

An Analysis of Teacher-Student Interactions in EFL Class at SMP Ihsaniyah Tegal

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ABSTRACT

This study presents the analysis of the teacher-student interactions in online and offline EFL classes. The objectives of this study are to identify the teacher-student interactions and to analyze the implementation of the types of teacher-student interactions in EFL classes. It is descriptive qualitative research involving three English teachers and thirty students for each class at SMP Ihsaniyah Tegal as the participants of the research. The data were collected through direct classroom observation and videos taken in the class. The data were analyzed based on a FLINT System. The results in this study by observation from the three teachers showed that the type of 'Asks Question' from the teachers' talks and 'Student Response Open-Ended' from the students' talks had the highest percentage. It means that teachers wanted the students to be more active and braver to speak in English. The conclusion of this study indicated that the dominant types of teacher-student interactions in EFL classes are 'Asks Question' from the teachers' talks and 'Student Response Open-Ended' from the students' talks because the teacher tended to act as a facilitator that facilitated students to speak and be more active and as a resource providing the information needed by students. In addition, the students had more opportunities to speak and interact in EFL class by giving responses to the teachers' talks.

Keywords: *Teacher-student interaction, EFL class, FLINT*

INTRODUCTION

Teacher-student interaction in EFL is quite important. As stated by Brown & Lee (2015), to gain experience in English communication, teacher and students need to interact regularly using the target language because the interaction is the heart of communication. When the interaction is obstructed, the teaching-learning process will not run well. The lack of interaction between them could hamper the students' understanding. Then, it will also influence students' behavior in the classroom. Therefore, choosing the appropriate type of interaction can minimize the problems in the teaching-learning process.

Nisa (2014) states that interaction occurs as long as people communicate with each other and act and receive reactions from each other anywhere and anytime, including in the classroom. In the EFL classroom, teacher-student interaction can be observed when

the teacher is delivering the materials during the teaching-learning process. However, while the teaching is explaining, they do not only transfer ideas, but also give the students chance to do several appropriate activities, like asking some questions, developing ideas, or enriching their vocabulary items. In another way, by distributing some questions, the teacher will find out whether or not the students keep their attention to the teacher's explanation.

Furthermore, Pennings et al. (2018) state that in the daily classroom, interaction can even reflect the teacher professional development. By choosing the appropriate technique to interact with students, the teaching learning process will run smoothly and interactively.

Based on the study above, the researcher identifies some problems based on the teacher student interaction. This aspect of the study reveals the general patterns of teacher student interaction in the class, especially in EFL class. In relation the problems above, the researcher tries to formulate the research problems into the research question, such as: what are the teacher and students interaction found on EFL class? And how do the teacher and student implement the types of interaction on EFL class? Therefore, the objectives of this research are to identify the teacher and students interaction found on EFL class and to analyze the implementation of the types of teacher-student interaction on EFL class.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the classroom, the relationship between teacher and students is asymmetrical (Sundari, 2017). When interacting throughout the class, students face limitations in their verbal abilities. Teachers are expected to have competencies in managing classes to encourage students' participation to foster the development of their spoken language. As stated by Sulistianingsih (2018) one of the most common problems faced by EFL teachers is passive classes, where students tend to avoid interactions with teachers. In many cases, students who are unresponsive always almost frustrate the teacher's efforts to have effective interactions in the classroom such as asking questions to the class as a whole, hoping for at least one student to respond. This can be a frustrating experience for both parties. There will be times when students cannot answer the teacher's questions, but often students do not answer even if they understand the question, know the answer, and can

answer. As stated by Sharpe (2008), the way the teacher talks to students, the way they interact with them, is one of the important teaching skills, but that does not require technical expertise. However, it requires the teacher to empathize with the person they are talking to.

This research also found sociolinguistic environments, such as students' needs, cultural aspects, linguistic aspects, and psychological aspects that can influence language development. Likewise, other elements—content, motivation, understanding, production, negotiation—might provide conditions for encouraging the development of foreign languages. Classroom interaction involves the teacher and students as people who interact using the target language. In the classroom, communication is largely initiated and managed by teachers. They, as key holders of classroom communication, play an important role in managing class participation and stimulating students' language production. Their perspective regarding language class practices needs to be found to understand what happens in the class.

Swain & Lapkin (1998) explain that the role of interactions provide students with many opportunities to produce outputs in the target language, to pay attention to their current language problems, to make and test hypotheses about language, and to make meta-linguistic reflections. Therefore, there are some common problems faced by the students in classroom interaction, for example, some students are inactive or reluctant to interact with others. In many cases, students who are unresponsive always almost frustrate the teacher's efforts to have effective interaction in the classroom such as asking questions to the class as a whole, hoping for at least one student to respond. However, this can also be a frustrating experience for both parties. There will be times when students cannot answer the teacher's questions, but often students do not answer even if they understand the question, know the answer, and can answer. In addition, students are often reluctant to provide feedback or ask questions to the teacher in front of the class. Thus, the teacher gets a little verbal response. This poor condition needs to be evaluated to get some solutions since the interaction between teachers and students will also engage their relationship. It is expected to make the teaching-learning activities run actively.

Furthermore, according to Moore (1989), there are three types of interaction: Learner-Content Interaction, Learner-Instructor Interaction, and Learner-Learner Interaction. In analyzing the teacher-student interaction of this study, the researchers

applied the theory of FLINT (Foreign Language Interaction Analysis System). According to Moskowitz (1971), the FLINT System has some types for observation in class. It helps develop interactive language teaching and to sets a learning climate for interactive teaching.

Table 1. Foreign Language Interaction Analysis (FLINT) System Adapted from Moskowitz (1971)

TEACHER'S TALK	
DIRECT INFLUENCE	INDIRECT INFLUENCE
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deals with feelings: in a non-threatening way, accepting, discussing, referring to, or communicating an understanding of the past, present, or future feelings of students. 2. Praise or encourages: praising, complimenting, telling students why what they have said or done is valued. Encouraging students to continue, trying to give them confidence, confirming that answers are correct. 3. Uses ideas of students: clarifying, using, interpreting, summarizing the ideas of students. The ideas must be rephrased by the teacher but still be recognized as being students' contributions. 4. Asks questions: asking questions to which the answers are anticipated. (Rhetorical questions are not included in this category.) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gives information: giving information, facts, opinion, or ideas: lecturing or asking theoretical questions. 2. Gives directions: giving directions, requests, or commands that students are expected to follow; directing various drills; facilitating whole-class and small-group activity. 3. Criticizes students' behavior: rejecting the behavior of students; trying to change the non-acceptable behavior; communicating anger, displeasure, annoyance, dissatisfaction with what students are doing. 4. Criticizes students' response: telling the students his or her response is not correct or acceptable and communicating criticism, displeasure, annoyance, rejection by words or intonation.
STUDENT'S TALK	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students' response, specific: responding to the teacher within a specific and limited range or available or previously practiced answers; reading aloud, dictation, and drills. 2. Students' response, open-ended: responding to the teacher with students' ideas, opinions, reactions, and feelings. Giving one from among many possible answers that have been previously practiced but from which students must now make a selection. 3. Silence: pause interaction. Periods of quiet during which there is no verbal interaction. 4. Confusion: 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. 	

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5. Laughter: laughing and giggling by the class, individuals, and or the teacher.
 6. Uses the native language: use of the native language by the teacher or the students.
 7. Nonverbal: gestures or facial expressions by the teacher or the students that communicate without the use of words. This category is always combined with one of the categories of teacher or students' behavior.
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The use of language in a classroom has a greatly important role in the teaching and learning process (Kuran et al., 2017). The teacher needs to be able to have good skills when he interacts with his students. One skill that a teacher needs is communication ability. A communicative teacher helps him to get some positive responses from his students. Teachers should enrich their 'unlimited' vocabulary to build the students' knowledge of the current field. He also needs to make eye contact with his students since it will build trust and students will feel relaxed. Although teachers and students are not the same as parents and children, their interaction creates harmony in class, so it mitigates the barriers. Rough adjustments are unconscious simplifications by parents and teachers. No group sets out to get the right language level for the viewer. Instead, they depend on a general perception of what people who listen to them understand. Their empathy allows them to almost feel whether the level of language they use is appropriate for the intended audience.

Thus, the role of language in the communication between teachers and pupils is very important (Ridge, 2013). Using communicative language to deliver the messages enables the teacher to develop the teacher and students' interaction in the classroom. According to Ramli & Putri Yohana (2018), the classroom is an environment in which talk is facilitated, whether between teachers and students or among students themselves. Then, classroom interaction becomes the central issue in the last 20 years, especially for language teaching.

As stated by Maloch (2002), student talks are divided into four main exchanges: asking questions, making exchanges of talks, repeating, and answering the teacher or friend's questions. By asking questions, students will not only get answers to questions but also learn how to construct their meaning. Giving the students more chances to answer is better than feeding them the correct ones since creating student talks raises many advantages. One of them is by creating conversation among students, so they can develop their knowledge and extend some information through class interaction. It happens not only between teacher-student interaction, but also student-student interaction. For

example, when a student is talking with his friends, he can exchange information about their feelings, experiences, knowledge, hobbies, and many others.

In general, the conclusions show that most teachers use students' knowledge that encourages students to talk, compliments/encourages students, and corrects students' speech when they talk to them. Meanwhile, most students use the questions asked, make student conversation, repeat the teacher's conversation, and answer teacher or peer questions. As stated by Rubie-Davies (2007), interaction is a prominent pattern where teachers and students touch to share information and knowledge. This increases the effectiveness of the language teaching and learning process because there is the involvement of two-way interaction and active participation between teacher and students in-class activities. However, there are still concerns about the competence of English teachers, especially in Southeast Asian countries. Several studies have found that the lack of competence of English teachers is a major problem in English classrooms since English is a foreign language. The concerns on the success of the teaching process lead to studies to explore and identify the characteristics of classroom interactions. As the whole ecosystem changes, teachers are required to overcome the latest trends and provide the best learning experience for their students (Di Gropello, 2013).

Therefore, the classroom interactions in English Foreign Language (EFL) classes bring a lot of benefits for the student's progress. The EFL class is a place where different cultures interact. The class is to learn and teach English. As cultural interaction begins, they can take into their class assumptions and value regarding what makes a good teacher and good student. English as a foreign language (EFL) is used for non-native English speakers learning in a country where English is not commonly spoken. In the EFL class, the teacher will teach the students how to learn and speak English as well as possible.

In the EFL class, a teacher must know about the backgrounds of the students and their English exposure as well as their motivation to learn English to make the most of class time and improve the English learning experience. The EFL class is an English class where students can learn and speak English as well as possible.

METHOD

The approach of this research was a qualitative approach that employs the simple random sampling technique. According to Creswell & Creswell (2017), each individual

had the same probability to be chosen from the population. The purpose of simple random sampling was to select an individual who served as a sample to represent the population. The participants of this research were the three English teachers and the first and third-grade students of SMP Ihsaniyah Kota Tegal in the academic year 2020/2021.

The data were taken from two different ways; direct and indirect observations. Direct observation was conducted when the researchers observed the teaching-learning process directly by joining the class both in the offline and online classes. While indirect observation was employed by watching the teaching-learning videos shared by the teachers. The data were analyzed by taking the following procedure; data collection, identification, classification, and data analysis. The video and checklist were used to collect the data. The next step was identifying all the words, phrases, and sentences containing teacher-student interaction. Then, the researchers began to classify the data based on the FLINT instruments.

The method of data analysis was descriptive analysis. The analysis was conducted through some steps; observing the class in the direct and indirect observation, watching and listening to the video, identifying the data that contain teacher-student interaction in the transcript of the video, analyzing the findings using FLINT instruments, and drawing some conclusions based on the final results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted at SMP Ihsaniyah Kota Tegal from September to November 2020. In addition, to get the data, the researchers observed three teachers (Teacher 01, Teacher 02, and Teacher 03). Two of them had three meetings; only one conducted two meetings. To analyze the interaction, the instruments used were direct classroom observation and videos taken in the class.

Since the research was conducted in the pandemic era, there was a policy to divide the class into two groups; female and male groups. Teacher 01 conducted three meetings in Class 9G of females, Class 9G of males, and Class 9H of females. Teaching-learning activities in EFL classes were done offline. Then, the researchers did some observation and recorded all of the EFL teaching-learning activities directly in the class. In the first meeting, the teacher gave the topic introduction and the researchers observed the interaction between the teacher and students in the class. For the second meeting, the topic

was simple present tense and the researchers observed how the teacher delivered the material to the students and how the students responded. For the last meeting from Teacher 01, the topic was simple past tense and the researchers observed how the teacher interacted with the students.

In November, there was another policy on conducting the teaching-learning process. They implemented online learning classes. Teacher 02 conducted this online learning class for two meetings in Class 9A and Class 9B. The teaching-learning process was conducted online using Google Meet for an hour. However, the researchers observed and recorded all of the teaching-learning English directly at SMP Ihsaniyah Kota Tegal. In the first meeting, the teacher brought the examination as to her topic and the researchers observed the interaction between teacher and students in the online class. For the second meeting, the teacher gave some exercises and explained the answers at the end of the session. Here, the researchers observed the way the teacher gave the explanation to the students as well as the students' responses.

In the middle of November, there was another policy on conducting the teaching-learning process. The school allowed the teachers to conduct their classes in blended learning (combining the online and offline classes). Teacher 03 conducted the online class using the Google Meet platform. However, she conducted an offline class afterward for an hour. Therefore, the researchers observed and recorded all of the English teaching-learning activities directly at SMP Ihsaniyah Kota Tegal. In the first meeting, the teacher gave the topic about the examination and the researchers observed the interaction between teacher and students in the online class. For the second meeting, the teacher showed the videos about a simple conversation to the students and the researchers observed the teacher's methods of giving the material to the students and the student's responses. For the last meeting, the topics were the date, time, introduction, schedule, and greeting. The researchers kept observing how the teacher and students interacted.

In this study, the researchers obtained the data through document analysis and direct observation in the class together with the English teachers (Teacher 01, 02, and 03). Then, the researchers wrote some transcription of the teacher-student interaction which included the teacher-student talks. After analyzing and classifying the data, the researchers found that there were fifteen types of teacher-student talks based on the FLINT System. In addition, four types of teacher-student interaction were not found in the EFL class, such

as criticizing students' behavior, confusion, laughter, and nonverbal. Besides, there were other types found apart from the teachers-student interaction based on the types of FLINT systems. These types deal with feelings, praising or encouraging, using ideas of students, asking questions, giving information, giving direction, criticizing students' responses, student response specific, student response open-ended, silence, and native language. The observation results of teacher-student interaction were found as followed:

Result of the Teacher-Student Interaction (Teacher 01)

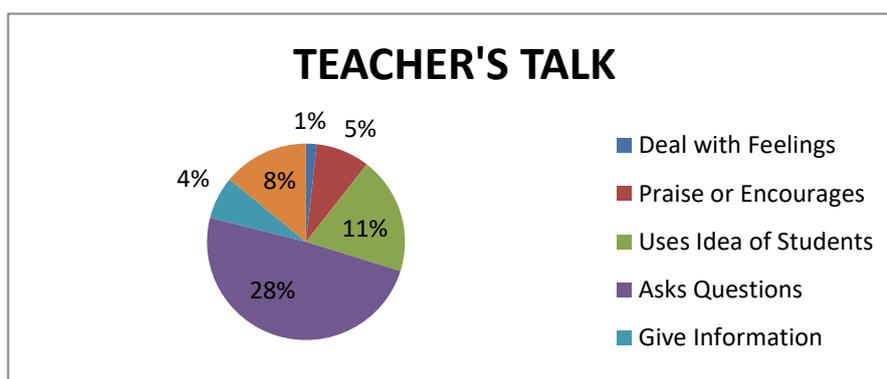


Figure 1. Result of the Teacher's Talk of Teacher 01

As shown by figure 1, it is found that the dominant result is Ask Questions (FAQ) which had a percentage of 28% and 11% was the Use Ideas of Student (IS). It was also found that Give Direction (GD) took 8%, then 5% was the use of Praise or Encourage (PE). Next was Give Information (GI) which had a percentage of 4% and the last was Deal with Feelings (DF) which only took 1%.

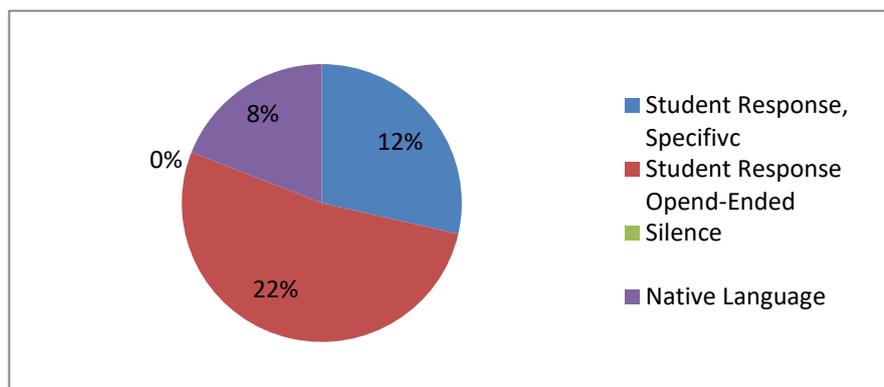


Figure 2. Result of the Student's Talk of Teacher 01

As shown by figure 2, it was found that the dominant teacher-student interaction used by T01 is Student Response Open-Ended (SR-OE) which appeared 22%. Next, 12%

was the use of Student Response Specific (SR-S). While the use of Native Language (NL) only appeared 8%.

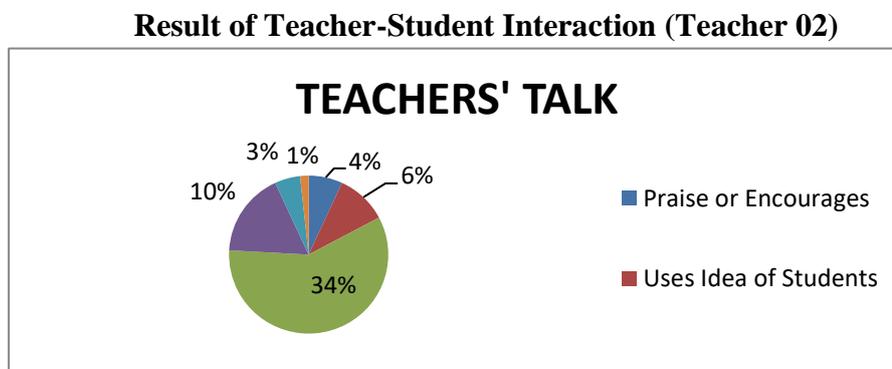


Figure 3. Result of the Teachers' Talks of Teacher 02

As shown by figure 3, it was found that the dominant result of the teacher-student interaction used by T02 was Ask Questions (FAQ) which had a percentage of 34%. Next was Give Information (GI) which had a percentage of 10%. The use of Use Ideas of Student (IS) was 6%, while both the use of Praise or Encourage (PE) and Give Direction took the percentage of 4%. From the results in figure 3 of teacher-student interaction used by T02, it was concluded that the type of Ask Question had the highest percentage since during the learning activities, the teacher always asked questions to students. It means that the teacher wanted the students more active during the learning activities.

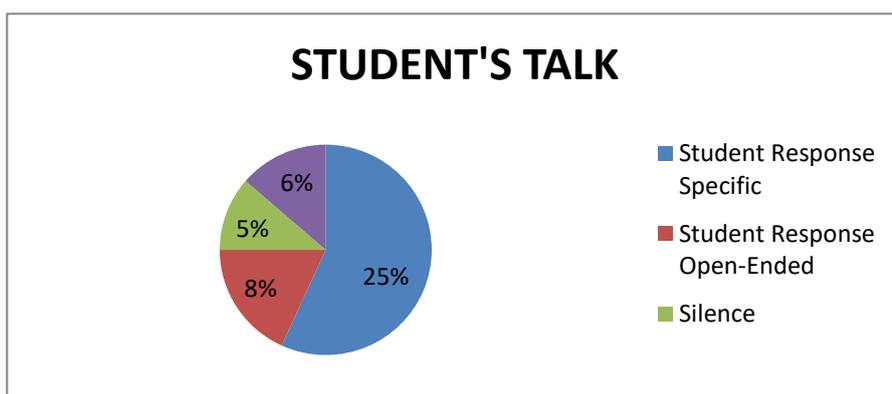


Figure 4. Result of the Students' Talk of Teacher 02

As shown from figure 4, it was found that 25% was the use of Student Response Specific (SR-S). It was also found that 8% was the use of Student Response Open-Ended (SR-OE). And then, Silence (S) had a percentage of 5%. The last was Native Language that had a percentage of 6%. From the teacher-student interaction used by T02, it was

concluded that the type of Student Response Specific had the highest percentage because the students frequently responded to the teacher with a specific response and limited range. It means that the students only listened to the teacher's talk but did not give any opinions or reactions during the learning activities.

Result of the Teacher-Student Interaction (Teacher 03)

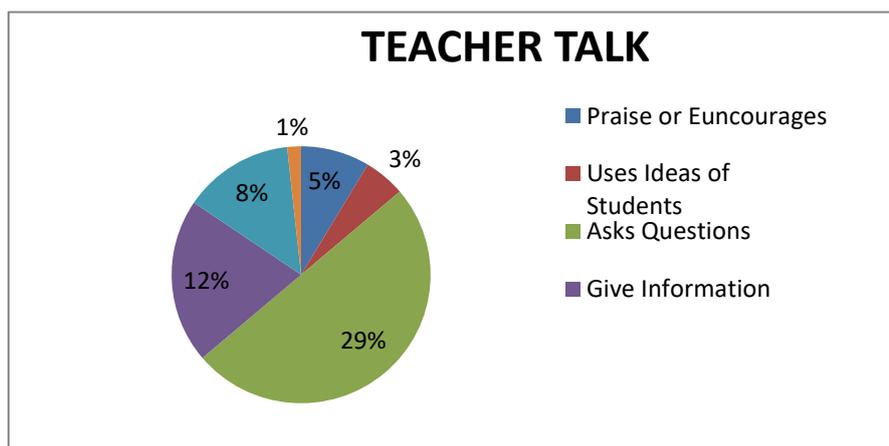


Figure 5. Result of the Teacher's Talk of Teacher 03

As shown from figure 5, it is found that 5% is the use of Praise or Encourage (PE). It was also found that 3% was the Use of Ideas of Student (IS). Next, Ask Questions (FAQ) had a percentage of 29%, and Give Information (GI) had a percentage of 12%. And then, Give Direction had 8%. The last was Criticize Student Response (CSR) that only got 1%. From the teacher-student interaction used by T03, it was concluded that the type of Ask Question had the highest percentage because during the learning activities, the teacher always asked questions to students. It means that the teacher wanted the students more active during the learning activities.

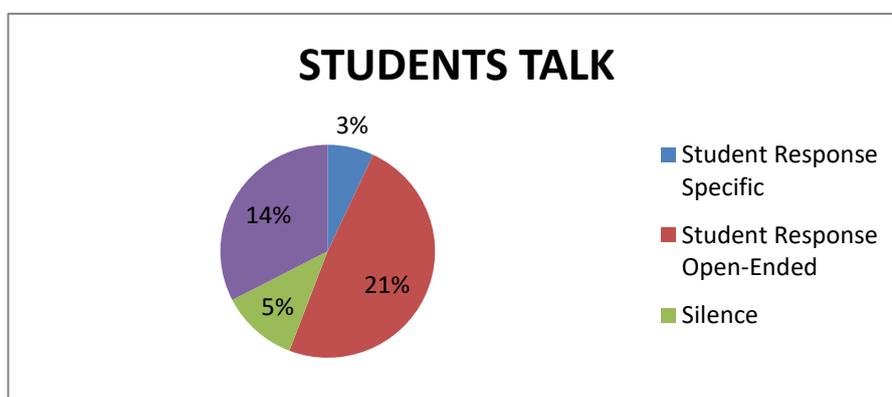


Figure 6. Result of the Students' Talk of Teacher 03

As shown from figure 6, it was found that 3% was the use of Student Response Specific (SR-S). It was also found that 21% is the use of Student Response Open-Ended (SR-OE) and Silence (S) had a percentage of 5%. And the last was the Native language that had a percentage of 14%. From the teacher-student interaction used by T03, it was concluded that the type of Student Response Open-Ended had the highest percentage because the students frequently gave their ideas, opinion, reaction, and feelings. It means that they were more active during learning activities because they always responded to the teacher's talk.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussion, the researchers conclude that not all the types of teacher-student interaction of the FLINT system were used by teachers and students in EFL class in SMP Ihsaniyah Kota Tegal. The study only found two dominant types that appeared and were relevant to the FLINT system; they were asking questions for the English talk and students' responses open-ended for the students' talks. In addition, the findings revealed that during interaction in the EFL class, the teacher tended to act as a facilitator that facilitated students to speak and be more active and a resource providing the information needed by students. In addition, the students had more opportunities to speak and interact in EFL class by giving some responses to the teachers' talks. However, the use of native language during the interaction was frequently used.

Hence, it is recommended that the English teachers motivate students to speak and interact using the target language (English) during teaching-learning activities, to praise them for what they have done for building up their confidence, and to encourage them to interact by applying questions strategies which can develop their communicative competence. Thus, the researchers expect the other researchers to conduct extensive research on the teacher-student interaction in EFL classes using another method.

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