



EXPLORING IDEOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTION IN TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTION IN EFL CLASSROOM

Richard Fidal Deme Hadjon¹, Rahmatia², Geminastiti Sakkir³

¹²English Education Department, Post Graduate Program, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia

³English Department, Faculty of Languages and Literature, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia

richardhadjon@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explores the ideological construction in teacher student interaction in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom using a Pragmatic Critical Discourse Analysis (PCDA) perspective. The main objective of this research is to examine how ideology and power relations are constructed and reproduced through classroom discourse. This study employed a qualitative research design, with data collected from classroom interaction transcripts consisting of ten extracts of teacher student communication. The findings indicate that classroom interaction is predominantly structured through the Initiation, Response and Feedback (IRF) pattern, positioning the teacher as the dominant participant. The teacher controls the flow of discourse through questioning, reformulation, and evaluation, which shapes how students' responses are interpreted. Furthermore, ideology is constructed through the use of binary oppositions such as "good" and "bad," particularly in discussions about smartphone use, online learning, and AI tools such as ChatGPT. This dichotomous framing simplifies complex issues and may limit students' critical thinking. The study also reveals that students demonstrate limited linguistic competence, reflected in hesitation, fragmented responses, and lack of confidence. These limitations contribute to passive participation and reinforce the teacher's dominance. In addition, the use of positive reinforcement, such as praise, functions not only as encouragement but also as a form of social control that maintains classroom authority. Interaction tends to remain at a surface level, with limited opportunities for negotiation of meaning or extended student contributions. The study also highlights that language in the classroom carries implicit ideological meanings that influence students' perspectives. In conclusion, classroom interaction is not neutral but functions as a site where power and ideology are continuously constructed and reproduced. Therefore, it is important for teachers to promote more student-centered and interactive learning environments to support critical thinking and active participation in EFL classrooms.

Keywords : *Ideological, Teacher Student Interaction, Pragmatic, Critical Discourse Analysis.*

Introduction

In the context of learning English as a foreign language (EFL), the interaction between teachers and students is often viewed as a neutral process focused on the delivery of material and the development of linguistic competence related to theory M.A.K. Halliday (1978), language is a social semiotic, which means it is a system of meaning that is inseparable from the social context. Language is not neutral; it is used to construct and represent social reality, including ideology and power relations.

Walsh (2016) proposes the concept of Classroom Interactional Competence (CIC), which emphasizes that classroom interaction is central to learning and is shaped by teachers' language use. This interaction is not neutral, as it reflects control, participation patterns, and social relations, making it highly relevant for analyzing ideological construction in EFL classrooms. However, the reality in the classroom shows that these communication practices are not entirely value-free, but rather laden with ideological content that implicitly shapes social relationship patterns. Teachers, as holders of authority, often use language that reflects dominance, control over the flow of interaction, and the establishment of norms that students must follow. Rogers (2018) explanation argues that language in educational contexts is not neutral but socially situated, reflecting power relations and ideological processes. Nguyen (2022) argues that classroom discourse in EFL settings functions as a site where ideology and identity are constructed, negotiated, and reproduced through language use. This perspective supports the use of Pragmatic Critical Discourse Analysis to examine how meaning, power, and ideology are embedded in teacher–student interaction. Through Critical Discourse Analysis, classroom interaction can be examined as a site where ideology is constructed and reproduced. On the other hand, students tend to accept hierarchical communication patterns without realizing that the language used in these interactions plays a role in building, maintaining, and even reproducing certain ideologies. This phenomenon indicates a gap between interaction practices in EFL classrooms and critical awareness of the ideological dimensions in language use, thus necessitating a more in depth examination.

Li (2020) highlights that teacher talk plays a central role in structuring classroom interaction, often reflecting teacher dominance and controlling participation patterns. This makes classroom discourse a site where power relations and ideological meanings are constructed and reproduced. Theoretically, studies on classroom interaction in EFL learning are still dominated by cognitive and communicative approaches that emphasize aspects of language structure and communication skills, while the dimensions of ideology, power, and socio-cultural context tend to be neglected. The Pragmatic Critical Discourse Analysis (PCDA) approach serves as an analytical framework that can integrate contextual meaning comprehension in pragmatics with critical analysis of power relations and ideology in discourse. Nevertheless, the application of this approach in the context of teacher–student interactions in EFL classrooms is still relatively limited. Therefore, this research is important to explore how ideology is constructed, negotiated, and reproduced thru language practices in classroom interactions, as well as how these processes reflect the power dynamics at play in the learning environment.

According to Surjowati, et al (2024), on mood and modality in classroom discourse, it was found that the teacher's language choices reflect control, authority, and legitimacy in the learning interaction. Other research emphasizes that the teacher's language not only serves to convey material but also as a tool to exercise various forms of power such as expert power, reward power, and legitimate power. Laila et al (2025), This research specifically examines how power relations are constructed and negotiated in teacher–student interactions in EFL classes using the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach. This study employs qualitative methods by analyzing recordings and transcripts of classroom interactions, and highlights pragmatic aspects such as speech acts, turn-taking, and the teacher's use of language in managing learning.

In the study by Surjowati et al. (2024) highlights that the use of mood and modality in classroom discourse is not merely a linguistic choice, but rather reflects the control, authority, and legitimacy of the teacher in the learning process. The language used by the teacher functions to direct interactions, determine who can speak, and limit or open up spaces for student participation. These findings are reinforced by another study that shows that teachers' language also serves as a tool to exercise various forms of power, such as expert power, reward power, and legitimate power. Meanwhile, research by Laila et al. (2025) more explicitly examines how power relations are constructed and negotiated in teacher-student interactions thru the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach. By using recorded data and transcripts of classroom interactions, this study emphasizes the importance of pragmatic aspects such as speech acts, turn-taking, and teacher language strategies in managing learning. Both studies show that EFL classroom interactions are complex social arenas, where language serves as the primary medium in shaping power relations.

However, there are still some significant shortcomings. First, Surjowati's research focuses more on functional linguistic analysis (mood and modality) without deeply exploring how ideology is constructed, negotiated, and reproduced in the interaction. Second, although Laila's study has employed the CDA approach and touched on pragmatic aspects, its focus is still limited to power relations, and it has not yet comprehensively integrated pragmatic analysis and ideology into a cohesive framework like Pragmatic Critical Discourse Analysis (PCDA). Moreover, both studies tend to position students as passive participants and have not extensively revealed how students also play a role in constructing or negotiating ideology through their language practices. Sert (2021) argues that students in EFL classrooms are not merely passive recipients but active participants who demonstrate interactional competence by managing turn-taking, negotiating meaning, and contributing to the development of classroom discourse.

This study focuses on how ideology is constructed, negotiated, and reproduced through classroom interaction between teachers and students in the 8Y English as a Foreign Language (EFL) class at SMP Katolik Rajawali. It particularly examines the ways in which teachers' and students' language practices contribute to the construction of power relations and ideological meanings in classroom discourse. Based on this focus, the study addresses the following research aspects: the construction, negotiation, and reproduction of ideology in the interaction between teachers and students in the 8Y English as a Foreign Language class at SMP Katolik Rajawali, the relationship between teachers' language practices, including speech acts, mood, modality, and turn-taking, and the representation of power relations and ideological meanings in classroom discourse, and students' active participation in constructing and negotiating ideology through their language use and interaction in the classroom.

Research Methodology

This research used a qualitative design. This design was chosen because the study aims to deeply explore how ideology is constructed, negotiated, and reproduced in teacher-student interactions in EFL classrooms. This approach integrates pragmatic analysis (such as speech acts, turn-taking, and the use of mood and modality) with critical discourse analysis that focuses on power relations and ideology. This design allows researchers to understand the meaning of language not only from

linguistic structure but also from the broader social context and interaction practices. The research procedures are systematically designed, starting from observation, recording, transcription, to interpretative analysis, so that they can comprehensively answer the research questions and allow replication in similar contexts.

The sample for this study was selected using purposive sampling technique from the 8 class of SMP Katolik Rajawali, including one English teacher and students (25–30 students) chosen as participants. The chosen class meets the criteria of having active class interactions and regular use of English during the teaching and learning process. The selection of one class as the focus of the research aims to obtain in-depth and contextual data regarding actual interaction practices.

In this study, data were collected through non-participatory classroom observation techniques and audio recording. The recording was conducted over several learning sessions to obtain authentic and repetitive interaction data. The main instrument in this study is the researcher as a human instrument, supported by recording devices, observation guidelines, and transcription guides.

For the instrument, an observation and analysis framework is designed that includes pragmatic and critical discourse aspects, such as types of speech acts, the use of mood, and modality. In addition, the transcription guidelines are systematically organized to ensure consistency in recording verbal and nonverbal data. The types of data collected include teacher and student utterances, interaction patterns, and the classroom situational context that support meaning interpretation.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The steps include :

- a. First, the recorded data is transcribed in detail to identify relevant discourse units.
- b. Second, a coding process is carried out to classify the data based on pragmatic categories such as speech acts, turn-taking, and the use of mood and modality.
- c. Third, the data is analyzed using the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach to reveal how ideology and power relations are constructed, negotiated, and reproduced in interactions.

Results and Discussion

Results

Here are the results of the interviews with students after the implementation of the research activities in the classroom.

T-Q = Teacher Question

S-A = Students Answer

S-R = Teacher Response

S-R = Students Response

T-A = Teacher Appreciation

Extract 1:

Teacher :

T-Q : What do your opinion about smartphone in the classroom ?

Students 1 :

S-A : Emmm my opinion when student bring use phone in the class, it's a bad idea , because organ student use phone maybe their DNA,,, eeee don't research future and then their had a bad score and then do their homework upsided.

Teacher :

T-R : okay...So that's bad it's right ? eee it's a ranning ee positif impact and wish if the students use smartphone in the classroom..

Students 1 :

S-R : Yeahh is it, because students can get maybe tips when search in phone before answer stugling..

Teacher :

T-A : Thanks for answer and good opinion

Extract 2 :

Teacher :

T-Q: Can you tell me your point of view about face to face learning like we having in the classroom or online learning?

Students 2 :

S-A : So in my opinion about face to face learning why? maybe online learning can there are some students that purpose weak learn on the camera or like behind maybe they the other side sleeping the good side or online learning like students are not here students do homework..

Teacher:

T-R : Owh okeyy the are also the good side and bad side online learning , eee how about the face to face online learning ?

Students 2 :

S-A : Eeee maybe I'm the best learning aaa funny method and then students go to sleep and remaining students go to wake up

T-A : Okay thank you.. so the online learning face to face learning they had both side good side and bad side okay thank you very much..

Extract 3 :

Teacher :

T-Q : Eee okay can you tell me your opinion about the use AI when students do their homework?

Students 3 :

S-A : eee my opinion on students eee using AI tools such up chat gpt is that students show chat gpt or ai tools because ee at walk depend more ee on ai..

Teacher :

T-R : Eee so when students use chat gpt their will depend more on ai so their will less depend on theirself .. okey there is good point of view of using ai and bad work ..

T-A : okay thank you...

Extract 4 :

Teacher:

T-Q: Uh, okay, let me check your understanding about procedure text. What is the first structure of procedure text?

Student 4 :

S-A: Title sir

Extract 5 :

Teacher :

T-Q: the next part of procedure text is?

Student 5 :

S-A: Materials and tools sir

Extract 6 :

Teacher :

T-Q : the last part of procedure text is? Student 6

S-A: Step by step

Extract 7 :

Teacher :

T-Q : Is it clear so far?

Student 7 :

S-A: Yes sir. It's clear

Extract 8 :

Teacher :

T-Q : Okay, have you decided which video that you want to analyze? Student 8 :

S-A: Yes, we already chose sir

Extract 9 :

Teacher :

T-Q : Okay, have you decided which video that you want to analyze? Student 9 :

S-A: Yes, we already chose sir

Extract 10 :

Teacher :

T-Q : Are you finished? How many minutes do you need? Student 10 :

T-A: not finished sir, we need ten minutes sir

Student 3

S - A: This is my assignment sir

U- A: It's already good, please continue

Student 5

S - A: This is what I found from the video sir

T-Q : It's already good, please continue

Student 7

S-A : Title sir

T-A : That's correct. You're, you're smart

Student 8

S - A: Materials and tools sir

T-A : That's correct. Nice Answer

Student 4

S-A : we are finished sir

T-A : Give applause for them. Thank you for your nice observation.

a. Teacher Dominance in Interaction Structure (IRF Pattern)

The findings reveal that classroom interaction is predominantly structured through the Initiation–Response–Feedback (IRF) pattern. The teacher consistently initiates questions (*T-Q*), students provide responses (*S-A*), and the teacher gives feedback (*T-A* or *T-R*). This related theory of Sinclair, J., & Coulthard, M. (1975) propose that classroom interaction is typically structured through an Initiation–Response–Feedback (IRF) sequence, where teachers initiate discourse, students respond, and teachers provide evaluative feedback.

For Example (Extract 4–6):

T-Q: “What is the first structure of procedure text?” S-A: “Title, sir”

T-A: “That’s correct”

This pattern indicates that classroom interaction is highly structured and controlled by the teacher, limiting opportunities for students to expand their ideas.

b. Discursive Control through Reformulation and Clarification

The teacher not only evaluates students’ responses but also reformulates them, shaping their meaning according to the teacher’s perspective.

Example:

Extract 1:

T-R: “So that’s bad, it’s right?”

Extract 3:

T-R: “Students will depend more on AI and less depend on themselves”

From a PCDA perspective, this reflects the teacher’s discursive authority in determining what is considered acceptable meaning in the classroom.

c. Ideological Construction through Binary Opposition (Good vs Bad)

The teacher frequently frames topics using binary oppositions such as “good” and “bad”.

Example (Extract 1–3):

“good and bad impact”

“good side and bad side”

Topics such as: smartphone use, online learning, AI usage are consistently presented within this dichotomy. This suggests an ideological simplification of complex issues, which may limit students’ critical thinking.

d. Ideology of Technological Dependency

The data indicate the emergence of an ideology suggesting that technology, particularly AI tools such as ChatGPT, leads to student dependency.

For Example (Extract 3):

S-A: “students... depend more on AI”

T-R: “they will depend more on AI and less depend on themselves”

The teacher reinforces this idea, indicating that such ideology is not only expressed but also reproduced through classroom interaction.

e. Students' Linguistic Limitations and Hesitation

Students demonstrate frequent hesitation and limited fluency in expressing their ideas.

For Example (Extract 1–3):

“eee my opinion...” “maybe...
maybe...” “students... depend
more...”

This suggests that in the EFL context: linguistic competence affects participation and students tend to lack confidence. As a result, teacher dominance becomes more prominent.

f. Surface-Level Interaction

In Extracts 4–10, the interaction mainly consists of display questions, focusing on checking students' knowledge rather than exploring their understanding. For example:

“What is the first structure...?” “the next
part is?”

“the last part is?”

Students' responses are limited to: “Title”, “Materials and tools”, “Step by step”.

This indicates that interaction remains at a surface level, without deeper negotiation of meaning.

g. Positive Reinforcement as Social Control

The teacher frequently uses praise as part of feedback. For examples:

“That's correct”

“Nice answer”

“You're smart”

“Give applause for them”

From a critical perspective, such expressions function not only as encouragement but also as a form of social control, reinforcing responses that align with the teacher's expectations.

h. Students' Compliance with Teacher Authority

Students consistently show compliance by: giving short responses, not challenging the teacher, following instructions. For examples:

“Yes, sir”

“We already chose, sir”

“Not finished, sir”

This indicates that students occupy a subordinate position and accept the existing power structure without resistance.

Discussion

This study indicates that teacher student interaction in the EFL classroom is strongly influenced by structured discourse patterns and unequal power relations. The dominance of the Initiation, Response, Feedback (IRF) pattern shows that the teacher controls the flow of communication and the construction of meaning, while students tend to provide short and limited responses this related to theory of Sinclair, J., & Coulthard, M. (1975) propose that classroom interaction is typically structured through an Initiation–Response–Feedback (IRF). Through reformulation and evaluation, the teacher shapes how students’ ideas are interpreted, reducing opportunities for collaborative meaning-making. In addition, the use of binary oppositions such as “good” and “bad” reflects the presence of ideology in classroom discourse, simplifying complex issues into fixed perspectives. Students’ linguistic limitations further contribute to their passive participation, reinforcing the teacher’s authority. Overall, the findings suggest that classroom interaction functions not only as a pedagogical activity but also as a site where power and ideology are continuously constructed and maintained.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research on classroom discourse, particularly studies that highlight the dominance of the IRF pattern in teacher-centered classrooms. Similar to earlier work in Critical Discourse Analysis, this study confirms that classroom interaction is shaped by institutional power, where teachers play a central role in controlling participation and meaning. Previous studies have also shown that limited student participation and reliance on short responses are common in EFL contexts due to linguistic constraints. In line with research on interactional competence, the findings demonstrate that students’ ability to engage in meaningful interaction is influenced by both language proficiency and classroom practices. Furthermore, the identification of ideological framing, such as the “good vs bad” dichotomy, supports earlier arguments that language in educational settings carries implicit values and beliefs that shape students’ understanding of reality.

This study has important implications for EFL teaching and classroom practice. First, teachers should be aware of their dominant role in shaping interaction and strive to create more student-centered learning environments that encourage active participation and critical thinking. Reducing reliance on the IRF pattern and incorporating open-ended questions may help promote deeper discussion and negotiation of meaning. Second, teachers need to be cautious in using binary oppositions such as “good” and “bad,” as these may limit students’ perspectives and critical engagement. Third, greater attention should be given to developing students’ linguistic competence to enhance their confidence and ability to participate in interaction. Finally, teachers should reflect on their use of feedback and praise, ensuring that it supports meaningful learning rather than merely reinforcing compliance.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the data were limited to a small number of classroom interaction extracts, which may not fully represent the complexity of teacher–student interaction in different contexts. Second, the study focused primarily on verbal interaction, without considering non-verbal communication such as gestures, tone, or facial expressions, which may also play a significant role in meaning-making. Third, the analysis was conducted within a specific EFL classroom setting, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts. Additionally, students’ perspectives were inferred from their responses

rather than explored through in-depth interviews, which may have provided a richer understanding of their experiences.

Future research is recommended to expand the scope of analysis by including a larger and more diverse dataset from different classrooms, educational levels, and cultural contexts. Further studies could also combine classroom discourse analysis with interviews or surveys to gain deeper insights into students' perspectives and experiences. In addition, researchers may explore the role of multimodal interaction, including non-verbal communication, in constructing meaning and power relations in the classroom. Another important direction is to investigate how different teaching approaches, such as student-centered or collaborative learning, influence the balance of power and participation in EFL classrooms. Finally, future research could examine the impact of digital tools and technologies, including AI applications like ChatGPT, on classroom interaction, critical thinking, and learner autonomy.

Conclusion

This study shows that teacher student interaction in the EFL classroom is not neutral, but influenced by power and ideology. The findings reveal that the use of the Initiation, Response, Feedback (IRF) pattern places the teacher as the dominant participant who controls classroom communication and meaning. Through questioning, reformulation, and feedback, the teacher directs students' responses and limits opportunities for deeper discussion. The study also finds that ideology is constructed through the use of simple categories such as "good" and "bad," especially in topics like smartphone use, online learning, and AI tools such as ChatGPT. This kind of framing can reduce students' critical thinking by presenting complex issues in a simplified way. In addition, students' limited language ability makes them less confident and more passive in interaction, which further strengthens the teacher's dominance.

Although the teacher plays a major role in controlling interaction, students also contribute to maintaining this structure by accepting and following the teacher's authority. As a result, classroom interaction becomes a space where power and ideology are continuously reproduced. Overall, this study suggests that teachers need to create more interactive and student-centered learning environments to support critical thinking and active participation in EFL classrooms.

References

- Laila E S et al (2025,) Power relationsins teacher-student interactions: acritical discourse analysis of english classroom talk.
<https://journal.unilak.ac.id/index.php/Pedagogical/article/view/27883/7842>
- Li, L. (2020). Teacher talk and interaction in EFL classrooms. *TESOL Quarterly*, 54(3), 678–703. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.550>
- M.A.K. Halliday (1978), *Language as Social Semiotic, The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning*, 0-8391-1183-5
- Nguyen, H. T. M. (2022). Ideology and identity in EFL classroom discourse. *Language Teaching Research*, 26(5), 1023–1042.
- Rogers, R. (2018). Critical discourse analysis in education: A review of the literature. *Review of*

- Educational Research, 88(6), 841–873. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654318786482>
- Sert, O. (2021). Student participation and interactional competence in EFL classrooms. *Classroom Discourse*, 12(2), 145–162. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19463014.2020.1852721>
- Surjowati R. et al (2024). Mood and Modalities Revealing Teacher’s Power in EFL Classroom Discourse: Critical Discourse Analysis. <https://ejournal.uinsaid.ac.id/electronic/article/view/9969/3173>
- Sinclair, J., & Coulthard, M. (1975). *Towards an Analysis of Discourse: The English Used by Teachers and Pupils*. Oxford University Press.
- Walsh, S. (2016). *Classroom discourse and teacher development*. Edinburgh University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780748698313>