

A Corpus-Based Analysis of Discourse Strategies Used by Primary Inclusive Schools

Sofi Yunianti^{1*}, Idhoofiyatul Fatin², Ahmad Mahmudi³

^{1,2}Universitas Muhammadiyah Surabaya, Indonesia

Corresponding Author's Email: sofiyunianti@um-surabaya.ac.id*

Article Info

Article history:

Received December 27th, 2025

Revised December 28th, 2025

Accepted December 30th, 2025

Keyword:

Corpus;

Discourse Strategies;

Primary Inclusive Schools;

ABSTRACT

Teachers and students' interactions play a crucial role in achieving learning outcomes. Therefore, this study aims to find out how discourse strategies are used in a primary inclusive school. Through the participation of a primary inclusive school's teacher, a corpus of recorded data was constructed. The discourse strategies were then identified and categorized based on the theory of Dornyei and Scott. The result of the study revealed that, based on corpus-analysis, the teacher used only the More Communicative Potential strategy. Within this category, the most frequently used strategy was a comprehension check. This was primarily applied because the teacher's main purpose was to deliver the lesson clearly and coherently while ensuring students understood the material. This study implied that it is essential for teachers to be aware of and apply appropriate discourse strategies to support effective classroom interaction.

Introduction

Teacher-student interactions play a crucial role in the classroom environment. Positive teacher-student relationships influence the cognitive and motivational learning outcomes (Pennings & Hollenstein, 2020). The cognitive influence is reflected in how students feel comfortable asking questions to clarify their understanding and enhance their comprehension and facilitate deeper learning (Zeinstra et al., 2023). Meanwhile, motivational learning outcomes involve building students' confidence, which are key factor in creating a positive learning atmosphere, especially for inclusive students (Nybøe & Bruin, 2025).

Considering the importance of teacher-student interactions for inclusive students, through effective interaction, teachers can fulfil students' need for emotional security, such as showing empathy, giving encouragement, and listening attentively (Obrovská et al., 2025). These enable inclusive students to feel accepted within the classroom community and encourage them to participate in the classroom. In addition, because inclusive students often learn at a slower pace, positive teacher-student interaction is pivotal for motivating and supporting their learning through purposeful dialogue and feedback. Therefore, it is useful for analyzing the conversation between the student and the teacher.

Teacher and student conversation in the classroom provides a meaningful context for analyzing discourse strategies, as classroom communication is not only about transferring knowledge but also about negotiating meaning, building relationships, and managing interaction. Particularly in an inclusive classroom, discourse strategies are implemented to determine how effectively students with diverse needs understand and engage in the learning process. Dornyei and Scott (1995) stated that discourse strategies consist of three categories: less communicative potential, medium communicative potential, and more communicative potential. According to Dornyei and Scott (1995), less communicative potential is used for communication breakdowns because the speaker unsuccessfully delivers the intended meaning. This strategy is different from the more communicative potential because the more communicative potential category is the most effective

communication and interaction. It happened because in this category, there is mutual understanding between the speakers and listeners. Moreover, the medium communicative potential category happened because the speaker delivered the general idea, but the intended meaning is not clear. These categories help to identify how the classroom language performance contributes to achieving the learning outcomes.

Several studies related to classroom conversation have been conducted in a classroom context. For instance, the comparison of discourse patterns between novice and expert teachers in a junior high school EFL context (Tong et al., 2024). Similarly, there was learning interaction research about communication strategies in experiential language learning (Yang et al., 2022). Another study by Järvinen et al. (2025) analyzed pre-service teacher interaction by comparing male and female teachers using the interaction analysis category system and acoustic analysis. The finding revealed that male teachers tended to use direct speech, while females preferred indirect speech and delivered tolerant acoustic profile. Furthermore, there was also a study about the important role of oral corrective feedback in the language learning classroom, which showed that low learner uptake and repair. Elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, and explicit correction, though used less frequently, were more effective in promoting learner repair. Although the results suggest that even expert teachers predominantly use recasts (Zhang et al., 2025). In addition, there was research that investigated the psychological impact of oral corrective feedback, which showed that the student received positive feedback rather than negative feedback (Hartono et al., 2022). Further study revealed that the multimodal conversation learning material on second language classroom influences the progression of task interaction (Rantala, 2025). Lastly, a study showed that the method of conversational analysis revealed that one-to-one interaction in secondary school classrooms provides insight into students' processes and the accompanying teacher practices (Gosen et al., 2025).

Based on the previous studies, there is limited research about the conversation analysis in inclusive schools. Therefore, this study intends to fill the gap by analyzing the conversation between the teacher and the inclusive student to know deeply about the conversation analysis and student-teacher interaction. This study focuses on how discourse strategy uses by teachers in inclusive schools by using corpus analysis.

Method

This study applied qualitative analysis since it focuses on the individual experience and natural condition (Creswell, 2014; Sugiyono, 2019). Moreover, this study used utterances as data. Qualitative data are usually using transcript or textual form (Dornyei, 2007). This study used a sketch engine, which enables word frequency. According to Stubbs (1995), the frequency with which linguistic devices occur in a corpus reflects the communicative importance within a certain discourse structure.

Participant

The subjects of this study were a shadow teacher and three inclusive students from one of the leading inclusive elementary schools. This study chose the school because it is recognized for its strong commitment. Moreover, this study chose the third grade because of the consideration of the linguistic development stage and social interaction maturity. At this stage, the inclusive students of third grade have generally developed in basic literacy and oral communication skills because they can ask questions, express opinion and give feedback. In social interaction maturity, they have already understood about peers' relationships and are comfortable with their peers and teacher, but sometimes they still feel anxious, which makes it different from the upper grade, and makes it interesting to analyze.

Data Collection

After obtaining permission from the school, the data collection was carried out in several steps. First, choosing the course theme. Global warming is something strange for them, and they cannot explain it concretely. Second, recording the conversation between the shadow teacher and three inclusive students. Third, record the data, and the last step is transcribing the data.

After obtaining the data, the next step for analyzing the data is categorizing it based on discourse strategies. This process was assisted by it helped by sketch engine to identify the frequency of word occurrences. Then, the frequency data were used to determine which discourse strategy category each utterance belonged to.

Findings and Discussions

Figure 1 shows the 50 most frequent words generated from sketch engine. Table 1 displays the corpus collected from the global warming course theme. The recorded duration was 90 minutes and consisted of 883 words. Based on the data set, a total of 21 discourse strategies were identified. Table 2 presents the type and frequency of discourse strategy categories (Dornyei & Scott, 1995).

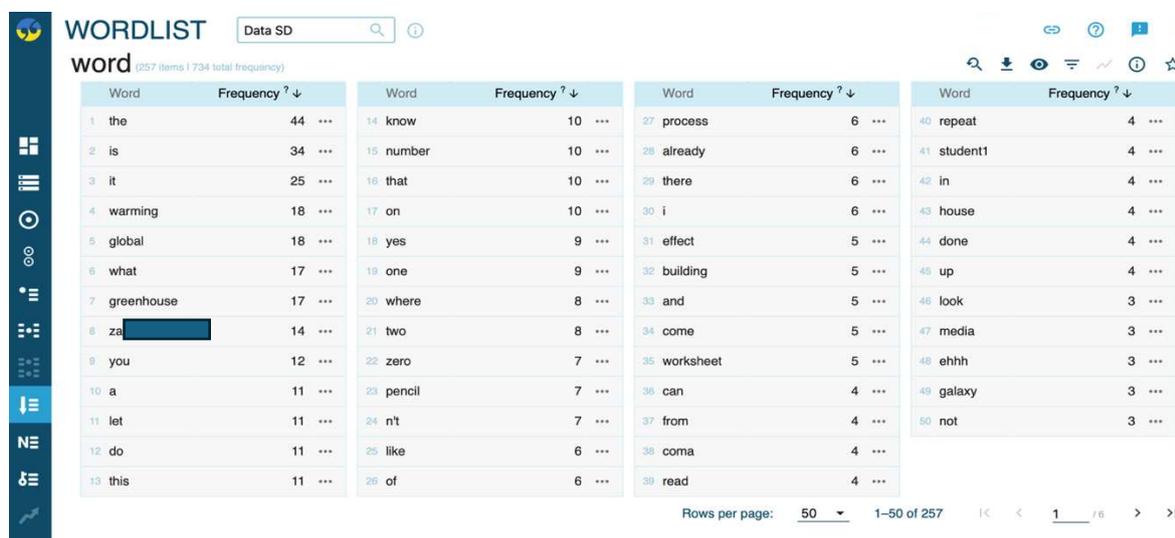


Figure 1. Sketch engine result

Table 1. Features of the corpus collected

Course Theme	Minutes	Words	Number of Discourse strategy Types
Global Warming	90	883	21

Table 2. Discourse strategies adapted from Donyei and Scott’s (1997)

No.	Discourse strategies	Total (n)	Percentage
Less Communicative Potential			
1	Omission	0	0
Medium Communicative Potential			
2	Use of Fillers		

3	Use of all purpose-words		
4.	Code switching		
		0	0
More Communicative Potential			
5.	Comprehension Check	10	47,6%
6.	Self-rephrasing		
7.	Restructuring	3	14,3%
8.	Retrieval		
9.	Self Repair		
10.	Self-repetition	8	38.1%
11.	Other repetition		
Total		21	100%

The Most Commonly Used Discourse

Based on the finding the occurrence of utterance only belongs to a more communicative potential category. The teacher implemented this strategy because maintaining communication and interaction. Among all the categories of more communicative potential, the comprehension check strategy is the most frequently used, with 10 occurrences, accounting for 47.6%. This indicates that teachers and students often clarify and confirm to ensure understanding, which is essential in an inclusive learning context. The second most frequent strategy was self-repetition, which occurred 8 times, and the total frequency is 38.1%. It means that the repetition of an utterance seeks attention and response and emphasizes meaning. Restructuring is the least common occurrence. It appeared 3 time and the percentage is 14.3 %. Rephrasing and reorganizing utterances make the intention clearer, especially when facing communication difficulties.

Moreover, Figure 1 presents the 50 most frequent words that appeared in the corpus collected from the data recording. The most frequent words are “warming”, “global”, and “greenhouse”. Additionally, wh question and “do” indicates the teacher initiatively asked the student about the learning material. The nouns “pencil” and “worksheet” appear more than five times. The presence of the student’s name indicates interpersonal engagement because the teacher intends to attract the student’s attention.

The Function of Discourse Strategies

The comprehension check involves many discourse strategies. It can be seen in the conversation below:

- Teacher : Do you know the Jawa Post building? This is a greenhouse. There are glasses, do you understand?
- Student : Yes, I understand
- Teacher : Ok, do you really know how the building is?
- Student : Yes, it is tall

The teacher checks the comprehension by using the words “know” and “understand,” and these words appear twice. It means that the teacher’s purpose is to confirm whether the student understood. It reflected that the function of this category is to ensure mutual understanding and to verify that the student follows the teacher’s intended meaning. Based on the conversation above, in an inclusive classroom context, a comprehension check is important because this strategy bridges the communication misunderstanding. Therefore, this strategy intends to demonstrate the sharing of understanding, especially in the classroom context.

The second majority of discourse strategy types is self-repetition. It is reflected on the conversation, as follows:

Teacher : Let's get the modules. Eee,,, the worksheet, take the worksheet, take the Worksheet Zaki, sitting here now. Take the pencil pencil. Where's the pencil? Pencil.

Student1 : worksheet?

Teacher : Where's the pencil? Pencil. Pencil worksheet *dong*, already

Teacher : this how much

Student : zero coma two degrees Celsius

Teacher : repeat

Student : zero comma ehmmm two degree Causes Increase greenhouse gases carbon dioxide and artificial chemical gas

Teacher : Please repeat again, boys

student : global warming process

Teacher : common look at this, global warming process

Student : Radiation

Teacher : repeat... repeat the radiation. This is a greenhouse gas planting global warming. The effect of the ice is melting, the extreme weather changes

Based on the conversation above, the words “pencil” and “worksheet” are repeated four times. The main function of this strategy is to emphasize important information. The teacher tries to get student attention with repetition. The student also clarifies the repetition by asking again, “worksheet”. In the second conversation, the teacher asked the student to repeat the reading task and difficult words, such as “global warming” and “radiation”. It means that this strategy is useful when students are uncertain about the meaning of vocabulary and the intention of communication. In an inclusive learning environment, repetition is helpful for students to follow the discussion, especially those with slower comprehension speed.

Teacher :...ehhh there is no dust in there. Please pay attention here. Global warming is... is the greenhouse.... what is greenhouse?

Student 1 : Don't know

The least frequent is the restructuring strategy. The teacher tries to make the question clearer with a restructuring strategy. At first, the teacher begins to have the student continue the definition of global warming. Then, the teacher changes it by asking a question. This strategy aims to reorganize or reformulate the utterance when the original structure fails to deliver meaning. This strategy also has the function to actively monitor the utterance, because the speaker wants to make an effort by clarifying the students' understanding.

The Communicative Potential of Discourse Strategies

The result revealed that all identified belonged to a more communicative potential category. This study contrasts with the findings from Shartiely and Anthonissen's (2013) study, which reported that the medium communicative potential strategy was the highest because of the class size, grade, and the teaching subjects and materials. This difference occurred because this study was conducted in an inclusive school, where the teacher gave more effort to grab students' attention, and students were more encouraged to actively participate in the classroom. Moreover, the strategy mainly focuses on checking the student understanding, especially maintaining the understanding of inclusive students. Repetition and self-repair strategy enable students to follow a conversation, and the main purpose is to ensure student understanding. Based on the findings, an inclusive classroom appeared more student-centered, as the study of Catherine P. Blanco (2024) revealed that the interaction in an inclusive classroom is less communicative potential strategy

because there is less omission or code-switching, as student guided to sustain communication and interaction.

Conclusions

This study analyzed the use of discourse strategies in an inclusive school. There are three inclusive students and a shadow teacher. During a 90-minute discussion on the Global Warming theme. The theory is based on Dornyei and Scott (1995), who revealed that all discourse strategies identified in the corpus belonged to a more communicative potential category. Comprehension check, self-repetition, and restructuring indicated a strong emphasis on maintaining communication, interaction, and understanding. These findings emphasize that teacher-student interactions in inclusive schools are highly communicative, supportive, and student-centered. It means that the teacher's discourse strategy is pivotal in building understanding, reducing miscommunication, and encouraging students to participate. This further study suggests taking more than one course theme and a longer duration to explore the variability of discourse study.

References

- Catherine P. Blanco. (2024). Code-Switching, Social Interactions, and Supportive Environment: Addressing the Challenges in Speaking English. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 6(4), 202–209. <https://doi.org/10.32996/jeltal.2024.6.4.22>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). Research design : qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. In *Sage* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Dornyei, Z. (2007). *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methodologies*. Oxford University Press.
- Dornyei, Z., & Scott, M. L. (1995). Communication strategies: An empirical analysis with retrospection. *The Twenty-First Annual Symposium of the Deseret Language and Linguistics Society*.
- Gosen, M. N., Willemsen, A., & Hiddink, F. (2025). Applying conversation analysis to classroom interactions: students' 'oh'-prefaced utterances and the interactional management of explanations. *Classroom Discourse*, 16(2), 123–141. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19463014.2024.2397127>
- Hartono, D., Basthomi, Y., Widiastuti, O., & Prastiyowati, S. (2022). The impacts of teacher's oral corrective feedback to students' psychological domain: a study on EFL speech production. *Cogent Education*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2022.2152619>
- Järvinen, K., Kähkönen, A. L., Nieminen, P., & Mäntylä, T. (2025). Pre-service teachers' interaction with students manifested in speech turns— a case study of interaction and acoustic analyses. *Classroom Discourse*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19463014.2025.2546863>
- Nybøe, Ø., & Bruin, M. (2025). Shaping inclusive approaches in the classroom: an analysis of teachers' and students' accounts on valued qualities in teacher-student interactions. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2025.2550275>
- Obrovská, J., Svojanovský, P., & Sharma, U. (2025). Teachers' inclusive core practices and all students' perspectives. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 165. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2025.105120>
- Pennings, H. J. M., & Hollenstein, T. (2020). Teacher-Student Interactions and Teacher Interpersonal Styles: A State Space Grid Analysis. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 88(3). <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.2019.1578724>
- Rantala, K. (2025). Implications of materials use in a shop encounter roleplay in Finnish as an L2 classroom interaction—a comparison of two types of task materials. *Classroom Discourse*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19463014.2025.2530401>
- Shartiely, N. E., & Anthonissen, C. (2013). *Discourse strategies of lecturers in higher education classroom interaction: A case at the university dar Es Salaam, Tanzania*. <http://scholar.sun.ac.za>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Stubbs, M. (1995). Collocations and semantic profiles. *Functions of Language*, 2(1), 23–55. <https://doi.org/10.1075/foL.2.1.03stu>
- Sugiyono. (2019). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R&D*. Alfabeta.
- Tong, Z., An, F., & Cui, Y. (2024). Exploring teacher discourse patterns: Comparative insights from novice and expert teachers in junior high school EFL contexts. *Heliyon*, 10(16). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e36435>
- Yang, H., Tsung, L., & Cao, L. (2022). The Use of Communication Strategies by Second Language Learners of Chinese in a Virtual Reality Learning Environment. *SAGE Open*, 12(4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221141877>
- Zeinstra, L., Kupers, E., Loopers, J., & de Boer, A. (2023). Real-time teacher-student interactions: The dynamic interplay between need supportive teaching and student engagement over the course of one school year. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 121. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103906>
- Zhang, C., Bowen, N. E. J. A., & Thomas, N. (2025). Oral corrective feedback and learner uptake: an analysis of Chinese high-school teachers' practices in a national teaching competition. *Classroom Discourse*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19463014.2025.2474233>