

THE ANALYSIS OF TEACHER TALK ON ENGLISH FOR YOUNG LEARNER CLASS

Annisa Yuliana Salam^{1*}, Muh.Taufik², Jusmaniar. N³

^{1,2,3} English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education,
Universitas Islam Makassar, Indonesia

^{1*}Corresponding author, email: annisayulss0407@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the form and characteristics of teacher talk and its influence on students' understanding and speaking skills in English learning for early childhood at Bahana Islamic School Kindergarten Makassar. A qualitative approach was used with direct observation and audio recording methods to identify teacher communication patterns during the teaching and learning process. The results showed that teachers used various communication strategies such as the use of simple language, repetition, praise, and visual aids to improve student understanding. In addition, it was found that the dominant interaction pattern was Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF), where the teacher initiates communication, students respond, and the teacher provides feedback. Strategies such as code-

switching between English and Indonesian were also used strategically to ensure student understanding. The effective use of teacher talk has been shown to create a positive learning atmosphere and support children's language development, encourage active participation, and build confidence in using English. This study concludes that teacher talk plays an important role in forming an interactive learning environment and supporting language acquisition in early childhood.

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education, especially at the kindergarten level, is a crucial phase in the cognitive, social, and emotional development of children. During this stage, children not only learn basic concepts but also how to interact with others and their environment. One important aspect of the learning experience in kindergarten is the communication between teachers and students. Effective communication can create an environment that supports language development and social skills in children. Therefore, understanding "teacher talk" the ways in which teachers communicate with their students becomes highly relevant. This includes both verbal and non-verbal strategies employed to facilitate learning and build positive relationships with students (K.pence 2019).

Emphasizing the importance of language in the learning process. Additionally, teachers play a crucial role in shaping children's attitudes towards education, as positive interactions can enhance their motivation and willingness to participate (Nunan, 1991).

Children feel supported and actively involved in the classroom, their ability to understand and use language increases significantly. Additionally, incorporating visual aids and gestures can enhance clarity, allowing children to grasp complex ideas more effectively (Tsui, 1995). The interactive nature of teacher talk also fosters collaborative learning, enabling children to learn from each other's responses and perspectives. By facilitating a dialogic environment, teachers not only deliver information but also invite students to contribute their ideas and thoughts.

Considering the well-established impact of teacher talk on language learning, cognitive development, and engagement in young learners, this research aims to explore the ins and outs of teacher talk as it happens in kindergarten classrooms. The study will look into the specific communication methods teachers use and how they affect the learning experiences of young children. For this research, teacher talk means all the verbal interactions started by the teacher, including what they say to teach, manage the classroom, and support the students to create a positive and productive learning space. By carefully looking at the patterns and purposes of teacher talk, this study hopes to give practical advice teachers helping them improve how they communicate and create a more engaging and effective setting for learning English. (Imran, M. C., and Nasaruddin. N n.d.)

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Teacher Talk

Teacher talk refers to the specific ways in which teachers communicate with their students during instructional activities. It encompasses both verbal and non- verbal communication strategies that educators use to facilitate learning, manage classroom interactions, and engage students. According to Walsh (2011), teacher talk is a critical element of classroom discourse that includes the language used by teachers to convey information, ask questions, provide feedback, and guide discussions. It plays a vital role in shaping the learning environment, influencing student comprehension, motivation, and participation.

In general, teacher talk can be categorized into several forms, such as direct instruction, questioning, feedback, and classroom management. Direct instruction involves explicit teaching where the teacher clearly explains concepts or skills. Questioning serves to engage students and assess their understanding, employing a mix of open-ended and closed questions. Feedback is essential for reinforcing learning, providing both praise and constructive criticism, while classroom management involves directives that help maintain a conducive learning atmosphere (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Effective teacher talk is characterized by clarity, engagement, adaptability, and supportiveness. Clarity involves using appropriate vocabulary and simplifying complex ideas to ensure student understanding. Engaging teacher talk actively involves students in the learning process, promoting dialogue and collaboration. Adaptability refers to adjusting communication styles based on students' needs, while a supportive tone fosters a safe environment where students feel comfortable to participate and express themselves (Tsui, 1995).

In addition, providing continuous support to students in overcoming learning challenges is also an important factor in improving the effectiveness of learning English vocabulary. Teachers can provide constructive feedback, provide additional guidance, or adjust learning approaches to suit the needs of each student. By providing the right support, students can feel more confident in facing difficulties in learning vocabulary and be more motivated to continue learning and developing. Overall, learning English vocabulary requires a holistic approach that integrates diverse learning methods, connects vocabulary to everyday contexts, and provides ongoing support to students. With a comprehensive and integrated approach like this, students can better develop their English language skills and achieve academic success.

Teacher Talk For Young Learner

In the context of young learner or kindergarten, teacher talk takes on additional characteristics tailored to the developmental needs of young learners, typically aged 5 to 6 years. For these children, teacher talk must be simple, clear, and age-appropriate. Educators often use shorter sentences and familiar vocabulary to ensure that their instructions and explanations are comprehensible. Tudge and Hogan (2005) highlight that effective teacher talk for young

children frequently includes concrete examples, gestures, and visual aids to enhance understanding.

Moreover, teacher talk in kindergarten emphasizes interactive communication. Educators employ questioning techniques that encourage children to respond and participate actively in discussions. This interaction not only helps assess children's understanding but also builds their confidence in using language (Mercer & Sams, 2006). The emotional tone of teacher talk is also crucial; a supportive and encouraging approach fosters a safe learning environment, motivating young learners to engage with the material and each other.

In summary, teacher talk is a multifaceted concept that plays a critical role in facilitating learning in both general and kindergarten contexts. For young learners, effective teacher talk involves clear communication, interactive engagement, and emotional support, all of which are essential for fostering a positive and productive learning environment. By understanding and implementing effective teacher talk strategies, educators can significantly enhance the learning experiences of young children.

The Concept of level teacher talk on English for young learner

Teacher talk refers to the language used by teachers when interacting with students in the classroom. In English language teaching, especially in EFL contexts, it serves as a primary source of language input for students. Teachers often simplify their language, repeat key vocabulary, ask questions, and provide feedback to help students understand and stay engaged. Teacher talk is not only used to deliver content but also to manage the classroom, give instructions, and create a supportive learning environment.

For young learners, teacher talk plays an even more important role. Since children's language and cognitive skills are still developing, teachers need to use simple vocabulary, clear pronunciation, expressive intonation, and visual aids like pictures or gestures to support comprehension. Consistent classroom phrases, such as greetings or routine instructions, help children become familiar with useful expressions. Additionally, interactive teacher talk—through songs, stories, and games—makes learning fun and encourages young learners to participate actively in English lessons.

METHODS

In this research, a qualitative method will be chosen for its ability to provide an in-depth understanding of *teacher talk* in English classrooms for young learners at Bahana Islamic School Makassar Kindergarten. This approach allows the researcher to explore teacher-student interactions and the social contexts influencing language learning. Data will be collected through direct observations and audio recordings to capture the communication patterns between teachers and students in detail. Data analysis will be conducted inductively, aiming to uncover new insights into the role of teacher talk in supporting the development of English Speaking skills.

This method emphasizes the richness of descriptive data, such as interview transcripts and observational notes, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. The approach also offers flexibility in adapting data collection techniques to the dynamics observed in the field, resulting in more relevant and contextual findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

In this chapter, the findings from the analysis of teacher talk in the English for young learners class at TK Bahana Islamic School Makassar are presented and discussed. The data

was collected through observation of the teaching process led by the teacher, and includes both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The purpose of this chapter is to interpret the findings, draw meaningful conclusions, and relate them to the research questions.

Teacher Talk in the Classroom

The analysis revealed that teacher talk plays a crucial role in facilitating communication in the classroom, especially for young learners. The teacher used was accessible and understandable for the children. These strategies includes the use of simplified language, repetition, and clear instructions, which are consistent with the literature on effective teacher talk for young learners.

Additionally, the teacher frequently used gesture and visual aids to support comprehension. This aligns with the concept of multimodal communication, which has been shown to enhance language learning in early childhood education. Her talk displayed several characteristics of effective language input for young learners, as identified through classroom and transcript analysis.

Simplified and Repetitive Language

The teacher consistently used simplified language and repeated key vocabulary to help students grasp meaning. For example, during a vocabulary activity, the teacher said:

“This is a cat. What is this ?”

Students : “Cat!”

Teacher : “Yes, very good. This a cat.”

This patterns or repetition is aligned with Cameron (2001), who states that “repetition is an essential feature of teacher talk in primary classrooms, helping learners internalize linguistic forms and meanings.”

The findings of this study reveal that teacher talk in an English for Young Learners (EYL) classroom plays a crucial role in shaping students' comprehension and speaking abilities. Through classroom observations and audio recordings at TK Bahana Islamic School Makassar, several key aspects of teacher talk were identified.

First, the teacher consistently employed simplified and repetitive language to support young learners' understanding. For instance, during vocabulary sessions, the teacher would repeat key phrases such as “This is a cat. What is this?” to ensure retention and clarity. This aligns with Cameron (2001), who emphasized the importance of repetition in primary education to aid internalization of language structures.

Second, praise and encouragement were frequently used as a motivational tool. Expressions like “Good job!” and “Excellent!” were often accompanied by gestures such as clapping and smiling, creating a supportive environment that boosted learners' confidence. This finding supports Nunan's (1991) view that positive reinforcement enhances student participation and motivation.

The use of visual aids and gestures further strengthened comprehension. For example, when introducing the word “banana,” the teacher used a plastic model while mimicking eating, which reflected a multimodal approach consistent with Shin (2006), who noted the effectiveness of visual and kinesthetic support in language acquisition.

Additionally, teacher talk included routine comprehension checks such as “Understand?” and “Can you do it?”, helping maintain classroom engagement and ensuring instructional clarity. Code-switching between English and Bahasa Indonesia was also observed, particularly when managing behavior or clarifying complex concepts. This strategy aligns with Cook’s (2001) argument that code-switching, when used strategically, can support learner comprehension in EFL contexts.

Interaction patterns in the classroom followed the Initiation–Response–Feedback (IRF) model, where the teacher led the dialogue, students responded, and feedback was provided. While teacher-centered interactions dominated, instances of student-initiated and peer interactions were present, especially during group activities. These moments signaled growing learner autonomy and reflect Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory, particularly the role of scaffolding in early language learning.

In summary, the results highlight that effective teacher talk—characterized by clear instructions, positive reinforcement, multimodal communication, and supportive interaction—significantly contributes to young learners’ language development. The findings confirm previous research on the importance of teacher talk in fostering a communicative and engaging classroom atmosphere, particularly for early childhood English education.

DISCUSSION

This section discusses the findings presented in the previous parts and connects them to the theoretical framework and previous studies. The analysis of teacher talk and interaction patterns in the English for Young Learners (EYL) classroom at TK Bahana Islamic School reveals several important insights into the nature of classroom communication and the role of the teacher.

Based on the results, it was found that the teacher frequently used various features of teacher talk, such as asking questions, giving instructions, giving feedback, repeating students’ responses, and using praise or encouragement. These features reflect Sinclair and Coulthard’s (1975) model of classroom discourse, particularly the Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) structure, which was the most dominant pattern in the observed classroom.

The frequent use of display questions and repetitions aligns with the findings of Cullen (1998), who stated that teacher talk in language classrooms tends to focus more on checking understanding open-ended conversation. However, in the context of young learners, such patterns are essential because they provide a clear and repetitive input that helps children acquire new vocabulary and sentence structures.

Moreover, the teacher often used code-switching between English and Bahasa Indonesia to ensure students understood instructions. This supports Cook’s (2001) view that code-switching can be a helpful pedagogical tool in bilingual or foreign language classrooms, especially with younger learners who are still developing their basic English skills.

The interaction pattern found in the classroom—especially the dominance of teacher-led interactions—are consistent with previous studies on early childhood education, where the teacher acts as the main source of language input and classroom management. As mentioned by Walsh (2006), teacher talk plays a central role in shaping the classroom environment and supporting language development in early learners.

Although student-initiated interactions and peer interactions were limited, their occurrence is noteworthy. It reflects the beginning of learner autonomy and growing confidence in using of EYL teaching. This finding aligns with Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes and scaffolding in language learning. The teacher’s role in providing support,

encouragement, and structured interaction helped students move within their zone of proximal development (ZPD).

In relation to the research objectives, the findings clearly show how teacher talk is used not only to deliver content but also to manage classroom behavior, encourage participation, and provide emotional support. The observed interaction patterns demonstrate how structured talk helps maintain student attention and promote language use in a controlled but supportive setting.

The findings of this study indicate that the use of the Spelling Bee method has a significant impact on improving students' English vocabulary mastery. The data analysis shows a marked increase in students' vocabulary test scores from the pretest to the posttest. This improvement demonstrates that engaging students in a structured and interactive spelling can enhance their vocabulary skills.

One of the key factors contributing to this improvement is the active participation required in Spelling Bee activities. Unlike traditional vocabulary learning methods that rely on passive memorization, Spelling Bee encourages students to actively engage with words by listening, recalling, and spelling them correctly. This interactive approach aligns with the findings of previous studies, such as Rantika et al. (2019), who concluded that the Spelling Bee game significantly enhances students' vocabulary mastery by making the learning process more engaging and competitive.

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of teacher guidance in ensuring the effectiveness of the Spelling Bee method. Teachers play a crucial role in selecting appropriate word lists, providing feedback, and creating a supportive learning environment. Asma (2022) emphasizes that teachers should facilitate spelling activities by incorporating visual and auditory aids to cater to diverse learning styles.

In conclusion, the findings of this study support the effectiveness of the Spelling Bee method in improving students' vocabulary mastery. The method not only enhances students' vocabulary skills but also improves spelling skills in learning English. Future research could explore the long-term effects of the Spelling Bee method on students' language proficiency and its application in different educational contexts.

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