
A Study on Teacher Talk Used to Male and Female Indonesian EFL Students

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine how female teachers interacted with their male and female students in the classroom and to provide examples of how various patterns of classroom interaction could be used. The research method used in this research was qualitative-case study. Techniques of collecting data used in this research were observation, interview and video recording. In analyzing the data, the researcher applied three steps namely data display, data reductions, and data conclusion. The findings of this study revealed that: the teacher preferred to utilize particular patterns of the teacher talk to her male and female students, such as the use of praising or encouraging category that the teacher applied towards male students in order to encourage them during the lesson; the asking question category was the most dominant the teacher used towards the female students through call out students' name and ask the questions that related to the topic lesson, meanwhile the males was called out their name and was asked the simple question.

Keywords: *pedagogical process, private schools in Indonesia, English teaching*

INTRODUCTION

Teacher talk is the method through which teachers engage the majority of the class time with language they have chosen. In addition to teacher's talk, there is a speech modification that can result in a distinctive style of discourse (Richard, 1996). Teacher talk is often used in EFL classrooms and is the subject of this study because it is so prevalent. The interactions in a classroom are also impacted by the amount and type of attention teachers provide to both male and female students. It turns out that there are considerable disparities between how teachers provide their talks to male and female students suggests that both are likely to respond to comments made by boys with praise and correction, but only with acknowledgement. Examining gender in language classrooms, particularly in regards to unequal teacher treatment, has become interesting. In her research at a Finnish university, Männynsalo (2008) found that while there were disparities in teachers' responses depending on the gender of the students, the outcomes were not as dissimilar as was expected. The tone of the teacher's feedback was more critical for boys than for girls, who

received a more shielded response. Girls received greater help from the teacher despite the fact that the teacher spoke with boys more and spent more time with them. Boys' dominant personalities allowed them to talk to the teacher for longer periods of time since they were permitted to call out the answer when the teacher was speaking with the girls (Männynsalo, 2008, p. 76). According to Wati (2018), there were differences language attitude towards English between male and female undergraduate students because of their own characteristics. Based on the phenomenon, the teacher unintentionally treated boys and girls differently and did little to help girls with their submissive attitudes.

This research will consider the ways of talking, especially the direct and indirect influence category used by the teacher to male and female students in EFL classroom interaction. This study aims to explore how the teacher provides her talk to male and female students in an English class of an Islamic junior high school in Indonesia, drawing on the concepts of ideal classroom interaction with a balanced proportion of teacher talk and the problems raised from the differences the teacher talks to male and female students. Based on the result of the preliminary observation that has been conducted by the researcher, the teacher uses more certain categories of teacher talk to male students than female students. Therefore, this study wants to further explore the teacher talk categories used by the teacher with male and female students.

However, once they underachieve, boys will face much tougher criticism. According to Dee (2006), teachers treat males and females differently in the classroom. For instance, some controversial research based on classroom observations. Hence the research question of this study is How does the teacher talk to her male and female students in EFL classroom? In line with the research question above, the purpose or aim of this research is to explore the way a teacher talks to her male and female students in an EFL classroom.

METHOD

This research design which the researcher takes was qualitative study. In addition, this research will apply a case study approach. Creswell & Poth (2018) support that the decision to choose a specific case to be described and explored represents the initial procedure in case study research. The researcher explored in considerable detail how the teacher talks with her male and female students in the naturally occurring classroom teaching process by using observation, interview, and video recording.

This research was conducted at a private Islamic Junior High School Tasikmalaya in EFL setting. The phenomenon that forms the background in this study involved a female teacher who will teach English to a class was known as a mixed-gender class. The researcher collected the whole main data of the teacher's talk to her male and female students in an EFL classroom through observation. Data on the type of teacher talk gathered using an observation sheet. This observation did last for approximately 60 minutes according to class hours at school. According to Baker (2006), the amount of time spent in the field is one of the distinctive aspects of observation.

Naturally, the length of time depends on the research issue and the researcher's role. Proportions of teacher talk categories were used in the classroom. In order to calculate the percentage, Chambliss and Schutt (2013) propose dividing the frequency of cases in a given category by the total number of cases questions related to the teacher talk with her male and female students in the class. According to Creswell (2012), an interview provides the researcher with additional chances to learn specific details that cannot be learned from observation. The questions asked to the teacher were also adapted from (Hai & Bee, 2006, p. 118) with some adjustments to suit the needs of this research. In addition to the two instruments above, the researcher also used video recording when the teacher conducts learning in class with students to better support the findings in this research. Video recording gives the investigator the ability to record and replay the audio and visual details of an event. In this section, the researcher discussed data analysis techniques after gathering data through observation and interviews. Data analysis can be divided into three parts, according to Miles and Huberman (1994): data display, data reduction, and conclusion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The first step to analyze the way the teacher talks to her male and female students was transcribing the interaction from recorded-video, then classifying into seven categories of Flanders Interaction Analysis Category (FIAC) System. After transcribing and coding into the aforementioned categories (it can be seen in Appendix 4 & 5), the next step was calculating the total amount and percentage of each category. Despite using a qualitative research approach, the researcher was also required to utilize some basic statistics to determine how many and what proportion of teacher talk categories were used in the classroom. In order to calculate the percentage, Chambliss and Schutt (2013) propose dividing the frequency of cases in a given

category by the total number of cases and multiplying the outcome by 100. The following is the equation.

$$P = \frac{f}{N} \times 100$$

Where:

P = Percentage of the category being calculated

f = The frequency of the category being calculated

N = The total number amount of cases

The class consists of a female teacher and 10 students; 6 of them are girls. Although the researcher observed two meetings in her classroom. The results of all dimensions of the way the teacher talks to male students could be seen in the summary Table 1.

Table 1
Percentages of Teacher Talk to Male & Female Students

Category	Males	Females
1. Accepting Feeling	0%	4%
2. Praising / Motivating	37.04%	14.40%
3. Accepting Students' Idea	16.70%	17%
4. Asking Questions	24.70%	37.3%
5. Lecturing	9.25%	8.40%
6. Giving Directions	11.10%	19%
7. Criticizing / Justifying Authority	1.22%	0%

Teacher Talk to Male Students

Table 1 showed that 'praising or motivating' was the most dominant category of teacher talk applied by the teacher towards her male students in classroom interaction with 60 occurrences (37%). In the context of motivating or encouraging male students to be more active in participating in the classroom, this category was used by the teacher. This is due to the fact that male students

are more likely to be inactive and lack enthusiasm for learning activities. However, the researcher found that the teacher also gave applause to male students only as an additional appreciation, then there were encouragement/motivation sentences for male students, as in the instance below (T refers to teacher, MS refers to male student).

Excerpt 1

T: *Kalau If penggunaannya gimana, Gyas? Masih inget gak? Coba dong kasih satu contoh dari penggunaan If.* [Do you still remember the use of If, Gyas?

Please give an example!]

MS 1: *Gak bisa, Miss.* [I cannot do it, Miss]

T: Ah, ayo! You can do it.

MS 1: If I have much money, I will buy the jacket.

T: Good job! Thank you, Gyas.

Excerpt 1 shows the teacher's strategy in encouraging her male student in order that he could do his best to respond to the teacher's questions first, so that the male students could provide the answer well. Alannisa (2018) stated that praise or motivation are necessary to increase their motivation for the instruction.

The second most common category utilized by teachers is the application of the asking questions category. It was used by the teacher towards male students with 40 occurrences (24.7%). Just that the overall proportion of female students is still higher. It has been discovered that there are variations in the contexts in which inquiries are used in this category. Boys tend to get simple questions that begin with calling their names. As was done by the teacher in using the category to her male students in the classroom, as in the illustration below.

Excerpt 2

T: Arkan, any questions so far?

MS 2: No

The researcher discovered that the teacher purposefully asked questions and expected student responses. Instead of one-sided communication, it was done to develop two-sided communication. It was found that accepting and using students' ideas is included in the teacher talk category which is quite widely used by the teacher. It is remarkable that the teacher could

apply this category to both male and female students. According to the findings of the observations, the teacher was more receptive to the ideas of male students on the first day than female students on the second day.

Excerpt 3

T: *Tadi gimana kalimatnya?* [What was your sentence?]

MS 3: You should not talk while eating.

Teacher: “Ok, boleh, atau bisa juga ‘You should not talk if there is food in your Mouth’.” [Ok, fine. It could be ‘You should not talk if there is food in your Mouth’]

It was followed by the other categories of teacher talk which was used by the teacher. However, there was a category that is only used by teachers to male students, namely criticizing or justifying authority. This category had 2 occurrences (1.2%). The researcher discovered that this category was used when the teacher criticized the student for behaving inappropriately. The criticizing type was employed when the teacher criticized the male student’s inappropriate behavior. The example is as follows.

Excerpt 4

T: “Boys, kalau masih mau ngobrol sini gantian pindah ke depan, biar Bunda yang duduk di belakang. Tolong jangan ngobrol terus, biar gak mengganggu yang lain.” [Boys, if you still want to talk with your friends, please move here! Let me sit in your seat. Please don't keep talking, so you don't disturb others.]

(see Appendix 5)

Teacher Talk to Female Students

The most dominant category of teacher talk used to female students was ‘asking questions’ with 75 occurrences (37.3%). Teacher asked the questions that related to the topic lesson to females and the process of asking questions started by calling the names of students one by one whether the teacher asked students specifically. According to Wirza and Sholihah (2019), the question asked about things related to the teaching materials was called instructional questions.

Excerpt 5

T: Alma, what is the difference between If and When?

The use of question type such as Excerpt 5 is carried out with quite a lot of frequency so that the researcher concludes that the topic of discussion can be given by the teacher effectively. Brown (2010) stated in order to promote students' cognitive abilities, questions are employed. The exclamation points and the teacher's indication that she is asking a question as she waits for the pupils' responses set this group apart. It is not a question, but rather a prompt when a teacher continuously asks a question to encourage students to provide the right response.

The next one is 'praising or motivating'. This category was used by the teacher towards female students with 29 occurrences (14.4%). As was done by the teacher in using the category to her male and female students in the classroom, she more often used words of appreciation such as "Okay" "Good job!" "Nice" "Thank you". The use of these words she used for all students who are participating in the classroom. This type of talk tends to be meant to help students become more interested in the topic being studied by providing them with positive reinforcement and rewards.

The other types of teacher talk that the teacher employed came after that. There was one category, accepting feeling, that was only applied by teachers to female students. There were 8 instances of this category (4%). This type is included in the least used by the teacher. From the data it was found that this type occurs because the teacher feels that students deserve to express their feelings about what they face during the learning process. However, the teacher only applied this type for female students. At the time of learning on both day 1 and 2, accepting feelings did not occur for her male students.

Excerpt 6

FS 2: "*Bunda, ini tugasnya susah.* [Miss, the exercises are difficult.]

T: "*Susah? Bisa kok. ini kan tadi udah Bunda kasih contohnya.*" [Is it difficult? You can do it. I have just provided you with examples.]

In order to strengthen data about the types of teacher talk to male and female students that occur in the classroom, the researcher conducted interviews with the teacher as the subject of this study. The questions asked relate to the types of teacher talk used when teaching and how she can apply it to male and female students. The teacher's answer is as follows.

IE1: *“Actually, there is no special consideration for accepting the students’ feeling, it just goes on. I usually give directions and of course also provide support with positive words so that the student can answer the question calmly and correctly”.*

The teacher also claimed that in addition to trying to accept students' feelings, the teacher should not corner students if they experience difficulties in learning in the classroom, therefore the teacher can give positive words so they do not feel down. As with the use of the most widely used, the teacher talk category was ‘praising/motivating’. The teacher believes that giving the praising/motivating words increase their enthusiasm and confidence when answering questions and doing other activities in the classroom. Therefore, she tried to be able to do it equally for her female and male students. However, it turned out that from the observations it was found that she used this category more with male students.

IE2: *“At that time, male students looked a little less active than female students, so to revive their enthusiasm for learning they had to include praising/motivating their students, when students answered whether they were right or wrong they should always be given praise.”*

Besides that, the teacher used the accept/utilize students' ideas category to help them be more confident in participating in class, such as repeating student answers and then giving appreciation if they are right but if they are wrong the teacher corrects them. Other things about the category of accepting students' ideas can be concluded as follows.

IE3: *“There is no specific standard for accepting ideas from students, there is no gender distinction either for accepting student ideas, all are the same.”*

IE3 showed that the teacher tried not to discriminate in the way she interacted to male and female students in the classroom. The same thing happened in the asking question category, in this interview, she always tried to stay balanced in applying this category. Although, based on the results of observations, asking questions was the most dominant category used for female students.

IE4: *“Female students who were more active at that time and made it easier*

to ask questions and answers too so that the time spent learning was effective.”

Further verification was created in accordance with the data already provided in order to reach the conclusions. The researcher then used the findings to reach conclusions, which served to validate the research. Even though this initial conclusion was made, there is the possibility that it might have changed if more facts are discovered.

The most used type of teacher talk was praising/motivating. The teacher frequently encouraged and praised the students. The researcher discovered that the teacher applied the motivational type for male students and the appreciation type for all students. The use of this type was based on the activeness of students when participating in class, as evidenced in the interview, the teacher motivated more her male students because at that time they were less active than female students. Nasir, et al., (2019) also claimed it appeared that the teachers would give compliment or encourage students when they responded to their questions.

The teacher provided context for this category to her male student in order to motivate them and increase their ability of participation in the classroom and after that she supplied the appreciation words to the male student. The researcher concluded from observational data and interviews that male students need more motivation from the teacher which could be seen through their less participation. In a similar way, Alannisa (2018) also stated male students occasionally require more motivation through the rewards. Moreover, the teacher also applied the rewarding words. This type of talk is typically intended to facilitate the way students become more interested in the topic being studied by providing them with positive reinforcement and rewards.

Asking questions proved to be the second-most prevalent type of talk used by the teacher. The researcher discovered that the teacher intentionally expected female students to provide the answers to the questions she asked in this category. The teacher checked the female student' comprehension of the English term. In order to properly build the learning run, the teacher frequently called students by name and asked specific questions of them. The researcher discovered that while she asked more questions about learning topics to female students than to male students, she asked more straightforward or close questions to male students. She attempted to equalize the engagement in the classroom by asking them more questions than the male students.

According to Nasir et al., (2019) this type of talk is usual, when the teacher asks a few questions about the subject matter in an effort to gather responses from the students.

Based on the observations and interviews, the researcher interpreted that the teacher was tempted to ask questions on the topic of the lesson to female students since they were more engaged in the learning process, this is carried out in a determination to maximize the significance of time spent learning. She additionally reached the decision to offer straightforward questions in an effort to encourage the involvement of male students.

Based on the findings, the researcher summarized that the teacher accepted the students' ideas when they were given an order to make a sentence. She had developed students' ideas by generating their ideas into her own words. This type is recognized to improve the confidence of learners and provide a more interactive classroom.

In this category, the students' ideas were respected more than the teacher's feelings (Hai & Bee, 2006). Therefore, if a student offers suggestions, the teacher may summarize in his or her own words or style. Additionally, he or she can expand upon, strengthen, or further develop the concepts or suggestions provided by the student. Nasir, et al. (2019) stated in addition to showing acceptance verbally, she might also show acceptance nonverbally by nodding or smiling in response to their comments, reactions, or ideas. She would therefore frown or shake her head or finger to indicate her disapproval.

In order for the students to comply with the teacher's instructions, directives, or orders, the teacher had to provide them. Teacher provided instructions when she asked students to do projects or activities and answer the questions. When giving instructions, the teacher alternates between interacting with the male and female students, such as asking female students to read their assignments which are then continued by male students.

In the teacher's allocation of this category, the researcher discovered a specific pattern. When students appear not to be paying attention in the lesson, the teacher frequently offer them instructions. This was supported by one of her statements, in which she took the initiative to confront students who were chattering in class in order to refocus their attention on the lesson at hand.

The lecturing is essential in order for the students to understand the material being studied and not become perplexed about what was truly being learnt. The data showed that the teacher's way of lecturing male and female students was almost the same because what she said was that she was not treated differently in delivering material in class.

The student's complaints about the exercise being too challenging was accepted by the teacher. Teacher then reassured by accepting her feelings and encouraging her to attempt before claiming it was difficult to do by herself. The results of the interview, the researcher concluded that the teacher did not purposely use this category for students based on gender, she did so because the circumstances at the moment demanded that she accept the feeling of her female student. According to Putri (2014), a teacher may establish a safe environment for learning by accepting her students' feelings. She showed this willingness to accept by providing students in the class with possibilities and chances to conduct or say something in front of the entire class. The teacher also established rules and behavior through the use of her power. This type was only used by the teacher when she felt that the students were noisy in the class, out of control, needed attention, or when she was critical of their responses to her questions.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to explore the way the teacher talks to her male students and women in the EFL classroom. The results showed the teacher frequently employs several kinds of patterns, such as praising or motivating and asking questions. The teacher preferred to use praising or motivating towards her male students through expressions of encouragement such as “*Ah, ayo!* You can do it”. She was equitable in her use of expressions of appreciation for all students’ active participation, such as “*Good job!*” “*Thank you!*”. While the dominant pattern used by the teacher towards female students is asking questions. She preferred to call out the students’ names and ask the questions that related to the topic lesson toward girls, whereas she also called out the students’ names and ask the simple questions towards boys. Moreover, the teacher only used a pattern of criticizing or justifying authority towards male students even for a short duration, and she only used a pattern of accepting feelings towards female students.

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