Teacher's Talk and Students' Motivation in an English Classroom: Insights from a Case Study

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Abstract

Teacher's talk plays a crucial role to control classroom interactions and enhance language learning in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Learning. This qualitative case study investigated how seventh-grade female students were motivated in EFL learning as a result of their teacher's talk. The study used the Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System (FIACS) to classify teacher's talk through classroom observations and interviews. The results revealed that giving instructions, asking questions, and expressing encouragement or praise were the most common ways teachers communicated. Students' motivation and engagement were greatly enhanced by these verbal techniques. On the other hand, engagement was often hampered by the lack of student-centered discourse, such as accepting students' opinions or using harsh criticism. A key novelty of this study is the exploration of gender dynamics, specifically how a male teacher communicates with an all-female class in an Islamic educational setting, a context rarely examined in previous studies. The study highlights the importance of teacher communication strategies in fostering a supportive and motivating EFL classroom environment.

Keywords: EFL classroom interaction, Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System (FIACS), gender dynamics, motivation, teacher's talk

1. Introduction

Teacher's talk plays a central role in managing classroom interaction and supporting language acquisition, particularly in the contexts of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). As a key source of linguistic input, Teacher's talk not only facilitates comprehension but also shapes classroom dynamics and influences student engagement. Effective Teacher's talk encompasses speech modifications for learner comprehension, the teacher's role as a facilitator, and responsive strategies that meet students' academic and emotional needs (Sistyawan et al., 2022). It contributes significantly to the development of communicative competence and fosters a positive and motivating classroom environment (Huang & Lian, 2024).

In student-centered classrooms, teacher communication is especially critical in motivating learners, particularly at early stages of language development. Through verbal encouragement, praise, and feedback, Teacher's talk can enhance learners' self-confidence and enthusiasm, promoting more active participation and sustained interest in language learning (Diem, 2024). Beyond its instructional function, Teacher's talk also serves as a medium for managing classroom behavior, establishing rapport, and building a supportive learning environment (Thy & Diem, 2023).

However, maintaining a balance between teacher and student talk is essential. While teacher discourse provides necessary scaffolding, an overreliance on Teacher's talk may limit students' opportunities to use the target language, thereby impeding their linguistic growth. Excessive teacher domination in classroom interaction has been linked to reduced student participation, highlighting the importance of a student-centered approach that encourages learners to contribute more actively (Tupalessy et al., 2024; Siregar, 2020).

Numerous studies have examined the impact of Teacher's talk on learner motivation and classroom interaction. Septiana (2022) found that praise and reinforcement strategies significantly improve classroom interactivity and student motivation. Similarly, Juswanto (2017) emphasized the role of both direct and indirect Teacher's talk in capturing and maintaining student interest. While these studies underscore the motivational power of teacher discourse, they often lack consideration of how gender dynamics influence teacher-student interactions.

The present study seeks to address this gap by exploring the types and functions of Teacher's talk used by a male teacher in an all-female classroom at an Islamic educational institution in Indonesia. The gender dynamic in this setting introduces a unique socio-cultural dimension that remains underexplored in current literature. Gender can significantly shape classroom communication patterns, perceptions of authority, and responses to motivational cues. Investigating how female students perceive and respond to a male teacher's communicative style provides valuable insight into the intersection of gender, culture, and pedagogy within the EFL classroom.

This study, therefore, aims to examine the specific types of Teacher's talk employed and their influence on student motivation in a gender-specific learning environment. By focusing on the interaction between a male teacher and female students, this research offers a novel contribution to the understanding of Teacher's talk as a socio-pedagogical tool in EFL education, with potential implications for classroom practice in similar cultural contexts.

1.1. Research question

Based on the explanation in the previous sub-chapter, this study has two research questions, namely:

1) What is the type of teacher's talk used by a male teacher in an all-female classroom at an Islamic educational institution?
2) How is the impact of teacher's talk used by a male teacher to all-female students' motivation at an Islamic educational institution?

1.2. Theoretical framework

Teacher's talk refers to the specific language used by educators during instruction, feedback, and classroom interaction. It is a key element in shaping classroom dynamics and influencing student motivation. Studies consistently highlight its importance in creating supportive learning environments and encouraging active participation. Opdenakker (2023) points out, effective Teacher's talk not only facilitates language acquisition but also builds students' confidence. This study is anchored on four key theoretical foundations:

1.2.1. Flanders' Interaction Analysis Categories System (FIACS)

This study uses Flanders' Interaction Analysis Categories System (FIACS) proposed by Flanders (1970) to examine Teacher's talk. Flanders (1970) divides Teacher's talk into two main types: direct and indirect, each serving different instructional and interpersonal functions.

1.2.1.1. Direct Teacher's Talk

Teacher's Talk Direct Teacher's talk is more teacher-centered and often used to manage instruction and discipline. It includes three subcategories: lecturing, giving directions, and criticizing or justifying authority.

a. Lecturing

Lecturing involves presenting information orally, usually with limited student involvement. There are three forms: (1) Expository lectures (teacher dominates talk); (2) Lecture-recitation (teacher includes some questioning or reading); and (3) Interactive lectures (lectures alternate with group tasks).

b. Giving directions

Clear directions help students stay focused and reduce confusion. According to Brown (2001), structured guidance allows students to organize their thoughts more effectively. Sofyan and Mahmud (2014) emphasize that giving directions lets learners engage meaningfully in language tasks. In this study, giving directions refers to verbal instructions that guide students toward specific learning goals. Brown (2001) notes that clear instructions increase student confidence.

c. Criticizing or justifying authority

At times, teachers must manage behavior by expressing disapproval. This is especially relevant for students with emotional challenges. Criticism can redirect attention and promote discipline. Research shows that Teacher's talk occupies more than half of classroom time, often dominated by lecturing and questioning (Aisyah, 2016). However, many studies do not explain why certain talk types are preferred. Corrective feedback often includes explanations to help students understand and fix their mistakes.

1.2.1.2. Indirect Teacher's Talk

Indirect Teacher's talk is more student-centered. It encourages participation, recognizes emotions, and values student ideas. It includes four subcategories: accepting feelings, praising or encouraging, accepting or using student ideas, and asking questions.

a. Accepting feelings

Teachers who acknowledge students' emotions help create a safe and empathetic environment. This can be done through verbal responses, gestures, or tone of voice. Flanders (1970) notes that recognizing feelings builds trust and supports learning.

b. Praising or encouraging

Encouragement boosts motivation and confidence (Flanders, 1970). It can be expressed through words, gestures, or tone. Examples include:

- "Don't worry, just share your thoughts."
- "You can create a better sentence next time."
- "Give it your best effort."

Such support helps learners take risks and stay engaged.

c. Accepting or using students' ideas

Acknowledging student input shows appreciation and promotes participation (Flanders, 1970). Teachers can respond with:

- "I understand your point."

Paraphrasing and building on student ideas during discussion. This makes students feel valued and encourages further contributions.

d. Asking questions

Questions help assess understanding and promote interaction (Flanders, 1970). Teachers can use display questions, which have specific answers, to check comprehension. Examples include:

- "Are you ready?"
- "What group are you in?"
- "Where is your book?"

Effective questioning keeps students engaged and encourages them to use the target language.

1.2.2. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emerged as a response to traditional, grammar-focused language instruction, emphasizing the need for meaningful interaction and real-life communication in language classrooms. It shifts the focus from rote memorization of rules to the practical use of language in context. In CLT, communication is both the means and the goal of learning. The approach encourages the use of authentic materials, task-based learning, and activities that simulate real-world language use, such as discussions, role-plays, and problem-solving tasks (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Within this learner-centered framework, teacher's talk plays a pivotal role in facilitating communicative competence. Rather than simply delivering content, teachers are expected to act as facilitators who guide, support, and encourage student interaction. Effective Teacher's talk under CLT principles should scaffold learning, reduce learner anxiety, and promote a classroom climate where students feel safe to take linguistic risks. It also provides critical input for students to internalize both language structure and functional use. Thus, teacher discourse must balance clarity, encouragement, and responsiveness to learners' needs, aligning with the communicative goals of the curriculum.

Richards and Rodgers (2014) emphasize that CLT requires teacher's talk to support student autonomy, encourage negotiation of meaning, and offer exposure to meaningful, context-rich language. This means moving beyond repetitive drilling or correction-focused

feedback to include strategies such as open-ended questioning, rephrasing student responses, and providing elaborative feedback that models natural language use.

Building on this, Ellis (2018) distinguishes between linguistic competence and communicaticve competence. Linguistic competence includes mastery of language forms including syntax, morphology, and phonology, while communicative competence involves the appropriate use of language in various social and cultural environments. CLT aims to develop both. Teachers, through their talk, model these dual competencies: they demonstrate accurate language use while also navigating diverse communicative situations, thereby shaping how students internalize and use language.

In practice, this approach reinforces the idea that teacher's talk is not merely instructional, but also motivational. The way teachers' question, praise, encourage, or rephrase student contributions can significantly affect learner confidence and willingness to engage. Especially in EFL contexts, where students often have limited exposure to English outside the classroom, teacher's talk becomes a primary source of input and interaction. As such, applying CLT principles to teacher's talk can enhance not only students' language development but also their motivation, engagement, and overall communicative competence.

1.2.3. Motivation theories

This study is underpinned by the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), primarily developed by Deci and Ryan (1985). SDT posits that motivation exists on a continuum, ranging from intrinsic (most autonomous) to extrinsic (controlled). Understanding these different forms of motivation is crucial for comprehending student engagement and learning behaviors in the classroom.

Intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in an activity for the inherent satisfaction, enjoyment, or interest derived from the activity itself (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). When intrinsically motivated, students participate in learning activities because they find them stimulating, challenging, or personally meaningful, without the need for external pressure or rewards. This form of motivation is associated with higher quality learning, persistence, and overall well-being.

Conversely, extrinsic motivation involves engaging in an activity to attain a separable outcome or avoid punishment (Deci & Ryan, 1985). This type of motivation is driven by external factors such as rewards, grades, praise, deadlines, or the desire to please others. While extrinsic motivators can effectively prompt initial engagement, their long-term impact on learning quality and sustained interest can vary. Within SDT, extrinsic motivation is further differentiated by the degree of internalization, from externally regulated (least autonomous) to integrated regulation (most autonomous) (Vallerand, 1997; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

In the context of an English classroom, teacher's talk often functions primarily as an extrinsic motivator. Specific forms of teacher's talk, such as providing verbal praise, offering encouragement, giving clear instructions, and employing structured questioning techniques, serve as external cues or reinforcements. These communicative acts by the teacher aim to guide student behavior, affirm effort, and provide a positive learning environment, thereby influencing students' motivation to participate and learn English. This study aims to explore the specific ways these teacher-talk elements manifest and contribute to student motivation.

1.2.4. Gender dynamics in classroom interaction

Gender dynamics refer to how gender roles and identities influence classroom interactions. In culturally or religiously sensitive contexts, such dynamics significantly shape how teachers and students relate to each other and how participation unfolds during instruction.

Howe (1997) notes that while overt gender bias in teaching is rare, subtle patterns persist. Male teachers may inadvertently dominate classroom discourse or direct more attention to boys, even in female-majority classes. Female students, in contrast, are often more responsive to supportive and inclusive communication than to directive or authoritative styles. These differences affect students' confidence, motivation, and willingness to engage verbally, especially when classroom environments are conservative and gender expectations are deeply rooted.

Building on this, Mamnoun and Nfissi (2023) present a comprehensive review of studies showing that male students tend to monopolize classroom talk, often receiving more attention, feedback, and interaction opportunities from teachers, regardless of the teachers' gender. Female students, by contrast, are frequently less visible, receiving fewer opportunities to speak unless specifically called upon. This pattern appears across various educational contexts and subject areas, including language classrooms. Moreover, the disparity is often unintentional, stemming from unconscious teacher behaviors and socialized gender roles.

The review also highlights that teacher-student interactions are influenced by multiple intersecting factors, including teacher expectations, subject matter, and student behavior. For instance, teachers may give more negative feedback to boys due to higher levels of disruptive behavior, while girls may receive more private or individualized attention. These gendered interaction patterns reinforce social stereotypes (boys as assertive and girls as compliant) which can affect academic performance and participation over time.

Sunderland (2000) supports these findings, noting that gender influences how teachers allocate speaking turns and authority in the classroom. In all-female classrooms, particularly in conservative settings, students may be more reserved when taught by male teachers, leading to reduced engagement and verbal interaction. Teacher awareness and intentional use of equitable communicative strategies are thus essential in addressing these imbalances.

Therefore, gender dynamics are not merely peripheral variables but central factors shaping classroom discourse, interaction patterns, and student motivation. This study explores such dynamics in the context of a male teacher leading an all-female EFL class within an Islamic educational setting by highlighting the importance of gender-sensitive pedagogy in fostering inclusive and empowering language learning environments.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative case study design to in-depth investigate the types of teacher's talk used by an English teacher and its impact on student motivation. A qualitative approach was chosen to provide an in-depth understanding of complex classroom interactions, which are not easily quantifiable. As Yin (2014, p.16) states, a case study is an empirical inquiry that "investigates contemporary phenomena within real-world contexts, particularly when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. This design aligns with the exploratory nature of the research questions, allowing for a comprehensive examination of teacher-student interactions in their natural context.2.1. Participants and Setting:

2.1. Participants and setting

The participant of this study was a male English teacher from Class VII A at Islamic Junior high school in Kalimantan, along with all 27 female students in that class. The selection of this specific class allowed for a focused and detailed exploration of teacher's talk within a natural classroom setting. The object of this study was the teacher's talk itself, analyzed through the lens of Flanders' Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC) to understand its influence on students' motivation.

2.2. Data collection techniques

The study primarily focused on collecting primary data, which encompassed the teacher's talk during English instruction. This data specifically highlighted the types of his teacher's talk and the direct impact on his female students' motivation to learn English. In addition, a triangulation of data collection techniques was employed to ensure comprehensive and robust data gathering. Before commencing any data collection, the researchers obtained both institutional approval from the school administration and informed consent from all participants. The purpose, procedures, potential benefits, and any foreseeable risks of the study were explained in clear and accessible language. Participants were assured that their participation was voluntary, that they could withdraw at any time without penalty, and that confidentiality and anonymity would be strictly maintained. The data collection techniques used in this research are:

a. Audio recording

Audio recordings were utilized to capture verbatim interactions and conversations between the teacher and students during English lessons. This method allowed for a detailed analysis

of the teacher's speaking style and specific instances of teacher's talk, enabling the researchers to identify elements that potentially influence student engagement and interest.

b. Interview

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the English teacher and eight selected students from Class VII A. These interviews aimed to elicit firsthand perceptions and insights regarding the teacher's communication style and its perceived influence on student motivation in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Responses were meticulously documented through note-taking and audio recording.

c. Observation

Direct, non-participant observations were conducted during English lessons in Class VII A. A structured observation guide was used to systematically document the teacher's interactions with students, focusing on identifying various forms of teacher's talk and their immediate effects on student motivation. Field notes were diligently taken to record key observations and interactions.

2.3. Data analysis

The data processing involved several steps. First, all data collected from interviews and classroom observations were meticulously recorded and transcribed. This initial processing aimed to prepare the raw data for in-depth analysis, focusing on identifying various types of teacher's talk and their potential influence on student motivation. Field notes from observations were also organized to facilitate comprehensive data management.

A qualitative approach was used for the data analysis phase. Transcribed audio recordings, interview data, and observation notes were systematically organized and coded into specific categories. These categories were primarily guided by the Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System (FIACS) (Flanders, 1970), which helps classify types of teacher's talk. Additionally, student responses and motivational elements such as verbal encouragement, praise, and instructional language were coded to understand the interactions. Then, these data were analysed using six-phase framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The six phases are: 1) familiarizing the data, 2) generating initial codes, 3) searching for themes, 4) reviewing themes, 5) defining and naming themes, and 6) producing the report. This structured coding enabled the identification of patterns and relationships between teacher's talk and student motivation in learning English.

2.4. Trustworthiness

To enhance the validity and reliability of the findings, data triangulation was utilized (Patton, 1999). This approach involved cross-referencing information from three distinct data sources which are audio recordings, classroom observation and interviews. By comparing and corroborating the findings across these three data sources, this study aimed to ensure

consistency and identify more robust patterns regarding the influence of teacher's talk on student motivation.

3. Findings and Discussion

This part contains findings of the study and discussion of the findings, consisting of two sub-parts, namely the types of teacher's talk used by a male teacher to all-female students and the impact of teacher's talk used by a male teacher to all-female students' motivation.

3.1. The types of teacher's talk used by a male teacher to all-female students

This section presents data gathered from a male teacher who taught English to all-female students at an Islamic educational institution. Using the Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System (FIACS) (Flanders, 1970), five types of teacher's talk emerged in their learning section. The summary of the teacher's talk types used by a male teacher to teach all-female students can be seen at table 1 below.

Table 1. The types of teacher's talk used by a male teacher to all-female students

Type of Talk	Subcategory	Findings of Teacher's Talk	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Indirect	Accept Feelings	*You can definitely do it; Try it first, if it's wrong, it's okay, it will be corrected later; If you can't answer, other students will help; It's called learning, so it's okay if you're wrong.*	4	13.79%
	Praise or Encouragement	*Very good; Nice; Good girl; Smart girl; Good job, give applause for Rizky Rizkiana; I'll give 10 additional points for Yasmien.*	6	20.69%
	Accepts or Uses Student Ideas	Yes, use simple present.	1	3.45%
	Asking Questions	*What day do they go to school?; Does anyone know what a ceremony is?; Is there a counselling guide?; Can anyone spell this word?; Are there any difficult words in the following questions?; What does IPA mean in English?; So, what does she study there?*	7	24.14%
Subtotal			18	62.07%
Direct	Lecturing	*The use of the word "has" is the same as the word "have", only the usage of them is different.; Because the*	2	6.9%

		counselling subject begins at 10:30 a.m., so the sentence used must still be adjusted to the time. So, the sentence must be in simple present since it is a time table.		
	Giving Directions	*Open next picture, please!; Open page thirty one!; Open your book please!; Open your dictionary!; Louder please!; I'll give you five minutes.; Raise up your hand!; Use English!.*	8	27.58%
	Criticizing/Justifying Authority	*Great, but if you want to use simple present don't forget to see the subject, if the subject I, you, we, they use base form of verb (Verb 1), if the subject He, She and It use base form of verb + s/es (V1 + s/es)*	1	3.45%
Subtotal			11	37.93%
Total			29	100%

Based on classroom observations and the coding of verbal interactions, a total of 29 instances of teacher's talk were recorded. Of these, 18 utterances (62.07%) were classified as indirect talk and 11 utterances (37.93%) as direct talk. Within the indirect category, the most frequently observed subcategories included asking questions (7 utterances), praise or encouragement (6 utterances), and accepting students' feelings (4 utterances). The teacher also demonstrated minimal engagement with student ideas (1 utterance).

In the domain of direct teacher's talk, giving directions (8 utterances) dominated, followed by lecturing (2 utterances) and criticizing or justifying authority (1 utterance). The teacher frequently issued procedural instructions such as "Open your dictionary" or "Raise up your hand," reflecting classroom management practices. Meanwhile, the limited instances of criticism were presented in a corrective and constructive tone, such as reminding students about subject-verb agreement rules.

The findings from this study, focusing on teacher's talk in an all-female Islamic educational setting, offer valuable insights into the nuanced pedagogical strategies employed to foster a supportive and participatory learning environment. The observed distribution of teacher's talk, with a notable prevalence of indirect over direct utterances, aligns with contemporary educational philosophies advocating for student-centered approaches that enhance engagement and emotional comfort (Jones & Dindia, 2004; Indriyani & Trioktawiani, 2019).

Specifically, the high proportion of indirect talk (62.07%), characterized predominantly by "asking questions" (7 utterances), "praise or encouragement" (6 utterances), and "accepting students' feelings" (4 utterances), suggests a deliberate effort by the teacher to cultivate an atmosphere conducive to student expression and confidence. This emphasis on questioning and positive reinforcement is particularly pertinent in educational contexts where fostering a comfortable learning environment is crucial for student engagement (Ismail, 2023). Previous research indicates that female students often exhibit conscientiousness and a propensity to ask questions and seek feedback, which can be further reinforced by a teacher's use of indirect, supportive language (Steinmayr & Spinath, 2008; Kilby, 2023). The teacher's conscious employment of these strategies, including the acceptance of student feelings, appears to be deeply rooted in the cultural emphasis on respect, emotional sensitivity, and rapport prevalent within the all-female Islamic educational setting. This approach can be seen as a pedagogical response to the specific needs and communication styles that may be more prevalent among female learners, potentially countering broader trends where female students sometimes receive less attention in mixed-gender classrooms (Sadker & Sadker, 1994; Eddy et al., 2014; Özdere, 2023).

While the dominance of indirect talk highlights a facilitative teaching style, the minimal engagement with student ideas (1 utterance) within this category presents an area for potential growth. Encouraging deeper elaboration on student contributions can further enhance critical thinking and active learning, moving beyond mere participation to more substantive intellectual exchange.

In contrast, direct teacher's talk, comprising 37.93% of utterances, was primarily characterized by "giving directions" (8 utterances). These procedural instructions, such as "Open your dictionary" or "Raise up your hand," reflect effective classroom management essential for maintaining order and instructional flow. The limited instances of "lecturing" (2 utterances) and "criticizing or justifying authority" (1 utterance) further underscore the teacher's preference for an indirect, less authoritarian style. Notably, the criticism observed was presented constructively, focusing on corrective feedback (e.g., subject-verb agreement rules) rather than punitive measures. This measured use of direct talk, particularly constructive criticism, is consistent with creating a supportive environment where students feel safe to make mistakes and learn, aligning with the cultural values of the all-female Islamic educational context where emotional sensitivity and positive reinforcement are highly valued.

The current study's findings, as presented in Table 1, reveal a predominant use of indirect teacher's talk over direct teacher's talk. This observation aligns with the research by Martina et al. (2021), who found that novice lecturers tended to employ indirect teacher's talk more frequently than direct teacher's talk. Martina et al. (2021) further suggested that this pattern might reflect a natural stage in pedagogical development, where educators, particularly early

in their careers, consciously adopt indirect strategies to foster student engagement and a supportive learning environment. This aligns with the notion that deliberate use of questioning, praise, and acceptance of student feelings can be a hallmark of a developing teaching repertoire aimed at building rapport and encouraging participation (Jones & Dindia, 2004; Sun, 2021; Rahima et al., 2023).

Conversely, the results of the present study diverge from other investigations, such as that by Nafisah and Setianingsih (2024), who reported a greater dominance of direct teacher's talk in the classrooms they observed. This discrepancy underscores the context-dependent nature of teacher's talk patterns. Variations in pedagogical philosophies, the specific subject matter being taught, the cultural and institutional norms of the educational setting, and the experience level of the teacher can all contribute to different distributions of direct and indirect communication. For instance, while Martina et al. (2021) noted that senior lecturers might revert to more direct forms of talk, the current study's teacher, operating within an all-female Islamic educational setting, may prioritize rapport-building and emotional sensitivity, leading to a sustained preference for indirect strategies regardless of experience level. Future research could explore the specific factors influencing these divergent patterns, particularly how cultural contexts and teacher professional development trajectories shape the balance between direct and indirect instructional approaches.

3.2. The impact of teacher's talk used by a male teacher to all-female students' motivation

This section presents a thematic analysis of interview data gathered from seven female students regarding the impact of a male teacher's talk on their motivation in learning English at an Islamic educational institution. Using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework, five major themes emerged, each highlighting specific ways teacher's talk shapes student motivation. The findings are further supported by previous research studies in similar educational and cultural contexts. The summary of the themes and students' responses can be seen at table 2 below.

Table 2. Summary of the themes and student responses

Theme	Key Insights	Student Voice Examples
Clarity and Calmness	Enhances understanding and comfort in learning	"Speaking slowly and kindly." – A; "Not getting angry." – C
Praise and Encouragement	Boosts emotional motivation, confidence, and participation	"Felt proud." – A; "Happy and appreciated." – C
Questioning	Encourages engagement but may cause anxiety; most still participate	"Responds enthusiastically." – A; "Feels afraid." – E
Feedback and Rewards	Reinforces effort and motivates further attempts	"Felt motivated." – A; "More eager to answer." – G
Rare Negative Talk	Generally absent but impactful when it occurs	"Felt unmotivated when the teacher complained." – G

3.2.1. Clarity and calmness build comprehension and confidence

A major theme emerging from the interviews is that the teacher's clear and calm delivery helps students understand the material and feel more confident in learning. Here are some examples of the students' answer based on students' interview and observation in the class.

- "The teacher explains clearly and is easy to understand." (Student G)
- "Explaining well and not getting angry." (Student C)
- "Speaking slowly and kindly." (Student A)
- "Explaining slowly and clearly, then giving many extra points." (Student F)

This clarity reduces cognitive strain and anxiety, making students more receptive. In the context of an Islamic school, where calm demeanor and respect are valued. In this case, the teacher's gentle and clear tone appears to align well with student expectations, fostering a safe learning environment.

All students emphasized that the teacher's clear and calm explanations make lessons easier to understand. Statements such as, "The teacher explains clearly and is easy to understand" (Student G) and "Explaining well and not getting angry" (Student C) reveal the importance of a composed tone in creating a supportive learning environment. In an Islamic girls' school context, calmness and clarity align with cultural expectations, helping reduce anxiety and increase trust. This is consistent with Sun (2021), who assert that respectful, clear teacher communication enhances learner engagement. Similarly, Alrabai (2014) found that teacher clarity and a non-threatening communication style significantly increased motivation in Saudi Arabian EFL learners. Additional support is provided by Stroet et al. (2021), who concluded that students were more engaged and confident when teachers used clear, supportive verbal instructions in Indonesian classrooms. Likewise, Xie and Derakhshan (2021) emphasized that teacher immediacy behaviors, including clarity and warmth, positively influenced learners' affective states and engagement in EFL settings. However, in contrast, Copland et al. (2014) found that excessive simplification or overuse of clarity strategies sometimes led to disengagement among advanced learners, who felt the classroom interaction lacked cognitive challenge. These contrasting findings suggest that while clarity is vital, it must be balanced with intellectual stimulation based on learner levels and needs.

3.2.2. Praise and encouragement elevate emotional motivation

Teacher's praise, both verbal and reward-based, emerged as a powerful motivational factor. Here are some examples of the students' answer based on the students' interview and observation of the class.

- "I feel proud when the teacher praises me." (Student A)
- "I feel appreciated and happy." (Student C)
- "I feel very happy, especially when receiving extra points." (Student E)

- "When I received praise and extra points, I felt more eager to answer." (Student G)

Based on the data above, even students who rarely receive praise reported feeling happy and motivated when it was given. This underscores the emotional value students place on recognition.

Praise was consistently identified as a strong motivator. Students described feeling "proud" (Student A), "appreciated and happy" (Student C), and "more eager to answer" (Student G) when praised or given rewards such as extra points. Even when praise was infrequent, students still reported positive emotional responses. This supports Firdaus (2015) and Asfah (2023), who also found that praise increases learner confidence and participation in Indonesian EFL classrooms. In this case, praise not only reinforced performance but also contributed to emotional well-being and classroom belonging. Furthermore, Yusuf (2020) emphasized that teacher's reward increases the students' enthusiasm and livens up the classroom. Similarly, some previous studies also reported that consistent teacher encouragement was directly correlated with improvements in students' willingness to communicate and their active classroom participation (Hughes & Chen, 2011; Uçar & Sungur, 2017; Sadoughi & Hejazi, 2021).

3.2.3. Questioning promotes participation despite anxiety

While frequent questioning was a key interactional feature of the teacher's talk, students had mixed emotional responses to it. Based on the students' interview and observation, here are some examples of the students' answer.

- "The teacher often asks questions, and I respond enthusiastically." (Student A)
- "I often feel confused but can still answer with some help." (Student C)
- "Very often, but I feel afraid." (Student E)
- "Often asked questions, and I answer, but still feel doubtful." (Student G)

Based on the data above, even though most students feel confused, afraid, or unsure, they still choose to actively participate in class. This demonstrates a moderate risk-taking environment, where teacher questioning pushes students out of their comfort zones but remains within supportive limits.

The teacher's frequent questioning elicited a range of emotions. While some students felt enthusiastic ("I respond enthusiastically" – Student A), others felt "confused" (Student B) or "afraid" (Student E). Despite these feelings, most students still attempted to answer. For instance, Student C stated, "I often feel confused but can still answer with some help." This suggests that questioning serves as a motivational tool when accompanied by support. This finding aligns with Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development, where students benefit from scaffolded challenges. Supporting this, Irawati et al. (2021) found that the strategic use of referential and display questions encouraged participation even among

hesitant learners in EFL classrooms. Similarly, Rahayu and Suharti (2023) observed that teachers who utilized open-ended and follow-up questioning techniques fostered a deeper sense of engagement and improved learner autonomy in Indonesian secondary schools. On the contrary, Alharbi (2021) noted that poorly timed or excessive questioning could lead to anxiety and passive resistance, especially among lower-proficiency students.

3.2.4. Feedback after tasks encourages persistence and confidence

Based on the observation of the class, teacher's responses after student participation were reported to increase enthusiasm and resilience, even though the students' answers were not always correct. Here are some examples of the students' answer based on the students' interview.

- "I feel motivated." (Student A)
- "I feel happy after receiving praise." (Student B)
- "When I couldn't answer, the teacher still helped and gave me points." (Student F)

This reflects a growth-oriented communication style, where even unsuccessful efforts are valued. Especially in Islamic girls' classrooms, where fear of failure can be heightened, teachers' encouraging feedback seems crucial in protecting self-esteem and promoting continuous engagement.

Students emphasized the motivational power of teacher's feedback following tasks or answers. Student A stated, "I feel motivated," while Student F noted, "When I couldn't answer, the teacher still helped and gave me points." Such interactions show that the teacher provides positive reinforcement even when answers are incorrect, promoting resilience and sustained effort. In culturally conservative settings, where fear of failure may be high, this form of feedback is especially important in preserving student motivation and confidence. This pattern of supportive corrective feedback is echoed in the findings of Sistyawan et al. (2021), who found that over time, students can feel that their teachers value their contributions to the class when they receive feedback that includes constructive criticism and praise. Indirectly, providing good feedback teaches students to respect one another, be courageous enough to own up to mistakes, and not be afraid to correct one another, when necessary, in a courteous and kind manner. This is in accordance with Nurhayati and Apoko (2024) who also found that in the context of English teaching, feedback acts as a stimulant for students' motivation and self-development. Therefore, it is crucial to comprehend individual preferences, offer tailored feedback, and establish a positive learning environment to maximise the influence of feedback on students' learning results.

3.2.5. Positive experiences are predominant, but negative talk has impact

Nearly all students reported positive or neutral experiences with teacher's talk, noting that they had never felt demotivated by the teacher's words. Based on the students' interview and observation, here are the examples of the students' answer.

- "Never." (Students A–F)
- "Yes, when the teacher complained about me." (Student G)

Only one student recalled a demotivating instance, suggesting that the teacher's communication style is overwhelmingly positive. However, this isolated case emphasizes that even brief moments of negative talk can have lasting effects, especially in high-context cultures where personal relationships are emphasized.

Nearly all students reported never feeling demotivated by the teacher's words. Only one student (Student G) mentioned feeling less motivated due to a teacher's complaint. This indicates that while negative experiences are rare, they can still have emotional consequences. As Wang (2023) suggest, emotional sensitivity in teacher-student communication is essential to maintaining engagement, especially in contexts where respect and face-saving are culturally significant. Their study highlighted that even small instances of public correction or sarcastic comments could lead to disengagement, underscoring the importance of consistently positive teacher discourse. Similarly, findings by Eginli and Mutlu (2022) confirmed that students' perception of teacher fairness and emotional regulation was closely tied to sustained motivation and classroom well-being in Turkish EFL settings.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the male teacher in this study predominantly uses indirect talk to foster a positive, respectful, and motivating environment, which is culturally appropriate in an Islamic, all-female setting. While direct talk is employed to manage instruction and discipline, it is not excessive, showing a balanced, learner-centered approach. The observed teacher's talk patterns demonstrate a balanced pedagogical approach that prioritizes emotional responsiveness and student participation through extensive indirect communication, while maintaining instructional clarity through targeted direct talk. This equilibrium is particularly significant given the all-female Islamic educational setting, where the teacher's conscious strategies appear to align with cultural values emphasizing respect, emotional sensitivity, and rapport. These findings contribute to the understanding of effective teaching practices in culturally specific educational environments, suggesting that a teacher's awareness and adaptation to the social and emotional dynamics of their classroom can significantly shape the learning experience.

The thematic analysis reveals that the male teacher's talk significantly enhances motivation among female students in this Islamic educational context. Clarity, praise, encouragement, supportive questioning, and positive feedback create an emotionally safe and academically motivating environment. These findings are supported by previous research in similar EFL and culturally conservative settings. While occasional fear or hesitation exists, especially around questioning, the teacher's communicative approach overall aligns with best

practices for fostering learner motivation and confidence in culturally and religiously sensitive settings.

The results of this study are still very limited to the context of this study. Therefore, they recommend that future researchers explore teacher-student interactions using FIACS in various educational contexts, such as coeducational environments or at various proficiency levels. Engaging student responses through classroom discourse analysis or integrating quantitative tools could provide a more comprehensive view of how teacher conversations influence student motivation, participation, and autonomy.

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