Interactional Patterns in Synchronous Online Teaching Mode at the Third Semester of English Education Study Program 0f University of Bengkulu

Hesty Prastiningrum
Universitas Bengkulu
hestyprastiningrum@gmail.com
Azwandi
Universitas Bengkulu
azwandi22@gmail.com
Gita Mutiara Hati
Universitas Bengkulu
gitamutiara@unib.ac.id
Corresponding email: hestyprastiningrum@gmail.com

Abstract

This research is aimed at finding out the interactional patterns in the synchronous online teaching mode at the third semester of English Department at University of Bengkulu. This research employed a descriptive quantitative research. The subjects of this research were class C of third semester of English Department consisting of 36 students and one lecturer who teaching online by using Google Meet as the synchronous platform. The data of this research were three audiovisual records which were recorded by the lecturer. The data were identified by using the identification table of IRF pattern of interaction and analyzed based on the IRF model. The first finding showed that the most occurred pattern employed by the lecturer is IRF pattern as complete pattern, and there are also IR pattern as semi complete pattern, and IF as incomplete pattern. The second finding showed that the elicitation act is the most frequently occurred act in the classroom interaction. It could be concluded this classroom can be stated as a good interaction because the lecturer gave the same opportunities to the students to initiate in the discussion, so the students were active giving initiations.

Keywords: classroom interaction, interactional pattern, synchronous online teaching mode.

Introduction

Classroom interactions have been investigated intensively for the past few decades. One reason is that teachers have a very central, decisive role in developing learners' knowledge, skills, competencies, and characters. Moreover,

good interactions between teachers and learners in the classroom are potentially critical to provide learners with needed supports such as encouragement, motivation, hope, and respect to do their best. In general, classroom interaction is a situation between two or more people who communicate with one another or react to one another in the classroom. Classroom interaction, according to Allwright and Bailey (1991), is defined as "input, practice opportunities, and receptivity" (p.25). Therefore, classroom interaction is significant for teaching and learning process. Teachers should be flexible and allowing possibilities of student-to-student and student-to-teacher interactions.

Also, Walsh (2011) stated that interaction is the central of teaching and learning process, managing groups of people, and organizing the various tasks and activities. This implies that classroom interaction is vital and a decisive factor to guarantee success in teaching and learning. Moreover, Rukmana, Yufrizal, Hasan (2014) revealed that the learners who have good interaction between teacher and others will get knowledge better than the learners who have bad interaction in the classroom. According to Malamah & Thomas (1987), there are four classroom interactions; teacher-whole class, teacher-individual student, individual student-teacher, and individual student-individual student. Therefore, this research focused on interactional patterns, mainly about teacher-student, and student-student interaction.

There are several models of interactional patterns, such as IRF (Initiation-Response-Follow up) by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), Foreign Language Interaction (FLINT) by Moskowitz (1971), Flander's Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC) by Flanders (1970), Brown's Interaction Analysis System (BIAS) by Brown (1975), etc. However, many researchers claimed that IRF pattern is the most ideal pattern of interaction. One of them is Walsh (2006) cited in Afriyanto, Harahap & Azwandi (2017) who stated that IRF which firstly developed by Sinclair and Coulthard in 1975 is the most ideal model among the others.

According to this model, the complete interactional patterns consists of the teacher's initiations, student's responses, and teachers' follow up/feedback. As stated by Dayag, et. al (2008), initiation is the teacher ask a question or action to initiate students to do interaction in classroom, while response represents the teacher initiate in response of initiation move by participants' act. They also state that

feedback completes the cycle as it provides closure to the initiation and response. Sinclair & Coulthard (1992) categorize the initiation move into three classes of act; *elicitation, directive,* and *information*, the response move into; *reply, react,* and *acknowledge,* and feedback move into; *accept, evaluate*, and *comment.*

However, this kind of research is rarely conducted in the classroom between lecturer and students. Moreover, it is also rare to find this research in the situation of online learning. One of the study is from Harahap & Emzir (2015) analyzed the classroom discourse at high school. They found that there were no complete IRF patterns. It was only IF patterns that occurred in the classroom. They also revealed that the teacher talk was the dominant talk in the classroom discourse.

Nowadays, all the schools and universities in Indonesia are closed and changed into online learning since the pandemic of Covid-19. Generally, online learning is a teaching and learning process that takes place over the internet. There are many platforms used in online learning. They can be from social media that is asynchronously such as WhatsApp, and Google Classroom, or from synchronously platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, Skype, etc.

Mostly, the research about the interactional patterns was carried in face-to-face learning in the classroom. Different from those studies, the current research analyzed the pattern of interactions between lecturer and students in online teaching mode to see the differences between offline and online mode. This research was required to get an obvious overview of the pattern of interactions between lecturer and students in online teaching mode.

In this research, the researcher chose English department students from the third semester of class C consisting of 36 students who have been studying all courses in online mode. However, there was only one course where the lecturer was consistent in using the synchronous online platform for teaching the students. The decision of choosing this class was because they have been studying through Google Meet intensively for about 4 months. Also, it was because the availability to get the data which was quite easy, since the researcher is from the same major. Therefore, the researcher analyzed the patterns of interactions that occurred between lecturer and students in online teaching mode through Google Meet.

Research Methodology

The research was conducted using a descriptive quantitative design. In this research, it contained the description and numerical data. The descriptive quantitative approach is relevant to use in this research because it aims to describe the patterns of interactions employed by lecturer and students during the synchronous online teaching mode at the third-semester students of the English Department at the University of Bengkulu. The researcher investigated their acts, moves, and exchanges that occurred in the interactions between lecturer and student according to the IRF model pattern of interactions.

The subjects in this research were one lecturer and 36 students in class C of the third-semester students of the English Department at the University of Bengkulu who were using Google Meet. The main data was three audiovisual records of the online class by the lecturer in class C of the third-semester students synchronously through Google Meet on 15th, 23rd, and 29th December 2020. This research used the identification table of IRF pattern of interaction as the main instrument for this research. In this case, the researcher adapted the table which was designed based on Coulthard's theory (2002) as follows:

Table 3.1 The identification table of IRF pattern of interaction from Coulthard's theory (2002).

No	Subject	Utterances	IRF Move	Act	Exchange
1.					
2.					
etc.					

The steps of collecting the data were asking for permission from the lecturer to get the audiovisual records of the third-semester students in class C through Google Meet for 3 meetings, then collecting all the audiovisual records. By using the IRF (Initiation-Response-Feedback) model from Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), the researcher analyzed the patterns of interactions employed by the lecturer and the students occurred in synchronous online teaching mode through Google Meet. There were several procedures of analyzing the data; transcribing the data, coding

the data, identifying the data, classifying the data, calculating the data, interpreting the data, and concluding the result.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

After analyzing the data, the researcher found several interactional patterns. There were IRF, IR, and IF patterns. Below is the table showing the frequency of each patterns in synchronous online teaching mode at class C.

Table 4.1 Interactional Patterns

Interactional Patterns	Frequency	Percentage
IRF (Complete Pattern)	77	37,6
IR (Semi Complete Pattern)	71	34,6
IF (Incomplete Pattern)	57	27,8
Total	205	100

As shown in Table 4.1, there were three main the interactional patterns found in synchronous online teaching mode at Class C. From those patterns, the most frequent pattern with total number of 77 is the complete pattern as IRF pattern (37,6%). This pattern can be defined as the complete pattern because it follows the IRF model which is consisting with complete moves, such as initiation, response, and feedback move.

In interactional patterns that found in the synchronous online teaching mode at class C as reported above, there were several acts that found by the researcher in every moves. For initiation move, there are elicitation, informative, and directive. Response move consists of reply, react, and acknowledge. Last, feedback move consists of accept, evaluate, and comment. The researcher found that initiation moves were not only from the lecturer, but also from the students. Elicitation act was the most frequent occurred in the initiation moves. Below is the acts found in initiation moves.

Table 4.2 Acts in Initiation Moves

Acts	Frequency	Percentage
Elicitation	174	44,6
Informative	147	37,7
Directive	69	17,7
Total	390	100

Response moves consisted of reply, react, and acknowledge act. The most frequent occurred was reply. The following table shows the number of every acts found in response moves.

Table 4.3 Acts in Response Moves

Acts	Frequency	Percentage
Reply	164	73,5
React	30	13,5
Acknowledge	29	13
Total	223	100

Feedback moves consisted of three acts, such as accept, evaluate, and comment. In this moves, the accept act became the most frequent occurred. The following table presents the frequency of the acts in feedback moves.

Table 4.4 Acts in Feedback Moves

Act	Frequency	Percentage
Accept	95	68,9
Evaluate	21	15,2
Comment	22	15,9
Total	138	100

Discussion

Based on the result of the analysis of interactional patterns using IRF model by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), it can be seen that in synchronous online teaching mode at class C through Google Meet, the IRF (Initiation-Response-Feedback) pattern was the most frequent pattern in the classroom interaction. This pattern is complete and ideal pattern, because it consisted of three moves as same as the IRF model from Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). According to the analysis by the researcher, this pattern is the most frequent pattern may be because the lecturer still did the same activity in teaching even though in online class. It could be seen because the lecturer still gave initiation and feedback to the students. Also, the students were active in the classroom interaction by giving responses and initiation to the lecturer.

This finding in lined with the finding of Afriyanto, et. al (2017). They found that IRF pattern was dominant in the classroom interaction. According to them, this may be because the teacher wanted to facilitate the students to follow the course by giving more initiation in IRF pattern. It probably means that by applying IRF pattern in the classroom interaction, the teachers might be provided the students to contribute in the classroom interaction.

This research finding are different from the finding reported by Harahap & Emzir (2015). They found that the teacher in high school in Jakarta did not apply the IRF pattern in the classroom interactions. In their research, they found that the most occurred pattern was only IF (Initiation-Feedback) pattern where the teacher dominated the whole classroom interactions. This implied that the teacher did not let the student to give response so that there were only initiation and feedback from the teacher. It can be probably indicated that the classroom interaction in that class did not run well, since it was dominated only by the teacher. In this respect, Harmer (1998) suggests that there should be a balance between teacher and students' interaction in order to increase students' productions. Thus, the classroom interaction should be involved both teacher and student's interaction, so that the classroom will be run well and the objectives of the classroom will be achieved.

Moreover, Havwini (2019) found that the teacher did not apply a structured IRF pattern. In addition, this study also found that the initiation was dominated by the teacher in EFL virtual classroom in Taiwan. However, the finding of this study showed that the students also initiated the interaction with the teacher and other students. Even though in the virtual classroom, the teacher gave a chance to the students to share their opinions, feelings, and even personal experience.

The finding of this current research also found that the initiation was the most frequently used by the lecturer. In this class which was in synchronous online teaching mode, the students also could share their ideas and opinions related to the topic that being discussed. It may be said that the initiation can come from lecturer and student. It can be seen from the result, where several interactional patterns also occurred by students' initiation. The possible reason is may be because of this class is kind a discussion class, where the lecturer let the students presented a topic and discussed it. In three meetings of synchronous online class, they always had presentation and question and answer session. The students can lead the discussion and freely ask or

expressed their opinions. The lecturer did not always initiate to the students, but he always provided feedback to the students who initiated the interaction in the classroom.

Furthermore, the feature of the classroom interaction could be affected by the subject of the classroom. Since the subject of class C at the third semester was an English discussion so that the classroom interactions became an interactive class. Rustandi & Mubarok (2017) also found that the classroom interaction was dominated by students' response. In the IRF pattern, they found students were more active in responding to the teacher. This happened because the class had a group discussion in speaking class. Thus, the current finding also found that the subject of the class could probably be influenced by the interactions between lecturer and students.

In addition, it was found that the lecturer kept controlling the students. It can be seen on the IF pattern, where the lecturer gave feedback even the initiation was from the students. The students usually gave initiation as asking or giving opinion, then the lecturer also gave feedback for that. It implies that the lecturer wanted the students to keep speaking and get into the classroom interaction. So that, it can be probably said that not only lecturer, but also the students have the same chance to interact each other in the classroom interaction.

Similar to the finding of Nikula (2007), who argued that there is no actual structured IRF pattern that could lead to teacher dominance in the classroom interaction. It could be implied that in the IRF pattern, the chance to interact both teacher and students is same. The teacher may be not always become the dominant in the classroom interaction. While the students also can probably interact actively as well as dominantly with the teacher in the classroom.

Furthermore, Saikko's study (2007) stated that students can establish their institutional power in the IRF pattern. This study reported that students were able to extend the IRF pattern after the Follow-up turn and even change the structure of IRF pattern itself. So, the interaction can be more tend to be a conversation rather than a question-answer-feedback structure. In this current research, the researcher could find this kind of pattern, even it was not fully in the whole interactional pattern of classroom interaction. Perhaps, it is because of the situation of the classroom itself. What is meant in here is that the classroom interaction may be depend on the situation that created by the teacher or lecturer on the particular subject that being taught.

However, the researcher also found that the time of one IRF pattern to another IRF pattern occurred in the classroom interaction was quite long. It could be implied that the time of occurring among the IRF patterns was quite long about several cycles of the interactions This may be because of there were other patterns found such as IR and IF pattern. The researcher found that after IRF pattern occurred, there were long other initiation occurred. It probably happened because this class was a discussion class, so the students and lecturer could be discussed a topic or a question in long discussions. This finding could be implied that event though this class have been followed the IRF pattern based on the theory of Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), it could not be stated that this class was dominated by the IRF patterns, because the time of occurring of IRF pattern in the interaction was quite long.

The second finding of this research was that elicitation act was the most frequent act found in the classroom interaction at class C. The elicitation act occurred either in initiation moves from the lecturer or moves from the students. The same as the finding from Havwini (2019) in which found that the most dominant act in teacher and students' initiation was elicitation act. Since the current research is same as previous study, it probably can be said that in the online classroom, elicitation act is really needed. For the lecturer, it was needed for getting information from students for example, since the presence of students is hardly known by the teacher. So that, the lecturer often needed to check students' understanding toward the lesson, the class condition, students' presence, and even to check the student's connection in the platform being used.

Furthermore, the students' initiation mostly was frequently used by asking a question which was also involved to the elicitation act. This can probably be influenced the activeness of the students in the classroom interaction at the discussion class. Perhaps this could be indicated that the interaction of this classroom was good since the students were active during the classroom interaction during the discussion class. The researcher also found that the elicitation acts were frequently in the form of referential question. It could be seen from the questions that being asked by the lecturer in which he actually did not really know the answer. Most of the questions from the lecturer were asking about how was the opinion from the students about the topic being discussed. This kind of questions usually elicit long response from the students.

Since this class was a discussion class, so the lecturer frequently used the referential questions in elicitation acts.

However, the researcher also found that in initiation especially in elicitation acts from the students there were only several students who were active in the classroom. From these findings, the researcher could not definitely state the particular reasons of that because this class was in online. There were many obstacles that happened during the class. Since it was online, the lecturer could not make sure that all the students should be active in the classroom interaction.

Conclusion and Suggestion

From the study, it could be concluded that the interactional patterns employed by the lecturer have been followed the ideal pattern based on Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). Moreover, it could be concluded that the classroom interaction of this online class was categorized as a good interaction because the lecturer have been followed the ideal pattern of interaction and have been fulfilled the characteristic of a good classroom interaction. Based on the conclusion above, it is suggested that the lecturers in English Education Study Program have to be consider the interactional patterns that they employed in the classroom, because it can affect to the language learning of the students. Furthermore, since this study is limited to the synchronous online platform with limited data, the further researchers could conduct this similar research with other platform either synchronous or asynchronous platform and take bigger sample than this study and take some interviews with the sample so that it will enhance the findings of this kind of study.

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