

POWER RELATIONS IN TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTIONS: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH CLASSROOM TALK

Sarnia Eunike Laia¹, Marwa Marwa², Rhosa Melani S.³, Nurmaisayah Ramsilas⁴, Wahyuni Nadeak⁵

¹ Universitas Lancang Kuning ; sarniaeunike28@gmail.com

² Universitas Lancang Kuning ; marwa@unilak.ac.id

³ Universitas Lancang Kuning ; rosamelani30@gmail.com

⁴ Universitas Lancang Kuning ; ramsilasnurmaisayah@gmail.com

⁵ Universitas Lancang Kuning ; wahyuninadeak025@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Keyword 1; Power Relation
Keyword 2; Classroom
Discourse
Keyword 3; Critical
Discourse Analisis

Article history:

Received 2025-05-24
Revised 2025-06-12
Accepted 2025-06-26

ABSTRACT

This study examines how power relations are constructed and negotiated in teacher-student interactions within an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Focusing on how language reflects authority and roles in education, the research uses a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework to explore classroom discourse. Conducted in a fourth-semester English education class at Lancang Kuning University, the qualitative study analyzed data from classroom recordings, transcripts, and selected interactions. Key discourse features such as speech acts, turn-taking, modality, and code-switching were examined. The findings show a dominance of teacher-centered discourse, with teachers frequently using directive and declarative language to manage classroom behavior and learning activities. Student responses were often brief and passive, though subtle resistance—like hesitation or silence—indicated that power was not fixed but negotiated. Teachers also used motivational language, reflecting soft power strategies that encouraged engagement while maintaining control. Overall, the study highlights how classroom talk reinforces institutional norms and affects student agency. It concludes that teacher awareness of language use is essential for creating more inclusive and empowering learning environments.

This is an open access article under the [CC BY-NC-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/) license.



Corresponding Author:

Sarnia Eunike Laia
Universitas Lancang Kuning ; sarniaeunike28@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Classroom discourse plays a crucial role in English language teaching and learning, shaping not only interactions and educational outcomes but also the underlying power dynamics between teachers and students. It involves complex relationships between language use, social context, and institutional frameworks that govern classroom behavior and expectations (Jora, 2022; Rachmawati, 2022). In English language classrooms, communication serves not only as the medium of instruction but also as the subject of learning itself. Language is not merely a tool for conveying academic content—it functions as a mechanism for constructing social relationships, defining classroom norms, and negotiating institutional roles. Every utterance, whether instructional or incidental, contributes to the shaping of the learning environment and carries broader implications for authority, identity, and participation. Critical discourse analysis reveals how teachers' language and power significantly affect student perceptions and learning outcomes, with expert and reward power being the most frequently employed (Rachmawati, 2022). This approach enables researchers to examine speech and writing in ways that uncover hidden social structures and cultural contexts influencing classroom interactions (Khan et al., 2022). Teachers and students co-construct meaning and negotiate power through their language choices—consciously or unconsciously—creating a dynamic interplay that directly impacts who speaks, who is heard, and who holds influence in the classroom. In English language learning contexts, where fluency and interaction are primary goals, these dynamics are especially significant, as language becomes a gatekeeper for participation, agency, and success. Incorporating discourse analysis into classroom practice fosters critical thinking, enhances differentiated instruction, and ultimately improves student engagement and educational outcomes (Khan et al., 2022). Understanding classroom discourse, therefore, requires not only linguistic analysis but also a critical examination of the sociocultural and institutional forces that shape educational experiences.

Classroom talk serves as a critical site for enacting, reproducing, and challenging power relations, as demonstrated by various studies employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Desrochers and Murray (2021) emphasize the transformative potential of CDA in disrupting oppressive systems within educational settings, enabling educators to critically reflect on their discourse practices. Sapkota (2024), examining language power dynamics in Nepali English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms, reveals how authoritative teacher talk can simultaneously constrain and motivate students, affecting their engagement and attitudes. Similarly, Chen et al. (2024), through their analysis of interactive discourse in Chinese media colleges, show how language operates not only as a pedagogical tool but also as a means of maintaining or challenging power structures. These studies collectively underscore the complex interplay between language, power, and student engagement in diverse educational contexts. Within the classroom, talk is more than a vehicle for instruction—it is a dynamic space where authority is negotiated and contested. Teachers may assert control through directives or evaluations, or foster participation through open-ended questions and affirmations, while students may respond with compliance, resistance, or strategic silence. These communicative acts are shaped by, and reflective of, broader cultural and institutional forces. Particularly in English language classrooms, where students operate in a non-native linguistic environment, their ability to negotiate meaning is influenced by both language proficiency and cultural capital. As such, language becomes a double-edged sword: a potential source of empowerment and, at the same time, a mechanism of limitation. The unequal distribution of voice and power is often embedded in classroom discourse, and CDA offers a valuable lens for examining not just the content of talk, but the underlying reasons and social structures that sustain these patterns.

Recent studies highlight the complex and dynamic nature of power and language in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, revealing how classroom interactions shape learner identities and influence educational outcomes. Teachers' use of language—including directives, praise, and questioning—carries embedded meanings about authority, hierarchy, and compliance, which in turn affect student attitudes and engagement (Sapkota, 2024). Power in the classroom is multifaceted, as teachers draw on various forms such as expert, reward, and referent power to structure interactions and influence learning (Rachmawati, 2022; Rachmawati, 2022). These forms of power, when used effectively, can positively impact student participation and academic performance. However, power is not a static construct; it is fluid, negotiated moment by moment through discourse and interaction. Students demonstrate agency through subtle acts such as passive resistance, silence, code-switching, and shifting between multiple roles or positions, challenging the notion of teacher dominance as absolute (Tian & Dumlao, 2020). Critical Classroom Discourse Analysis (CCDA) underscores that classroom talk is a central site for the enactment and contestation of power, and that even ordinary interactions contribute to the construction of authority and social order. This perspective highlights the importance of recognizing language as a socially situated practice that is never neutral, but always aligned with or resistant to prevailing power structures. As such, EFL teaching should not only focus on language acquisition, but also on learner identity development by incorporating humanistic and inclusive approaches that acknowledge students' voices and foster meaningful participation (Sapkota, 2024; Tian & Dumlao, 2020). Every moment of classroom discourse thus becomes an opportunity to shape, reinforce, or disrupt power relations, making the critical examination of teacher-student interactions essential to creating equitable and effective learning environments.

Students are not passive recipients in classroom discourse; rather, they are active agents who shape the interactional flow and, consequently, the distribution of power within the classroom. Their choices—to respond, question, or remain silent—carry significant meaning within the larger framework of classroom authority and control. Although institutional structures tend to position teachers as primary authority figures, students frequently assert their presence and influence by negotiating meanings, reinterpreting instructions, or subverting teacher expectations through humor, resistance, or strategic silence. In English language classrooms, students' fluency and comfort with the target language further influence their capacity to participate and challenge norms, linking discourse directly to their linguistic identities and sense of empowerment. These factors collectively determine the extent of control students have over their own learning experience and how power circulates in everyday interactions. Research supports the view that students actively shape classroom discourse and power relations through linguistic choices and participation strategies such as code-switching, resistance, and engagement in dialogue (Tian & Dumlao, 2020). However, teacher control mechanisms—including display questions and directive instructions—can significantly limit students' opportunities to initiate discourse, often resulting in increased silence or passive responses (Deji-Afuye, 2024). Moreover, students' participation in second language practices is shaped by contextual factors across different university communities and is mediated by their agency in navigating these environments (Sung, 2019). While some learners gain fuller participation by adopting expected language practices and demonstrating competence, others may struggle in spaces where power imbalances between native and non-native speakers are more pronounced (Sung, 2019). These findings collectively underscore the complex and dynamic nature of classroom discourse, highlighting its deep connection to learners' linguistic identities, their agency, and the structures that can either empower or constrain them.

Classroom discourse is deeply embedded in broader societal contexts, reflecting and reinforcing prevailing social norms, power dynamics, and cultural ideologies (Lai & King, 2020). Recognizing the intricate relationship between language, ideology, and power in

educational settings is essential for addressing issues of diversity, inclusion, and equity (Lai & King, 2020). Researchers have emphasized the importance of fostering equitable classroom talk by developing clear indicators of inclusive discourse, utilizing video analysis to reflect on classroom interactions, and creating targeted materials to support teacher learning (Jensen et al., 2021). These strategies aim to encourage meaningful participation in disciplinary practices and are particularly beneficial for students from historically marginalized or minoritized communities (Jensen et al., 2021). What may appear to be routine classroom exchanges—such as a teacher choosing which student to call on or offering praise for particular responses—are in fact saturated with social meaning. Such communicative choices reflect and reproduce broader societal values, including respect for authority, the prioritization of conformity, or the valorization of competitiveness. In this way, the discourse of the classroom becomes a mirror of wider social hierarchies and cultural expectations. English language classrooms, often influenced by Western pedagogical frameworks, may unintentionally impose cultural norms that feel foreign or even alienating to students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Consequently, the very language practices intended to facilitate learning can simultaneously reinforce cultural hegemony and limit genuine inclusion. Recognizing these ideological dimensions of classroom talk enables educators to move beyond surface-level instructional goals and critically examine how everyday communication practices shape students' sense of identity, belonging, and participation in the learning environment.

Teachers' linguistic choices play a crucial role in shaping classroom dynamics and authority structures. The use of direct commands and imperative forms often serves to establish control but may inadvertently suppress student participation (Wailissa, 2023; Herdiawan & Rofi'i, 2023). In contrast, inclusive language and open-ended questions can foster greater engagement by making students feel heard and valued (Wailissa, 2023). Speech acts such as directives, representatives, praise, and expressions of pleasure influence students' learning attitudes and motivation (Sapkota, 2024), yet these are not neutral choices—they are shaped by institutional policies, cultural norms, and societal expectations (Jozauska, 2019; Herdiawan & Rofi'i, 2023). As the teacher's role evolves, authority is no longer derived solely from discipline but also from broader social foundations (Jozauska, 2019). Critical discourse analysis reveals that both teachers and students use language strategically to assert positions and construct identities within the classroom (Sapkota, 2024; Herdiawan & Rofi'i, 2023). Thus, understanding how speech acts—such as commands, praise, correction, or even silence—construct authority is essential, as these choices influence whether students perceive themselves as active participants or passive observers in the learning process.

Control over interactional structures—such as who speaks, when, and for how long—is a powerful mechanism through which teachers manage classroom discourse and assert authority. By regulating turn-taking, setting the agenda, and evaluating responses, teachers establish implicit rules that shape who is heard and whose contributions are valued. These practices can unintentionally marginalize certain students, especially in English language classrooms where proficiency varies, potentially leading to disengagement and anxiety. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) reveals how such interactional norms reflect deeper power dynamics, showing that classroom talk is not neutral but laden with ideological implications. While teacher-student interactions are often asymmetrical, students may resist passivity by self-nominating or interrupting to claim voice (Candrika Citra Sari, 2020). Teachers frequently exercise expert and reward power (Rachmawati, 2022), reinforcing traditional hierarchies. However, CDA also offers tools for transformation: by making power relations visible, it enables educators to reflect critically on their practices, foster more inclusive participation, and disrupt patterns of oppression (Desrochers & Murray, 2021; Y. Chen et al., 2024). It is important to acknowledge that power in the classroom is not inherently negative or

oppressive. When exercised reflectively and ethically, teacher authority can provide structure, security, and a framework for effective learning. Power can also be used to empower—to support student voice, autonomy, and confidence. In English language instruction, where communication skills are central, the teacher's role in scaffolding participation is critical. Facilitating meaningful dialogue requires awareness of how language choices affect student agency. Encouraging open discussion, validating student perspectives, and acknowledging different forms of expression all serve to redistribute power more equitably. In this way, discourse becomes a tool not only for teaching but for building a more inclusive classroom culture. Recognizing and leveraging this potential requires critical self-reflection on the part of educators. It also calls for an understanding of discourse as both pedagogical and political.

This study investigates teacher-student interactions through the lens of discourse analysis to uncover how power is constructed, maintained, and contested within the classroom. Rather than focusing solely on the content of speech, the analysis emphasizes the structure, sequencing, and underlying implications of classroom talk. Specific attention is given to directive speech acts, questioning patterns, feedback mechanisms, student responses, and both verbal and non-verbal cues that signal the assertion, negotiation, or resistance of power. By unpacking these elements, the research seeks to understand how discourse contributes to the formation of classroom hierarchies and impacts learning outcomes. English language classrooms, with their emphasis on spoken interaction and communicative competence, offer a particularly fertile ground for observing how language both enables and constrains power relations. Drawing from critical discourse frameworks, the study links micro-level interactional features to broader institutional and ideological structures. A range of prior research informs this inquiry: Oral (2013) uses a Foucauldian perspective to examine power negotiations during seatwork in EFL settings, revealing connections between classroom behavior and institutional discourses; Brooks (2016) highlights how routinized teacher questioning can lead to student passivity while occasionally allowing subtle shifts in authority; Rachmawati (2022) identifies types of power such as expert and legitimate power that shape student engagement in EFL classrooms; and Reinsvold and Cochran (2012) demonstrate how teacher-dominated discourse and closed-ended questioning reinforce hierarchical dynamics in science classrooms. Collectively, these studies emphasize the intricate interplay between discourse, power, and pedagogy in shaping educational experiences.

Ultimately, this research seeks to uncover the often-hidden mechanisms through which power operates in classroom discourse, positioning language not as a neutral medium but as a socially and ideologically charged practice. By critically examining how authority is constructed, maintained, and contested in teacher-student interactions, the study offers deeper insights into the role of discourse in shaping educational experiences. It also provides practical implications for educators who aim to foster more democratic, inclusive, and equitable learning environments. In English language teaching where communication is central power is embedded in everyday talk, influencing who gets to speak, whose voices are heard, and how identities and participation are shaped. Teaching, therefore, extends beyond content delivery to include the construction of social roles and relationships within the classroom. Drawing on critical discourse analysis, this research highlights how different forms of teacher power such as expert and reward power can significantly influence student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes (Rachmawati, 2022; Sapkota, 2024). Moreover, discourse analysis reveals how classroom language practices reflect broader social structures and cultural contexts, enabling educators to develop pedagogies that are more inclusive and responsive to diversity (Khan et al., 2022). The work of Lai and King (2020) further underscores how discourse both enacts and resists social inequality, particularly in multilingual and multicultural settings. Together, these perspectives affirm the importance of critically examining classroom talk as a means to promote equity, challenge structural

oppression, and empower all learners. By recognizing the political dimensions of language use, educators can become more reflective and intentional in shaping just and transformative educational spaces.

Research Questions:

1. How are power relations enacted in teacher-student discourse in the English classroom?
2. What linguistic strategies reflect power and authority in classroom talk?

Research Objectives:

1. To examine how teachers and students construct power through language.
2. To identify discourse patterns that reinforce or challenge authority.

2. METHODS

2.1 Research Approach

This study adopts a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach to examine how power relations are constructed, maintained, and potentially challenged in teacher-student interactions within the English classroom. CDA, as conceptualized by Norman Fairclough, provides a theoretical and analytical framework for investigating the relationship between language use and social structures, particularly in institutional settings like education. By focusing on classroom discourse, this research aims to uncover the subtle ways in which language reflects and reinforces institutional power dynamics.

2.2 Research Setting and Participants

The research was conducted in a classroom of the English Language Education Study Program at Lancang Kuning University, involving fourth-semester undergraduate students majoring in English Language Education. These students regularly engaged in classroom activities using both English and their native language (Bahasa Indonesia), providing a rich context for analyzing bilingual discourse practices.

A purposive sampling strategy was used to select one intact class consisting of approximately 27 undergraduate students, along with the course instructor for Statistics in English Language Education, Dr. Marwa Zuhri, M.A. This class was specifically chosen due to its active verbal participation and its relevance to the research objectives. All participants were informed about the aims of the study, and ethical research procedures were strictly followed. This included obtaining informed consent, ensuring voluntary participation, and maintaining anonymity and confidentiality throughout the research process.

2.3 Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

To gather authentic data on classroom interactions, the following instruments were utilized:

2.3.1 Classroom Recordings

Video recordings of classroom sessions were conducted to capture natural teacher-student interactions. The recordings included a variety of communicative episodes such as instructions, questioning, feedback, and informal exchanges.

2.3.2 Transcripts

The recorded data were transcribed verbatim to preserve the linguistic features

of the interactions. These transcripts served as the primary data for discourse analysis, with special attention given to speech patterns, turn-taking, and the use of power-related language.

2.3.3 Teacher-Student Interaction Samples

Selected excerpts from the transcripts were chosen based on their relevance to the research questions. These samples were rich in features indicative of power negotiation and were subjected to in-depth analysis using CDA tools.

2.4 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the Critical Discourse Analysis framework, focusing on both micro- and macro-level features of the discourse. The analysis included:

1. Lexical Choices and Modality: Examination of words and expressions that reflect degrees of authority, such as directives, hedges, and modal verbs.
2. Turn-Taking and Interactional Control: Analysis of who speaks, when, and how conversational control is exercised or resisted.
3. Speech Acts: Identification of assertive, interrogative, and evaluative speech acts that reflect or challenge authority.
4. Code-Switching Patterns: Observation of shifts between English and the native language and how these shifts relate to roles, power, and identity.
5. Through this layered analysis, the study seeks to uncover how language serves as a tool for exercising and negotiating power in educational discourse.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Teachers and Students Construct Power Through Language

This section highlights how power is formed and exercised through verbal interactions between teacher and students can be seen in the sample analyses below:

- a) "The analysis focused on how institutional authority and asymmetrical power were expressed through discourse. For instance, teacher-led decisions such as '*Kita abaikan ini dulu, karena kita mau cobakan pada data yang berdistribusi normal*' illustrate unidirectional control over the direction of classroom activities (English version: "We set this aside for now, because we want to try it on data that are normally distributed")

This utterance reflects the teacher's unilateral decision-making process during classroom instruction. Although the teacher uses the inclusive pronoun "we," the context reveals that students were not actively involved in deciding the direction of the lesson. The use of "we" merely serves as a rhetorical strategy to soften the exercise of authority. In reality, the teacher retains full control over classroom activities. This demonstrates an asymmetrical power structure, where the teacher dominates the interaction while students follow instructions. From a CDA perspective, this is a clear instance of "power behind discourse," where institutional roles and authority are embedded and reproduced through language.

- b) "Students' contributions, by contrast, were largely passive and minimal. Responses such as '*Bisa, Mam*', '*Sudah, Mam*', and '*Oke, Mam*' demonstrate their limited role in discourse construction..." (English version: "Sure, Ma'am; done, Ma'am; okay, Ma'am.")

These student responses are short, formulaic, and primarily serve to confirm or acknowledge the teacher's instructions. They lack elaboration, critical engagement, or

independent thought. The brevity and repetition of such utterances suggest that students occupy a passive discursive role. Rather than contributing meaningfully to the dialogue, they simply respond in ways that confirm the teacher's control. In CDA terms, this reflects a restricted communicative role imposed on students, reinforcing the teacher's dominance and illustrating how discourse can limit participation and agency in the classroom.

- c) Even moments of teacher disengagement, such as '*Coba baca betul-betul perintahnya, sebentar saya mau balas WA. Baca dulu,*' revealed sustained control..." (English version: "Try to carefully read the instructions, I'll reply to a message for a moment. Read it first.")

Even during a moment of teacher disengagement, the teacher maintains control by instructing students to continue a task. This utterance illustrates how authority is sustained not only through direct interaction but also through indirect presence. The teacher's temporary withdrawal from active teaching does not reduce their control over classroom activities. Instead, language is used to ensure that students remain on task, reinforcing the teacher's ongoing authority. This shows how discursive power is exercised continuously, even in the teacher's absence, through instructions that position students as obedient task-followers.

- d) "The analysis focused on teacher utterances, student responses, and interactional sequences. These were examined using CDA to uncover how language structured participation, assigned roles, and reinforced hierarchical relationships..."

This analytical focus reveals the structured nature of classroom discourse, in which the teacher orchestrates most aspects of the interaction. By determining who speaks, when they speak, and what topics are addressed, the teacher effectively governs the flow and direction of communication. Students' roles are shaped by this structure, leaving little room for spontaneous or independent contributions. From a CDA perspective, this exemplifies "interactional positioning," where the power dynamic is maintained through controlled turn-taking and topic management. The teacher's dominant role structures the interaction to reinforce their institutional authority.

- e) "Throughout the session, the teacher's discourse exhibited authoritative control over both the technical process and student behavior... reinforced compliance with correct technical formatting."

This sample underscores the comprehensive nature of the teacher's control not only over academic tasks but also over student conduct and discipline. The teacher's language serves both instructional and regulatory functions, shaping how students behave as well as what they learn. This dual function reflects discursive hegemony, where language is used to establish norms of correctness and obedience. Drawing on Foucault's view, this kind of discourse does not simply convey information but also constructs subjects who conform to institutional expectations. The teacher's language thus becomes a tool for reinforcing both knowledge and social order within the classroom.

3.2 Discourse Patterns That Reinforce or Challenge Authority

This section highlights how language patterns reinforce or potentially challenge authority in classroom interaction:

- a) "The teacher frequently used declarative and directive speech acts such as '*Nah, dengan data seperti ini dalam satu kelas, saya akan memakai uji paired samples t-test,*' positioning herself as the unquestioned authority in both content and procedure..." (English version: "Well, with data like this in one class, I will use the

paired samples t-test.”)

This statement illustrates the teacher’s use of declarative and directive speech acts to assert control over classroom procedures. By saying “I will use paired samples t-test,” the teacher positions herself as the sole decision-maker in both content and method. The use of first-person pronouns and assertive tone reflects a top-down dissemination of knowledge, where student input is neither requested nor accommodated. This aligns with the CDA framework of institutional discourse, in which authority is constructed through definitive statements that leave no room for negotiation or dialogic engagement, reinforcing the teacher’s dominant position in the classroom hierarchy.

- b) “The lesson continued with sequential commands like ‘*Silakan buka ya, buka "Layout Variable View" di SPSS kalian,*’ and ‘*Coba lihat lagi, deh, tuh, yang ini,*’ which illustrate how turn-taking and topic control were entirely led by the teacher. (English version: “Please open it, open ‘Layout Variable View’ in your SPSS. Try to look at it again, see, this one”)

These utterances are examples of sequential commands that structure both the turn-taking and focus of attention during the lesson. The teacher issues instructions in a continuous flow, controlling the timing and direction of the class. Students are guided step-by-step through the activity, with limited space for deviation or independent initiative. From a discourse analysis perspective, this reflects a teacher-centered communicative model where control is embedded in the structure of interaction itself. Language serves as a regulatory tool, dictating when and how students should act, thus reinforcing a system of compliance and obedience within institutional norms.

- c) “Furthermore, the teacher emphasized behavioral expectations, as reflected in ‘*Tapi mengajarnya yang benar-benar Ananda pada saat eksperimen, ya. Jangan mengajarnya asal-asalan,*’ where instruction extended beyond content...” (English version: “But make sure to teach it properly during the experiment, okay? Don’t just teach it carelessly.”)

Here, the teacher moves beyond instructional content to articulate behavioral expectations. The directive not only guides student action but also imposes a moral or qualitative judgment on how they should perform. This indicates an extension of power beyond knowledge transmission into the domain of behavioral regulation. In this context, the teacher uses language to shape student identity as responsible and diligent learners. CDA would interpret this as part of discursive discipline, where the teacher’s authority is upheld by defining acceptable forms of behavior, thereby constructing norms that students are expected to internalize and follow.

- d) “Motivational and advisory remarks such as ‘*Harus, ya, Ananda. Kalau mau kayak ini, motivasi. Ini penelitian yang menyenangkan*’ illustrate how the teacher sustained control over the classroom atmosphere... These instances reflect a form of soft power...” (English version: “You must do it, okay, Ananda. If you want it like this, motivation. This is an enjoyable research.”)

This utterance illustrates the use of motivational discourse to sustain authority through more subtle means. Rather than commanding or criticizing directly, the teacher appeals to students’ emotions and aspirations, encouraging motivation and engagement. This represents a form of soft power, where influence is maintained through persuasive and supportive language rather than overt coercion. While the tone appears nurturing, it still functions to direct student behavior and maintain classroom control. Within CDA, this reflects power in its ideological form, where control is exercised through values and beliefs that align students with institutional goals.

- e) "Units of analysis included teacher monologues, instructional commands, references to student responsibilities, and procedural discourse. These were examined to understand how control, compliance, and institutional norms are constructed and maintained..."

This analytical statement highlights the range of discursive tools used by the teacher to structure classroom interaction. Monologues reflect the teacher's dominance in floor time; commands dictate student action; references to responsibility shape student roles; and procedural discourse manages technical flow. Each of these discursive forms contributes to the construction of a controlled and compliant learning environment. From a CDA perspective, this supports the idea that language is not neutral it is actively involved in constructing power relations, maintaining institutional norms, and defining classroom roles in ways that privilege the teacher's authority.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Enactment of Power Relations in Teacher-Student Discourse

The findings reveal that power in classroom discourse is largely enacted through asymmetrical teacher-student interactions, where the teacher dominates both the content and flow of communication. Teacher utterances such as "Kita abaikan ini dulu, karena kita mau cobakan pada data yang berdistribusi normal" reflect unilateral decision-making, positioning the teacher as the central authority in the classroom. This supports the claim that language is not merely a tool for conveying academic content but also functions as a mechanism for constructing social relationships, defining classroom norms, and negotiating institutional roles. The teacher's control was evident even during moments of disengagement; for example, when instructions were given while the teacher momentarily stepped away ("sebentar saya mau balas WA..."), illustrating how discursive authority remains persistent and embedded in the routines of interaction.

These patterns align with previous research on classroom discourse that reveals asymmetrical power dynamics between teachers and students. Teachers dominate interactions through various control mechanisms, such as managing turn-taking (Candrika Citra Sari, 2020), using imperative forms and display questions (Herdiawan & Rofi'i, 2023), and interrupting students or restricting their contributions (Sultan & Jufri, 2019). This control reflects not only teachers' social status but also their pedagogical competence (Sultan & Jufri, 2019). Moreover, teachers tend to employ different types of power, with expert and reward power being the most frequent (Rachmawati, 2022). Although some teachers attempt to stimulate critical thinking through open-ended questions (Candrika Citra Sari, 2020), many still adopt monologic discourse patterns despite expressing a preference for dialogic approaches (Herdiawan & Rofi'i, 2023). These power imbalances can hinder students' language skill development and negatively impact the learning climate (Sultan & Jufri, 2019). Understanding these dynamics is therefore crucial for developing more equitable and empowering teacher-student relationships in classroom settings.

4.2 Linguistic Strategies That Reflect Power and Authority

The data also demonstrate how specific linguistic strategies are employed by teachers to establish and reinforce authority in classroom interactions. Directive and declarative speech acts were frequently used to shape student behavior and control the instructional flow. For instance, statements such as "Saya akan memakai uji paired samples t-test" and "Silakan buka ya, buka 'Layout Variable View' di SPSS kalian" reflect a teacher-centered discourse that limits student autonomy. As highlighted in the introduction, "teachers' use of language—including directives, praise, and questioning—carries embedded meanings about authority, hierarchy, and compliance". These speech

patterns function as mechanisms of institutional control and are reinforced through structured turn-taking, procedural monologues, and references to responsibility.

Moreover, motivational language, as in “Harus, ya, Ananda. Kalau mau kayak ini, motivasi”, illustrates the use of soft power, where the teacher influences the classroom atmosphere by aligning emotional appeals with institutional goals. This finding aligns with research on classroom discourse, which reveals that teachers employ specific linguistic strategies—particularly directive speech acts such as commands and requests—to shape student behavior and instructional flow (Azizah et al., 2020; Dewa Ayu Widiastri et al., 2019). Teachers often utilize imperative forms and display questions to impose authority and control interactions (Herdiawan & Rofi'i, 2023). This teacher-centered approach can limit student autonomy and participation, with students typically responding in brief rather than extended statements (Herdiawan & Rofi'i, 2023).

Furthermore, the distribution of authority in classroom interactions is shaped by the roles and statuses of teachers and students, influencing the types and functions of speech acts produced by each party (Darong, 2024). While teachers predominantly use directive speech acts, students' speech acts—though fewer—serve similar functions in managing interaction (Darong, 2024). These linguistic patterns reflect the cultural scripts and the importance placed on the teacher's role within the educational system (Herdiawan & Rofi'i, 2023).

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study highlights that power relations in English classroom interactions are predominantly constructed through asymmetrical discourse patterns, with teachers occupying dominant roles by controlling turn-taking, issuing directives, and regulating student behavior. Language functions not only as a medium for instruction but also as a tool for shaping authority, identity, and participation. While students often respond passively, they also exhibit subtle forms of agency, indicating that power is not absolute but negotiated through everyday interactions. The use of both overt and subtle linguistic strategies—ranging from direct commands to motivational appeals—demonstrates how discourse reinforces institutional norms and teacher authority. Understanding these dynamics encourages educators to reflect critically on their language use and fosters the development of more inclusive, participatory, and empowering classroom environments.

REFERENCES

- Azizah, A., Suparno, S., & Supriyadi, S. (2020). Indonesian in-service teacher's production of directive speech acts and students' responses. *Research and Innovation in English Language Studies Journal*, 1(3). <https://doi.org/10.47175/rielsj.v1i3.158>
- Brooks, C. (2016). Role, power, ritual, and resistance: A critical discourse analysis of college classroom talk. *Communication Education*, 80, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10570314.2015.1098723>
- Chen, Y., Yu, K., & Shen, Z. (2024). Exploring pedagogical interactions: A critical discourse analysis of college English teaching in Chinese media colleges. *International Journal of Languages Literature and Linguistics*, 10(4), 330–335. <https://doi.org/10.18178/ijll.2024.10.4.537>
- Darong, H. (2024). Speech acts production in EFL classroom interactions (A conversation analysis). *Ranah: Jurnal Kajian Bahasa*, 13(2). <https://doi.org/10.26499/rnh.v13i2.4771>
- Deji-Afuye, O. O. (2024). Students' linguistic moves in English language classroom interactions in relation to teachers' control strategies. *British Journal of Multidisciplinary and Advanced Studies*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.37745/bjmas.2022.0410>
- Desrochers, M., & Murray, J. (2021). Applying critical discourse analysis in the classroom.

- Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 23(2).
<https://doi.org/10.52214/cice.v23i2.8486>
- Dewa Ayu Widiarsri, D., Budiarsa, M., Sudipa, I. N., & Satyawati, M. S. (2019). Speech act in Indonesian language teaching: An ethnography communication study. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Culture*, 5(5).
<https://doi.org/10.21744/ijllc.v5n5.740>
- Herdiawan, R. D., & Rofi'i, A. (2023). Pre-service teachers' power dominance and interaction strategies in EFL classroom discourse. *Visipena Journal*, 14(1).
<https://doi.org/10.46244/visipena.v14i1.2062>
- Herdiawan, R., & Rofi'i, A. (2023). Pre-service teachers' power dominance and interaction strategies in EFL classroom discourse. *Visipena Journal*, 14(1).
<https://doi.org/10.46244/visipena.v14i1.2062>
- Jenks, C. (2020). Applying critical discourse analysis to classrooms. *Classroom Discourse*.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19463014.2020.1761847>
- Jensen, B., Valdés, G., & Gallimore, R. (2021). Teachers learning to implement equitable classroom talk. *Educational Researcher*, 50(8).
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X211014859>
- Jozauska, K. (2019). The concept of power in teacher talk in contextuality of teacher's authority. *Innovations, Technologies and Research in Education*.
<https://doi.org/10.22364/atee.2019.itre.29>
- Khan, K. A., Khan, A. U., & Mahmood, A. (2022). The role of discourse analysis in understanding language teaching and learning. *Global Social Sciences Review*.
[https://doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2022\(vii-i\).48](https://doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2022(vii-i).48)
- Lai, Y., & King, K. (2020). Diversity and inclusion in education. In *The Cambridge Handbook of Discourse Studies* (pp. 505–526). <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108348195.024>
- Oral, Y. (2013). "The right things are what I expect them to do": Negotiation of power relations in an English classroom. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 12.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2013.775877>
- Rachmawati, S. (2022). Critical discourse analysis of language and power in EFL classroom interaction. *JET (Journal of English Teaching)*, 8(2), 224–232.
<https://doi.org/10.33541/jet.v8i2.3633>
- Sapkota, C. N. (2024). Critical discourse analysis on language and power in Nepali public ELT classroom. *Madhyabindu Journal*, 9(1).
<https://doi.org/10.3126/madhyabindu.v9i1.65382>
- Sari, C. C. (2020). Conversation analysis: Turn-taking mechanism and power relation in classroom setting. *CELTIC: A Journal of Culture, English Language Teaching, Literature and Linguistics*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.22219/celtic.v7i2.12598>
- Sari, C. C. (2020). Conversation analysis: Turn-taking mechanism and power relation in classroom setting. *A Journal of Culture English Language Teaching Literature & Linguistics*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.22219/CELTIC.V7I2.12598>
- Sultan, S., & Jufri, J. (2019). Teacher's control on students: Representation of antisocial communication in an Indonesian language learning context. *Humaniora*, 10(2).
<https://doi.org/10.21512/humaniora.v10i2.5531>
- Sung, C. (2019). Negotiating participation and identity in a second language: Mainland Chinese students' English learning experiences in a multilingual university in Hong Kong. *Research Papers in Education*, 36(4), 381–401.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2019.1677760>
- Tian, W., & Dumlao, R. (2020). Impacts of positioning, power, and resistance on EFL learners' identity construction through classroom interaction: A perspective from critical classroom discourse analysis. *HCAS_JOURNALS*, 25(6).
<https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2020.4161>
- Wailissa, H. R. (2023). A speech act analysis of teacher-student interactions in educational cinema: A case study of "Freedom Writers". *HUELE: Journal of Applied Linguistics, Literature and Culture*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.30598/huele.v3.i2.p61-72>
- Widiarsri, D. A., Budiarsa, M., Sudipa, I. N., & Satyawati, M. S. (2019). Speech act in Indonesian language teaching: An ethnography communication study. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Culture*, 5(5).
<https://doi.org/10.21744/ijllc.v5n5.740>