



Comparing Formal and Informal Talks Between Male and Female English Teachers in Classroom Interaction

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Abstract. A formal talk is used by the teacher to minimize misinterpretation in delivering the materials. Thus, classroom interaction can run well, and the students understand what the teacher teaches. In contrast, the teacher also uses an informal talk in classroom interaction to build a relationship with the students. Male and female English teachers have different characteristics in producing formal and informal talks in classroom interaction. This research aimed to discover the characteristics of formal and informal talks between male and female English teachers in classroom interaction. This research was descriptive qualitative research. The participants of this research were male and female English teachers who teach at an intermediate level at Elia English Course. The classroom interactions were observed and recorded to gain the data. The data were transcribed and presented as the percentage of each formal and informal talk characteristic. The results showed that male teachers produced four characteristics of formal talks and six characteristics of informal talks. However, the female teachers showed three characteristics of formal talks and four of informal talks. Those results have implications for either male or female English teachers in considering formal and informal talks in classroom interaction, which can be a strategy to engage the students in the teaching and learning process.

Keywords: classroom interaction · formal talk · informal talk

1 Introduction

Classroom interaction happens in two types, namely verbal and non-verbal. Both of the types are used to deliver information. According to [1], interaction is a way to deliver information, share the thinking, feeling, or planning. The discussion needs interaction to show thinking, feeling, or planning without which other people do not know exactly about the purpose of interaction.

The balance of talks, either formal or informal, is important for students' understanding in the classroom. Teachers use an informal talk unconsciously or they do not realize that they produce an informal talk as long as the students pay attention to what is said.

The teacher has a role to engage the students in the classroom interaction. The teachers use several talks including formal and informal talk interaction to maintain the attention of the students. According to [2] male and female teachers show different verbal behaviors that are expressed in classroom interaction. The different verbal behaviors can be the language that teachers produce in the classroom or feedback in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Usually male teachers use few language expressions in the teaching and learning process or in giving feedback. However, female teachers tend to use more utterances to engage the students rather than male teachers [3]. Therefore, the current research compared male and female English teachers in using formal and informal talks in classroom interaction. It will be conducted in non-formal education which is an English Course in Padang especially in the intermediate class.

Formal and informal talks are parts of teacher talks in which the teacher uses various talks in the classroom interaction. Teachers' talk is categorized as an informal talk in the message and a formal talk is in the subject lesson [4]. An informal talk is used in delivering the message without strict application of linguistic rules on the pattern whereas a formal talk is used to give a lesson and explain the material. In addition, teachers' talk has a central role in classroom interaction as it serves as the function, tool, and device for teachers to manage and control the classroom activities. As supported by [5], a teachers' talk has a crucial role for the teachers to maintain the classroom activities. It can be used as the source of information, message, or explanation.

2 Literature Review

According to [6] teachers' talk becomes exercises, explanations, and classroom management in the second or foreign language classroom. It is clear that teachers talk is the core of the teaching and learning process to explain the material and manage the activities in the classroom. Teachers use simple language with students to understand what they are saying. [7] stated teachers try to simplify their talk in the second or foreign language in interacting with the students in the classroom. It means teachers modify the talk in classroom interaction to make the students understand whether provide instruction, explanation, or question and answer.

The variety of language teachers use in the classroom as long as the teachers produce spoken language can be said teacher talk. In line with [8] emphasized that teacher talk defines the language used by the teacher in the classroom which can be formal or other forms to address students' attention in the classroom. The teacher needs to organize the class and monitor what happens in class. It builds and maintains a relationship with students that teacher talk enhances students' classroom participation and develops their language proficiency. It can be seen when students respond to the teacher while asking a question or others.

Formal talk can be used in a formal situation, such as in an educational environment. According to [9] argued that formal talk is more pay attention to choosing the word, sentence, and pronunciation. It implies that formal talk is careful in certain rules that want to deliver for others, which are appropriately structured and polite. According to [10] formal talk has special consideration of rules. It emphasizes the pattern of formal talk and the standard of structure and pronunciation. Using formal talk have to choose

the appropriate word or vocabulary, no abbreviation, and slang. It seems that formal talk is less of flexibility which is the consideration of talk is the key point.

According to [11], people prefer to use formal talk to main the conversation without misinterpretation. Formal talk provides minimization of misinterpretation among interlocutors. However, formal talk is less spontaneous, and the speaker should consider what is talking about and be conscious of the certain rules of formal talk.

On the other hand, informal talk can be used in an informal situation which not strict with the rules or forms of language. According to [12], informal talk defined the fewer rules or forms of language. It indicates that informal talk is not a certain rule that is spontaneous. Informal talk is flexible and interactive talk that can be used without thinking too much about what to say. The informal talk builds an interactive atmosphere for interaction among individuals. The speakers use informal talk unconsciously that tends to share their opinion as long as the others understand what is said.. According to [11], informal conversation is the use of fewer, shorter, more frequent words that require less precision in grammatical structures or others. Thus, it seems flexible in words and sentences without a long time to think about the complex structure.

According to [13] stated that the characteristics of formal and informal talk see the differences between formal and informal talk in word, phrase, or sentence (Table 1).

3 Method

This research is descriptive research that finds out the formal and informal talk between male and female English teachers. According to [14] descriptive is used to collect the information which establishes the tendency of the response by participants. It helps the researcher to summarize the tendency that provides understanding and insight in comparing formal and informal talk between male and female English teachers in classroom interaction. The participants of this research were male and female English teachers at Elia English Course which one male and one female English teacher. The class that was researched was at the same level which was the intermediate class. The researcher has conducted this research by using an observation sheet and audio recording that the researcher came to the class for 2 meetings each of the teacher. Therefore, the total of meeting was four meetings.

The source data were the utterances that teachers used in classroom interaction. Thus, the researcher transcribed and recorded the whole classroom interaction to find out the characteristics of formal and informal talk between male and female English teachers. After transcribing, the researcher categorized the utterances of the teacher using either formal or informal talk. The utterances have counted the frequency of formal and informal talk and find out the percentage of teachers in using formal and informal talk. Therefore, the researcher compared the percentage of formal and informal talk between male and female English teachers. The result of percentage will be counted by using the formula below:

$$P = \frac{f}{n} \times 100\%$$

Table 1. The Characteristics of Formal and Informal by Eggins (2004)

Formal Talk	Informal Talk
Neutral lexis	Attitudinal lexis
Formal lexis 1. Full forms 2. No slang	Colloquial lexis 1. Abbreviated forms 2. Slang
Politeness phenomena	Swearing
Careful turn-taking	Interruptions, overlap
Titles, no first name	First names, nicknames, diminutives
Incongruent mood choices	Typical mood choice
Modal for deference	Modal to express probability
Modal for suggestions	Modal to express an opinion

4 Findings and Discussion

The result of this research showed that there are four characteristics of formal talk and six characteristics of informal talk male English teachers. The female English teacher performed three characteristics of formal talk and four characteristics of informal. The male English teacher said formally that including full form, careful turn-taking, incongruent mood choice, and modal suggestion. The informal talk existed attitudinal lexis, colloquial lexis, interruption, nickname, typical mood choice, and modal for opinion. On the other hand, the female English teacher showed formal talks such as full form, careful turn-taking, and incongruent mood choice. The informal talk showed attitudinal lexis, nickname, typical mood choice, and modal for opinion. The percentage of characteristics of formal and informal talk between male and female English teachers can be seen in Table 2.

In Table 2, it is mentioned that male English teacher was a higher percentage for the formal talk especially in careful turn-taking which is 53.8%. It almost closed with female English teacher which was 53.1%. However, female English teachers said incongruent mood choice frequently than male English teacher which is 29.3%. In addition, the Female teacher did not show the modal for a suggestion that was different from male English teacher that showed it around 0.7%.

Besides, the male English teacher used various informal talks in the classroom interaction which were 6 to 8 characteristics. The higher percentage was nickname around 58.5%. However, if it compared with female English teacher, the female English teacher was the highest around 61.9%. The female English teacher did not show colloquial lexis and interruption which is male showed that characteristics. For the typical mood choice, male and female English teachers were almost close which are 5.8% and 4.8%. The female English teacher was often to use modal for opinion which is 9.5% rather than male English teacher around 5.7%. The explanation of each characteristic is presented as follows.

Table 2. The Percentage of Formal and Informal Talk Characteristics (%)

	Characteristics	Male English Teacher	Female English Teacher
Formal Talk	Full-Form	23.8	17.6
	Careful Turn-Taking	53.8	53.1
	Incongruent Mood Choice	21.7	29.3
	Modal Suggestion	0.7	
Informal Talk	Attitudinal Lexis	25.8	23.8
	Colloquial Lexis	1.4	
	Interruption	2.8	
	Nickname	58.5	61.9
	Typical Mood Choice	5.8	4.8
	Modal For Opinion	5.7	9.5

1. Formal Talks

a. Full-Form

Full-form defined the teacher's utterances using the full form of structure in which do not say something short but full-form of the sentence. This characteristic was found almost in every single utterance that teachers used in classroom interaction. The male English teacher said full form around 23.8% and female teacher was 17.6% which means the male English teacher was frequently used full-form in the classroom interaction. Full-form can be seen when teachers say statements for the students or provide information that should they do in the classroom. It is due to the teacher considering the rule and the form when they say something [15]. Thus, English teachers provide clear utterances to be easy for a student in understanding that statement.

b. Careful Turn-taking

Careful turn-taking was the higher number that found on the formal talks which is 53.8% for male English teacher and 53.1% for female English teacher. It means both teachers provide an opportunity for the students to take a part in the classroom to say something without interrupting their utterances. The respect of the teachers was good to appreciate their students in the classroom interaction,

c. Incongruent Mood Choice

According to [13], incongruent mood choice defined the interrogative sentence in asking something to someone. It means asking a question can be seen in this characteristic. The male English teacher showed that 21.7% used incongruent mood choice, however, the female English teacher showed 29.3%. It emphasizes that female English teacher was a large number of using incongruent mood choice in classroom interaction.

In classroom interaction, female teacher engaged the students by asking them a question to involve and be active in the classroom.

d. **Modal for Suggestion**

Modal for suggestion is auxiliary modal that teacher use when he/she wants to suggest or advise their students in which can be should, better, so on. In the classroom, modal for suggestion was a small number used by the teacher. It is only male English teacher provides the suggestion for the students at the end of the class. The male English teacher was 0.7% in using modal for suggestion. If it compared with the female English teacher, it was nothing. The female English teacher did not utterance for suggestions during classroom interaction.

2. **Informal Talks**

a. **Attitudinal Lexis**

The teacher used the lexis to express emotion or feeling words to their student during classroom interaction. According to [16] attitudinal means the lexis is to show appraisal or feeling to someone about something. The male English teacher showed attitudinal lexis which was 25.8%. The male teacher was frequently used it rather than female English which was 23.8%. Both teachers either male or female English teachers applied attitudinal lexis to express good feelings for their students as the appreciation for their job such as great or good.

b. **Colloquial Lexis**

Colloquial lexis is a kind of informal talk that expresses something with someone or situation informally. It can be abbreviations or slang. The researcher found that the male teacher used abbreviations to deliver something shortly. The male English teacher was a very small number of using abbreviation which is 1.4%. On the other hand, the female teacher did not use abbreviations or slang during classroom interaction. The female teacher tends to be careful to utterance something due to the point is she wants their students to understand clearly.

c. **Interruption**

Interruption occurs when the teacher breaks or stops utterances while the student is talking. It happens suddenly when the teacher is rushed to talk about something which students are forced to stop their utterances. The researcher found that only male English teacher did that. The male English teacher showed interruption for a while which is 2.8%. Another side, the female English teacher did not show that at all which she was taking care of their students' utterances.

d. **Nicknames**

The teacher was frequently called their students with their nicknames to build the relationship in classroom interaction. The most teachers used nicknames in classroom interaction. In this characteristic, the female English teacher has often used nicknames around 61.9%. However, the male English teacher has also used nicknames frequently which were 58.5%. The female English teacher was the higher percentage in showing nicknames during classroom interaction.

e. **Typical Mood Choice**

Typical mood choice occurs when the teacher instructs the students that can be for exercise or homework. It implies imperative sentences that teachers say for the students in the classroom [13]. The female English teacher was the lower percentage in using typical mod choice which was 4.8%. On the other side, the male English teacher was high a little bit around 5.8%. The teacher provided instruction for students in using imperative sentences thus, the male teacher often used typical mood choice than the female English teacher.

f. **Modal for Opinion**

Modal for opinion happens when the teachers provide their opinion or their assumption. It indicates the perception of the teacher about something while he/she is talking. It can be seen on Table 2 that female teachers showed modal for opinion frequently around 9.5% and the male English teacher was 5.7%. It performed that the female English teacher often said their opinion while classroom interaction.

5 Conclusion

This study has shown the comparing formal and informal talks between male and female English teachers in English course, especially in the intermediate class at Elia English Course. The male English teacher showed four characteristics for the formal talk which are full form, careful turn-taking, incongruent mood choice, and modal for suggestion. However, the female English teacher only performed three characteristics for the formal talk which are Full form, careful turn-taking and incongruent mood choice. For an informal talk, the male teacher showed various talk in classroom interaction in which performed six characteristics which were attitudinal lexis, colloquial lexis, interruption, nicknames, typical mood choice, and modal for opinion. On the other hand, the female English teacher only showed four characteristics for the informal talk which were attitudinal lexis, nicknames, typical mood choice, and modal for opinion.

To sum up, the Female English teacher did not use various talk either formal or informal talks during classroom interaction which performed only seven characteristics due to she was careful in saying what to say and tend to engage the students to understand what she talk about. However, the male teacher was creative in using several characteristics either formal or informal talks that can be seen the male teacher performed ten characteristics.

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