Teachers' Language Use in EFL Classroom Interaction: A Qualitative Study Analysis in Indonesia Settings

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analyzed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

Original Research Article

ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the classroom language used by a teacher of English department during the learning process. Mastery of a foreign language requires persistent practice and patience among students and teachers. Therefore, languages used in the classroom have a potential to help students produced good communication in the target language. This qualitative study was conducted with 1 male teacher and 22 second grade English major students who were learning writing. Data collection was carried out by observation and interviews both the teacher and 5 sample students and it was analysed with descriptive qualitative techniques. The results showed that the classroom language generally used by the EFL teacher were categorized into several types: instructions, questions, feedback and correction, clasroom management, building rapport, explanations, transitions, and encouragement. While for students, they used language revolved around their interactions within the classroom, both with their peers and teachers. It included phrases and questions that helped them manage their learning experiences, clarify instructions, and participate actively in classroom activities. The results of the analysis are supported by the

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observation checklists regarding how situations require certain types of language goals. The use of classroom language has different objectives according to the current situation within the scope of learning. The study offers practical recommendations for EFL teachers on how to effectively use different types of language to enhance learning outcomes, such as the strategic use of questions, feedback, and encouragement.

1. INTRODUCTION

The classroom is a suitable place to carry out the teaching and learning process and is an important part of supporting teaching activities. Communication is the key to the classroom, successful teaching usually only requires half knowledge and half communication skills. Therefore teachers must be proficient in the four ways of communicating, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing, teachers must also know how to utilize the four skills effectively in the school environment. This ability is proven by the impact on the success achieved by students in their academic life, and also the success of the teacher himself [1]. Language has several functions in social society for communication, socialization, entertainment, and education. In the language classroom the function is to facilitate effective communication between teachers and students. Moreover, language is used to foster educational skills and develop students' cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains [2]. According to Hanif (2020) Communication in the classroom influences the quantity and quality of interaction between teachers and students. In learning activities, communication must occur between teachers and students. In interactions, teachers usually play an important role as information givers and students play the role of information seekers or information recipients. To achieve learning goals, teachers and students have their own strategies for carrying out communication.

English is an international language used by many countries because English plays a very important role as an international communication language for various existing sectors [3,4]. One of the aims of learning English is to help the students master English so they can communicate both orally and in writing [1]. By studying English, the students can also access the latest information, learn about the latest research, and expand their knowledge in various fields. As stated in the English language achievements in high school, English language learning is devoted to strengthening the ability to use English in six language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, viewing, writing and packaging in an integrated manner, in various types of texts. Mastery of a foreign language requires persistent practice and patience among students and teachers. Therefore, the presence of a teacher is very important for the students' progress in acquiring the language [5,6]. However, currently, there are still many problems for schools to help students become proficiency in using English. The reason why students are not able to speak English is that students think learning English is complicated [7,8] ; (Wahyudin et al., 2020; Yusnidar, 2014). Apart from that, the use of English in everyday life is still rare so students experience difficulties in learning English [7]; (Dwihartanti & Faizah, 2018; Hamidah & Yanuarmawan, 2018). When they are in junior high school, students should be directed to start communicating with teachers or friends. Apart from remembering exercise options, practising English to become fluent requires consistent practice through simple conversations both outside and inside the classroom (Hanifa, 2018; Mauliate et al., 2019; Tseng, 2014). These conversations can be broken down into classroom language used between student to teacher and vice versa teacher to student in appropriate templates.

Humans communicate in various ways, one of the most important ways is of course through language (verbal communication) and also gestures (non-verbal communication). For a long time, only language came directly to mind when we discussed human communication, while nonverbal communication was often ignored. In fact, nonverbal communication plays a very important role in the teaching and learning process in the school environment. Based on the medium, communication is divided into verbal communication and nonverbal communication, verbal communication involves the use of language while nonverbal communication is basically based on the use of expressions, gestures, actions, etc. Both forms of

communication are very important for overall transfer/understanding of content in teaching. In the learning process, verbal communication plays a much more important role in knowledge transfer (Rawat, 2016). Verbal communication is communication that uses words, whether orally or in writing. Verbal communication is most widely used in relationships between humans, to express feelings, emotions, thoughts, ideas, facts, data, and information and explain them, exchange feelings and thoughts, debate, and quarrel with each other. The important elements in verbal communication are words and language.

Learning is a formal process aimed at acquiring knowledge about a subject or skill through study, experience, and teaching. learning occurs in an educational environment and requires that when the teaching and learning process in the classroom occurs, students will remember what they have seen and heard. Teaching is guiding and facilitating students during the learning process which allows students to learn. Apart from that, teaching means every action carried out by a teacher with the aim of making learning easier for students. Learning English is important for interacting with other people in the world. Therefore, it is hoped that English language learning can be applied in schools and other institutions. Teachers should have good strategies to arouse and increase students' willingness in the teaching and learning process. The aim of using strategies is to make students more active and communicative in the classroom, especially in learning English. This strategy is used by teachers to motivate their students to dare to speak English. Teachers must stimulate students by applying good strategies when teaching. English class is a learning process that receives learning material from the teacher, so students must play an active role by carrying out activities that can support the learning process, so that the learning carried out is successful. The learning process in the classroom is a series of changes in the development of learning activities that occur in the context of the desire to obtain changes in students in the form of knowledge, skills, or attitudes and behavior carried out through interactions between students and teachers in a learning environment in the classroom. A language classroom is a specially designed area where language instruction is provided. This environment has been deliberately created to support language competency and acquisition in a methodical and planned way. Language classrooms are found in primary schools, universities, and other educational settings. They are frequently linked to instruction in foreign or second languages (Hellermann, 2008).

Classroom language can generally be said to be an expression used in classroom interactions between teachers and students. Classroom language is a routine language that is used regularly in class, such as giving instructions or praise or asking questions. (Bilash, 2011; Leona et al., 2021; Martriwati et al., 2018). Class language is used by teachers to produce good communication between teachers and students and students and other students in the process of teaching and learning English in the classroom. This emphasizes that the use of classroom language focuses on helping students to express their interactions broadly, in this case, English. The aim of the class language in this case is English to help students capture the full meaning of the language and connect it with real communication (Bella & Zainil, 2020; Hadiatmi et al., 2020; Rosa & Rozimela, 2023). If the teacher provides instructions using classroom language, students will become more familiar with these expressions in general and after that, they will use them slowly with a little practice (Hadiatmi et al., 2020; Thoyyibah et al., 2019). This means, the aim of using classroom language is to familiarize students with expressions that can be used later. There are other specific purposes for using classroom language, as follows: First, to motivate. Classroom language has the aim of motivating students to be more active during English lessons (Whitehead, 2021; Yang et al., 2022).

While there is considerable literature on language acquisition, less attention has been given to the specific dynamics of classroom language use by both teachers and students in EFL settings. This present study addresses this gap by analyzing the types of language used and their functional roles within the classroom. There is a need for detailed empirical evidence on how language functions in actual classroom settings to inform teaching practices and curriculum development. This research provides this evidence, highlighting how language is used for various educational and interpersonal purposes. The core issue in this study explores the need for a better understanding of the specific types of language used by teachers and students in Indonesian EFL classrooms. This is critical as mastery of a foreign language heavily relies on the quality of classroom interaction. This study addresses the

gap in existing research by analyzing how language functions in real classroom settings to facilitate effective communication and learning processes.

2. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative research is to understand the condition of a context by leading to the description in detail and in-depth regarding the portrait of conditions in a natural context (natural setting), about what occurs according to classroom language used by English deprtment students during their writing subject. In this study, the true nature of the problem researched is more appropriate if it is studied with a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach can reveal and understand something behind the unknown phenomenon previously. This qualitative approach can also provide complex details about elusive phenomena expressed through quantitative methods (Nugrahani, 2014). Observers or researchers in qualitative research play a very important role in the data collection process in other words, the researchers themselves are the researchers of qualitative research (Albi Anggito & Johan Setiawan, 2018). Researchers become the main tool in qualitative research. In this study, the researcher was not a participant in the learning process. This study does not use data in the form of numbers but in the form of a narrative. In this study, the researcher emphasizes the description of a phenomenon that explained the research results using narrative (Yusuf, 2017). This research is a case study because the researcher focuses on a particular case and proves the case based on theory. A case study collects in-depth, detailed, intensive, thorough, and systematic data and information about people, events, social backgrounds (social background), or groups using various methods and techniques as well as many sources (Yusuf, 2017). The place and time of the research were at the English department of Nusantara PGRI Kediri, Indonesia and was held in three meetings during the writing subject. With the sample of 1 teacher and 5 students, the data was collected through interview and documentation. Participants were included based on their voluntary consent to participate and their availability during the period of data collection, and the teacher selected for this study is a certified EFL teacher with over five years of experience in teaching English in secondary education settings in Indonesia.

Observations were carried out over a period of three months, encompassing various types of writing class sessions. This duration were to capture a wide range of interactions and instructional strategies. The observer focused on specific aspects of language use, including instructional language, feedback, classroom management, and student responses. Each observation session aimed to identify patterns in language use that facilitate or hinder effective communication and learning. Detailed notes were taken during each observation, and select sessions were audio-recorded with the consent of participants to ensure accuracy in capturing verbal exchanges. These recordings were later transcribed for detailed analysis. The observer maintained a non-intrusive presence to minimize disruption and ensure that the natural dynamics of the classroom were preserved. This approach helped in gathering authentic data reflective of genuine interactions.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

From the observation documentation, it was found that the teacher had several types of goals in the use of classroom language, namely; instructions, questions, feedback and correction, classroom management, building rapport, explanations, transitions, and encouragement. In this regard, from the results of observations and interviews, the use of classroom language related to the types that has been mentioned before was carried out and selected based on various considerations. The teacher also stated that classroom language bridges communication between him and his students to enhance comprehension and encourage participation in the classroom. It was observed in the classroom that the classroom language used by teacher and studets was mixed in Indonesian and English (source language and target language). However, In carrying out second language learning activities, the teacher had the goal of using the target language as much as possible. Sieber [9] stated that the goal of teaching is to get the highest number of class language users using target language. For this reason, teachers have the most important role in managing the class and managing the students themselves. In addition, while there is often a strong emphasis on maximizing exposure to the target language (English), integrating the first language can serve as a valuable educational tool [10]. Focusing on the goal of improving students' learning abilities, indirectly the classroom language used by the teacher also encourages students to be more competitive when learning activities were carried out. During the observation period it was

discovered that the classroom language characteristics used by teachers was to improve students' abilities that contained elements of verbal or oral reinforcement. For example, When reviewing a content material in class, one of the most frequent language used in class was dealing with daily routine. Doing this, the teacher had a goal to maximize the use of the target language and promote its use among students. For example, in the beginning of lesson, the teacher used classroom language of "greetings", "check attendance", and "give motivation". During observation, it was found that the use of classroom language for teaching was also based on several considerations of the classroom situation faced by the teacher. Due to there were some students whose English were in basic English , the source language was still used occasionally. The use of classroom language certainly supports teachers in continuing to manage the class and control student activities outside the current learning context. The detail explanation regarding the types of classroom language used by the teacher are explored in the Table 1 below.

Table 1. Categorization of classroom language used by the teacher

Type of clasroom language	Purpose	Examples
Language of instruction	This type of classroom language is used to direct students on what they need to do. It's clear and direct to ensure all students understand what is expected of them.	"Open your books to page 20," "Listen carefully," "Repeat after me."
Language of questions	Teacher uses questions not only to check comprehension but also to stimulate thinking and interaction.	"What do you think about this idea?" "Can anyone tell me the answer to question three?" "Why do you think this is the case?"
Language of feedback and corrections	This involves giving feedback on students' performance and correcting their mistakes in a way that supports learning.	"Well done, that's correct!" "Not quite, let's try that again," "Remember, we say 'she has' not 'she have'."
Language of classroom management	This language is used to maintain discipline, organize the classroom, and manage student behavior.	"Could you please speak more quietly?" "Let's all pay attention now," "Line up by the door."
Language of buildibg rapport	These are phrases and language choices aim at creating a friendly and supportive classroom environment.	"Great to see everyone today!" "I really enjoyed your presentation," "Thank you for your hard work."
Language of explanations	This language is used for explaining new concepts, language rules, or instructions in a comprehensible way.	"This tense is used to talk about future plans," "A synonym is a word that has the same or nearly the same meaning as another word."
Language of transitions	The phrases used to move smoothly from one part of the lesson to another.	"Now that we've finished with this topic, let's move on to..." "Before we start, I'd like to review..."
Language of encouragement	This language is used Motivating students to participate and continue working hard.	"You're doing really well," "Keep trying, you're almost there," "I know this is tough, but you can do it."

For students, they mostly used classroom language speech for several reasons: asking for clarification, requesting help, responding to questions, expressing inability or difficulty, seeking permission, offering suggestions or opinions, apologizing and politeness, and confirming understanding. The phrases and language that were used by these EFL students are essential to navigate the complexities of lrearning in a language that is not their first. This is effective in developing the foreign language for confidence, participation, and overall learning experience. The exploration of clasroom language used by students are further explained in Table 2 below.

The teacher's classroom language is not merely a tool for instructional delivery but a fundamental aspect of educational practice that affects students' learning experiences, moral development, communication skills, and much more. The teacher's classroom language is crucial for effective communication, human experience, moral character, and comprehensive training practice [11]. Classroom language is the primary medium through which teachers convey ideas, instructions, and feedback. Classroom techniques can alleviate communication apprehension and promote communication in ESL students [12]. Effective communication in this context ensures that students understand the lessons, feel supported in their learning processes, and are clear on expectations. Teachers who use clear, concise, and accessible language can significantly enhance understanding and engagement, making learning more effective. Classroom communication should become an important content and main style of

Table 2. categorization of classroom language used by students

Types of classroom language	Purpose	Examples
Asking for clarification	Students use the language to ensure they have understood instructions or content correctly.	"Could you please repeat that?" "What does this word mean?" "Can you explain it one more time?"
Requesting help	The language used when students struggle with an exercise or concept, they need to ask for assistance.	"I don't understand this problem, can you help me?" "Could you show me how to do this?" "I need help with this exercise."
Responding to questions	Certain phrases used by students to respond during class discussions or when called upon.	"I think the answer is..." "In my opinion,..." "Yes, I agree because..."
Expressing inability or difficulty	Language used when students are facing challenges with the learning material.	"I can't figure this out," "This is really hard for me," "I'm not sure how to answer this."
Seeking permission	Language use to ask for permission for various needs during class.	"May I go to the bathroom?" "Can I open the window?" "Is it okay if I speak in my native language?"
Offering suggestion or opinion	Language used in group work to articulte students' views	"Maybe we should try..." "What if we do it this way?" "I believe that..."
Apologizing and politeness	Language use for polite forms and apologies to maintain a respectful and cooperative classroom environment.	"Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt," "Excuse me, could you please pass the book?" "Thank you for your help."
Confirming understanding	Language used after receiving an explanation or instruction, to confirm students' understanding.	"Got it, thanks!" "Okay, I see now," "So, you mean that we should..."

teaching to boost students from maintenance learning to creative learning [13]. Likewise, Hidayati and safitri [14] found the most dominant category of classroom language used by student teachers in microteaching classes is simple instruction, accounting for 92% of the total language used.

The language used by teachers also contributes to the emotional and social climate of the classroom. The teacher creating a positive emotional atmosphere in class contributes to higher foreign language enjoyment scores for students [15]. It shapes the students' classroom experience, affecting their motivation, comfort, and sense of belonging. For instance, using inclusive language and addressing students respectfully can foster a supportive and nurturing environment. This, in turn, influences students' attitudes towards learning and their overall school experience. Teachers serve as role models, and the language they choose reflects and promotes values such as respect, integrity, and empathy. Gabrys-Barker [16] mentioned emotionality in teacher discourse, including verbal and non-verbal behaviors, contributes to appropriate interaction, classroom dynamics, and student language achievement and well-being. Moreover, by using language that is fair, encouraging, and considerate, teachers can impart these moral virtues to their students. This aspect of classroom language is crucial as it helps inculcate ethical behavior and social responsibility among students, preparing them to be conscientious members of society.

Due to, classroom language is not just about delivering content; it also involves training students in various soft skills and cognitive abilities. How a teacher phrases questions, for example, can encourage critical thinking and problem-solving. Campos and Ferreira [17] said that using questioning as a support for critical thinking in problem-solving can promote a positive evolution in students' capacity for critical interpretation, analysis, and reflection. Explicitly, Potts [18] also mentioned that asking open-ended questions and allowing sufficient time for reflection can encourage critical thinking and problem-solving. Additionally, the use of language to facilitate discussions, collaborative work, and debates plays a central role in developing students' communication skills, teamwork abilities, and intellectual agility. Furthermore, the adaptability of classroom language—to different subjects, contexts, and student needs—illustrates its role in

comprehensive training. Teachers must continually adjust their language to suit educational goals, cultural contexts, and the evolving dynamics of their classrooms. This adaptive use of language enhances teaching effectiveness and ensures that all students, regardless of their background or learning style, can benefit from the educational process [19].

This research contribute to the academic discourse by offering a nuanced categorization of the types of language used by teachers and students, which includes instructions, feedback, classroom management, and more. This categorization helps in understanding the pedagogical strategies in language teaching. The findings about how students use language for learning management and participation provide valuable insights for educators to tailor their instructional approaches to better support student engagement and learning. To enhance the credibility of the findings, several strategies were employed including prolonged engagement and triangulation. The prolonged engagement involved spending extensive time in the classroom setting, which helped in gaining an in-depth understanding of the context and the phenomena under study.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, classroom language, both from the perspectives of teachers and students, plays a pivotal role in the educational experience. For teachers, classroom language is not merely a medium for delivering content but a powerful tool that influences effective communication, shapes the human experience within the classroom, models moral character, and supports comprehensive educational practices. The types of classroom language used by teachers—ranging from instructions and feedback to management and rapport-building—underscore their integral role in facilitating not just academic learning but also in developing social skills and ethical values among students. Similarly, for students, classroom language is essential for navigating their learning environment effectively. It includes asking for clarification, seeking help, responding to questions, and expressing difficulties. These linguistic interactions are crucial for students' active participation and their overall learning process. By effectively using classroom language, students can enhance their understanding, engage more deeply with the material, and cultivate critical academic and social skills. Future research can explore similar

classroom language dynamics in different cultural or educational contexts to compare with the findings in Indonesian EFL classrooms. This might help in understanding the influence of cultural factors on language use in education. Further research also can examine how the integration of technology in EFL classrooms affects language use and learning. This is particularly relevant given the increasing use of digital tools in education.

CONSENT

As per international standards or university standards, Participants' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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Peer-review history:
The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/116835