



An Analysis of Teachers' classroom Language at SMPN 4 Muara Bungo

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Abstract

The present research aims to figure out (1) teachers' classroom language occurs in the teaching and learning process, and (2) teachers' reflection on their classroom language. The study employed qualitative descriptive research with the three teachers of SMPN 4 Muara Bungo as the participants. Observation and Stimulated Recall Interview (SIR) were used to conduct the data, and the data were analyzed by using Salaberri's handbook of classroom language (1995). The result of this study showed that teachers spoke six types out of 8 types of classroom language suggested by Sallaberi, namely simple instruction, dealing with the language of spontaneous situation, the language of social interaction, pair group work, question types, and dealing with error. However, the average of teacher's English classroom language use showed a low percentage, which was only 45,4%. It proved that teachers in this study did not provide comprehensible input to their students. Through a stimulated recall interview, the teachers admitted that they are still not optimal in providing input to the students. It was because of two reasons: (1) students' proficiency and (2) teachers' proficiency themselves.

Keywords:

Language input, classroom language, teacher talk analysis

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INTRODUCTION

Language input, which “refers to all types of data from the target language that the learner is exposed to and from which they learn” (Zainil, 2019, p. 24) is very important in language learning. It allows the learners to improve their language proficiency, and the comprehensible input can lead the learner to the acquisition (Krashen, 1982).

The most possible place for EFL students to get the optimal input is in their classroom through teachers' classroom language. According to Burazin (2018), classroom language is a language commonly used inside a classroom like giving

requests, asking questions, praising, checking understanding, etc. Bilash (2011) defines “Classroom language as the routine language that is used regularly in the classroom like instructing praise”. In addition, Heath (1987) specifically defines classroom language as the segments of discourse -- sequences, of a unit of language arranged to produce interaction for particular functions. It focuses on the function of units of language larger than the sentence.

In the EFL context, teachers’ classroom language is one of the major sources for the students to get English input. Teachers’ classroom language, in the term of English, helps the students to be engaged in real and meaningful communication. Zainil (2019) additionally states that the best way to teach a foreign language is probably by providing input continually to the students. To provide the students with the continually optimal input, teachers must have adequate knowledge of classroom language to make them capable of providing the students with the optimal input. However, some EFL teachers are still unaware of the language they use in the classroom. Instead of using English, they prefer to use Bahasa Indonesia and their mother tongue in their class. It is also found teachers do code-switching where they combine two or more languages in one sentence or phrase.

Some studies related to the present research have been undertaken in the past. Polio and Duff (2007) had analyzed the teachers’ language use in university foreign language classrooms. Rabbidge and Chappel (2014) explored the use of classroom language in South Korean elementary school. It was found that those teachers were not implementing the government policy in which they are supposed to teach English through English, dubbed TETE. In the other study, Canh and Renandya (2017) had examined the correlation between teachers’ English proficiency and classroom language use. They found that teachers’ general proficiency significantly affects the way they use language in the classroom to promote learning. Their classroom proficiency is at least as important as their general proficiency. Although the examination of language use in the classroom has become a crucial issue worldwide, there is still limited information available in Indonesia literature on teachers’ classroom language. Therefore, it is very useful to research the classroom language used by Indonesian teachers in the teaching and learning process. This present research was done at SMPN 4 Muara Bungo. It aimed to analyze teachers’ classroom language regarding the language input and teachers’ reflection toward their classroom language.

METHOD

This present research employed a qualitative research method. It involved an explanation of the social phenomenon in helping us understand our social world where we live (Hancock, Ockleford, & Windridge, 2007). This study focused on the language phenomenon, which specifically analyzed teachers’ classroom language and teachers’ reflection on their classroom language. The participants of this study were three English teachers of SMPN 4 Muara Bungo and their respective classes. Classroom observation and Stimulated Recall Interview (SRI) were used to gain the data which were done from August 31st to September 21st, 2020. Moreover, to answer the research questions, teacher lesson transcripts, and stimulated recall interview transcripts were analyzed. AS-unit helped in analyzing the teachers’ classroom

language found during the teaching and learning process; then, it had been grouped based on Sallaberi's handbook (1995).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Finding

1. Teachers' Classroom Language occurs in Pre Teaching

After analyzing the data by using Sallaberri's Handbook for English Classroom: Classroom language (1995), four types of classroom language were found in pre-teaching; namely, Simple Instruction (SI), Dealing with the Language of Spontaneous Situations (SS), The Language of Social Interaction (SIn), and Question Types (QT).

Table 1. *Amount of Teachers' Classroom Language in Pre Teaching*

Teacher	Teachers' Classroom Language in Pre Teaching			
	SI	SS	SIn	QT
A	13	4	13	19
B	-	6	11	5
C	45	37	37	123
Total	58	47	61	147

Question types are the dominant ones found in pre-teaching, which is about 147 utterances. Teacher C is the one who used the question types and other classroom languages the most during pre-teaching. Teacher B is the one who used the least amount of classroom language during this phase of teaching.

2. Teachers' Classroom Language occurs in Whilst Teaching

In whilst teaching, six types of classroom language were found, namely Simple Instruction (SI), Dealing with Language of Spontaneous Situations (SS), The Language of Social Interaction (SIn), and Question Types (QT), Pair Group Work (PG), and Dealing with Errors (DE).

Table 2. *The Amount of Teachers Classroom Language in Whilst Teaching*

Teacher	Teachers' Classroom Language in Whilst Teaching					
	SI	SS	SIn	QT	PG	DE
A	56	-	42	36	2	15
B	151	7	50	110	5	2
C	215	37	93	351	2	8
Total	422	44	185	497	9	25

Question types are also the dominant classroom language found in whilst teaching, which was spoken about 497 utterances. Teacher C is the one who used the question types the most during whilst teaching. Teacher B is the one who used the least amount of classroom language during this phase of teaching.

3. Teachers' Classroom Language occurs in Post Teaching

In teaching, three types of classroom language were found namely Simple Instruction (SI), The Language of Social Interaction (SIn), and Question Types (QT).

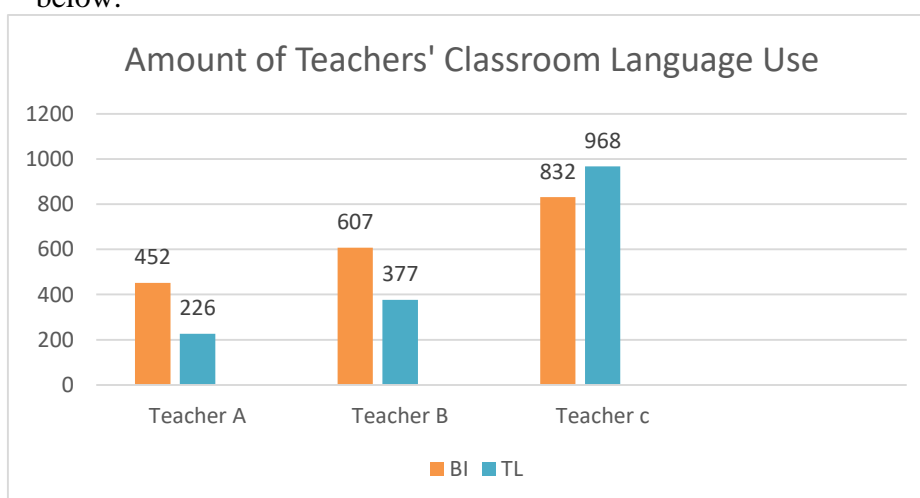
Table 3. *The Amount of Teacher Classroom Language in Post Teaching*

Teacher	Teacher Classroom Language in Post Teaching		
	SI	SIn	QT
A	6	11	9
B	12	3	8
C	1	3	16
Total	26	23	20

The dominant classroom language in post teaching is simple instruction, and teacher B is the one who used simple instruction the most than the other two teachers. However, teacher C, as in pre-teaching and whilst teaching, used question type the most than teacher A and teacher B.

4. Amount of Teachers' Classroom Language Use

The data shows that teachers spoke two kinds of language; English and Bahasa Indonesia. The amount of classroom language use in English and Bahasa Indonesian uttered by the participants can be seen in the bar chart below.



The chart above shows significant differences between the three teachers observed in this study regarding the amount of teachers' classroom language of the target language and Bahasa Indonesia spoken by each teacher. Teacher C seemed to use more English classroom language than other teachers. She spoke about 968 utterances or 53,7 %. The other participants, teacher A and teacher B talked less in English classroom language (226 and 377 utterances or 33,3% and 38,3%, respectively).

5. Teachers' Reflection on Their Classroom Language

Through stimulated recall interviews, two out of three teachers mentioned that the language input they provided to the students was still not

optimal. Teacher A claimed that the rarely use of English in everyday life is the cause of her lowness in using English in the classroom or the mistake she produced in speaking English in the classroom. Teacher B stated that the cause of her lowness use of English in the classroom was due to lacking vocabulary mastery. Therefore, she thought it is needed for her to improve her vocabulary knowledge.

Different from the other two teachers, teacher C mentioned that measuring the optimization of input she provided to the students depended on the class she taught, or in other words, depended on the students' English proficiency in each class. According to her, each class had different abilities, so that the use of English needed to be adjusted accordingly. Besides that, she also tried to use English in the classroom as much as she could, not only to make students familiar with English but also to improve her proficiency in English itself. As she mentioned, English in Indonesia is only a foreign language, so that a possible place for her to improve her ability was by interacting with the students in the classroom using the English classroom language.

The teachers' reflection on the use of classroom language as the input, as described above, is in line with the finding of the amount of teacher classroom language spoken by each teacher. Both teachers A and B stated that the input they exposed in their class was still low, and the amount of their English classroom language shows 226 and 377 utterances or 33,3% and 38,3%, respectively. Teacher C claimed she tried to use English in the classroom as much as she could, and the amount of her English classroom language shows 54,5 %, which means there is a balance between the target language use and Bahasa Indonesia use.

DISCUSSION

This study aims to find out the teachers' classroom language used in pre-teaching, whilst teaching, and post-teaching. It aims to examine the input exposed by the teachers. The researcher found some types of English classroom language spoken by the participants: simple instruction, dealing with the language of spontaneous situation, social interaction, pair group work, question types, and dealing with errors. The dominant classroom language used by the teachers seems to be on asking a question. It is under Wilens's analysis (1987), who described the questioning as the most commonly used at all grade levels of the many methods of teaching. Teachers have long used questioning to review, to check on learning, to explore thought processes, to explore problems, to find out problems or various solutions, and to challenge to reflect on critical issues or values they had not previously considered.

This study also indicates that there are significant differences between the three teachers observed in this study regarding the amount of teachers' classroom language of English and Bahasa Indonesia spoken by each teacher during the lesson. Teacher A spoke 226 utterances, teacher B spoke 377 utterances, and teacher C spoke 968 utterances. Teacher C seems to use more English classroom language during the teaching and learning process. However, the average teacher's English classroom language use shows a low percentage, which is only 45,4%. It proves that

the teachers used more Bahasa Indonesia in teaching. It supports the claims of Zainil (2019) and Rabbidge and Chappel (2014), who found the use of English in classroom interaction was low. This result contributes a clear understanding of language exposure by the teachers at SMP Negeri 4 Muara Bungo, which does not support Krashen's theory (1985). In Krashen's theory, the students must be given sufficiently comprehensible input. But in fact, the teachers in this study have not spoken more English in the classroom, so the students still have not received enough comprehensible input.

The teachers, through stimulated recall interviews, admitted that they are still not optimal in providing input to the students. It is because of two reasons: (1) students' proficiency and (2) teachers' proficiency themselves. The extracts of the interview are as below:

Because seven grade students just entered junior high school so that they still did not understand English. So I use English as well as Indonesian because, at Elementary school, they had not learned English yet.

Yes, and sometimes I make a mistake. It is because we rarely speak English. (Teacher A, interview transcript 1)

Sometimes after I use English, I use Indonesia too, because I think not all students understand what I say. I think my problem for my self I still need to add my vocab ya. (Teacher B, interview transcript 2)

Teachers claim that students had difficulty in understanding what they said in English. Therefore, they tend to use Bahasa Indonesia or do code-switching. The teachers also mentioned that the reason for speaking more Bahasa Indonesia in the classroom was because of their proficiency. Teacher A thought that the rarely use of English in everyday life make her difficult to speak English in the class. Teacher B stated that she still lacked vocabulary mastery, so it was sometimes difficult for her to speak English.

While teachers C, who spoke English more than the other two teachers, assumed that she still needed to learn how to adjust the English classroom language that fit the students' abilities so that the students could understand what had been said by the teachers. The extract of the interview is as below:

It's just how we speak organized in class ... what are the exact sentences we use in class. Maybe the language for our friends is different from the language for the students. (Teacher C, interview transcript 3)

Based on the teacher's reflection on the classroom language they spoke in the classroom, which found that the lack of teachers' English classroom language in class is due to the proficiency of both of the students and the teachers, the teacher must hold some kind of training that can improve their ability in using classroom language. Then the teachers can provide the students with the comprehensible input to improve their English proficiency. Teacher A, in the interview, also mentioned

that she was more enthusiastic about using English in the classroom after attending the training.

CONCLUSION

Based on the finding of this research, it was found six types of classroom language were spoken by the teachers from the beginning until the end of the lesson. They were simple instruction, dealing with the language of spontaneous situation, the language of social interaction, pair group work, question types, and dealing with error. Question types are the dominant classroom language found in the teaching and learning process. From the observation, teacher C seemed to use more English classroom language in class compared to the other two teachers. But, teacher A used the least amount of English classroom language. However, the average of teacher's English classroom language use shows a low percentage, which is only 45,4%. It proves that teachers in this study do not provide comprehensible input to the students. Through a stimulated recall interview, the teachers admitted that they are still not optimal in providing input to the students. It is because of two reasons: (1) students' proficiency and (2) teachers' proficiency themselves. Therefore, the teachers need to improve their English proficiency so that they can use more English in the classroom.

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