p> <p>Received</p> <p>Accepted</p>	<p>This study was aimed to identify types of teacher talk and analyze verbal communication adaptations used by the English teacher for mixed-ability students in grade IX at SMP Gajah Mada Medan. Flander's Interaction Analysis Categories System (FIACS) theory was utilized by the researcher to identify teacher talk. Qualitative design was used in this study, where the data was taken from observation and documentation. The researcher found seven types of teacher talk: receiving feelings, praising/encouraging, accepting/using students' ideas, asking questions, lecturing, giving directions, and criticizing/justifying authority. Questioning dominated while accepting feelings was used the least. Diverse strategies were used by the teacher for different ability levels of students.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

Teacher talk is a fundamental aspect of classroom interaction, shaping the dynamics of the teaching and learning process. It encompasses how teachers communicate with their students, particularly in English language classrooms where teachers play a crucial role. English teachers, for instance, can foster creativity through activities like creative writing and text analysis, as well as integrate digital tools to facilitate technological proficiency. Beyond merely imparting information, teachers influence the intellectual, social, and emotional development of students. They are not just information providers but skilled communicators whose interactions can significantly impact student success (Amatari, 2015). Classroom interaction, including teacher talk, is vital for effective learning. Dagarin (2004) describes classroom interaction as a reciprocal process involving all participants in the learning environment. Teachers must navigate diverse student characteristics, including varying personalities and intelligence levels. Zulfikar, Dahliana, & Sari (2019) highlight that students display positive cognitive, emotional, and behavioral attitudes towards learning English, necessitating tailored communication techniques from teachers.

Mixed abilities among students, linked to cognitive development, further complicate classroom dynamics. Piaget's theory of cognitive development (as cited in Sinaga & Choiriyah, 2023) underscores that students' progress through different developmental stages. This study classifies students into low-level, medium-level, and high-level categories based on their cognitive abilities. Teachers must adapt their support and instruction accordingly, recognizing that these evaluations can vary by context and subject. Flanders' Interaction Analysis Category System (FIACS), developed by Ned Flanders in the 1960s, offers a valuable framework for understanding teacher-student interaction through teacher talk. This theory identifies seven types of teacher talk: accepting feelings, praising or encouraging, accepting or utilizing students' ideas, asking questions, lecturing, giving directions, and criticizing or justifying authorities. Nunan (as cited in Gebhard, 2006) asserts that teacher talk is a significant input in English as a foreign language classes, often dominating classroom interactions (Nugroho, 2009). Analyzing teacher talk using Flanders' theory provides insights into its impact on student participation, conceptual understanding, and motivation.

Despite the theoretical importance of diverse teacher talk, practical application often falls short. For instance, during the Introduction to the School Field program, teachers frequently relied only on praising and questioning, resulting in diminished student interest and participation. Especially for students with mixed abilities, a one-size-fits-all approach to teacher talk is ineffective. Previous research on teacher talk has predominantly focused on first and second-year middle or high school classes, often with similar research questions

and objectives (Charisma, 2019; Gultom & Naibaho, 2022; Siregar, 2020). This study diverges by examining a third-year class, specifically grade 9 at SMP Gajah Mada Medan, and explores how teachers adapt their communication to address mixed-ability students. This research aims to provide a detailed analysis of teacher talk, contributing to improved teaching practices. By understanding how teachers communicate, the study seeks to illustrate methods for enhancing classroom interactions.

The objectives of this research are to identify the types of teacher talk used in grade 9 at SMP Gajah Mada Medan and to analyze how teachers adapt their talk to accommodate students with varying abilities. The study focuses on teacher talk within classroom interactions involving ninth-grade students at SMP Gajah Mada Medan, aiming to provide practical insights for teachers and students. The research findings are expected to contribute to the improvement of effective English teaching and learning processes both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it enhances educational theory on classroom interactions, while practically, it informs teacher professional development programs on effective communication strategies for diverse students.

METHOD

The study employed a descriptive research design with a qualitative methodology, as defined by Creswell (2009), focusing on non-numerical data collected from recordings, field notes, personal documents, and other official documents in naturally occurring settings. The data for this study consisted of teacher talk utterances in a ninth-grade classroom at SMP Gajah Mada Medan, sourced from one English teacher. This choice was influenced by the researcher's positive experiences at the school, its accessible location, and the willingness of the school principal to grant research permission. Data collection instruments included smartphones for video and audio recordings, leveraging technology's ability to capture relevant observational data.

The researcher employed participatory observation techniques, directly involving themselves in the teaching and learning process to collect data. The Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System (FIACS) was utilized to analyze teacher-student interactions, focusing on categorizing teacher talk based on Flanders' defined categories, coding and systematically classifying the data, and differentiating utterances according to students' abilities. This process enabled the researcher to measure and analyze the frequency and distribution of different types of teacher talk and examine patterns and trends within the classroom context.

FINDINGS

Data from teacher talk was used to evaluate the interaction between the teacher and students during the learning process. The data included seven categories of teacher talk: (1) accepting feelings, (2) praising or encouraging, (3) accepting or using students' ideas, (4) asking questions, (5) lecturing, (6) giving directions, and (7) criticizing and justifying authorities. The table below showed the most frequently used teacher talk to the least used.

Table 4.1 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Teacher Talk

No.	Teacher Talk	Frequencies	Percentages (%)
1.	Asking Questions	47	23.86
2.	Giving Directions	32	16.24
3.	Lecturing	31	15.74
4.	Criticizing and justifying authorities	31	15.74
5.	Praising or encouraging	22	11.17
6.	Accepting or utilizing students' ideas	20	10.15
7.	Accepting Feelings	14	7.11
	Total	197	100

Of the total 197 interactions recorded, the analysis showed that Asking Questions were the most frequent type of teacher talk, with 47 times, followed by Giving Directions 32 times, and Lecturing and Criticizing Authorities 31 times each. However, the least frequent type of teacher talk was Acknowledging Feelings, with only 14 times. These results showed that in the learning process, interactions that focused on questions, directions, and presentation of materials were more dominant. However, it was important to remember that the types of discussions that created a supportive environment, such as accepting students' feelings and valuing their ideas, also contributed greatly to the establishment of a positive relationship between the teacher and students, as well as increasing students' participation in learning. Therefore, the teacher could consider these different types of talks as the teacher planned the next lesson to make the learning experience more diverse and rewarding for students.

The teacher effectively adapted teacher talk to mixed-ability students by tailoring language and instructions according to students' proficiency levels. At the beginner level, the teacher used simple phrases and straightforward questions to build relationships and boost confidence. For intermediate students, the teacher introduced more complex language and encouraged deeper thinking and active participation. At the advanced level, the teacher used open-ended questions and provided fewer, more open-ended instructions to foster critical thinking and independence.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis, seven categories of teacher talk were identified in English classrooms at Grade IX SMP Gajah Mada Medan: accepting feelings, praising or encouraging, accepting or using students' ideas, asking questions, lecturing, giving directions, and criticizing and justifying authorities. Among these, asking questions dominated the interactions, while accepting feelings was the least utilized. The teacher effectively adapted their talk to accommodate mixed-ability students by tailoring language and instructions according to proficiency levels. For beginners, simple language and clear questions were used to build rapport and confidence. Intermediate students were engaged with more complex language, while advanced students benefited from open-ended questions and minimal instructions to foster critical thinking and autonomy in learning.

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