

Pattern of Teacher–Student Conversation in the English Classroom: A Case Study in a Single Sex School

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Abstract- *This study aims to know the pattern of teacher – student conversation in English class in a single sex class. The data were obtained from a private Islamic bilingual high school Jombang. The study used qualitative approach. The data are based on the observations of the classroom and video recordings during three meetings in each class (female and male class). The theory used in the study was conversational analysis proposed by Paul Ten Have. There are four types of conversation analysis. They are turn – taking organization, sequence organization, repair organization, and preference organization. The result showed that the highest number of conversation analysis type was turn – taking organization followed by sequence organization (adjacency pairs) and the preference organization and the lowest number was repair organization. The pattern of teacher student conversation was influenced by several factors such as the topics discussed, the teaching – learning method used by the teacher, the rules of Islamic regulations and the teacher’s strategy in giving extra score to the students. Method. From the results it can be concluded that there were no marked differences of the pattern of teacher – student conversation found in the class of female student and male student only. The teacher had succeeded in the teaching and learning process without considering the gender of the students.*

Key words- *Teacher – Student conversation; Conversation Analysis; Single Sex class*

1. INTRODUCTION

Classroom interaction is an important factor in the success of the teaching learning process. Through a good classroom interaction built by the teacher and learners, the goal of education can be gained. There are many factors influencing the interaction. One of those factors is gender issue. In some cases, gender issue is still becoming a “problem”. Some teachers still treat male and female learners differently. The discussion about gender in education is always interesting to explore especially for Eastern people like in Indonesia. Few of them deals with the gender issue in English as foreign language classroom (Sunderland, 1992[15]; Lee, 2001[6]; Sadker D & Sadker M, 1984[13]). This study is aimed to illustrate, analyze, and discuss aspects of gender in the pattern of teacher–student conversation in a single sex class.

The term “Gender” is different from sex. Sex refers to the biological appearance but gender is more complex thing. It deals with the social life construction such as behaviors, norms and values that they have to consider. In line with these considerations, the teachers play an important roles in controlling this stereotypes and can create a good classroom atmosphere. Coates (2013: 4)[2] explained that sex refers to a biological distinction, while ‘gender’ is the term that deals with social life. Female and male look at the same situation from different point of view. It is because they are grown up in different way. People also

treat them differently, have different expectations and the society differentiate between them in some rules and norms that are also different from the process of socialization. In some cases boys are given more chances to speaking practice and more feedback on their utterances. Sibley (1990: 17)[14] stated that “Gender, defined here as the learned, cultural behaviors associated with the two biological sexes, has been shown to be a major factor influencing interactions between teachers and students”.

The pattern of teacher student conversation deals with how teachers and learners build the communication through conversation in the class in attempt to achieve the goal of the learning processes. Teachers as the role model for the students play an important part in creating and maintaining a harmonious condition in the classroom. Interaction in classroom is different from interaction or communication in the normal society (Männynsalo: 2008: 4)[8]. Interaction in the classroom must consider the norms, rules and the regulations. One of things to consider is that teachers should practice equality in treating and respecting the students. Some teachers said that they have treated and respected the students fairly, but in some cases teachers do not give balanced treatment to the students especially when dealing with the students’ gender. Pratama (2015)[11] stated that teachers do not treat girls and boys in the same way in the classrooms.

In school, students learn many skills and attitudes and beliefs regarding the schools rules and the outcome through relationship with others including the teachers inside classroom and outside the classroom (Baker. 1999: 58)[1]. Teachers and students should understand and respect their obligations and rights. A teacher as the role model should be able to build a good interaction among the students. When the students feel comfortable in learning activities they will be able to absorb the knowledge easily. In some cases, there are some students who are not comfortable when they study and stay together in the classroom with their opposite sex.

2. CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

Have (2007: 128)[4] defines Four types of interactional organization. They are important factors in analyzing the conversation done by human being. They are turn-taking organization; sequence organization; repair organization; and the organization of turn-design.

2.1 Turn-taking organization

Turn talking is a very important part in conversation analysis since through turn talking used by the speaker and the hearer, the conversation analysts will get the data to analyze in the communication. Have (2007: 128)[4] defined that turn talking as an organized activity is one of the core ideas of the conversation analysis. The best turn talk organization is when there is only one speaker in a period of time and the hearer as well. It must be understood by the speaker and hearer when they make a conversation.

2.2 Adjacency Pairs

In a conversation, there is an organization of talk that need to considered. If the speakers do not pay attention to the organization of conversation, there might be misunderstanding or overlapping during the conversation. According to Have (2007: 130)[4] “sequence” refers to the ordinary terms that one thing lead to another thing. When the speaker speaks, the hearer should hear the first speaker and vice versa.

Another explanation given by Lerner (2004: 6)[7], is that activities in conversation are built up into some sequences of actions and the organization of activities’ sequences makes a form of participation in conversation and each action structures gives a chance to involve. When the current speaker has already used its turn to talk, the next speaker should fill “the space” after the current speaker uttered his or her utterances. The concept of filling the space between the current speaker and the next speaker is commonly called as Adjacency pairs.

The adjacency pairs sets the ‘first pair part’ in relation with the ‘second pair parts’ expectable. The first turn is related to the second turn as the second speaker responds to the first turn. Schegloff and Sacks in Have (2007: 20)[4] remark that “adjacency pairs (APs) provide for a ‘close ordering’ of utterances which makes their use relevant for specific purposes, that is the creation of specific ‘sequential implications’, limiting what can

orderly be done in next position, and for specific organizational tasks, such as opening or closing a conversation.

Adjacency pairs are an important part of organization of conversation which consists of two paired parts, such as question-answer, assessment- agreement, or request-acceptance (Ingram, 2012: 163)[5]. Ingram (2012: 164)[5] also explained that adjacency pairs found in the classroom usually are in form of question – answer since by using questions, the students want to get the knowledge. The easy way in understanding the knowledge is by questioning to the teacher. Teacher uses question method in order to check the students’ understanding. Conversation analysis investigates the occurrence of turn – talking organization. Paltridge (2006: 115)[11] added that adjacency pairs are a core part in the conversation organization. They are the key factor to know how meanings are communicated and understood in a conversations. Adjacency pairs are the utterances produced by the two speakers whom the first speaker and the second speaker is related each other as usually the response from the speakers.

2.3 Repair Organization

In a conversation done by the speakers, sometimes there is a wrong word or message delivered by the speaker. Then the speaker needs to repair the wordings by giving some other words in order the hearer can understand what the speaker means. This is called repair. According to Have (2007: 219)[4] stated that repairs are used in various troubles in the interaction’s progress when the speakers have the communication. It repairs the troubles, such as mishearing, misunderstand of the discussion. Repairs in conversations involve the way to resolve the trouble arise in the interaction to continue the conversation successfully (Ingram, 2012: 164)[5].

2.4 Organization of Turn Design

Have (2007: 136)[4] explained that the general idea of the organization of turn design is that a speaker builds an utterance in such a way that it fits its recipient. What a speaker utters is able to be understood by the hearer which sometimes is not an easy thing. Coulthard (1985: 71)[3] defined that preference is a very powerful idea used to give an explanation the occurrence of other phenomena as the results when the speakers want to avoid misunderstanding in dispreferred seconds. There are two kinds of turn designed proposed by Have (2007: 218)[4] those are preferred action (affiliative) and dispreferred action (disaffiliative). Preference or preference organization is the structural responses and other actions emerges from the choices whether positive or negative responses and tend to be constructed differently. When the preferred (positive) action emerges, the response usually comes quickly while when there is dispreferred (negative) action the response will come slowly.

3. METHOD

This research used qualitative approach. In qualitative research, the research tends to ignore numbers since it focuses on the essential qualities beyond the numbers itself (Miles et al. p.282)[9]. This research data are obtained from single sex school in an Islamic boarding school commonly called "Pesantren". This school provides a specific phenomenon in which male and female students are educated in separate classroom because this school is part of an Islamic boarding school commonly called "Pesantren". As other Pesantren in Indonesia, this school also educates the students based on their gender. There are some local and religious rules and norms that are maintained by this school from time to time since the beginning of the school. This school is consistent to hold a class which separate the students into male and female classroom. Although the students are separated by their gender, the teachers both male and female are not segregated. It means that male teachers as well as female teachers can teach in both male and female classroom. The classes were observed for three times for both female and male class.

4. DISCUSSION

The discussion is divided into three parts. The first is teacher – student interaction in a class of female student, the second is teacher – student interaction in a class of male student, and the third is the similarities and differences of teacher – student interaction in a class of female and male student.

4.1 Teacher – student interaction in a class of female student only

All conversation analysis types can be found in the class of female students' class. The biggest number of conversation analysis type found in the class of female students only class was turn – taking organization followed by sequence organization and repair organization. Turn – taking organization as the biggest one was commonly caused by the tradition of an old teaching method where the teacher still led and dominated the class all time. Although the teacher gave the students chance to express their ideas, the students still reluctant or shy because they were worried in making mistakes. Once the teacher pointed the certain student to come forward, some students would come forward and explained to their classmates and the other refused it.

The highest number of conversation analysis type found in the three meetings observed was turn – taking organization. It was 573 times (55.4%). It was caused by the teacher often communicate with the students by asking individually and in group to make sure or to check the students' understanding about the topics discussed. In one of the meeting, the teacher gave the students a copy of materials that enabled the students to have more understanding. The teacher also used another device to

display the materials on the screen. It helped the students to maintain their concentration during the session.

Teacher also dominated the class in all meetings. It was also because the teaching method used by the teacher was teacher centered in which all was determined by the teacher. In some meetings the teacher also involved the students to lead the discussion with their classmates about the topics under the teacher's supervision.

The lowest number of the conversation analysis type found in the class of female students only was repair organization. It was commonly because the teacher and the students used the native language. The use of native language (Indonesian language) was dominated by the teacher since the teacher needed to make sure that the students would not misunderstand. Besides, the teacher also found some difficulties in delivering the topics especially in explaining the details. The teacher sometimes used both languages simultaneously, English language first then native language (Indonesian language) when she thought that the students would not understand if the teacher used English language only. As the result, the Indonesian language was used by the teacher and students mostly to bridge their communication and to avoid misunderstanding.

When the teacher asked the students voluntarily to explain the topics in front of class. All students kept silent for few minutes. Even though the teacher asked the students for the second time, the students did not respond the teacher's question by keeping silent because they were not sure whether they could do the teacher's instruction well or not. Some students asked another students by whispering their friends to respond to the teacher's instruction to explain in front of the class.

4.2 Teacher – student interaction in a class of male student only

From the data results found in the class of male students only, the teacher mostly treat the students similarly in both classes, female only class and male only class. The difficulties were commonly about the language used. The students had difficulties in practicing their English. In most time, the teacher as the role model still used to use the native language in emphasizing the instruction and the explanation.

In term of theory used in the study, conversation analysis proposed by Have (2007)[4], the study found all types of conversation analysis in the class of male students only as well as in the class of female students only. The turn – taking organization was the highest number found in the class of male students only. It was because the teacher mostly dominated the class. When the teacher asked the students or explained the topics, she asked all students not to certain students but to the whole class.

While the lowest number of conversation analysis type found was repair organization. It was caused by the teacher who dominated the class the teacher as well as the students also used Indonesian language during the class.

The interaction built by the teacher and the students was mostly dominated by the teacher. Although the teacher had asked the students to be more active in the classroom as explained by the teacher that they were now using 2013 curriculum which the students must be active, the students still ignored the teacher's explanation.

In term of using the native language, the teacher also mostly used the native language. It was the strategy used by the teacher to make the students understand more the topics discussed. Not only for the topics discussed but also when the teacher asked or gave the instruction to the students, she also used bilingual languages, English and Indonesian language as their native language. The teacher used the native language was aimed to give a help the students to comprehend the questions and the instruction. The use of the native language helped the students and the teacher in building the interaction between the teacher and the students during teaching and learning process.

In the male student only class, the class had more jokes and the jokes mostly initiated by the students. Proven that the teacher many times reminded the students to be serious. The teacher's reaction when she knew the students make a joke, she automatically reminded to be serious. If not, the students would do the same things again and again.

The students in male class mostly did not care about the extra score given by the teacher. It happened when in each meeting, the teacher persuaded the students to respond the teacher's question by giving the students an extra score. Unfortunately no students responded, then the teacher pointed certain student and directly asked to explain the topics in front of the class.

4.3 The similarities and the differences of teacher-student interaction in the class of female only students and the class of male only students.

During the class, the teacher had the same pattern in opening classes. She started the class by saying "salam" then she called roll the students' name to make sure the students joined the class at each meeting. The way teacher called the roll of the students was quite different between

female class and male class. In female class, the teacher asked the students about who was absent at that day while in male class the teacher called each student's name. It was because the number of students in the male class was less than in female class. Teacher asked the female students' who were absent to save time.

In both classes, female and male class the teacher always reviewed the previous topics discussed. The teacher always checked the students' understanding by asking the students some questions related to the previous meeting. If the students could answer the teacher's questions, she will proceed to new topics, but when the students could not answer the questions she explained the topics again.

In the class of female students only and the class of male students only, the teacher persuaded the students to answer the teacher's questions by giving an extra score to every student who could answer the questions. By persuading the students with an extra score, the teacher had succeeded to motivate and encouraged the students to be more active to participate in the class. The female students were very enthusiastic in answering the teacher's questions. They raised their hand in order the teacher pointed them to answer the questions. It happened only in the female class. Surprisingly, in the male class, the teacher's strategy to motivate the students to be more active and to encourage the students by giving an extra score did not work successfully. The male students kept silent when the teacher announced that whoever could answer the questions, the teacher would give an extra score. It happened in all meetings. Then the teacher pointed certain students to answer the question.

There were some jokes found during the teaching and learning activities. The jokes found in the class of female students only were mostly initiated by the teacher. The jokes were aimed to refresh the students' concentration. While in the class of male students only, the jokes found in the class were mostly initiated by the students. When the students made a joke, their friends laughed together and responded the joke with another jokes. That is why in some meetings the teacher reminded the students to be serious when they were trying to make the joke.

Table 3.3 Teacher – student Interaction in both classes, female class and male class only.

Types of CA	Female student class							Male student class						
	M 1		M2		M3		Total	M1		M2		M3		Total
TTO	210	57.7%	185	60.9%	178	47.3%	573	171	53.9%	204	55.3%	140	37.9%	515
AP	57	15.7%	80	26.3%	86	22.9%	223	57	18%	80	21.7%	77	20.9%	214
RO	14	3.8%	10	3.3%	22	5.9%	36	19	6%	21	5.7%	15	4.1%	55
PO	83	22.8%	29	9.5%	90	23.9%	202	70	22.1%	64	17.3%	57	15.4%	191
total	364		304		376		1034	317		369		289		975

*CA: conversation analysis

AP: adjacency pairs

M: meeting

RO: repair organization

TTO: turn – taking organization

PO: Preference organization

The interaction in the class of female only students was found more often than in the class of male only students. It was because the students were the same gender as the teacher. When the teacher and students are the same gender, the class would be more live. There would be more interaction built between the teacher and the students since the students did not feel hesitate to respond to the teacher's question and instruction.

In the teaching and learning process, the teacher and the students used also the native language which is Indonesian language in both classes, female students only and male student's only class. The teacher used Indonesian language during the teaching and learning process was to make sure that the students understand with the teacher's questions, instructions, and explanations. Islamic values as the unwritten regulations were obeyed by the teacher and the students. It has big influences to the teacher –student interaction both in female class and female class. The teacher had not have physical contact with the opposite sex in the classroom. While the teacher had the physical contact with the students in the same sex

It can be seen from the table above that turn – taking organization was the highest number of conversation analysis type found in both classes, female student only and male student only. The lowest number of conversation analysis type found was repair organization. There were no big differences found in the data between female student class and male student class. It means that the teacher had treated the students fairly. She did not differentiate between female and male students.

5. CONCLUSION

The pattern of teacher – student conversation in the classroom was influenced by many factors. The pattern of teacher student conversation was not different between the class of female students only and the class of male students only. In term of theory used in the study which was conversation analysis proposed by Have (2007)[4], the highest number of type of conversation analysis was turn – taking organization.

One of the causes was the teacher still applied the old method in teaching the students. The teacher dominated the class. She mostly asked the students some questions to the whole class. As the result, whoever could answer the questions? As explained in the previous chapters that current speaker self-selects was the condition that the current speaker gave the chance to all hearers (the students) to be the next speaker. It means that when the teacher asked the class to answer the questions, meaning that all students had the same right or chance to select themselves to be the next speaker in the conversation.

The least number of conversation analysis types was repair organization. It was also the same findings in both classes, female only class and male only class. It was caused by the teacher and the students still used Indonesian language in the classroom. The teacher also used Indonesian language especially when the teacher asked questions to the

students. She usually asked questions and gave instructions in bilingual. Indonesian language was used to help the students in understanding the topics discussed.

The effect of Islamic regulations toward the teacher – student interaction was quite high. The teacher and the students are not allowed to have physical contact between different genders. Although there were no written regulations that manage the interaction which was allowed or not allowed between different genders in the classroom, the teacher and students really knew well the regulation. It became the habit when they lived and study in Islamic boarding house and schools.

Surprisingly, the teacher's strategy to motivate the students by giving an extra score or point to those who could answer the teacher's questions was not successful in the class of male students. The students were not enthusiastic when the teacher persuaded the students by giving an extra score. They ignored the chance to have the extra score given by the teacher by being silent. While the teacher's strategy to give extra score for the students who can answer the teacher's questions was successful for the female students' class. Most of the students raised their hand in order the teacher gave them a chance to have the extra score.

The result of the study showed that there were not significant differences found in teacher –student interaction in the class of female students only and male students only. There were only slight differences that can be found which is the number of teacher – student interaction found in both classes. In the class of female student only, the teacher interacted more than in the class of male student only.

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