

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In the current age of globalization, English language proficiency is an essential skill for learners to possess. English not only functions as an international communication tool but also as a gateway to broader access to knowledge, technology, and educational and career opportunities. English has become a crucial tool for global communication, acting as a bridge that fosters cross-cultural understanding and encourages the exchange of traditions, values, and ideas across nations. As a global lingua franca, Zhang (2024) describes that English holds a significant position in shaping the competencies needed for success in the international workforce. Mastery of English equips individuals with the ability to navigate professional environments that span multiple countries, enabling them to adapt, collaborate, and excel in diverse cultural and business contexts. Similarly, Maghfiroh (2021) describes that English is a global language that is widely used in communication across countries, thereby underscoring the importance of its mastery for students' academic, professional, and social development.

A significant challenge confronting the education sector at present is the inadequate engagement of students in the learning process. However, most students' engagement in the teaching and learning process persists as a pervasive challenge across various levels of education. This phenomenon is evidenced by students' limited engagement in class discussions, minimal interaction with the subject matter, and infrequent contributions to group activities. Fredricks, et.al (2004) student engagement theory posits that successful learning is not solely measured by cognitive aspects; students' behavioral and emotional engagement are also considered. This phenomenon is influenced by various factors, including pedagogical methods that are perceived as uninteresting, limited interaction between teachers and students, and students' difficulties in comprehending the material presented Skinner & Belmont (1993) In this context, teacher talk assumes a pivotal role in fostering student engagement. As Walsh (2011) defines that teacher

talk encompasses a range of verbal communication forms employed by teachers to direct, facilitate, and cultivate meaningful interactions with learners. Another study, conducted by Cullen (2002) given the pivotal role of teacher talk in promoting student engagement, it is essential to examine further how teacher talk functions as a fundamental tool for building effective educational relationships

In this context, the role of the teacher as a learning facilitator becomes paramount. Teachers employ a variety of instruments to build effective learning relationships, with teacher talk being a primary one. Teacher talk is defined as any form of verbal communication conducted by teachers during the learning process. Teacher talk plays a pivotal role in shaping the classroom atmosphere, motivating students, providing feedback, and facilitating interaction between teachers and learners. Firdaus' (2015) research demonstrated that positive teacher feedback, in the form of praise and verbal comments, can enhance students' motivation and engagement in English language acquisition. A considerable body of research has previously emphasized the pivotal role of teacher verbal communication in the context of language learning. According to Nunan, D (1991) oral interaction between teachers and students constitutes a fundamental component of second language acquisition. Concurrently, Walsh (2006) underscores the significance of interactional components such as scaffolding, repair, and feedback in fostering student engagement in the language classroom. However, the majority of these studies were conducted within the framework of a conventional curriculum or in the absence of an Emancipated Curriculum, which curriculum that places significant emphasis on student independence and active participation.

The significance of teacher talk becomes even more prominent in the implementation of the Emancipated Curriculum, the latest curriculum being implemented in various schools in Indonesia, including Madrasah Aliyah Negeri. The curriculum has been meticulously designed to grant educators greater autonomy in selecting learning methodologies that align with the distinct characteristics and requirements of their students. Research conducted by Sugianto (2022) indicates that the Emancipated Curriculum prioritizes student-centered

learning, employs a differentiated approach, and is tailored to address individual learning requirements.

However, the implementation of the Emancipated Curriculum is also confronted with a number of challenges, particularly in the domain of learning communication. It has been demonstrated that not all pedagogues define the capacity to establish interactions that promote active student participation. According to Yoana et.al (2020), Preliminary observations at one Madrasah Aliyah revealed that educators who incorporated communicative teacher talk into their pedagogical practices were able to establish a more dynamic and conducive classroom atmosphere. Conversely, Michelene et.al (2017) assert that pedagogical approaches characterized by an overwhelming emphasis on teacher monologue, devoid of student engagement, often result in a passive learning environment.

This discrepancy forms the foundation of the present study. A pressing need exists to investigate the role of teacher discourse within the context of English language instruction as outlined by the Emancipated Curriculum, particularly within the context of Madrasah Aliyah, which is characterized by its unique characteristics and pedagogical nuances. This research is significant from two perspectives. Firstly, it contributes to the theoretical foundation of classroom discourse studies. Secondly, it supports the development of teacher communication strategies and more effective pedagogical training.

The selection of the title "The Contribution of Teacher Talk to Student Engagement in Emancipated Curriculum" is based on the need to improve the quality of interaction between teachers and learners in the process of learning English. The currently implemented Emancipated Curriculum emphasizes student-centered learning methods and encourages their active participation in the learning process. However, in reality, many teachers still face barriers in implementing communicative and reflective teaching methods (Kemendikbudristek, 2022)

Previous research, such as that conducted by Walsh (2011) and Wulandari (2021) has demonstrated the importance of teacher talk in classroom management and

creating effective learning opportunities. However, the majority of these studies were conducted in the context of the conventional curriculum or prior to the implementation of the Emancipated Curriculum. To date, empirical research that specifically examines the role of teacher talk in the context of the Emancipated Curriculum, especially in the madrasah, is still quite limited. This situation reflects a research gap, considering that the successful implementation of this new curriculum is highly dependent on the teacher's ability to create effective verbal interactions to increase students' participation in the learning process.

1.2 Reasons for Choosing the Topic

First, the interaction between teacher talk and student engagement presents an intriguing area of study, particularly in the context of English language learning. How educators communicate with their students—through the use of questioning, prompting, providing feedback, or even maintaining silence—exerts a substantial influence on the extent to which students are cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally engaged in classroom activities. This finding aligns with the results of previous studies that emphasize the role of teacher talk as both a medium of instruction and a catalyst for student participation and motivation (Walsh, 2006; Nunan, 1991). The investigation of how student responses are shaped by different types of teacher talk contributes to a deeper understanding of how language functions in classroom discourse.

Secondly, this subject matter is pertinent to the ongoing educational transformation in Indonesia, particularly with the implementation of the Emancipated Curriculum. This curriculum enables educators to exercise greater autonomy in designing learning experiences centered on students, with the capacity to adapt to the diverse needs of learners. Within this framework, teacher talk assumes an even more critical role, as it facilitates differentiated learning, fosters student voice, and fosters meaningful classroom dialogue. Despite its importance, the practical application of teacher talk strategies in the Emancipated Curriculum remains under-researched, particularly within the context of Islamic senior high schools, thus offering a valuable gap to explore.

Accordingly, the objective of this study is twofold: firstly, to contribute to the theoretical framework of language education; and secondly, to provide practical applications for the Emancipated Curriculum. To this end, the study will examine how teacher talk operates within the dynamics of student engagement.

1.3 Research Question

Following the background of the study, the focus of this study is to answer the following research question:

1. What is the contribution of Teacher Talk to students' engagement?

1.4 Research Objective

1. To analyze the contribution of Teacher Talk to student engagement in the learning process, specifically in the classrooms implementing the Emancipated Curriculum.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study's significances value in both theoretical and practical contributions, particularly in the field of English of Classroom Discourse within the framework of the Emancipated Curriculum. The significance of this study can be elaborated as follows:

1. **Theoretical Significance:** This study aims to advance the understanding of classroom discourse, specifically how teacher talk contributes to increasing student engagement. By emphasizing the context of an emancipated curriculum, the findings may provide a fresh perspective on how teacher talk facilitates student-centered and differentiated instruction. It also extends previous research by examining teacher talk not only through the lens of language function, but also considering its pedagogical effects on student participation.
2. **Practical Importance for English Language Teachers:** This research can serve as a resource for English language instructors in developing effective communication approaches that promote student participation throughout the learning experience. Understanding the types of teacher communication

that encourage active participation can help educators improve classroom engagement and create a more vibrant learning environment.

1. For educators and curriculum designers: The findings can guide the implementation of the Emancipated Curriculum by highlighting the importance of teacher dialogue in achieving student-centered learning.
2. For future researchers: This study could serve as a foundational reference for additional research on teacher communication, especially to emerging curriculum models or across educational settings.

1.6 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study is limited to the investigation of teacher talk and student engagement within the Emancipated Curriculum, specifically in an eleventh-grade class at a senior high school in Garut. This particular institution was chosen due to its distinctive standards in teaching methods, approaches, and classroom practices compared to other schools. Therefore, the findings of this research are context-specific and may be interpreted or adapted according to the needs and perspectives of each reader

1.7 Definition of Terminologies

In order to interpret the key terms used in this study, the definitions are stated in this study, the definitions are stated in the following:

1. Teacher Talk

In this study, according to Sukarni and Ulfah (2015) that Teacher Talk is the way most often used by teachers to provide information, guide students to convey knowledge, opinions and manage their actions.

2. Student Engagement

As noted by Fredricks et al. (2004) student engagement consists of three interrelated dimensions such as Behavioral, Emotional, and Cognitive engagement.

3. Emancipated Curriculum

Emancipated curriculum is defined as a learner-centered approach that emphasizes autonomy, contextual learning, and flexibility, aiming to

empower students through differentiated instruction and meaningful learning experiences (Kemendikbudristek, 2022)