



**AN ANALYSIS OF IRF (INITIATION-RESPONSE-FEEDBACK)
IN INTERACTION BETWEEN TEACHER AND STUDENTS IN
ENGLISH CLASS AT SMA NEGERI 2 PADANG PANJANG**

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Abstract

This research is conducted based on the phenomenon of an interaction of learning English based on curriculum 2013. This study aims to find and analyze the pattern of IRF interaction used by students and teachers in SMA Negeri 2 Padang Panjang. The types of questions teacher use, types of student responses to teacher questions, and the types of teacher feedback in responding to a student. Theories about the types of question used by a teacher in the classroom, theories about the types of student responses in the classroom and theories about the various feedbacks that teachers use in the classroom are used as the basis for answering those three questions. The results of the analysis show that, 1) there are five types of questions that teachers often use to ask students questions: referential question, display question, convergent question, and divergent question, 2) there are four types of responses used by students: open-ended or student-initiated, specific response, silence, and similar student responses, 3) there are five types of teacher feedback: repeating, acknowledging a correct answer, indicating an incorrect answer and summarizing. The type of this research is descriptive qualitative. Data is collected in two classes with two teachers and each class has 36 students. Based on IRF analysis it can be concluded that between teacher initiation and student response dominate each other but the response of students with the frequency of student initiation is still very low. The reason for this is because the teacher initiates a lot by asking students, the students automatically passive and only a few express their ideas. So that the goal of the learning process based on the 2013 curriculum is not achieved optimally.

Key words: *Classroom discourse, interaction, IRF, curriculum 2013.*

A. INTRODUCTION

In the classroom discourse, there is an interaction between teacher and students or among students. However, the interaction may vary. A teacher, for example, may speak to an individual student while the rest of students become hearers. This interaction usually takes place when a teacher expects a student to answer a particular question or when the interaction is the informal one. A teacher, however, may converse with some students (e.g. in a group work) for giving instructions or information on what the students need to do. Sometimes,



students begin to speak to the teacher to convey their ideas. In addition to these three teacher-student interactions, there are also some forms of interaction among students. A student may discuss with his or her friends for a group task or perform in front of class such as doing a presentation using a foreign language.

Successful learning in a classroom relies on the good interaction between teacher and students. Malamah-Thomas (1987, in Mingzhi, 2005:59) states that a teacher may initiate an interaction by asking students, followed by the students' response and the feedback from the teacher. This interaction is also known as IRF (initiation-response-feedback) pattern.

IRF pattern is proposed by Sinclair and Coulthard in 1975. IRF pattern describes a reciprocal relationship between teacher and students in the classroom. Teacher raises a question, then students answer it, and the teacher gives an evaluative follow-up or feedback before raising another question are referred to as initiation, response, and follow-up or feedback. Because of IRF is a pattern that structured, it is useful to analyze the classroom interaction. According to McCarthy M (2002 cited in Yu W 2009:155), it is very important to analyzing pattern in an interaction where talk is relatively tightly structured. Thus, analyzing IRF pattern is very helpful in seeing the interaction between teacher and students. Cazden (1988 cited in Farrell S.C. Thomas 2009:60) says that the form of a question is usually as initiation in the classroom. According to Richard and Lockheart (1996:185), there are three types of questions; Firts, procedural question that is used by the teacher in checking assignments had been completed, to know the students were ready or not for a new task, teacher engage students in the lesson, help student to master the content of a lesson, to facilitate their comprehension, and to promote classroom interaction are the function of Procedural questions. Second, Convergent question that question encourages similar student responses such as "yes" or "no" or responses which focus on a central theme. It is useful when the teacher focuses on certain skills or information. Third Divergrnt questionis used by the teacher to compare students' ideas about a specific topic. In addition, Sutter considers three types of question that teacher used to initiates students in the classroom, they are Display question, Referential question and Socratic or Elicitation question. The question that answer has already known before is known as Divergent question. Brown, (2001: 171) says that Referential question is a question that involves student to generate the long response. Besides, the teacher does not know the answer.). Using the student's answers as point of departure for the next question is a kind of Socratic or Elicitation question.

Mehan (1979:55) argues that teacher uses the variety of strategies until students understand the questions and give the suitable response. For example, when a teacher does not get a response or gets a wrong answer to an elicitation, he can start again by repeating or rephrasing the question, or move on to another student it is called "bound initiation" (Ib), and it may be bound in ways of "re-initiation", "listing", "reinforce", or "loop".

The varieties of student response can be seen from interaction analysis as known as Foreign Language Interaction (FLINT) by Moskowitz in Brown (2001:170) as known as student talk. First, *Student response, specific*: responding

to the teacher within a specific and limited range of available or previously practiced answers, reading aloud, dictation, drills. Second, *Student response, open-ended or student-initiated*: responding to the teacher with students' own ideas, opinions, reactions, feelings. Giving one from among many possible answers that have been previously practiced but from which students must now make a selection initiating the participation. Third, *Silence*: pauses in the interaction. Periods of quiet during which there is no verbal interaction. Fourth, *Silence-AV*: silence in the interaction during which a piece of audio-visual equipment, e.g., a tape recorder, filmstrip projector, record player, etc., is being used to communicate. Fifth, *Confusion, work-oriented*: more than one person at a time talking, so the interaction cannot be recorded. Students calling out excitedly, eager to participate or respond, concerned with the task at hand. Sixth, *Confusion, non-work-oriented*: more than one person at a time talking to the interaction cannot be recorded. Students out of order, not behaving as the teacher wishes, not concerned with the task at hand.

According to Richard and Lockheart (1996:188), feedback can be positive or negative. Varieties of feedback are available on content as known as feedback content. There are varieties of feedback content as follows:

- 1.) Acknowledging a correct answer: The teacher acknowledges that a student's answer is correct by saying, for example, "Good," "Yes, That's right," or "Fine."
- 2.) Indicating an incorrect answer: The teacher indicates that a student's answer is incorrect by saying, for example, "No, that's not quite right," or "Mmm."
- 3.) Praising. The teacher compliments a student for an answer, for example, by saying "Yes, an excellent answer."
- 4.) Expanding or modifying a student's answers the teacher responds to vague or incomplete answer by providing more information or rephrasing the answer in the teacher's own words. For example:
T: Does anyone know the capital of the United States?
S: Washington.
T: Yes, Washington, D.C. That's located on the east coast.
- 5.) Repeating. The teacher repeats the student's answer.
- 6.) Summarizing. The teacher gives a summary of what a student or group of students has said.
- 7.) Criticizing. The teacher criticizes a student for the kind of response provided. For example:

T: Raymond, can you point out the topic sentence in this paragraph?

R: The first sentence.

T : How can it be the first sentence? Remember, I said the first sentence is not always the topic sentence in every paragraph. Look again!

This study specifically analyzed the dominant part of IRF pattern that occurs during the interaction between teacher and students, the types of each part of the initiation, response, and feedback in the interaction between teachers and students. Besides, some researchers have conducted research on IRF patterns such

as to see teacher strategies in interacting with students, analyzing IRF in group discussions among college students, knowing problems that arise during teacher and student interactions in the classroom and so on. Although there are a lot of researchers who have conducted the research previously, this research is different because the researcher investigated the IRF in the class that applied curriculum 2013 which expresses student-centered learning principle. According to *Permendikbud (No. 70 Tahun 2013) Curriculum, 2013* is based on student-centered learning. For example, students need to expand their ideas by doing initiation to the teacher as called as student initiation. The teacher needs to guide the students through the learning process, especially in core activities. There are five steps in core activities such as observing, questioning, exploring, associating and communicating.

The purpose of conducting this research was to obtain information about the the dominant and the types of each part of IRF pattern. The result of this research will be able to inform the teachers about the phenomena in interaction under the analysis of IRF pattern between teacher and students in the classroom.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was a descriptive qualitative research because the research was designed to analyze the IRF pattern in interaction between teacher and students in the learning process. According to Iskandar (2009:61) points out that “descriptive qualitative research is a research that systematic and subjective approach in describing phenomena or social phenomena in the field and understanding those phenomena as detail”.

This research was designed to analyze the first grade students in SMA Negeri 2 Padang. The subject of the research were X MIPA 1 class and X MIPA 4 class, and the sample was chosen by cluster sampling, so X MIPA 1 class and X MIPA 4 class were chosen as the sample classes. The research used video recorder, observation sheet and interview guide as the instrument to obtain the data. Interaction between teacher and students were recorded by using video recorder, the observation sheet was used by the researcher to record the data in the form of information while observing, and to gather the data from the participant intensively the interview was done.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Finding

The data of the research were obtained from the teacher and students interaction in the classrooms. The instrument used to obtain the data about IRF pattern in interaction between teacher and students. The whole respondents for the research were two teachers in two classes and 36 students for each class.

a. MIPA 1 Class

Table 1. Types of (I) initiation, R (response), (F) feedback

IRF	Total
Types of initiation	
Divergent Question	1

Convergent Question	7
Referential Question	12
Display Question	14
Types of Response	
Silence	4
Similar Student Response	4
Open-ended or Student-initiated	13
Specific Response	13
Types of feedback	
Repeating	11
Acknowledging a correct answer	7
Expanding or Modifying	7
Indicating an incorrect answer	1
Summarizing	1

The total used of IRF pattern between teacher and students was 95 turns. The numbers of initiation were 34 turns with two teacher's bound initiation. For example, turns 22 shows that teacher did bound initiation to the students in order to get a suitable response to the students. After the teacher did bound initiation the student gave open-ended or student initiation to the teacher. It means that teacher needs to initiate again in order to get a suitable response. Based on the data, from 6 types of initiations the teacher only used 4 types. The types were Divergent question, Convergent question, Referential question, and Display question.

Besides, the total of students response were 34 turns that the kinds of students response open-ended or student-initiated just 13 turns. Although, students have the same turns as teacher initiation turns. It doesn't mean that all turns of students' response were student-initiated. Referring to curriculum 2013, student-centered learning described a student do more initiation to the teacher during the lesson. Comparing with the numbers of student, unfortunately there were only a few students who had initiation to share ideas in the learning process. Whereas, the students should actively take a part in sharing and giving ideas and knowledge. Based on the interview there were some factors why some students response and the others not. Besides, the silence-AV was the only types of students response not occurred during the lesson (see appendix 2). It can be seen that student who took a part in IRF pattern commonly gave variation types of response. Moreover, from 6 types of students response, they used only 4 types in the classroom such as Silence, Similar Student Response, Open-ended or Student Initiation and Specific Response.

From the students' response in IRF pattern teacher gave some feedback to the students. Although not all feedbacks gave by the teacher after students' response it can be seen from the turns 1 and 2 there was no feedback after students' response in the turn 1, teacher directly did initiation in the turn 2. It also happened in the turns 15 and 16, 20 and 21 that teacher not gave some feedback. However, based on the interview most of students said that teacher usually gave feedback based on their response. In fact, the teacher not used all of the types of feedback from 7 types of feedback the teacher only used 5 types. The types were

Repeating, Acknowledging a Correct Answer, Expanding or Modifying, Indicating an Incorrect Answer, Summarizing.

Table 2: IRF in X MIPA 1

IRF	CLAS X MIPA 1		
I	34	I	31
		Ib	3
R	34	R	21
		SI	13
F	27	F	27
TOTAL			95

List of Abbreviation:

1. I : Initiation
2. R : Response
3. F : Feedback
4. SI : Students initiation
5. Ib : Bound initiation

To sum up, the table above explains that most of the turns were taken by the teacher. The teacher still dominated the interaction which the teacher asked a question and the students answered it. Unfortunately, no students took turn individually by asking a question. Most of the students answered together. In other words, the learning process was not running as it should be because the students just answered the question from the teacher. It influences the centered learning between teacher and students. In fact, the school is implemented curriculum 2013 with the student-centered-learning, but the teacher was still dominant in the learning process.

b. X MIPA 4

Table 3. Types of (I) initiation, R (response), (F) feedback

IRF	Total
Types of initiation	
Referential Question	10
Socratic or Elicitation Question	2
Convergent Question	1
Types of Response	
Open-ended or student initiated	5
Silence	7
Similar Response	1
Types of feedback	
Expanding or Modifying	3
Acknowledging a correct answer	1

The total turns were 30, the number of teacher initiation was 13 turns with 4 turns of bound initiation or Ib. Students response was 13 turns with 5 turns of students open-ended or students' initiation. The number of teacher feedback was 4 turns. From 6 types of teacher initiations the teacher used only 3 types. The types were Referential question, Socratic or Elicitation question and Convergent question. Based on the data, from 6 types of Students Response the students used only 3 types to response teacher question such as Open-ended or student initiated Silence and Similar Response. It was also found that not all feedback that teacher gives based on students response. From 7 types of feedback, teacher used only 2 types. The types are expanding or modifying, and acknowledging a correct answer.

Table 4. IRF in X MIPA 4

IRF	CLAS X MIPA 4		
I	13	I	8
		Ib	5
R	13	R	8
		SI	5
F	4	F	4
TOTAL			30

In short, it can be seen that the most or dominant part of IRF pattern used by teacher and students in learning process was Initiation and Response (R) did by teacher and students during interaction in the learning process. It means that some students have tried to act in interaction and the teacher tried to engage students in the lesson. However, the teacher commonly gave bound initiation to the students. It was because the students commonly did not answer with the suitable response to the teacher did the bound initiation. In another word, IRF pattern occurred in the learning process, but only some students took their turn by asking the question or sharing their ideas.

Table 7: IRF in X MIPA 1 class and X MIPA 4

IRF		
Initiation	Response	Feedback
Divergent question	Similar student response	Expanding or and Modifying
Convergent question	Open-ended or student initiated	Acknowledging a correct answer
Referential question	Specific response	Indicating an incorrect answer
Display Question	Silence	Summarizing

So, the findings of the research are:

- a. The types of initiation that used by teachers were Divergent question, Convergent question, Referential question, and Display Question.

- b. The types of students response that students used were Similar student response, Open-ended or student initiated, Specific response and Silence.
- c. The types of teachers' feedback were Expanding or Modifying Acknowledging a correct answer, Acknowledging a correct answer Indicating an incorrect answer and Summarizing.
- d. The number of teacher initiation and student response was dominated each other but the type of student initiation as student response that was expected occur in the classroom line with curriculum 2013 less than teacher initiation. So, the dominant part of IRF pattern was initiation by teacher.

2. Discussion

The findings following the analysis of the two classes show that there are similarities regarding to the IRF pattern of the X MIPA 1 class and X MIPA 4 class. This discussion focuses on why these classrooms appear to exhibit such similarities. It can be seen from the data above that the teachers in each classroom still dominate during the learning process and not all students respond with student-initiated type. In this case, the IRF pattern as a tool to record the phenomena in the interaction between teacher and students. Based on the data, IRF pattern emerged in interaction during the learning process. Many types of Initiation, response, and Feedback were used by teachers and students in the classroom.

Firstly, in MIPA 1 class teacher used many types of question to initiate students such as Divergent Question, Convergent Question, Referential Question, Display Question. The teacher in this class used four types of questions from six types of teacher question in the classroom. It means that the teacher used varieties types of question to initiate students as the initiation part in IRF pattern. Teacher question automatically affects students response. In this case, students in this classroom response with a Specific response that they answer the teacher based on previous practice answer or the answer had already known before. However, some students response with open-ended or student-initiated, they were sometimes response with their own idea. Occasionally, some students response with similar students response because the teacher sometimes initiates students with convergent questions. Unfortunately, some students responded with silence from teacher initiation.

As the types of response that students used in this class were the Specific response, Open-ended or Student-Initiated and Silence, Similar Student Response, and Silence. For the most types of response that occurred in this classroom were Open-ended or Student-Initiated and Specific response. The fact, based on the interview data some students claimed that they want to express their idea and ask the teacher as student initiation. Besides, based on the data the number of Specific Response was similar with Open-ended or Student-Initiated. It proves that students in this classroom response to the teacher in a good way. It shows that X MIPA 1 class suitable for students activity.

As the third part of IRF called feedback that teacher gives to students as the confirmation or evaluation based on student answer. In this class, the teacher used

five types of feedback like Repeating, Acknowledging a Correct Answer, Expanding or Modifying, Indicating an incorrect answer and Summarizing. However, the teacher commonly gave feedback with repeating type. It means that teacher usually repeats what student answer during the interaction. It causes some students did not get some expected feedback such as praise. Although, the Acknowledging a Correct Answer were used to confirm student answer. Yet, not all students got feedback from the teacher. Based on the interview a student claimed that she was not getting feedback from the teacher although she already answered. Even though, the teacher tried to Expanding or Modifying Indicating an incorrect answer and Summarizing the answer from students as teacher feedback. In short, IRF pattern occurred in this classroom with initiation and response dominating each other and followed with feedback by the teacher. Even so, the amount of teacher initiation was more than student initiation. As known, this class was used curriculum 2013 that asked student more active by giving initiation to the teacher during the learning process.

Secondly, in MIPA 4 class teacher used various types of question to initiate students such as Referential Question, Socratic or Elicitation Question, and Convergent Question. The teacher in this class used three types of questions from six types of teacher question in the classroom. It means that the teacher used different types of question to initiate students as the initiation part in IRF pattern. Teacher initiation by giving some questions of course affected students response. For example, teacher initiate students by giving Referential question, In this case, students in this classroom response with Silence. It was because some students not ready to enter the lesson yet. Based on the interview some of the students claimed that they were not prepared the lesson at home. Because of that, the teacher needs to do bound initiation in order to get students suitable response. Besides, some students response with open-ended or student-initiated, they were sometimes response with their own idea. However, the number of students response with silence were more than student response with open-ended or student-initiated type. Occasionally, some students response with similar students response because the teacher sometimes initiates students with convergent questions.

For this classroom, the teacher has used two different types of feedback like Expanding or Modifying and Acknowledging a Correct Answer. It shows that students answer need to expand and modified by the teacher. It can be seen from their ability in answering teacher's initiation that most of them gave the response with silence. Despite, the teacher gave feedback with Acknowledging a correct answer as a feedback to students. Although, the amount of this types was less than Expanding or Modifying. To sum up, in X MIPA 4 class the IRF exist during the learning process. However, the teacher still dominates in interaction because of most of the students commonly response with silence. Because of that the bound initiation often appears during the learning process. In addition, the teacher only uses two types of feedback only. However, there are many types of feedback that teacher can be used in the classroom.

In conclusion, the IRF pattern exists in both classes X MIPA 1 and X MIPA 4 in SMA Negeri 2 Padang Panjang. Generally, the initiation by teacher and response by students still dominate each other. Besides, the data shows that the

amount types of students response with Open-Ended or Student-Initiated less than teacher initiation. In addition, teacher sometimes did bound initiation in order to get student suitable response. The types of feedback that teachers used in that class need to be more variation during the lesson. It happened both in X MIPA 1 and X MIPA 4. Whereas, these two classes used curriculum 2013 that required student centered-learning. In addition, in curriculum 2013 has five steps such as observing, questioning, exploring, associating, and communicating. However, based on the observation sheet data in the questioning step which students have an opportunity to ask teacher as student initiation, the teacher takes the change to ask students. Whereas, the teacher just need to guide students to create a question. It also seems that during the observation the learning process dominates by the teacher. the teacher asks students and students answer teacher question it happened continually in the learning process.

It can be concluded these classes were already using curriculum 2013 but the purpose of learning process based on Curriculum 2013 has not been maximally applied. It can be proven from the data based on analysis of IRF that teacher still dominates in the classroom. In other word, the IRF pattern was found in these two classes and the process of the learning in the classroom still dominated by the teacher. In fact, the school is using curriculum 2013. As known curriculum 2013 is based on student-centered-learning.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

IRF is phenomenon potentially occurs during the interaction. It usually takes place in the classroom. The interaction between teacher and students can produce the pattern of IRF. The most part of IRF pattern between teacher and students in SMA Negeri 2 Padang Panjang were Initiation (I) – Response (R). The percentage of teachers' feedback is less than the other turns of IRF pattern. It means that not all students response get teachers feedback. Dealing with the pattern, the turn was initiated by the teacher by asking some question and students just answer it.

Not all students participated in the learning process. It is because the learning process is dominated by the teacher. The process of learning was not suitable for curriculum 2013. The teacher just asking and students answer it as the sequential in that learning process. Even though, some students' response by sharing their ideas or student initiated but this type was less than teacher initiation in the classroom.

The teacher was not following the rule of the steps of learning process based on the curriculum 2013 such as observing, questioning, exploring, associating, and communicating. It was difficult to found the boundary of the steps during the learning process. The teacher seems like teaches the material directly without involving students actively. In fact, based on the curriculum of 2013, students need to be active in the lesson by working in pair or group and the teachers just facilitate them to engage the lesson.

In short, based on the analysis of IRF in the interaction between teacher and students in English class it can be seen thatthe IRF pattern that used by teacher and students was initiated by studentsbut the role of a teacher is still dominant during the learning process.

Based on the conclusions above, there are some suggestions that can be made. First, it is suggested for the teacher to aware that the role of the teacher during the interaction as a tutor and guide the student more active without taking students' change to do the initiation. Second, it is also suggested for the teacher to use variation feedback. It is because of the part of feedback less than other parts in IRF pattern. Meanwhile, feedback is also important to increase students motivation, confident, and evaluation. Third, for further research, there are some aspects that may be possible done by the next researcher. The researcher suggests doing the next research in the interaction between teacher to a group students, student to teacher, student to student, student to group members or student to whole class.

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