Patterns of Teacher-Students Interaction Based on The Textbook “When English Rings A Bell” for Seventh Grade: A Classroom Discourse Study

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Abstract

This study aimed to: 1) describe how teachers structure their classroom interaction based on the textbook “When English Rings a Bell” for Seventh Grade, and 2) reveal what affects their structuring classroom interaction.

The study belongs to a case study. However, principles of discourse analysis are applied to data gathering and data analysis. Data were collected through interviews, document check, observation, note taking and videotaping of 80 minute-classroom interaction of four teachers, twice each, teaching seventh graders of four junior high schools. Verbal and non-verbal data were gathered, transcribed, noted and analyzed.

Findings show that teachers structured their classroom interaction by consistently implementing the 2013 Curriculum and its aspects especially its scientific approach. More specifically, it was revealed that the teachers: (1) worked over the five stages of the scientific approach, in the order as it should be: observing, questioning, experimenting, associating, communicating; (2) started and ended the lessons using the same set of activities and expressions; (3) mostly used laptops and LCDs to provide language exposure by presenting songs, chants, texts, and tasks; (4) used Shaw’s textbook adaptation technique by modifying the content and format of the textbook material; (5) discussed interpersonal and transactional texts, through the texts’ social function, generic structure, and linguistic features. (6) integrated all four language competences of listening, reading, speaking, and writing, with the emphasis on oral and written skills; (7) assigned tasks requiring students’ active thinking rather that creative one; (8) were lack of time to measure students’ individual performance; (9) used bilinguals of English and Indonesian; (10) conducted indoors classes and arranged students to sit facing them except in group works. Further it was found out that teachers’ perception and language competence shaped teachers’ presentation in similar and different classroom interaction.

Keywords: classroom interaction, the 2013 Curriculum, scientific approach, textbook adaptation

Background

In Indonesian formal education system, education curricula have gone through about 10 times revisions since 1947. In relation to the English curriculum, Ghozali and Poerwowani (2018:18) documented more than seven time revisions, including the 2013 Curriculum which are intended to redesign a more effective learning and teaching process. In 2013, a new curriculum,
named the 2013 Curriculum, was launched and implemented in a small number of pilot project junior and senior high schools in every district, followed by a wider implementation to the rest in the following academic year of 2014-2015. Afterwards, the 2013 Curriculum has been implemented nationwide starting from the academic year of 2016-2017.

To help teachers implement the 2013 Curriculum in their classes, the ministry of education and culture offers a model of classroom presentation called Scientific Approach as the learning methodology. The teaching model is also implied in the procedural steps of learning throughout the imposed textbooks, one of which is “Bahasa Inggris: When English Rings the Bell”. All schools that have already applied the 2013 Curriculum had to use the teacher and student textbooks.

This study focuses on how teachers structure their classroom interaction based on the textbook “When English Rings a Bell” for Seventh Grade; and what affects their structuring classroom interaction. To find out detailed information, the structure of the classroom interaction is revealed through some aspects, two main of which are the implementation of the learning model of the scientific approach and the textbook adaptation. Further, it will reveal teachers’ consistency in using the textbook of the 2013 Curriculum and its aspects. The researcher tries to compare and contrast data to see the similarities or differences; and finally to see the patterns of how the teachers structure their teacher-students classroom interaction.

The researcher conducted this research because so far in Bantul District there has been no information of the real practices of how teachers structure their classroom interaction as the effort to use the compulsory textbook “When English Rings a Bell” for Seventh Grade. In brief, to answer the question how the teachers structure their classroom interaction is based on how they use the textbook, as the realization of the 2013 Curriculum; and how they use the textbook can be thoroughly revealed through all activities happened during the classroom interaction since the beginning until the end of the lesson. The problems formulation of this research is: How teachers structure classroom interaction based on the textbook “When English Rings a Bell” for Seventh Grade? And What affects teachers’ structuring classroom interaction based on the textbook “When English Rings a Bell” for Seventh Grade?

Literature Review

Scientific approach

The 2013 Curriculum suggests the use of Scientific Approach in teaching and learning process. It is believed that the approach is a golden bridge to grow, develop and attain desired/targeted attitude (affective domain), skills (psychomotor domain), and knowledge (cognitive domain). In Scientific Approach, scientists prioritize inductive reasoning rather than using deductive reasoning. Deductive reasoning focuses on general phenomena first before arriving at a specific conclusion while inductive reasoning is the reverse. Inductive reasoning focuses on specific phenomena or situations before arriving at a global conclusion. In short, inductive reasoning tries to collect specific proves, interrelate every proof to find the most possible conclusion. Scientific approach focuses on unique phenomena and analyzes them specifically and in details before arriving at a global conclusion. It puts emphasis on techniques of
investigation of a phenomenon or some phenomena or symptoms, producing a new knowledge, or correcting and synchronizing previously learned knowledge.

**Steps of scientific approach - based learning**

Regulation of the Education Minister no. 81 A year 2013 appendix IV lists five principles learning experiences: (1) observing, (2) questioning, (3) exploring, (4) associating, (5) communicating. Activities of each principle can be presented in the following table.

| Principle             | Students’ Activities                                                                 |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Observing             | Students read, listen, watch with or without learning tool or media with or without a tool to identify problems they are confronted. |
| Questioning           | Students ask questions on information on anything they need to know or clarify starting from easy and factual question to move to hypothetic and higher-order thinking skill questions |
| experimenting /Hypothesizing | Students explore, try, conduct experiments, discuss, demonstrate, imitate certain movements, and read various other resources (in addition to textbooks), and collect data from resource persons through interviews or questionnaires, or any other instruments. |
| Associating (Analyzing) | - Students analyze data/information to answer their questions and draw conclusions from the available data or information.  
                          | - (With or without teacher’s support) students sort out, classify and identify patterns to answer their questions. |
| Communicating /Creating | Students express what they have observed, or learnt and drew conclusion based on what they have learned, be it orally or in written form or my means other medium, be it tangible or intangible matters. |

(Adapted from Priyana, 2014)

**Teachers’ language competence**

Competencies teachers have to acquire are in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 16 Year 2007 on Standards of Academic Qualifications and Competence of Teachers. The regulation stated that there are four key competencies to own by the teachers, namely pedagogical competence, personal competence, social competence, and professional competence.

Professional competence is one of the basic skills that a teacher should possess. The first competence to possess is the mastery of his subject. as the basis of the teaching skill. For language teachers, language competence plays the greatest part in influencing their performance in teaching and learning processes. Related to teachers’ language competence, Richard (2011) states,
“It is necessary to consider the language-specific competencies a language teacher needs in order to teach effectively. These include the ability to provide good language models, to maintain use of the target language in the classroom, to give correct feedback on learner language, and to provide input at an appropriate level of difficulty”.

Methodology

Research type

To reveal and describe patterns of teacher-students interaction based on “When English Rings a Bell” for seven grade, this research study used a case study that attempts to describe the phenomena through collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data by observing what people do and say. Another approach used was discourse analysis (DA) aiming at analyzing written, vocal, sign language use, or any significant semiotic event. This approach analyzes 'naturally occurring' language use, aimed at revealing socio-psychological characteristics of a person/persons rather than text structure; that happened during the classroom interaction. Interaction is defined as mutual or reciprocal action or influence. This data of communication is connected with all activities happened during the lesson; thus connected with all aspects of the 2013 Curriculum.

Data collecting techniques

Some techniques to collect data for this research consists of: (1) Interview. To collect data of the teachers’ knowledge about the English 2013 Curriculum, the English textbook “When English Rings a Bell” for Seven the researcher interviewed the teacher participants individually to get direct data, using an in depth interview, a flexible interview approach. (2) Document check. The researcher checked the textbook to analyze the conformity of the interviewees’ (the teacher participants’) opinions on some certain questions and helped them with information collected from the textbook. (3) Classroom observation. Classroom observation was the technique used to get the data in actual teaching learning process. Observational data are attractive as they afford the researcher the opportunity to gather ‘live’ data from ‘live’ situations. The researcher has the opportunity to look at what is taking place in situ rather than at second hand. Observation enables researchers see things that might otherwise be unconsciously lost, to discover things that participants might not freely talk about in interview situations, to move beyond perception-based data, and to access personal knowledge. (4) Video recording. When observing the classes, the researcher also videorecorded the teaching and learning processes to catch the details of classroom interaction, especially teachers’ and students’ utterances. The verbatim recordings of classroom activities were transcribed to closely reveal and describe how they structured classroom interaction based on the textbook “When English Rings a Bell” for Seven Grade, and what affects them in doing so.

Data analysis techniques

Patton in Moleong (2000: 103) define data analysis as a process of arranging the sequence data, organizing them into a pattern, category, and unit basic outline. Since the
beginning of the study, the researcher got guidance from the research problems of this thesis. This study focused on how teachers structured their classroom interaction based on the official textbook of the 2013 Curriculum and what patterns found accordingly related to all aspects observable during the teacher-students classroom interaction. The researcher used McDonough’s criteria to identify the textbook. Thus, the compilation unit and categorization of information was used to the theme that had been determined in this study. The information that was not relevant to the study was casted.

Findings and Discussion

The findings are based on the research questions pertaining to the research objectives. Based on this, the presentation of this chapter is allocated to cover (1) how do teachers structure classroom interaction based on the books they use and (2) reasons why they do so.

Findings

The findings showed patterns of similarities with slight differences in how teachers structured their classroom interaction. They covered the following areas of discussion: (1) Scientific Approach Implementation, (2) Typical Patterns of Teacher-Students Interaction, (3) Patterns of Language Exposure Provision, (4) Textbook Adaptation Techniques, (5) The Instructional Materials, (6) The Linguistic Competences, (7) Students’ Active Thinking and Creativity, (8) Learning Achievement, and (9) Language of Interaction, (10) Organization of Students’ Mobility and Activities.

Patterns of the Scientific Approach implementation

The stages of the approach helped to create a learner-centered teaching and learning process, to improve students' active and creative thinking and to build nation’s character. Some factors contribute to the implementation of this in classroom. Teachers’ experience in attending various trainings on the scientific approach implementation gave insights and enabled the teachers to apply it as required. The teachers have carried out their teaching and learning processes through all the five stages, i.e. observing, questioning, experimenting, associating and communicating. Contextually, they allocated time for every step of the approach to involve all students physically and mentally and engaged them to be active in all tasks.

Discussion

This part of the chapter presents more discussions of the research findings and the reasons for similarities and differences of the patterns of teacher-students interaction in the classroom interactions.

Typical patterns of teacher students interaction

The findings showed that there were similar and different patterns of teachers’ structuring their classroom interaction. There were typical activities and expressions used by the teachers and the students. For example, all four teacher participants open their classes with greetings, prayers, check students’ physically and their mental readiness to attend the class.
The provision of language exposure

Similar patterns could be observed in other stages of teaching. In the next stage, for example, all teachers tried to provide exposure of the teaching item to be presented although they did it differently. T1, for example, played video containing songs in order that the students pay attention to the pronunciation and also language forms used in the song. T2 showed a descriptive text about someone. And T4 played a video showing introduction. Although the activities developed by the teachers are different, they share similar goal that is introducing the teaching items to the students, or called providing language exposure.

The use of textbook

Trainings on the use of textbook experienced by teachers contributes to the quality of how to present the teaching items from the textbook in standardized ways. When interviewed about the textbook, the teachers relatively agreed with the colorful animated pictures but complained about the content shortages. This perceived fact bound with the teachers’ competence led to different textbook usage. The teachers were willing to cooperate with the government’s effort to help implement the new curriculum through the new textbook because there was conformity between the textbook content with the required core and basic competences as stated in the 2013 Curriculum based syllabus.

The analysis of the classroom interaction has also shown that the teachers’ degree of willingness in following the textbook varied. This showed their individual perception towards the curriculum and the textbook itself. The same textbook used by the teachers contributed a similar pattern of adaptation but their perception about the textbook content and their abilities in using it led them to make different modification technique of the textbook and this impact contributed to the pattern differences. Nevertheless, the teachers have tried to maximally compromise with the new realm of the curriculum including its textbook, be consequent and consistent with what accordingly to do.

All four teachers participants in this study used the textbooks differently, be it the teacher book or the student book. The teacher book provided chronological steps of teaching methodology and classroom activities for each chapter, but there were no clear divisions between them and the teachers had to decide by themselves based on their own perception, which activities fitted which each section of the scientific method.

The Instructional Materials

The instructional materials provided in the textbook were in accordance with the syllabus of the 2013 Curriculum; that language should be in the forms of texts (interpersonal and transactional, at the time the research was done).

The eight transcripts of classroom interactions basically showed that the teachers introduced three language elements of text production: started from introducing the social function of the text; generic structure of the text which comprises of initiating and responding in a conversation; and the linguistic features of the text, comprising of the vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and punctuation related to the text. This showed that the teachers did not only
teach the form of language but also its meaning. In other words, they emphasized both the context of situation and the context of culture and therefore they have applied the underlying idea of learning a language as stated in the Curriculum 2013, that language is a communicative act and inseparable from the society, although they did it differently.

**The Linguistic Competences**

The elaboration below was to see how in using the textbook the teacher participants had designed their teaching and learning processes as required by the Curriculum 2013 by facilitating the students to learn the language through integration of listening, speaking, reading and writing activities to enable the learners to produce oral and written language properly and acceptably. Seen from this point of view, all four teachers have labored their teaching and learning processes by integrating all language competences of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

**The Students’ Active Thinking and Creativity**

All four teachers gave tasks that required their students’ active thinking to do the tasks, either individually, pair work, or in groups. No one just fed them by offering solutions before their students finished doing a certain task. They varied in the degree of difficulty of the tasks given, or in other words, there was a variation between the low and high order thinking skills.

**The Learning Achievement**

In all classroom interactions videotaped, there was a similarity of how the lessons ended, i.e., before the teachers gave individual tasks. At most, the learning achievement could be assessed roughly through the communicating activity, i.e., when the students showed the result of their group discussion, either by sticking it on the board to be read by other groups, or by reading it aloud for their friends to listen. This phase ran well because most students behaved well and respected their friends.

In short, it could be concluded that in their own ways the teachers have focused on the materials depth and worked on the language micro skills through retention on the rules of text production in order that their students could produce closely target spoken and written texts properly and acceptably. Although this research did not discuss the learning output, the immediate results of the actual production of the teaching and learning process was traceable.

**The Language of Interaction**

Translation was favored by all four teachers. They spoke bilinguals during their classroom interactions. Most of the time they translated their formerly English explanation into Indonesian, the formal language of the country. This was to clarify the teachers’ explanation and check the students understanding.

Apart from the spoken language, there was no similarity in the use of body language. Only T 2 gave portion to the kinesthetic learning style to explain something that might be unfamiliar or hard to understand by tactile students. She used it in the opening session of her first class. To recall previous lesson, she asked her students to sing a song about body parts while
touching their own corresponding body parts. The aesthetic experience seemed increased the impression and motivation of her students.

The Organization of Students’ Mobility and Activities

The analysis showed that all four teachers used the same technique of organizing the students’ mobility. There were three kinds of mobility and all occurred indoors, in the classroom. Most students spent almost entirely sitting classically facing to the front, face to face with the teachers. T 1, T 2, and T 3 invited individual students to write some words on the board. T 1 and T 2 asked their students to turn their chairs when it was time for group work. All four teachers asked some students to present the result of their work in front of their friends during the communicating stage. Implicitly, along with the analysis of students’ mobility and the activities they did, there were two patterns of interaction here, i.e., teacher-student and student-student interaction in all classes.

What affects teachers’ structuring their classroom interaction?

Levels of teachers’ language competence is different based on their life learning experiences they have gone through. After perceiving a phenomenon, a teacher driven by their competences makes decisions of what to do and how to do it. The interaction happened in the classroom is the reflection of their language competence. From the beginning until the end of the lessons, the teachers act and react determined by their perception about the reality and their background language competence. Therefore, teaching goals maybe the same but techniques of how to reach them understandably vary.

On the contrary, there was also a similar pattern showing that the teachers did not include physical movement because there was no measurement in terms of speed, precision, distance, procedures, or techniques in execution. Besides the similarities, there were also differences. It is the teachers’ perception on how to deal with all the aforementioned activities and what they really teach that creates differences. Based on their own judge, all teachers varied their way of utilizing the textbook and the amount of materials taken.

It was indeed the learning content and the activities imposed to it that differentiated the teacher students-interaction. Teachers’ language competence and their perception of how much their students could receive the lessons influenced how they formulated the instructional objectives, selected and prepared proper instructional procedures and implemented the plan in the teaching and learning processes. The teachers’ ability helped them design, manage, and organize the learning resources, in order to achieve effective and efficient teaching; help them in identifying the concepts and problems in education and teaching learning activity. The different degrees of the teachers’ language competence were principal in setting the teachers’ different perceptions resulted in similar and different patterns of teacher students-interaction.

Limitations of the Research

Findings of this study are restricted to how the four teacher participants structured their classroom activities based on the state approved textbook “When English Rings a Bell” for Seven Grade. The findings are from the analysis of outstanding data obtained from what the
teachers did in an 80-minute classroom interaction, in surviving their teaching and learning processes by using the textbook, and its impacts.

This study compares the classroom activities in eight classes by looking for patterns similarities and differences. One of the outstanding findings showed that all lessons finished without individual assessments. However, the findings of my study do not imply that the teacher participants are not able to finish their lessons as planned by giving the previously prepared individual task to assess the students’ achievement. A possible influencing factor of this is because of the presence of an outsider when videotaping their teaching and learning process twice each. Both teachers and students may feel uneasy of this data gathering processes.

Conclusion

The summary of findings showed similar and different patterns of teacher-students interaction resulted from the teachers’ structuring classroom interaction based on “When English Rings a Bell” for Seven Grade:

1. Globally, the imposed use of the textbook contributed to patterns similarity of how the four teachers adopted the stages of the scientific approach advocated in the 2013 Curriculum.

2. There were typical similar patterns related to teacher-students interaction seen from the opening, closing and language exposure activities. The four teachers opened and ended the lessons with the expressions for greetings; checking attendance and readiness to follow the lesson; leavetakings; and similar expression and order of activities of providing language exposures for their students.

3. Although the teachers used the same technique of textbook adaptation, i.e. modification, they varied in terms of the content and the format of the selected teaching items, the amount of the learning load, and the sequence of their presentation. This variation was due to the insufficient content of the textbook that forced the teachers to be really creative and innovative to fulfill the need in order to suit the 2013 Curriculum. How creative and innovative the teachers was dependent on their language competence. Length of teaching experience does not a guarantee of a qualified teaching but teachers’ competence do.

4. Related to the linguistic competences, all teachers showed a similar pattern. They integrated all language skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing in doing the tasks of every teaching item they presented to facilitate the students to be able to produce oral and written language correctly. This was linear with the goal of language teaching stated in the 2013 Curriculum.

5. Similarly, the teachers elaborated a process-oriented pedagogy propagated in the 2013 Curriculum. They engaging their students into demanding active thinking tasks although only one teacher in one of her classes gave a task requiring creativity, i.e. when she asked her students to describe their family photo in short simple sentences using their own words. To facilitate students’ creativity certainly needs teachers’ innovative thinking. Unfortunately, insufficient language input would certainly hinder students in accomplishing a task.

6. There was a similar pattern concerning the language of interaction. All four teachers spoke bilinguals by translated their utterances into Indonesian. They seemed to perceive their students’ ability in comprehending their speaking in a similar way. The less elaboration on the
sign language such as gesture, body language, facial expressions or other means of communication such as media, etcetera, was patterned into a seemingly similar perception of doubt about their students’ competence of listening comprehension, and partly because they are not accustomed in doing so.

The most influencing factors affecting the teachers’ implementation of the textbook in their classroom practices were as follows:

a. Teachers’ Language Competence

Teachers’ individual language competence shaped the teachers’ performances in conducting real classroom interaction and varied the content of the teaching and learning processes.

b. Teachers’ Perception

Teachers’ individual perception, as the manifestation of the language competence, determined teachers’ decisions taken and actions done because what they believed or perceived was what they did.

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