



The Implementation of Initiation–Response–Feedback (IRF) in EFL Writing Class

Fajar Nugroho Dwi Atmojo[✉], Mursid Saleh, Widhiyanto

Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

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Abstract

Classroom interaction has been an interesting discussion in the research of discourse as well as language education itself. This research was aimed to analyze the implementation of initiation-response-feedback (IRF) model in EFL writing class. IRF is a pattern of classroom interaction found by Sinclair and Coulthard in 1975 that stands for teacher initiation, students' response and feedback by teacher. This study was a case study with several steps conducted by its researcher in analyzing the data. The analysis of the data began with the process of organizing data from the result of recording, transcribing data into paper-based transcriptions, coding the data, calculating the occurrences of the teaching exchange pattern and IRF pattern, reporting the findings, and interpreting the findings. The results of the study showed that both teacher and students implemented the IRF model in teaching and learning process, especially in writing class. In this study there are five teaching exchanges which occurred based on Sinclair and Coulthard (1975)'s model including teacher inform, teacher direct, teacher elicit, student inform, and check. Furthermore, the classroom interaction process in EFL writing class reflected the patterns of IRF sequence. As the conclusion, it is recommended that the teacher should maintain the effectiveness of classroom interaction and give much opportunity to the students to take role in classroom verbal interaction through reflecting the IRF pattern in teaching learning process particularly in EFL writing class.

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[✉]Correspondence Address:

Kampus Universitas Negeri Semarang, Kelud, Semarang, 50233
 E-mail: fajarnugrohodwiatmojo@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

In this globalization era, it cannot be denied that English has been an international language, used by people all over the world to communicate to each other both in spoken and written interactions. No wonder, the fundamental characteristics of authentic real life examples of both spoken and written discourse are important for the learners (Ghufron & Saleh, 2016). Thus, it is not surprising that the teaching of English is carried out in many parts of the world including in Indonesia where teaching English concerns more on the written language. Unfortunately, there are many challenges in writing especially for high school learners (Kusuma & Saleh, 2017). In reality students often produce error in writing (Kusuma & Saleh 2017). This makes writing class is interesting and therefore this study deals with it.

In creating an interactive foreign language classroom, it is important for teacher to pay attention to the language used and to the categories of teacher talk in particular. In terms of teacher talk, several researchers have argued that the excessive amount of teacher talk in the classroom does not offer enough opportunities for student talk time and does not promote active learning and students' participation (Davies, 2011; Walsh, 2002). Only a small part of the student talk shows initiation related to the learning materials.

Teacher's domination in classroom interaction can discourage students to participate and speak more in the target language (Kurniawati & Fitriati, 2017). It means that the teachers do not give chance to the students to talk. A study on teacher talk in classroom interaction has been conducted by Sukarni and Ulfah (2015) showed that the teacher is more active in the interaction. Similarly, the study conducted by Sagita (2018) also aims to analyze teacher and the student talk in classroom interaction and finds the similar finding that the teacher generally did most of talking during the lesson

A common problem for EFL teachers is dealing with a passive class where students are

unresponsive and avoid interaction with the teacher. The students seem shy or lazy to ask a question to and/or to answer to the question from the teacher. They prefer to become passive rather than active to participate in learning process actively. Furthermore, the environment around the students is not quite supportive and the opportunities to apply the target language are even fewer.

Sometimes a teacher seeks interaction in a teaching learning process, such as asking questions to the class as a whole, expecting at least one of the students to respond. Obviously, there will be times when no student is willing to answer the teacher's question, but often students do not answer even if they understand the question, know the answer, and are able to produce the answer.

Classroom interaction has been an interesting discussion in the research of discourse as well as language education itself. The construct refers to the interaction between teacher and students. According to (Hall, 2011) classroom interaction is a term that used to analyze who goes on among people in classroom when language is involved. Interaction in the classroom is an essential part of teaching learning process. Interaction or human interaction has been defined as a process whereby two or more people engaged in reciprocal actions. The teacher maybe use bilingual (Indonesian and English) for the whole interactions with the purpose that the students can understand what the teacher said.

Classroom interaction that is focused by the researcher in this study is about how the teacher and students participate to talk during teaching learning process. Study on teacher talk has been conducted by many researchers. They analyze the classroom interaction from lower level of education up to higher education or college. For instance, the studies on teacher talk in young learners' classroom have been conducted by Inceçay (2010), Setiawati, (2012), Pujiastuti (2013), and Mulyati, (2013) and Sukmawati (2018). Meanwhile, Puspawati & Jurianto (2012), Sukarni & Ulfah (2015), and Sagita (2018) conducted the study on teacher

talk in junior high school. Furthermore, the studies on teacher talk in senior high school have been conducted by Putri (2015), Aisyah (2016), Iswan (2016), Wasi'ah (2016), Irmayani & Rachmajanti (2017) and Huriyah & Agustiani (2018). In addition, Kiasi & Hemmati (2014), Nurpahmi (2017) and Munawir (2017) conducted the study on teacher talk in university.

Teacher talk in this present study is analyzed using Sinclair and Coulthard initiation-response-feedback (IRF) model. According to Dagarin (2004) argues that classroom interaction is two way process between the participants in the language process, the teacher influences the learners and vice versa. Furthermore, interaction in the classroom is categorized as the pedagogic interaction which means the interaction in the teaching and learning process (Sarosdy et al, 2006).

The investigation on the structural organization of classroom interaction has been conducted by many researchers. The classic investigation of Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) showed that there are acts, moves, exchanges, and transactions in all talk in teacher-students interaction. The basic unit of teacher-student communication in this system is the 'IRF exchange', in which a teacher Initiates an interaction, the student Response, and the teacher then provides some Follow-up or feedback. Initiation-response-feedback (IRF) model is a model of classroom interaction which provides guidance for analysing spoken language, which was developed from classroom interaction (McCarthy, 2002).

Some studies have been conducted to explore IRF in the classroom. Rustandi & Mubarak (2017), for example, conducted the study that aims to analyze the reflection of IRF (initiation-response-feedback) in speaking class and investigating the dominant sequence among I, R, and F. The result showed that student response becomes the dominant sequence of IRF in speaking class. Poole (2005) has attempted to investigate the IRF in various subjects in US, Taiwan, and South Africa. It shows that IRF pattern varies across the subjects, countries and

cultures as the variables of the study. The patterns are insightful and important in terms of giving pedagogical implications toward classroom interaction. Further, the pedagogical implications offer a way to facilitate learning or acquisition through possibility of repair and common feedback in IRF (Seedhouse, 2004).

In addition, studies focusing on IRF have been conducted by the work of Nicholson (2014). It aims to give a brief overview of the Sinclair & Coulthard model, examining it particularly at the level of exchange, move and act. The result show that the Sinclair and Coulthard's model is useful for understanding classroom communication as it is an effective tool for seeing the roles classroom participants play, the types of talk they participate in and the quality of output derived from the type of questions asked in the classroom. Ginting (2017) also analyzed the importance of opening moves in classroom interaction. The purpose of this study was to describe the types of opening moves used by the teacher through the learning process. The result showed that elicitation and bound types were the dominant ones and followed by re-initiation, direct, repeat, inform, listing, and check.

There has been interest in conducting research on IRF sequences. Marzban, et al, (2012) conducted a research about the possibility of IRF structure change. The participants were ten adults in English as foreign language classes in a private language school in Naqadeh, Iran. The researchers used video tapes, audio recordings, transcription, and field notes as instruments to collect data. The result of the research shows that IRF sequences actually limited students' opportunity to contribute their talk in class. The researchers though that the teacher should give the students multiple opportunities to engage in interaction in classroom. In conclusion the researchers suggested for teacher to implement ISRF (Teacher Initiation-Student Struggle-Teacher Response-Student Feedback) sequences in class. It is because based on their findings, ISRF sequences could help students to have more opportunities to talk in classroom interaction.

The examples above are some from many studies concerning on initiation-response-feedback (IRF) model proposed by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) to analyze teacher - student interaction in English classroom during teaching learning process. However, those previous studies are different with this present study which is primarily intended to provide complete pictures of how IRF model is implemented by the teacher and the students in teaching and learning writing and how the reflection of IRF in EFL writing class. Therefore, this present study is expected to fill the gap in the literature.

METHOD

This study, following Anisah, Fitriati, & Rukmini (2019) employs case study qualitative research design. A qualitative study, according to Suparman (2009), reports the result obtained from qualitative analysis through detailed descriptions of the processes which the researchers need in arriving at the categories and patterns of research. In addition, according to Creswell (2012) process, meaning, and understanding gained through words or pictures are the aspect that the researcher is interested in qualitative study. Moreover, qualitative research tends to be a research design describing the data in descriptive form which consist utterance, written data or human behaviour (Bogdan & Taylor, 1992). Through this design, the researcher will collect, analyse, and interpret a variety of data.

The subjects of the study are an English teacher and 30 students in class 7A of SMP N 2 Pangkah. The data focus on the teaching learning process by analyzing the interactional conversation among teacher – students and students – teacher. The object of this study is the utterances produced by the teacher and students in the classroom interaction

In collecting data, the researcher use classroom observation, video-recording, and lesson transcript to gain the data. In term of observation the resarcher conduct three observations in three meetings.

Once the data are gathered, the researcher are conduct the several steps. First, the researcher conducts a discussion with the chosen English teacher in the research setting, namely the junior high school about a class that is regarded better than the other classes in order to give the significant data. Second, the researcher conducts the observation in the chosen class three times with the purpose to collect the data as accurate as possible since observing interactions that occur in the learning process show effective conversations between teacher and students (Widiyastuti & Rustono, 2018). Third, the researcher records the teaching and learning processes. To assist the video recording, the researcher uses note taking. Fourth, the researcher later transcribes the teaching and learning processes and write all of them in the research instrument in order to ease the researcher himself analysing the data. Fifth, the researcher uses the theory of IRF model proposed by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). Lastly, the researcher presents and elaborates the data in paragraph.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Implementation of Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF)

This research finds various findings in term of the implementation of Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) by the teacher in teaching writing. The analysis shows that the teaching exchange pattern which the teacher implements most is teacher elicit. Below is the example showing this teaching exchange pattern.

Table 1. The Example of Teacher Elicit with Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) Moves

T	:	What does it look like? (I)
S	:	It is round (R)
T	:	It is round. Good. (F)

The example of the analysis above shows that the teacher initiates the interaction with the students. The teacher gives the student a question about the shape of the ball. The

purpose of the teacher is to activate the background knowledge of the students about describing something since they will learn description text. This initiation is responded by one student properly. He responds by saying the shape of the ball, round. It means he knows what the teacher is trying to say. After the response, the teacher also provides that student a feedback by praising him in front of the other students. This is absolutely suggested because the existence of the feedback indeed is able to encourage that student to engage more in the interaction and also to motivate the other students to join in the interaction.

Table 2. The Example of Teacher Elicit with Initiation-Response (IR) Moves

T	:	What is the title? (I)
S	:	I'm proud of Indonesia (R)

From the example above, it can be seen that the teacher initiates the interaction with the students. The teacher asked the student about the title of the topic that they are learning. This initiation is responded by the students. They respond by saying the title of the topic correctly. It means they understand the teacher initiation. However, the teacher does not give any feedback to the students. This is not suggested because the existence of the feedback actually is able to encourage the students to engage more in the interaction.

Table 3. The Example of Teacher Direct with Initiation-Response (IR) Moves

T:	Okay, <i>sekarang udah tahu ya, sekarang coba kita lihat dialog yang ada ...</i> open your book page one hundred and fifty. There is a dialog. <i>Sudah?</i> One hundred and fifty. (I)
S:	NV (open the book) (R)

From the example above, it can be seen that the teacher initiates the interaction with the students. The teacher asked the student to open the book in order they can learn the dialog. This initiation requires the student to respond by showing non verbal response. The students open the books to learn the dialog exactly like what

the teacher instructs. It means they understand the teacher initiation. However, the teacher does not give any feedback to the students. This is not suggested because the existence of the feedback in any kind of forms actually is able to encourage the students to engage more in the interaction.

Table 4. The Example of Teacher Inform with Initiation (I) Move

T:	Today we have a new lesson. <i>Kita hari ini adalah materi baru.</i> Chapter seven. (I)
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From the example above, it can be seen that the teacher informs an information to the students. She gives the students an advice to respect their friends who are presenting certain topic in front of the class. The purpose of the advice is to build good character inside the students' mind. Unfortunately, the students do not give any response for that advice. This triggers some speculations. First, the students are possibly afraid of the teacher, although they actually are able to respond using English. Second, the students are possibly do not understand at all what to say to respond the teacher's initiation.

Table 5. The Example of Teacher Inform with Initiation-Response (IR) Moves

T:	It's thick. It has a blue hard cover. (I)
SSS:	It's thick. It has a blue hard cover. (R)

From the example above, it can be seen that the teacher informs an information to the students. She gives the students an information about the description of the thing in the dialogue. Then, the students give the response by repeating what the teacher said. This triggers a speculation that students are possibly understand at all what to say to respond the teacher's initiation.

Table 6. The Example of Check with Initiation-Response (IR) Moves

T:	<i>Jelas ya?</i> (I)
S:	<i>Jelas</i> (R)

From the example above, it can be seen that the teacher initiates the interaction with the students. The teacher checks the comprehension of the students. She makes sure that the students indeed understand the topic that they are learning. This initiation is responded by the students. They respond by saying that the topic is clear enough for them. It means they understand the teacher initiation.

The Implementation of Student Inform Pattern in EFL Writing Class

This research finds only one finding in term of the implementation of initiation-response-feedback (IRF) by the students in learning writing since the students do not implement the students elicit. They prefer to be silent because they do not know what should be said or asked to the teacher. The analysis shows that the exchange pattern which the students implement is student inform with initiation-feedback (IF) moves. Below is the example showing this teaching exchange pattern.

Table 7. The Example of Student Inform with Initiation-Feedback (IF) Moves

S:	<i>Bu, salah bu.</i> To criticize. (I)
T:	<i>Saya kok dengarnya pride ya.</i> Oh criticize. (F)

In the example above, when the teacher explains about the title of the topic lesson in that meeting, a student initiate to correct her by saying “*Bu, salah.* To criticize” for reminding the teacher that she makes a mistake. The feedback from teacher is by giving comment that she hear “pride” instead of criticize, and then making a correction by herself.

The Reflection of Initiation-Response-Feedback in EFL Writing Class

The findings of this study show the interactions in EFL writing class which are divided into teacher initiations, student responses and teacher feedbacks. These interactions occurred in teaching learning process. From the analysis of the data, it shows

that the teacher initiation is the highest score calculated from the observation. Then, at the second place is student’s response. Finally, the third place is teacher feedback. In this regard, the teacher initiation is the dominant pattern in the classroom interaction in speaking class rather than response of the students and feedback from the teacher.

Table 8. The Example of Teacher Initiation in EFL Writing Class

S:	What is the purpose? Apa sih tujuan kita belajar ini? Dibaca di situ ada, tujuannya apa? Anggi tolong dibaca yang keras. Read aloud. (I)
T:	To make them stand out. (R)
S:	Ya, the purpose is to make them stand out. (F)

From the example above, it can be seen that the teacher initiates the interaction with the students. The teacher asked the student about the title of the topic that they are learning. This initiation is responded by one student. She responds by saying the purpose of the topic correctly. It means she understands the teacher initiation. After the response, the teacher also provides that student a positive feedback. This is absolutely suggested because the existence of the feedback indeed is able to encourage that student to engage more in the interaction and also to motivate the other students to join in the interaction.

Table 9. The Example of Student Response in EFL Writing Class

T:	What is the dialog above? I)
S:	Notebook. (R)
T:	Ya, the purpose is to make them stand out. (F)

From the example above, it can be seen that the teacher initiates the interaction with the students. The teacher asked the student about the topic of the dialog that they are learning. This initiation is responded by one student. She responds by saying the topic of the dialog correctly. It means she understands the teacher

initiation. However, the teacher does not give any feedback to the students. This is not suggested because the existence of the feedback actually is able to encourage the students to engage more in the interaction.

Table 10. The Example of Teacher Feedback in EFL Writing Class

T:	Apa itu <i>round</i> ? (I)
S:	Kata sifat (R)
T:	Good! (F)

The example of the analysis above shows that the teacher initiates the interaction with the students. The teacher gives the student a question about what the part of speech of round. This initiation is responded by one student properly. She responds by saying “*kata sifat*”. It means she knows what the teacher is trying to say. After the response, the teacher also provides that student a feedback by praising him in front of the other students. This is absolutely suggested because the existence of the feedback indeed is able to encourage that student to engage more in the interaction and also to motivate the other students to join in the interaction.

The other feedback which find in this study is repetition. Below is the example of the feedback.

Table 11. The Example of Teacher Feedback in EFL Writing Class

T:	Okay, this is a dialog between <i>siapa</i> ? (I)
SSS:	Edo <i>dan</i> Beni (R)
T:	Ya, dialog between Edo and Beni (F)

From the example above, it can be seen that the teacher initiates the interaction with the students. The teacher asked the students who is the people on the dialogue that the students are learning. This initiation is responded by the students. They respon by saying the name of the participants in the dialog. After the response, the teacher also provides that students a feedback by repeating the student’s response. This is absolutely suggested because the existence of

the feedback indeed is able to encourage that student to engage more in the interaction and also to motivate the other students to join in the interaction. The teacher also use extending feedback as shows in the following figure.

Table 12. The Example of Teacher Feedback in EFL Writing Class

T:	<i>Bila temannya sedang presentasi kalian harus apa?</i> (I)
SSS:	<i>Menghargai</i> (R)
T:	Good! (F)

As it can be seen, the teacher doesn’t only repeat identically the student’s answer, but also the teacher added some words by saying “*Menghargai dan mendengarkan*”.

The result of this study showed that the dominant occurred among I, R and F in the classroom interaction on EFL writing class was teacher initiation. Regarding the interaction during teaching and learning process in EFL writing class, Walsh (2011) stated that interaction is an aid of showing how teachers can create opportunities for learning through their use of language and interactional resources. By verbal and noninteraction, teachers facilitate students’ involvement by constructing language in which students are involved to create learning opportunities.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the result of this present study, it can be concluded that this present study has three main findings. First, it is found that the teacher was implemented the IRF model suggested by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). The model that implemented by the teacher consists of four teaching exchange patterns, namely teacher elicit, teacher inform, teacher direct, and check. Second, it was found that the students were implemented the IRF model suggested by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). The model that implemented by the students only consists of one teaching exchange patterns, namely students inform. Third, it was found that the interaction during teaching learning activities in EFL

writing class was reflected of IRF pattern sequences.

This study obviously needs the future studies to enrich the findings. It will be better for further researchers to conduct the study about classroom interaction in which the other patterns in classroom interaction such as scaffolding and private speech pattern, not only interaction pattern between teacher-students and students-teacher, but also interaction pattern among students-students.

Applying the IRF pattern can be difficult to analyze every utterance and place it into its appropriate IRF category. This is primarily true because the speaker can choose to do or say anything they like. For this reason, IRF has been widely criticized by many including Willis (1983) who argue the weaknesses of the model include being too product-oriented or situational. Additionally, Coulthard (1985) himself acknowledges that the model has some drawbacks, for example addressing discontinuity in discourse. Even though the process was quite difficult, in the end, it was not impossible to find appropriate discourse data to fit into the IRF model.

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