

# ANALYSIS OF CLASSROOM INTERACTION IN SPEAKING CLASS AT A SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN BANDAR LAMPUNG

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## Abstract

This study compares patterns of interactions among teachers and students in an English speaking class by using three different newspaper topics: political, economy and entertainment. The subject of the research was 31 students of a senior high school in Bandar Lampung.

The result shows that there were differences in the patterns of interaction when learners were given three different newspaper article topics. The differences were found in terms of the patterns of interactions among teacher-students, and students-students as well as kinds of interactional contribution categories.

This suggests that using various topics from various sources of materials provided good stimulus for learners to practice their English in the classroom. The closer the topic to the learners' daily interest the more they will likely to actively involve in the interactions.

*Key words: classroom interaction, patterns of interaction, interactional contribution categories, political, economy, and entertainment texts*

## 1. Introduction

Within the field of education and language teaching over the last few years a distinct shift has taken place, resulting in many classroom interactions placing less emphasis on teachers and teaching and greater emphasis on learners and learning styles. This 'learner-centred' approach to education and ESL programs can be seen in many schools and language centres indeed it is central to the approach taken at the school in question which will be used as the basis of the classroom interaction study. Studies conducted on classroom interaction have shown that student talk accounts for an average of less than 30 per cent of talk in 'teacher-fronted' classrooms. Yet studies on language and learning have shown that students not only learn to talk but they also talk to learn. This can be seen from the fact that students are persistent questioners; it is by asking questions that they explore and learn about the world around them. However, studies have shown that the number of questions asked by students drop significantly as soon as they enter school.

When we talk about different interaction in class, we mean the issue of who is speaking to

whom. Edge (2001:69) divided classroom interaction into 6 types of interaction: teacher-students, students-teacher, teacher-student, student-teacher, teacher-student-student, student-student. In addition, Rackham (1970) divided eight categories of contribution that can be used to analyzing patterns of classroom interaction, they are: seeking suggestions, suggesting, agreeing, disagreeing, seeking clarification, clarifying responses, interrupting, and miscellaneous.

This study focuses on the classroom interaction by using different kinds of newspaper text: political topic, economy topic and entertainment topic and interactional categories contribution which performed by students in the teaching and learning process. Students' involvement in discussing the text, to share information, to give summary, opinion and critics related with the text.

## 2. Theoretical framework:

Classroom interaction is defined as description of the form and content of behavior or social interaction in the classroom (Marshall 1998). Bishop (2000) stated that students will not get enough practice just by talking to the instructor, and very little by just listening to the instructor. Furthermore he said that students

develop competency and become critical thinkers in classroom that provides opportunities for intensive, structured interaction among students.

Rowiyah (2007) stated that the teacher must engage in the sort of interaction with the learner, in which the communication is able to take place. She also adds that communication is achieved by means of variety of resources. In the classroom interaction, communication among the students and teacher-students take place. Interaction in the classroom takes place when the students interest is presented. To promote interaction on other language, the teacher therefore must maintain a lively attention in another language among students in the classroom (Rivers in Rowiyah, 1987) This means that the teacher can use non verbal cues to encourage students speaking interaction, for example, smile expectantly and nod as students talk.

When we talk about different interaction in class, we mean the issue of who is speaking to whom. Edge (2001:69) divided classroom interaction into 6 types of interaction:

1. Teacher-students interaction where teacher gives instruction to the whole class (T-Ss)
2. Teacher-students interaction where there is an exchange between the teacher and the whole class such as question and answer (Ss-T)
3. Teacher-student interaction where teacher initiates the interaction with an individual of students. The teacher asks a student to answer question, repetition, confirmation and so on (T-S)
4. Student-teacher interaction where the communication with the teacher started by student. The student initiated himself to question the teacher, giving opinion, complaining, eliciting in form of information and many others (S-T)
5. Teacher-student-student interaction where the teacher tells one student to say something to another (T-S-S)
6. Student-student interaction where students communicate directly with each other in form of discussion, asking for the correct term, confirmation of an information, giving opinion and so on (S-S).

In addition, Rackham (1971) divided eight categories of contribution that can be used as an

aid to analyzing patterns of classroom interaction, they are:

1. Seeking Suggestions. This label is used when someone invites others to contribute their ideas, suggestions or proposals.
2. Suggesting. This can take a number of forms e.g. "I suggest we do so and so", "Let's do the following", "Shall we do X, Y and Z", "Can I take your idea a stage further?"
3. Agreeing. This covers all types of supporting or backing up what has just been said. This includes nodding.
4. Disagreeing. This covers all ways of opposing or withholding support for what has just been said: i.e. not only an outright disagreement ("No, I can't go along with that.") but also stating a difficulty, whether valid or not: "The snag is that ..." or "We are running short of time again."
5. Seeking Clarification. Whenever someone asks for a recap or checks that he has understood what was intended e.g. "Do you mean ...", "What happens if A and B coincide."
6. Clarifying Responses is to requests for explanations; also spontaneous summaries of a discussion.
7. Interrupting. Whenever someone breaks in to stop a member from finishing his or her contribution; or when everyone seems to be speaking at once.
8. Miscellaneous. In practice, it is difficult to assess all contributions quickly enough to categorize them, so any unspecified contribution can be put in this category rather than go unrecorded

### 3. Data Collecting Technique

Two methods were used to gather the data:

1. Recording. The main data is the records of classroom interaction. The researcher recorded the activities and interactions that occurred during English speaking class by using newspaper.



Then, the researcher transcribed the data that she got from recording technique. The recording tools that used were video recorder and audio recorder. The video recorder was used in front of the class so the students and the teacher can be captured. The audio recorder was used in every group to get the clearer interaction in the groups. The recordings were then transcribed and coded following Edge (2001:69) in terms of the patterns of interaction and the quantity of utterances performed by the teachers and students.

2. Observation

An observation checklist was prepared to record what happen in the classroom during the discussion sessions.

3. Procedures

The subject of the research was class XI IPA of a senior high school in Bandar Lampung, which consist of 31 students. A discussion with the English teacher resulted in a decision that a speaking class would be held. The teaching materials were taken from Jakarta Post. Three newspaper articles: politic, economy and entertainment- were used as guidance for

The class discussions. The researcher acted as an observer who observed the activities of both students and teacher during English speaking class by using newspaper that was conducted by the classroom teacher. The researcher took note using observation sheet from which it develops based on the research question.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. The patterns of interactions in the classroom

During the class hour students were involved in group discussion guided by the teacher. In the first meeting, the topic discussed was taken from an economic topic. An article from Jakarta Post was given to the students. In the second meeting, entertainment topic taken from the same newspaper was used as the basis for discussion. Finally, on the third meeting an article on political topic taken from the newspaper was used as the basis for discussion. The recording of the whole classes were taken from pre activities, whilst activities and post activities.

The results of the transcription and coding of the classroom situation is presented in in the

Table 1: Patterns of interactions in the discussion sessions

No	Pattern of Interaction	Economy topic		Entertainment topic		Political Topic		Total interaction	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	T-Ss (1)	46	18,5	78	15,8	36	22,5	160	17,2
2	Ss-T (2)	13	5,2	45	9,1	7	4,3	65	7,2
3	T-S (3)	15	6,0	7	1,4	10	6,3	32	3,7
4	S-T (4)	28	11,2	31	6,3	28	17,5	87	9,5
5	S-S (5)	139	55,8	332	67,3	65	40,6	536	58,7
6	T-S-S (6)	8	3,3	11	2,1	13	8,5	32	3,5
	<b>Total</b>	249	100%	493	100%	160	100%	912	100%

The table shows that there are six patterns of interaction occurred during the discussion sessions: a) the interaction between the teachers and the students (T-Ss), b) the interaction between students and teacher (Ss-T), c) the interaction between student and one particular student (T-S), d) the interaction between a particular student and teacher (S-T), e) the interaction between one student and another student (S-S), and f) the interaction among teacher and individual students (T-S-). From the total interactions during three discussion sessions

(column 5), 912 talks were produced by the teacher and the students. From these 912 talks, the highest number of interactions produced was the interaction among students individually (S-S) interaction which comprises 58,7% of the total talks. Interaction between the teacher and students (T-Ss) was the second highest number of interaction (17,2%) of the total talk. Smaller proportions of interactions were also found in the interaction between the teacher and individual students (T-S and T-S-S) interactions. The same proportion of patterns of interactions were also

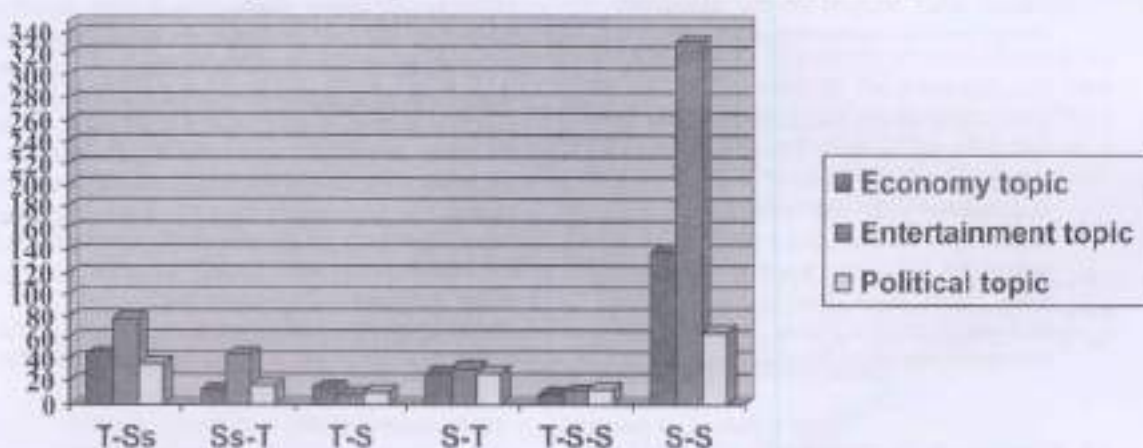
identified in discussions from the three discussion sessions, in which student-student interaction (S-S) produced the highest number of interactions (55,8%,67,3% and 40,6% consecutively).

Comparison between the patterns of interactions in three different topics also shows interesting facts. In terms of interaction between teacher and students (T-Ss), most talks were resulted in discussion using political topic (22,5%), followed by discussion using economic topic (18,5%). The smallest number of interactions between the teacher and students was

found in the discussion using entertainment topic (15,8%). In terms of interaction between student-student individually (S-S interaction), the highest number of interactions was found in the discussion session using entertainment topic (67,3%) followed by economic topic (55,8%). Discussion on political topic produced the least number of interactions between one individual student and another student (40,6%).

Further comparison among each type of patterns of interaction can be seen from the following graph.

Figure 1: the graphic of amount of interaction occurred in the classroom



The graphic shows the comparisons between each patterns of interaction in the three discussion session.

a) In Teacher students (T-Ss) interaction, 48,75% was produced by discussion using entertainment newspaper topic, 28,75% was produced in discussion using economy newspaper topic, and 22,5% was produced in political newspaper topic. Teacher-students interaction occurred when the teacher gave instruction to the students. The highest score at entertainment topic happened because during teaching and learning process by using entertainment topic, the teacher gave instruction to the students to do the tasks fill in the blank two times, getting specific information and describing a Hollywood star while at the meeting by using economy topic the teacher gave task getting specific information and in the meeting by using political topic the teacher made the activity to role play activity, a group of student as Rihut

Sitompul and a group of student as reporter. The students mostly showed their understanding of teacher's instruction by means of gestures such as nodding, and the rest said 'yes' or 'yes sir'.

b) In students-teacher.(Ss-T) interaction, the highest quantity of the interaction came to the meeting by using entertainment topic 69,23%. Next was the meeting by using economy topic 20%, then the meeting by using political topic 10,76%. During teaching and learning process by using entertainment, many students gave answer to the teacher's questions quickly and gave response such as giving opinion, complaining and giving information related to the newspaper text. While at the economy newspaper topic, some students were able to give answer to the teacher's questions and at political topic only a few of students who were able to answer the teacher's questions. This was purposely done to see whether students got the gist of the topic text and



to encourage them in order to interact with the teacher. The differences in the amount of pattern of interaction indicated that the topic used in each meeting influence the students' participation during the meeting. Participation which occurred indicated that students were not only attending the class on time and staying the entire period but also participating in the activities and trying to find out information of the teacher's instruction.

c) In teacher-student (T-S) interaction, 46.87% interaction by using economy topic became the highest interaction during the learning process. Next is 31.25% interaction by using political topic and the last is 21.87% interaction by using entertainment topic. The highest interaction by using economy topic happened because the teacher usually asked student to answer question or to give response related to the topic text. While at the lowest interaction by using entertainment topic, the teacher rarely asked the students to answer his questions or to give opinion related to the topic text because the students answer every teacher's questions and give opinion directly without the teacher instruction. The teacher initiated the conversations with the students to support them to speak up in the classroom. He sometimes chose a student who seemed to be able to answer the question. He also sometimes chose a student who seemed to loose concentration.

d) In student-teacher (S-T) interaction, economy topic produced 32.18% interactions, entertainment topic 35.63% and political topic 32.18%. This sort of interaction happened because the teacher often stimulated the students to speak one by one and not only babbled together. This was done to train them not to be afraid to speak English. During teaching and learning process by using entertainment as the highest percentage compared to the meeting by using economy topic and political topic, many students often initially participated related to the information in the newspaper article by giving additional information related to the text. While at the meeting by using economy topic and the meeting by using political topic have same percentage because the students spoke to give answer based on the teacher's questions.

e). In student-student (S-S) interaction, during the process of teaching and learning in speaking class by using entertainment newspaper topic text became the highest percentage 61.94% because the students looked enthusiastically to discuss the information in the text. They have abandoned

background knowledge related to the Hollywood stars mentioned in the text and sometimes they talked to their friend about the information of the Hollywood stars that are not mentioned in the text. Next was economy topic 25.93%. This percentage mostly came as the result of their interaction with their friends in the group during the discussion session of getting information task. And the last political topic has the lowest percentage 12.12%. This percentage is the lowest percentage because the students do not have enough background knowledge of the text so they often opened dictionary to get the meaning of the words rather than asked to their friends.

f). In teacher-student-student (S-S) interaction, the highest interaction happened at the meeting by using political topic 40.62%, next is the meeting by using entertainment topic 34.37% and the last is the meeting by using economy topic 25%. Teacher-student-student interaction happened where the teacher told one student to present their discussion result to the class on the meeting by using economy and entertainment topic. Teacher-student-student interaction happened where the teacher told one student who acted as reporters to ask questions to the student who acted as Ruhut Sitompul in the meeting by using political newspaper article. The teacher initiated the conversations with students to support them to speak up in the classroom. He sometimes chose the students who rarely spoke in the class. He also chose the students who seat in the back seat to make sure that they could follow the material given as clear as those who sat in front

#### **4.2. Interactional contribution categories performed by students**

Another aspect sought to answer in the study in the distribution of contribution categories produced in the interaction during the three discussion sessions. The following table illustrates the contribution categories produced in the discussion sessions.

Table 2: Distributions of Contribution Categories in the interactions

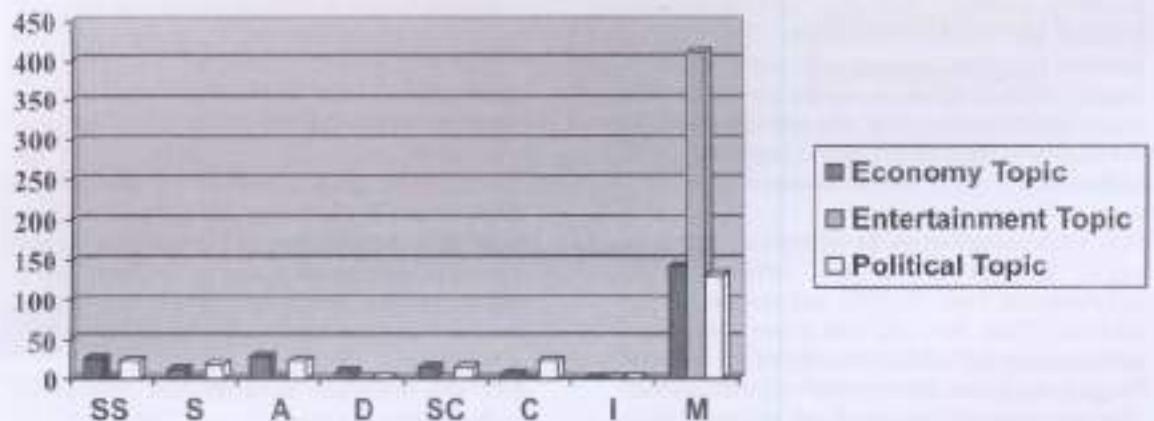
No	Interaction contribution	Economy topic		Entertainment topic		Political Topic		Total interaction	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	SS	26	9,8	5	1,1	23	8,7	54	5,6
2	S	12	4,5	4	0,9	19	7,2	35	3,6
3	A	28	10,5	3	0,7	23	8,7	54	5,6
4	D	9	4,4	0	0	1	0,3	10	1,0
5	SC	15	5,6	2	0,4	16	6,1	33	3,4
6	S	8	3,0	5	1,1	23	8,7	36	3,7
7	I	0	0	1	0,2	1	0,3	2	0,2
8	M	168	63,2	416	95,4	148	56,0	732	75,8
9	Totals	266	100%	436	100%	264	100%	966	100%

The table shows that in terms of total number of interactions produced in the discussion sessions (column 6), the highest proportions of contribution categories produced were Miscellaneous categories (75,8%) other

contribution categories were produced below ten percent.

Further comparison of the contribution categories is illustrated in the following graph.

Graphic 2: interactional contribution categories occurred in the discussion sessions



The graphic shows the distribution of eight contribution categories produced in the three discussion sessions. The Miscellaneous category (M) is the most dominant category produced in the discussion sessions in the three topics. This category is utterances that cannot be included in any of the other seven categories, which include students' laughter, irrelevant talks, mumbles, etc-but they contribute much to the continuation of the discussion sessions. From the three topics given, the highest number of miscellaneous category was identified in the discussion with entertainment topic (56.83%) miscellaneous contributions followed by discussion with economy topic (22.95%), and discussion with political topic (20.02%). It happened because the students were enthusiastic

to follow the lesson by using entertainment topic; the class was really noisy because the students were enthusiastic to give their opinion and ideas related to the text. They talked a lot to their friends and the teacher related to the text.

Another important category is Seeking Suggestion (SS) and Agreeing (A) both produced 56 occurrences from the total interaction. In Seeking Suggestion category, discussion using economy topic produced the highest percentage (48,75%), followed by discussion using entertainment topic (45,29%), and 9,25% was produced in discussion using political topic. Seeking suggestion emerged when the students invites the others to give ideas or suggestions.



The students often got a problem in finding the meaning of words in English that they found in the newspaper article so they asked their friends to give ideas about it. Or, when they got confused on how to write the answer of getting specific information and they invite their friends in the group to give suggestions. In the meeting by using economy, they found many unfamiliar words so the students often asked what the meaning is in Indonesia by asking to their friend and usually they asked it by using Bahasa Indonesia. For the meeting by using entertainment topic, students did not have enough background knowledge of the article so they often got problem in getting the specific information in the text so they often seek suggestions from their friends in their group. The lowest percentage is the meeting by using entertainment topic 9.25%, it happened because the students were familiar with the content of the information in the newspaper text, so they can easily get the information from the text. During the process of teaching and learning, the class was crowded with laugh, answers, questions, opinions and additional information that were delivered by the students.

In Agreeing (A) category, the highest percentage was produced in discussion using economy topic (51.85%), followed by discussion political topic and the lowest percentage was produced in interaction using entertainment topic (5.55%). The highest percentage of agreeing category in discussion using economy topic happened because both the teacher and the students often gave their agreement in numbers of cases. Based on the observation, both the teacher and the students often had the same opinion with their peers. It happened because every student had the article and they opened dictionary if they did not know the meaning words in Bahasa Indonesia. When they found the meaning of the word they tell their peers and afterward they had the same opinion. Less number of Agreeing category was found in entertainment topic and political topic because less difficult words were found from the articles.

## 5. Conclusions

The conclusions that can be drawn from the study are:

1. Implementation of three different newspaper article topics: economy topic, entertainment topic and political topic in the classroom has generated different patterns of interactions and different

kinds of interactional contribution categories. At the meeting by using entertainment topic which has the highest number of interaction had influenced the students to speak a lot. The differences in pattern of interaction and kinds of interactional contribution categories which occurred provided good stimulus for students to practice their English in the classroom.

2. Within interaction, there were interactional discourses used by student to deliver his/her message to their friends or the teacher. The interactional discourses which happened indicated the awareness of students to solve the communication breakdown which happen during interaction. Seeking suggestions were often used by students while interrupting was very seldom used since the students delivered their opinion after the other students stop speaking.

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