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by Uswatun Hasanah

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INITIATION-RESPONSE-FEEDBACK (IRF) PATTERN OF SINCLAIR AND COULTHARD MODEL IN ENGLISH CLASSROOM INTERACTION

Uswatun Hasanah¹, Neni Afrida Sari², Rahmad Husein³

English Education Department, University of Medan State, Indonesia
E-mail: uh3974321@gmail.com

Abstract. *The study investigated the implementation of the Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) pattern of Coulthard and Sinclair Model in sixth-grade classroom interactions. It focused on its impact on student engagement and learning outcomes. Conducted with an English teacher and 23 students, the research utilized video recordings to analyze discourse patterns during lessons. Findings reveal that the IRF model facilitated communication by structuring interactions where teachers initiate questions, students respond, and teachers provide feedback. However, the analysis indicated that while students actively participate, their responses often consist of repetition rather than demonstrating comprehension of the material. Teacher feedback plays a crucial role in reinforcing learning, yet it also highlighted areas needing improvement in fostering deeper understanding. The study emphasizes the importance of teacher-student dialogue in creating an interactive learning environment and suggests that educators should encourage critical thinking and comprehension alongside participation. By identifying best practices within the IRF framework, this research contributes to enhancing classroom dynamics in early secondary education settings.*

Keywords: Initiation-Response-Feedback, classroom interaction

INTRODUCTION

A classroom interaction is a crucial aspect of the learning process, particularly in grade 6, where students are transitioning from primary to secondary education. The Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) model, first proposed by Sinclair and Coulthard in 1975, has been widely used to analyze classroom interactions. This model involves the teacher initiating a question, the student responding, and the teacher providing feedback. The IRF pattern is fundamental in facilitating learner-initiated communication and enhancing classroom engagement. However, the effectiveness of this model can vary depending on the teaching context and student participation.

The IRF model is grounded in discourse analysis, which examines how communication occurs in the classroom. This approach highlights the importance of turn-taking, student participation, and teacher feedback in shaping the learning environment. Research by Mackey (2012) emphasizes that negotiated meaning, facilitated through IRF interactions, is essential for language learning. Additionally, studies by Kumaravadevalu (1999) and Seedhouse (2011) underscore the significance of IRF in creating a dynamic and interactive classroom environment.

Despite the extensive use of the IRF model in educational settings, there is a need to explore its specific application in grade 6 classrooms. Previous studies have primarily focused on higher educational levels or specific language learning contexts, leaving a gap in understanding how this model operates in the early stages of secondary education. Moreover, there is a lack of research on how teachers can effectively implement the IRF model to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes in grade 6.

Previous studies have shown mixed results regarding the dominance of teacher or student interactions in the IRF sequence. For instance, Rustandi and Mubarak (2017) found that student responses often dominate in speaking classes, while other studies like those by Rahmi et al. (2008) and Rashidi & Rafieerad (2010) suggest that teachers still maintain a significant level of control over classroom interactions. These findings indicate that the IRF model can be both facilitative and restrictive depending on the teaching context. Therefore, this

study aims to analyze the process of using the IRF model in grade 6 classrooms to identify best practices that can maximize learner-initiated communication and overall classroom interaction.

This research aims to examine the role of teacher initiation, student response, and teacher feedback in facilitating learner-initiated communication and to contribute to the understanding of how the IRF model can be effectively implemented in early secondary education settings, ultimately improving the quality of classroom interactions and student learning outcomes.

METHOD

A descriptive qualitative method was the design of this research. It investigated the learning interaction process in discourse analysis perspectives. Creswell, (2009) states that qualitative research is an exploration that is also related to individual understanding of these social problems. In the classroom interaction, it is noted that investigating classroom discourse and the way they influence students and the learning process can be considered as the important aspect in learning.

An English teacher and 23 pupils from class VI A that consists of 14 girls and 9 boys were the study's subjects from SDN 104202 Bandar Khalifah. With the teacher's and students' consent, data were gathered using a video recorder. It was recorded in the midst of an English lesson. The conversational discourse was examined using the transcription and analysis processes recommended by (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975), an IRF model for characterizing student and teacher speech based on a hierarchy of discourse units.

RESULTS

After observing the video recording, the following is a transcript of the video:

Teacher:	Verb 2 nya drank, verb 1 nya apa?
Student(s):	Drank...
Teacher:	Drink, apa?
Student(s):	Drink...(together)
Teacher:	Oke. Verb 1 nya drink, verb 2 nya?
Teacher&student(s):	Drank...
Teacher:	Berarti Aisyah minum water yesterday...

¹ <i>Student(s):</i>	<i>Apa itu?</i>
<i>Teacher:</i>	<i>Water, what does it mean of water?</i>
<i>Student(s):</i>	<i>Air...(some of them)</i>
<i>Teacher:</i>	<i>Air... air yesterday. What does it men of yesterday?</i>
<i>Student(s):</i>	<i>Kemarin...(some of them)</i>
<i>Teacher:</i>	<i>Kema...?</i>
<i>Student(s):</i>	<i>Rin!(together)</i>
<i>Teacher:</i>	<i>Kemarin. Berarti apa artinya Aisyah drank water yesterday?</i> <i>Aisyah minum?</i>
<i>Student(s):</i>	<i>Air...(together)</i>
<i>Teacher:</i>	<i>Ke...?</i>
<i>Student(s):</i>	<i>Kemarin!(together)</i>
<i>Teacher:</i>	<i>Kemarin, good job!</i> <i>Itu masa lalu gak?</i>
<i>Student(s):</i>	<i>Iya</i>
<i>Teacher:</i>	<i>Iya. Past... past...</i>
<i>Student(s):</i>	<i>Pasti (one student said it and the rest are silence)</i>
<i>Teacher:</i>	<i>Past tense! Pasti.. pasti...</i>

Based on the video transcript above that has been tested using IRF's model analysis by (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975), there are 23 interactions between teacher and students. It starts with the teacher asking a question that always acts as an initiator and then the student responds verbally in the whole interaction. Likewise with the feedback phase, which is given by the teacher in the form of repetition of answers from students and there is also a form of praise from students' correct answers.

To better understand the IRF model's process during the interaction, the analysis results are shown in the table below:

Teacher:	Verb 2 nya drank, verb 1 nya apa? (I, teachers' question)
Student(s):	Drank... (R, students' answer)

1 Teacher:	Drink, apa? (F, teacher was correcting the answer and request students to repeat)
Student(s):	Drink...(together) (R, students repeated the answer)
Teacher:	Oke. Verb 1 nya drink, verb 2 nya? (I, teachers' question)
Teacher& student(s):	Drank...(R, students' answer)
Teacher:	Berarti Aisyah minum water yesterday... (F, teacher read the sentence as reinforcement to students)
Student(s):	Apa itu? (R, Students' response by asking question)
Teacher:	Water, what does it mean of water? (F&I, teachers' question)
Student(s):	Air...(some of them) (R, students' response)
Teacher:	Air... air yesterday. What does it mean of yesterday? (F&I, teacher repeated the answer and give a new question)
Student(s):	Kemarin...(some of them) (R, students' response)
Teacher:	Kema...? (F, teacher requested to continue her word)
Student(s):	Rin!(together) (R, students' answer)
Teacher:	Kemarin. Berarti apa artinya Aisyah drank water yesterday? Aisyah minum? (F&I, teacher repeated the answer and give a new question then request to continue her word)
Student(s):	Air...(together) (R, students' answer)
Teacher:	Ke...? (F, teacher requested to continue her word)
Student(s):	Kemarin!(together) (R, students' answer)
Teacher:	Kemarin, good job! (F, repeated the answer and give a praise to students) Itu masa lalu gak? (I, teachers' question)
Student(s):	Iya (R, students' answer)
Teacher:	Iya. Past... past...(F, teacher repeated the answer and requested to continue her word)
Student(s):	Pasti (one student said it and the rest are silence) (R, students' answer)
Teacher:	Past tense! Pasti.. pasti... (F, Teacher was correcting the answer)

From the results of above analysis, it was found that the process of classroom interaction in the class that uses IRF's model analysis approach is:

1. Teachers' question: as a form of initiation to engage students' activeness during learning.

Teacher:	Verb 2 nya drank, verb 1 nya apa? (I, teachers' question)
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This is the first initiation from the teacher. In previously, teacher read a sentence "*Aisyah drank water yesterday*". So teacher wants to elicited students' memories about the previous material by asking students about what is the verb 1 of drank, because drank is already there. By doing that interaction can improve remembering skill of students.

Teacher:	Oke. Verb 1 nya drink, verb 2 nya? (I, teachers' question)
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Then, in this situation after the teacher elicit and already got the answer from students, the teacher was asking students back to the present material about the verb 2 of drink. Again, the teacher did this situation to improve remembering skill of students.

Teacher:	Air... air yesterday. What does it mean of yesterday? (F&I, teacher repeated the answer and give a new question)
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But in this case, there are two process that happen. Teacher gives initiation and feedback at the same time. Teacher give a feedback to repeated the students' answer and teacher read a next word and ask students the meaning of that word, that is "*yesterday*".

Teacher:	Kemarin. Berarti apa artinya Aisyah drank water yesterday? Aisyah minum? (F&I, teacher repeated the answer and give a new question then request to continue her word)
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Same as previous case, but here there is new instruction that is teacher requested students to continue her word.

Teacher:	Itu masa lalu gak? (I, teachers' question)
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While, in this situation teacher give an initiation by giving a new question. After the teacher explained the meaning of word by word so to make students' understanding about whole sentence, the teacher went to the main topic that day that is about pas tense. So by analyzing word by word and understanding the meaning of each word, students may know what is the tenses of the sentece and how the sentence used in real expression.

In brief, from initiation phase which teacher did by giving a question, it can make students more active and more enhancing a knowledge of students.

2. Students' answer: as a form of response to the teacher's question. Most of their responses are in the form of repeating and continuing the teacher's words. However, there were also some students who managed to answer correctly from the teacher's question. There was also interaction as a response from students in the form of questions given to the teacher because of their ignorance.

Student(s):	Drank... (R, students' answer)
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For this interaction, students' answer is wrong. It caused by their ingorance of a new knowledge.

Student(s):	Drink...(together) (R, students repeated the answer)
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But in this time, students has already gotten about a new knowledge before and the end students answered the question correctly.

Teacher&student(s):	Drank... (R, students' answer)
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In this interaction teacher and students give a response together loudly. In previous interaction students' answer is not correct. But in this interaction student finallu answer the question correctly. So to corroborate the student's answer and convince the student of the correct answer, the teacher joins in answering the question along with the students.

Student(s):	Apa itu? (R, Students' response by asking question)
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While there is one response of one student who ask one question. After teacher read the sentence in English and that student immediatly said "*Apa itu?*" Because he is not familiar with the words. So in this case a response is not always about students give an aswer but also can be give a question back to the teacher because of their curiosity.

Student(s):	Air...(some of them) (R, students' response)
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Student(s):	Kemarin...(some of them) (R, students' response)
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Student(s):	Rin!(together) (R, students' answer)
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Student(s):	Air...(together) (R, students' answer)
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Student(s):	Kemarin!(together) (R, students' answer)
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Student(s):	Iya (R, students' answer)
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Student(s):	Pasti (one student said it and the rest are silence) (R, students' answer)
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From those all responses, mostly students' answer just like repeating what does the teacher said before and students still didn't understanding about the English word and sentence that has given by the teacher.

3. Teachers' feedback: In the results of the above research, the feedback given by the teacher was such as repeating the student's answer, asking for a request to continue the speech, giving praise such as good job and correcting if the student's answer was wrong.

Teacher:	Drink, apa? (F, teacher was correcting the answer and request students to repeat)
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So in this interaction teacher gives a feedback in the form of corrections to students' answer that was wrong before. Then the teacher requested students to continue what she said before.

Teacher:	Berarti Aisyah minum water yesterday... (F, teacher read the sentence as reinforcement to students)
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Teacher:	Water, what does it mean of water? (F&I, teachers' question)
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The teacher answer what does students ask in before interaction in English then she continue to ask students about the meaning of that word, that is "*water*".

Teacher:	Air... air yesterday. What does it mean of yesterday? (F&I, teacher repeated the answer and give a new question)
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Teacher:	Kemarin. Berarti apa artinya Aisyah drank water yesterday? Aisyah minum? (F&I, teacher repeated the answer and give a new question then request to continue her word)
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Teacher:	Ke...? (F, teacher requested to continue her word)
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Teacher:	Kemarin, good job! (F, repeated the answer and give a praise to students) Itu masa lalu gak? (I, teachers' question)
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Teacher:	Iya. Past... past... (F, teacher repeated the answer and requested to continue her word)
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Teacher:	Past tense! Pasti.. pasti... (F, Teacher was correcting the answer)
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DISCUSSIONS

The analysis of classroom interactions using the IRF (Initiation-Response-Feedback) model reveals several key insights into the dynamics of teacher-student communication. The study involved an English teacher and 23 students from a sixth-grade class, where interactions were recorded and analyzed to understand how the IRF model operates in practice.

From the results, it is evident that the teacher plays a crucial role in initiating dialogue through questions, which serves to engage students actively in the learning process. For instance, the teacher's questions often prompt students to respond, demonstrating the initiation phase of the IRF model. An example from the analysis shows the teacher asking, "Verb 2 nya drank, verb 1 nya apa?" which encourages students to think and respond verbally.

The responses from students indicate a tendency to repeat what the teacher has said, suggesting that while they are participating, there may be gaps in their understanding of the material. This is highlighted by instances where students respond with "Drank..." or "Kemarin!" without fully grasping the underlying concepts. This repetition can indicate a lack of deeper comprehension, which is a critical aspect of effective learning.

Feedback from the teacher is also a significant component of the interaction. The teacher provides reinforcement by repeating students' answers and offering praise for correct responses, which can help build students' confidence. However, the feedback also includes corrections when necessary, indicating an ongoing process of learning and adjustment. This feedback loop is essential for reinforcing learning and addressing misunderstandings.

Overall, the analysis underscores the importance of the IRF model in facilitating classroom discourse. It highlights how teacher initiation, student responses, and teacher feedback coalesce to create a dynamic learning environment. However, it also points to the need for teachers to encourage deeper understanding rather than mere repetition, which can enhance the effectiveness of classroom interactions.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of classroom interactions using the IRF model highlights the significant role of teacher-student communication in the learning process. The study, which involved an English teacher and 23 sixth-grade students, demonstrated that the teacher's initiation through questions effectively engages students. However, the responses from students often reflected a tendency to repeat the teacher's words rather than demonstrate a deeper understanding of the material. Teacher feedback, which included both reinforcement and corrections, plays a crucial role in guiding students' learning. Overall, while the IRF model facilitates dynamic classroom discourse, there is a need for teachers to encourage deeper comprehension among students to enhance the effectiveness of these interactions.

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