Teacher Talk Analysis in the Learning Video "Descriptive Text'' from MAS PONPES Darul Qur'an Through Sinclair and Coulthard Model

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Abstract. This study aimed to analyze teacher conversations in the "Descriptive Text" learning video from MAS Ponpes Darul Qur'an using Sinclair and Coulthard's discourse model. With a qualitative descriptive design, data were collected through video observation and transcribed to identify exchanges, movements, and actions in classroom interactions. The results show that the Initiation–Response–Follow-up (IRF) structure dominates classroom discourse, with teachers taking most of the initiative through questions, explanations, and directions, while students generally provide brief and limited responses. Teacher follow-ups are mostly evaluative, using praise and confirmation, which helps maintain motivation but does not expand student cooperation. The discussion highlights that while this teacher-centered approach ensures clarity, structure, and regularity, it also limits opportunities for students to provide longer and more creative responses. The study concludes that teacher talk has a dual role: as a facilitator of learning and as an obstacle when it is too dominant. More varied strategies, such as open-ended questions and in-depth feedback, are recommended to create a more interactive and student-centered classroom environment.

Keywords: Classroom Interaction; Descriptive Text; IRF Structure; Student-Centered Learning; Teacher Discourse.

1. BACKGROUND

Language is central to the teaching and learning process because it functions as a tool for communication, knowledge construction and interaction in the classroom. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), teacher talk becomes particularly crucial since it is often the primary source of linguistic input for students who have limited exposure to English outside the classroom. Teacher talk is not only about transmitting knowledge but also about shaping the flow of lessons, motivating students and providing opportunities for them to practice the target language (Cazden, 1988). However, many studies have shown that teacher talk often dominates classroom interaction which leads to a teacher-centered environment where students' responses are short and lack elaboration. This imbalance between teacher and student talk raises concerns about whether classroom communication truly facilitates active learning and the development of communicative competence.

Analyze how interaction unfolds in classroom settings, Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) proposed a discourse model that categorizes communication into several hierarchical units: lesson, transaction, exchange, move, and act. The most fundamental of these is the Initiation–Response–Follow-up (IRF) structure, which describes how teachers initiate discourse, students respond and teachers provide evaluation or feedback. This model is valuable because it

systematically uncovers patterns of classroom communication making it possible to see how teaching is organized and how learners participate. Yet, research has also indicated that the IRF structure can be repetitive and predictable with teachers controlling most of the initiation and evaluation while students mainly occupy the role of respondents. Such a pattern may create order and clarity but it can also reduce learners' autonomy and opportunities for critical engagement with the lesson.

In line with this, Wells (1993) highlights that while the IRF sequence ensures structured and efficient communication, it simultaneously restricts students' chances to provide extended responses or initiate exchanges. This limitation is especially important in EFL contexts such as Indonesia, where students often depend on teacher direction and rarely take initiative in interaction. Despite the wide use of Sinclair and Coulthard's model in classroom discourse studies, its application in Indonesian Islamic boarding schools (Pesantren) remains very limited, as most prior research has focused on general schools or relied heavily on FIAC analysis. This creates a gap in understanding how teacher talk operates in unique educational settings where English is taught alongside religious subjects. Therefore, this study analyzes teacher talk in the learning video of "Descriptive Text" from MAS Ponpes Darul Qur'an. By doing so, it seeks to describe the forms of teacher talk that appear in classroom interaction and to highlight their functions in guiding participation. The findings are expected to contribute both theoretically, by enriching the study of classroom discourse and practically, by offering insights for teachers to improve communication strategies that foster more active and meaningful student engagement.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Classroom Interaction

Classroom interaction can be defined as the communicative process that occurs between teachers and students during the teaching and learning activities. It is not merely the exchange of words but also includes responses, initiations, pauses, and even silence, all of which influence the dynamics of learning. Azizah (2020) points out that classroom interaction encompasses both verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication that together create the learning atmosphere. Brown (1994) describes interaction as the collaborative exchange of ideas, feelings, and thoughts between teachers and learners, which produces reciprocal effects and mutual understanding. In this sense, classroom interaction is more than just the transmission of knowledge; it is also a social process in which teachers and students work together to construct meaningful learning experiences.

Classroom interaction can take different forms depending on the roles and relationships between teachers and students. Teacher–student interaction is often the most dominant type, in which the teacher initiates by asking questions, giving directions, or explaining lessons, while students respond within a limited scope. Richards and Rodgers (2001) also highlight that communicative language teaching promotes interaction in pairs or groups as a way to enhance fluency and confidence. Therefore, these types of interaction complement one another and should be balanced to ensure that learning is both effective and engaging.

The functions of classroom interaction go beyond the delivery of content. Richards and Rodgers (2001) explain that classroom talk has an instructional function, namely to transmit knowledge and check comprehension. Jackson (1968) adds that interaction also has a managerial function, since teachers use it to control classroom behavior, organize learning activities, and manage time. Gebhard (2000) stresses its motivational function, where interaction is used to encourage learners, build confidence, and keep them engaged.To analyze how classroom interaction is structured, Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) developed a discourse model that systematically categorizes classroom communication into hierarchical levels.Understanding classroom interaction through the Sinclair and Coulthard model has significant implications for EFL pedagogy. Identifying the dominant discourse patterns helps teachers evaluate whether their communication promotes active participation or reinforces teacher-centered talk.

Teacher's Talk

Teacher talk is generally understood as the language used by teachers to facilitate classroom learning, manage interactions, and provide input for students.Yanfen and Yuqin (2010) define it as the type of language most frequently employed by teachers in the classroom to give instructions, explain activities, and check students' comprehension. Cazden (1988) similarly describes teacher talk as all the verbal language used by teachers during instruction, including directions, explanations, questions, and feedback.Teacher talk has distinctive linguistic and pragmatic characteristics that set it apart from everyday conversation. Chaudron (1988, as cited in Wang, 2014) notes that teachers often adjust their speech by speaking more slowly, pausing frequently, articulating words more clearly, and simplifying vocabulary to make input more comprehensible for learners.

The functions of teacher talk are multifaceted and extend beyond simple knowledge delivery.Walsh (2002) points out that teacher talk plays a vital role in either facilitating or constraining opportunities for student participation.Through questioning, teachers elicit responses and guide students toward constructing knowledge.Through feedback, they confirm, correct, or encourage learners.In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, teacher talk becomes particularly important because it is often the primary source of exposure students have to English.

The implications of teacher talk for teaching and learning are far-reaching. On the one hand, it contributes to managing classroom routines, ensuring clarity of instructions, and delivering comprehensible input, all of which are essential for maintaining a structured learning environment. On the other hand, when teacher talk dominates excessively, it can unintentionally silence students and reduce opportunities for them to develop communicative competence. Wells (1993) critiques the overuse of the IRF (Initiation–Response–Follow-up) structure, noting that while it provides order and structure, it often results in limited student talk.

Sinclair and Coulthard Model

The Sinclair and Coulthard model (commonly referred to as Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975) is one of the early and influential approaches in classroom discourse studies. This model refers to conversation analysis specifically applied to describe the structure of verbal interaction between teachers and students in the classroom. In this model, the conversation pattern structure consists of initiation-response-feedback (IRF), and conversation units form lesson structures such as moves, exchanges, and acts. The Sinclair and Coulthard model, in general, is used in analyzing classroom recordings to understand the teacher's speech/conversation patterns during the learning process. By using this method, the resulting analysis forms a systematic framework to identify each role from the beginning of the conversation, the responses that occur, and how feedback is given in the classroom.

The main components in the Sinclair and Coulthard model consist of several hierarchical layers. The first is the Move, which is the smallest unit in verbal communication, such as giving instructions, asking questions, or providing evaluations. Then, several moves form an Exchange, known as IRF (Initiation, Response, Feedback). The IRF concept is the core of this model and is often used to assess the extent of communication and interaction patterns of teachers in the classroom. After that, there is the unit Act, which describes how communication actions are complex, and there is the Transaction, which is one of the units that combines several exchanges within a single lesson. With these units, the Sinclair and Coulthard model

has been widely used in classroom discourse analysis, whether through video, audio recordings, or instructional videos.

Although this model is often used in classroom discourse, it is not without certain weaknesses or shortcomings. In this model, classroom discourse analysis places more emphasis on the formal structure of conversation, so the cultural context or the complex communication functions are often overlooked. In addition, this model focuses more on the interaction between the teacher and the students, giving minimal attention to peer-to-peer discussions, both in verbal and non-verbal aspects. According to Brock (1986, in Shomoossi, 2008), IRF helps teachers maintain a structured communication flow, but if it is too dominated by the teacher, students tend to be passive. Therefore, researchers need to carefully consider the use of this model in classroom discourse analysis.

Teaching Descriptive Text

Descriptive text is one of the fundamental genres taught in Indonesian senior high schools, including Madrasah Aliyah, as part of the English curriculum. The main purpose of descriptive text is to provide a detailed description of people, places, objects, or phenomena in order to create a clear and vivid image for the reader or listener. Derewianka (1990) explains that descriptive text plays a central role in language learning because it enables learners to organize their ideas coherently while also practicing the use of precise vocabulary and grammar to express meaning.A descriptive text is characterized by its generic structure, which typically includes two main parts: identification and description.The identification part introduces the subject being described, while the description elaborates on its characteristics, qualities, or features. Knapp and Watkins (2005) note that descriptive texts often rely heavily on adjectives and adverbs to create vivid images and specify details.

Teaching descriptive text in an EFL classroom is particularly important for developing both literacy and communicative competence.Students at the secondary school level often struggle to use vocabulary accurately or to arrange sentences cohesively, which makes genre-based instruction especially useful. The genre-based approach, grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), provides a structured method for teaching descriptive text through four stages: building knowledge of the field, modeling the text, joint construction, and independent construction (Hyland, 2003).

The teaching of descriptive text has several pedagogical implications in the EFL classroom. Firstly, it provides opportunities for integrated skills learning, as students practice reading, writing, speaking, and listening through descriptive activities. Secondly, it helps learners expand their vocabulary and grammar repertoire, particularly in relation to adjectives,

adverbs, and sentence structures that convey qualities and attributes. Thirdly, descriptive text encourages students to connect classroom learning with real-life experiences, as they are often asked to describe familiar people, places, or objects. Furthermore, teaching descriptive text through a genre-based approach aligns with the goals of the national curriculum in Indonesia, which emphasizes functional and communicative use of English.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter details the methodology used for the research. It describes the research design, data sources, collection methods, instruments, and analysis techniques, all of which are based on the Sinclair and Coulthard model.This research used a qualitative design because the focus was on describing and interpreting teacher-student interactions rather than using numbers or statistics. As McLaughlin et al. (2012) point out, qualitative research helps give a deeper and more complete picture of learning experiences. In this study, the design made it possible to look closely at how the teacher and students interacted in an EFL classroom shown in the learning video. It also allowed the researcher to notice details such as tone of voice, gestures and the overall flow of classroom communication.

The main data in this study came from verbal and non-verbal interactions between the teacher and students. All of these were taken from the learning video "Descriptive Text" from MAS Darul Qur'an. The video itself was the main resource and from it the researcher selected examples of teacher talk such as giving instructions, asking questions and giving feedback.

The data was collected through video observation. The researcher watched the learning video carefully and noted the moments where interaction between teacher and students happened. Special attention was given to instruction, questioning and feedback because these reflect key aspects of classroom communication. Following Chuntala (2019), observation in this way helps provide a better understanding of the classroom atmosphere and teaching style. To make sure nothing was missed, the researcher used repeated viewing and marked the exact times of important interactions.

Table 1. Observation Sheet Based on Sinclair and Coulthard Model.

Dialog	Exchange			Move			Act					
	I	Q&A	D	I	R	F	Q	E	A	Rf	Rv	Ap

The instrument used to collect the data was an observation sheet based on Sinclair and Coulthard Model. This framework was helpful to classify the teacher's speech into exchange, move and act. The Sinclair and Coulthard model served as a guide so that the data could be organized systematically. Video playback tools also supported the process making it possible to pause and replay specific parts for accuracy.

The data analysis was carried out using qualitative descriptive analysis. First, the researcher transcribed and coded teacher-student interactions observed in the video according to Sinclair and Coulthard Model. Each interaction was categorized into exchange, move and act. The analysis emphasized interpreting how these strategies contributed to classroom engagement and learning opportunities. This process ensured that the findings were not only descriptive but also connected to the theoretical framework provided by Flanders (1970) and later supported by Dagarin (2004).

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Based on the classroom discourse transcription at MAS Ponpes Darul Qur'an, teacher talk was analyzed using Sinclair and Coulthard's model, focusing on Exchanges, Moves and Acts. The analysis revealed several key findings as follows:

Exchange Structure

The data showed that the teacher consistently organized her talk into different exchange types:

   a. **Informing Exchange**

This exchange occurred when the teacher provided information or explained a concept. For example, when the teacher introduced the topic:

T: "So today we are going to learn about descriptive text. The difference is in the language features."

This utterance functions as an informing exchange, where the teacher directly transmitted knowledge to students without requiring immediate answers.

b. Question–Answer Exchange

This was the most dominant exchange in the classroom. The teacher frequently asked questions to check students' understanding, recall prior knowledge, or encourage responses. Example:

T: "What did we learn last week?" (Initiation)
S: "Simple present" (Response)
T: "Good, that's correct" (Follow-up)

This sequence demonstrates the classic IRF structure. The teacher initiated, students responded briefly, and the teacher followed up with confirmation.

c. Directive Exchange

This exchange appeared when the teacher instructed students to perform a specific action, such as:

T: "Please stand up and sing our national song."
T: "Leader, lead your friends to pray."

Directive exchanges were used to manage classroom behavior and ensure students followed the lesson activities.

Move Structure

Each exchange was further broken down into moves: Initiation (I), Response (R), and Follow-up (F).

a. Initiation (I)

The teacher took the majority of initiation moves by asking questions, introducing topics, and giving directions. Example:

T: "Do you know who he is?" (Showing Ronaldo's picture).

This initiation move was aimed at eliciting student knowledge.

b. Response (R)

Students responded to the teacher's initiations, but the responses were often short and limited. For instance:

S: "Ronaldo"

S: "Handsome"

S: "Yes, Miss"

This shows that while students actively participated, their contributions remained brief and teacher-dependent.

c. Follow-up (F)

The teacher usually followed up responses with evaluation or feedback, often in the form of praise or confirmation. Example:

T: "Good job!"

T: "That's correct."

These follow-up moves reinforced student answers but rarely expanded or extended them into longer discussions.

Act Structure

At the act level, various speech functions were identified:

a. **Questioning Act:** The teacher frequently used questions to elicit responses, e.g., "Do you like him?" or "What is the function of simple present?"

b. **Explaining Act:** Acts of explanation were found when the teacher elaborated on grammar rules or descriptive text structures. Example:

a. T: "Descriptive text has two parts: identification and description."

c. **Evaluating Act:** The teacher often evaluated student responses, such as "Correct," "Good," or "Okay."

d. **Directing Act:** The teacher used this act to manage classroom activities: "Please do the task," "Open your book," or "Lead the prayer."

e. **Agreeing Act:** In several exchanges, the teacher showed agreement with student responses, e.g., "Yes, that's right."

The classroom talk followed a highly structured pattern where the teacher initiated most of the discourse, students responded briefly, and the teacher provided follow-up. This Initiation–Response–Follow-up (IRF) cycle was repeated throughout the lesson. In the opening

stage, the teacher dominated with greetings, instructions, and warm-up activities (directive and informing exchanges). In the lesson stage, the teacher used many questions to check understanding and encourage responses (question–answer exchanges). In the presentation stage, students took on more responsibility by performing group tasks, but the teacher still guided through initiation and follow-up. In the closing stage, the teacher summarized the lesson and gave assignments, once again using informing and directive exchanges. This finding supports Sinclair and Coulthard's claim that classroom discourse is highly predictable and follows hierarchical structures.

Discussion

The analysis of classroom interaction at MAS Ponpes Darul Qur'an shows that the Initiation–Response–Follow-up (IRF) pattern dominated the discourse, in line with Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) model. The teacher initiated most exchanges by asking questions, giving directions or explaining material while students generally responded briefly. The teacher then followed up with evaluative feedback often in the form of praise or confirmation. This structure created an orderly and controlled learning atmosphere but also highlighted the teacher's central role in directing interaction. Although student participation was evident, it remained largely dependent on teacher cues with few opportunities for learners to elaborate or initiate interaction independently.

These findings confirm Wells's (1993) critique that while IRF patterns ensure structure, they also restrict students' creativity and communicative development when overused. Nevertheless, the presence of group presentations showed that students could occasionally take on the role of initiators though the teacher still guided and evaluated their contributions. Similar to Suherdi's (2010) findings on Indonesian EFL classrooms this study indicates that teacher talk continues to dominate. Therefore, while the Sinclair and Coulthard model effectively captured the structured nature of the classroom discourse, the results suggest that teachers need to balance their talk with strategies such as open-ended questioning and elaborative feedback to foster more interactive and student-centered participation.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGESSTION

Conclusion

This study analyzes teachers' conversations in the "Descriptive Text" learning video from MAS Ponpes Darul Qur'an using Sinclair and Coulthard's discourse model. Using a qualitative design with video observation, this study analyzes verbal and nonverbal interactions by

categorizing them into levels of exchange, movement, and action. Sinclair and Coulthard's framework provides a way to group teacher discourse into sequences of initiation, response, and follow-up (IRF).

Findings show that classroom conversations are dominated by an Initiation–Response–Follow-up (IRF) pattern, in which teachers often initiate interactions through questions, explanations, and commands, while students provide brief responses. Teacher feedback, usually in the form of praise, confirmation, or nonverbal communication such as smiles and gestures, maintains student engagement but does not explicitly expand their actions. The most common actions are asking questions, explaining, evaluating, and giving instructions, which shows that teacher talk functions as a means of teaching and classroom management. This discussion highlights that although this teacher-centered approach ensures clarity, structure, and order in lessons, it also limits students' opportunities to provide more in-depth responses and creativity. There are several examples of student initiatives, especially during group presentations, but teachers still maintain control through guidance and performance evaluation. This reflects the advantages and limitations of the IRF model: it provides structured classroom interaction.

Sugesstion

Teachers should always balance their dominance in classroom conversations by using open-ended questions, longer waiting times, and feedback to encourage student-centered learning. Students, on the other hand, should actively participate by asking questions, clarifying instructions, and providing responses to boost their confidence. For future research, it is recommended to apply the Sinclair and Coulthard model in different contexts, combine it with other conversation analysis frameworks, and explore the role of nonverbal communication or technology to gain a deeper understanding of teacher-student interactions.

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