

**MALE AND FEMALE TEACHER'S INITIATION  
IN ENGLISH CLASSROOM INTERACTION**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study was about male and female teacher's initiation in English classroom interaction. The aims of this study were (1) to find out the types of male and female teacher's initiations used in English classroom interaction based on Sinclair and Coulthard Model, (2) to find out the reason why male and female teacher used the types of initiation. The design of the research used qualitative research. To answer the problems of the study, the data were collected in three ways by observing, video recording and interviewing. The data were analyzed based on Sinclair and Coulthard theory (1975). The result of this study were the following, (1) there were nine types of initiation used by male and female teacher in English classroom interaction, namely, boundary, teacher inform, teacher direct, teacher elicit, check, re-initiation (i), re-initiation (ii), listing and repeat. (2) the reasons in use of types initiation by male and female teacher. Those were affected by male and female teacher belief which belongs to the presage category and context category which refers to the class in which the teaching process takes place. They had different ways when doing initiation in English classroom interaction, which is they had their own ways in doing interaction with the students. Even though they had different ways but their aim just making the students comprehended and could knew what the teachers said.

***Keywords: Initiation, Gender, Classroom Interaction***

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### *Background of The Study*

Classroom interaction takes an important place in the process of language teaching and learning through giving learners opportunities to receive the input that is provided by the teacher, material which must be understood by the learners in order to make them involved in the classroom task by providing the output. Therefore, teachers need to be aware of to what extent their classroom practices facilitate language learning in reality. The use of language in a classroom has great important roles in teaching and learning process. Teachers use language not only for sending messages or delivering what in their thought but also for organizing teaching activities, helping students practice, implementing teaching plan and interacting with their students that make the learning and teaching process to be effective.

It has been widely recognized that classroom interaction is important to a foreign language since it provides an opportunities for learners to practice their language skills, to develop knowledge and to interact with others. Successful interaction between teacher and student very often provides the impetus behind effective language teaching and reinforces student motivation for language learning. Still most teachers have unique teaching styles which are identified by how they deliver instructions, evaluate students, select content suitable for student level of competency, and support the needs of their students. Brown (2007) said that in countries where English is used as foreign language, the students need to practice English in language classroom. To get experience in English learning, they need to interact with the teachers, themselves and with materials regularly

using the target language, because interaction is the heart of communication. Unfortunately, the interaction in the language classroom seems to the teachers in the classroom all the time, especially in the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classroom. The goal of teaching process then could not be achieved if the teacher of EFL ignores it. Therefore interaction is needed in teaching-learning process, because they are expected to give a response between teacher and students in the class. Teachers do something to the students, students do something in return. As the result, the students learn. If this interpersonal is good, it is assumed that learning will occur. On the hand, it is bad, the process of learning will not occur.

Initiation is the teacher ask a question or action to initiate students to do interaction in classroom. It is effort of the teacher in pushing the student to make them active in classroom. It is also believed that the important way to create the interactive language classroom because it provides the stimuli for the students to interact continually. According to Sinclair and Coulthard Model (1975), there are 10 kind of initiations that the teacher release; Boundary, teacher elicit, teacher inform, teacher direct, listing, re-initiation (i), re-initiation (ii), check, repeat, reinforce.

It has been generally assumed that gender is a factor that affect the process of teacher/student interactions in the classroom. In other words, gender of both teachers and students influences the quality and the quantity of the interaction in the classroom. Gender of the teacher affects the classroom environment (Canada and Pringle, 1995; Hopf and Hatzichristoo, 1999; Duffy, Warren and Walsh, 2002). According to the studies that have been done in this area, teachers of different gender have class with different characteristics. For example, the general

characteristics of a class that are taught by a male teacher were faster-paced, much (excessive) teacher floor time, sudden topic shifts, and shorter but more frequent student turns. Similarly, female teachers is described as communicative facilitators and perhaps more tolerant of first language use. Female teachers are also described as too forceful in choosing topics and asking too many questions primarily with the intent to smooth and perpetuate the conversational flow (Chavez, 2000).

The research focuses on initiation that produced by male and female teacher in SMAN 9 Medan. Based on the writer's observation, in the beginning class, generally the teacher initiates by giving a greeting, and then explain the material of lesson. For male teacher always ask a question to student and less explain the lesson material, give an Information. In asking a question, if the student didn't answer his question, the male teacher will change the question. In contrast, a female teacher directly give the student an information from the beginning to the end of teaching-learning process. She explained the lesson material and seldom ask a question or information to student. In asking a question, if the female teacher asked her student a question, the student did not answer her question, the female teacher would still ask the same question until she get the answer. Even, if the student also still didn't answer the question, the female teacher would answer her question herself. In addition, when one of students already answered the question, female teacher would still ask continuously the same question to get more information from the other student.

For male teacher, in the beginning class, He initiated teacher inform, teacher elicit, re-initiation (i), and boundary. Male teacher initiated boundary three

times, teacher elicit is ten times, re-initiation is twice and teacher inform is one time. Meanwhile female teacher realized boundary is one time, teacher inform is twice, teacher elicit is four times, listing is three times. It can be concluded that male teacher more realized teacher elicit than female teacher did., it means male teacher asked the student many questions to get information or to move the class step by step to a conclusion. Based on Lakoff (1975) states that characteristic of female teacher class is to ask many questions, male teacher does not. But in the fact, male teacher more often ask a question than female teacher. It is very rarely used by men when talking or discussing with another people. Based on the phenomena above, it proves that there are differences of kind of initiation that male and female teacher applied.

From explanation above, the research will be conducted dealing with male and female teacher initiation in English classroom interaction to know differences kinds of initiation that are used by male and female teacher.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **1. Classroom Interaction**

According to Chaudron (1998:10), classroom interaction covers classroom behaviors such as turn-taking, questioning and answering, negotiation of meaning and feedback. Chaudron (1998:10) states that Interaction is viewed as significant because it is argued that:

- a. only through interaction, the learner can decompose the TL structures and derive meaning from classroom events,
- b. interaction gives learners the opportunities to incorporate TL structures into their own speech (the scaffolding principles) and
- c. the meaningfulness for learners of classroom events of any kind, whether thought of as interactive or not will depend on the extent to which communication has been jointly constructed between the teacher and learners.

### **2. Sinclair and Coulthard's Model**

This model of analysis was developed at the University of Birmingham which focused on the structure of discourse in traditional English native speaker school classrooms. The S&C discourse analysis model (1975) was created after a rank scale structure proposed by Halliday (1961). The model is proposed to show how interaction in the classroom takes place by taking a linguistic and functional look at discourse.

According to Sinclair and Coulthard (1992), the rank scale format was chosen due to its flexibility. In other words, it was easy to adjust the new model

by adding new contributions to it as soon as they were discovered because 'no rank has any more importance than any other' (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1992: 2). Additionally, each rank scale unit consists of one or more units below. The rank scale has a lesson as the largest unit of the highest rank, followed by a transaction, then the next unit in line, an exchange, which is followed by a move, and finally, an act as the smallest unit at the bottom of the scale hierarchy.

**a. Exchange**

Exchanges can thus be differentiated by these functions and separated into teaching or boundary (organizational) exchanges. In the particular form of classroom interactions, the teaching exchange, is considered among the most frequently occurring types of teacher-student talk in the classroom which is called Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF). Initiation that is conducted by the teacher is realized by ten Exchange; Boundary, teacher elicit, teacher inform, teacher direct, listing, re-initiation (i), re-initiation (ii), check, repeat, reinforce.

**b. Move**

Moves consist of acts and combine to form exchanges. There are five classes of moves, which make up exchanges. Firstly, there are *framing* moves, which are used to structure the lesson and are often followed by *focusing* moves, which are there to draw students' attention to the direction of the lesson (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1992, pg.22). The other three moves are labeled as *opening*, *answering*, and *follow-up*.

**c. Act**

The lowest rank of classroom discourse is the individual act, expressed by clauses or single words. Acts are the smallest and "...lowest rank of discourse"

Acts are used "...to initiate succeeding discourse activity or respond to earlier discourse activity" (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1992: pg.8). Sinclair & Coulthard (1992) list twenty-two acts. These acts combine to make the five classes of move.

### **3. Gender and Teacher Language**

According to West and Zimmerman (1987), gender is not something inherent when someone was born with and not something which someone has, but something which someone does. According to Lakoff (1975) state that females are more polite, hesitant, complain, cooperative and talk more in private context than men. In conversation, they are more competitive, dominate, authority, command and interrupt.

In conversations involving both sexes, men could switch topics while women would take turns to speak, supporting others' opinions, complementing them and trying to avoid interrupting others. When it is conversation among members of the same sex, women prefer to discuss personal topics while men prefer public issues and would avoid discussing private topics.

According to (Hopf & Hatzichristou, 1999), teachers of different gender have class with different characteristics. For example, the general characteristics of a class that are taught by a male teacher were faster-paced, much (excessive) teacher floor time, sudden topic shifts, and shorter but more frequent student turns. Similarly, female teachers is described as communicative facilitators and perhaps more tolerant of first language use.

### **4. Conception of Teaching**

There are variables which might affect to each other on the teacher's and students' performance in the classroom where the teaching process take place



(Gage, 2004). The variables are: (a) the presage category: teacher's years of experience, characteristics, age, and the teacher's belief of the subject knowledge she is teaching; (b) the context category: the characteristics of the nation, region, community, school, and class in which teaching takes place; (c) process category: which can also be broken down into three categories, namely, teacher thought process in planning, and deciding; teacher thought process and the content of teaching; and teacher thought process and students' thought process; and (d) product: represents the goal of all the foregoing categories. It includes achievement of cognitive objectives and can also refer to achievement of social emotional objectives.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### *Methodology*

This research was conducted by using descriptive qualitative research with qualitative approach. According to Lodico (2006:264) qualitative research is the research that focus on the study of social phenomena and on giving voice to the feelings and perceptions of the participants under study, this is based on the belief that knowledge is derived from the social setting and that understanding social knowledge is a legitimate scientific process. The data collected is not in the form of number, but the data derived from manuscripts, field note, personal documents, record memos, and other official documents. In this study, the descriptive research was done in the classroom, and the main point of this research is to collect and to accumulate the basic data in descriptive way. It described the phenomena that occurred in the classroom such as teacher initiation, during teaching learning process in SMA Negeri 9 Medan, such as the kind of initiation that will be used by male and female teacher.

### *Subjects of the Study*

The data of this study was the transcription of utterances produced by male and female English Teacher during teaching learning process. The source of the data was taken from English teachers of SMA Negeri 9 Medan. The chosen class was in grade eleven. The researcher used two classrooms. One classroom was for male teacher and the other classroom was for female teacher

### *Techniques and Instruments of Collecting the Data*

#### a. Observation

The observation carried out to the teacher talk. This is a nonparticipant observation. It means that although the researcher were in the classroom, she didn't participate in the activities. She just sit on the back of the classroom, observe, and record classroom interaction.

#### b. Video Recording

Video recording was used to record the talk which occur in the classroom. The result of recording was transcript.

#### c. Interview

The researcher conducted interview to get supporting data about the reason of male and female teacher used the initiation during taught in classroom interaction.

### *Technique of Analyzing data*

This research was analyzed by using the data analysis from Rymes (2009, p.74). There are four basic steps:

- Recording real classroom interaction. The researcher recorded the whole part of teaching and learning process in order to get the teacher initiation during the interaction in the classroom. interactional involved in focal event, to look at how it was patterned and the sequences within it.
- Transcribing the talk and action. Transcribing-writing down what everyone said.

- Analyzing transcript. Analyzing transcript can be defined as coding scheme, which the researcher analyzed the teacher talk in the script by using Sinclair and Coulthard model (1975) (based on table 2.1 and table 2.2 and then analyzing why the male and female teacher used the initiation. The conclusion drawn from the data that have been summed up and making the report of the research.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

### *Data Analysis*

This study analyzed the data based on Sinclair and Coulthard to find out the types of teacher's initiations, and Gage's theory (2004) to find out the reason why male and female teacher used type of initiation during the teaching and learning process.

### *The Findings*

It was found that there were nine types of teacher's initiation that were used by male and female teacher. They are teacher elicit, boundary, teacher direct, teacher inform, re-initiation (i), check, repeat, re-initiation (ii), listing, meanwhile reinforce was not found during the teaching and learning process. Reinforce was not find during the teaching and learning process. It was found that Male teacher initiated dominantly teacher elicit is 61 times (34,65%), boundary 8 times (4,54%), teacher inform is 45 times (25,56%), teacher direct 36 times (20,45%), check is 17 times (9,7%), re-initiation (i) is once (0,56%), re-initiation (ii) is twice (1,13%), listing is twice (1,13%) and repeat is 4 times (2,27%). Meanwhile female teacher initiated dominantly teacher elicit is 55 times (29,10%), boundary 18 times (9,52%), teacher inform is 51 times (27%), teacher direct is 24 times (12,7%), check is 11 times (5,82%), re-initiation (i) is 8 times (4,23%), re-initiation (ii) is twice (1,05%), listing is 14 times (7,40%) and repeat is 6 times (3,17%). Reinforce was not find during the teaching and learning process.

The reason why male and female teachers used the type of teacher initiation. They were: (1) boundary, to gave a signal that lesson would be began or

ended; (2) teacher inform, to increased the students's knowledge about the topic which was discussing; (3) teacher direct, to made student knew what they had to do in classroom; (4) teacher elicit, to measured student's understanding; (5) check, to measured student's understanding; (6) re-initiation (i), to encouraged the students to be more confident and braver to gave their opinion; (7) re-initiation (ii), to encouraged the students to be more confident and braver to give the answer; (8) listing, the student could be more active in classroom interaction; (9) repeat, the teachers could made their directive or elicitation and student's answer be clearer. So, based on those reasons, it could be concluded that the teacher's performance during the learning process was affected by the teacher's belief which belonged to the presage category and was affected by context category which refers to the class in which the teaching process takes place (Gage, 2009:47).

In addition needs to be discussed related to this research is like Lakoff (1975). According to Lakoff (1975), men and women communicate on different levels and their communicational approaches are also different. In conversation, women is more polite than men. women also more ask question and talk than men. In conversations involving both sexes, men could switch topics while women would take turns to speak, supporting others' opinions, complementing them and trying to avoid interrupting others.

Not all of the most frequent ways are fully applied by male and female teachers. Based on the observation male teacher also used some characteristic that usually there in female teacher such focused on asking questions, talking and providing information.

It could be seen from data of this study. The fact is male teacher more ask a question than female teacher during teaching learning process. Based on the data, It was confirmed that male teacher initiated dominantly teacher elicit (34,65%) and so did female teacher (29,10%), which were mostly related to obtain verbal responses from the students.

The other supporting data is in using Check by male and female teacher. From data of this study, the percentage of initiating Check by male teacher is 9,17% and female teacher is 5,82%, which were mostly related to discover how well the students are getting on and identify the topic, which was also realized by questioning.

The last supporting data is in using re-initiation (ii). From data of this study, the percentage of initiating re-initiation (ii) by male teacher is 1,13% and female teacher is 1,05%, which were mostly related to encourage the students to be more confident and braver to give their opinion or answer, which was also realized by questioning.

So, based on the fact and supporting data above, it can be concluded that the theory is across with the reality that have been observed.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

### *Conclusion*

After analyzing the types of initiation were used by male and female teacher based on the research findings and discussion in the pervious chapter, it could be drawn the conclusion as follows: (1) there were nine types of initiations used by male nd female teacher in English classroom interaction, namely: boundary, teacher inform, teacher direct, teacher elicit, check, re-initiation (i), re-initiation (ii), listing and repeat. Meanwhile, reinforce was not found during the teaching and learning process in the class. (2) the reasons why the teacher used types of initiation, in teaching learning process, types of initiation were used by male and female teacher functioned as a way to give a signal that lesson would be began or ended which refers to boundary. For teacher inform, it is purposed to increase the student's knowledge about the topic which was discussing. By initiating teacher direct, student would knew what they had to do in classroom. Teacher elicit and check are ways to check students's understanding, knowledge nd comprehending the lesson. Beside it all, male and female teacher used re-initiation (i) and re-initiation (ii) to encourage the students to be more confident and braver to give their opinion or answer. By initiating listing, the students could be more active in classroom interaction. And repeat, it could made teacher's explanation and student's response be clearer. So, it could be easy to comprehend by students. Those are affected by the teacher's belief which belongs to the presage category and context category which refers to the class in which the teaching process takes place. (3) In this study, the researcher found male teacher more ask a question than female teacher during the teaching learning process. It



can be seen that the most often frequently used by male and female teacher was teacher elicit. Male teacher 34,65% and female teacher 29,10%. It occurred because the teacher were trying to gain students' participation, which was realized by questioning. The other supporting data is the percentage of using Check.

### *Suggestions*

1. The teacher is expected to improve an effectiveness of English classroom interaction through the teacher's initiation. By using initiations, the teacher can stimulate the students' participations. So, the class will run successfully.
2. The students are expected to be braver and confident to give their opinion. It can practice their language skills, to develop knowledge and to interact with others. In other word, student's interaction in classroom will provide them the chance to participate in English communication in the society.
3. For the next researcher, the findings of this research can be used as reference to give better understanding. The next researcher is expected to provide additional information and comparison for varied research in other classroom interaction sessions whether it is based on Sinclair and Coulthard model (1975), which will be a very useful reference in teaching and learning process.

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