

Analyzing the Use of Formal Links through Classroom Interaction at Islamic Boarding School

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Abstract

This study deals with the kinds of formal links used in classroom interaction at the Islamic Boarding School by an English teacher and female students in class XI. It aims to describe the kinds of formal links used in classroom interaction, to find out the most frequent kinds of formal links used in classroom interaction, and to find out the extent the students use formal links effectively in classroom interaction at the Islamic Boarding School. This research was carried out by using descriptive qualitative. The researcher used an observation checklist, interview, and audio recording. The data of transcription were classified into seven kinds of formal links. They were verb forms, parallelism, referring expression, repetition, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction. The researcher observed the English teacher and twenty-two female students in class XI at the Islamic Boarding School. From the English teacher and twenty-two female students in class XI at the Islamic Boarding School who had been observed, the researcher discovered numbers of utterances and percentages. Their total utterances were classified into seven kinds of formal links. The most frequent kind used in classroom interaction was verb forms. Most of the students effectively used formal links in their classroom interaction. On the other hand, some students faced difficulties in using formal links correctly and effectively in classroom interactions.

Keywords: *Formal links, classroom interaction, female students.*

INTRODUCTION

Language is a critical component of human existence as a means of communication. Individuals can convey their feelings and make suggestions through the use of language. Additionally, individuals can interact with their surroundings and communicate with them from any location. Humans are capable of exchanging ideas and expressing their opinions, as well as

advancing their respective scientific disciplines, through the use of communication. Language is the most fundamental and prevalent way of conducting human affairs (Pridham, 2001).

Language is a purposeful behavior that individuals employ daily to communicate with one another (Kaharuddin, 2013). Conversely, interaction emerges as the essential element of communication. Daily, individuals engage in interaction, which consequently renders it a crucial component of language acquisition. To interact proficiently in English, one must acquire mastery of the language's communication abilities. An effective language learner must possess the ability to engage in meaningful exchanges with others while utilizing the target language.

The research findings indicated that individuals engage in speech for a multitude of objectives (Kaharuddin, 2013). Certain individuals engage in speech for a variety of purposes, including conversation, social interaction, rapport-building, creating social connections between two individuals, and more. Both the teacher and the students should be enthusiastic about engaging in classroom discussions.

Students' communicative abilities are enhanced, according to Brown (2001), through participation in written or oral discourse with their peers. Students participate in an extensive quantity of companion and group work, dialogue journaling, problem-solving tasks, and discussion in an interactive classroom.

In the realm of classroom engagement, an interdependent relationship is present between educators and learners, in which their verbal and behavioral expressions exert a reciprocal impact. Students must also engage in classroom participation by thinking, speaking, and being listened to.

An interactive discourse is characterized by a reciprocal exchange of dialogue between the teacher and learners. It signifies the presence of bidirectional communication. Speaking interactions within the classroom are not confined to the instructor alone, as the students actively participate in active listening. Additionally, the nature and magnitude of academic success are contingent upon the caliber of communication.

The analysis of the use of formal links on eleventh-grade female students and an English teacher, MA Darul Arqam Muhammadiyah Gombara at Islamic Boarding School in the academic year 2022-2023 was the focus of this research. By incorporating formal links into an utterance, coherence and the significance of its meaning can be improved. According to Cook (1989), there are two distinct approaches to language: contextual, which involves referencing facts external to the language, and formal, which involves referencing facts within the language. The conveyed meaning is substantially altered by the use of formal links in sentences and paragraphs; each link serves a unique purpose or communicates a distinct meaning. Each of the seven varieties of formal links serves a distinct function. They are verb forms, parallelism, referring expressions, repetition, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction (Cook, 1989).

The results of an initial investigation carried out by the researcher at an Islamic boarding school indicated that a group of students encountered challenges in their ability to speak effectively. They frequently struggled to select verbs that accurately described the time and events they were discussing. Aside from that, they frequently repeated the same words or phrases and exhibited confusion regarding the use of pronouns.

Furthermore, the implementation of formal links possesses the capacity to significantly augment discourse and streamline the acquisition of the target language. Their primary objective was to aid the reader or listener in comprehending the importance of a statement or speech.

Furthermore, the researcher found formal links to be a thought-provoking subject of discourse. In the first place, the study of formal links allowed us, as English language learners, to gain an understanding of sentence construction and the language's fundamental structure. An additional advantage of examining formal links was that it enhanced our understanding of how they contribute to sentence coherence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Discourse Analysis

Cook (1989) identifies two different prospective objects of investigation. An individual participates in the practice of language or literacy instruction or analyzes the regulations governing language structure. Discourse denotes the second category of language, which is employed for communication. Discourse analysis is the study of the elements that contribute to the coherence of communication. Discourse analysis is an essential concept for comprehension because it enables one to establish connections and incorporate a large number of conversations in an efficient manner to achieve the desired result. Fisabilillah (2020) presents a preliminary understanding of discourse by defining it as the exchange of ideas through conversation, speech, and verbal means. Furthermore, this subject concerns the formal manner in which the subject is addressed in written and spoken form. In addition, Crystal (1995) stated in his book entitled "The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language" that discourse analysis is concerned with the organization of organically transpiring spoken language, including that which is encountered in speeches, interviews, commentaries, and conversations.

Formal Links

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of discourse, it is crucial to look into characteristics that extend beyond the limitations of language. According to Cook (1989), there are two approaches to language: formal links, which refer to facts beyond the realm of language, and informal links, which refer to facts within the realm of language. A cohesive device is a method for recognizing formal links between clauses and sentences; it consists of conjunctions, ellipses, verb forms, parallelism, referring expressions, repetition, and substitution.

a. Verb Form

The statement that a verb form in one sentence may be considered 'incorrect' or, at the very least, 'unlikely' due to its incompatibility with the form in another may result from the impact of the verb form in a given phrase on the available options for the ending verb.

b. Parallelism

An additional connection refers to parallelism, a tool of discourse that implies a relationship through the mere repetition of the structure of a clause or sentence. Differentiation can be observed in the process through which sentences that adhere to correct grammar are identified from those that do not. This objective can be accomplished by autonomously applying our knowledge of grammar, without depending on external sources of information. It was determined that parallelism constituted the primary object of a sentence. The subsequent explanations will undertake an analysis of the word, phrase, and clause levels in which parallelism occurs.

c. Referring Expression

Referring expressions are lexical items that require a shared understanding between the sender and recipient to be semantically interpreted; their interpretation is predicated on the reference to other words or elements within the same context. Anaphoric and cataphoric references can be distinguished by the precise placement of a particular item and pronoun in the classification of references. Anaphora, a form of referring expression, involves initially stating the identity of a person or object and subsequently alluding to it as "she, he, or it" for the duration of the expression (Cook, 1989). Cataphora is an alternative form of referring to something in which the pronoun is presented initially and its meaning is subsequently disclosed.

d. Repetition

According to a Web page sponsored by Literary Devices, repetition is a literary device in which identical words or phrases are utilized several times to clarify an idea ("Literary").

e. Substitution

When a speaker or writer wishes to prevent the repetition of a lexical item and can utilize one of the grammatical resources of the language to substitute for the item, they employ substitution and ellipsis (Bloor & Bloor, 1995). Substitution, as opposed to reference, describes the relationship between linguistic units, such as phrases or words.

f. Ellipsis

Cook (1989) defines an ellipsis as the omission of fragmented sentences when the meaning is implicit from the context or an earlier sentence.

g. Conjunction

Additional forms of formal links between clauses and sentences are established through the use of words and expressions that specify the nature of the relationship between each clause and sentence.

Classroom Interaction

The learning process and interaction are synonymous (Allwright, 2008). A language learner can increase their opportunities for successful language use through interaction. In addition, interaction gauges the progress of the learners. Communication is predicated on interaction (Brown, 2001). It may involve the transmission, reception, interpretation, or negotiation of meanings of messages.

Classroom communication resembles other modes of discourse. Nevertheless, classroom communication varies due to distinct objectives, settings, and modes of participation. Classroom communication is comprised of various elements. Originator, transmission, message, channels, communication climate, interference, reception, decoding, responder, and feedback are all components of the communication system (Barker, 1982).

Brown (2001) argues that the communicative abilities of pupils are augmented through engagement in written or spoken discourse. They may also participate in dialogue journals, problem-solving exercises, and discussions. Effective language acquisition is contingent on meaningful classroom interaction in which both instructors and pupils are interdependent and actively engaged. An interactive discourse involves a conversation between the instructor and the students. This facilitates reciprocal communication, thereby establishing an engaging and ever-changing educational setting.

METHOD

Research Design

The researcher applied a qualitative research design. The findings of this research were provided descriptively to the subject under investigation. Furthermore, Bogdan and Biklen (2007) state that the data that is gathered consists of either textual or visual components. The written findings of the research incorporated excerpts from the data, including interview transcripts, field notes, photographs, videotapes, personal documents, memoranda, and other official records, to illustrate and substantiate the presentation. Qualitative research preserves the complexity and profundity of the data, avoiding any oversimplification or reduction of numerical values or statistics.

One of the strengths of qualitative research is its capacity to capture the significant sets of meanings that were present among the participants in the events. This is in contrast to quantitative research, which is constrained by the meanings imposed by the investigator (Yin, 2015). Furthermore, qualitative research emphasizes the significance of actual events rather than merely their occurrence.

Research Instrument

The researcher herself served as the instrument in this research. As Creswell (2014) postulated in Research Design, the researcher, not an inanimate mechanism (Jahja, 2018), was the principal instrument in data collection. The researcher then utilized an interview, field notes, video recording, or camera to conduct observations, in addition to an observation checklist. The steps were as follows:

a. Observation by Using Recording

The researcher recorded classroom activities through the utilization of a recorder or a camera on their smartphone, which served as the research's auxiliary device. Its purpose is to safeguard the data. The researcher documented every activity that transpired during the teacher-student interaction in the classroom.

b. Observation Checklist

The observation checklist proved to be a highly effective and efficient assessment instrument due to its capacity to assist the researcher in maintaining focus while conducting observations, thereby facilitating the generation of research outcomes. Conversely, the checklist list functions as a checklist, comprising the subject's name and some additional symptoms or characteristics of the object of observation (a teacher and students). In this research, the researcher was required to evaluate and assign a check or checklist (√) to each instance of the kind of formal links that occurred between a teacher and a student during speech.

c. Field Note

Field notes meticulously and exhaustively documented every pertinent element of the circumstance. The documents comprised two fundamental categories of data: (1) descriptive information about what the researcher personally observed or heard during the study on-site, and (2) reflective information encompassing the researcher's emotions, experiences, and thoughts throughout the observation sessions (Airasian, Mills, & Gay, 2012).

d. Interview

An interview consists of a purposeful discussion, examination, and interrogation with another individual. Interviews typically entail verbal communication between the researcher and respondents. Structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews are the three most prevalent forms of interviews (Anozie & Adhabi, 2017). The researcher employed semi-structured interviews in this study. Analysts assert that the predominant interview format utilized in qualitative research is the semi-structured interview (Alshenqeeti, 2014). The researcher progressed from broad to specific topics or inquiries to facilitate identification. This provided the research participants with increased autonomy to recount their experiences and articulate their emotions, thoughts, viewpoints, anticipations, despondency, setbacks, and successes. The interview was used as an instrument to answer the third research problem. The researcher asked 10 students and a teacher to find out their effectiveness in using formal links. The interview process was recorded for 3-5 minutes.

Techniques of Data Analysis

The researcher applied qualitative analysis in line with the theory proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). This theory delineates three simultaneous streams of activity: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Using distinct codes, the researcher classified various forms of formal links in classroom interactions by Guy Cook's theory. These codes assist in the categorization and simplification of data. Furthermore, by designating codes to the functions of formal links in classroom interactions, the researcher evaluated their efficacy or lack thereof. By combining these three strands of analysis into an interactive model, a comprehensive understanding of the research findings is achieved. By employing these methodologies, the research investigated the existence and efficacy of formal links within classroom interactions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Kinds of Formal Links used in Classroom Interaction

From the whole data analysis, the researcher found the kinds of formal links used in classroom interaction by eleventh-grade female students at Ma Darul Arqam Muhammadiyah Gombara, Makassar, according to Guy Cook's theory. The researcher concluded, based on these results, that formal connections of every kind were discovered in this study: conjunctions, ellipses, verb forms, parallelism, referring expressions, repetition, and substitution. The findings of this study are consistent with those of Cahyani (2013), Kulsum (2008), and Ghozali (2016). Numerous studies have demonstrated the value of formal links. However, this study exhibits both commonalities and distinctions when compared to prior research. Consistent with Kulsum's (2008) findings, the National Examination reading revealed a multitude of formal connections. An investigation conducted by Cahyani (2013) corroborated the claim that Barack Obama's speech also contained a variety of formal connections. According to Ghozali (2016), he additionally identified every type of formal relationship that was present within the short story's text.

The Most Frequent Kinds of Formal Links Used in Classroom Interaction

After combining the utterances of the teacher and all students of the Islamic Boarding School, eleventh-grade female students of MA Darul Arqam Muhammadiyah Gombara, Makassar, and the researcher discovered the most frequent kinds of formal links used by the teacher and her students in classroom interaction. As a result, the researcher reached the definitive conclusion that verb form was the most commonly employed formal link in classroom discourse. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Cahyani (2013), which revealed that the tenses utilized most frequently in the speech transcript of Barack Obama were simple present, simple past, and simple future. The verb can be expressed in simple present, simple past, and simple future forms. Alternatively, it is a verb form.

The Extent the Students Used Formal Links Effectively in Classroom Interaction

In addition to referencing the function of each formal link, the researcher enhanced the conclusions with interview data. Based on prior research, it was determined that five students committed the majority of speaking errors associated with the use of formal links, while the remaining five students demonstrated perfect correspondence between their thoughts and actions. In addition, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with ten students and an English instructor to bolster claims made about the students' responses. Upon examination of the formal link aspect, it becomes evident that every type of formal link serves a distinct purpose in comparison to the others. It was discovered that the function of formal links that incorporate verb form in one sentence can restrict the verb in the following sentence. A certain degree of formal link appears to exist between them in the form of consistent use of particular tenses. The purpose of parallelism is to simplify the language, referring expressions signify reference pronouns, repetition serves to emphasize the main idea of the text, substitution, and ellipsis ensure the accuracy of the utterance, and conjunctions demonstrate cause and effect relationships, comparison and contrast, information addition, and temporal illustration. The researcher took the data from the Islamic Boarding School, eleventh-grade female students of MA Darul Arqam Muhammadiyah Gombara, Makassar.

CONCLUSIONS

To the stated research objectives, the researcher wishes to deliver the following conclusion:

- a. Through classroom interaction, the twenty-two students and a teacher of English utilized a variety of formal links in numerous utterances, albeit in varying proportions and quantities, according to the findings of the researcher. Verb forms, conjunctions, referring expressions, repetition, substitution, ellipsis, and parallelism were among them.
- b. The most dominant kind of formal link used in classroom interaction at eleventh-grade female students at Islamic Boarding School was verb forms. The researcher found the proportion of every kind of formal link by calculating the sum of all utterances expressed as a percentage, following the classification of the data into different kinds of formal links. Variations in the proportion of every kind were observed for each participant described. Additionally, the researcher emphasizes that both the English teacher and the students employed various kinds of formal links, as every kind serves a distinct purpose; thus, they did so intentionally by their learning objectives. Every kind of formal link was employed to establish connections between clauses and sentences, thereby demonstrating the unity of meaning.

c. Most of the students at Islamic Boarding School, eleventh-grade female students of MA Darul Arqam Muhammadiyah Gombara, Makassar, had good abilities in using formal links, and most of them effectively applied them in various communication contexts during their interactions in the class. Their level of effectiveness in utilizing formal links was significantly influenced by several factors, including educational factors such as their familiarity with formal links, the atmosphere at the Islamic Boarding School, and their motivation to learn. In addition, the learning and speaking exercises offered in an Islamic boarding school had an impact on the student's proficiency in employing formal links. Conversely, a subset of female students in the twelfth grade at the Islamic Boarding School encountered challenges when it came to accurately and efficiently employing formal connections during classroom exchanges. As evidenced by data collected in the field, the utilization of formal links resulted in error rates for five students. This finding suggested that a subset of these students exhibited a diminished capacity for utilizing formal links in their communications. A multitude of factors contribute to these challenges, encompassing inadequate practical speaking skills, restricted understanding of formal links, and the impact of the surrounding environment.

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