

Oral Discourse and Interaction in Early Childhood Education: A Case Study at PG-PAUD at Universitas Muhammadiyah Kendari

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Abstract: Oral discourse plays an important role in shaping the interaction and meaning-making process in early childhood teacher education. However, limited research has examined how classroom discourse is revealed in local contexts such as teacher training institutions in Indonesia. This study explores the patterns, functions, and implications of oral discourse in academic interaction in the Early Childhood Teacher Education Program (PG-PAUD) of the University of Muhammadiyah Kendari, which functions as a locus of inquiry. Using a qualitative research design with discourse analysis, data was collected through classroom recordings, direct observations, and semi-structured interviews with lecturers and students. The analysis focuses on identifying patterns of repetitive interactions, including initiation-response-feedback (IRF) sequences, negotiation of meaning, and the integration of local cultural and institutional values into discourse practices. The findings reveal that oral discourse is not only a medium for knowledge transmission but also a space to foster student participation, collaborative meaning-making, and strengthening cultural identity. In addition, the locus of Muhammadiyah's higher education influences the way lecturers and students use language to balance academic rigor with moral and cultural values. These results underscore the importance of context-sensitive discourse studies in advancing the quality of teacher education. This study contributes to the growth of the literature on classroom discourse and offers practical insights for improving pedagogical practice in early childhood education programs.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education, Oral Discourse, Universitas Muhammadiyah Kendari

A. Introduction

Oral discourse has a fundamental role in education, especially in the context of early childhood education (PAUD) and teacher education. In early childhood education, oral discourse is not only a means of communication, but also a means of cognitive, social, emotional, and language development of children (Brodin et al., 2020; Hadley et al., 2023; Irshad et al., 2021). For example, the *show and tell method* has been shown to be effective in improving the speaking skills of children aged 5-6 years through

verbal interaction that involves students actively conveying ideas and listening to friends or teachers (Hadley et al., 2023). found that the use of *show and tell* significantly increases children's participation in class as well as their expressive abilities. In addition, in the education of PAUD teachers, the ability to understand and facilitate oral discourse is very important. Early childhood teachers must be able to form a classroom atmosphere where verbal interaction occurs naturally and productively, so that students not only receive information, but also thrive through dialogue, negotiation of meaning, and active participation. Studies on *teacher talk* and its impact on student interaction show that the quality of interaction is strongly influenced by how teachers use open-ended questions, feedback, and how turn-taking is organized (L. Hu & Chen, 2022).

Oral discourse in the classroom also brings locus elements, namely the local context of culture, institutions, and educational policies that affect language styles, types of interactions, and communication norms. For example, in a study on *classroom interaction* using the IRF (Initiation-Response-Feedback) pattern, it was found that the dominance of lecturers or teachers as the initiators and controls the flow of discourse often reduces the active participation of students or students (Weisi & Ahmadi, 2024). Similarly, the study "Unveiling Power Dynamics in Online ESL Conversation Classes" which critically examined IRF patterns in the context of online ESL showed that while IRFs can facilitate teaching structures, they have the potential to reinforce power asymmetry in teacher-student interactions (Gunansyah et al., 2024). In addition, AI technology and multimodal methods are beginning to be used to assess the quality of classroom discourse, as in the research of (Tan et al., 2020) that introduced a multimodal approach to evaluate the three components of classroom discourse: the nature of the discourse, the question, and the explanation. The results emphasize that the textual component of discourse is still dominant in the evaluation of discursive practices, but that non-verbal and audio-visual features also influence consistency with human judgment.

Although a number of studies in Indonesia have addressed aspects of oral discourse, teacher-student interaction, IRF patterns, *teacher talk*, and strategies for improving speaking skills in early childhood or early childhood education, there are still some significant gaps 1) Specific local context: Many studies use common methods such as *show and tell*, read-aloud, story-reading, and so on in various regions (Sezer et al., 2022.; Walldén et al., 2021). However, the context of higher education, especially PG-PAUD at the University of Muhammadiyah Kendari is not explored in depth, 2) Focus on the practical elements of academic verbal interaction at the teacher level of prospective teachers or PG-PAUD students: Most literature examines children's early childhood classes directly, rather than academic interactions between lecturers and students in teacher training programs. This includes how oral discourse is used in theoretical discussions, teaching practices, academic feedback, and language use (formal vs. local), 3) Discourse analysis by considering institutional loci and local

culture: Many international and national studies emphasize theory and generalization, but few examine how institutions such as the University of Muhammadiyah, Muhammadiyah values, and the local culture of Kendari affect the practice of oral discourse in PG-PAUD, 4) Limitations in current methodologies such as critical discourse analysis, or the use of multimodal elements: While there are studies of critical discourse analysis (e.g. related to power dynamics in IRF patterns online) and multimodal research internationally few local studies combine these elements in the context of PG-PAUD (Natsir et al., 2023). Therefore, research that explores oral discourse and interaction in PG-PAUD classes at the University of Muhammadiyah Kendari as a research locus will add to the literature by providing contextual empirical data, complementing theoretical understanding, and recommending locally relevant practices. Based on these backgrounds and gaps, the objectives of this study are 1) To analyze the oral discourse and interaction that occurs in the PG-PAUD class of the University of Muhammadiyah Kendari as a research locus, 2) To identify the patterns of academic interaction (including IRF or outside IRF), the use of language (formal vs. local), communication strategies between lecturers and students, and how institutional culture and local values affect these discourses, 3) To reveal the implications of oral discourse practice on the learning quality of PG-PAUD students, especially in terms of participation, understanding, motivation, and academic speaking competence.

This research is guided by the following questions, 1) How does the pattern of oral discourse appear in academic interaction in the PG-PAUD class of the University of Muhammadiyah Kendari, whether the pattern follows the IRF, IRFR, or other discourse structures; how the turn of the conversation occurs; and how students are given the opportunity to start a dialogue, 2) What factors affect the form of interaction in the PG-PAUD class?, 3) What are the implications of oral discourse on the quality of learning of PG-PAUD students?

Oral discourse is understood as a linguistic practice that involves the production, distribution, and interpretation of spoken speech in a specific social context. In the realm of early childhood education (PAUD) and teacher education, oral discourse serves a dual function: (1) as a medium of knowledge transmission (instructional), and (2) as a socio-cultural arena for identity formation, negotiation of meaning, and the development of children's and teachers' language skills. The pragmatic perspective emphasizes that the meaning of speech is determined not only by linguistic structure but also by the context of interaction, the intention of the speaker, and the inference of the listener; Therefore, understanding oral discourse in education must involve the analysis of functional (e.g. elicitation, scaffolding, feedback) and interactional (e.g. turns, roles, status) aspects. Meta-analytical research on spoken language interventions shows that targeted interventions can improve communication skills and learning outcomes in children, emphasizing the direct relevance of oral discourse to the purposes of early childhood education and curriculum. In addition, the current

literature underscores the importance of a multimodal approach in classroom discourse analysis covering verbal, paralinguistic, gestural, and physical elements because learning interactions are often richer than just spoken words. This approach helps explain how teachers/students use a combination of modes to convey explanations, provide feedback, and facilitate participation (Ke et al., 2021; Yeager et al., 2022).

One of the most commonly used models to describe classroom interactions is the IRF (Initiation-Response-Feedback) pattern in which the teacher starts (I), the student responds (R), and the teacher gives a response or evaluation (F). IRF facilitates an organized and efficient teaching structure, but research shows that this pattern is often asymmetrical (lecturer/teacher dominant), thus limiting students' spontaneous speaking opportunities and active participation. Recent empirical analyses have found variations in IRF patterns; for example, extended IRFs (IRFRs), or patterns in which feedback is transformed into collaboration (inviting negotiation of meaning). Studies of *teacher talk* emphasize that the quality of questions (open vs. closed), feedback styles (evaluative vs. elaborative), and elicitation strategies determine the extent to which interactions encourage critical thinking and engagement (Farrelly & Sinwongsawat, 2021; Soysal & Soysal, 2023).

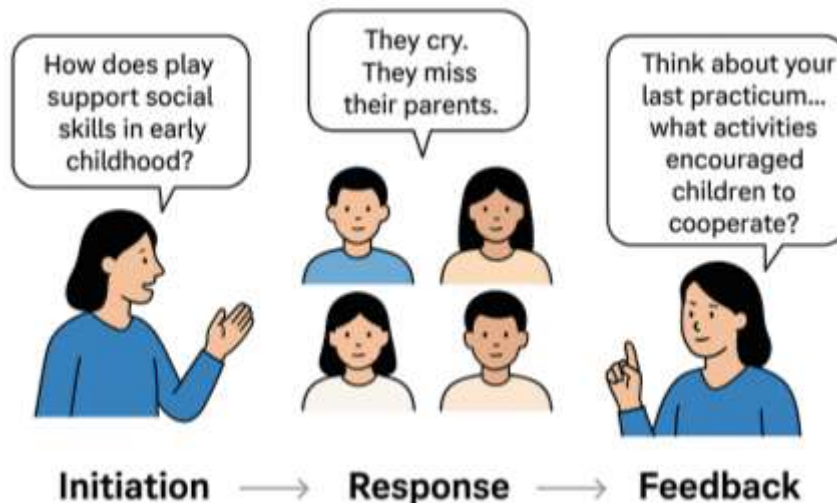


Figure 1. Spoken Discourse Interaction Patterns

Furthermore, a recent systematic review of *teacher talk* concluded that the form and function of teacher speech are directly related to learning outcomes, for example, instructive and supportive feedback styles can improve students' retention and speaking skills, while the dominance of one-way instruction has the potential to inhibit pragmatic development and fluency. These findings are relevant for the development of teaching practices in teacher education programs, including PG-PAUD, because prospective teachers need to be given examples and interaction experiences that support reflective and dialogical practices (Huang et al., 2020; Khong

et al., 2023).

The concept of *locus* refers to the emphasis that discourse practices must be read in the framework of the local context including institutional culture (e.g., Muhammadiyah values), local language, curriculum policies, and local communication norms. In teacher education, contextualization of discourse practices is important because effective communication methods in one context (e.g., multilingual urban classrooms) may not be directly applicable in another context (e.g., local religious values-oriented campuses). Previous studies have confirmed that the integration of local wisdom and institutional values can influence register selection (formal vs. local), teaching strategies, and ethical orientation in teaching-learning interactions. The locus approach facilitates a richer understanding of how language is used to internalize professional and cultural values among prospective teachers (Emeklioglu et al., 2025). In addition to the cultural aspect, recent technical studies have also shown that the collection and analysis of classroom interaction data (e.g. video recording, multimodal processing) must be sensitive to local variability e.g. differences in speech turn patterns or local language use so that the interpretation of discourse is not biased by a single theoretical framework.

International research over the past few years has broadened the understanding of how teachers and children/students interact verbally in a variety of settings. For example, the study (Scholarworks et al., 2025) emphasizes the importance of initiatory producer actions that trigger child responses and collaboration, as well as how educators can facilitate rich conversations through reflective questions and follow-ups (Garcia, 2020a) Meta-analysis and intervention studies show that teacher communication training programs (e.g. TCIT-U) can improve the quality of interactions, teaching strategies, and student engagement findings relevant to the design of pre-service training at PG-PAUD. These studies recommend the integration of evidence-based pedagogical interaction modules into (teacher education curricula (Resnick, 2023).

At the national level (Indonesia), many empirical studies focus on the pattern of IRF in English and general education classrooms, showing the tendency of teacher dominance as well as the need to enrich interactions to be more dialogical. Several local studies also highlight the role of regional languages and cultural norms in influencing the style of interaction in the classroom. These local analyses offer a comparative basis for studies that place Universitas Muhammadiyah Kendari as a special locus because local religious and cultural values can produce distinctive and relevant discourse patterns for the professional development of prospective PAUD teachers. Finally, methodological developments from classical conversational analysis to multimodal approaches and data processing automation provide classroom discourse researchers with new tools to capture the nuances of interaction more holistically. The application of these methods in the context of PG-PAUD of the

University of Muhammadiyah Kendari has the potential to produce empirical insights that can enrich the literature and practice of teacher education in Indonesia.

B. Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a discourse analysis design that focuses on oral interaction in the classroom (Weyant, 2022). Discourse analysis was chosen because it allows researchers to understand communication patterns, language use, and social meanings contained in speech (Miles et al., 2020). In the context of early childhood education teachers, discourse analysis provides an opportunity to explore how lecturers and students negotiate meaning, build understanding, and instill professional values through spoken language.

This research is naturalistic inquiry meaning that data is obtained from a natural context without artificial manipulation or intervention (Creswell, 2014). The main goal is to capture the practice of communication as it takes place authentically in academic interactions in the PG-PAUD class of the University of Muhammadiyah Kendari. In addition, this methodology also adopts the perspective of interactional sociolinguistics, which emphasizes the relationship between the form of speech and the socio-cultural context in which it is produced (Liamputtong, 2020). Thus, this study not only describes the form of discourse, but also examines how local factors of Muhammadiyah values, Kendari culture, and student identity affect interaction patterns. The participants of this study are lecturers and students of the Early Childhood Teacher Education Study Program (PG-PAUD) University of Muhammadiyah Kendari 1) Lecturers: as many as 3 permanent lecturers who actively teach core courses (e.g. Early Childhood Learning Strategies, Children's Language Development, and Children's Social-Emotional Development Methods), 2) Students: around 30 students in semesters 4 and 6, selected by purposive sampling to represent a variety of backgrounds, communication skills, and academic experience. The selection criteria are based on: (a) active involvement in class discussions, (b) ability to speak Indonesian and, occasionally, the local language (Tolaki or Bugis), and (c) willingness to participate through *informed consent*. The number of participants is considered sufficient because discourse analysis requires the depth of data from the interaction recorded in detail, not the large quantity of participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data analysis is carried out in several stages 1) Transcript; All class recordings and interviews are transcribed verbatim. Transcription follows the basic conventions of conversation analysis (Jefferson, 2004), including pauses, intonation, and speech overlap, 2) Coding; The data is coded with two main categories, namely Structural codes: IRF (Initiation-Response-Feedback) patterns, turn-taking, and elicitation strategies, and Thematic codes: the use of local vs. formal language, Muhammadiyah values that appear in discourse, and forms of student participation, 3) Discourse

Analysis; The encoded data is analyzed to identify dominant patterns, variations, and social meanings of interactions. The critical discourse analysis approach (Fairclough, 2020), is used to examine the dimensions of power, ideology, and culture in discourse, 4) Interpretation The results of the analysis are compared with the international literature on class discourse in order to see the similarities, differences, and contributions of the typical Kendari context (Johnstone & Andrus, 2024; Petousi et al., 2020). Research ethics are maintained by the following steps; 1) Informed consent is obtained from all participants, 2) The identities of lecturers and students are disguised with an anonymous code, 3) Recorded data is only used for academic purposes and stored securely, 4) Research received ethical approval from the Institute for Research and Community Service (LPPM) of the University of Muhammadiyah Kendari. In addition, sensitivity to local norms and Muhammadiyah values was maintained throughout the research stage, including in the way the researcher observed the class and interacted with the participants.

C. Results and Discussion

Characteristics of respondents

This section presents research findings on oral discourse and interaction in the PG-PAUD program of the University of Muhammadiyah Kendari. The results were organized into three main themes derived from the research questions: (1) the pattern of oral discourse in academic interactions, (2) factors that influence class interactions, and (3) the implications of oral discourse on the quality of student learning.

Table 1. Characteristics of Research Respondents

Code Responders	Gender	Age	Semester	Academic Status	Practicum Experience (months)
R1	Woman	19	III	Active students	2
R2	Woman	20	V	Active students	4
R3	Man	21	V	Active students	5
R4	Woman	20	III	Active students	1
R5	Man	22	VII	Active students	6
R6	Woman	21	VII	Active students	7
R7	Woman	19	III	Active students	2
R8	Man	20	V	Active students	3

Information:

- 1) Total respondents: 8 PG-PAUD students
- 2) Gender ratio: 5 females (62.5%), 3 males (37.5%)
- 3) Age range: 19-22 years old
- 4) Semester distribution: Semester III (3 students), Semester V (3 students), Semester VII (2 students)
- 5) Practicum experience: 1-7 months

Patterns of Oral Discourse in Class Interaction

Based on interviews with eight respondents, it can be concluded that the pattern of

oral discourse that appears in the PG-PAUD class of Universitas Muhammadiyah Kendari generally follows the pattern of IRF (Initiation–Response–Feedback), where lecturers start questions (Initiation), students answer briefly (Response), and lecturers close with additional explanations (Feedback). This pattern was found consistently in R1 and R5 respondents. However, some students (R2, R4, R6, R8) observed variations in the form of IRFR (Initiation–Response–Feedback–Response) or an extended version. In this pattern, students are given space to respond again after the lecturer gives feedback, either in the form of clarification or brief discussion. This is especially the case when the topic of learning is associated with the student’s field practice or personal experience. On the other hand, there are also students (R3, R7) who consider that interactions tend to be monological, where lecturers dominate the conversation and students are only passive listeners.

Overall, the interview results showed that although the IRF pattern was still dominant, IRFR variations began to develop especially in learning contexts that emphasized discussion, reflection, and linkage to field practice. This pattern provides greater opportunities for students to actively participate and develop academic communication skills. Analysis of class recordings and transcripts revealed that the dominant discourse structure followed the Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) model. Lecturers often initiate questions, students provide responses, and lecturers conclude with evaluative or elaborative feedback. This pattern is consistent with previous findings on teacher-student discourse in higher education (X. Hu et al., 2023). However, unlike in many Western contexts where student speech tends to be more complicated, in PG-PAUD classes students’ responses are often brief, reflecting cultural communication styles and limited confidence in the use of academic language.

Despite this tendency, moments of extended student talk occur when lecturers use scaffolding strategies, such as reframing questions, providing clues, or connecting the discussion to students’ practical experiences in early childhood classrooms. For example, in one lecture on child development, a lecturer asked, “How does play support social skills in early childhood?” Some students respond with minimal phrases, but after the lecturer asks, “Think about your last practicum in kindergarten, what activities encourage children to work together?”, students come up with longer, more reflective answers. This suggests that contextual encouragement fosters a more engaged and expanded discourse.

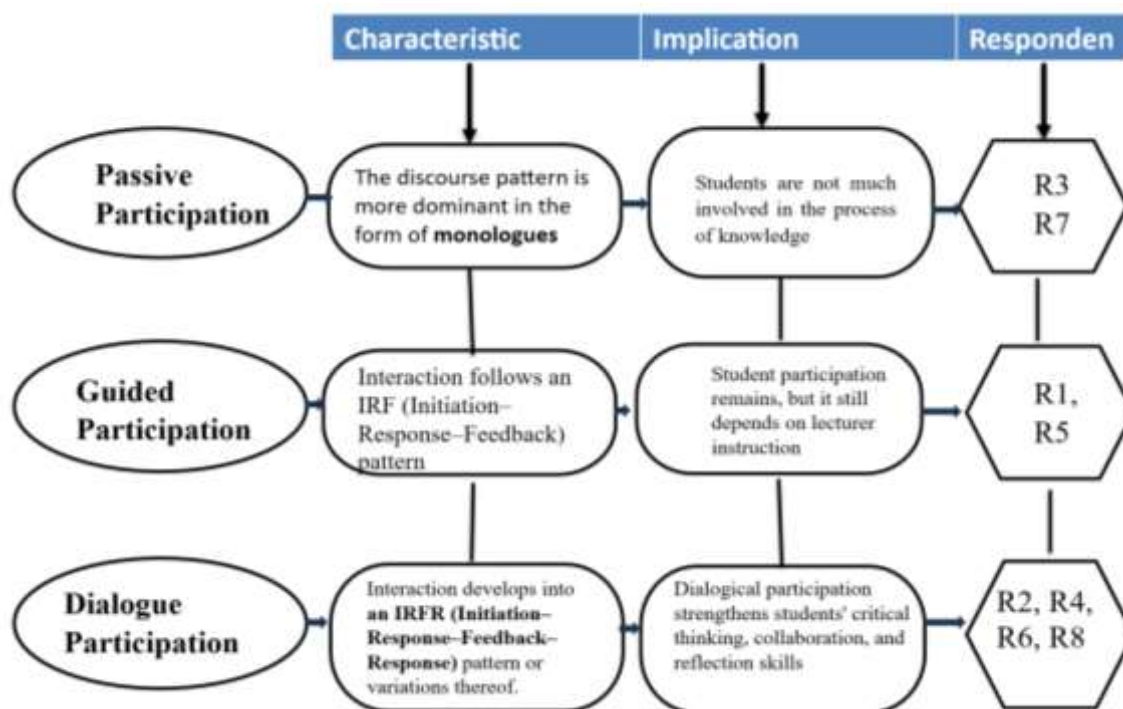


Figure 2. Patterns of Oral Discourse in Class Interaction

These findings show that there is a spectrum of participation in the PG-PAUD academic interaction of the University of Muhammadiyah Kendari. From passive to dialogical participation, the pattern of oral discourse reflects variations in the roles of students and lecturers. In general, the transition from the monologue pattern → IRF → IRFR illustrates an increase in student engagement rates. This has important implications: the more dialogical interactions are built, the greater the opportunities students have to internalize the communication, critical thinking, and pedagogical reflection skills needed as prospective early childhood educators.

Factors Influencing Interactions

Several factors shape the dynamics of oral discourse in the PG-PAUD classroom.

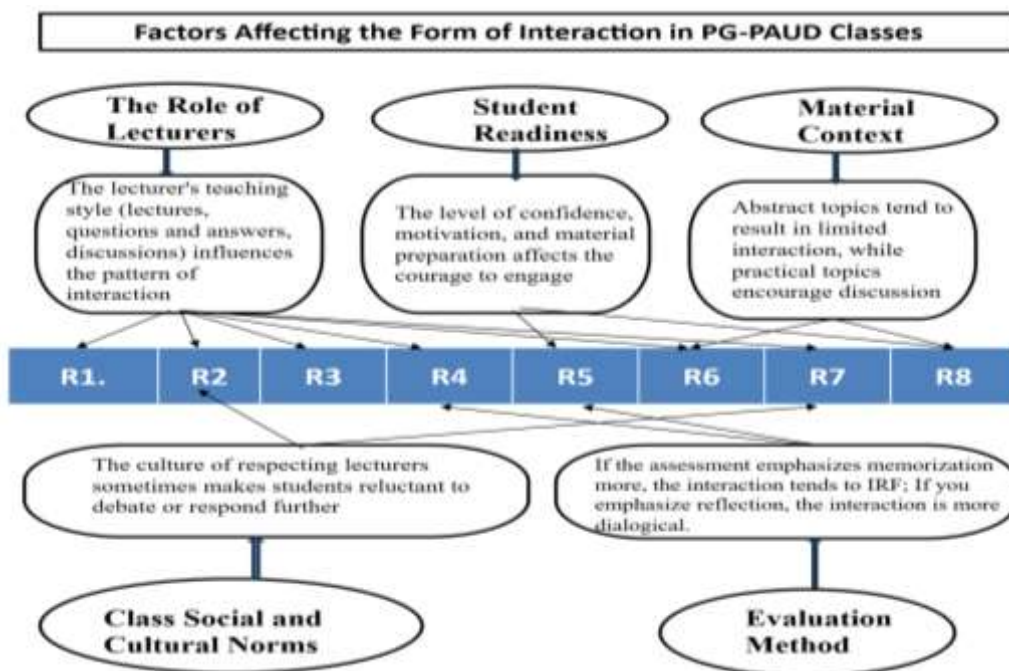


Figure 3. Factors Affecting the Form of Interaction in PG-PAUD Classes

The interview revealed that the form of academic interaction in the PG-PAUD class is influenced by a combination of internal and external factors. The role of the lecturer emerged as a dominant factor: the interactive communication style encouraged the IRFR pattern, while the lecture style tended to limit participation. Student readiness is also crucial, because students who are confident and have an initial understanding are more courageous to engage in discussions. In addition, the context of the material determines the depth of the interaction. Practical material relevant to field experience encourages reflective discussion, while theoretical material produces a brief response. Another factor that plays a role is the social norms and culture of the classroom, where respect for the authority of the lecturer sometimes makes students passive. Finally, the evaluation method is also decisive: the orientation to memorization reinforces the IRF pattern, while the reflective orientation encourages the dialogical pattern. Overall, these results show that academic interaction in the PG-PAUD class is dynamic and influenced by the synergy between the role of lecturers, student readiness, material relevance, class norms, and evaluation systems.

Implications for Student Learning

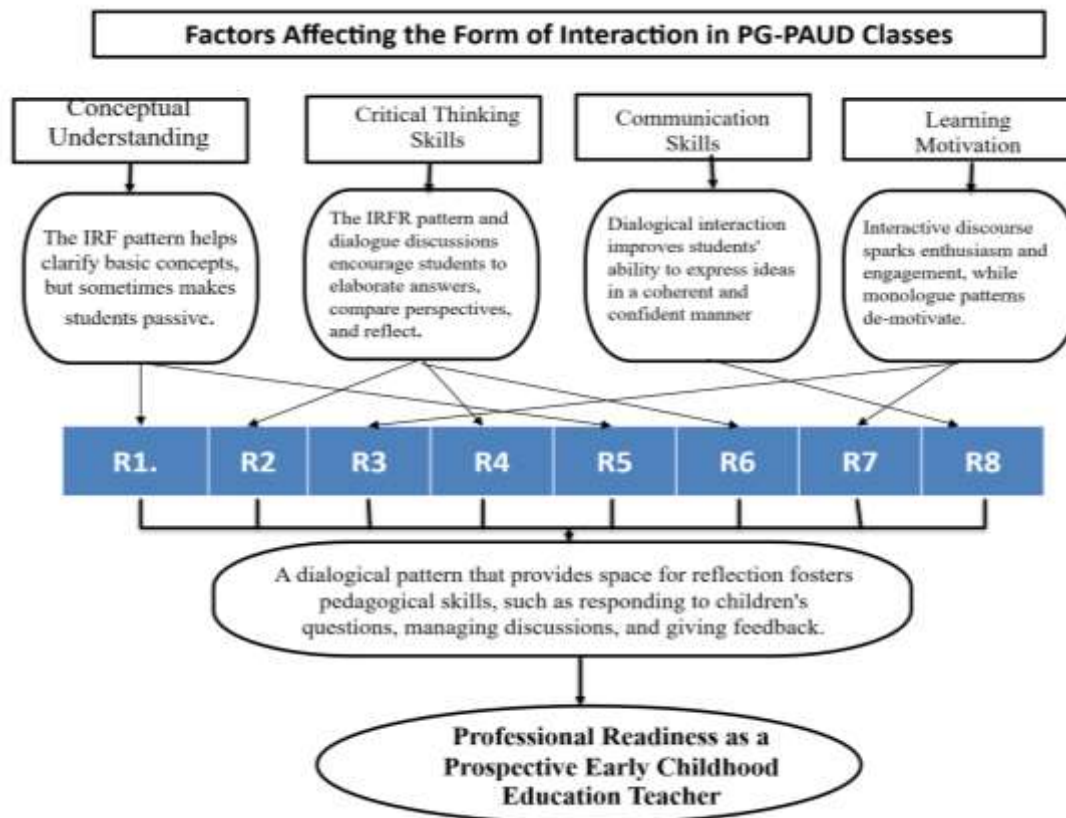


Figure 4. Implications of Oral Discourse on the Learning Quality of PG-PAUD Students

The analysis of the interview results shows that oral discourse has a significant role in determining the quality of learning of PG-PAUD students. The IRF pattern helps students understand the core concepts through the lecturer's explanation, but this interaction tends to be guided so that students are not optimal in practicing independent thinking. On the other hand, the IRFR pattern or dialogical discourse provides wider opportunities for students to develop critical thinking, ask follow-up questions, and build academic reflection. Another prominent implication is on communication skills. Students who are used to being involved in discussions admit that they are more confident in expressing their opinions, which directly contributes to their readiness as prospective PAUD teachers. In addition, learning motivation was shown to be higher when lecturers encouraged dialogical participation, compared to monological patterns that made students passive and bored. Overall, oral discourse in academic interactions has direct implications on students' conceptual understanding, critical thinking skills, communication, learning motivation, and professional readiness. Thus, the management of dialogical oral discourse is an important strategy to improve the quality of learning in the PG-PAUD study program.

The respondent characteristics table shows important variations in the profile of PG-PAUD students who are participants in this study. The majority of respondents were in the age range of 19–22 years, which is the productive age typical of undergraduate students in Indonesia. This suggests that they are in the early developmental stage of adulthood, where communication, reflection, and critical thinking skills are being significantly formed (Thornhill-Miller et al., 2023).

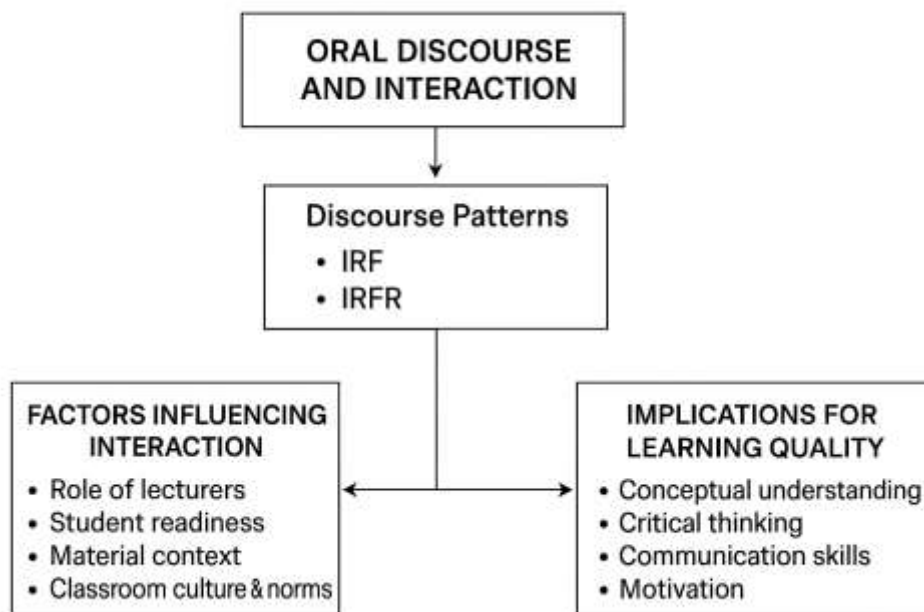


Figure. 5 Oral Discourse and Interaction in PG-PAUD

In terms of gender, there is a dominance of female respondents, which is in line with the general trend in the Early Childhood Education (PAUD) study program, where women prefer the professional path of child education (Dwyer et al., 2020). This composition also gives context to the pattern of discourse in the classroom, as some studies show that gender can influence communication styles, participation levels, and forms of academic interaction (X. Hu et al., 2023). The respondents' educational backgrounds were relatively homogeneous, with all of them coming from high school/high school, both with science, social studies, and religious majors. This homogeneity may affect their initial perception of academic discourse, given that previous experiences focused more on memorization and teacher-centric interaction patterns. However, the variety of majors at the high school level can affect their confidence and the way they construct oral discourse in university classrooms.

In addition, most of the respondents have experience in student organizations, both intra and extra-campus. This is relevant because organizational involvement often improves interpersonal communication skills, leadership, and the courage to speak in academic forums (Dumais et al., 2014) Therefore, these non-academic experiences can enrich their oral discourse patterns in the classroom. Overall, the characteristics of

these respondents emphasized that the discourse patterns that emerged in the PG-PAUD class interaction at the University of Muhammadiyah Kendari were not only influenced by the lecturer's curriculum and methods, but also by demographic factors, educational backgrounds, and non-academic experiences of students. In other words, the individual context of students is an important factor in understanding the dynamics of academic discourse in the classroom.

Discussion

This study examines the practice of oral discourse in the PG-PAUD program of the University of Muhammadiyah Kendari, focusing on discourse patterns, influencing factors, and their implications on student learning. These findings reveal that oral discourse in this context is shaped by the interaction of pedagogical strategies, cultural norms, language proficiency, and institutional values. In this section, the results are discussed based on theoretical frameworks, relevant empirical studies, and their implications for early childhood teacher education practices.

Oral Discourse as a Pedagogical Tool

The dominance of the Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) pattern observed in this study is in line with the classic classroom discourse model of Sinclair and Coulthard (Estaji et al., 2023; Tong et al., 2024). However, the data show that while IRFs ensure structured interactions, they can also limit opportunities for students to develop expanded discourse, especially in higher education settings where critical reflection is essential. Similar criticisms have been raised internationally, noting that IRFs often privilege teacher talks and limit dialogical learning (Ahmed et al., 2022). In the PG-PAUD classroom, moments of expanded student discourse arise when lecturers adopt scaffolding strategies such as contextual cues or reflective questions that resonate with Vygotski's perspective on the role of language mediation in cognitive development (Cong-Lem, 2022). These findings highlight oral discourse not only as a channel for transmitting knowledge but also as a pedagogical tool to encourage participation and high-level thinking.

Cultural and Linguistic Influences on Interactions

Cultural communication norms play an important role in shaping discourse practices. The observed respect for lecturers reflects the broader Indonesian educational tradition that emphasizes respect for authority (Faisal et al., 2022; Utomo et al., 2020). This cultural orientation often discourages students from interrupting or openly challenging teachers, limiting opportunities for dialogical interaction. However, this does not always indicate a release; rather, it reflects a culturally embedded form of participation characterized by attentive listening and selective response.

Language skills further influence interactional dynamics. Although Indonesian is the language of instruction, students' confidence in academic discourse varies. Some are hesitant to speak up for fear of making linguistic mistakes, echoing findings from higher education contexts in Asia where linguistic insecurity limits participation (Sofyan et al., 2025). This points to the need for pedagogical interventions that normalize error-making and create a supportive environment for exploratory talks.

Institutional Values and the Moral Dimension of Discourse

The characteristic of the discourse in the context of PG-PAUD is the integration of moral and religious values, consistent with the ethos of Muhammadiyah which combines intellectual and ethical development. Lecturers often infuse an Islamic perspective into academic discussions, reinforcing values such as honesty, responsibility, and cooperation. This is in line with research on religion-based education, which emphasizes the role of discourse in shaping cognitive and moral development (Neufeld, 2025). By instilling moral discourse in academic interactions, institutions not only transmit knowledge but also cultivate character, contributing to the holistic formation of future teachers. This integration underscores the importance of acknowledging institutional identity as a factor in discourse practice, a dimension that is often underexplored in mainstream classroom discourse research.

Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings of this study are in line with the global literature that shows the centrality of teacher-led discourse and the challenges of promoting dialogical interaction in higher education (Lehesvuori et al., 2021; Sanchez et al., 2023). However, the results also expand the literature by highlighting the contextual specificity of discourse practice in Indonesia. Unlike studies from Western contexts where students are often more likely to engage in critical discussions (Ahmed et al., 2022). Students in these studies rely heavily on contextual scaffolding and clues to outline their ideas. In addition, the integration of moral and religious dimensions into academic discourse distinguishes this locus from secular higher education settings. While previous research has acknowledged the influence of institutional ethos on pedagogy (Garcia, 2020b; Zafrani & Yarden, 2022). Few have explored how this ethos is enforced through discourse. This study contributes to filling this gap by showing how Muhammadiyah values shape classroom conversations in a way that encourages cognitive and moral learning.

Implications for Teacher Education Practice

These findings have several practical implications for improving the quality of teacher education in PG-PAUD programs and similar contexts:

- 1) Promote dialogical pedagogy: Lecturers should include more open-ended questions, group discussions, and reflective activities that encourage students to articulate extended responses. This will move beyond the limitations of IRF and encourage dialogical learning
- 2) Supports linguistic beliefs: Strategies such as peer discussions, structured turn-taking, and explicit encouragement from exploratory talks can help students overcome linguistic insecurities and participate more actively
- 3) Contextualizing discourse: Connecting theoretical content with students' practicum experiences has been shown to increase engagement. Teacher educators must systematically integrate experiential references into discourse practice, bridging theory and practice.
- 4) Integrating moral and cultural values: The ethos of Muhammadiyah provides unique strength by instilling character education into discourse. Educators must continue to leverage this dimension to foster professional competence and moral responsibility in future teachers.

Contributions to Theory and Research

Theoretically, this research supports a sociocultural perspective on learning that views language as a mediating tool while demonstrating the importance of context-specific adaptation. This underscores the need for discourse research to consider not only pedagogical and linguistic dimensions but also cultural and institutional influences. Empirically, this study adds to the limited literature on classroom discourse in Indonesian higher education, especially in teacher education for early childhood. It highlights universal features of discourse (e.g., the prevalence of IRF) and distinctive local features (e.g., the integration of moral-religious values).

Limitations and Future Research

Although this research provides important insights, it is not without limitations. Focusing on one institution limits generalization. Future studies should examine the practice of discourse in various teacher education programs in Indonesia to capture broader patterns and variations. In addition, longitudinal research can track how discourse practice evolves as students progress through their studies and enter professional practice. Another limitation is the exclusive focus on lecturer-student discourse. Peer-to-peer discourse, both inside and outside the classroom, also plays an important role in shaping learning and identity but is not examined in depth. Future research should address this gap by investigating peer interaction and informal discourse practices.

The discussion highlighted that oral discourse in the PG-PAUD program at the University of Muhammadiyah Kendari is not just a vehicle for knowledge transmission but a complex practice shaped by pedagogical, cultural, linguistic, and

institutional factors. It supports students' cognitive development, the formation of professional identity, and the development of moral character. By placing these findings within a broader theoretical and empirical framework, this study underscores the need for context-sensitive discourse research in higher education. Ultimately, improving discourse practices in teacher education requires a balanced approach that values structured guidance while encouraging dialogical participation, acknowledging cultural norms while encouraging critical engagement, and integrating moral values alongside academic content. This holistic orientation has the potential to prepare future early childhood educators who are not only knowledgeable but also reflective, ethical, and responsive to the needs of their communities.

D. Conclusions

This study has examined the patterns, influential factors, and implications of oral discourse in the PG-PAUD program of the University of Muhammadiyah Kendari. These findings suggest that classroom discourse is largely structured by an Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) model, with lecturers taking a central role in directing interactions. While this ensures clarity and structure, it also tends to limit extended student talk. Nevertheless, meaningful participation arises when lecturers use scaffolding strategies such as contextual prompts, reflective questions, and connecting discussions with students' practicum experiences. Several factors were found to influence the nature of class discourse. Cultural norms of respect for authority shape students' communicative practices, often leading to minimal responses unless explicitly encouraged. Linguistic beliefs also play a role, with many students hesitant to contribute for fear of making mistakes. At the same time, the institutional ethos of Muhammadiyah education provides a unique layer of moral and cultural integration in academic discourse, instilling the values of responsibility, cooperation, and ethical practices into the learning process.

This study makes three main contributions. First, it affirms the pattern of global discourse while highlighting local adaptations shaped by culture, language, and institutional identity. Second, it underscores the dual role of oral discourse as a cognitive and moral tool, mediating the construction of knowledge and character formation simultaneously. Third, enriching the limited literature on discourse in Indonesian higher education, especially in early childhood teacher education.

Practical recommendations emerging from these findings include the need for teacher educators to adopt more dialogical pedagogies that encourage open discussion, to support students' linguistic beliefs through peer collaboration and exploratory talks, and to continue to integrate moral and cultural values into academic discourse. This practice will not only improve students' communicative competence but also strengthen their professional identity as future early childhood educators. Oral

discourse in the PG-PAUD classroom serves as a vital place to shape learning, identity, and values. A context-sensitive approach that balances structured guidance with dialogical interactions, and academic rigor with moral-cultural integration, can significantly improve the quality of teacher education in Indonesia and beyond.

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