Exploring Interaction Patterns

in EFL Teaching and Learning Context

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Abstract

This study talked about interaction patterns in EFL teaching and learning context which aims to explore types of interaction patterns implemented by the teachers, problems faced and solutions done to solve the problems. The problem in this study was formulated into three namely; 1) what types of interaction patterns do the teachers use in teaching English?, 2) What are the problems faced by teachers in applying interaction patterns in teaching English, and 3) How do the teachers solve the problems in implementing interaction patterns in teaching English?. The research in this study was in a form of qualitative descriptive research. This study conducted research toward three qualified teachers at Language Development Center of IAIN Padangsidimpuan together with the students who study English with them. The instruments used were observation and interview. This study found that there were some interaction patterns applied by the teachers in teaching English. They were *group work*, *full class interaction*, *close ended teachers questioning*, *open ended teachers questioning*, *individual work, choral responses,* and *students initiate and teachers answer*. From these interaction patterns, there are two patterns dominantly used by the teachers i.e. *group work* and *full class interaction*. Related to the problems of implementing interaction patterns, this study found that teachers got difficulty in monitoring students' group work and students' full class activity.

Keywords: Interaction, Pattern, Teaching, Learning

Introduction

There are some reasons why interaction patterns are very useful. First, interaction patterns can affect students' learning success and failure (Amin, 2015). Then, the patterns of classroom interaction can determine students' learning process as well as their achievement (Lestari, 2018). In addition, by having good interaction, students could reach communicative success through exchanging

information and sharing ideas with the teachers or among the students (Lyster, 2007). So, Interaction patterns can help students to have different types of activities to reach their learning goals. Regarding the problems about learning English, there are many students who cannot express their idea in English both written and oral form. This problem can be caused by the limited interaction between teachers and students, and students with other students. The problem related to the interaction using English classroom can be solved if teachers and students realize the importance of interaction in the classroom. According to Hardini quoted by Arumawati (2018), interaction plays beneficial roles in the classroom to develop students' communication skill and to build up students' confidence in producing languages.

Taking a close look at teaching and learning English in IAIN Padangsidimpuan, all students from all departments and faculties in the first grade are required to take English lesson at the Language Development Center of IAIN Padangsidimpuan from Monday to Friday for one and a half hours. With that condition, teachers face a difficult task: they must create a fun and enjoyable learning environment so that learning is exciting for students. Based on interview result with some teachers, it was known that teachers often faced students' laziness, students' boredom or students' difficulties in understanding English material in the classroom, therefore the lesson sometimes became passive. Then, it was also known that it was hard to get students' attention, so classroom was not communicative. To solve the problem, the teachers tried to make interaction patterns in the classroom such as asking a question to students and let them think for a while to process the question into their mind with their pairs and group members. Then, the teachers should make the class to be fun (by gaming), establish groups, call on each student, and teacher always encouraged students to speak to the teacher and to each other in the class. Thus, interaction patterns played important role in learning

This study reviews some previous research relevant to this research. Julana (2018) found there were several benefits of interaction patterns including supporting them in managing the classes, and students could work and communicate effectively in English. So, interaction patterns bring a success to teaching and encouraging students to speak English during the teaching and learning process. Then, Juniarmi (2019) conducted research about interaction patterns. The research result showed that various learning interaction is really needed to improve students' communication and activeness in learning. Through interaction, students get more chances to expose their communicative ability and understanding of the language. Interaction patterns also help teachers to motivate and encourage students to take part in building their communicative competences.

In addition, Lestari (2018) did research about interaction patterns and she found that there were some types of classroom interaction such as student – student interaction (SS), teacher – student interaction (TS), and student – teacher interaction (ST). There were some roles of teacher – student interaction (TS) like giving instruction, giving explanation, correcting mistakes, translating in L1, requesting,

displaying question, giving information, replaying words, and praising. The second, student – teacher interaction (ST), they are student response, student silence, and student confusion. The third, student – student interaction (SS), they are participations and interaction. The next study was research by Ibrahim (2012). The result of the research showed that interactional classes help students develop not only oral and communicative skills, but also sustain students self – confidence. Yet students continue to have difficulties with pronunciation and pragmatic features. The success of classroom interaction relies on the teacher's responsibility. He/she should vary the materials and teaching techniques in order to motivate learners and stimulate their interest.

Moreover, Murtiningrum (2009) also conducted research about this research topic and found that the interaction between the teachers and students was limited on the activities in the textbook. The teacher gave instructions, explained the material, and asked questions. The student interacted with the teacher by giving response to the teacher's question and giving initiation. In summary, the interaction among the students happened most of the time; both the teachers and students were aware and understood that interaction was important in English learning.

Regarding the previous related research, this research is different in terms of its data collection technique which is directed to exploring types of interaction patterns through in depth observation. The indicators of interaction patterns that are investigated are also different. This study used interaction patterns proposed by Ur (1996) while other researchers took other indicators. Then, there have been lots of research discussing about interaction patterns, yet only a few study investigated about problems faced and solution done related to its implementation. Therefore, this study explored interaction patterns as well as problems faced and solution done in its implementation.

Related to the research problems, the researcher formulates the research question as follow: (1) What types of interaction patterns do the teachers use in teaching English at Language Development Center of IAIN Padangsidimpuan? (2) What are the problems faced by teachers in applying interaction patterns in teaching English at Language Development Center of IAIN Padangsidimpuan? (3) How do the teachers solve the problems in implementing interaction patterns in teaching English at Language Development Center of IAIN Padangsidimpuan? Based on the research problem, there are three objectives of this research namely; to describe types of interaction patterns that teachers use in teaching English at Language Development Center of IAIN Padangsidimpuan, to find out the problems faced by teachers in using interaction patterns in teaching English at Language Development Center of IAIN Padangsidimpuan, and to know how the teachers solve the problems in implementing interaction patterns in teaching English at Language Development Center of IAIN Padangsidimpuan.

Method

This research was done at Language Development Center of IAIN Padangsidimpuan. This research applied qualitative type of research and implemented descriptive method in analyzing the data. This research chose 3 of

English lecturers who teach English at Language Development Center of IAIN Padangsidimpuan as participants. In this research, the researcher used observation supported by interview as data collection technique. In this research, the researcher used Miles and Huberman's theory in analyzing the data which covers data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

Results

1. Types of Interaction Patterns Used by the Teachers in Teaching English

To get the data related to this findings observation was conducted to three qualified English Teachers teaching English at Language Development Center. Here is the description of those three teachers' teaching observation.

a. Teacher 1 (AL)

This study conducted observation once in her class, and these are findings derived from the observation. The topic of the lesson was about *summer holiday* including teaching vocabulary, grammar, and reading material related to the topic. There were some types of interaction patterns implemented by the teacher in her teaching. They were:

1) Group work

Related to this type of interaction, the teachers grouped the students into 3 members and asked them to do the first task related to choose the correct word or phrases to complete the collocation.

2) Full class interaction

Related to this type of interaction, the teacher taught the students about *to be going to,* to talk about future plan. Then, she asked the students to interview their friends about their holiday in the future. The students walked around the class and did the interview. They were free to ask three of their friends and wrote the answers on their notes.

3) Teachers talk

The teachers also taught grammar about future *to be going to*. She wrote the examples on the board, and highlighted the form. She also explained how to use the concept well and correctly.

4) Choral responses

This type of interaction was very often used by the teacher in teaching. She tended to ask yes / no questions and reinforced the students to response chorally toward the questions.

5) Close ended teachers questioning

When explaining the concept of grammar, she did concept checking to make sure whether the students had understood the concept or not yet. She used close ended teachers questioning.

b. Teacher 2 (DF)

This teacher applied some types of interaction patterns in her teaching which is about *perfect day*. This topic covers some skills and discussion like speaking, reading,

and grammar. The description of interaction patterns used by the teachers in her teaching is elaborated below.

1) Group work (pair talk)

Regarding this interaction pattern, the teacher asked the students to work in pair in which the students talked to the students sitting next to them. The pairs talked about their day out activity. The students take turns asking the questions with their pairs, and wrote their answers on their notes. After that the teacher asked the students to report their notes to the students sitting next to them on another side.

2) Group work (games)

Another activity implemented by using group work was in reading skill. Here is the step applied by the teacher.

a) The students were grouped into three members.

b) The task was about finding the answers of the questions given by the teachers orally.

c) The teacher read the questions and the group had to find the answers from the texts in the book.

d) The group competed to be the faster one who would write the answer on the paper and showed it to the teacher.

3) Close ended teacher questioning

The teacher always use close ended teacher questioning in giving instructions. In other words, concept checking in form of yes/no questions are asked to make sure whether the students had understood the instructions or not yet.

4) Open ended teacher questioning

The teacher also sometimes asked the students with open ended teacher questioning interaction pattern, to make sure whether the students had understood the instructions or not.

5) Choral responses

In terms of choral responses, the students always answer the teacher's questions chorally, whether the questions are close or open ended questions. The examples of students' choral responses could be seen from students' answers from open and close ended questions in the previous paragraph.

6) Teacher talk

Related to this type of interaction patterns, the teacher explained the concept of present tense in future time clauses. Again, she did long explanation. While she explained the concept, the students listened to it seriously. She also provided written examples on the board and highlighted the forms of the clauses like the use of verbs, to be and conjunctions.

c. Teacher three (NM)

When, the observation was done, this teacher taught English about *the office* covering several English skills and component i.e. speaking, listening, grammar, and vocabulary. In her teaching, she implemented several patterns of interaction like

group work, pair work, opened and closed ended teachers questioning, self-access, choral responses, teachers talk, and full class interaction. Here is the description of those interaction patterns.

1) Group work

    The teacher applied a game called *board race*. The teacher grouped the students into five big groups consisting of five members. The group stood in line in front of the board and competed to write collocation related to *office activity*. The teacher said a verb and the students wrote a collocation using the verb. The front students started to write and the next students continued to write.

2) Group work (pair work)

    Related to this type of interaction, the teachers divided students into pairs to talk about *office activities* usually done by the office workers. The pairs must write their discussion result on their notebooks. Then, the teacher asked the students to mention the result of discussion pair by pair.

3) Teacher talk

    The teacher also applied *teacher talk* interaction pattern in her teaching related to grammar about comparing nouns or comparison. The teacher provided realia to make examples of comparison and wrote the example on the board. She highlighted the formula of comparison like the use of *more + adjective and adjective + er*.

4) Close ended teacher questioning

    The teacher always used close ended teacher questioning in giving instructions. In other words, concept checking in form of yes/no questions were asked to make sure whether the students had understood the instructions or not yet.

5) Open ended teacher questioning

    The teacher also sometimes asked the students with open ended teacher questioning interaction pattern, to make sure whether the students had understood the material or not.

6) Individual work

    The teacher also asked the students to work individually to do the exercises from the book. The exercise was about *completing the sentences with a noun or phrase related to collocation*. The teacher set the time 10 minutes, and asked the students to compare their answers with their pairs. In giving feedback, the teacher nominated pair by pair to read their answer and wrote them on the board.

7) Choral responses

    In terms of choral responses, the students always answer the teacher's questions chorally, whether the questions are close or open ended questions. The examples of students' choral responses could be seen from students' answers from open and close ended questions in the previous paragraph.

The short and clear information about types of interaction patterns used by the

three teachers is displayed in the table below.

Table 1. Types of Interaction Patterns Used in Teaching English

No	Research Respondents	Types of interaction patterns used in teaching English
1	Teacher 1	1. Group Work 2. Full Class Interaction 3. Teacher Talk 4. Choral Responses 5. Close Ended Teachers Questioning
2	Teacher 2	1. Group Work 2. Pair Work 3. Teacher Talk 4. Choral Responses 5. Close Ended Teachers Questioning 6. Open Ended Teachers Questioning
3	Teacher 3	1. Group Work 2. Pair Work 3. Teacher Talk 4. Choral Responses 5. Close Ended Teachers Questioning 6. Open Ended Teachers Questioning 7. Individual Work

2. Problems Faced by Teachers in Implementing Interaction Patterns in Teaching English

To get the data related to problems faced by the teachers in implementing those kinds of interaction patterns, observation and interview were conducted by the researcher. Here are the observation and interview results related to the data. Related to the *full class interaction* in which the teacher asked the students to walk around to interview their friends. It was seen that the teacher got difficulty in monitoring all students' speaking activity; the teacher did monitoring by walking around the classroom, met students, and listened to students' talking. However, it was observed that even though the teacher did monitoring, there were still some students who did not do the task well. The study saw a few students who made some grammatical mistakes in expressing their ideas. There were also some students who mispronounced some words, phrases, and expressions. Based on the interview with

the teacher, in line with the data from observation, it was found and known that the teacher also felt difficulty in monitoring students' speaking while doing mingling activity in full class interaction.

1. How the Teachers Solve the Problems in Implementing Interaction Patterns

From the three teachers observed, it was known that the problems happened in implementing some types of interactions like *full class interaction*, *teacher talk*, *choral response*, and *individual work*.

a. *Full class interaction*

The problems related to *full class interaction* pattern is the fact that students tended to make some grammatical and pronunciation mistakes while talking to their friends. To solve this problem, the teacher did close monitoring to listen to students' talking and gave direct correction if there were some students who made grammatical and pronunciation mistakes.

In addition, to avoid students' noise during group works and discussion, the three teachers observed always set the time to accomplish the task given. So, it was seen that during group work, all students in the group were busy doing their own task. The teachers also made sure that all students had their own task.

b. *Teacher talk*

The problems related to *teacher talk* pattern are the fact that some students did not pay attention to teacher's explanation while giving some explanation. Some students sometimes were noisy and talked to their friends next to them. To overcome this case, the teacher gave concept checking which means asking students a question at the same time explaining the material. Then, the teachers also said that they sometimes asked students to give examples from the things explained.

c. *Choral responses*

The problems about *choral response* is the fact that not all students repeated what exactly drilled by the teachers. To solve the problem, the teachers asked the students to repeat the sentences, phrases, and words one by one which means doing individual drill. This is in order to make sure that students say the sentences correctly.

d. *Individual work*

Regarding the problems of *individual work*, the teachers said that students sometimes did cheating to their friends. The students did copy paste while doing their work individually. Then, some students were noisy and talked to their friends. To deal with this case, the teachers did monitoring to make sure every student did their job honestly and correctly.

The short and brief description about the problems and solution related to interaction patterns can be known from the table below.

Table2. Problems and Solution Related to Interaction Patterns

No	Interaction Patterns	Problems	Solution
1	Full class interaction	students tended to make some grammatical and pronunciation mistakes while talking to their friends	teacher did close monitoring to listen to students' talking
2	Teacher talk	some students did not pay attention to teacher's explanation	teacher gave concept checking which means asking students a question at the same time explaining the material
3	Choral responses	not all students repeated what exactly drilled by the teachers	teachers asked the students to repeat the sentences, phrases, and words one by one
4	Individual work	students sometimes did cheating to their friends, students were noisy and talked to their friends	the teachers did monitoring to make sure every student did their job honestly and correctly

Discussion

This research finds that there are some types of interaction patterns implemented by the teachers in teaching English namely *group work, close ended teachers questioning, open ended teachers questioning, individual work, choral responses, full class interaction, students initiate and teachers answer,* and *teachers talk*. However, there is one type of interaction pattern that has never been implemented by the three teachers observed i.e. *self-access*.

Related to those types of interaction patterns, it is also seen that the three teachers apply group work and full class interaction dominantly in teaching English. By applying this interaction, the students are seen active and motivated to learn English as well as every student get chance to express their ideas during the discussion, and the students cooperate effectively with other students. This finding is in line with Juniarmi's (20019) research findings mentioning that   through interaction students get more chances to expose their communicative ability and understanding of the language. Interaction patterns also help teachers to motivate and encourage

students to take part in building their communicative competences.

In addition to types of interaction patterns dominantly applied by the teachers, *close and open ended teachers questioning* are also very often implemented in teaching English. Questioning is seen effective to reinforce students to give opinions and share knowledge during the learning process. This research sees that questioning is used as a way to brainstorm the material, to wake students' attention, and to raise students' learning interest. Then, by giving close and open ended questions to students, the teachers can know how far the students know about the material taught. Related to this finding, Svanes and Bakken (2021) say that *open questions* are seen meaningful in classroom to enhance students' dialogue and learning by giving them a chance to share their ideas.

Related to the implementation of group work and full class interaction, the teachers often face problems in monitoring students' work. Students tend to make noise and do something not related to the discussion if the teachers do not monitor the activity. This is in line with Tal's (2018) argument saying that classroom management is very important to handle students' activity in speaking class in which one of the aspects is monitoring.

In addition, problems also emerge when the teachers have long talk to explain certain concept. In other words, students cannot have good attention during teachers' long talk (Nuratika, 2018). It means that teachers should avoid giving a long talk.

Regarding the problems discussed in the previous section, there are always efforts that teachers do to avoid the emerging problems during teaching. It is seen that monitoring is the best solution to avoid problems in implementing group work and full class interaction. Then, giving close and open questions is also another way to manage students' attention during teachers' talk.

Conclusion

The conclusion is related to types of interaction patterns used in teaching English, how they are implemented, problems faced and solutions done by the teachers. Regarding types of interaction patterns, there some interaction patterns used by the teachers namely; *group work, close ended teachers questioning, open ended teachers questioning, individual work, choral responses, full class interaction, students initiate and teachers answer,* and *teachers talk*. However, there is one type of interaction pattern that has never been implemented by the three teachers observed i.e. *self-access*. It is also concluded that the three teachers apply group work and collaboration dominantly in teaching English. Related to problems faced by the teachers, this study concludes that the problems are dominantly seen in using group work and full class interaction. Related to the implementation of group work and full class interaction, the teachers often faced problems in monitoring students' work. Students tend to make noise and do something not related to the discussion if the teachers do not monitor the activity. Finally, related to solutions done to solve the problems, this study concludes monitoring is the best solution to avoid problems in implementing group work and full class interaction. Then, giving close and open

questions is also another way to manage students' attention during teachers' talk.

This study has some suggestions directed to the other researchers who will do the similar research. The suggestions are: This research is very limited in terms of its respondent's numbers, there are only three teachers observed and interviewed. This research suggests adding more respondents in order to get more data because this is qualitative research. Then, there is also a suggestion to conduct research that asks about students' perceptions on the interaction patterns used by the teachers.

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