



Verbal Interaction in Indonesian Language Speaking Course of Higher Education: A Case Study at the University of Surakarta

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Abstract

Speaking skill plays a crucial role in student's future professional career. Classroom discourse analysis in Language Teaching and Learning in Indonesia mostly examined English Teaching and Learning as second language acquisition. Thus, the present study aimed to describe the verbal interaction that goes on inside the speaking class of the Indonesian national language for a specific purpose. The study involved a lecturer and forty students of the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Program, in the University of Surakarta (pseudonym). The data were verbal utterances delivered by the lecturer and students in the speaking course. The gathered data were explored and analyzed by employing Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System. Findings revealed that there were ten categories of verbal interaction during the speaking class which was divided into three major stages. Lecturer's talk contained accepting feelings, praising/encouraging, accepting/using ideas of students, asking questions, lecturing, giving directions, criticizing or justifying authority. Students' talks included giving responses and initiating. Lastly, the tenth is the silence phase or confusion. On the whole, verbal interaction in classroom discourse of speaking course was dominantly undertaken by students' talk, in the form of initiation (45%). Meanwhile, the lecturer positioned herself as a facilitator which was realized by a high percentage of 'giving direction (14%)' out of seven categories of teacher' talk. The verbal interaction was conducted fruitfully in the speaking course. Aligning with Harmer (1998), postulated that the high frequency of students talking time rather than teacher's (or lecturer's) talking time indicates successful teaching in language learning. It is recommended to the lecturer to encourage and give a chance for students to ask or state their ideas in the classroom.

Keywords: *Verbal Interaction; Classroom Interaction; The Indonesian Language Speaking Course; Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System (FIACS)*

Introduction

In higher education, students are prepared to have adequate knowledge and skills for their future professional careers. Language proficiency takes an essential part in gaining success. Out of four basic language skills, speaking skill is most frequently used in one's daily activities. "Speaking is the vehicle par excellence of social solidarity, of social ranking, of professional advancement and of business" (Bygate, 1987:1). Most people prefer to communicate verbally. They spend more than half of their time in a day to speak and listen while the rest for writing and reading (Alek & Ahmad, in Ngatmini, 2019). As

its basic usage, people practice their speaking skills in daily life for exchanging information, presenting, negotiating, conducting a transaction, and many others.

In Language Education and Literature Faculty, Indonesian Language and Literature Education students are obliged to take the speaking course. The course is aimed to encourage and develop students' speaking skills for a specific purpose. Students are supposed to learn it theoretically and practice it verbally in the speaking class. Thereby, verbal interaction actually happens in the classroom. Teaching-learning activities in the classroom engage the lecturer and student interactions (Joe-Kinane, 2017). The lecturer and students' interaction is necessary required in classroom activities. Interaction is an important part of the curriculum (Lier, in Ngatmini, 2019). As stated by Walsh (in Ngatmini, 2019), it is such an essential thing in the teaching-learning process.

As a facilitator, lecturers have to understand what their students need, how to encourage them to speak up and deliver their opinions confidently. Hence, the lecturer should conveniently provide students a chance to ask questions or state their ideas. In line with Harmer (1998:4) that good lecturers could minimize their involvement in teaching-learning activity divertingly encourage students to be involved. It would be realized by a high frequency of Student Talking Time (STT) rather than Teacher Talking Time (TTT). Many practice principles in teaching, such as promoting team-working, encouraging active learning, giving feedback, communicating high expectancy, appreciating diverse aptitudes can be applied by the lecturer in the classroom (Chickers & Gamson in Ngatmini, 2019). In fact, there are still plenty of students who were involved actively in the teaching-learning process. As stated by Maman (in Ngatmini, 2019) that lecturers do not involve students in the learning process. The teacher or lecturer's talk tends to actively dominate the verbal interaction in the classroom (Mardiyana *et al.*, 2018; Vivekmetakorn & Thamma, 2015; Rashidi & Rafieerad, 2010). These findings prove the previous research by Nunan (1998), postulated that 70 to 80 percent out of class time in the Language Teaching-Learning classroom was spent by teacher talk.

Many studies of classroom discourse in language teaching and learning whether abroad (Pourhaji & Sadeghi, 2021, Vivekmetakorn & Thamma, 2015; Hour & Saeideh, 2014; Rashidi & Rafieerad, 2010) or in Indonesia (Katili, *et al.*, 2021; Rido & Sari, 2018; Mardiyana, *et al.* 2018; Larasaty & Yutinih, 2018; Harahap & Emzir, 2015; Astiti, 2012) mostly examined English Language Teaching (ELT) as second language acquisition. Even though, there are several studies of classroom discourse have conducted previously in Indonesian language teaching and learning. By applying systemic functional linguistics, Andryani (2011) examined interpersonal utterances in classroom discourse to reveal the mood system, modality, and social context interpretation at senior high schools in Medan, Indonesia. Later, Handayani, *et al.* (2019) analyzed the classroom discourse in Indonesian language learning at SMAN 09 Bengkulu, Indonesia. Nevertheless, a comprehensive classroom discourse analysis in the speaking course of Indonesian national-language for a specific purpose at university has not been conducted yet.

Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories System (FIACS) was purposely designed for observing the verbal behavior of teacher/lecturer(s) and students in the classroom (Mardiyana, *et al.* 2018). Proposed and developed by Flanders (1970), the instrument contains ten categories of communication possibilities in classroom discourse. FIAC is one of the comprehensive techniques in analyzing classroom discourse systematically since it has covered all the categories, includes the lecturer and students (Martina, *et al.*, 2021). In broad outline, FIACS consists of three major stages, such as teacher's talk, students' talk and silence phase or confusion. Teacher's talk involves seven categories, namely accepting feelings, praising/encouraging, accepting/using ideas of students, asking questions, lecturing, giving directions, criticizing or justifying authority. Students' talks included giving responses and initiating. Lastly, the tenth is the silence phase or confusion.

Aligning with the afore statement, it is essential to shed some light on how verbal interaction between lecturer and students goes on inside the classroom of Indonesian national language for specific purpose speaking course. Thereby, the present paper attempts to describe the verbal interaction that happens inside the classroom of Indonesian national-language for a specific purpose speaking course at the University of Surakarta (pseudonym) by employing Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System (FIACS).

Methodology

The present paper is descriptive qualitative research since the source data of the research was the lecturer and students' utterances during the Indonesian national language speaking course inside the classroom. As stated by Creswell (2009: 4), descriptive qualitative research is exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups ascribe to the social or human problem. The lecturer and students conducted the teaching-learning activities naturally, as usually, they undertook. There was no researcher's intervention or any manipulation in the process of teaching and learning activities. The researcher acted as the key instrument who observing the classroom interaction directly as an observer without being involved in teaching-learning activities.

The data of the research were obtained through classroom observation, which involved the lecturer's talk and students' talk during the speaking course inside the classroom. In the process of gathering the data, verbal interaction of a lecturer and forty students in the Indonesian language speaking course at the University of Surakarta (pseudonym) as the location of the research was recorded. Later, the recording was being transcribed. In analyzing the data, teacher and students' utterances were decoded, identified, categorized, and analyzed dealing with ten categories of Flanders' Interaction Analysis Categories Systems (Flanders, 1970). Findings of the research were considered to draw the conclusion and suggestion or recommendation due to the objective of the research.

Results and Discussion

Findings revealed that verbal interaction goes on inside the classroom of the Indonesian language speaking course at the University of Surakarta was conducted by three major stages. First, the lecturer's talk took 39% of verbal interaction in the classroom. Second, students' talk contributed 55% of verbal interaction during the learning process. Further, 6 % of the classroom interaction was silence phase or confusion. It is depicted in the pie diagram below.

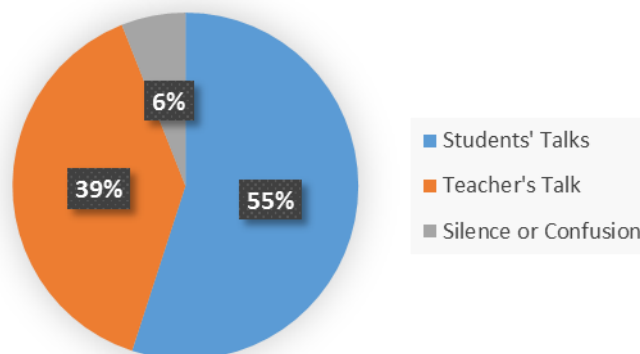


Diagram 1. The percentage of Classroom Interaction's Stages

By employing the Flanders interactions analysis category system, there were ten categories of verbal interaction during the speaking course inside the classroom. Lecturer's talk represented seven

categories of communication possibilities, namely accepting feelings, praising/encouraging, accepting/using ideas of students, asking questions, lecturing, giving directions, criticizing, or justifying authority. Students' talks included giving responses and initiating. Lastly, the tenth is the silence phase or confusion.

Starting from the highest percentage to the lowest one, teacher's talk was represented as giving directions (14%), praising/encouraging (5%), accepting/using ideas of students (5%), accepting feelings (4%), asking questions (4%), criticizing or justifying authority (4%), and lecturing (3%). Students' talks were realized by giving responses (45%) and initiating (10%) and followed by silence phase or confusion (6%). In detail, the percentage of ten categories of verbal interaction in the Indonesian language speaking course at the University of Surakarta is presented in the following diagram.

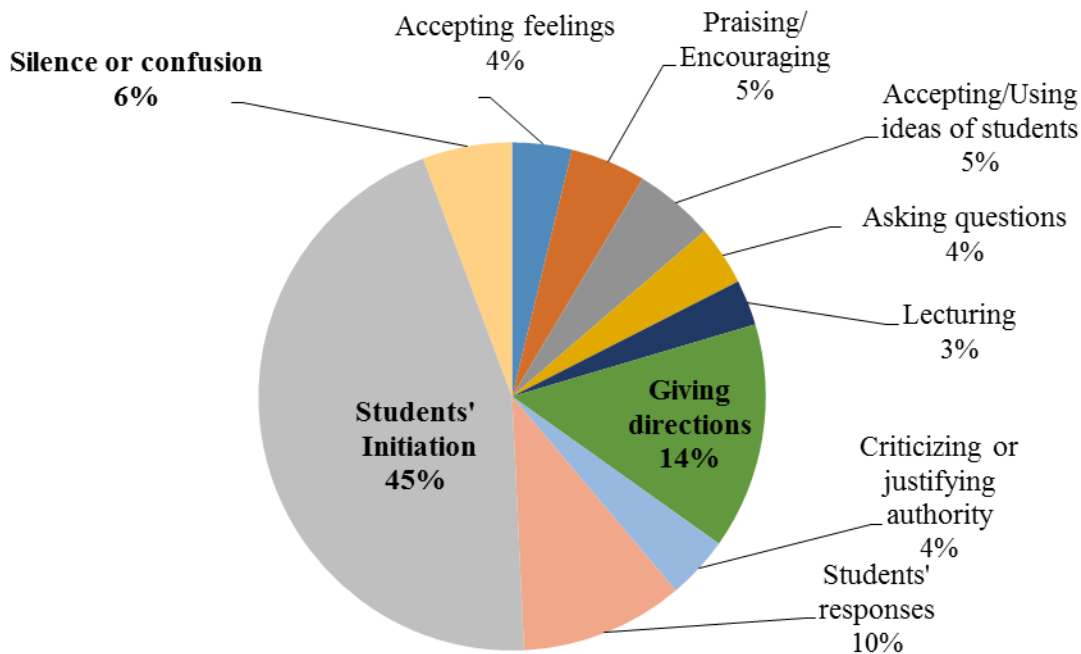


Diagram 2. The percentage of ten categories of verbal interaction in the Indonesian language speaking course at the University of Surakarta

On the whole, verbal interaction during the Indonesian language speaking course inside the classroom was dominantly undertaken by students' talk, in the form of students' initiation (45%). Meanwhile, the lecturer's talk was less dominant. Out of seven categories of teacher's talk, 'giving direction' (35,9%) was mostly accommodated by the teacher. It indicated that the lecturer positioned herself as a facilitator. The lecturer bridged the interaction among students by 'giving direction'. Verbal interaction inside the classroom was conducted fruitfully during the speaking course. Harmer (1998:4) stated that good lecturers could minimize their involvement (Teacher Talking Time) in teaching-learning activities. Divertingly, the lecturer encouraged students to be involved. It was realized by a high frequency of Student Talking Time (STT) in the classroom.

Further discussions of each category of teacher's talk, students' talk, and silence phase or confusion in the Indonesian language speaking course inside the classroom at the University of Surakarta are described subsequently in the present paper.

Lecturer's Talk

The first category of the lecturer's talk was 'accepting feelings'. It refers to the act of the lecturer in accepting students' feelings by giving a non-threatening manner. It is supposed that the students were not under pressure or not be punished when they exhibiting their feelings during the classroom interaction. Feelings may be positive or negative. One of the dialogues that represented the act of accepting feelings by the lecturer was as follows.

Excerpt 1 (D70)

Context: The lecturer was discussing the debate that has been conducted among the students.

Lecturer: *"Tapi untuk permulaan yang pertama tidak apa-apa ya, namun perlu belajar. Bisa ditutup."*
 ("For the beginning at first time, it's okay. But you need to learn. Well, this can be finished.")

Second, the lecturer's talk is represented as praising or encouraging. The lecturer praised or encouraged students' actions and behavior during the classroom interaction undertaken. It conveyed by the lecturer towards students' involvement inside the classroom. For instance, when a student answered the lecturer's question, asked a critical question to other students in the debate group, or stated their opinions and ideas towards other students' questions. In addition, the lecturer also showed her appreciation by giving applause and gave positive feedback to a group of students who presented a good debate. It is depicted in excerpt 2 below.

Excerpt 2 (D75)

Context: The lecturer gave positive encouragement towards students who performed a good debate.

Lecturer: *"Tepuk tangan ..."*
 ("Give applause...")
"Kita bandingkan dari debat yang sudah kita lakukan, hari ini semakin baik ya!"
 ("Compared to the debate we have conducted previously, today's debate is better!")

The third category of the lecturer's talk was accepting or using the ideas of students. In the teaching-learning process, the lecturer used the ideas of students in order to clarify and develop students' ideas. The lecturer added her own ideas towards student initiation. The act of accepting or using students' ideas by the lecturer was depicted in excerpt 3 below.

Excerpt 3 (D60)

Context: The lecturer accepted and used ideas of the students' answer.

1st Student : *"NIM 094. Jelaskan tentang metode berbicara!"*
 ("ID 094. Explain the method in speaking!")

2nd Student : *"Metode berbicara dibagi menjadi empat, yaitu 1) metode impromptu, jelaskan apa ndak? Metode impromptu adalah metode"*
 ("Methods in speaking are divided into four, namely impromptu method, should I explain it?.... The impromptu method is....")

- 3rd student (the moderator) : *“Bagaimana Saudara?”*
 (“How about it, brother?”)
- 1st Student : *“Ya, jelas!”*
 (“Yes, it’s clear.”)
- Lecturer : *“Jadi ada..., ada empat jenis ya, ada empat macam metode berbicara, yaitu metode impromptu, metode ektemporan, metode naskah, dan metode hafalan atau ingatan. Bagus...!”*
 (“So, there are... there are four methods in speaking, such as impromptu, extemporaneous, transcript, and memorizing or remembering. Great!”)

The fourth category of the lecturer’s talk during the Indonesian language speaking course was asking questions. The lecturer asked questions to the students about the materials discussed. In addition, the lecturer also requested students to ask questions that involved higher thinking order towards other students’ performance in the debate. Furthermore, the lecturer confirmed students’ verbal exchange (questions and responses) through confirmation checks and rhetorical questions. The following excerpt below represented the lecturer’s talk in the category of asking questions.

Excerpt 4 (D83-84)

Context: The lecturer asked students to give feedbacks or comments towards other students’ performance/presentation in front of the class.

- Lecturer : *“Ya saya beri kesempatan untuk mahasiswa dari kelas A, yang akan memberikan komentar lagi, silahkan!”*
 (“Ok, I will give you guys from class A, a chance to give comments, please!”)
- 1st student : *“Saya hanya ingin bertanya mas, simposium itu pembicaranya satu orang?”*
 (“I want to ask. Symposium, is it delivered by one person?”)
- 2nd Students (the presenter) : *“Menurut definisinya serangkaian pidato pendek.”*
 (“According to its definitions, it is a series of short speeches.”)

The fifth, lecturer’s talk was realized as lecturing. The lecturer conveyed a coherence lecturing dealing with the material discussed. Further, the lecturer gave facts and opinions about the content or procedure expression by her own ideas. In addition, the lecturer explained the material by giving examples and demonstrations of her own ideas or citing an authority other than a student. The following utterances below depicted lecturing inside the Indonesian language speaking course at the University of Surakarta (pseudonym) by the lecturer.

Excerpt 5 (D85-86)

Context: The lecturer delivered the problem which would be discussed.

- Lecturer : *“Saya sudah punya delapan sobekan kertas, ada delapan permasalahan yang biasanya kita jumpai dalam kehidupan. Ada delapan persoalan yang biasanya dihadapi ketika anda menyelenggarakan sebuah kegiatan, masing-masing kelompok mendapatkan permasalahan berbeda-beda, oke. Tugas anda adalah mencari solusi untuk permasalahan yang ada di sini”.*
 (“I have eight pieces of paper. There are eight problems we usually meet in life. There are eight problems you usually face when you organize an event. Each group will get different topics. Okay, your job is giving solutions towards the following problem.”)

“Ya sebentar, untuk penilaian yang perlu dinilai tiga aspek nggih, ada banyak sekali penilaian tapi ini saya pilihkan... (mahasiswa berisik suara dosen tidak terdengar jelas).”

(“Okay, wait a minute. For the evaluation, the aspect need to be evaluated includes three aspects. Actually, there are so many aspects could be evaluated, but I will choose” [students make a noise so that lecturer’s talk could not be heard])

The sixth category of the lecturer’s talk during the Indonesian language speaking course was giving directions. In the teaching-learning activities, the lecturer also played a role as a director. The lecturer delivered directions, commands, orders, and initiations to students. Those were expected to comply with students. Verbal interaction among students inside the classroom was built up by the lecturer’s directions. Based on classroom observation, the direction, command, and order of the lecturer are depicted the excerpt below.

Excerpt 6 (D87)

Context: The lecturer was giving directions at the beginning of the teaching-learning activities.

Lecturer : *“Teman-teman perlu diingat ya pendapat kelompok itu boleh dipertanyakan nanti setelah disampaikan.”*
 (“You all, guys. It needs to remember that the statement of the group can be questioned.”)

Excerpt 7 (D87)

Context: The lecturer was giving directions in the middle of the learning when students were conducting a debate.

Lecturer : *“Moderator boleh menegaskan kembali jawaban dari pembicara. Diidentifikasi dulu beliau bertanya terus dalam hal apa ? kalau ternyata jawaban dari pembicaranya yang mbulet-mbulet moderator boleh membantu menegaskan jawaban. Maka penting moderator mempunyai catatan kecil”.*
 (“The moderator can reaffirm the answer of the speaker. First, identify what they have questioned. Just in case, the answer of the speaker is delivered unclearly, the moderator may reaffirm the answer.”)

Seventh, the lecturer’s talk was realized by criticizing or justifying authority toward students’ performance or behavior. In the category, criticizing or justifying the authority of the lecturer is supposed to change students’ non-acceptable attitude or performance. In such a manner, the students can improve their skills. The lecturer ‘what’ and ‘why’ also come under this category. The following excerpt below represents how the lecturer criticizes or justifies authority towards students’ performance inside the classroom during the Indonesian language speaking course at the University of Surakarta (pseudonym).

Excerpt 8 (D102)

Context: The lecturer criticized students’ performance after undertaking a debate.

Lecturer : *“Jadi Anda itu tidak fokus pada materi yang Anda akan perdebatkan tetapi fokus juga pada pernyataan lawan. Kalau tadi saya melihat Anda fokus pada data yang Anda punya.”*
 (“So, you are not only focused on the content which is discussed but also be focusing on your interlocutor’s statement. I paid attention to you. You seemed only to focus on the data you have.”)

Students' Talk

The second stage that built up the verbal interaction inside the classroom of the Indonesian language speaking course at the University of Surakarta (pseudonym) was students' talk. It consists of two categories, namely responses and initiation. Out of ten categories of Flanders Interaction Categories System (FIACS), responses depicted students' involvement in the classroom. It was dealing with students' talk in response to the lecturer's talk. The short dialogue of this category is presented in the excerpt as follows.

Excerpt 9 (D107)

Context: One of the students responded lecturer's question.

- Lecturer : *"Metode apa yang paling nyaman dipilih ketika tampil di depan? Yang paling nyaman!"*
 ("What method is most comfortable to be chosen in performing a speech in public?")
- Student : *"Tanpa teks".*
 ("Without a script.")
- Lecturer : *"Tanpa teks?"*
 ("Without a script?")
- 1st Student : *"Ekstemporan."*
 "Extemporaneous".

Further, students' talk was also realized as initiation. The students' initiations realized expressing their ideas; initiating a new topic; freedom to develop opinions, and a line of thought like asking thoughtful questions; going beyond the existing structure (Arockiasamy, 2017). Students' initiation was dealing with ideas that authentically come from students. As the verbal interaction, students' initiation inside the classroom during the Indonesian language speaking course at the University of Surakarta (pseudonym) is presented as follows.

Excerpt 10 (D116)

Context: Students initiated to deliver the result of their group discussion voluntarily in front of the class.

- Lecturer : *"Ya di sini kami perwakilan dari kelompok tujuh ingin presentasikan hasil diskusi kami, dan di sini saya akan membacakan permasalahannya yaitu hal-hal apa yang dilakukan ketika audien tidak menyimak saat diskusi berlangsung"*
 ("Well. Here, we are the representation of group seven. We would like to present the result of our discussion. And, here I will deliver the problem. It is 'what will we do when the audience does not pay attention and listen during the discussion.'")

Silence or Confusion

Lastly, the tenth category of Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System (FIACS) is the silence phase or confusion. Instead of the teacher's talk and students' talk, the silence phase or confusion also took a part in classroom interaction. The silence phase refers to the situation of interlude or takes a rest when the classroom is quiet for a moment. Confusion supposed in this category refers to unintelligible communication while waiting for the upcoming information. It can be considered as the lecturer was waiting for students' response; the lecturer was preparing herself for lecturing or preparing

the media, or students attempt to understand the material that has just been discussed. Hence, the silence phase refers to various interpretations.

There was almost no silence phase during the classroom interaction of the Indonesian language speaking course at the University of Surakarta (pseudonym). On the contrary, the classroom was noisy. It happened when the lecturer asked one of the students to be a moderator. In addition, the classroom was full of unintelligible voices when the debate session would begin. It was some moments that hard to be analyzed by the researcher as an observer inside the classroom.

Conclusion

By employing Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System, verbal interactions are conducted by three stages such as teacher's talk, students' talk, and silence or confusion. On the whole, the verbal interaction during the Indonesian language speaking course inside the classroom was dominantly undertaken by students' talk, in the form of students' initiation (45%). Meanwhile, the lecturer's talk was less dominant. Out of seven categories of teacher's talk, 'giving direction' (35,9%) was mostly accommodated by the teacher. It indicated that the lecturer positioned herself as a facilitator. The classroom interaction among students was built up by teachers' directions. Thereby, the verbal interaction inside the classroom of the Indonesian language speaking course at the University of Surakarta was conducted fruitfully during the speaking course. Aligning with Harmer (1998), postulated that the high frequency of students talking time rather than teacher's talking time indicates successful teaching in language learning. It is recommended to the lecturer to encourage, and give a chance for students to ask or state their ideas in the classroom.

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