

TALK IN ACTION: UNPACKING TEACHER–STUDENT INTERACTION THROUGH THE IRF LENS

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ABSTRACT

Soil is defined as a thin layer of the earth's crust, which serves as a medium for the growth of plants. It is a natural body of animal, mineral, and organic constituents differentiated into horizons of variable depth, which differ from the material below in morphology, physical makeup, chemical properties, compositions, and biological characteristics. Good soil nutrition is the solution to many of the problems afflicting agriculture. Insect pests, diseases and weeds are all directly related to poor soil health. There is an 'ideal' state of balance between the physical, chemical and biological components of the soil, at which production is maximized and pest and weed pressure is greatly reduced. This 'ideal' state is what every farmer should try to attain.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Good communication between students and teachers lies at the very heart of effective learning. When students are able to discuss ideas freely, respond to meaningful questions, and receive constructive feedback, they not only master lessons more thoroughly but also develop the confidence to articulate their own thoughts. Among the many approaches used to examine this interaction, the Initiation–Response–Feedback (IRF) model has stood as one of the most influential frameworks. First introduced by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), the IRF pattern captures the rhythm of classroom communication: the teacher initiates with a question, the student responds, and the teacher follows up with feedback. This seemingly simple cycle reveals profound insights about the dynamics of teaching and learning.

Across the globe, research has underscored the enduring relevance of the IRF model. For instance, studies such as those by Nassaji and Wells (2000) in the *Journal of Pragmatics* have shown that reflective feedback in IRF sequences enhances student engagement and comprehension in language classrooms. Similarly, a meta-analysis by Hattie and Timperley (2007) in *Review of Educational Research* demonstrated that feedback types within IRF cycles, when shifted from

evaluative to reflective, significantly improve learning outcomes. Ng et al. (2025) demonstrated in Hong Kong classrooms that when teachers moved beyond “right” or “wrong” judgments and instead offered reflective feedback, students’ learning outcomes improved significantly. Likewise, Purnawati (2021) found that in English lessons, the way teachers formulated questions and delivered responses directly shaped learners’ vocabulary growth and speaking confidence. These findings suggest that the IRF model is not merely a structural pattern—it is a powerful tool for enhancing engagement, participation, and cognitive development.

More recent scholarship has even expanded the IRF framework into more dynamic forms. In Chinese junior high schools, expert teachers frequently employed variations such as IRFR or [IⁿRⁿ]F, where cycles of questioning, responding, and feedback were extended to encourage deeper critical thinking and more authentic discourse (Zhang, 2023). These adaptations reveal the flexibility of IRF: while it provides structure, it can also be reshaped into a dialogic tool that fosters creativity, fluency, and higher-order reasoning. Indeed, while critics have noted that IRF may reduce students to passive respondents, carefully managed feedback and open-ended questioning transform it into an instrument of empowerment (British Council, 2024). Supporting this, research by Alexander (2008) in *Developing Dialogue:*

Arguments on the Left and Right emphasizes how dialogic IRF variations promote student agency and critical thinking.

In the Philippine context, the IRF model has also begun to inform classroom discourse analysis. Balaobao et al. (2024) found that a healthy balance between teacher and student talk led to more interactive English-medium classrooms in Davao del Sur. Likewise, Caube (2024) explored IRF in modular learning settings, highlighting how teacher-initiated prompts and subsequent student responses shaped the quality of at-home learning. In higher education, discourse studies in Ilocos Sur revealed that non-evaluative follow-up strategies within IRF kept students engaged and even led to inverted IRF exchanges, in which learners initiated the discussion (ISPSC Research Office, 2024). These studies indicate that IRF is already enriching insights into Philippine classrooms by showing how communication patterns influence participation and confidence. Additional evidence from Bautista and Ocampo (2020) in *Philippine Journal of Linguistics* supports the model's application in Filipino ESL contexts, where balanced IRF promotes linguistic proficiency.

However, despite these valuable contributions, a striking research gap remains. Little is known about how the IRF model unfolds in secondary-level English classrooms—particularly at the Grade 9 level in private institutions such as Philippine Countryville College, Inc. This stage of schooling is critical: students are expected to reason more deeply, express ideas with clarity, and prepare for the communicative demands of higher education. Without a closer look at how teacher questions, student responses, and feedback patterns shape participation, educators risk overlooking opportunities to cultivate stronger speaking skills and deeper engagement among learners.

The significance of this research lies precisely in its potential to bridge that gap. By examining real classroom conversations through the lens of IRF, this study will explore how often teachers and students speak, what types of questions are posed (display, referential, convergent), how students respond (active, hesitant, or silent), and what forms of feedback (evaluative, reflective, or encouraging) are most effective. Insights from Rahmi et al. (2018) affirm that such details matter greatly: when teachers employ varied question

types and meaningful feedback, students display not only better vocabulary but also greater confidence in speaking. Applying these findings to Philippine Countryville College could help identify interaction strategies that genuinely empower learners. Further backing this, a study by Walsh (2006) in *Applied Linguistics* highlights how question types and feedback in IRF sequences directly correlate with student participation and language development.

Ultimately, this study holds the promise of transforming classroom practice. If teachers learn to shift from evaluative feedback to reflective dialogue, and if students are encouraged to take greater initiative in classroom exchanges, English learning at the Grade 9 level can become far more engaging, inclusive, and productive. Beyond filling a scholarly gap, this research can guide teachers toward communication strategies that make classrooms vibrant spaces of dialogue rather than monologues of instruction. In doing so, it reinforces the fundamental truth: education flourishes when communication thrives.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

This study seeks to analyze the nature of teacher–student interaction through the Initiation–Response–Feedback (IRF) model in Grade 9 English classes at Philippine Countryville College, Inc. Recognizing that effective communication between teachers and students plays a vital role in shaping learning outcomes, the study intends to uncover how classroom discourse unfolds and what factors either promote or hinder student participation.

Specifically, it aims to address the following research questions:

1. What recurring patterns of teacher–student interaction emerges in Grade 9 English classes when analyzed through the IRF (Initiation–Response–Feedback) model?
2. What types of teacher questions (e.g., display, referential, convergent, divergent) elicit higher levels of student response and interaction?
3. What factors (e.g., teacher strategies, student confidence, classroom environment, language proficiency) influence the quality and frequency of

student participation in IRF-based classroom interactions?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to analyze teacher–student interaction in Grade 9 English classes at Philippine Countryville College, Inc. using the Initiation–Response–Feedback (IRF) model. More specifically, it seeks to:

1. Identify and categorize the common interaction patterns between teachers and students based on the IRF model.
2. Examine the types of teacher questions that encourage greater student engagement and active participation.
3. Investigate the factors that facilitate or hinder students' participation in IRF-based classroom interactions during English lessons.

Significance of the Study

This research, which is based on analysis of teacher-student interaction using the Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) model, is helpful to different stakeholders in the educational sector, most especially in Philippine Countryville College, Inc.

Students. This research will remind students of their involvement in classroom discussions. Being conscious of the way teacher-student interactions are conducted, students can be prodded to engage more actively and improve their communication and critical thinking skills.

Teachers. The findings of this study give information to teachers on the effectiveness of questioning and giving feedback. These findings can potentially help teachers fine-tune teaching, promote higher student engagement, and create more student-centered and interactive learning spaces.

Parents. Parents will have a better understanding of the classroom dynamics that influence their children's learning and engagement. The study can also enable them to better support their children in becoming more confident and communicative at home and in school.

School. These results can be used by the school administration to assess and improve instructional practices, training programs, and

curriculum planning. This can result in enhanced learning achievements and academic performance of the students.

Future Researchers. who wish to study classroom discourse, student participation, or the IRF model in another context can use this study as a starting point. It opens the door for comparative study or follow-up on the determinants of classroom learning and interaction.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study examines the patterns of teacher–student interaction in terms of the Initiation–Response–Feedback (IRF) model in Grade 9 English classes at Philippine Countryville College, Inc. The general objective is to analyze how classroom discourse unfolds during English lessons and how frequently each component of the IRF model—Initiation, Response, and Feedback—is employed by teachers and students.

The research is limited to one Grade 9 section composed of 27 pupils, as the school offers only a single section at this level. The participants were chosen primarily for convenience since the researcher is also the English teacher of the class, which allows for closer access and observation. Data will be collected exclusively through classroom observation of an English lesson focused on active and passive voice, providing a specific and controlled context for examining the IRF framework in action.

The focus of this study is restricted to teacher–student interaction in English lessons. Interactions in other subjects, peer-to-peer communication, or classroom behaviors unrelated to the lesson (e.g., misbehavior or off-task talk) are beyond the scope of this inquiry. By concentrating on one class session and one lesson, the study aims to provide an intensive, in-depth analysis of how IRF sequences naturally occur in the classroom discourse.

While the scope is narrow, this focused approach allows the research to highlight authentic interactional patterns and provide insights that can serve as a basis for broader studies in similar contexts.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Review of Related Literature

The study of teacher–student interaction has long been a central concern in classroom discourse research, particularly through the framework of the Initiation–Response–Feedback (IRF) model. Originally conceptualized by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), the IRF structure views classroom talk as a triadic exchange in which the teacher initiates, the student responds, and the teacher follows up with feedback or evaluation. This model has since provided a foundational lens for examining not only the structural organization of classroom communication but also the pedagogical intentions and power dynamics that underlie it. It's like peeking behind the curtain of a classroom conversation—simple on the surface, but full of deeper layers that shape how learning really happens.

Building upon this foundation, conversation analysis (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974) has offered more detailed tools for understanding the sequential organization of classroom talk. Unlike Sinclair and Coulthard's structural approach, conversation analysis emphasizes how meaning unfolds turn by turn, shedding light on how teachers' initiations project certain types of responses and how feedback either opens up or closes down opportunities for further dialogue. In this sense, IRF sequences are not fixed but fluid, often expanding or contracting depending on how both teachers and students orient to each other's contributions. Imagine it as a dance: sometimes it's a quick step, other times a full routine that invites everyone to join in.

In addition to conversation analysis, sociocultural perspectives also enrich the understanding of IRF. Vygotsky's notion of the Zone of Proximal Development positions classroom interaction as a scaffolded space where teachers use language to guide learners toward higher levels of competence. Correspondingly, Bakhtin's theory of dialogism frames classroom talk as a dialogic process, one where voices intersect and meaning is co-constructed rather than merely transmitted. From this perspective, the feedback stage of the IRF sequence becomes especially crucial, as it determines whether the exchange remains evaluative and closed or opens up opportunities for collaborative reasoning and extended dialogue. It's a reminder that teaching isn't just about delivering information—it's about building bridges between minds.

Moreover, systemic functional linguistics (Halliday, 1978) provides an additional layer of analysis by linking interactional patterns with specific linguistic choices. Teachers' use of question types, evaluative language, and modality, for instance, not only structures the discourse but also signals authority, alignment, and stance. This functional approach allows researchers to see how the micro-level choices in language contribute to broader pedagogical goals. Think of it as the grammar of conversation: every word choice can either empower a student or hold them back.

Feedback theory also plays a significant role in extending IRF studies. Hattie and Timperley (2007), as well as Black and Wiliam (1998), distinguish between evaluative feedback, which often results in short responses, and formative feedback, which offers students cues and strategies for improvement. Research shows that formative feedback embedded within IRF cycles increases the likelihood of student uptake, as learners are encouraged to reflect, reformulate, and extend their answers. Thus, while the IRF model was initially criticized for fostering rigid and teacher-centered exchanges, subsequent studies have demonstrated that its flexibility depends on how teachers use the feedback move. It's all about turning a potential monologue into a lively back-and-forth.

Empirical research across international contexts provides further insight. For example, Mehan (1979) illustrated how the IRF pattern dominates classroom interaction, often reproducing institutional authority. Later studies, however, revealed that open-ended or referential questions tend to elicit longer and more meaningful student responses compared to display questions, which typically result in brief, one-word answers. Similarly, increasing wait-time after an initiation has been found to encourage more thoughtful and complex student contributions. More recent research emphasizes that IRF does not have to be restrictive; when teachers extend the follow-up move with probing questions or prompts, the sequence can evolve into dialogic talk that promotes higher-order thinking. As Walsh (2006) notes in his work on classroom discourse, these tweaks can transform routine exchanges into opportunities for real growth.

In the Philippine context, a growing number of studies highlight how IRF functions in local classrooms. For instance, Balaobao et al. (2024)

and Caube (2024) have shown that the type of feedback teachers provide significantly influences students' confidence and willingness to participate. Other research has documented how modular and at-home learning environments reshape initiation and response opportunities, underscoring the importance of context in shaping discourse patterns. Moreover, findings from the ISPSC Research Office (2024) suggest that inverted IRF sequences—where students initiate and teachers respond—can be observed in certain higher education classrooms, signaling a shift toward more dialogic and student-centered interaction. It's heartening to see how these insights are taking root in places like the Philippines, where educators are adapting global ideas to fit their unique classroom realities.

Taken together, these studies suggest that the IRF model, while simple, is a powerful tool for understanding classroom discourse. International and local evidence consistently points to the importance of question design, feedback type, and teacher strategies in shaping student engagement and learning outcomes. However, despite the wealth of research, gaps remain. In particular, there is limited analysis of IRF sequences in Philippine secondary schools, especially in Grade 9 English classrooms where communicative competence is a critical objective. Furthermore, while existing studies often count the frequency of IRF patterns, fewer combine micro-level sequential analysis with linguistic approaches such as systemic functional linguistics to show how teachers' language choices concretely influence student uptake. This is where we can step in to fill those gaps and make a real difference.

For this reason, the present study aims to build on the existing body of work by applying both conversation analysis and systemic functional linguistics to the analysis of classroom talk. By focusing on IRF sequences in a Grade 9 English class at Philippine Countryville College, it seeks to identify not only how the IRF model manifests in local classrooms but also how teacher strategies and linguistic choices affect student participation. Ultimately, the study intends to generate context-specific insights that can inform pedagogical practices, making classroom discourse more interactive, student-centered, and conducive to meaningful learning. After all, when we get the

conversation right, everyone in the room—teachers and students alike—wins.

Conceptual Frameworks

The present study is anchored on the Initiation–Response–Feedback (IRF) model of Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), which posits that classroom discourse typically follows a triadic exchange. In this framework, the teacher initiates interaction by asking a question or giving a prompt, the student responds to the initiation, and the teacher provides feedback that either evaluates, affirms, or extends the response. Although seemingly straightforward, this cycle reveals important insights into how classroom communication is structured and how learning opportunities are either opened or constrained. It's like the heartbeat of a good lesson—steady, but with room for improvisation.

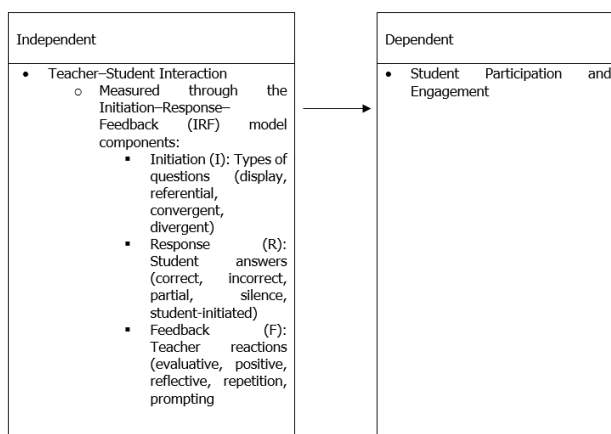
At the heart of the framework are three core components. Initiation refers to the questions or prompts posed by the teacher, which may take different forms such as display, referential, convergent, or divergent questions. These not only guide the flow of discussion but also determine the depth of student engagement. Response encompasses the verbal or non-verbal replies provided by students, which may vary in length, accuracy, and confidence. Responses can be categorized as active, hesitant, or absent, depending on the learners' readiness and willingness to participate. Feedback, the final stage, involves the teacher's reaction to the student's response. This can take the form of evaluative comments (e.g., “correct” or “wrong”), reflective prompts that invite elaboration, or encouraging remarks that sustain participation. As Hattie and Timperley (2007) remind us, the right kind of feedback can turn a simple exchange into a stepping stone for growth.

This study also incorporates supporting theories that explain how IRF functions in classroom discourse. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory emphasizes the role of interaction in the Zone of Proximal Development, where teacher feedback serves as scaffolding for learner growth. Bakhtin's theory of dialogism highlights the inherently dialogic nature of classroom talk, suggesting that the feedback move is not merely evaluative but an opportunity to co-construct meaning. Furthermore, systemic functional linguistics (Halliday, 1978) provides a lens for analyzing how

the teacher's linguistic choices—such as modality, tone, and questioning strategies—shape the quality of student responses. Together, these perspectives allow for a holistic understanding of IRF not simply as a structural cycle but as a dynamic process of meaning-making. It's a beautiful reminder that teaching is about connection, not just control.

In this framework, the independent variable is teacher discourse strategies, operationalized through the types of questions and forms of feedback used. The dependent variable is student participation, reflected in the frequency, quality, and confidence of responses. Moderating factors such as classroom environment, student confidence, and language proficiency may either enhance or hinder participation within the IRF cycle. By situating classroom discourse within this model, the study aims to reveal how specific teacher strategies influence the engagement of Grade 9 students in English lessons. Ultimately, the conceptual framework underscores the idea that effective classroom communication is not achieved merely by following the IRF cycle mechanically, but by using initiation and feedback in ways that stimulate authentic, student-centered interaction. When applied thoughtfully, the IRF framework becomes a tool for fostering critical thinking, active participation, and more meaningful learning experiences. And isn't that what we all hope for in education—a space where voices matter and minds grow together?

2.2. Research Paradigm



In this study, the independent variable is the teacher-student interaction, which is examined through the components of the Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) model. The IRF framework captures how communication unfolds

in the classroom. First, the teacher initiates interaction, often through a question. Next, the student provides a response, which may vary in correctness, completeness, or initiative. Finally, the teacher delivers feedback, which can take the form of evaluation, encouragement, reflection, or repetition. These interactional patterns serve as the central mechanism through which classroom discourse is shaped.

The dependent variable is the level of student participation and engagement, which reflects how learners respond to and are influenced by teacher-student interactions.

The assumption guiding this framework is that the way teachers initiate questions and provide feedback has a direct impact on how actively students engage in the lesson. For example, referential or divergent questions are more likely to elicit extended and thoughtful responses, while display questions may only generate short or rehearsed answers. Similarly, reflective or positive feedback can boost students' confidence and willingness to participate, whereas purely evaluative feedback ("correct" or "wrong") may limit dialogue and discourage participation.

Thus, the study proposes that the pattern and quality of teacher-student interaction (IV) strongly influence the degree of student participation and engagement (DV) in Grade 9 English classes. By analyzing these variables, the research seeks to understand which forms of initiation, response, and feedback most effectively promote active, confident, and meaningful classroom discourse.

3.METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study is presented in this chapter. It covers the instrumentation, research design, study location, sampling procedure, and the statistical techniques applied to the analysis.

3.1.Research Design

This research utilizes qualitative descriptive research design, wherein discourse analysis is used to examine and analyze teacher-student interaction patterns under the Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) model. The qualitative design is suitable because it enables the researcher to learn about interaction patterns in a natural way as they unfold within the classroom without altering any of the variables. Discourse

analysis allows us to discover some communicative sequences that construct up participation and learning during discussion sessions within the classroom.

This design affirms the investigation of classroom talk structure and function with an emphasis on how learning and teaching are co-constructed in talk. It is especially beneficial in revealing underlying patterns of communication that influence instruction quality and student participation.

3.2. Research Setting

This study was conducted at Philippine Countryville College, Inc., a private school located in Purok 2B, Sayre Highway, Panadtalan, Maramag, Bukidnon, Philippines. The institution offers Junior High School (Grades 7–10), Senior High School (HUMSS strand), and college-level programs.

The focus of the research is the Grade 9 English class, the only section at this level, making it an ideal setting for an in-depth study of classroom discourse. This naturally bounded environment offers an authentic context for analyzing teacher-student interactions using the Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) model, with the goal of generating insights relevant to small-school and rural educational settings in the Philippines.

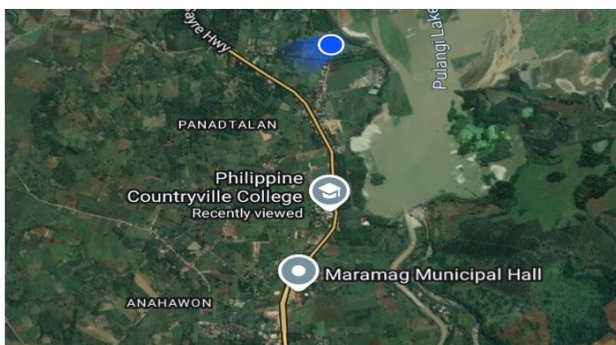


Figure 3.1: Map of the research locale. Courtesy from Googlemap.com

3.3. Sampling procedure

The participants of this study are the Grade 9 students of Philippine Countryville College, Inc. This group was selected through convenience sampling, as the researcher is also the English teacher of the class. Such a procedure allows for greater accessibility in observing and recording classroom interactions, since the researcher

already has established rapport with the students and direct access to their scheduled English lessons. The use of convenience sampling is deemed appropriate for this qualitative study, as the primary objective is not generalization to a larger population but rather an in-depth exploration of teacher–student interaction within a naturally occurring classroom setting.

By focusing on a single Grade 9 section, the study ensures that the discourse data collected is both manageable and authentic. The pre-existing teacher–student relationship further minimizes potential disruption, as participants are already accustomed to the classroom routines and the researcher’s presence. This approach provides a practical yet reliable means of examining interactional patterns while ensuring that the context remains natural and conducive to meaningful analysis.

3.4. Participants of the Study

The participants of this study were the twenty-seven (27) Grade 9 students enrolled at Philippine Countryville College, Inc., located in Panadtalan, Maramag, Bukidnon. Since the school offers only one Grade 9 section, the entire class was purposively selected to serve as the focus of the research. This purposive sampling ensured that the study could capture a complete and coherent picture of teacher–student interaction within the context of English instruction, particularly during a lesson on active and passive voice.

The selection of participants was also guided by considerations of accessibility and practicality. As the researcher is the English teacher of the class, direct observation and data collection were facilitated with minimal disruption to the natural flow of instruction. This dual role provided convenience in gathering authentic discourse data while ensuring that the interaction observed reflected regular classroom dynamics.

3.5. Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection for the study was carried out with strict attention to ethical protocols and actual classroom settings. As the teacher-researcher, class observations were conducted on a typical Grade 9 English class at the Philippine Countryville College, Inc., which was on the topic "Active and Passive Voice."

Permission was obtained from the school's principal and class adviser. Parent permission was not obtained because of organizational issues, but the research had ethical concerns in mind by using anonymity and non-intrusiveness—no names, personal details, or photographs were gathered, and only audio recordings were used.

Through participant observation, the teacher-researcher recorded classroom dialogue in the audio format and took field notes, both verbal dialogues and environmental factors such as student responses and seating. Audio recordings were taken verbatim to create the principal data set.

These data were subsequently structured and coded into Initiation, Response, and Feedback (IRF) elements through the use of Microsoft Excel. The structure provided sequential analysis of a pattern of discourse. Coded data were similarly analyzed to see trends within classroom communication.

The process operated to strengthen the purpose of the study by providing real-time patterns of interaction and solving a local need in discourse research through applying the IRF model to Filipino junior high schools.

3.6. Data Analysis

The classroom interactions collected for this study will be transcribed and analyzed following the discourse analysis framework established by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). Their model, which originally introduced the Initiation–Response–Evaluation (IRE) pattern—later expanded into the Initiation–Response–Feedback (IRF) model—serves as the primary lens for coding and interpreting the data. This approach is particularly suitable for classroom discourse because it provides a systematic method for segmenting interactions into functional units and identifying recurring structures.

The first stage of analysis involves transcription. Audio-recorded classroom sessions will be transcribed verbatim using conventions adapted from Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). Each utterance will be coded according to its discourse function: Initiation (I) for teacher prompts or questions, Response (R) for student replies, and Feedback (F) for teacher reactions. Where relevant, additional notations will capture features such as overlapping talk, pauses, or

emphasis to provide a more detailed picture of interactional dynamics.

The second stage consists of coding and frequency analysis. Utterances will be categorized into I, R, and F components, and the frequency of each will be counted. These counts will reveal the overall distribution of discourse roles and show whether classroom talk is teacher-dominated, student-centered, or balanced. Frequency tables will be constructed to illustrate how often particular patterns occur. For example, simple I–R–F sequences, extended cycles (e.g., IRFR), or incomplete exchanges (e.g., I–R only) will be documented.

The third stage involves pattern identification and qualitative interpretation. Transcripts will be examined for recurring interactional patterns such as repetitive IRF sequences, extended feedback, or student-initiated turns that invert the traditional sequence. Special attention will be given to the types of teacher questions—display, referential, convergent, or divergent—and how these shape the nature of student responses. Likewise, the feedback component will be analyzed to determine whether it is evaluative (confirming correctness), reflective (encouraging elaboration), or motivational (promoting confidence).

Finally, the analysis will address factors influencing participation. These include teacher strategies (e.g., questioning style, wait-time, scaffolding), student-related variables (e.g., confidence, proficiency, willingness), and classroom conditions (e.g., clarity of instructions, level of support). By triangulating frequency counts with illustrative transcript excerpts, the study will provide both quantitative and qualitative insights into the nature of teacher–student interaction.

Results will be presented in narrative form, supported by frequency tables, sample transcript excerpts, and interpretive commentary. This combination of numerical data and discourse-based analysis ensures that the findings not only reveal how often IRF patterns occur but also explain how they function in shaping classroom communication and participation.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

Research follows accepted ethical research protocols to ensure the rights, privacy, and

welfare of all participants. Before data gathering, the school administration was given formal approval. Although direct parental consent is unlikely due to practical limitations, the researcher took care that the study posed minimal risk and all information collected was anonymous and strictly confidential.

No actual students' names were included in any segment of the study. Pseudonyms or coded names were, however, utilized at the transcribing and analyzing stages to ensure anonymity. Field notes, and the utilization of an audio recording, prevented visual identity being recorded, and all the recordings were securely stored and utilized for academic purposes only. The participants were orally and in writing made aware that their involvement entailed no extra duties beyond normal classroom behavior and that they could decline or withdraw from the study at any point without penalty. Such ethical measures were taken to ensure transparency, student dignity, and a guarantee of the research process integrity.

4. PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter presents the interpretation and Analysis of the collected data from teacher-student's actual interaction or communication during English discussion.

Recurring patterns of teacher-student interaction (SOP 1)

Based on the analysis of classroom discourse in the Grade 9 English classes, several recurring patterns of teacher-student interaction emerged when examined through Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) model. The dominant sequence observed was the classic I-R-F pattern, where the teacher initiates a question, the student provides a response, and the teacher delivers feedback. For example;

Teacher (I): *"What is subject student C?"*

Student C (R): *"Is the performer or the who or what in the sentence,"*

Teacher (F): *"Very good, yes that is correct!"*

This exchanges exemplifies a display question, designed to elicit a known answer. Another example from the data;

Teacher (I): *"What is the verb in the sentence?"*

Students (R): *"Riding Ma'am"*

Teacher (F): *"Excellent"*

The IRF cycle reinforced factual recall and accuracy, serving as immediate feedback that validated correct responses. This shows a straightforward exchange showing how teachers guide the flow of classroom talk while maintaining authority and providing evaluative feedback. This interactions were the most frequent, indicating that teacher talk largely frames student responses within controlled and predictable patterns.

Another sequence observed was the I-R sequence, which involved a teacher initiation followed by a brief student response without explicit feedback. For instance;

Teacher (I): *"Lead the prayer, please."*

Student (R): *"Yes, Ma'am."*

This kind of pattern was common in procedural routines and classroom management moments such as greetings, attendance, and transitions. The exchanges were short, polite, and rule-based, reflecting a focus on order and discipline rather than open-ended dialogue. This pattern is for Classroom Management and Routines, where the teacher's control of turn-taking ensures smooth lesson flow and behavioral structure.

Less frequent but pedagogically significant were the I-R-F-I sequences, which demonstrated extended interactions aimed at engaging students more deeply. An example from the data was the dialogue;

Teacher: (I) *"What did you learn yesterday?"*

Student (R): *"About verbs."*

Teacher (F): *"Correct. Can you give an example of a verb (I)?"*

This interaction falls under task engagement and participation, it is moments in the class discussion where the classroom becomes more dialogic and opens room for students' fruitful participation and encourage the students to think beyond recall-level responses in which the teacher not only affirmed the student's response but also expanded the exchange by prompting further elaboration. Although less dominant, these instances revealed the teacher's effort to scaffold learning and push students to apply their knowledge in context.

In some cases, a Nonverbal communication response is also observed as there are instances

where the teacher's initiation did not elicit a verbal response from students, forming I- (no R) sequences. For example;

Teacher (I) asked, "*No answer? Anyone?*"

Then the students would merely smile or scratch their head instead of replying verbally which indicates, hesitation, shyness, or uncertainty among students. These moments highlight how affective factors—such as fear of making mistakes or lack of confidence in English—can shape participation. While silence is often interpreted as disengagement, it may also reflect students' processing or limited linguistic competence.

Moreover, Positive reinforcement and feedback emerged also it is commonly illustrated by the common utterances of the teacher of "Very Good", "Good Job" and "correct". This kind of evaluative feedback from the teacher helps maintain student motivation and classroom rapport, contributing to a positive learning climate but it is also noticeable that most feedback instances were evaluative rather than elaborative, meaning they affirmed correctness but rarely encouraged deeper reflection or explanation. This reveals an opportunity for improvement—teachers could provide more expansive feedback, such as prompting students to explain their reasoning or connect ideas to prior lessons.

Lastly, Limited Student Initiation was evident in the scarcity of student-led exchanges. The data revealed that students seldom initiated turns with phrases like "Ma'am, may I answer?" or "Can I ask a question?" Instead, interactions were primarily teacher-controlled, emphasizing the traditional power dynamic in classroom communication. While this ensures order, it limits opportunities for students to take an active, dialogic role in constructing knowledge.

Based on the data being discussed the IRF analysis of the Grade 9 English class indicates that while the teacher successfully creates an organized and encouraging environment through structured questioning and positive reinforcement, the interaction pattern remains predominantly teacher-centered. The frequent I-R-F exchanges reinforce routine learning and affirmation, but they also restrict students' autonomy and dialogic participation. Encouraging more student-initiated responses, open-ended questioning, and elaborative feedback could foster richer, more

interactive classroom discourse—one where learners are not merely responders but active contributors in constructing meaning.

Types of teacher questions (SOP 2)

Across the analyzed classroom data, a variety of teacher question types—display, referential, convergent, and divergent—were used to structure teacher-student interactions. However, the display question emerged as the most dominant type, shaping much of the classroom discourse. These questions generally aimed to check understanding, recall prior knowledge, or confirm correct answers. For example, the teacher frequently asked, "What is the subject in the sentence?", "What is the verb?", and "What color do you choose?" In response, students typically produced short, factual answers such as "Subject, Ma'am," "Riding, Ma'am," or "Red, Ma'am." These sequences followed the classic I-R-F (Initiation-Response-Feedback) pattern:

Teacher (I): "What is the verb in the sentence?"

Student (R): "Riding, Ma'am."

Teacher (F): "Very good, correct."

This structure allowed the teacher to maintain classroom control and assess comprehension quickly. However, it also revealed that most student turns were limited to brief utterances, often no longer than a word or phrase. Display questions thus supported accuracy but constrained elaboration and self-expression, leading to what Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) termed "evaluation-heavy" exchanges—where the teacher's main goal is to verify rather than extend understanding.

In contrast, referential questions, though used less frequently, elicited richer, more meaningful exchanges. These questions asked students to share opinions, reasons, or explanations rather than recall fixed answers. A notable instance from the data occurred shown in the following conversation of teacher and student. The student responded using a mix of English and Bisaya:

Teacher (I): "What do you think is the difference between these two sentences?"

Student (R): "In the first sentence sa active ma'am ga una sa sentence ang gabuhat sa action, while sa passive ma'am ga una ang ga receive sa action."

Teacher (I): “Very good! That’s correct,”

As the teacher asked the students the students responded using a mix of English and Bisaya. This bilingual explanation demonstrated both comprehension and confidence. The teacher responded affirmatively with “Very good! That’s correct,” showing encouragement while maintaining linguistic flexibility. This type of exchange created an I-R-F-I pattern—where the teacher built upon the student’s response instead of simply ending the interaction with evaluation. In such cases, referential questions promoted higher cognitive engagement, as students were encouraged to think critically and apply concepts in their own words.

Convergent questions were also present in the data, focusing on a single, correct idea that students were expected to identify collectively. For example, during one interaction;

Teacher (I): “Who performs the action in the sentence?”

Students (R): “Cat, Ma’am!” (Answered in unison)

Teacher (I): Yes, correct!”

These convergent questions helped reinforce key grammatical ideas but still confined the interaction within the teacher’s evaluative control. Because only one “right” answer existed, students were less inclined to elaborate or offer alternative perspectives. This pattern reflects a form of collective recitation rather than authentic communication, showing that while convergent questioning strengthened recall and collaboration, it did not necessarily enhance depth of understanding or discourse complexity.

Meanwhile, divergent questions—those that allowed for multiple answers or interpretations—occurred less frequently but generated the most dynamic and interactive moments. For instance, when the teacher asked, “Anyone who would like to share their ideas about Agent?”, students humorously replied, “Secret Agent, Ma’am!” While this response might not have been academically precise, it reflected spontaneity and engagement, revealing a classroom environment where students felt comfortable enough to take linguistic risks. Later, in another exchange, the teacher asked, “What lesson can we apply from the story?”, prompting varied and reflective student answers such as “To be kind to others” and “To be

honest even when no one is watching.” The teacher extended the dialogue by asking, “Yes, honesty and kindness—how can we show that in our class?” This follow-up question transformed the exchange into an open discussion, illustrating how divergent questions promote moral reflection, creativity, and shared meaning-making among learners.

The classroom discourse further revealed that when the teacher allowed code-switching during referential and divergent questioning, students participated more actively and expressed ideas with greater clarity. For example, when students struggled to explain grammatical differences, they often switched to Bisaya for clarification—“Ma’am, sa active kay ang subject maoy nagbuhat sa action”—then returned to English when providing examples. This flexible language practice supported both comprehension and confidence, showing that linguistic scaffolding through code-switching can enrich the quality of student responses.

Thus, the data show that display and convergent questions were essential for structure, assessment, and maintaining classroom order, while referential and divergent questions encouraged elaboration, reasoning, and authentic communication. The teacher’s predominant use of closed questions reflected a traditional, teacher-centered interactional style. However, moments when open-ended questions were employed—often accompanied by humor, praise, and flexible language use—created more dialogic and participatory exchanges. These findings highlight the pedagogical importance of balancing both question types: using display and convergent questions for guidance and comprehension, while integrating referential and divergent ones to stimulate critical thinking, creativity, and communicative competence.

SOP 3: What factors (e.g., teacher strategies, student confidence, classroom environment, language proficiency) influence the quality and frequency of student participation in IRF-based classroom interactions?

Student participation in IRF (Initiation–Response–Feedback) classroom interactions was shaped by a combination of teacher strategies, student affective factors, language proficiency, and the overall classroom environment. These elements worked together to either promote or constrain

learners' engagement and quality of responses during communicative exchanges.

The teacher's use of praise (e.g., "Excellent Student A!", "Very good!") and humor (e.g., "Since he's the happiest!") served as affective scaffolds that helped sustain student motivation and reduce performance anxiety. Such positive reinforcement created a psychologically safe environment where students felt recognized for their efforts, regardless of linguistic accuracy. The teacher also incorporated interactive strategies such as group work, peer assistance ("Call a friend please!"), and choral responses, which fostered collaboration and collective engagement. These pedagogical moves align with communicative teaching principles that emphasize affective support and interactional symmetry.

A notable pedagogical feature observed was the teacher's strategic allowance of code-switching—for instance, when a student asked, "Pwede mag-Bisaya Ma'am?" and the teacher replied, "Okay, you may use vernacular but next time practice expressing your ideas in English." This instance illustrates code-switching as a mediating tool that bridges linguistic gaps between the students' first language (L1) and the target language (English). It allowed learners with limited proficiency to articulate thoughts more freely, ensuring comprehension while gradually transitioning toward L2 use. Such flexible language policy reflects linguistic sensitivity and a translanguaging approach, recognizing that students' native language resources can facilitate rather than hinder English learning. Code-switching, in this context, promoted inclusivity and participation, empowering less confident students to contribute without fear of grammatical errors or ridicule.

Emotional and psychological factors, such as self-confidence, anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation, significantly influenced the frequency and quality of student responses. Some learners exhibited hesitation or withdrawal behaviors—seen in responses like "Dili ko kabalo Ma'am" (I don't know, Ma'am) or through non-verbal cues such as head-scratching, averting gaze, or silence. These behaviors suggest low self-efficacy in language use and highlight the role of affective filters in second language learning. Nevertheless, the teacher's patience and peers' encouragement helped mitigate these barriers, illustrating the

importance of social support in language classrooms.

The overall classroom atmosphere was positive, supportive, and inclusive, as reflected in frequent applause ("Classmates: Claps their hands") and the students' enthusiastic group responses. However, the discourse remained largely teacher-dominated, with short student turns typical of the IRF pattern. While this structure maintained order and direction, it sometimes limited opportunities for extended student talk or higher-order thinking. Yet, when the teacher employed referential or divergent questions, students provided longer, more reflective responses, suggesting that question type directly influenced interactional depth.

Collectively, these findings highlight that student participation is not solely a product of linguistic ability but a complex interplay of emotional, social, and instructional factors. The teacher's strategies of praise, humor, scaffolding, and code-switching contributed to lowering students' affective barriers and enhancing engagement. Code-switching, in particular, emerged as an inclusive pedagogical resource—not merely a fallback but a deliberate tool for comprehension, expression, and confidence-building. Thus, while the IRF framework revealed the teacher's central control over classroom discourse, moments of flexibility, empathy, and linguistic negotiation transformed these interactions into meaningful learning opportunities.

5.SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter presents the summary, conclusion, and recommendation.

5.1.Summary of Findings

The analysis of the Grade 9 English classroom discourse through the Initiation–Response–Feedback (IRF) framework revealed several significant interactional patterns, question types, and influencing factors that shaped student participation and communication dynamics.

The classroom interactions were predominantly structured around the classic I–R–F pattern, where the teacher initiated, the student responded, and the teacher provided evaluative feedback. This pattern ensured order and comprehension monitoring but limited students'

opportunities for extended dialogue. Other patterns such as I-R (without feedback) and I-R-F-I (extended exchanges) were also observed, with the latter encouraging deeper engagement and elaboration. Non-verbal responses (e.g., silence, gestures, smiles) revealed affective and linguistic barriers such as shyness, hesitation, or limited English proficiency. Positive reinforcement (“Very good,” “Excellent”) was frequent, sustaining motivation but remaining largely evaluative rather than elaborative. Overall, the teacher maintained control of turn-taking, resulting in a teacher-centered but supportive classroom environment.

The data indicated that display and convergent questions dominated classroom discourse, eliciting brief, factual responses and maintaining lesson flow. These question types were effective for checking understanding but confined student talk to short, predictable patterns. In contrast, referential and divergent questions, though less frequent, produced richer, more meaningful, and interactive exchanges. Students provided longer, reflective answers and sometimes used code-switching (from English to Bisaya) to clarify or elaborate their ideas. When such linguistic flexibility was permitted, student confidence and participation increased. Thus, open-ended questioning—especially when combined with humor, praise, and code-switching—created more dialogic and participatory learning moments.

Several factors affected the quality and frequency of student participation, including teacher strategies, student affective states, language proficiency, and the classroom environment. The teacher’s use of praise, humor, and peer collaboration fostered a positive atmosphere and reduced anxiety. Code-switching emerged as a powerful bridging strategy, enabling students with limited English proficiency to participate meaningfully without fear of mistakes. Emotional factors such as low confidence and fear of negative evaluation sometimes hindered responses, yet these were mitigated by teacher empathy and peer support. The overall environment was encouraging but teacher-dominated, with interaction depth increasing when the teacher used open-ended, referential, or divergent questions.

5.2. Conclusions

The analysis concludes that the Grade 9 English classroom discourse is characterized by a predominantly teacher-led IRF interaction pattern, where the teacher plays a central role in managing communication and learning flow. While this structure supports organization, comprehension, and discipline, it often restricts student-initiated talk and creative expression.

The study further reveals that the nature of teacher questioning significantly shapes the depth of student engagement. Display and convergent questions maintain order and reinforce accuracy, whereas referential and divergent questions, especially when supported by code-switching, foster higher levels of interaction, critical thinking, and authentic communication.

Moreover, teacher strategies and affective considerations—such as humor, praise, scaffolding, and linguistic sensitivity—play a crucial role in promoting student participation. Code-switching, in particular, should be recognized not as a deficiency but as a pedagogical resource that supports comprehension, confidence, and inclusivity in multilingual classrooms.

In essence, the findings emphasize the need for teachers to balance structure with openness, shifting from a purely evaluative to a more dialogic approach that values student voices. Encouraging extended responses, allowing flexible language use, and integrating more referential and divergent questions can transform IRF exchanges into genuine opportunities for communicative learning and shared meaning-making.

5.3. Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusions, several recommendations are offered.

For students, they are encouraged to participate actively in class discussions and not be afraid of making mistakes. Engaging in English communication, even though code-switching, can help them express ideas more confidently while improving fluency. Collaborative work and peer support should also be maximized to build confidence and communication skills.

For parents, creating a supportive home environment for language learning is vital. They can encourage their children to practice English

through conversation, reading, and exposure to media. Recognizing effort rather than focusing only on correctness can boost motivation and self-confidence.

For teachers, it is essential to strike a balance between different question types, incorporating more referential and divergent questions into classroom discussions to promote higher-order thinking and extended student responses. Teachers should also provide scaffolding, encouragement, and positive reinforcement to build learner confidence and sustain engagement. Additionally, allowing students more opportunities to initiate discourse can shift classroom interaction toward a more participatory and collaborative model.

For schools and administrators, professional development programs should be implemented to enhance teachers' understanding of discourse strategies, questioning techniques, and learner-centered pedagogy. Schools must also ensure that classroom environments are supportive and conducive to active participation, fostering a culture where students feel safe and confident to contribute.

For future researchers, this study recommends conducting comparative investigations across different grade levels, subjects, or school settings to explore the consistency of IRF patterns in various contexts. Moreover, the use of mixed-methods research—such as interviews and surveys—can provide deeper insights by complementing classroom observations with student perspectives.

In summary, these recommendations stress the importance of refining classroom discourse practices. By integrating more open-ended questioning, encouraging student initiative, and creating supportive learning environments, educators can move beyond rigid IRF structures and cultivate richer, more meaningful classroom interactions.

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