

Teacher Talk and Student Involvement in Elementary School English Language Learning Classrooms

Denisa Nur Octaliani, Imam Santosa

denisaocto6@student.esaunggul.ac.id, imam.santosa@esaunggul.ac.id

Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Esa Unggul, Jakarta, Indonesia

*Correspondence to: Imam Santosa

Universitas Esa Unggul

email: imam.santosa@esaunggul.ac.id

Abstract: This study aimed to analyze the types of teacher talk that influence student involvement in elementary English learning. The study was motivated by the important role of classroom interaction in promoting active learning, while evidence regarding how specific teacher talk strategies shape student involvement in elementary English classrooms remains limited. A qualitative approach with a case study design was employed. Data were collected through classroom observations, field notes, lesson videos, and observation sheets and were analyzed thematically using ATLAS.ti. The analysis focused on identifying teacher talk types and examining their relationships with indicators of student involvement, including attention, verbal response, active participation, concentration, enthusiasm, instruction following, and classroom interaction. The findings revealed that the most prominent teacher talk types were asking questions, giving information or explanations, affirming students' contributions, giving directions or instructions, and stimulating students' motivation and interest. Among these, asking questions most effectively encouraged active participation by eliciting verbal responses and promoting classroom interaction. Giving information or explanations sustained students' attention to lesson content, whereas clear directions and instructions supported students' understanding of learning activities and maintained their engagement throughout the lesson. These findings demonstrate that teacher talk functions not only as a means of content delivery but also as a pedagogical strategy for fostering student involvement and creating interactive English learning environments in elementary classrooms.

Keywords: elementary school; english language learning; student involvement; teacher talk

Article info: Submitted May 30, 2026 | Revised Jun 13, 2026 | Accepted Jun 17, 2026 | Published Jul 25, 2026

Recommended citation: Octaliani, D. N., & Santosa, I. (2026). Teacher Talk and Student Involvement in Elementary School English Language Learning Classrooms. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran Guru Sekolah Dasar (JPPGuseda)*, 9(2), 114–125. <https://doi.org/10.55215/jppguseda.v9i2.53>

Introduction

English language learning in elementary school is shaped not only by textbooks, learning materials, or activities prepared by the teacher, but also by the teacher's classroom language, which functions as an important pedagogical resource in English instruction (Flynn & Hoy, 2026; Yoana et al., 2020; Winanta et al., 2020). One element that strongly shapes classroom learning, although it is often treated as ordinary classroom speech, is the language used by the teacher during instruction. In English classrooms, teachers do not merely deliver content; they also build interaction, direct students' attention, provide instructions, create opportunities for students to respond, regulate the classroom climate, and help learners construct meaning through verbal support (Jiang et al., 2026; Nasir et al., 2019; Nurpahmi, 2017). These verbal actions are generally referred to as teacher talk. In English as a foreign language learning, teacher talk becomes particularly important because elementary school students usually have limited exposure to English beyond the classroom and depend heavily on classroom input provided by the teacher (Cahyani & Chotimah, 2023; Rahayu & Syahrizal, 2020; Sukmawati, 2019). Consequently, the teacher's language often becomes the primary source of direct and comprehensible English input that students hear during learning activities (Muluneh et al., 2026; Siregar & Lismay, 2023).

Teacher talk has a wide pedagogical function. It helps teachers manage classroom activities, supports language learning, and contributes to meaningful classroom interaction (Cahyani & Chotimah, 2023; Ahmed & Saalh, 2025). It is also viewed as an interactive tool that can influence student involvement because teacher utterances provide directions, questions, reinforcement, and opportunities for participation (Azizah et al., 2023; Nasir et al., 2019). In English learning contexts, what teachers say and how they say it can determine whether

students merely listen passively or become genuinely involved in learning. The problem is that teacher talk does not automatically support involvement. Teacher utterances that are too dominant, too rapid, too lengthy, or insufficiently responsive can leave students silent, confused, or mechanically following instructions without understanding the purpose of the activity. Therefore, teachers must consciously monitor their speaking habits and adapt their linguistic complexity to ensure their verbal input serves as a supportive scaffold rather than a cognitive barrier. By striking this optimal balance, educators can transform their instructional discourse into a powerful catalyst for active, meaningful student engagement and deeper linguistic comprehension.

Student involvement is a central aspect of classroom learning because learning does not occur simply because students are physically present. Involvement includes attention, concentration, perseverance, participation, willingness to ask questions, readiness to answer, and effort in completing academic tasks (Ginting, 2021; Yu et al., 2022). Steinhart et al. (2022) distinguish involvement from engagement by emphasizing that involvement refers to students' active state of being involved in an activity. In English classrooms, this can be observed when students pay attention to the teacher, respond to questions, follow instructions, try to use English vocabulary or expressions, cooperate with peers, and react to learning tasks. A quiet classroom, therefore, should not be mistaken for an involved classroom. It may look controlled, but it does not necessarily represent active learning. Consequently, educators must shift their focus from merely enforcing discipline and quietness to proactively cultivating a dynamic environment where verbal risk-taking and collaborative interactions are highly encouraged. Ultimately, it is through this visible, energetic participation that students can effectively internalize the target language and build authentic communicative competence.

At the elementary level, the relationship between teacher talk and student involvement becomes more complex. Young learners are still developing linguistically, cognitively, socially, and emotionally. They need clear instructions, concrete examples, repetition, supportive intonation, friendly expressions, and gradual opportunities to practise. English learning for young learners should be interesting, interactive, and enjoyable so that students can develop vocabulary and basic communicative ability (Hotimah, 2017; Rahayu & Syahrizal, 2020). Teacher talk in elementary school must therefore be adjusted to students' abilities. If teachers use language that is too abstract or instructions that are unclear, students may lose focus. In contrast, simple, supportive, and responsive teacher talk can help students follow the lesson with greater confidence. By strategically scaffolding their language in this manner, educators can create a psychologically safe environment that encourages active participation and reduces the fear of making mistakes. Ultimately, mastering this delicate balance in classroom communication is essential for laying a strong foundation for students' future language acquisition and lifelong learning motivation.

Previous studies indicate that teacher talk may contribute to student participation and classroom atmosphere. Azizah et al. (2023) reported that teacher talk such as asking questions, giving directions, and giving praise may encourage students to become more involved in English classrooms. Wirza and Sholihah (2020) also showed that teacher initiation through questions, correction, encouragement, and instruction provides space for students to respond. Yoana et al. (2020) found that several features of teacher talk, such as referential questions, display questions, scaffolding, and extended teacher turns, can increase students' attention, effort, and action during learning. However, teacher talk in elementary English learning still requires clearer investigation, especially regarding the types of teacher talk that can be directly observed as supporting student involvement. Addressing this empirical gap is crucial, as identifying these specific verbal behaviors will enable educators to move beyond general theories and apply targeted techniques tailored for young learners. Ultimately, a more granular understanding of these interactions will equip elementary teachers with the evidence-based tools necessary to foster a highly engaging and dynamic language-learning environment.

Previous studies indicate that teacher talk may contribute to student participation and classroom atmosphere. Azizah et al. (2023) reported that teacher talk such as asking questions, giving directions, and giving praise may encourage students to become more involved in English classrooms. Wirza and Sholihah (2020) also showed that teacher initiation through questions, correction, encouragement, and instruction provides space for students to respond. Yoana et al. (2020) found that several features of teacher talk, such as referential questions, display questions, scaffolding, and extended teacher turns, can increase students' attention, effort, and action during learning. However, teacher talk in elementary English learning still requires clearer investigation, especially regarding the types of teacher talk that can be directly observed as supporting student involvement. Therefore, this study aims to identify the types of teacher talk that influence student involvement in elementary English classrooms. The contribution of this research lies in providing empirical evidence on how specific forms of teacher talk are related to observable indicators of student involvement, such as attention, response, active participation, concentration, enthusiasm, instruction-following, and classroom interaction. By clarifying this relationship, the study offers practical insights for elementary English teachers in using classroom language not only to deliver material, but also to promote more active, responsive, and meaningful student involvement.

This study focuses on one research question: What types of teacher talk influence student involvement in English language learning in elementary school? This question is important because teachers need to understand that the quality of their speech is not only related to content delivery, but also to the way students become involved in the learning process. The analysis therefore identifies the types of teacher talk that appear in classroom interaction and examines their relationship with indicators of student involvement. Through this focus, the study is expected to provide a more operational understanding of how teacher talk supports attention, response, participation, and student confidence in elementary English learning. Consequently, the findings will offer practical guidelines for educators to consciously adapt their verbal strategies to create a more engaging and interactive classroom environment. Ultimately, optimizing these teacher-student interactions is crucial for laying a strong foundation in early language acquisition and fostering a lifelong positive attitude toward English.

Teacher talk refers to the language teachers use during instruction, such as explaining content, giving directions, asking questions, responding to students, providing reinforcement, and managing classroom behavior. In English language learning, teacher talk functions both as an instructional tool and a source of language input (Winanta et al., 2020; Yoana et al., 2020). This role is especially important in EFL classrooms because students often depend on the teacher's language as their main source of comprehensible English input (Muluneh et al., 2026; Siregar & Lismay, 2023). Effective teacher talk is not simply about speaking more, but about using language purposefully to support understanding, interaction, and participation. It may appear through explanation, questioning, repetition, examples, scaffolding, praise, correction, and the use of students' ideas (Jiang et al., 2026; Fatmawati et al., 2022). Previous studies classify teacher talk into direct forms, such as lecturing, giving directions, and asserting authority, and indirect forms, such as asking questions, encouraging students, accepting feelings, and using students' ideas (Nurpahmi, 2017; Nasir et al., 2019). Based on these classifications, this study examines teacher talk through categories such as giving directions, giving information, asking questions, praise and encouragement, accepting students' ideas, stimulating motivation, affirming students' authority, and regulating classroom behavior.

Student involvement in English learning refers to students' effort to pay attention, understand, respond, participate, ask questions, follow instructions, and use the language during classroom activities (Ginting, 2021; Yu et al., 2022). Involvement is shaped by instructional design, classroom atmosphere, and teacher communication. Teacher talk can support involvement by directing students' attention, creating opportunities for response, building confidence through praise and encouragement, and expanding students' contributions through the use of their ideas. Prior studies show that asking questions, giving directions, scaffolding, praise, correction, and teacher initiation can encourage students' attention, effort, participation, and classroom interaction (Azizah et al., 2023; Yoana et al., 2020; Wirza & Sholihah, 2020). However, teacher talk can also restrict involvement when it is too dominant, unclear, or not suited to young learners' abilities (Ana et al., 2021; Rahayu & Syahrizal, 2020). Therefore, teacher talk should be clear, purposeful, supportive, and interactive so that it helps elementary students become actively involved in English learning.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2017) with a case study design. The qualitative approach was selected because the study sought to understand in depth the types of teacher talk that are associated with student involvement in English learning at the elementary level. Qualitative research enables researchers to explore phenomena contextually through non-numerical data, such as observation notes, interaction transcripts, and descriptions of classroom behavior (Denny & Weckesser, 2022). A case study design was used because the study focused on specific classroom situations and attempted to understand teacher talk as it occurred in real learning contexts. A case study involves an in-depth analysis of a particular case. In this study, the case examined was the practice of teacher talk and student involvement in elementary English classrooms (Tisdell et al., 2025). Ultimately, this methodological framework ensures that the complex, real-world dynamics of these interactions are captured authentically, providing rich insights into how specific verbal strategies foster active learning in young learners.

The research was conducted in two elementary schools in Tangerang City, consisting of one public elementary school and one private elementary school. The selection of these two school types was intended to obtain a richer picture of teacher talk practices across different institutional contexts. The research participants were four English teachers from the two schools. The teachers consisted of elementary English teachers who were actively teaching English classes during the period of data collection and had direct experience managing classroom interaction with young learners. The teachers were selected because they directly used teacher talk during instruction and interacted with students throughout classroom activities. Students in the observed classes also became data sources for identifying student involvement. The students were elementary school learners who participated in the observed English lessons; however, they were not treated as individual research

subjects for achievement assessment, but as classroom participants whose observable involvement was analyzed in relation to teacher talk. The focus of the research was not to evaluate teachers' personalities, school quality, or students' individual achievement, but to examine patterns of teacher utterances and observable student involvement.

The primary data were collected through classroom observation. Observation was selected because the research question required direct data on the types of teacher talk that appeared in classroom interaction. Observation allowed the researcher to see the phenomenon as it occurred in the classroom rather than relying only on participants' memories or perceptions. Hasanah (2017) notes that observation can provide broader, more comprehensive, and contextual understanding of a studied phenomenon. In this study, the researcher acted as a non-participant observer and did not take part in the learning activities. This position enabled the researcher to focus on teacher utterances, student responses, and classroom dynamics without directly influencing the flow of instruction. The classroom observations were conducted during regular English lessons in the selected schools. Each teacher was observed during classroom teaching sessions, and the observation focused on naturally occurring teacher talk and student involvement during instruction, questioning, explanation, task direction, and classroom interaction.

The main instrument was a teacher talk observation sheet. The observation sheet contained categories of teacher talk synthesized from the literature: giving directions or instructions, giving information or lecture, accepting or using students' ideas, asking questions, praise and encouragement, acknowledging and accepting students' feelings, stimulating students' motivation and interest, affirming students' authority, and criticizing or justifying authority. Each category was observed based on verbal behavior indicators. For instance, asking questions was recorded when the teacher asked content-related questions and allowed students to respond. Praise and encouragement were recorded when the teacher provided verbal or nonverbal reinforcement. Accepting or using students' ideas was recorded when the teacher accepted, repeated, expanded, or connected students' ideas to the lesson. To support coding consistency, each category was defined before data analysis, and the researcher used these operational definitions as coding guidelines when reviewing field notes and video recordings.

In addition to identifying teacher talk, the observation also recorded indicators of student involvement. These indicators included attention to the teacher, verbal responses, answers to questions, participation in activities, willingness to try using English, body movements showing involvement, and readiness to follow instructions. Observing student involvement was necessary so that the analysis did not stop at a list of teacher utterances. By recording student responses, the study could examine the relationship between teacher talk types and forms of involvement. For example, teacher questions could be connected with student responses, teacher directions with students' readiness to follow activities, and teacher praise with students' willingness to answer again. Therefore, the analysis emphasized patterns of association and co-occurrence between teacher talk and student involvement, rather than claiming direct causal influence. By highlighting these correlational patterns, the research ultimately provides educators with practical, evidence-based insights into how specific conversational adjustments can organically cultivate a more interactive and responsive learning environment.

The observation data were supported by video recordings after permission had been obtained from relevant parties. The videos were used so that classroom interaction could be reviewed more carefully. Each recording was watched more than once to produce detailed field notes. Repeated review was important because teacher talk often occurred quickly and overlapped with student responses. Without recordings, some teacher utterances, pauses, student reactions, or nonverbal forms of involvement could easily be missed. During this process, the researcher recorded the utterance context, the type of teacher talk, the student response, and the surrounding learning situation. Relevant segments of classroom interaction were then selected as quotation units for coding, especially when a teacher utterance and a student involvement indicator appeared in the same classroom event. This rigorous and iterative documentation process ultimately ensured a high degree of reliability and trustworthiness in the qualitative data. By accurately capturing the nuanced, real-time interplay between instruction and reaction, this method provided a robust foundation for drawing valid conclusions about effective pedagogical communication.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was used to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes emerging from the data (Jnanathapaswi, 2021). The analysis involved data familiarization, selection of important excerpts, coding, grouping codes into categories, interpretation, and theme development (Naeem et al., 2023). ATLAS.ti was used to assist the organization, coding, and management of qualitative data, following its function as a tool for supporting qualitative data analysis (Afriansyah, 2018). Initial codes were developed from the predetermined teacher talk categories and then connected to indicators of student involvement found in the observation. The coding procedure began with reading field notes and reviewing video recordings repeatedly, followed by identifying classroom excerpts that contained teacher utterances and student responses. These excerpts were coded according to teacher talk

categories and student involvement indicators. After coding, the researcher examined code frequency, co-occurrence patterns, and contextual notes to interpret how particular types of teacher talk were related to forms of student involvement. The analysis was directed toward answering the research question concerning the types of teacher talk that are related to student involvement in elementary English learning.

Trustworthiness was maintained through technique triangulation and repeated checking of the observation data. Triangulation was conducted by comparing field notes, video recordings, and observation sheets. Repeated checking was carried out so that interpretations of teacher talk types and student involvement would not depend on a single reading of the data. Research documentation, including field notes, observation sheets, and relevant interaction transcripts, was retained as an audit trail. In addition, the researcher compared coded data with the original observation records to ensure that each interpretation remained grounded in classroom evidence. The use of video recordings also allowed the researcher to revisit unclear interactional moments and reduce the risk of missing overlapping teacher and student responses. With these procedures, the study aimed to produce a more accountable description of teacher talk types related to student involvement in elementary English classrooms.

The methodological limitation of this study lies in its focused research question and limited case context. Because the study was conducted in two elementary schools and involved four English teachers, the findings should not be generalized to all elementary English classrooms. Instead, the findings should be understood as a contextual interpretation of teacher talk and student involvement in the observed classrooms. The observation data were not treated as evidence for judging teacher personality, school quality, or general learning success. Instead, the data were read as classroom interaction evidence showing how teacher utterances functioned in English learning situations. This principle was necessary to keep the analysis sharp and prevent it from expanding into issues that were beyond the study's scope. In the analysis, each finding needed to be supported by classroom excerpts, activity context, and observable student responses. In this way, claims about teacher talk were grounded in concrete classroom evidence rather than assumption.

Result and Discussion

Teacher Talk Types Identified in the Classroom

The data analysis included 116 quotation units coded from classroom observation. From these quotations, the analysis identified 119 occurrences of teacher talk codes and 160 occurrences of student involvement codes. The difference between the number of quotation units and the number of code applications indicates that several quotation units contained more than one code. Therefore, the frequencies presented in this section should be understood as code occurrences, not as direct measures of causal influence. In other words, teacher talk types that appeared more frequently indicate more visible classroom patterns, but their pedagogical meaning still needs to be interpreted together with observation comments and involvement indicators that occurred in the same quotation units. By contextualizing these numerical frequencies within the broader qualitative data, the research avoids oversimplifying the highly nuanced dynamics of teacher-student interactions. Ultimately, this holistic analytical approach ensures that the resulting findings accurately reflect how specific conversational patterns function practically to stimulate active learning in real-world educational settings.

Eight types of teacher talk were identified in the classroom observation data: asking questions, giving information or lecture, affirming students' authority, giving directions or instructions, stimulating students' motivation and interest, criticizing or justifying authority, praise and encouragement, and acknowledging and accepting students' feelings. The most frequent type was asking questions, with 31 occurrences or 26.1% of all teacher talk codes. The next categories were giving information or lecture with 26 occurrences or 21.8%, affirming students' authority with 20 occurrences or 16.8%, and giving directions or instructions with 19 occurrences or 16.0%. These four categories formed the largest portion of the observed teacher talk patterns. Lower-frequency categories included stimulating students' motivation and interest with 14 occurrences or 11.8%, criticizing or justifying authority with 5 occurrences or 4.2%, praise and encouragement with 3 occurrences or 2.5%, and acknowledging and accepting students' feelings with 1 occurrence or 0.8%.

Table 1. Frequency of Teacher Talk Type Codes

No.	Teacher Talk Type	Frequency	Percentage	Brief Interpretation
1	Asking questions	31	26.1%	The most visible elicitation strategy; strongly related to students' oral participation.
2	Giving information/lecture	26	21.8%	Input and clarification strategy; mainly related to students' attention.

No.	Teacher Talk Type	Frequency	Percentage	Brief Interpretation
3	Affirming students' authority	20	16.8%	Agency-building strategy; related to participation and perseverance.
4	Giving directions/instructions	19	16.0%	Task-management strategy; related to attention and concentration.
5	Stimulating students' motivation and interest	14	11.8%	Activity-framing strategy; related to attention, concentration, and participation.
6	Criticizing or justifying authority	5	4.2%	Regulatory strategy; mainly used to restore focus.
7	Praise and encouragement	3	2.5%	Affective reinforcement; low frequency but supports confidence and effort.
8	Acknowledging and accepting students' feelings	1	0.8%	Affective-regulatory strategy; only one coded occurrence.

The data indicates that the most visible forms of teacher talk were asking questions, giving information or explanation, affirming students' authority, and giving directions or instructions. Based on the frequency data of teacher talk types presented in **Table 1**, classroom interaction is predominantly driven by elicitation and instructional strategies, as evidenced by the high percentages of asking questions (26.1%) as the primary tool for encouraging oral participation, and giving information or lectures (21.8%) to secure student attention. Furthermore, educators actively manage classroom dynamics and foster learner autonomy through affirming students' authority (16.8%), giving directions (16.0%), and stimulating motivation (11.8%), all of which collectively support concentration, perseverance, and active engagement. Conversely, regulatory and affective approaches are notably minimal; criticizing or justifying authority accounts for only 4.2% of occurrences to restore focus, while emotional interventions such as praise and encouragement (2.5%) and acknowledging students' feelings (0.8%) rank at the very bottom. Overall, this distribution indicates that the observed teacher communication practices strategically prioritize cognitive engagement and academic task management over affective reinforcement or direct behavioral discipline.

Teacher Talk Types Supporting Student Involvement

The coded data show that teacher talk supported student involvement through different classroom functions. Asking questions was the teacher talk type most strongly associated with active participation in classroom discussion. The 31 occurrences of the asking questions code, 30 co-occurred with active participation. This pattern indicates that questions were not used only to check students' knowledge but also to open space for oral response. Observation comments showed that students answered pronunciation questions, responded to vocabulary questions, continued reading, and reacted to teacher prompts. Thus, questions functioned as involvement triggers because students were asked to produce responses rather than merely receive explanations. Giving information or lecture also appeared as an important category (Jiang et al., 2026; Sukmayadi et al., 2026). This code most frequently co-occurred with attention, with 19 instances, and was also related to concentration and active participation. In the observation data, teachers provided information about the day's activity, word meanings, pronunciation, task instructions, assignment deadlines, and the next meeting's materials. When information was delivered clearly and matched students' needs, students were recorded as paying attention, listening carefully, or joining the classroom discussion. This finding indicates that teacher explanations remain necessary in elementary EFL classrooms because teachers function as sources of comprehensible language input.

Affirming students' authority showed an interesting pattern. This code appeared 20 times and co-occurred with active participation 15 times, perseverance 6 times, and concentration 6 times. In the observation comments, teachers gave students opportunities to construct meaning independently, continue unfinished sentences, write unfamiliar vocabulary on the board, or choose the next peer to participate. This practice suggests that teacher talk does not influence involvement only through teacher verbal dominance. Student involvement can also increase when teacher talk gives students room to take roles, try, choose, and manage turns in a limited but meaningful way. Giving directions or instructions functioned mainly to maintain students' attention and concentration. This code appeared 19 times, with its highest co-occurrences in attention 12 times and concentration 9 times. Observation comments showed that teachers asked students to read books, underline unfamiliar words, open books, write vocabulary, listen, or complete exercises. In the context of elementary students, clear instructions help reduce confusion because students know what learning actions they are expected to perform. Teacher talk in the form of instructions is therefore not merely managerial; it also supports task-based involvement.

Stimulating students' motivation and interest appeared as a type of teacher talk that supported involvement by framing activities in more engaging ways (Safira et al., 2026; Arief et al., 2025; Nufus et al., 2025). This code appeared 14 times and was related to active participation, attention, and concentration. The data showed that teachers used guessing activities, focus claps, videos, word repetition, timed quizzes, audio, and more expressive tones. These forms of teacher talk helped maintain student attention because language activities were not perceived only as formal explanations, but also as activities involving play, quick response, and interaction. The dominant pattern in the data shows that teacher talk types did not work in the same way. Asking questions functioned as a response-elicitation strategy, giving information or lecture functioned as input and clarification, affirming students' authority functioned as an agency-building strategy, and giving directions or instructions functioned as a way of organizing learning action. Thus, frequency should not be interpreted superficially as proving the most influential teacher talk type. Frequency helps reveal recurring patterns, but its pedagogical influence must be interpreted through utterance function and the student responses that accompany it. This distinction matters because qualitative analysis requires contextual reading rather than numerical comparison alone.

Relationship Between Teacher Talk and Student Involvement

The relationship between teacher talk and student involvement can be read through the co-occurrence pattern. Asking questions was most strongly related to active participation. Giving information or lecture was more strongly related to attention, although it also generated participation in several quotation units. Giving directions or instructions tended to be related to attention and concentration. Affirming students' authority was related to active participation and perseverance. Stimulating students' motivation and interest was distributed across attention, concentration, and active participation. This pattern indicates that student involvement does not only mean speaking or answering questions. It also appears in the forms of attention, concentration, perseverance, and readiness to follow learning procedures. The result in **Table 2** should be read as a co-occurrence matrix. The numbers indicate how often a teacher talk code and a student involvement code appeared in the same quotation unit. This matrix supports the interpretation that questions were most strongly associated with active participation, while information and instructions were more often associated with attention and concentration.

Table 2. Co-occurrence of Teacher Talk Types and Student Involvement Indicators

Teacher Talk Type	Active Participation	Attention	Concentration	Perseverance	Asking Questions
Asking questions	30	5	3	0	0
Giving information/lecture	7	19	6	1	3
Affirming students' authority	15	5	6	6	1
Giving directions/instructions	2	12	9	1	1
Stimulating students' motivation and interest	7	6	7	1	0
Criticizing or justifying authority	1	4	1	0	0
Praise and encouragement	1	0	1	1	0
Acknowledging and accepting students' feelings	0	1	1	0	0

The co-occurrence analysis shows that different types of teacher talk are associated with different forms of student involvement. Asking questions has the strongest relationship with active participation, with 30 co-occurrences, indicating that teacher questions were the most visible strategy for encouraging students to respond and take part in classroom interaction. Giving information is most strongly linked to students' attention, with 19 co-occurrences, suggesting that teacher explanations helped students focus on the lesson content. Student authority also shows a strong connection with active participation, with 15 co-occurrences, indicating that giving students space to contribute, choose, or take roles supported more active involvement. Instructions are mainly related to attention and concentration, showing that clear directions helped students follow learning tasks (Jiang et al., 2026; Cahyani & Chotimah, 2023). Meanwhile, motivation or interest-related talk is distributed across active participation, attention, and concentration, suggesting that engaging prompts, games, or expressive language helped sustain students' involvement. Overall, the findings indicate that teacher talk supports student involvement not through one single function, but through different pedagogical roles: eliciting responses, directing attention, maintaining concentration, supporting agency, and increasing classroom engagement.

The data on **Table 3** translates the coded observation comments into analytic evidence. It shows that each type of teacher talk supported involvement through different classroom mechanisms, including eliciting oral responses, directing attention, strengthening confidence, opening agency, and restoring classroom focus.

Table 3. Teacher Talk Types and Indicators of Student Involvement

Teacher Talk Type	Classroom Observation Evidence	Student Involvement Indicator	Interpretation
Asking questions	The teacher asked how to pronounce particular spelling or vocabulary items, and students answered. In some moments, the teacher repeated vocabulary questions and students responded actively.	Active participation in classroom discussion; attention	Questions functioned as response triggers because students were not only listening but were required to produce oral answers directly.
Giving information/lecture	The teacher explained the lesson focus, word meanings, pronunciation, assignment deadlines, and the next meeting's material. Students were recorded as paying attention, concentrating, or joining the discussion.	Attention; concentration; active participation	Explanation helped organize learning input and clarify meaning, especially when the teacher explained vocabulary and pronunciation using accessible classroom language.
Affirming students' authority	The teacher allowed students to continue sentences, understand meaning independently, write unfamiliar vocabulary on the board, or select the next peer.	Active participation; perseverance; concentration	Limited student control helped build agency and encouraged students to try, choose, continue, or take turns.
Giving directions/instructions	The teacher directed students to read, underline unfamiliar words, open their books, listen, write vocabulary, or complete tasks.	Attention; concentration; following task procedures	Instructions supported task-based involvement because expected learning actions became clear and easier for elementary students to follow.
Stimulating students' motivation and interest	The teacher used guessing games, focus claps, videos, word repetition, timed quizzes, audio, and a more playful tone of voice.	Attention; concentration; active participation	Teacher talk framed activities in engaging ways and helped turn language practice into more interactive classroom activity.
Criticizing or justifying authority	The teacher warned noisy students, corrected pronunciation, and managed disruption. Students were then recorded as returning to attention or concentration.	Attention; concentration	Regulatory teacher talk helped restore classroom focus, but its low frequency makes it more appropriate to read as a supporting strategy rather than a main pattern.
Praise and encouragement	The teacher gave praise such as "Good Job" after correct answers. Students became more ready to answer, more confident, or continued participating.	Perseverance; concentration; active participation	Praise worked as affective reinforcement, although the small amount of data requires cautious interpretation.
Acknowledging and accepting students' feelings	The teacher mediated a disagreement between students and redirected them to pay attention.	Attention; concentration	This code appeared only once, so it is safer to read it as an indication of affective-regulatory function rather than a strong repeated pattern.

The findings indicate that the types of teacher talk influencing student involvement in elementary English learning cannot be understood as a single form of utterance. Student involvement emerged through a combination of questioning, explaining, instructing, giving students room to act, stimulating interest, and providing affective and regulatory support. This pattern is consistent with the idea that teacher talk functions as a pedagogical interaction tool that organizes learning, provides language input, and builds classroom relationships that support student involvement (Ahmed & Saalh, 2025; Azizah et al., 2023; Nasir et al., 2019). The most prominent type of teacher talk was asking questions. The high co-occurrence between questions and active participation suggests that questions were a main tool for encouraging students to speak, answer, or continue classroom interaction. In elementary EFL contexts, questions do not only evaluate understanding; they

activate learners. This finding supports the view that asking questions can create more dynamic classroom interaction and encourage students to engage in language practice (Azizah et al., 2023; Wirza & Sholihah, 2020). Nevertheless, this interpretation should remain cautious because the available data were based on observation comments rather than full transcripts that displayed the precise form of each question.

Giving information or lecture also played an important role, especially in building students' attention. In English learning for elementary students, teachers often become the main source of comprehensible language input. When teachers explain word meanings, pronunciation, activity goals, or the material to be learned, students receive an initial frame for understanding the task. This pattern aligns with the view that teacher talk provides comprehensible input in EFL classrooms and helps students process the target language more purposefully (Siregar & Lismay, 2023; Nasir et al., 2019; Sukmawati, 2019). However, information delivery must be controlled. If teacher explanation becomes too dominant and does not provide response space, teacher talk may inhibit student involvement (Cahyani & Chotimah, 2023; Ana et al., 2021). Giving directions or instructions contributed to attention and concentration. This finding matters because elementary students need clarity about what to do, particularly in language activities involving reading, vocabulary writing, listening, or answering. Clear instructions help students move from passive presence into directed learning action. Giving directions or instructions should therefore not be seen only as classroom control. In the present data, instructions served as a bridge between teacher explanation and student involvement in tasks. This supports the argument that teacher talk helps manage classroom activities while maintaining student participation (Rahayu & Syahrizal, 2020; Winanta et al., 2020).

One of the most meaningful findings is the role of teacher talk in affirming students' authority. This category shows that teachers influenced involvement not only through questions or instructions, but also through opportunities for students to take roles. When students were allowed to write vocabulary on the board, choose the next peer, continue a sentence, or try to understand meaning independently, involvement became more active and agentic. This finding expands the understanding of teacher talk because student involvement does not always emerge from direct teacher control. It can also emerge from a limited distribution of responsibility within classroom interaction. Stimulating motivation and interest was also relevant in the primary EFL classroom. The data showed that guessing activities, focus claps, videos, repetition, timed quizzes, audio, and expressive teacher voice were related to attention, concentration, and active participation. This can be understood because elementary students often need variety, rhythm, and playful elements to remain involved in learning. In this context, teacher talk functions not only as a medium for content delivery, but also as a frame for learning experience. This finding is consistent with the view that English learning for young learners should be interactive, engaging, and appropriate to students' developmental characteristics (Rahayu & Syahrizal, 2020; Sukmawati, 2019).

Low-frequency categories still offer useful information, although they should not be exaggerated. Praise and encouragement appeared only three times, but observation comments suggested that praise such as 'Good Job' helped students become more confident, more prepared to answer, or more willing to continue participating. This indicates an affective reinforcement function, although the data are not sufficient to label it a dominant pattern. Criticizing or justifying authority appeared five times and was mostly related to attention. This type of teacher talk seemed to help restore classroom focus when there was noise, pronunciation error, or disruption. However, it requires careful use because overly dominant correction or authority assertion may reduce students' response space (Cahyani & Chotimah, 2023; Ana et al., 2021). Overall, the findings indicate that teacher talk influences student involvement through the fit between utterance function and classroom need. Questions are effective when teachers need to elicit responses. Information is effective when students need input or clarification. Instructions are effective when students need to understand the learning action to perform. Affirming students' authority is effective when students need opportunities to try and take roles. Motivational stimulation is effective when attention begins to decline or when the teacher needs to make language activities more engaging. Effective teacher talk, therefore, is not teacher talk that appears most frequently. It is teacher talk that is functionally appropriate to the classroom context.

The main contribution of this study is its demonstration that student involvement in elementary English learning is not visible only when students answer questions. Involvement is also reflected in attention, concentration, perseverance, readiness to follow instructions, and willingness to ask questions. For this reason, teacher talk analysis should move beyond counting teacher utterances. It should examine teacher talk types, utterance functions, and student involvement responses that follow them. Without this analytic movement, frequency tables are not enough to explain the pedagogical meaning of the observed classroom interaction. However, this study has several limitations. The analysis was based on classroom observation data from a limited number of elementary English classrooms, so the findings cannot be generalized to all elementary school contexts. In addition, the study focused on observable teacher talk and student involvement indicators, while deeper aspects such as students' internal motivation, language anxiety, and long-term learning outcomes

were not examined. Despite these limitations, the findings imply that elementary English teachers need to use teacher talk more strategically by balancing explanation, questioning, instruction, encouragement, and opportunities for student agency. Teacher education programs should also help teachers reflect on the functions of their classroom language, not merely on how much they speak, so that teacher talk can be used to create clearer, more interactive, and more supportive English learning environments.

Conclusion

This study shows that teacher talk plays an important role in shaping student involvement in elementary English language learning. The most prominent types of teacher talk were asking questions, giving information or lecture, affirming students' authority, giving directions or instructions, and stimulating students' motivation and interest. These types helped students pay attention to the material, understand instructions, respond to teacher prompts, participate actively, and engage in classroom interaction. Asking questions appeared to be a strong strategy for opening student participation, while giving information or lecture and giving directions or instructions helped students understand the material and follow learning activities. In addition, affirming students' authority and stimulating students' motivation and interest contributed to confidence, enthusiasm, and sustained involvement during learning. Effective teacher talk is therefore not determined by how much the teacher speaks, but by how teacher utterances create meaningful interaction. Elementary English teachers need to use teacher talk in balanced, clear, and responsive ways so that learning becomes more active, communicative, and supportive of student involvement. Future research may examine teacher talk across wider school contexts, compare public and private elementary classrooms, include students' perspectives, and use more detailed classroom transcripts to explore how specific teacher utterances influence student involvement over time.

Author Contributions

DNO and IS contributed to the conceptualization, methodology, and formal analysis of the study. DNO conducted the investigation and wrote the original draft. IS provided supervision and contributed to writing, reviewing, and editing the manuscript.

Funding

This research received no external funding.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal

Use of Artificial Intelligence

Generative AI was used to assist in drafting portions of the manuscript. All AI-generated text was critically reviewed, revised, and verified by the authors. The authors assume full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the final manuscript.

References

- Afriansyah, E. A. (2016). Penggunaan software ATLAS.ti sebagai alat bantu proses analisis data kualitatif. *Mosharafa: Jurnal Pendidikan Matematika*, 5(2), 53–63. <https://doi.org/10.31980/mosharafa.v5i2.357>
- Ahmed, S. Q., & Saalh, S. M. (2025). The effect of instructing teacher talk and classroom language on EFL student-teachers' linguistic performance. *Journal of the College of Education for Women*, 36(1), 90-108. <https://doi.org/10.36231/coedw.v36i1.1799>
- Ana, R. Y., Dewi, R., & Amin, B. (2021). Types of teacher talk to support students' activeness in online classroom. *Elite: English and Literature Journal*, 8(1), 76–90. <https://doi.org/10.24252/elite.v8i1a7>
- Arief, M., Ruswandi, R., & Hidayat, H. (2025). Investigating of using teacher talk strategy to build students' participation and motivation in english speaking class. *Journal of Teacher Training and Educational Research*, 2(3), 121-131. <https://doi.org/10.71280/jotter.v2i3.454>

- Azizah, S. P. N., Nurpadilah, S. D., & Sari, R. (2023). The contribution of teacher talk on student engagement in English Classroom. *Education Students*, 2(1), 165–176. <http://ejournal.unsub.ac.id/index.php/vesco/article/view/1877>
- Cahyani, D. A., & Chotimah, I. C. (2023). Teachers' talk and its impact on young learners' interaction in the learning environment. *SALEE: Study of Applied Linguistics and English Education*, 4(1), 148-170. <https://doi.org/10.35961/salee.v4i1.533>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.
- Denny, E., & Weckesser, A. (2022). How to do qualitative research? *BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology*, 129(7), 1166–1167. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-0528.17150>
- Fatmawati, D. T., Retnaningdyah, P., & Setiawan, S. (2022). Teacher talk in classroom interaction used by english tutor in Mr. BOB english course kampung inggris Pare. *Edumaspul: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 6(2), 2056–2061. <https://doi.org/10.33487/edumaspul.v6i2.4298>
- Flynn, E. E., & Hoy, S. L. (2026). Language is a part of everything: Early childhood teachers' conceptualization of language learning. *Language and Education*, 40(4), 815-835. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2025.2579847>
- Ginting, D. (2021). Student engagement and factors affecting active learning in english language teaching. *Voices of English Language Education Society*, 5(2), 215–228. <https://doi.org/10.29408/veles.v5i2.3968>
- Hasanah, H. (2017). Teknik-teknik observasi (sebuah alternatif metode pengumpulan data kualitatif ilmu-ilmu sosial). *At-Taqaddum*, 8(1), 21–46. <https://doi.org/10.21580/at.v8i1.1163>
- Hotimah, E. (2017). Penggunaan media flashcard dalam meningkatkan kemampuan siswa pada pembelajaran kosakata bahasa Inggris kelas II MI Ar-Rochman Samarang Garut. *Jurnal Pendidikan UNIGA*, 4(1), 10–18. <https://doi.org/10.52434/jp.v4i1.30>
- Jiang, Y., Kaplan, B., & Ko-Wong, L. (2026). Does teacher talk matter too? A meta-analysis of partial correlations between teachers' language practices and children's language development from preschool to third grade. *Review of Educational Research*, 96(4), 1136-1172. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543251339131>
- Jnanathapaswi, S. G. (2021). Thematic analysis & coding: An overview of the qualitative paradigm. In *An introduction to social science research*, 1, 98–105. APH Publishing Corporation. <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.17159249>
- Muluneh, T. K., Amogne, D., & Maru, N. (2026). An exploratory study of teacher talk in EFL classroom interaction. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 13, 102268. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.102268>
- Naeem, M., Ozuem, Wilson, Howell, K., & Ranfagni, S. (2023). A step-by-step process of thematic analysis to develop a conceptual model in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 22, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231205789>
- Nasir, C., Yusuf, Y. Q., & Wardana, A. (2019). A qualitative study of teacher talk in an EFL classroom interaction in Aceh Tengah, Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 8(3), 525–535. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v8i3.15251>
- Nufus, Z., Ifadloh, N., Al-Anbari, A. H. J., Jha, S. K., & Shalehah, S. (2025). Teacher's talk and students' motivation in an english classroom: Insights from a case study. *SALEE: Study of Applied Linguistics and English Education*, 6(2), 660-681. <https://doi.org/10.35961/salee.v6i2.2311>
- Nurpahmi, S. (2017). Teacher talk in classroom interaction. *ETERNAL (English, Teaching, Learning, and Research Journal)*, 3(1), 34–43. <https://doi.org/10.24252/Eternal.V3i1.2017.A4>
- Rahayu, S., & Syahrizal, T. (2020). Teacher talk in young learners' classroom interaction. *Indonesian EFL Journal*, 6(1), 89–96. <https://doi.org/10.25134/ieflij.v6i1.2651>
- Safira, A., Gagaramusu, Y. B., Khairunnisa, K., Fasli, M., Aras, N. F. F., & Wilade, S. (2026). Exploring contextual teaching effects on student motivation in elementary language learning. *Journal of Innovation and Research in Primary Education*, 5(1), 1959-1970. <https://doi.org/10.56916/jirpe.v5i1.3278>

- Siregar, K. N., & Lismay, L. (2023). Analyzing the english teacher talk in EFL classroom interaction. *Educativo: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 2(1), 107–114. <https://doi.org/10.56248/educativo.v2i1.108>
- Steinhardt, F., Dolva, A. S., Jahnsen, R., & Ullenhag, A. (2022). Exploring two subdimensions of participation, involvement and engagement: A scoping review. *Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 29(6), 441–463. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11038128.2021.1950207>
- Sukmawati, N. N. (2018). Teacher talk in teaching English for young learners. *Jurnal VARIDIKA*, 30(1), 62–72. <https://doi.org/10.23917/varidika.v30i1.6546>
- Sukmayadi, V., Fadhila, S. A., Effendi, R., & Martian, F. (2026). What makes an ideal lecturer?: Decoding the student narratives. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JARHE-02-2026-0341>
- Tisdell, E. J., Merriam, S. B., & Stuckey-Peyrot, H. L. (2025). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Winanta, A., Rochsantiningsih, D., & Supriyadi, S. (2020). Exploring EFL classroom interaction: An analysis of teacher talk at senior high school level. *ELS Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 3(3), 328–343. <https://doi.org/10.34050/elsjish.v3i3.11061>
- Wirza, Y., & Sholihah, U. I. (2020). Teacher talk in encouraging students' participation in the EFL classroom. In *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Language, Literature, Culture, and Education (ICOLLITE 2019)* (pp. 287–293). Atlantis Press. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.200325.098>
- Yoana, S. A., Purwati, O., & Anam, S. (2020). The use of teacher talk in making students engaged in EFL classroom interaction. *Jurnal Education and Development*, 8(1), 205–209. <https://journal.ipts.ac.id/index.php/ED/article/view/1535>
- Yu, Z., Yu, L., Xu, Q., Xu, W., & Wu, P. (2022). Effects of mobile learning technologies and social media tools on student engagement and learning outcomes of english learning. *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*, 31(3), 381–398. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1475939X.2022.2045215>