THE ROLES OF THE F MOVE AND ITS EFFECT ON CLASSROOM INTERACTION

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Abstract

This study investigated the role of the teachers' F move in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms and how it affected teacher-student interaction in the classroom. The F move, also known as feedback, is considered an important part of the classroom interaction as it serves two primary roles: evaluative and discoursal. This study used secondary data of classroom interaction during English lesson in two senior high schools in Indonesia. The data were then analysed using the Conversation Analysis (CA) approach. The findings of the current study showed that the teachers used the F move mostly served its evaluative role and there was no evidence of the F move serving its discoursal role. This study suggested the need for teachers to re-evaluate the current teaching practice, especially the way they provided feedback or used the F move as a response to students' answers.

Keywords: Feedback (F moves), evaluative and discoursal roles, classroom interaction

PERAN F MOVE DAN PENGARUHNYA TERHADAP INTERAKSI KELAS

Abstrak

Studi ini menyelidiki peranan F move guru di kelas bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing (EFL) dan bagaimana F move memengaruhi interaksi guru-siswa di kelas. F move, juga dikenal sebagai umpan balik, dianggap sebagai bagian penting dari interaksi kelas karena memiliki dua peran utama: evaluatif dan wacana. Penelitian ini menggunakan data sekunder interaksi kelas selama pelajaran bahasa Inggris di dua sekolah menengah atas di Indonesia. Data tersebut kemudian dianalisis dengan menggunakan pendekatan Conversation Analysis (CA). Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan dominasi penggunaan F move sebagai evaluasi dan tidak ada bukti bahwa F move menjalankan peran wacananya. Studi ini menyarankan perlunya guru mengevaluasi kembali praktik mengajar saat ini, terutama cara mereka memberikan umpan balik atau menggunakan gerakan F sebagai tanggapan atas jawaban siswa.

Kata Kunci: F move *(Umpan balik), peranan evaluatif dan wacana, interaksi kelas*

INTRODUCTION

A typical classroom interaction pattern in an English as a foreign language (EFL) context follows an Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) cycle where a teacher initiates the interaction by asking a question followed by a student's response which then followed by the teacher's feedback. The F move or feedback in the exchange structure is considered compulsory (Cullen, 2002) as it distinguishes the classroom from the outside classroom discourse. There are two types of teacher's questions: display and referential. A display question is a question with a predetermined answer while a referential question is a genuine question where the answer has not been known. Here, students are able to express their ideas or opinions. For a display question, feedback serves the function of accepting and disconfirming students' answer. As Coulthard and Brazil (1992) has argued one

of the primary functions of responding to students' answers is to distinguish right from wrong answers. It has been noticed that the occurrence of 'yes' is more frequent as a sign of the teacher's acceptance and acknowledgement of the students' response. In contrast, the F move where a referential question is posed functions not only to confirm or disconfirm a student's response but also to add comments regarding the discussion topic. As Lee (2007) has argued the third move of the IRF scheme should not be a mere feedback, but it should have an analytical focus.

The Role of the F move

Cullen's (2002) analysis of lesson transcripts in secondary school classes in Tanzania has revealed two pedagogical roles of the F move: evaluative and discoursal roles. The evaluative role functions as "feedback to

individual students about their performance" (Cullen, 2002, p. 119). Its focus is to tell or indicate to students that their utterances are correct or incorrect. To this end, there are two recognised types of feedback: positive and corrective. Positive feedback confirms the correctness of students' responses, while corrective feedback indicates that students have made an error or a mistake (Ellis, 2009, 2012).

Positive feedback comes with different strategies. In a study examining positive feedback in second language learning, Reigel (2005) has classified three strategies of positive feedback as summarised in the following Table 1.

Table 1. *Positive feedback strategies (Reigel, 2005)*

Strategies	Definition
Paralinguistic strategy	A non-verbal responses such as backchannelling, a nod, a smile or laughter
Linguistic strategy	A verbal response to show the teacher's affirmation of students' answer
Praise markers	A verbal response to praise students such as 'very good', 'fine', or 'excellent'

These strategies often co-occur with one another. Similarly, there are also several strategies of corrective feedback. Lyster and Ranta (1997) in their study of four French immersion classroom found that teacher feedback can be categorised into six different strategies as described in the following Table 2.

Table 2. *Categories of oral corrective feedback (Lyster & Ranta, 1997, p. 46-48)*

Strategies	Definition
Explicit correction	Explicit provision of the correct form
Recasts	Reformulation of all or part of student utterance without error
Clarification request	Indicating that either the teacher has misunderstood the student utterance or an error has occurred in the utterance
Metalinguistic feedback	Comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of the student's utterance, without providing the correct form
Elicitation	Eliciting the correct form of the student's utterance
Repetition	The teacher's repetition, in isolation, of the student's erroneous utterance

Meanwhile, discoursal role of the F move aims to "pick up students' contributions… in order to develop it into a dialogue with students" (Cullen, 2002, p. 120). To this end, the discoursal role focuses on the content of the students' response rather than the correctness of their utterances.

To date studies relating to the F move particularly in the context of Indonesian EFL classroom has been limited to describing strategies that the teachers used in responding to students' answer. For instance, a study by Maolida (2013) investigating the teachers' use of oral feedback in ESL primary school context reported that teachers used both positive and corrective feedback strategies. Another study by Irawan and Salija (2017) in the context of senior high school focused on identifying the types of oral feedback that the teachers used. In addition, their study also investigated the teachers' reasons for using oral feedback and the students' perceptions of oral feedback.

Therefore, this study seeks to answer the following three questions:

1. What role does the F move play in the EFL classroom?
2. How does the teachers' F move affect the teacher-student interaction?

METHODS

The current study was framed under a qualitative design. It utilised a secondary data in the form of videos of classroom interaction in two different senior high schools in Indonesia. The videos were then transcribed. The transcripts were coded using IRF label and analysed using Conversation Analysis (CA) method. To date, there has been an increasing expansion of the application of Conversation Analysis (CA) to analyse language classroom discourse, and many researchers agree that CA might be a more appropriate way to approach classroom interaction data (Seedhouse, 2004; Woffitt, 2005; Have, 2007; Walsh, 2013). CA was employed in this study owing to its relevance in looking at moment-by-moment interaction. Unlike the discourse analytic approach, which mainly focuses on determining the simple IRF pattern of classroom interaction, CA tries to scrutinize the complexity and heterogeneity of the classroom discourse (Seedhouse and Walsh, 2010). Seedhouse (2004) has illustrated the complexity of the classroom discourse by examining one classroom extract from two perspectives: Discourse Analysis (DA) and CA. He has demonstrated that with CA, the data could be explicated in greater detail. He also stated that each classroom has its own unique architecture, which is among others built on through face-to-face interaction. Therefore, the dynamic nature of the language classroom can be assessed by identifying the pattern arising from the data (Liddicoat, 2011).

FINDINGS

Praising students

The findings showed that the IRF pattern dominated the classroom interaction. Additionally, the teachers' F moves most of the

time were used as a way to confirm the correctness of students' answers and to give praise to students. These were well captured in the following excerpts:

Excerpt 1

12	T1:	That's great. Ok class, let's give you a little
13		bit about our last meeting's lesson (0.2)
14		Is..there anyone who wants to talk about it (.) and
15		use it as an example?
16		(0.2)
17	S1:	((raising hand)) Mam↓
18	T1:	Ya.
19	S1:	(stand up) You look so tired today, are you OK?=
20	T1:	=Yeah, that's good also. Another example (0.3)
21		Good, yes I'm a little bit tired, thank you.
22		Now I will show you a very beautiful tourist resort.
23		(showing pictures on the projector). Are they beautiful?

At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher reviewed the previous topic and asked the students to make a sentence. The feedback from the teacher 'Yeah, that's good also' (line 20) and 'Good,..' (line 21) indicated that the student's answer was correct. The teacher showed acceptance to it and at the same time she gave a verbal praise. Giving a direct verbal praise for the correct answer was probably a way to encourage to participate in the interaction because the teacher showed a positive attitude towards the student.

Other examples of the teacher's use of praise was also shown in the following excerpts, Excerpt 2 and Excerpt 3.

Excerpt 2

24	T1:	Is there anyone know where they are?
25	S2:	Mam↓
26	T1:	Yes (.) please (.) Siti?

27	S2:	I think both of them are in Europe. I know from
28		the picture on the(0.2) right side. It's Venice in Italy.
29	T1:	OK, good job. So you know one of the pictures it is
30		Venice in Italy.

In this excerpt the teacher displayed a picture on a slide and asked students if they knew the place in the picture. S2 stated her answer (line 27-28) The teacher feedback to the student's response was 'OK, good job' (line 29) which showed that the teacher approved the answer and praised the student. She then added a comment to the feedback by saying 'So, you know one of the pictures it is Venice in Italy.' (line 29-30). The teacher's comment could be seen as an emphasis to the answer.

Excerpt 3

32	T1:	OK. But first, do you know what we will learn today?
33	S1:	Mam↓
34	T1:	Yes, Mega
35	S1:	I think we will learn about the beautiful place
36	T1:	Ok (0.3) can be. Does anyone have another thought?
37		Yes please Siti
38	S2:	I think we will describe about tourist spot.
39	T1:	Yes, good. thank you. So students, I will show you the
40		purpose of our study today and let's take a look on the
41		slide. <display the slide> This is what we'll learn today

In Excerpt 3, the teacher initiated the interaction by asking if students knew what they would learn that day (line 32). S1 volunteered the answer, stating her opinion (line 35). The teacher's feedback to S1 answer was 'OK, can be. Does anyone have another thought?' (line 36). Here, the teacher neither approved nor disapproved the student's answer. Instead, the teacher continued seeking a different answer from other students which opened up an opportunity for other students to share their answer. As a result, another student, S1, participated and stated her answer (line 38). This time the teacher's feedback was 'Yes, good. Thank you' (line 39) which confirmed the student's answer.

In another transcript, T2 seemed to praise her student's response to her question as described in Excerpt 4 below:

Excerpt 4

17	T2:	Ok Students. Now please open your book on page 146.
18		OK,ya, in this chapters we will study about an idol,
19		ya. Everybody have an idols. I have an idol. and I
20		want to ask to you (0.3) who is your idol. Now I want to ask
21		another students. How about you, Nabil.
22	S2:	Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)
23	T2:	Ya, Why. Can you describe him.
24	S2:	Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is my idol because (0.3) and
25		I think he is a very perfect person in the world. I
26		choose him to be my idol because he has many
27		behaviours (0.1) like errr his kindness, his patience,
28		his intelligent, and his honesty that we can use as an
29		example. He is also not arrogant and always
30		humble. and so I think not wrong to make him as an idol.
31	T2:	OK, good Nabil. OK now, I choose the girl… Hmm how about
32		you Datin? OK Datin. I want to ask you about your idol. Who is your idol.

In this excerpt, the teacher asked a referential question about the students' idol (line 20). The teacher appointed a student to respond to her question. The student then stated his answer (line 22). Here the teacher's F move 'Ya, why.

Can you describe him.' (line 23) triggered the student to think of the reason for his answer and extend the student's thinking (line 24-30). After the student finished, the teacher's feedback was 'OK, good Nabil' (line 31) and then she continued asking other student the same question.

Even though the use of verbal praise is encouraged, it does not mean that the teacher stops giving more feedback in response to the answers (Wong & Waring, 2009). It would possibly be more meaningful if, instead of moving to another question asking about the same thing, the teacher could correct the grammar errors or give more comments. That way, teacher might create a learning opportunity.

DISCUSSION

With regard to the first question, what role the F move plays in the EFL classroom, the current study revealed the teachers' F moves mainly served the evaluative role in the way that it evaluated the correctness of students' answers. At the same time, the teacher used it as a praise. This finding aligned with the findings of the previous studies which found that the F move was used mainly to praise and tell students that their response or answer to the teacher's question was correct (Maolida, 2013; Thi et al., 2019; Wong & Waring, 2009).

The use of praise is common in EFL classroom and it is intended as a motivation for students to participate more during the classroom interaction. However, Hattie & Timperley (2007) have argued in their four level of feedback that praise is the least effective type of feedback as it does not provide information about student learning. Praise should be differentiate based on its focus. For praise to be effective, the focus should be clear. It needs to address the student effort rather than their ability because it has the power to influence students' mindsets (Dweck, 1999, 2007).

In the current study, it can be seen that teachers' praise was non-specific in the way that the focus of the praise was not clear. It could be that the teacher praised the individual

students for their ability to provide the correct responses. Dweck (1999) has argued that praising students for their ability can lead them to believe that ability or intelligence is a fixed trait and cannot be changed. This will lead to students developing a fixed mindset. However, when students are praised for their effort, it will help them develop a growth mindset – they believe that ability can be improved.

Regarding the second research question, how the teachers' F move affects the classroom interaction, it can be concluded that the teachers' F moves restricted students to participate and to be more involved in the interaction. The teachers often used the phrase 'yes, good' and then moved to the next topic, without furthering the students' responses. In their study investigating the use of 'very good' as positive evaluation or feedback, Wong and Waring (2009) found that such phrase potentially hindered student learning opportunity. While explicitly confirming the correctness of the students' answer was seen necessary, it seemed that the teachers' F move also acted as a sequence closing of the interaction between the teacher and the student. It was evident from how the teacher shut off the students from contributing or participating in the interaction.

The findings of the current study also revealed that the discoursal role of the F move was absent in both classrooms. The teachers did not seem to pick up students' answer and trigger further discussion about it as shown in Excerpt 4. If the teachers wanted students to have more opportunity to learn, the teachers should allow them to be more involved in the interaction through a dialogue with the students. Lee (2016) has argued for the need to put students in the centre of the classroom by giving them more responsibility and opportunity to regulate their own learning. That being said, the teacher needs to minimise their power to control the classroom interaction. The absent of such feedback from the interaction in the Indonesian classroom was not surprising as previous studies found its occurrence was quite scarce during the classroom interaction (Arrafii & Kasyfurrahman, 2015)

There has been plenty of studies suggesting the importance of dialogue in the feedback process as it brings a lot of benefits for students (Ajjawi & Boud, 2017; Hawe & Dixon, 2017; Steen-Utheim & Wittek, 2017; Sutton, 2009; Yang & Carless, 2013). Feedback dialogue has been argued to have a potential to enhance student learning. For instance, Tan et al. (2019) investigated Year 9 students' perceptions of two-way feedback in Perth, Western Australia. Interviews with 32 students revealed that dialogic feedback extended students' metacognition and it could result in students' higher order learning gains.

The result of this study provides some implications for teachers. Firstly, teachers should raise awareness of the importance of feedback. Additionally, teachers should also try to provide feedback and further handling to students' answers in a stimulating way. Secondly, teachers might want to consider modifying their feedback practices. The implementation of the triadic-dialogue should be carried out more flexibly. Alexander (2006) proposed a "dialogic teaching" (p.38) or dialogic talk which is seen useful (Hardman, 2011). Its features include collective (teachers and students address learning task together), reciprocal (teachers and students listen to each other, share ideas, and consider alternative viewpoints), supportive (students articulate their ideas freely without fear of embarrassment over 'wrong answers, and they help each other to reach common understandings), cumulative (teachers and students build on their own and each other's ideas and chain them into coherent lines of thinking and enquiry), and purposeful (teachers plan and steer classroom talk with specific educational goals in view).

By doing so, students' contribution is expected to surge, and the participation can be more balanced. Additionally, it is hoped that the students can think more critically. However, it is, of course, not an easy task to change the classroom culture. There should be some steps to follow and some practices to do before the participants finally understand their roles.

CONCLUSIONS

The current study has shown how the IRF cycle was dominant in the context of Indonesian EFL classrooms. Such domination restricted students' opportunity to be more involved in the learning process during the interaction. The teachers used the F move to accept and praise students' answers, and very little evidence of discoursal role of feedback was found. This study has shed light on an important implication that teachers should be more aware of the importance of the F move and re-evaluate their current practice.

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