

DOES YOUR TALK ENGAGE THE STUDENTS? THE CONTRIBUTION OF TEACHER TALK TO EFL STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT

*Apakah Bahasa Mu Menumbuhkan Keterlibatan Siswa? Kontribusi Bahasa Guru Terhadap
Keterlibatan Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris*

*Yustika Nur Fajriah, Fuad Abdul Hamied, & Wawan Gunawan
yustikanurfajri@upi.edu
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia*

ABSTRACT

Teacher talk plays a very crucial to the success of students' attainment in the classroom setting. However, the research on the contribution of teacher talk to student engagement is rare to find. Therefore, this research is an effort to scrutinize the contribution of teacher talk to students' engagement in EFL classroom. To achieve this goal, qualitative study embracing case study was employed. The data were gathered through classroom observations, of an EFL teacher and twenty Senior High School students in West Java, Indonesia. The data were then analyzed using Flanders and SMSLEFA analysis. The result revealed that questioning as the most dominant talk type used by the teacher, has activated students' affective and cognitive engagements. Therefore, it is inferred that behavioral engagement is not much triggered.

Keywords: *Teacher talk, students' engagement, SMSLEFA, Asking Question, Affective Engagement, and Cognitive Engagement.*

ABSTRAK

Teacher Talk sangat berperan penting bagi keberhasilan pembelajaran siswa di kelas. Namun, penelitian terkait kontribusi Teacher Talk pada Students' Engagement (Keterlibatan siswa) belum banyak dilakukan. Untuk itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kontribusi Teacher Talk terhadap Students' Engagement pada konteks pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Untuk mencapai tujuan tersebut, penelitian kualitatif dalam bentuk studi kasus digunakan. Data penelitian ini berasal dari observasi terhadap seorang guru bahasa Inggris dan 20 siswa di salah satu Sekolah Menengah Atas di Jawa Barat, Indonesia. Data tersebut dianalisis menggunakan SMSLEFA dan Flanders'. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa questioning (bertanya), jenis Talk yang paling sering digunakan, berkontribusi pada keterlibatan siswa dalam segi afektif dan kognitif. Dengan kata lain, dapat disimpulkan bahwa keterlibatan dalam segi behavior tidak banyak digali.

Kata Kunci : *Teacher talk, Students' Engagement, SMSLEFA, Questioning, Affective Engagement, Cognitive Engagement.*

INTRODUCTION

Students' engagement is one of the pivotal elements in achieving a successful teaching-learning process. This notion is in line with Harper & Quayle (2009) who claim that the engagement of students, as revealed by their participation in the class, could help them attain the learning outcome. More than that, the appearance of student engagement is also beneficial for showing the apparent relationship between students and the teacher (Newmann, 1992; Suherdi, 2017).

Nevertheless, numerous students are disengaged in the classroom. One of the factors causing the disengagement is students' psychological condition, involving distress, and low motivation (Baik et al, 2015). More than that, other factors causing students not to be engaged in the classroom involve the

aspects of expectations, financial condition, institutional mechanism, and processes, academic officials, and the teaching procedures (Chipchase et al, 2017).

Seeing this, one of the factors influencing students' engagement is teachers' talk. The research shows that if teachers are not capable of managing their talk, it will destruct the classroom interaction (Gharbavi & Irvani, 2014). Parallel to this finding, it is reported by Pianta, Hamre, and Allen (2012) that the failure of teacher talk management could impact students' demotivation in following the class. Xiao (2006) also confirms that one of keys to build a good class interaction is the ability of the teachers to build conducive learning environments; such as, accepting the feelings of students. Put simply, the capacity of teachers in managing the talk contributes to stimulating students' participation and engagement in the classroom setting.

Regarding this, a lot of studies have been conducted. Some of them focused on the student engagement's criteria (Michael & Lawson, 2013; Fredricks et al, 2004). Other research centered on investigating the way of teachers in managing their talk (Karabiyik, 2019; Dincer & Takkac, 2012), Maria, 2016; Rahayu, 2018; Firdaus, 2015).

From the numerous studies above, it is found that most of the studies focused on either students' engagement or teacher talk . It means that the studies discussing how teacher talk contributes to students' engagement are not much researched. Hence, this study is an endeavor to uncover the contribution of talk to the development of students' engagement in an EFL classroom.

METHODOLOGY

To attain the research purpose, case study was embraced as the research design. This study was participated by an EFL teacher and her 20 female students in an Islamic Senior High School, West Java, Indonesia. The teacher is a novice teacher with relevant teaching background; majoring in English education (S1), and has been teaching for 4 years. In addition, from 20 students, six of them were selected as the focus participants based on the level of achievement; high, mid, and low achievers. The data were obtained from classroom observation for three meetings in the stage of BKoF (Building Knowledge of Field) under Genre Based-Approach; particularly on the teacher-student interaction scripts. The data in this study were analyzed using the framework of Silverman (2006). Specifically, the teacher talk analysis framework is modified from Flanders, 1970; Crespo, 2002; Ambrosio, 2013) and SMSLEFA (Synergetic Multilayered Students' Learning Engagement Framework of Analysis) from Suherdi (2017) for students' engagement.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This finding elaborates the data concerning types of teachers' talk and students' engagement.
Teachers' Talk

Regarding types of teacher talk, seven types of teacher talk were found; involving, asking questions, giving information (lecturing), making directions, accepting feelings, making praises or encourages, accepting ideas of students.

The most dominant teacher talk utilized is asking questions. Specifically, in each meeting, the teacher usually chose displaying questions. As an example, the teacher said, "*Is she happy?*" and "*Oke disini ada lagi konflik?*". This evidence is a bridge for students to take part in the classroom. This finding is parallel to Flanders (1970); Suherdi (2017) that asking the question triggered students to understand the learnt lesson. It is also confirmed by similar findings from previous studies on teacher's talk which shows that the classroom are focused on asking the questions, and students' answer (Cullen, 2002; Xiao, 2006; Inceyay, 2010;; Jouibar & Afghari, 2015; Jing & Jing, 2018; Rezaee et al, 2012).

Another type of talk which appeared is giving information. This talk type was seen particularly when the teacher explained the concept of the digital text (e.g. *Maka disini jelas bahwa di awal cerita, penjelasam terkait background dari tokoh, setting, dan topik apa yang dibahas harus jelas*). More than that, the direction is also given to the students through the video, and then to write down what they heard about the story such, "*Ok so now please watch this video and then write down the important information of this story!*". It means that students were expected to follow some instructions from their teacher. This datum shows that the teacher should put an effort to provide clear instruction in the classroom, with the aim to keep the class rhythm.

Lined up with this evidence, it is stated that too much giving information will lead to less participation of students in classroom discussions (Karabiyik, 2019). Besides that, the teacher accepted students' feeling saying "*how are you today?*". This talk is aimed at appreciating students' feelings and as positive encouragement (Flanders, 1970). In addition, the teacher also praised students; for instance, "*Good! Independent.*", "*pinter.*", and "*Good! thank you.*" Those kinds of talk is assumed to be effective to stimulate students' confidence and participation in the class. Lined up with this, Aisyah (2016) mentions that when students feel so encouraged, they will feel comfortable. Accepting ideas is also employed by the teacher. Specifically, she repeated students' statement (Ss: "*sama.*" the teacher responded "*di kita sama yaa..*"). This kind of expression reflects the teacher's appreciation in accepting students' answer. The teacher's confirmation of students' suggestion was also identified in this study; such as the statement of "*I understand what you mean*" was uttered by the teacher when students have a request. In other words, the teacher talk occurring in the classroom varies; including, asking question, giving information, making direction, accepting feeling, making praises, and appreciating students' ideas.

Students' Engagement

The data in this study reports that there are three kinds of engagement; affective engagement, cognitive engagement, and behavioral engagement. It is revealed that the most frequent type of engagement in learning is affective engagement. As evidence, students are asked about the lesson that she held "*can you see?*" then students answered "*yes.*". This finding means that the teacher confirmed that students were engaged with her explanation, showing A2 (Comply with, follow, command, volunteer, acclaim) in SMSLEFA (see also Suherdi, 2017).

Besides that, cognitive engagement was also identified.... For instance, "*From his question apa kira-kira anda melihat..*" and then students answered, "*bingung*". This datum reflects that students have problems in understanding the material, showing that they managed to get involved and be engaged in the learning process (see Appleton et al., 2008; Suherdi, 2017).

Furthermore, behavioral engagement was also found. Peculiarly, this engagement appeared when students were instructed to do something. (e.g. students had to repeat the word such as, "*to invite.. coba apa invite ayo semua ulang invite*" and the students responded by repeating what the teacher said, "*invite*"). It means the students' action in repeating the teacher's statement is an evidence that they were behaviorally engaged. This finding belongs to P2 (Behavior) in SMSLEFA framework (Suherdi, 2017).

The Contribution of Teachers' Talk to Students' Engagement

This part explicates the discussion of the contribution of teachers' talk to students' engagement. First, the most persistent teachers' talk in this study, asking question, contributes to developing students' affective domain. For instance, when the teacher asked about the material such, "*Magic mirror is like a ghost jadi kaya?*" It means the teacher asked the students to make sure they are engaged with the lesson and then the students are answered with "*Hantuuu*" / ghosts. This situation means the students were engaged with their teacher to follow the whole of the learning process.

Lined up with the above-mentioned evidence, Kratwhol et al (1973) said that affective domain includes receiving phenomena, responding, valuing, organizing, and characterizing. Additionally, much of the research on affective has been conducted and they confirm that this engagement is assumed proper to promote students' concern and enthusiasm (Ainley, 2006). Rahayu's study (2018) also reveals that the teachers' capability in managing classroom interaction is very influential. Therefore, it is inferred that the teachers cannot ignore their capacity in determining the interaction in classroom.

Secondly, asking question also triggered the existence of students' cognitive engagement. For example, when the teacher asked this question "From his question *apa kira-kira anda melihat?*" and the students answered "*bingung*". The word "*bingung*" confirms the students' cognitive engagement (Suherdi; 2017), particularly in the aspects of remembering. It means that the students are expected to recognize the concept of the story as given by the teacher.

In addition, the contribution of teachers' talk is seen on students' behavioral engagement. For instance, the teacher said "*to invit*", *coba apa invite ayo semua ulang invite*" then the students followed and repeated what teacher said "*invite*".

Giving direction in this context of study made the students engaged in behavioral domain as imitating in specific behavior (Suherdi, 2017). Furthermore, it doesn't mean every giving direction made the students engaged in behavioral domain, it depends on what the teacher ordered because each command must be different in each situation in the learning process. In relation to this, some studies revealed that behavioral engagement centers on the involvement of academic tasks and behaviors and persistence (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Skinner & Belmont, 1993).

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research findings and discussions, it is inferred that teachers' talk has activated some engagements of students in EFL classroom. Specifically, the talks of teachers mostly have helped students to be cognitively and affectively engaged, meaning that the behavioral engagement was not much explored by the teacher's talk.

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