

An Analysis of Classroom Interaction in Speaking Classes at a Junior High School

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore classroom interaction in speaking learning at SMPN Sekuting Terpadu using the Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System (FIACS) to examine communication patterns and identify the most frequently used learning strategies by English teachers. Effective classroom interaction is very important in language learning because it can improve students' speaking ability, self-confidence, and communicative competence. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with data collection techniques in the form of interviews, observations, and focus group discussions (FGD). Participants in this study were students and an English teacher from classes 8A and 8C. Data analysis was carried out through data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results showed that classroom interaction was dominated by teachers in both classes. In class 8A, teacher interaction reached 52% of the total interaction, mainly in the form of questions, giving instructions, and praise, while student responses were only 34%, and 12% of the time was filled with silence or confusion. A similar pattern was found in class 8C, with teacher interaction at 53%, student responses at 30%, and silence/confusion at 12%. The most frequently used learning strategies include questioning techniques, direct instruction, and structured activities such as group discussions and role-plays. Open-ended questions have been shown to be effective in encouraging student participation and stimulating discussion, creating a more interactive and engaging learning environment.

Keyword:

Classroom Interaction, Speaking Class, Instructional Strategies, FIACS, Student Participation


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INTRODUCTION

Effective communication skills play a vital role in social integration, especially in language acquisition. At the junior high school level, the ability to communicate effectively is considered crucial ([Ghaderi, 2024](#)). Effective communication involves not only speaking but also listening and comprehending what others convey ([Letters and Yadav 2023](#)). When these communication skills are well-developed, ideas can be expressed clearly, and understanding is gained from teachers and peers alike, which enhances learning outcomes and strengthens social connections ([Girsang 2020](#)). However, in effective communication, the misuse of linguistic elements – such as conjunctions – can lead to unclear meaning and misunderstanding, which may hinder the delivery and interpretation of messages ([Budjana 2022](#)).

Classroom interaction is essential in developing students' speaking skills ([Adaba 2017](#)). By actively participating in discussions, presentations, debates, and group activities, students have ample opportunities to improve their verbal abilities ([Gorong 2017](#)). Interaction with peers and teachers helps students refine their expression, communicate ideas persuasively, and practice pronunciation, intonation, and fluency ([Hasnidar, 2019](#)). Moreover, students learn important communication nuances, such as active listening, empathy, and adapting messages to different audiences ([Mellany, 2021](#)). Therefore, the classroom environment provides a supportive platform to build confidence in speaking, a skill crucial for academic, professional, and social contexts ([Sumaiya et al., 2022](#)).

The transition from primary to junior high school involves significant cognitive, social, and emotional changes, making this phase critical for students' educational development ([Waters et al. 2012](#)). Understanding how these transitions affect classroom interaction and speaking skills development is important to create a supportive learning environment ([Asih 2018](#)). Additionally, the integration of digital technologies – such as WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, Zoom, and Google Forms – has transformed traditional classroom interaction. However, the impact of these technologies on interaction patterns and speaking proficiency in junior high school classrooms needs further investigation ([Wang, 2025](#)).

The purpose of learning English at the junior high school level is to provide students with knowledge and competencies that can be applied in real-life contexts ([Wijayanti and Budi 2023](#)). The ability to speak English is increasingly important, given its broad use in many aspects of life. This has driven countries, including Indonesia, to emphasize English mastery ([Qamariah 2023](#)). The Indonesian government has made English a compulsory subject for three years in junior high school, aiming to broaden students' horizons and enhance their skills and

competencies ([Daar, 2020](#)).

Previous studies reveal challenges such as the dominant use of Bahasa Indonesia in classroom instruction, limiting students' opportunities to practice English (Prakoso) ([Sofyan, 2014](#)). Additionally, teacher talk often dominates classroom interaction, reducing student talk time ([Astuti, 2021](#)). [Pratama, et.al](#) (2020) identified three main types of classroom interaction: teacher-student, student-student, and student-material interaction, occurring in various teaching phases.

The Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories System (FIACS) is an observational tool used to analyze verbal behaviors of teachers and students during classroom interactions ([Larasaty, 2018](#)). FIACS categorizes teacher behaviors such as accepting feelings, praising, using student ideas, questioning, lecturing, directing, and criticizing, as well as student talk that includes responses and initiations, plus moments of silence or confusion ([Rauza Najemah, 2022](#)). Understanding these interactions is essential for designing effective teaching strategies ([Hamre et al. 2021](#)).

Preliminary research at SMPN Sekuting Terpadu revealed that classroom interaction in eighth-grade speaking classes has not met expectations ([Made, 2022](#)). Issues include students' reluctance to respond to questions, limited vocabulary, fear of making mistakes, and lack of confidence. Focus group discussions with students confirmed these findings ([Alviani 2022](#)).

Based on these phenomena, this study entitled "*An Analysis of Classroom Interaction in Speaking Classes at Junior High School*" aims to investigate classroom interaction in speaking classes using the FIACS model. The study hopes to provide insights into effective teaching strategies that enhance students' speaking skills at the junior high school level ([Lestari, E., et al, 2022](#)).

METHOD RESEARCH

This research was conducted at SMPN Sekuting Terpadu during the academic year 2024/2025. The study employed a descriptive qualitative design aimed at exploring and understanding classroom interaction in speaking classes. According to [Creswell](#) (2011), qualitative research is an approach that seeks to explore and comprehend the meaning individuals or groups assign to social or human problems, making it suitable for investigating classroom social phenomena. The research subjects were selected through purposive sampling, focusing on information-rich cases relevant to the phenomenon of interest. The participants included one English teacher, chosen due to her longer teaching experience and certification, and ten eighth-grade students from two classes (8A and 8C) who were recommended based on criteria such as gender, above-average English scores, and confidence in expressing

themselves.

The data collection instruments consisted of semi-structured observation, interviews, and focus group discussions. Semi-structured observation was conducted using the Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories System (FIACS) to systematically record teacher and student verbal behaviors during speaking lessons. The interview instrument featured semi-structured questions directed at both the English teacher and student representatives to gather insights about classroom interaction and teaching strategies for speaking. Additionally, focus group discussions were held to collect students' perceptions and experiences related to speaking classes.

Data collection techniques included participant observation of the entire speaking lesson process to identify interaction patterns, semi-structured interviews with the teacher and students to understand their perspectives, and focus group discussions for deeper exploration of classroom dynamics. The data analysis followed [Miles and Huberman's](#) (2004) framework involving three concurrent activities: data condensation (selecting and simplifying data), data display (organizing data for interpretation), and conclusion drawing (formulating answers to research questions). To ensure data trustworthiness, the study applied methodological triangulation by comparing data from observations, interviews, and focus groups. This approach increases the validity and credibility of findings by cross-verifying information collected through multiple methods. Triangulation helps minimize bias and provides a comprehensive understanding of classroom interaction in the speaking classes at SMPN Sekuting Terpadu.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to analyze classroom interaction in speaking lessons at SMPN Sekuting Terpadu using the Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories System (FIACS). The focus was on interaction patterns, teacher strategies, and the use of technology.

1. Classroom Interaction in Speaking Lessons at SMPN Sekuting Terpadu

Observations were conducted in classes 8A and 8C from October 8–10, 2024. Data were collected through interviews with the teacher, student focus group discussions, and classroom observations.

Class 8A, a total of 73 interactions were recorded:

- 52% were teacher talk (mainly asking questions and giving instructions),
- 34% were student responses,
- 12% were silence or confusion.

The teacher frequently asked questions, but students rarely initiated conversation. Many students struggled to understand English, prompting the teacher to often translate into Indonesian. The main barriers included fear of making mistakes, shyness, and lack of confidence.

Student quotes include:

“I feel shy because I’m afraid of answering incorrectly.”

“I didn’t study English in elementary school, so I’m not confident.”

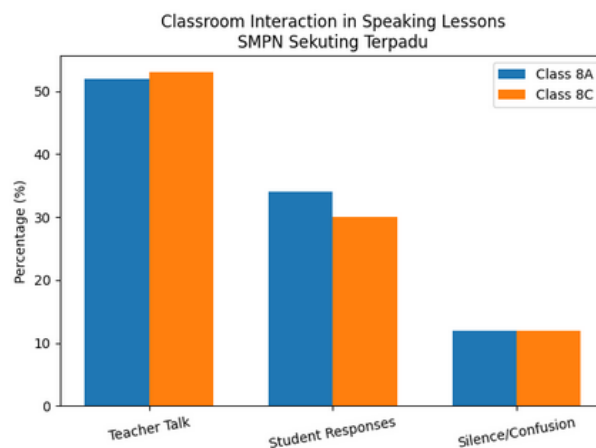
The teacher attempted to build a safe atmosphere by offering praise, sentence models, and simple questions.

Class 8C, a total of 49 interactions were observed:

- 53% were teacher talk,
- 30% were student responses,
- 12% were silence or confusion.

The teacher provided clear guidance and positive feedback, yet students remained passive. Strategies such as individualized questioning and use of the whiteboard were applied, but interaction remained limited.

Overall, the teacher dominated classroom talk. Students were responsive but rarely initiated speech. Although the teacher worked to create a comfortable atmosphere, students still hesitated to speak actively.



Bagan 1 Classroom Interaction in Speaking Lessons SMPN Sekuting Terpadu

The chart illustrates classroom interaction patterns during speaking lessons in classes 8A and 8C at SMPN Sekuting Terpadu. In both classes, teacher talk constitutes more than half of the total interactions (52% in class 8A and 53% in class 8C), indicating a predominantly teacher-centered instructional approach. Student responses account for a smaller proportion of classroom discourse (34% in class 8A and 30% in class 8C),

while silence or confusion consistently represents 12% of interactions in both settings. These findings suggest that although students respond when prompted, they rarely initiate communication, reflecting limited active participation in speaking activities despite the teacher's efforts to provide guidance and positive feedback.

2. Most Frequently Used Teaching Strategies

To enhance interaction, the teacher employed several strategies:

- a. Cooperative learning: group discussions and collaboration;
- b. Questioning techniques: to stimulate responses and check understanding;
- c. Scaffolding: providing step-by-step support, including prompts and translation when needed;
- d. Modeling: offering example sentences to build student confidence;
- e. Code-switching: switching between English and Indonesian to aid comprehension.

While the teacher was active and supportive, opportunities for students to initiate interaction were still limited. These strategies proved fairly effective but would benefit from more interactive and student-centered activities.

Discussion

1. Classroom Interaction

The teacher initiated lessons with greetings and light questions to establish student comfort ([Brown, 2015](#)). Scaffolding techniques were used to help students understand and respond, which aligns with Vygotsky's (1934) Zone of Proximal Development, where learners are guided through tasks they cannot yet perform independently.

When students showed confusion, the teacher explained in Indonesian, demonstrating sensitivity to students' language limitations. This bilingual approach helped clarify meaning and encouraged students to speak more confidently.

The teacher also modeled simple sentence structures such as "My favorite animal is...", allowing students to recognize and repeat language patterns ([Richards, 2008](#)). Positive reinforcement like "Good job" was used to boost student confidence ([Skinner, 2005](#)).

However, the teacher's dominance in classroom talk rendered students largely passive listeners. Although the environment was supportive and structured, it lacked opportunities for student-initiated dialogue. Activities such as group discussions and role-play could promote a more balanced and interactive classroom dynamic.

2. Teacher Strategies

Three key strategies were observed:

- a. Questioning: Encouraged participation, even if responses were brief; also served as a means to assess understanding.
- b. Modeling: Provided clear examples of correct language usage for students to imitate.
- c. Scaffolding: Offered gradual support through prompts, translations, and additional explanations.

These strategies fostered a structured and encouraging learning environment. However, to help students become more confident and independent speakers, the teacher needs to provide more opportunities for students to initiate conversation and engage in meaningful communication.

This study offers a novel application of the Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories System (FIACS) specifically contextualized in speaking instruction for junior high school students in rural areas of Indonesia. The novelty lies in the integration of FIACS with a pedagogical approach based on bilingual strategies and sensitivity to local culture. Most previous studies using FIACS have been conducted in urban or international contexts, whereas this research demonstrates that teacher-student interaction patterns in the local context have different dynamics, especially regarding students' affective barriers and linguistic limitations.

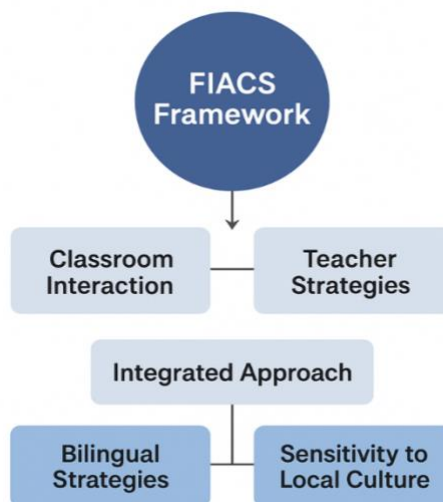


Diagram 2. FIACS Framework

Furthermore, this conceptual model emphasizes the importance of integrating classroom interaction analysis with concrete teaching strategies. Another innovation

is the identification that teacher dominance does not necessarily imply ineffectiveness but can serve as a foundational scaffolding required by low-proficiency students. However, to promote language autonomy, it is necessary to design transition strategies from a teacher-centered approach to a student-centered approach. This model can serve as a new theoretical reference for designing FIACS-based pedagogical interventions tailored to the characteristics of EFL learners in non-elite schools.

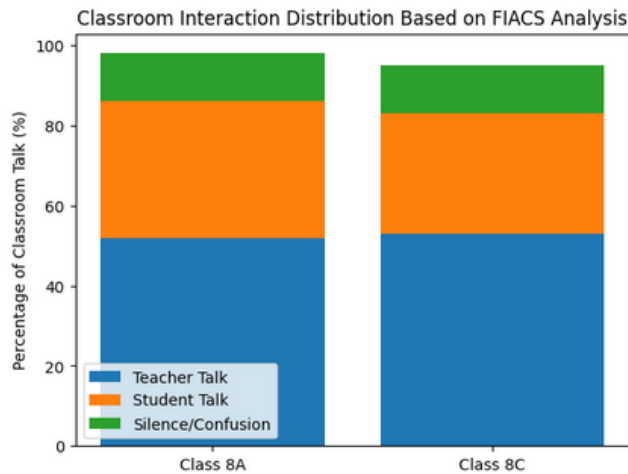
CONCLUSION

This study examined classroom interaction patterns in English speaking classes of grades 8A and 8C at SMPN Sekuting Terpadu, with a focus on the balance between teacher and student roles in communication ([Khoiriyah, 2017](#)). The findings revealed that classroom interactions are still predominantly teacher-centered, with the teacher contributing 52% and 53% of total classroom talk in classes 8A and 8C respectively, as identified through FIACS analysis. Teachers primarily engaged in asking questions, giving directions, and occasionally offering praise, while students contributed less – 34% in 8A and 30% in 8C – often showing minimal initiative, with 12% of class time marked by silence or confusion.

The instructional strategies observed, such as questioning, modeling, and scaffolding, were effective to a degree in promoting interaction. Open-ended questions and structured activities like group discussions and role-plays showed potential in engaging students. However, the limited student participation indicates a need for more student-centered approaches that build confidence and reduce fear of making mistakes.

In relation to the research objectives, the method used classroom observation with FIACS proved appropriate in capturing the interaction dynamics and identifying instructional gaps. The implications of this research highlight the importance of shifting towards communicative language teaching (CLT) techniques, which emphasize learner autonomy and interaction. Incorporating activities that involve student presentations, the use of body language, and interesting, relevant discussion topics can help create a more participatory classroom atmosphere.

Overall, this study contributes to the understanding of classroom interaction in EFL contexts by underlining the need for pedagogical shifts that support active student involvement. Future research could explore the impact of specific CLT strategies on student engagement and speaking proficiency over time to further enrich the pedagogical practices in similar educational settings.



Bagan 3. Classroom Interaction Distribution Based on FIACS Analysis

The chart illustrates the distribution of classroom interaction based on FIACS analysis, showing that teacher talk remains dominant in both Class 8A and Class 8C. Teachers account for 52% and 53% of the total classroom interaction, respectively, primarily through asking questions, giving instructions, and providing occasional praise. In contrast, student participation is lower, contributing 34% in Class 8A and 30% in Class 8C, which indicates limited student initiative during classroom discourse. Additionally, 12% of classroom time in both classes is characterized by silence or confusion, suggesting moments of inactivity or uncertainty. Overall, the chart highlights a teacher-centered interaction pattern, with student engagement occurring less frequently than teacher-led communication.

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