

## TEACHER'S INTERACTIONAL MODIFICATIONS AND THE STUDENTS' RESPONSES IN INTERMEDIATE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

**Gisela Elshadelin, Josefa Juniarti Mardijono**

English Department, Faculty of Letters, Petra Christian University, Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia  
e-mail: [Gelshadelin@yahoo.com](mailto:Gelshadelin@yahoo.com), [Josefamardijono449@gmail.com](mailto:Josefamardijono449@gmail.com)

### **Abstract:**

This study is about the teacher's interactional modifications in teaching the intermediate students in an English Course in Surabaya. The three objectives of this study are to find out the types of the teacher's interactional modifications, the students' responses toward the teacher's interactional modifications, and the contribution of the interactional modifications for the students' learning. The subject of the data is an English teacher and fourteen students. Moreover, the theory applied was a theory of the interactional modifications from William, Inscoe, and Tasker (2014). The findings revealed that the teacher used five types of interactional modifications namely confirmation check, clarification request, comprehension check, repetition, and reformulation. While for the students' responses, it showed that the students gave correct responses, incorrect responses, and no responses. Furthermore, it also revealed that interactional modifications gave four contributions; making the meaning more comprehensible for the learners, improving the learners' language, minimizing the misunderstanding between the teacher and the learners, and ensuring that the learners were following. Finally, the writer concluded that the interactional modifications help the learners to learning the language

**Keyword :** Interactional modifications, students' responses, contribution

### **INTRODUCTION**

The interaction between the teacher and the students is considered as a crucial matter in learning the language (Ellis, 1990, 1998, as cited in Walsh, 2006). In order to increasing the classroom's learning interaction, the teacher has to comprehend and create the classroom interaction (Walsh, 2006). That is why, teachers modify their spoken language which are divided into input modifications and interactional modification (Walsh, 2011). However, input modification alone is not enough to creating a good interaction condition in classroom (Walsh, 2006). Thus, Long (1983) argues that modifying the interaction is considered crucial in the process of negotiation of meaning.

In the process of negotiation between speakers and listeners, the speakers may use some strategies in order to make themselves understandable toward the learners (Lynch, 2009). Because of that, interactional modifications occur since the speaker's messages are not understandable for the listeners (Gass, 2009). Furthermore, because of the lack of the comprehension, the listener will seek for the clarification of the meaning by using interactional modifications (Gass, 2009).

In order to find the teacher's interactional modification, the writer has conducted the research at *English House* course. This course has been built since 2005. This course provides general English class(es) for almost each grade of elementary, junior, and senior high school. In addition, this course also provides Business English class which is for the entrepreneurs, employees, and university students. At present, there are approximately 200 students in total. Five teachers work at this English course, and each teacher taught 3-5 classes. Also, there are three levels: the beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. Furthermore, for this study, the writer conducted the research at the intermediate one class. The reason is that according to the head of the English course, the intermediate one is the most interactive class among other classes.

In doing the research, the writer had three objectives to achieve. First, What are the types of interactional modifications used by the teacher in teaching English to the students. Second, What are the students' responses toward the teacher's interactional modifications. Lastly, What are the contributions of the interactional modification for the students' learning.

To answer the research question above, the writer used the theory from William, Inscoe and Tasker (2014) about the interactional modifications. There are five types of interactional modifications namely confirmation check, clarification request, comprehension check, reformulation, and repetition (William, Inscoe and Tasker, 2014).

The speaker uses confirmation check to refer to the previous utterances that has been heard (William, Inscoe and Tasker, 2014). In the confirmation check, the teacher uses it because there is a problem with hearing, so he asks the students' to repeat the utterances (William, Inscoe and Tasker, 2014). Furthermore, there are there kinds of confirmation check: code-based/medium based, positively oriented, and neutrally oriented (William, Inscoe and Tasker, 2014). These types are different in the form of the utterances, in the code based, the teacher uses it by repeating some or all of the parts of the previous utterances (William, Inscoe and Tasker, 2014). The positively oriented is used in a declarative question, whereas, the neutrally oriented is in an interrogative question (William, Inscoe and Tasker, 2014).

In the clarification request, the speaker used it to ask for a further explanation of the previous utterances that has been heard or understood (William, Inscoe and Tasker, 2014). In addition, it is used to clarify or revise some points that has been heard or understood (William, Inscoe and Tasker, 2014). Furthermore, comprehension check is one of the types of interactional modifications to check the students' comprehension knowledge (William, Inscoe and Tasker, 2014). There are two kinds of comprehension check: the display question and the referential question (William, Inscoe and Tasker, 2014). The display question means that the teacher or the speaker has already known the answer, whereas, the referential question means that the speaker or the teacher does not know the answer of the question (William, Inscoe and Tasker, 2014).

Another type of interactional modification is repetition which is used by repeating the students' previous utterances (William, Inscoe and Tasker, 2014). The teacher used it to clarify the previous utterances or to ask a confirmation of the previous utterances (William, Inscoe and Tasker, 2014). The last type of interactional modification is reformulation which the teacher uses it by reformulate the previous utterances (William, Inscoe and Tasker, 2014). There are two kinds of reformulation: the limiting the lexical and phonological world and the synonyms (William, Inscoe and Tasker, 2014).

For the students' responses, the writer uses the correct responses, incorrect responses and no responses. The correct responses mean that the students' response is in line with the teacher's expectation. In contrast, the incorrect responses mean that the students' response is not in line with the teacher's expectations. Furthermore, the no responses describes that the students do not give any responses toward the teacher.

## **METHOD**

In this study, the writer used a qualitative approach. The instrument of the data is the writer who collected and analyzed the data, the data consist of the teacher's utterances that showed the interactional modifications and the students' responses toward the teacher interactional modifications, and the result of the data was shaped through the writer's perspective of the data which is in line with in the main theory of this study.

The writer used the video recording to collect the teacher's and students' utterances. The writer placed the video recorder at the back of the class to get the clear visual of the teacher's movement in interacting with the students. The writer took the video recording twice in September and October 2016. After getting the recording, the writer transcribed it by using the detail transcription.

The writer chose the detailed transcription because it did not only concentrate on the content but also "the way the narrative is conveyed" (Zachariah, 2011 p. 118). In addition, the reason of choosing the detailed transcription was because of the meaning shown through the way of the message (Zachariah, 2011)

After collecting the data, the writer used two tables to analyze the data. First, the writer used table 3.1 in order to analyze the data from the video recording. The table has been made based on the types of interactional modifications which are proposed by Williams, Inscoe, and Tasker (2014). Every teacher's utterance that shows the types of interactional modification and students' responses toward the teacher's interactional modifications is put at the "dialogue lines/utterances" column. The number which is given to every utterance are put at the "No" column. Moreover, to classify the teacher's utterance that shows the types of interactional modifications, the writer wrote the name of the types of the interactional modifications in the column that represents the types of interactional modifications. Also, for the students' responses, the writer put a check (✓) in the students' responses

columns that represent the correct responses, incorrect responses, and no responses. Correct responses mean that the students' answer was in line with the teacher's expectations. Whereas, the incorrect responses mean that the students' answer was not in line with the teacher's expectations. Furthermore, the no responses mean that the students do not respond to the teacher, and they remained quiet with some reasons. Then, the writer put the comments and opinions which are also a part of the analysis in the "Notes" column.

**Table 3.1 Table of the Types of Teacher's Interactional Modifications and Students' Responses**

No	Utterances	Teacher's types of interactional Modifications	Students' Responses			Notes
			C	I	NR	
1.1.1						
1.1.2						
(...)						

Note:

C: Correct Responses

I: Incorrect Responses

NR: No Responses

After classifying the types of interactional modifications, the writer moved to the table 3.2. In table 3.2, the writer put the summary of the teacher's interactional modifications and the students' responses. The writer put a thick (✓) on the column that contains the positive or negative responses from the students toward the teacher's interactional modifications. Furthermore, this table helped the writer to know the types of interactional modifications that the teacher's used. Also, it helped the writer to know the students' responses toward the teacher's interactional modifications.

**Table 3.2 The Types of Interactional Modifications used by the Teacher and the Students' Responses**

TIM \ SR	Confirmation Check			Clarification Request	Comprehension Check		Repetition	Reformulation	
	CB	P	N		DQ	RQ		S	L
C									
I									
NR									

Notes:

TIM: Teacher's Interactional Modifications

SR: Students' Responses

CB: Code-based  
 P: Positively oriented confirmation check  
 N: Neutrally oriented confirmation check  
 DQ: Display Question  
 RQ: Referential Question  
 L: Limiting the lexical and phonological  
 S: Synonyms  
 C: Correct responses  
 I: Incorrect responses  
 NR: No responses

Then, after getting the data, the writer could analyze the data. Thus, the tables above helped the writer to analyze the data of this study

## ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

**Table 4.1 The Types of Interactional Modifications Used by the Teacher in Teaching the Intermediate Students**

TIC \ SR	Confirmation Check			Clarification Request	Comprehension Check		Repetition	Reformulation	
	CB	P	N		DQ	RQ		S	L
C	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓
I		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓
NR				✓	✓		✓		

From the table 4.1, the writer found out that there are five types of interactional modifications which are used by the teacher. However, it also reveals that the teacher did not use the neutrally oriented confirmation check. Also, the teacher did not use the synonym in the reformulation. For the students' responses, they give the correct responses, incorrect responses, and no responses.

### Confirmation Check

Confirmation check is used by the teacher to refer to the previous utterances that has been heard. Also, the teacher used confirmation check when the teacher cannot hear the students' utterances clearly which is happened because of the noises of the classroom. Thus, he asked a confirmation from the students' previous utterances. There are three types of confirmation check which are code-based/medium based, positively oriented, and neutrally oriented. However, neutrally oriented confirmation check was not used by the teacher.

#### Code-Based/Medium Based Confirmation Check

In this type of confirmation check, the teacher wanted to confirm the students' previous statements by using the confirmation check. Moreover, this type was presented in the form that the teacher repeated all of the parts or some of the previous utterances. The example is presented below

*LL: She is/she has/ elephant*

*T: (Points on the students 15) she is?*

*L: Drawing*

#### Positively Oriented Confirmation Check

The teacher used this confirmation check in a form of declarative question. Moreover, the purpose of this confirmation check is the same as the code-based/medium based which was to confirm the students' previous utterances because the teacher could not hear the utterances clearly.

*T: (Showing a picture of a person rides a bicycle)*

*L: Ride a bicycle*

*T: Once again?*

*L: Ride a bicycle*

### **Clarification Request**

Clarification request is one of the types of the interactional modifications that the teacher wanted the students to explain some points further or to clarify/revise their previous utterances. In other words, the teacher used the clarification request because the teacher was not satisfied with the students' answer. Furthermore, the example of the clarification request is described below.

*T: Is June taking a shower?*

*L: No, he is not*

*T: June? June?*

*L: No she isn't*

### **Comprehension Check**

The teacher used comprehension check to check the students' understanding or knowledge. According to William, Inscoc, and Tasker(2014), this type is divided into two sub-types: the display question and the referential question.

#### **Display Question**

The teacher used display question to check the students' understanding whether they have understood the materials or not. Moreover, the teacher has already known the answer of the question that he gave, and he just wanted to directly check the students' knowledge. Thus, the example is presented below

*T: this is my? (Showing pencil)*

*L: Pencil*

#### **Referential Question**

Apart from the display question, in the referential question the teacher asked the students, but he did not know the answer of the question. The teacher used this kind of comprehension check in order to know the students' knowledge or understanding.

*T: now. Ehhh... There are a lot of kind of rooms in your house, yes? [What are they?]*

*L: [What?]*

### **Repetition**

The teacher used repetition by repeating the students' previous utterances. The purpose. The purpose of repetition is to confirm the students' answer and to seek a clarification regarding the students' answer. The example is shown below

*L: How many boxes*

*T: How many boxes [do they have]*

*L: [do they have]*

### **Reformulation**

Reformulation is the type of the interactional modifications that the teacher used by reformulating the previous utterances. The teacher used reformulation by limiting the lexical and phonological of the previous utterances. The reason was to help the students to comprehend the meaning.

The way the teacher reformulated the previous utterances was by limiting the lexical and phonological unit. In addition, the teacher used this type by stressing at the important part only. To illustrate, the example is given below

*T: Now look at Sasty and make a sentence about her. She?*

*T: She?*

*L: Prosotan*

### **The Students' Responses toward Teacher's Interactional Modifications**

The students' responses toward the teacher's interactional modifications are presented in table 4.1. There are two kinds of responses; the correct and incorrect responses. The correct responses mean that the students' answer was in line with the teacher expectations. In contrast, the

incorrect responses describe that the students' answer was not in line with the teacher expectations. The further explanation will be described below

### **The Students' Correct Responses in Confirmation Check**

In the confirmation, the code-base/medium-based, the students gave correct answer toward the teacher's interactional modification. The students' answer was similar to the teacher's expectations.

*LL: She is/she has/ elephant*

*T: (Points on the students 15) she is?*

*L: Drawing*

### **The Students' Correct Responses in Clarification Request**

In the clarification request, the teacher asked the students because the teacher wanted to seek a further explanation or a revision toward the students' answer. The example is shown below.

*L: No she*

*T: Nah complete?*

*L: No, she doesn't*

*T: Ravin?*

### **The Students' Correct Responses in Comprehension Check**

In comprehension check, the teacher usually checked the students' comprehension which is considered as the display question. Moreover, the students gave a correct answer as presented in the example below.

*T: But before that, this is my? (Showing pencil)*

*L: Pencil*

*T: and then, I ? (showing markers)*

### **The Students' Correct Responses in Repetition**

The teacher used repetition by repeating the students' previous utterances. The aim of this interactional modification is to confirm the students' answer and to ask the students to explain their answer further. The student might answer the question completely and in a low voice because she/he might doubt her/his answer. Then, the teacher repeated their answer, and the student was encouraged to answer the complete answer to which she responded toward the teacher utterances.

*L: How many boxes*

*T: How many boxes [do they have]*

*L: [do they have]*

### **The Students' Correct Responses in Reformulation**

The students' correct answer also occurred in the reformulation which is the limiting the lexical word. The teacher reformulated the previous utterances by limiting the lexical words in order to focus on the important words or sentences.

*L: He is smoeking*

*T: Smoke! Smoking*

*L: He is smoking*

### **The Students' Incorrect Responses in Confirmation Check**

One of the sub-types of confirmations check that the students answer incorrectly is positively oriented confirmation check. The teacher asked the students to seek for the students' answer because the teacher cannot hear it clearly. However, the students' answer is not in line with the teacher's expectations.

*LL: He is smo/rokok/apa itu*

*T: Once again?*

*L: He is smaking*

### **The Students' Incorrect Responses in Clarification Request**

In the clarification request, the teacher wanted the students to explain some points further or answer the question completely. However, there were some cases that the students answered it incorrectly. Thus, the teacher encouraged the students to answer it correctly

*L: Ride a bicycle*

*T: Hmm. You miss one*

*L: Riding*

*T: Riding?*

*L: Riding a bicycle*

### **The Students' Incorrect Responses in Comprehension Check**

In the comprehension check, the students' answered the incorrect answer toward teacher's interactional modifications. Then, the teacher drew him to answer the right answer.

*T: Yes, once again Rama?*

*L: Yes*

*T: Yes?*

*L: He is ice-skating now*

### **The Students' Incorrect Responses in Reformulation**

There are also incorrect responses that occur in the reformulation. The students gave the answer incorrectly which was not in line with the teacher's expectations. The example is given below. Thus, the teacher helped the students to answer it correctly.

*T: Now look at Sasty and make a sentence about her. She?*

*T: She?*

*L: Prosotan prosotan*

### **The Students' No Responses Toward the Teacher's Interactional Modifications**

In the comprehension check, there were some cases that the students did not answer toward the teacher. Thus, the teacher chose another student to become a good example. The example is given below

*T: Andra?*

*L: ....*

*T: Hmm, Sasty?*

*L: They are playing football now*

*T: Andra?*

*L: He is*

*T: heh heh*

*L: They are playing football now*

The students also did not give any responses in teacher's repetition. They remained quite and did not give any answers. The reason was perhaps they are confused or afraid to answer the question. Because the student did not give any response, the teacher moved to another student.

*T: Okay, Rama once again?*

*L: Drawing*

*T: Drawing?*

*L: ....*

*T: Okay. Ifandika?*

*L: He is brushing*

### **The Contribution of the Interactional Modification for the Students' Learning**

There are some contributions which happened because of the Interactional modifications. From the analysis of the teacher's interactional modifications and the students' response, the writer classifies four contributions that were made because of the interactional modifications. The contributions are making the meaning more comprehensible for the learners, improving the learners' language, minimizing the misunderstanding between the teacher and the learners, and ensuring that the learners are following.

#### **Making the Meaning more Comprehensible for the Learners**

In learning the foreign language, the learners need to understand the meaning of the language. Thus, having interactional modifications will help the students to comprehend the meaning better. One of the way is by reformulating the previous utterances.

*T: There are a lot of kind of rooms in your house, yes?*

*L: What?*

*T: Rooms in your house*

*L: oh rooms*

*T: What are they?*

*L: Living room*

### **Improving the Learners' Language**

By having the interactional modifications, the teacher helps the students to improve their language. Clarification request is one of the interactional modifications which gives a contribution in improving the students' language.

*L: Sitting*

*T: What is he doing?*

*L: He is sitting now*

### **Minimizing the Misunderstanding between the Teacher and the Learners**

In the context of a classroom, there are a lot of noises which made the teacher not be able to hear the utterances clearly. In addition, the students might be shy to answer that makes them answer or respond to the teacher in a low voice. Because of that, the teacher cannot hear the students' answer clearly which lead to the misunderstanding. In order to minimize the misunderstanding, the teacher used confirmation check. It could help the teacher to confirm the students' previous utterances, so there will be no misunderstanding between the teacher and learners.

*L: Diving diving*

*T: Complete?*

*LL: He is diving/driving*

*T: driving?*

*L: Diving*

### **Ensuring that the Learners are Following**

The learners might lose their concentration when learning the language. Because of that, the teacher should ensure that the learners are following the class. One of the types of the interactional modifications that the teacher used is the repetition. By repeating their utterances, the learners got their concentration back.

*T: Farah?*

*L: She is running*

*T: Eh running?*

*L: She is climbing now. A mountain now*

## **CONCLUSION**

This thesis concentrated on the interactional modifications that are used by the teacher and the students' responses. This study wanted to find out the types of interactional modifications that were used by the teacher in teaching the intermediate one students. Also, this study wanted to seek out the students' responses toward the teacher's interactional modifications, and the contribution of the interactional modifications for the students' learning. In order to get the data, the writer used the theory of the interactional modifications from William, Insoe, and Tasker (2014). Moreover, in order to collect the data, the writer used a video recorder to record the whole class interaction. Two meeting were conducted in collecting the data.

From the analysis, the writer found out that the teacher used five types of interactional modifications. The interactional modifications are confirmation check, clarification request, comprehension check, repetition, and reformulation. Nonetheless, the teacher did not use the neutrally oriented confirmation check and the synonyms.

This study also found out the students' responses toward the teacher's interactional modifications. It revealed that in confirmation check and reformulation, the students only gave both correct and incorrect responses. In contrast, the students give responses and no responses in the comprehension check, clarification request, and repetition.

The writer also found out the contribution of the interactional modifications for the students' learning. The contributions are making the meaning more comprehensible for the learners, improving the learners' language, minimizing the misunderstanding between the teacher and the learners, and ensuring that the learners are following.

From the findings and discussion, the writer interprets that the students give negative responses because they were confused and did not know the answer. Moreover, the class was focused on the grammar and the students knowledge which makes the teacher did not use the neutrally



oriented confirmation check and the synonyms. The reason is that those two sub-types of interactional modifications are more likely used for increasing the students' speaking skill and for the students in the higher level.

To conclude, the interactional modifications help the learners to learn the language. By having the interactional modifications, the learners can have a better understanding of the meaning. Thus, the writer hopes that this study can give the readers better understanding about the interactional modifications used in the classroom.

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