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Exploring Classroom Discourse in Applied Linguistics: Analysing IRF Interaction Patterns in Offline and Online

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the dynamics of classroom discourse in offline and online English language classrooms, focusing on the Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) interaction pattern. While classroom discourse is critical for shaping language learning, research comparing interaction patterns in offline and online environments remains limited. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the IRF patterns in offline and online classes at UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, Indonesia. A qualitative approach was employed, involving classroom observations and analysis of recorded interactions between lecturers and students. The findings indicate that offline classrooms foster more balanced interactions, with the I R I R I R pattern being common. In contrast, online classrooms were dominated by lecturer-initiated exchanges, with the I I I R I pattern prevailing, reflecting the passive participation of students. Key findings highlight that student elicitation was absent in online learning, while it was present in offline settings. The study emphasizes the importance of adjusting teaching strategies in online environments to enhance student engagement and participation. Future research should explore how technological tools and different teaching methodologies affect interaction dynamics across various educational contexts
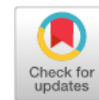
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INTRODUCTION

Classroom discourse has long been a focal point in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), recognized for its vital role in shaping the processes of language learning and teaching. The classroom itself serves as a unique social microcosm where language is both the medium and the goal of instruction (Cazden, 2001). In such environments, the verbal interactions between teachers and students are foundational in facilitating knowledge transmission, reinforcing comprehension, and building social relations (Walsh, 2011). The study of classroom discourse thus provides crucial insights into how language operates in these educational settings, guiding not only the development of language skills but also the socio-cultural practices embedded within educational contexts.

A key framework for analyzing classroom interaction is the Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) pattern, a cornerstone of discourse analysis since its formulation by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). This triadic structure—teacher Initiation, student Response, teacher Feedback—has been widely recognized for its role in scaffolding learning, checking comprehension, and structuring classroom discourse (Mehan, 1979). While this classical model provides a foundational lexicon for describing teacher-led talk, contemporary research has significantly evolved to explore its variations and adaptations, particularly in technology-mediated environments. Scholars such as Jiang (2022) and Satar (2021) have demonstrated that digital platforms do not merely replicate traditional IRF but transform it, creating what some

term "digital IRF" or "multimodal IRF" sequences. In these modern contexts, the "feedback" move may be distributed across automated tools, peer comments in a chat, or non-verbal emoji reactions, expanding beyond the teacher's sole domain.

This study builds upon this evolving conversation by investigating not just the presence of IRF in online settings, but its qualitative distortion. While foundational theory establishes IRF as a mechanism for co-constructing knowledge, our findings reveal that the online environment can constrict this dynamic. The prevalent pattern we observed (I-I-I-R-I) represents a significant deviation from the classic triadic structure, suggesting a breakdown in the dialogic loop and a regression towards a more transmission-oriented mode of instruction. Therefore, this research contributes by empirically documenting how digital mediation can lead to "truncated" or "extended-initiation" IRF variants that potentially undermine the very collaborative potential the original model described. By bridging classical discourse theory with current findings on digital learning, this study highlights the critical need to adapt pedagogical strategies to foster more equitable and interactive IRF patterns in virtual classrooms.

The Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) pattern remains a vital analytical tool for understanding classroom discourse, but its application and interpretation have evolved significantly, especially with the advent of digital learning. While classical formulations by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) and sociocultural perspectives (Vygotsky, 1978) established IRF as a scaffold for knowledge co-construction within the Zone of Proximal Development, contemporary research critically examines how this structure transforms in online environments.

Recent scholarship has moved beyond viewing IRF as a monolithic sequence to exploring its dynamic variations. In technology-mediated contexts, the pattern is often reconfigured into what some term "multimodal IRF" (Satar, 2021) or "distributed scaffolding" (Jiang, 2022), where the teacher's feedback role may be shared with automated tools, peer interactions in chat, or digital annotations. This aligns with a Conversation Analysis (CA) perspective, which emphasizes the emergent, turn-by-turn construction of learning opportunities. However, as Lamy and Zourou (2013) note, the sequential organization of talk is fundamentally altered online, where overlapping turns are suppressed and non-verbal cues are limited.

This study builds on this contemporary understanding by investigating not just the presence of IRF online, but its qualitative distortion. Our findings reveal a predominant I-I-I-R-I pattern in virtual classrooms, a significant deviation that extends the teacher initiation phase and constricts the dialogic loop. This "extended-initiation" variant suggests that without deliberate pedagogical design, the digital environment can hinder the very scaffolding and sequential co-construction that foundational theories champion. Thus, this research contributes by empirically documenting how digital mediation can compromise the interactive potential of IRF, underscoring the necessity for instructional strategies that actively foster more equitable and collaborative sequences in online learning.

The shift to online and blended learning modalities, accelerated by the global pandemic, has added a new layer of complexity to classroom discourse. Traditional face-to-face interaction has been increasingly supplemented, and in some cases replaced, by digital communication platforms, which may alter the nature and flow of the IRF pattern (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000). The concept of the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework suggests that effective learning environments, whether offline or online, rely on sustained interaction and communication, which are mediated differently in each context (Garrison et al., 2020). In online settings, factors such as reduced paralinguistic cues, delayed feedback, and asynchronous participation may reshape the traditional IRF structure, necessitating a closer examination of how these shifts affect the dynamics of classroom interaction. This makes the comparative study of IRF patterns in offline and online settings not only relevant but essential for understanding the evolution of classroom discourse in the digital age.

While studies on classroom discourse, particularly IRF patterns, have proliferated in recent years, there remains a gap in research that directly compares these interactional patterns

across offline and online environments within the same institutional context. Recent studies have focused on the challenges and transformations of IRF patterns in online settings. For instance, Hu and Lee (2021) observed that the feedback move in synchronous online classrooms often suffers from a lack of immediacy and non-verbal cues, resulting in feedback that tends to be more formulaic and less formative. In contrast, Zhang and Zheng (2022) found that online text-based forums could encourage students who are typically passive in face-to-face settings to engage in more elaborate responses, although the teacher's initiation needed to be carefully crafted to elicit such responses. Moreover, Lee and Wong (2023) reported that in hybrid learning environments, the IRF pattern became more fragmented, with longer pauses and increased student-initiated questions, particularly in online contexts.

However, much of the existing research on IRF patterns in online versus offline contexts is situated within Western or East Asian settings. The socio-cultural dynamics of Indonesian classrooms, with their distinct power structures, expectations of authority, and collective learning practices, remain underexplored. It is essential to investigate how these local socio-cultural factors influence the structure and function of the IRF sequence. Furthermore, while there is a growing body of literature on the individual effects of offline and online learning, few studies have directly compared the IRF pattern in these two modes within the same cultural and institutional setting. This gap is significant, as it makes it difficult to isolate the impact of the learning environment from other variables such as teaching methods or institutional culture.

This study aims to address these gaps by conducting a comparative analysis of IRF interaction patterns in offline and online English language classrooms at UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, Indonesia. By focusing on this underexplored geographical and cultural context, this research will offer new insights into how the IRF sequence operates in Indonesian classrooms, particularly in the era of blended and online learning. The theoretical contribution of this research lies in its potential to deepen our understanding of the IRF model's applicability in non-Western contexts, especially in relation to cultural and technological shifts. It will test the evolution of IRF in a new setting, potentially offering a more nuanced interpretation of classroom discourse in Indonesia's higher education system. The practical implications for Indonesian educators and teacher trainers are also significant, as the study will provide evidence-based recommendations for adapting interactional strategies to foster effective learning in both physical and digital classrooms. Moreover, the findings could have policy implications, guiding the development of blended learning curricula and support systems that prioritize interactive and dialogic teaching practices.

METHOD

This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach, focusing on the interaction within an English class. The study incorporated several characteristics typical of qualitative research, including natural settings, participant perspectives, the researcher as the primary data-gathering instrument, extended first-hand engagement, the centrality of meaning, wholeness and complexity, subjectivity, emergent design, inductive data analysis, and reflexivity (Hatch, 2002). The research was conducted at UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, Indonesia, with participants consisting of an English lecturer and 83 students. The study took place during the transition from offline to online learning (WFO and WHA).

Data collection was carried out through observations and recordings of the teaching and learning process. For the offline sessions, video recordings were made in the classroom using a camera positioned at the rear of the room. In the online setting, Google Meet was used for the teaching process, and recordings were captured using the OBS Studio application. Observations were documented through field notes and an observation checklist. The field notes consisted of descriptive accounts of phenomena occurring during the class, while the observation checklist included tables designed to capture IRF sequences. Data analysis followed the framework outlined by Miles and Huberman (Sugiyono, 2013). The data reflected exchanges between the lecturer and students, analyzed using the IRF pattern as the primary analytical step, and subsequently narrated into written discourse.

The analysis process involved several stages: data selection, data transcription, and the identification of classroom interaction patterns using coding and categorization based on the IRF structure. Symbol transcription was applied to the conversation analysis, as described by Hutchby and Wooffitt. Finally, the data were categorized into sub-topics based on the types of teaching exchanges observed in both offline and online learning environments. The study concluded with an interpretation of the IRF pattern's application and its meaning based on classroom discourse analysis

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Before delving into the findings, it is important to note that classroom discourse plays a crucial role in shaping the teaching and learning process, particularly in English Language Teaching (ELT). The interaction patterns between teachers and students, especially the Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) structure, provide valuable insights into how language is used to facilitate learning. The following analysis compares the IRF patterns in offline and online learning environments, focusing on the frequency and nature of exchanges in both settings. By examining these interaction patterns, we aim to uncover the differences in student engagement and teacher involvement in offline versus online classrooms, especially during the transition from face-to-face to digital learning modalities. The findings presented here offer a deeper understanding of how these patterns function in different learning contexts and how they influence the overall learning experience.

Table 1

Exchanges Type	Offline Availability (Numeric)	Offline Availability (%)	Online Availability (Numeric)	Online Availability (%)
Lecturer Direct	1 (✓)	16.67%	3 (+++)	50%
Lecturer Inform	1 (✓)	16.67%	2 (++)	33.33%
Lecturer Elicit	1 (✓)	16.67%	3 (+++)	50%
Pupil Elicit	1 (✓)	16.67%	0 (0)	0%
Pupil Inform	1 (✓)	16.67%	1 (✓)	16.67%
Checking Students	1 (✓)	16.67%	3 (+++)	50%

The table above presents a comparative analysis of the Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) interaction patterns observed in both offline and online English language classrooms. The types of exchanges found in these settings were lecturer Direct, lecturer Inform, lecturer Elicit, Pupil Elicit, Pupil Inform, and Checking Students. The (+) sign indicates the availability of each exchange type, with more (+) signs meaning the type of interaction occurred more frequently, and fewer (+) signs indicating less frequent occurrence. A (0) sign denotes that the exchange type was not found in the learning process.

In the offline setting, each exchange type was observed at least once, indicating a balanced interaction where both the lecturer and students contributed to the conversation. Lecturer Direct and lecturer Elicit exchanges were frequent, with students actively engaging in the learning process. In contrast, in the online classroom, the lecturer's role became more dominant, with Lecturer Direct and Lecturer Elicit exchanges occurring more frequently (50%) compared to offline (16.67%). Meanwhile, Pupil Elicit exchanges, where students initiate the conversation, were absent in online learning (0%), highlighting the passive student

participation. The frequency of interactions in the online environment shows that Lecturers had to take a more active role in initiating discussions to encourage student responses. This suggests that online classrooms may require more structured engagement strategies to replicate the level of interaction and engagement observed in offline classrooms. These findings emphasize the challenges of fostering active student participation in online learning environments, especially in the absence of non-verbal cues and real-time feedback.

Off-line Exchanges Types

The following are the exchange type of interaction in off-line class

Lecturer direct exchanges

Lecturer Direct Exchange occurs when the lecturer gives clear instructions or prompts to the students, guiding their responses.

Exchange 1

Lecturer	:	"So, let's move on to the next topic: the causes of climate change. Can anyone tell me what they know about this?" (Initiation)
Student 1	:	"It's caused by pollution from cars and factories." (Response)
Lecturer	:	"Right, pollution is a big factor. But can you explain a bit more about how that works?" (Initiation)
Student 2	:	"The gases from cars and factories go into the atmosphere and trap heat." (Response)
Lecturer		"Exactly, those gases are called greenhouse gases, and they trap heat, which contributes to global warming." (Response)

First Initiation (I): The Lecturer opens the conversation by introducing the next topic and asking a question, inviting students to share their knowledge. The question "Can anyone tell me what they know about this?" serves as an Initiation to prompt student responses. First Response (R): Student 1 responds by stating that pollution from cars and factories causes climate change. This is a straightforward response, directly addressing the lecturer's question. Second Initiation (I): The Lecturer follows up by asking for more details, encouraging deeper thinking with the question, "But can you explain a bit more about how that works?" This is another Initiation, prompting the student to elaborate on their previous response. Second Response (R): Student 2 responds by providing a more detailed explanation of how pollution contributes to climate change, explaining how gases from cars and factories trap heat in the atmosphere. Third Response (R): The Lecturer then gives feedback, confirming the student's explanation and adding more information: "Exactly, those gases are called greenhouse gases..." The lecturer's response serves as Feedback, reinforcing the correct understanding of the concept and further elaborating on it.

In this I R I R R pattern, the lecturer initiates the conversation twice, prompting students for both general knowledge and more specific details. The students respond with increasing depth, and the lecturer reinforces the students' responses with feedback. This pattern encourages active participation and deeper engagement with the material. It also allows the lecturer to guide the conversation and ensure that students fully understand the topic being discussed.

Lecturer inform exchanges

This exchange is shown in the opening move when the lecturer tried to check students' understanding to the teaching material. There were two students responded to the lecturer's initiation. The lecturer accepted student's responses and gave feedback in the form of evaluation. The following is the interactions between the lecturer and the students:

Lecturer	*: "What did we learn today?"*	Initiation (I)
Student 1	*: "We learned about letters."*	Response (R)
Student 2	*: "Yeah, we learned the parts of a letter."*	Response (R)
Lecturer	*: "Right, we learned the parts of a letter. Good job!"*	Feedback (F)

In this I R R F exchange, the instructor initiates the conversation with a simple question, "What did we learn today?", to check the learners' understanding of the lesson. The instructor's use of a raised tone in the initiation draws attention and encourages participation. The learners respond, but their answers reflect some uncertainty, with Learner 1 providing a hesitant response and Learner 2 quickly interrupting, suggesting they are still unsure but eager to contribute. The interaction highlights the teacher's role in guiding students' thinking and

encouraging more specific responses. The feedback provided by the instructor, though affirming, includes a hint of playful criticism with the comment "Good job!" This feedback serves to acknowledge the learners' contributions while subtly pointing out the need for more active engagement.

In conclusion, this exchange demonstrates the dynamic role of the instructor in managing the flow of classroom discourse. By using a convergent question, the instructor not only checks the learners' understanding but also fosters a space for multiple responses. The I R R F pattern effectively structures the interaction, where the instructor's feedback reinforces learning while also providing motivation for greater participation. The learners' hesitant responses indicate that while the students are involved in the learning process, they may require further support to confidently engage in deeper discussions. This pattern exemplifies the balancing act between guiding students and encouraging them to take initiative in the conversation.

Lecturer elicit exchanges

The lecturer gave questions and discussed with students about the definition of letter. The lecturer gave elicitation and students answered clearly but students confused at the same time. Here is the conversation presented in a table format based on the **Lecturer** Elicit Exchanges in the I R I R I R R I F (Initiation-Response-Initiation-Response-Initiation-Response-Response-Feedback) pattern:

Lecturer	"*Hmm, okay, next! What is the body?*" (elicitation)	Initiation (I)
Student 1	"*Contents.*" (response)	Response (R)
Lecturer	"*Contents in the?*" (elicitation)	Initiation (I)
Student 2	"*In the letter.*" (response)	Response (R)
Lecturer	"*The letter. After writing the letter, there is the date, greeting. After that, what is the fourth?*" (elicitation)	Initiation (I)
Students	"*Closing.*" (response, with confusion)	Response (R)
Student 1	"*Closing.*" (response, with confusion)	Response (R)
Lecturer	"*Where do we write the closing?*" (elicitation)	Initiation (I)
Lecturer	"*It is the salutation phrase, that is the closing word.*" (feedback)	Feedback (F)

In this I R I R I R R I F exchange, the instructor utilizes multiple elicitation moves to engage students and facilitate their understanding of the topic. The interaction begins with the instructor prompting students with the question, "What is the body?" to elicit a response about the parts of a letter. As the students provide answers, the instructor further guides them with follow-up questions, such as "Contents in the?" and "What is the fourth?". The pattern reveals that the students' responses are somewhat hesitant, indicating that while they are engaged, they may not have full clarity on the topic. The repetition of responses and follow-up questions shows the instructor's strategy of encouraging students to refine their answers, creating a more active learning environment.

The I R I R I R R I F pattern effectively illustrates the interactive and scaffolding nature of classroom discourse. The instructor's repeated elicitation moves serve to guide students towards a deeper understanding, while the students' responses reflect their effort to piece together the material. The final feedback confirms the correct answer, reinforcing the learning process. This exchange highlights the importance of teacher persistence in prompting and refining student responses, ensuring that learners are actively involved and guided throughout the learning experience. It also emphasizes the critical role of elicitation in stimulating student participation and enhancing their comprehension of complex topics.

Pupil Elicit Exchange

In this exchange, the conversation begins with a student's question, where the student seeks clarification about a sentence's meaning. The student directly asks the lecturer for help, without any preceding boundary exchanges. The lecturer then responds by guiding the student to think about the verb. Below is the interaction between the lecturer and student:

Student 1	"Apa Bahasa Inggrisnya, saya makan nasi?" (What is the English for 'I eat rice'?)	Initiation (I)
Lecturer	"Hmm, use the past tense – it means subject plus verb 2, not 'I eat,' because that's verb 1, if it's past, it's verb 2."	Response (R)

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Student 1	"Apa, eaten?" (What is eaten?)	Response (R)
Lecturer	"No, it's 'ate,' not 'eaten'."	Response (R)
Student 1	"Hmm, I ate rice."	Initiation (I)
Lecturer	"Yes, right, I ate rice, because 'ate' is verb 2."	Response (R)

In this Pupil Elicit Exchange, the student initiates the conversation by directly asking the lecturer for the correct English translation of the sentence "I eat rice." The lecturer's initial response does not provide a direct answer but encourages the student to consider the verb form used in the past tense. This approach guides the student to figure out the correct form. The conversation consists of several responses, with the lecturer continuing to guide the student step by step through the understanding of the correct verb tense.

This exchange follows the I R R R I R pattern, where the student initiates a question and the lecturer provides multiple responses, encouraging critical thinking. The lecturer's strategy of not directly providing the answer but instead guiding the student through the reasoning process fosters active participation. This method supports active learning, as the student is encouraged to reason through the problem, leading to a better understanding of the grammatical rule. The interaction demonstrates how elicitation can be effectively used to develop independent learning and promote deeper understanding.

Pupil Inform Exchange

This type of exchange begins with a student's initiation, where the student provides information or informs the lecturer about something. Below is the interaction between the Lecturer and Student:

Student 2	*"Sir, I've finished."*	Initiation (I)
Lecturer	*"Where? This is still one line."* (acknowledging, looking at the text)	Response (R)
Student 2	*"I'm confused."*	Initiation (I)
Lecturer	*"You made a story about a past event that motivates you for the future."* (clarifying)	Response (R)
Student 2	*"This seems to involve the simple present and future, right?"*	Response (R)
Lecturer	*"First, use the simple past, and then, depending on your needs, you can add simple present or future."*	Response (R)

In this Pupil Inform Exchange, the interaction begins with Student 2 informing the Lecturer that they have finished their task ("I've finished"). The Lecturer then responds, asking for clarification and pointing out that the task is not yet complete ("This is still one line."). The exchange continues with the student expressing confusion ("I'm confused"), and the Lecturer further clarifying the concept by explaining that the student should use the simple past tense first before adding other tenses. The student confirms their understanding by relating the concept to simple present and future tenses, prompting further clarification from the Lecturer.

This exchange follows the I R I R R R pattern, where the student starts the conversation by providing information and the Lecturer responds with clarifications and explanations. The Lecturer guides the student through the process of understanding the grammatical rules, emphasizing the proper use of verb tenses. The conversation is dominated by responses, as both parties engage in a back-and-forth dialogue to clarify the learning material. The Lecturer actively supports the student in understanding the topic, demonstrating a collaborative approach to learning.

Checking Student Exchange

In this type of exchange, the Lecturer gives repeated elicitation to check whether the students have understood the subject matter. The Lecturer provides information and then follows up with more elicitation to ensure student comprehension. Below is the interaction between the Lecturer and students:

Lecturer	"Is 'have' verb one or verb two?" (elicitation)	Initiation (I)
Student 1	"Verb one." (response)	Response (R)
Lecturer	"What is verb two?" (elicitation)	Initiation (I)
Student 2	"Had." (response)	Response (R)

In this Checking Student Exchange, the Lecturer uses repeated elicitation to gauge whether the students understand the subject matter, specifically the use of verb tenses. The Lecturer begins by asking if "have" is verb one or verb two, prompting a response from Student 1. When the Lecturer receives an answer, they continue by asking for the second verb form ("What is verb two?"), which is answered by Student 2. This exchange allows the Lecturer to assess whether the students grasp the distinction between verb forms, reinforcing their understanding.

This interaction follows the I R I R pattern, where the Lecturer initiates questions to test the students' understanding, and the students respond with their answers. The Lecturer's role in eliciting responses repeatedly ensures that the students engage with the content actively and confirms their comprehension. The use of repeated questioning helps reinforce key concepts and ensures that students are able to distinguish between the different verb tenses, illustrating how elicitation can be a powerful tool in checking understanding.

Online Exchanges Types

The following are the type of exchange that was found in the online classroom interaction:

Lecturer direct exchanges

In this type of exchange, the Lecturer gives instructions to the students to elicit their responses. In the online learning environment, it appears that the Lecturer needs to put in extra effort to encourage students to respond. Below is the interaction between the Lecturer and Student:

Lecturer	"Now, I want Farihah because Farihah couldn't answer earlier, but now read!" (raising tone)	Initiation (I)
Student 4	[silent]	Response (0)
Lecturer	"The great barrier reef." (showing the text)	Initiation (I)
Student 4	[silent]	Response (0)
Lecturer	"Let's read! Still don't know?" (raising tone, trying to engage)	Initiation (I)
Student 4	"Which one, sir?" (acknowledging)	Response (R)
Lecturer	"This one, let's look at some examples."	Initiation (I)
Student 4	"The Great Barrier Reef..." (reading the text)	Response (R)

In this Lecturer Direct Exchange in the online classroom, the Lecturer repeatedly initiates the conversation to encourage Student 4 to read. Initially, the student is silent, even after the Lecturer prompts her to read the text. The Lecturer then uses a follow-up initiation, "Let's read! Still don't know?" to try and engage the student further. The student finally acknowledges the Lecturer's prompt with a question, asking "Which one, sir?" This leads to the Lecturer providing further clarification with "This one, let's look at some examples." Finally, Student 4 reads the text. This interaction demonstrates the I R I R pattern, where the Lecturer initiates multiple times, while the student responds with increasing clarity. In the online learning environment, there seems to be a challenge in eliciting immediate responses from students, as shown by the initial silence. The Lecturer's repeated efforts reflect the need for extra engagement to stimulate participation in online settings. The silent responses from the student could be attributed to various factors common in virtual classrooms, such as technical issues or a lack of immediate face-to-face interaction. This highlights the Lecturer's important role in actively prompting and guiding students to ensure active participation in online learning environments.

Lecturer Inform Exchange

The exchange pattern is observed when the Lecturer opens the lesson by asking if the students have prepared their student workbooks. The Lecturer initiates multiple times, but there is no response from the students. Below is the interaction between the Lecturer and students:

Lecturer	"Did you bring your materials with you?" (elicitation)	Initiation (I)
Students	[silent]	Response (0)
Lecturer	"Is your material ready?" (elicitation)	Initiation (I)
Students	[silent]	Response (0)
Lecturer	"Hello, why is it still silent?" (raising tone)	Initiation (I)
Students	[silent]	Response (0)

Lecturer	"Is your textbook ready?" (elicitation)	Initiation (I)
Students	[silent]	Response (0)

In this Lecturer Inform Exchange, the Lecturer repeatedly asks the students whether they are prepared for the class, specifically if they have their materials or textbooks ready. Despite the multiple initiations, there is no response from the students, making the exchange unbalanced and leaving the Lecturer to dominate the conversation. The Lecturer's varied intonations, such as the raised tone in line 5, are attempts to engage and prompt the students to participate, but the students remain silent throughout.

This interaction follows the I I I I pattern, where the Lecturer initiates multiple times, but the students do not respond. The Lecturer's tone and repeated questions aim to stimulate engagement, but the lack of response suggests that the students are disengaged or uncertain. This passive response could be attributed to challenges in online learning environments, where students may feel less inclined to participate without the immediate feedback and non-verbal cues that are present in face-to-face settings. The Lecturer's role in attempting to prompt participation demonstrates the effort required to engage students, especially in virtual learning environments where students may be more passive.

Lecturer Elicit Exchange

In this exchange, some information was evoked from the students in reaction to the Lecturer's questions. The questions were especially related to the English textbook being used in the class. Before giving the procedural question, the Lecturer used a marker on the boundary exchange to focus on the topic.

Lecturer	*"Now, number two, who can answer?"* (raising tone)	Initiation (I)
Students	*[silent]*	Response (0)
Lecturer	*"Why was Anggun thanked by her fans, based on the text we read earlier?"* (elicitation)	Initiation (I)
Student 1	*"Because they support her."* (response)	Response (R)
Lecturer	*"Who answered this?"* (elicitation)	Initiation (I)
Student 1	*"Rahmah, Sir."* (acknowledging)	Response (R)
Lecturer	*"Okay, so what is the answer?"* (elicitation)	Initiation (I)
Student 1	*"C."* (acknowledging)	Response (R)
Lecturer	*"Okay, good, because they support her."* (feedback)	Feedback (F)
Lecturer	*"If I may ask, where did you get the answer from? How did you find C? Where is the sentence?"* (elicitation)	Initiation (I)
Student 1	*"In the end of Anggun thanks us, for coming here and supporting her."* (response, incorrect pronunciation)	Response (R)
Lecturer	*"Okay, but 'us' is pronounced /ʌs/, not /us/."* (feedback)	Feedback (F)

In this Lecturer Elicit Exchange, the Lecturer uses several elicitation moves to encourage students to think critically and participate actively. The Lecturer asks about the reason why Anggun was thanked by her fans, prompting the students to refer back to the reading material. The student responds, but the Lecturer continues to prompt for clarity and confirmation, asking "Who answered this?" and "What is the answer?" before providing feedback to confirm the correct answer.

The interaction follows the I I R I R I R F I R F pattern, where the Lecturer initiates the conversation multiple times to guide the students towards the correct understanding. The Lecturer's questioning encourages the student to engage actively, while the feedback at the end ensures the accuracy of the responses. Although the students respond slowly and with some uncertainty, the Lecturer's persistent elicitation helps keep the conversation going, ultimately guiding the student towards a clearer understanding. This exchange demonstrates the Lecturer's role in promoting active participation, even when students hesitate or provide uncertain responses, highlighting the importance of feedback and continuous engagement in classroom interactions.

Pupil Inform Exchange

This type of exchange involves student initiation in the conversation, where the student asks questions, prompts ideas, or expresses their thoughts or intentions. Below is the interaction between the Lecturer and the students:

Exploring Classroom Discourse in Applied Linguistics: Analysing IRF Interaction Patterns in Offline and Online

Lecturer	"Hello, anyone can answer? Nasiroh!" (elicitation)	Initiation (I)
Student 1	"Cannot, Sir." (acknowledging)	Response (R)
Lecturer	"Impossible to beat Dewi. Come on Dewi!" (encouragement)	Initiation (I)
Student 2	"The cause-effect paragraph usually follows the basic format paragraph." (response)	Response (R)
Lecturer	"Then?" (elicitation)	Initiation (I)
Student 3	"I don't know, Sir." (acknowledging)	Response (R)
Lecturer	"May Allah forgive. The eleventh grade, why don't you know? I ask who understands here. Who?" (elicitation and criticism)	Feedback (F)
Lecturer	"Najiwa, the handsome boy!" (calling for a response)	Initiation (I)
Student 4	"Yes, Sir." (acknowledging)	Response (R)
Lecturer	"Come on, translate!" (elicitation)	Initiation (I)
Student 5	"My signal is slow, Sir, and there's no picture." (response)	Response (R)

This interaction demonstrates an I R I R I R I F pattern, where the Lecturer consistently elicits responses from the students, while the students take turns participating, though with some hesitation. The Lecturer's repeated elicitation and encouragement, along with a touch of criticism, push the students to engage in the conversation. The Lecturer creates a dynamic classroom environment by prompting students to think and respond, even when some responses are hesitant or unsure. This interaction shows that the students feel comfortable enough to express their thoughts or uncertainties, creating a balanced and active learning atmosphere. Despite some passive responses, the students have the opportunity to communicate their understanding and confusion, making the learning process more interactive and participatory.

Checking Students' Exchange

The discourse structure in this exchange differs from others, with the Lecturer seeming to dominate the conversation while discussing a text. This is illustrated in the following interaction:

Lecturer	"Fewer baby birds are hatched, what does it mean?" (elicitation, showing the text)	Initiation (I)
Students	[silent]	Response (0)
Lecturer	"This becomes passive voice. So, the subject doesn't do something and usually uses the verb 3, like 'rice is eaten by me.' The subject word always comes at the beginning of the sentence, namely 'rice,' but who does that? The rice or me?"	Initiation (I)
Student	"Me." (response)	Response (R)
Lecturer	"Okay, so 'me' is in the back or front? Before that, 'rice is eaten by me'?" (elicitation)	Initiation (I)
Student	"In the back." (response)	Response (R)
Lecturer	"In the back." (confirmation)	Response (R)

This interaction follows the I R I R R pattern, where the Lecturer initiates multiple times to try and check the students' understanding, but the students provide minimal responses. The Lecturer controls the flow of the conversation due to the lack of active engagement from the students, resulting in an imbalanced interaction. The adjacency pairs (Initiation-Response-Feedback) do not function as intended because the Lecturer handles most of the exchanges, creating a dialogue that lacks balance. This highlights the difficulty of engaging students in a deeper conversation when their responses are limited, and the Lecturer is required to take a more dominant role in maintaining the flow of the discussion.

Discussion

This study, which analyzed classroom interaction through the lens of Coulthard's (1975) exchange patterns, identified eleven distinct types of exchanges, revealing a fundamental divergence in interaction dynamics between offline and online English language learning environments. The findings indicate that offline learning fostered a more balanced, collaborative dialogue, predominantly following an Initiation-Response-Initiation-Response (I-R-I-R) pattern. This iterative cycle aligns with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978), positioning the lecturer as a scaffold who guides students through a continuous dialogue within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In stark contrast, the online environment was characterized by a lecturer-dominated I-I-I-R-I pattern, which underscores the instructor's central role in driving discourse and reduces student contributions to limited, reactive

responses. This dominance of teacher initiation corroborates the work of Smith & Peterson (2018) on reduced student turns-at-talk in virtual forums, while the specific I-I-I-R-I pattern offers a more granular view of the imbalance than the commonly reported Initiation-Response-Feedback (I-R-F) structure.

A particularly telling finding was the complete absence of student-initiated elicitation in the online mode, a pattern that was present in face-to-face classes. This suggests a shift from active to passive student engagement online, likely exacerbated by technological barriers, the psychological pressure of being on camera, and the lack of immediate non-verbal feedback. This absence of student questions contrasts with research by Lee & Han (2020), who found that text-based chat functions could stimulate student queries, highlighting that the modality of online teaching—synchronous video versus asynchronous text is a critical variable. Furthermore, while student information exchanges occurred in both settings, they were predominantly student-driven offline and almost exclusively lecturer-elicited online, reinforcing the lecturer's more directive role. This supports the foundational work of Nassaji & Wells (2000) on the importance of teacher scaffolding in face-to-face settings, while our study provides a direct comparative benchmark of what is lost in the transition to virtual classrooms.

To counteract these identified imbalances, specific and actionable pedagogical implications are essential. To mitigate lecturer dominance (I-I-I-R-I), instructors must consciously implement structured "wait time" after posing questions and adopt the "Pose, Pause, Pounce, Bounce" technique to deliberately create student-to-student interaction sequences. To foster student elicitation, it is crucial to create low-stakes channels for questions, such as an anonymous Q&A platform or dedicated "question-generation" time in the chat. Finally, to promote student-led information exchange, the use of breakout rooms with clear collaborative goals and the assignment of specific student roles are imperative strategies. Consequently, building a vibrant Community of Inquiry (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000; Anderson, 2008) in online settings depends not merely on technology, but on intentional instructional design that strategically manages social and teaching presence to facilitate meaningful interaction, thereby creating online learning experiences that can approximate the dynamism and effectiveness of the physical classroom.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights a significant divergence in classroom interaction patterns between offline and online learning environments. While offline classrooms foster balanced, collaborative exchanges, online settings are predominantly characterized by lecturer-led Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) patterns, with students demonstrating a marked reluctance to initiate exchanges. These findings underscore the necessity for online lecturers to adopt deliberate pedagogical strategies to foster a more participatory and equitable learning environment. To counter lecturer dominance, instructors can implement structured interaction protocols such as the "Pose, Pause, Pounce, Bounce" technique to stimulate student-to-student dialogue. Furthermore, leveraging technology is key: using breakout rooms for small-group collaboration, integrating live polls and Mentimeter for real-time feedback, and creating asynchronous discussion forums for more reflective, in-depth responses can effectively redistribute speaking turns and encourage student agency. It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The findings are based on a relatively small sample size from a single institution, which limits their generalizability across different educational contexts. Furthermore, the technical constraints of online observation, such as the inability to see all participants' video feeds clearly or capture private chat messages, may have resulted in an incomplete picture of student engagement. The study also did not account for differences in student proficiency levels, which likely influences their willingness and ability to participate in different settings. These limitations present clear pathways for future research. To build

upon these findings, subsequent studies could investigate interaction patterns across a larger and more diverse range of universities and academic disciplines. A promising avenue would be to examine differences in participation between lower- and higher-level students to understand how language proficiency interacts with medium-specific anxiety. Moreover, research should move beyond general platform comparison to investigate the direct influence of specific technological features—such as chat functions, emoji reactions, and structured breakout room tasks—on the emergence and quality of IRF patterns. Such focused inquiry would provide educators and platform designers with evidence-based guidelines for creating more engaging and effective virtual classrooms.

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