

A DISCOURSE AND PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF CLASSROOM INTERACTION IN NINTH GRADE OF SMP SUNAN AMPEL PLUS

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis interaksi kelas di kelas sembilan SMP Sunan Ampel Plus menggunakan perspektif wacana dan pragmatik. Interaksi kelas memainkan peran penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa, terutama dalam mengembangkan kompetensi komunikatif siswa. Penelitian ini berfokus pada bagaimana guru dan siswa menggunakan bahasa selama proses pengajaran dan pembelajaran. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kualitatif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas dan perekaman kegiatan pembelajaran. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa interaksi kelas didominasi oleh pembicaraan guru, sementara partisipasi siswa terbatas. Dari perspektif wacana, interaksi mengikuti pola terstruktur, terutama inisiasi-respons-umpan balik. Dari perspektif pragmatik, tindak tutur seperti bertanya, meminta, dan memberikan umpan balik sering digunakan. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa wacana dan pragmatik sangat penting dalam memahami bagaimana komunikasi terjadi di kelas.

Kata kunci: analisis wacana, pragmatik, interaksi kelas, sekolah menengah pertama

Abstract

This study to examine the communication taking place in ninth-grade classrooms at SMP Sunan Ampel Plus through the lenses of discourse and pragmatics. The interaction within the classroom significantly influences language acquisition, especially in enhancing students' ability to communicate effectively. This investigation zeroes in on the ways in which teachers and pupils employ language throughout the educational process. A qualitative descriptive approach is employed as the methodology for this research. Data was gathered by observing the classrooms and recording the teaching activities. The results indicate that teacher talk predominates in classroom interactions, with student involvement being minimal. Analyzing from a discourse standpoint, the interactions adhere to a clearly defined structure, primarily characterized by initiation, response, and feedback. From a pragmatic angle, communicative acts like questioning, requesting, and providing feedback are commonly utilized. The research concludes that both discourse analysis and pragmatics are vital for comprehending the nature of communication within the classroom.

Keywords: Discourse analysis, pragmatics, classroom interaction, junior high school

1. INTRODUCTION

Language plays a fundamental role as a medium of communication in both academic and social contexts, and in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), the development of communicative competence remains a primary goal of instruction (Malini et al., 2022; Redjeki & Muhajir, 2020; Muluk et al., 2021). Among the four language skills, speaking is often considered the most essential because it directly reflects learners' ability to

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use language meaningfully in real-life situations. In this regard, classroom interaction becomes a central element in the teaching and learning process, as it provides the space where language is actively practiced, negotiated, and developed.

Classroom interaction refers to the patterns of communication that occur between teachers and students during instructional activities. Through interaction, learners are encouraged to express ideas, respond to questions, clarify meaning, and engage in dialogue. These interactive processes are crucial for language acquisition because they create opportunities for meaningful language use and feedback (Zhang et al., 2021; He et al., 2024; Zou et al., 2023). Research in EFL contexts shows that effective classroom interaction contributes significantly to the development of students' speaking skills, confidence, and overall communicative competence (Herdina & Ningrum, 2023; Kholisoh & Linggar Bharati, 2021; Boutheina, 2025). Conversely, limited interaction may restrict learners' opportunities to practice language and hinder their progress.

Despite its importance, many EFL classrooms still rely heavily on teacher-centered approaches, where teachers dominate the discourse and students take on passive roles. In such settings, interaction is often limited to short responses rather than extended communication. This imbalance can reduce students' motivation and limit their ability to develop higher-level speaking skills. Studies on classroom writing and language challenges also indicate that learners often struggle not only with linguistic forms but with expressing ideas and participating actively in communication (Hermida, 2024; Alharbi, 2023; Vejayan & Yunus, 2022). Therefore, examining how interaction is structured and enacted in the classroom becomes essential for understanding the effectiveness of language learning practices.

To analyze classroom interaction more deeply, discourse analysis and pragmatics provide valuable theoretical frameworks. Discourse analysis focuses on how language is organized in use, particularly how utterances are connected to form meaningful communication. One widely recognized model in classroom discourse is the Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) pattern, which illustrates how teachers initiate interaction, students respond, and teachers provide feedback. While this structure helps maintain classroom order, it often reflects the dominant role of the teacher in controlling communication (Feretti & Graham, 2019; Thi & Que, 2025; Becerra-Posada et al., 2022). On the other hand, pragmatics examines how meaning is constructed in context, including the intentions behind utterances and how speakers perform actions through language. The concept of speech acts is particularly relevant in classroom settings, where teachers and students use language to ask questions, give instructions, respond, and negotiate meaning.

The integration of discourse analysis and pragmatics allows for a more comprehensive understanding of classroom interaction. While discourse analysis reveals patterns and structures of communication, pragmatics uncovers the intentions, meanings, and functions behind those interactions. This combined approach is especially important in contemporary classrooms, where communication is influenced not only by pedagogical practices but also by evolving technologies and digital tools (Azamatova et al., 2023; Dash, 2022). Recent studies highlight how the integration of artificial intelligence in language learning environments can reshape interaction patterns and influence students' engagement and performance (Ida Royani & Sihombing, 2024; Ozfidan et al., 2024). However, these developments also raise questions about maintaining authentic interaction and communicative competence.

Given these considerations, it is important to investigate how classroom interaction actually occurs in specific educational contexts. In particular, analyzing the interaction patterns and pragmatic features in junior high school classrooms can provide insights into

how students develop their communicative abilities. Therefore, this study aims to analyze classroom interaction in the ninth grade of SMP Sunan Ampel Plus by applying discourse and pragmatic perspectives. Through this analysis, the study seeks to identify interaction patterns, examine the use of speech acts, and understand how meaning is constructed in classroom communication, ultimately contributing to improving EFL teaching practices.

2. METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to explore classroom interaction in its natural setting, in line with the focus on discourse and pragmatic analysis (Tisdell et al., 2025; Sugiyono, 2021; Patton, 2020). The research was conducted in the ninth grade of SMP Sunan Ampel Plus, involving one English teacher and approximately thirty students. Data were collected through direct classroom observation, audio recordings, and field notes across three instructional sessions. Each session lasted around eighty minutes, allowing the researcher to capture authentic patterns of interaction occurring during the teaching and learning process.

The collected data were transcribed and analyzed using both discourse analysis and pragmatic frameworks (Fairclough, 2023). The analysis focused on identifying patterns of classroom interaction, particularly the Initiation–Response–Feedback (IRF) sequence, as well as examining the types and functions of speech acts produced by both the teacher and students. Through this approach, the study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how communication is structured, negotiated, and interpreted within the classroom context.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

3.1 Observation Overview

Based on classroom observations conducted over three meetings, the teaching and learning activities generally consisted of teacher explanations, question-and-answer sessions, and short individual or group exercises. The teacher played a dominant role in directing the flow of the lesson, including explaining materials, asking questions, and managing classroom activities. Students participated in the interaction primarily when prompted by the teacher rather than initiating communication independently. The overall classroom environment reflected a structured and teacher-led interaction pattern, where opportunities for spontaneous student contribution were relatively limited.

3.2 Discourse Patterns

The discourse analysis revealed that the Initiation–Response–Feedback (IRF) pattern was the most dominant interaction structure observed in the classroom. This pattern consistently appeared throughout the teaching sessions, indicating that the teacher controlled the progression of communication. For instance, in one interaction, the teacher asked, “*What is the main idea of the text?*”, followed by a student’s brief response, “*About holiday,*” and concluded with the teacher’s evaluative feedback, “*Yes, good.*” Similarly, in another interaction, the teacher instructed a student to read a paragraph, after which the teacher provided feedback on pronunciation. These examples illustrate that classroom discourse was largely structured around teacher initiation, brief student responses, and immediate evaluation. Such patterns suggest that interaction was primarily transactional rather than dialogic, with limited expansion of student responses or deeper discussion.

3.3 Pragmatic Analysis (Speech Acts)

From a pragmatic perspective, several types of speech acts were identified in the classroom interaction. Directive speech acts were predominantly used by the teacher to manage classroom behavior and guide activities, such as instructing students to open their books or pay attention. Interrogative speech acts were also frequently employed, mainly to check students' understanding and elicit responses, for example through questions like "*Do you understand?*" or "*What is the meaning?*" In addition, evaluative speech acts were commonly used to provide feedback, often in the form of brief affirmations such as "*Good job*" or "*That is correct.*" In contrast, students' speech acts were largely limited to responding to teacher questions. Instances of students initiating questions or engaging in extended interaction were rare, indicating a restricted range of pragmatic functions in student participation.

3.4 Student Participation

The level of student participation observed in the classroom was relatively limited and reactive in nature. Most students responded only when they were directly addressed by the teacher, and very few took the initiative to contribute voluntarily. Student responses were generally short and focused on providing minimal answers rather than elaborating on ideas. This pattern suggests that while students were involved in classroom interaction, their role was primarily passive, with limited opportunities to engage in meaningful or extended communication. The findings indicate that the interactional structure of the classroom may constrain students' communicative development, particularly in terms of confidence, fluency, and the ability to actively participate in discourse.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that classroom interaction in the ninth grade of SMP Sunan Ampel Plus is predominantly structured through a teacher-centered pattern, particularly reflected in the frequent use of the Initiation–Response–Feedback (IRF) sequence. This pattern suggests that the teacher maintains control over the flow of communication, while students are positioned mainly as responders rather than active contributors. Such a structure is commonly found in EFL classrooms, where teachers rely on questioning strategies to manage instruction; however, it often limits opportunities for extended student talk and deeper engagement with the language. This supports the view that while IRF can provide organizational clarity, it may also constrain the development of communicative competence when overused (Feretti & Graham, 2019).

From a pragmatic perspective, the dominance of directive, interrogative, and evaluative speech acts further reinforces the teacher's authoritative role in classroom discourse. The teacher's frequent use of directives and questions functions to control classroom behavior and monitor understanding, while evaluative feedback tends to be brief and confirmatory rather than elaborative. This pattern of interaction reflects a focus on accuracy and task completion rather than meaning negotiation and communicative expansion. In contrast, students' speech acts are largely limited to short responses, with minimal evidence of initiating questions or expressing ideas independently. This imbalance indicates that students are not fully engaged in the pragmatic use of language, which is essential for developing communicative competence in authentic contexts (Hågemark & Gårdenfors, 2025).

The limited participation observed among students also highlights the impact of interactional patterns on learner engagement. When students are primarily required to respond rather than initiate, their opportunities to practice speaking, develop confidence, and construct meaning collaboratively are reduced. This finding aligns with previous research showing that students in teacher-dominated classrooms often struggle to express ideas and

participate actively in communication (Hermida, 2024). As a result, classroom interaction becomes more transactional than dialogic, focusing on the exchange of information rather than the co-construction of knowledge.

In addition, the findings can be interpreted in light of broader developments in language learning, particularly the increasing role of digital tools and artificial intelligence. While this study focuses on face-to-face interaction, recent research suggests that technology-enhanced environments can provide additional opportunities for interaction, feedback, and language practice. AI-assisted learning tools have been shown to improve students' motivation and engagement when used to support writing and communication activities (Pokrivcakova, 2019). However, the effectiveness of such tools depends on how they are integrated into pedagogical practices, particularly in promoting active participation rather than passive response.

Furthermore, the results emphasize the importance of balancing teacher guidance with student-centered interaction. While teacher control is necessary for managing classroom activities, excessive dominance may limit the development of higher-order communicative skills. More interactive approaches, such as open-ended questioning, group discussion, and collaborative tasks, can encourage students to take a more active role in communication. This is consistent with research suggesting that writing and communication competencies develop more effectively in environments that promote interaction, feedback, and learner autonomy (Tridinanti et al., 2020).

Overall, this study demonstrates that classroom interaction is not merely a procedural aspect of teaching but a critical factor influencing language learning outcomes. The dominance of IRF patterns and limited student participation suggest a need for more dialogic and participatory interaction models. By integrating discourse and pragmatic awareness into teaching practices, educators can create more balanced interactional environments that support students' communicative development and active engagement in the learning process.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that classroom interaction in the ninth grade of SMP Sunan Ampel Plus is predominantly characterized by teacher-centered discourse, particularly through the frequent use of the Initiation–Response–Feedback (IRF) pattern. While this structure provides clarity and control in managing classroom activities, it tends to limit students' opportunities to engage in extended communication. From a pragmatic perspective, the dominance of directive, interrogative, and evaluative speech acts further reinforces the teacher's authority, while students' participation remains largely reactive and minimal. As a result, classroom interaction is more transactional than dialogic, which may constrain the development of students' communicative competence.

The findings of this study have several important implications for teaching practice. First, teachers need to move beyond strictly teacher-centered interaction patterns by incorporating more student-centered strategies, such as open-ended questioning, group discussions, and collaborative tasks. These approaches can encourage students to initiate communication, express ideas more freely, and engage in meaningful interaction. Second, teachers should expand the use of feedback from simple evaluation (e.g., “good” or “correct”) to more elaborative responses that support students' language development and critical thinking. Third, integrating discourse and pragmatic awareness into classroom practice can help teachers better understand how language functions in interaction and how to

create more balanced communicative environments. Additionally, the use of digital tools and AI-assisted platforms can be considered to complement classroom interaction, provided they are used to promote active engagement and not merely passive responses.

This study is limited to a small sample and a specific classroom context; therefore, future research is recommended to explore classroom interaction in a wider range of educational settings, including different grade levels, schools, and learning environments. Further studies could also employ mixed-method or quantitative approaches to examine the relationship between interaction patterns and students' speaking proficiency more systematically. In addition, future research may investigate the role of technology, particularly artificial intelligence, in shaping classroom interaction and enhancing students' communicative competence. Another important direction is to explore students' perspectives on classroom interaction to better understand their needs, challenges, and preferences in language learning. By expanding the scope and methodological approaches, future research can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how classroom interaction supports effective language learning.

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