



AN ANALYSIS OF TEACHER-STUDENTS INTERACTION IN ENGLISH SPEAKING LEARNING AT THE EIGHTH GRADE

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ABSTRACT

This study explored teacher–student interactions in English speaking classes among eighth graders at SMP Negeri 1 Botumuzoi. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, data were gathered through classroom observations, interviews, and documentation. Findings reveal that interaction between teachers and students significantly contributes to building an engaging and supportive learning atmosphere. Nevertheless, several limitations emerged. Interactive techniques such as role plays, group discussions, and games were rarely utilized, and teachers did not consistently offer pronunciation models or explicit vocabulary support. Consequently, many learners showed passivity, low confidence, and reluctance to use English in oral communication. Moreover, the classroom climate often failed to reduce students’ anxiety, which further hindered participation. The study concludes that effective teacher–student interaction should extend beyond motivational strategies, requiring the integration of varied, interactive, and learner-centered methods to enhance oral proficiency. These findings underscore the importance of designing classroom practices that not only encourage active participation but also cultivate a safe and communicative environment. Ultimately, this research provides valuable implications for English educators, emphasizing the need to foster inclusivity, responsiveness, and dynamic interaction to strengthen students’ confidence and speaking abilities.

Keywords: *Teacher-students interaction, English speaking instruction, classroom strategies, student participation.*

1. INTRODUCTION

English has long been recognized as a global language with vital roles in education, commerce, and cross-cultural communication. Among the four language skills, speaking is often perceived as the most demanding since it requires not only linguistic competence but also confidence, fluency, and consistent

practice (Astuti & Nurkamto, 2020, p. 45; Anwar, 2018; Jenks & Lee, 2020). In Indonesia, although English is introduced from primary through secondary levels, many learners continue to experience difficulties in oral communication. These challenges are frequently linked to limited exposure to authentic English use, low self-confidence, and insufficient practice opportunities within classroom contexts

Vol 9, No 1 (2026): ESTEEM

(Yulia & Lestari, 2021, p. 112; Lesiana et al., 2023; Jaya et al., 2025).

A key determinant of students' speaking development is the quality of teacher–student interaction. Meaningful interaction enables learners to articulate ideas, obtain corrective feedback, and enhance communicative competence (Wagner & Smith, 2022, p. 77; Sherine et al., 2020). Supportive interaction fosters willingness to participate, whereas teacher-dominated exchanges often result in passive learners who are hesitant to use English (Sari & Rahmawati, 2022, p. 36).

Preliminary observations at SMP Negeri 1 Botomuzoi indicate that students tend to avoid speaking English, largely due to the prevalence of teacher-centered practices and the limited use of interactive techniques such as role plays, pair work, or group discussions. This has contributed to underdeveloped speaking proficiency and heightened anxiety about making mistakes. Hence, it becomes crucial to investigate the dynamics of teacher–student interaction in speaking classes and the obstacles encountered by both parties.

The present study is motivated by the need to enhance the effectiveness of English speaking instruction through improved interactional strategies. By examining how teachers engage with students, this research seeks to uncover existing weaknesses and propose more student-centered approaches. Creating a classroom climate that values respect, support, and active involvement is expected to encourage students to communicate more confidently in English. Accordingly, the study aims to analyze teacher–student interaction in eighth-grade speaking classes at SMP Negeri 1 Botomuzoi and to generate insights for advancing pedagogical practices in the future.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been many studies on teacher-student interaction in English speaking learning. Putri (2021) analyzed teacher-student interactions at SMP Negeri 3 Malang and found that the strategy of open

questions and positive feedback was able to increase student participation. Another study by Hidayati (2020) showed that the use of interactive media encouraged students to be more confident in speaking.

Sunarto and Wijaya (2024) emphasized three important dimensions in classroom interaction, namely affective, cognitive, and linguistic dimensions that influence each other in improving students' speaking skills. Meanwhile, research by Rahmawati (2022) found that teachers' lack of preparation in providing learning media had an impact on students' low motivation to speak.

Research by Nugroho (2021) discussed the role of teacher scaffolding in building effective interactions. He concluded that a gradual guidance strategy can encourage students to be more active. In addition, Lestari (2023) examines the use of peer interaction in speaking classes which is proven to help students correct each other's language mistakes.

Similar findings were presented by Hasanah (2020) who highlighted the importance of simple teacher talk strategies for junior high school students to better understand instructions. Another study, Yusuf (2022), showed that the use of reflective questions from teachers made students more critical in responding.

In addition, research by Andini (2021) revealed that the existence of a positive emotional relationship between teachers and students affects students' courage in speaking. Meanwhile, research by Pratama (2023) emphasized that collaborative interaction significantly improved students' communication skills.

From an international study, Harris (2019) explained that teacher-student interaction serves as a key foundation in speaking skills because it is through this interaction that students gain authentic opportunities for language practice. Research results from Zhang (2022) also show that the use of varied questioning strategies in EFL classes encourages student engagement.

Vol 9, No 1 (2026): ESTEEM

Based on these studies, it can be concluded that teacher-students interaction has an important role in speaking learning. However, most studies still focus on teachers' strategies without much exploration of students' active role in the interaction. In addition, there are still few studies that specifically examine teacher-student interaction at the junior high school level in an area like Botomuzoi, so this study tries to fill the gap.

3. METHODS

This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach, which aimed to analyze the interaction between teacher and students in English speaking learning at the eighth grade of SMP Negeri 1 Botomuzoi. The study was not experimental, review, or simulation based, but rather field research using observations, interviews, and documentation as the main sources of data (Sugiyono, 2021; Neuman, 2019; Patton, 2020).

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Botomuzoi, located in Ononamolo Talafu Village, Botomuzoi District, Nias Regency, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia. The research took place from March 17th to April 18th, 2025. The eighth-grade English teacher and students were among the participants.

a. Data Sources

Data were obtained from teacher, as the primary informant regarding interaction patterns and teaching strategies. Students, as the subjects of interaction during English speaking lessons. Documents, including lesson plans, worksheets, and other class-related materials.

b. Instruments

The instruments used were observation sheets, to record classroom interaction systematically. Interview sheets, containing structured and semi-structured questions for the teacher and students. Documentation, in the form of photographs, lesson materials, and school documents related to English speaking activities (Anufia, 2019).

c. Data Collection Techniques

The researcher applied three techniques observation, using a checklist and field notes to monitor teacher-students interaction during speaking lessons (Mauliddiyah, 2021; Daruhadi & Sopiati, 2024). Interviews, conducted with the English teacher and selected students to gain deeper insight into their perceptions, challenges, and strategies (Kvale, 2021; Gill & Baillie, 2018). Documentation, collecting supporting materials such as schedules, photos, and school records.

d. Data Analysis

Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's (2020) interactive model, which consists of Data Collection, gathering information from observation, interview, and documentation. Data Reduction, summarizing and selecting relevant information according to research focus. Data Display, organizing the data into descriptive forms for easier interpretation (Miles & Huberman, 2019). Conclusion Drawing/Verification, deriving conclusions from patterns and confirming them with evidence (Herdayati & Syahrial, 2019).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1) Results

The findings of this study revealed that teacher-student interaction in speaking classes at SMP Negeri 1 Botomuzoi was manifested through three primary modes of communication: teacher talk, student talk, and reciprocal teacher-student exchanges. Teacher talk was observed to be the most dominant form, as teachers frequently delivered explanations, gave instructions, posed questions, and provided corrective feedback. This dominance reflects the traditional classroom practice in which teachers serve as the central source of knowledge. Although such interaction ensures classroom order and clarity of instruction, it also limits students' opportunities to engage in extended speaking practice. Most students responded to teachers' prompts with brief or formulaic answers, indicating that the interaction

Vol 9, No 1 (2026): ESTEEM

pattern tended to be unbalanced and heavily teacher-centered.

Despite this tendency, more dynamic interaction occurred when teachers employed strategies that encouraged active participation. For instance, open-ended questions prompted students to share longer responses, express personal opinions, and practice constructing sentences more independently. In addition, scaffolding techniques, such as providing vocabulary support, modeling pronunciation, and guiding sentence structures, enabled learners to feel more confident in expressing themselves. These strategies not only created a more interactive learning environment but also encouraged students to take risks in using English without excessive fear of making mistakes. Such practices highlight the critical role of the teacher in shaping the quality of interaction by providing both linguistic support and emotional encouragement.

Furthermore, the results demonstrate that students' willingness to participate was strongly influenced by the teacher's motivational efforts. When teachers showed appreciation for students' attempts, gave constructive feedback, and fostered a supportive atmosphere, students became more engaged and communicative. This shift suggests that effective interaction in speaking classes is not merely about the quantity of communication but the quality of exchanges that promote mutual respect and trust. By combining open-ended questioning, scaffolding, and motivational strategies, teachers can transform the classroom into a communicative space where students are more willing to practice English actively. Thus, the study emphasizes the need for teachers to adopt a more student-centered approach in order to enhance speaking proficiency and reduce learners' anxiety in using English.

Discussion

The results of this research demonstrate that teacher-student interaction in English speaking instruction at the eighth grade of SMP Negeri 1 Botomuzoi has a profound

impact on learners' engagement and oral performance. Teachers were observed to employ strategies such as questioning, repetition, and explanation to elicit responses from students. This corresponds with Brown (2020), who argued that interactive pedagogical techniques, particularly questioning and feedback, are integral to fostering learners' communicative competence in language classrooms.

In addition, the findings highlight that students showed greater involvement when teachers provided constructive feedback and scaffolding. This observation resonates with Vygotsky's socio-cultural perspective, which posits that scaffolding enables learners to progress from their current capabilities toward more advanced levels of performance (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 2021). Putri (2021) similarly reported that guiding questions and consistent encouragement from teachers increased learners' readiness to participate more actively in oral activities. Another key result concerns the affective dimension of classroom interaction. Supportive teacher-student exchanges contributed to lowering students' anxiety and enhancing their willingness to communicate. This aligns with Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (2020), which asserts that a comfortable, low-stress environment raises motivation and facilitates second language acquisition. The study confirmed that encouragement and avoidance of excessive criticism made students more confident in practicing English.

Nevertheless, several challenges were also identified. A notable limitation was the absence of varied teaching media, such as visual and audio resources, which restricted opportunities for authentic communicative practice. This finding reinforces Sari and Wijaya's (2022) observation that inadequate instructional media reduces interaction and hinders speaking development. The integration of multimedia tools is therefore essential to optimize classroom communication and foster speaking proficiency. Finally, the study illustrates that interaction in speaking lessons is inherently reciprocal. Although teachers initiated most of the communication, students also participated by responding, posing questions,

Vol 9, No 1 (2026): ESTEEM

and sharing ideas. This supports Nunan's (2021) assertion that effective language teaching involves two-way communication, where meaning is co-constructed through active collaboration between teachers and learners..

5. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study confirm that its primary objective analyzing teacher-student interaction in English speaking classes at the eighth grade of SMP Negeri 1 Botomuzoi has been successfully achieved. The results highlight that interaction between teachers and learners plays a central role in fostering an engaging and communicative classroom atmosphere while simultaneously enhancing students' speaking proficiency. Teachers applied diverse strategies, including the use of open-ended questioning, constructive feedback, and opportunities for students to articulate their ideas, which led to more meaningful and effective exchanges. In turn, students demonstrated active involvement by responding to questions, participating in discussions, and collaborating with peers.

Overall, it can be concluded that teacher-student interaction has a substantial positive impact on learners' motivation, self-confidence, and oral communication skills. The study emphasizes that the effectiveness of English speaking instruction is closely tied to the quality and dynamics of interaction established in the classroom.

For future research, it is recommended that similar studies be conducted across different educational levels and contexts to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of how teacher-student interaction shapes speaking competence. Further investigations could also integrate classroom interventions using multimedia resources, role plays, and collaborative projects to measure their effectiveness in enhancing participation and fluency. Additionally, exploring students' perspectives on interaction strategies would provide valuable insights into creating more student-centered practices. Such extensions will not only enrich the field of language education but also guide teachers in adopting

innovative methods that maximize learners' communicative potential.

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Vol 9, No 1 (2026): ESTEEM

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Vol 9, No 1 (2026): ESTEEM

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Vol 9, No 1 (2026): ESTEEM

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