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The Realization of Formulaic Expressions in EFL Teacher-Student Classroom Interactions

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Article Info	Abstract
	Formulaic expressions are essential for developing students' communicative competence to speak English naturally and fluently. This research aimed to determine how the EFL teachers and students used the five types of formulaic expressions in their classroom interactions. This study is discourse analysis, particularly conversation analysis, using a qualitative research approach. The research subjects were two teachers and thirty-one students from two different EFL classes in a private high school in Semarang. The data were obtained by recording their 5x40 minutes' classroom interactions. The video recordings were transcribed and then observed. After all of the data were collected, they were classified and analyzed based on Biber et al.'s (1999) framework and then described qualitatively. The study results showed that the teachers and the students realized all five types of formulaic expressions; lexical bundles, idiomatic phrases, free combinations of verb+particle, binomial expressions, and inserts. It shows that the teachers and the students are able to speak relatively natural English. By doing the further analysis, it was also found that even though the teachers used the formulaic expressions a lot more than the students, the orders of the frequency of formulaic expressions used are similar, as well as some expressions used. Surprisingly, it was revealed that there were some expressions which were not used by the teachers but were realized by the students.

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INTRODUCTION

This study investigated the formulaic expressions realized by EFL students and the teachers in their classroom interactions. There is an urgent need to investigate this matter because it is believed that the main objective of teaching and learning English as a second or foreign language is the ability to be able to communicate or interact by using the language, whether it is done in the spoken or the written form. This kind of ability is called communicative competence. However, being natural and fluent in speaking English has never been easy.

Celce-Murcia (2007) defined 'communicative competence' was coined by Dell Hymes, an anthropological linguist, as a response given to Chomsky's theories which focused only on linguistic competence. It was stated as well that one important component in communicative competences is formulaic competence which enables students to be able to speak naturally and fluently as how the native speakers do. That was the reason why Celce-Murcia proposed a new model of communicative competence where formulaic competence was added as one of the important components in communicative competence together with other five competences; discourse competence, sociocultural competence, interactional competence, linguistic competence, and strategic competence.

According to Celce-Murcia (2007), Formulaic competence refers to fixed chunks or expressions used by native speakers to communicate in their daily life. Ellis (1994) stated that the use of formulaic speech is included in one of the early stages of developmental patterns in L2 acquisition, together with the silent period and structural and semantic simplification. It shows that formulaic competence or the ability to use the chunks of language is essential in the process of the language learning, especially in enhancing the students' speaking and communicating ability. Because by being able to use those chunks, it means that learners are able to (or are in the process of being able to) speak fluently in a similar way to how native speakers speak because a native speaker tends to speak by using those language chunks in their daily conversation.

The use of formulaic expressions is an essential skill in someone's oral language development.

Despite its importance, Oberg (2013) stated that in ESL or EFL classes, practicing oral communication skills, including formulaic sequence, does not receive as much time as other skills or activities such as lecture, vocabulary, grammar, reading, or writing because speaking lesson was claimed as time-consuming lesson. Furthermore, speaking is assumed as a hard skill to assess compared to other skills in English language.

In a classroom situation, interaction between the teacher and students happens a lot as the process of teaching and learning activities. In an English class, teacher-student classroom interaction is hoped to be the interaction that aims at developing two very important skills, speaking and listening, among the learners so that students will be able to have meaningful communication in their target language. Ellis (1984) stated that the formulas learnt by classroom learners showed frequently occurring social and organizational contexts that arose during communicating in the classroom environment. It shows that in a classroom interaction when the teacher talks or gives instructions will also influence the L2 acquisition process as well as will affect the atmosphere of the English learning and teaching process.

The students need to get the right and good input from the teacher because the teacher talk in the classroom interaction is the real speech production that students hear frequently in live situations. It can be said that the teachers' ability to control the language production and the language use in the classroom can be perceived as important as the methods being used in the lesson.

Krashen and Terrel (1983) stated that the teachers' talk in their interaction with the students in the classroom is a vital source of comprehensible input in the second/foreign language classroom. Teacher talks such as giving classroom instructions, asking questions, and giving models on pronouncing English words can be role models for students.

Teachers' perceptions about the formulaic expressions are also an important issue to discuss. Aziz (2017) revealed that teachers perceive formulaic expressions as an important cultural language component. He also stated that most teachers realize about the importance of formulaic sequences and their impact on language proficiency and the different tools

and practices of introducing it to language learners at the university level. However, Safa's (2017) study revealed that though the teachers found the high importance of formulaic sequences in improving writing proficiency and showed positive attitudes towards their inclusion in their writing classrooms, the instruction of these sequences was not really part of their teaching agenda.

If a teacher uses many formulaic expressions in his/her classroom interaction, it is assumed that the students will imitate and modify how the teacher speaks, which will help them in producing utterances. This condition will lead to a situation where teachers and students will have a good and mutual classroom interaction that supports the second language acquisition. Walsh (2002), as cited in Faruji (2011), stated that teachers' ability to control their use of language is considered to be as important as their ability to select appropriate methodologies. Furthermore, Xu (2016) revealed that the formulaic expressions play a very significant role in both first and second language learning because teaching words in isolation is perceived as not an effective method in the practical use.

Some students still find it hard to use formulaic expressions in the right context. To avoid that, teachers should have the ability to facilitate the learner's understanding of how a language works so that they will be aware of the utility and productivity of chunks. Thus, the presence of teachers should not only teach the materials and explain the theories but also involve them in the real conversation through the teachers' talk and the classroom interactions so that the students also will be 'invited' to share their minds and finally will be able to be involved in the classroom interaction by using the L2 (Sirkel, 2017).

Orlic (2018) stated that it is vital to put formulaic sequences in context. Therefore, formulaic sequences should be taught in class. However, it is not easy to do, especially if learners do not have enough linguistic input from native speakers. So, if the teacher can speak fluently and their English is natural and native-like by using formulaic sequences heavily, then it is hoped that the students would also be able to use them appropriately.

Based on the above explanations, which stated that the fluency and the native-like speaking style of the English teacher is one of the essential factors to enhance the students' speaking skills, the researchers conducted this study on spoken language entitled "Formulaic Expressions in EFL Teacher-Student Classroom Interactions." The school where this study was conducted is an immersion school because, as stated by Kalisa (2013), the immersion program could provide valuable opportunities for the teachers and students to use the language naturally in spoken interactions. The researcher chose senior high school level because studies of the use of formulaic expressions in the early bilingual classroom have been conducted by some researchers before (Utami & Virgin, 2017; Steyn & Jaroongkhongdach, 2016; Kalisa, 2013).

This study was done in order to make English teachers realize that as English teachers, we have to be aware of our English speaking in the classroom interactions because our talks in the classroom interaction can be one of the most essentials input and role models for our students' communicative competence in the English learning and teaching process. By listening to the teacher, imitating and modifying the chunks used by the teacher, it is hoped that the students' speaking ability will also be enhanced, which will lead to the students' better communicative competence. Hence, this study is crucial because the teachers' and students' levels of fluency could be seen from the use of the formulaic expressions in their interactions in the classroom.

METHODS

This study is a discourse analysis, particularly conversation analysis which uses a descriptive qualitative approach. The research subjects were two teachers and thirty-one tenth-grade students from two different EFL classes in SMA Semesta Bilingual Boarding School, Semarang. The object of the study was the teachers' and students' utterances in the classroom interactions specified on analyzing the realization of the formulaic expressions. The data were obtained by recording their 5x40 minutes' classroom interactions. The video recordings of the conversations between the teachers and students in the classroom interactions were then transcribed and observed. After all of the data were collected, they were classified and analysed based on Biber et al.'s (1999) framework and then described qualitatively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of formulaic expressions which used Biber et al.'s (1999) theory, it was revealed that Biber et al.'s five types of formulaic expressions were realized in the classroom interactions. Those formulaic expressions are lexical bundles, idiomatic phrases, free combinations of verb + particle, coordinated binomial phrases, and inserts.

The findings show that inserts were the most dominant formulaic expressions used during the classroom, followed by idiomatic phrases, lexical bundles, free combination of verb + particle and the last one is binomial expressions.

This finding is similar to the result of the studies conducted by Mustapa and Agustien (2017) and Sugiarti and Rukmini (2017), who found that inserts are the most frequent form of formulaic expressions in the conversational texts of an English textbook. It happens that way, probably because of the inserts' simplicity in form yet essential in function compared to other formulaic expressions.

This finding revealed that inserts were used 172 times (74%), idiomatic phrases were used 48 times (7.5%), lexical bundles were used 96 times (29%), the free combinations of verb + particle were only used eight times (3%) and coordinated binomial phrases were only used three times (1%) by the teachers. Binomial expressions were the slightest type of formulaic expressions used by the teachers.

The students' results are similar to the teachers' results. Inserts were also the most dominant formulaic expressions used during the classroom interaction by the students, followed by lexical bundles, idiomatic phrases, free combination of verb + particle (collocations), and the last one is binomial expressions. In the classroom interactions, Students used inserts 129 times (74%), lexical bundles 29 times (16.5%), idiomatic expressions 13 times (6%), free combinations of verb + particle four times (2%), and the least is binomial expressions which were only used once by the students.

The Realization of Lexical Bundles in the EFL Teacher-Student Classroom Interaction

In this part, the researchers analyzed the use of lexical bundles in classroom interactions. Biber et al. (1999) defined lexical bundles as a recurring sequence of three or more words that come together as a lexical unit. There are fourteen categories of lexical bundles proposed by Biber et al. (1999). However, in this present study, only nine types of lexical bundles occurred: personal pronoun + lexical verb phrase, wh-question fragments, verb phrase with active verbs, yes-no questions fragments, other expressions, adverbial clause fragments, meaningless sound bundles, verb that-clause fragments, and phrase/noun phrase + be.

From the five recorded sessions, 125 lexical bundles occurred during the classroom interaction; 96 times were used by the teachers and 29 times by students. It can be said that lexical bundles were used quite heavily in the classroom interactions, which is good because, as Lorenna, Fitriati, and Widhiyanto (2020) stated that the use of lexical bundles is vital for teachers to perform native-like fluency and improve their oral proficiency, which is hoped will lead their students also to perform the same way.

Following is more detailed explanation of the lexical bundles realizations in the classroom interactions; personal pronoun + lexical verb phrases were used 49 times (30 times were used by the teachers and 19 times were used by the students), wh-question fragments were used 28 times (27 were used by the teachers and once used by the students), verb phrase with active verbs were used 18 times (16 times were used by the teachers and two times used by the students), yes-no questions fragments were used 10 times (all of them were used by the teachers), other expressions were used eight times (three times were used by the teachers and five times were used by the students), adverbial clause fragments were used four times (three times were used by the teachers and only once used by the students), meaningless sound bundles were used two times (both of them were used by the teachers), verb that-clause fragments were used four times (three times used by the teachers and once used by the students), and pronoun/noun phrase + be were used only two times (both of them were used by the teachers). The example of the realization of lexical bundles in the teacher-students classroom interactions can be seen as follows:

Teacher: **What did you say?** Did you say "no"? Why did you strongly say no? What makes you, you know, think that… **'I don't like animals'**.

Student: It's me…. maybe because…

Teacher: It's okay, it's okay, it's okay... just...

Student: **It's got to be bad**, the smell. Not good.

Teacher: It's not good... For?

Student: The smell...

Teacher: Smell's bad, okay. Smell's bad.   Specific, right? Animals, you know... It smells bad, Miss. '**I don't like it**. And then, what else?

The above example shows that teachers and students realized lexical bundles in their classroom interaction. There are four lexical bundles identified in the conversation. In the example above, the teacher applied wh-question fragments and personal pronoun + lexical verb phrases, while the student applied pronoun/noun phrase + be.

The teacher asked a question by using wh-questions fragments *What did you say?* to the student for knowing what the students had said. Furthermore, the teacher also applied personal pronoun + lexical verb phrases in the utterances *I don't like animals,* and *I don't like it.* The student answered the teacher's question about why she did not like animals by saying, *It's got to be bad,* which is included in pronoun/noun phrase + be. More specifically, the bundles *It's got to be bad* are four-word bundles consisting of expressions with it (+auxiliarry) + copula *be*.

The Realization of Idiomatic Phrases in the EFL Teacher-Student Classroom Interaction

According to Biber et al. (1999), idiomatic phrases combine two or more words that the meaning cannot be derived from each word. In other words, idiomatic expressions are formed when two or more words go together, forming a phrase, function as single verbs, and have different meanings from the literal meaning of each word.

Idiomatic phrases are classified into phrasal verbs, prepositional verbs, phrasal-prepositional verbs, and other multi-word verb constructions. There are also other types of idioms, such as wh-question idioms, complete noun phrase idioms, and prepositional phrase idioms (Biber et al., 1999).

The researchers identified five different types of idiomatic phrases used in this study. From the five recorded sessions, the prepositional verbs were only used three times in total, two times used by the teacher and only one time used by students. The phrasal verbs were used more frequently than the prepositional verbs. The phrasal verbs were used 37 times: 30 times used by the teacher and seven times used by students. The phrasal prepositional verbs were used ten times: nine times used by the teacher, and only once by the student. The fourth category of idiomatic phrases, which is multi-word verb construction, was used ten times: the teacher used seven times and three times by students. Moreover, the last category used in the classroom interaction is complete noun phrase idioms, which the teacher used once.   The realization of idiomatic phrases in the teacher-students classroom interactions can be seen in the following example:

Teacher: Oh, oh, okay, **sit down, sit down**. Uhm, Putri, **sit down! Move on!**

Student 4: cat, tiger, rabbit

Student 5: cat, tiger, rabbit, dog

Student 6: cat, tiger, rabbit, dog, headshop

Student7: cat, tiger, rabbit, dog, headshop, em... tiger.

Student 6: Miss! Miss! Miss! Miss! She is out! Out! Out!

Teacher: You, **move on! Come on!**

From the example above, we can see that the teacher applied idiomatic phrases in her classroom interactions with her students. The idiomatic phrases used in the above example are phrasal verbs such as *sit down, move on* and *come on.* Biber et al. (1999) stated that phrasal verbs are defined as "multi-word units consisting of a verb followed by an adverbial particle (*e.g., carry out, find out, or pick up*)" (p.403). Furthermore, it was also explained that adverbial particles such as *out, in, up-down, on, off,* have locative meanings, but they usually are used with extended meanings, and that phrasal verbs function as single verbs and usually have got different meanings from the literal meaning of each word (Biber et al., 1999).

The Realization of Free Combinations of Verb + particle in the EFL Teacher-Student Classroom Interaction

The third type of formulaic expression identified in the teacher-students classroom interaction is free combinations of verb + particle. Different from idiomatic phrases where two words or more go together to function as a single verb and have got different meanings from the literal meaning of each word, free combinations of verb + particle do not have idiomatic status, or it can be said that free combinations of verb + particle have literal meaning (Biber et al., 1999). After analyzing the interactions,

the researchers found that free combinations of verb + particle were used 12 times: eight times used by the teacher and four times used by students.

The realization of free combinations of verb + particle in the teacher-students classroom interactions can be seen in the following examples:

Example 1

Student: …because he had forgotten to switch the lights on. Can I **move to** the next part, Ms?

Teacher: Sure, nice, thank you, we may skip this as well... and then for part C, yeah, part C ... number three. Only number three. Only number three.

Example 2:

Teacher: Okay, girls, now please submit the paper. Submit the paper, please. Submit the paper, please. Thank you. Okay, **go back** to your book. Now here we **come to** the reading section, a text entitled 'Complaints around the world.'

Students: Oh my god…

In the two examples above, a student used the free combinations of verb + particle *move to* when she asked the teacher if she could move or continue to the next part of her book. The teacher used the expressions *go back* to ask the students to be back or to get focused again on the materials on their books. While she used the expressions *come to* in example 2 to show the students that they have reached the reading part of the book. We can see from the three examples of free combinations of verb + particle in the conversations above that the combinations *move to, go back, and come to* have the literal meaning without any idiomatic status.

The Realization of Binomial Expressions in the EFL Teacher-Student Classroom Interaction

According to Biber et al. (1999), a coordinated binomial phrase is formed from two words from the same grammatical category connected by the word *and* or *to*. There are four types of coordinated binomial phrases: coordinated binomial phrases formed from noun and noun, verb and verb, adjective and adjective, and adverb and adverb.

Coordinated binomial phrases were only used four times in the teacher-students classroom interactions; 3 times were realized by the teacher and once realized by the student. The phrases used by the

teachers were *go and get* (S1/171), *here and there* (S3/31), and *here and now* (S4/37), and the phrase which the student used was *food and drink* (S4/96). The realization of coordinated binomial phrases in the teacher-students classroom interactions can be seen in the following examples:

Example 1

Students: Good morning! Hey, where are your shoes?

Teacher: Hey, hey, hey... your shoes... **go and get** them… It's fine. It's okay...

Example 2

Teacher: Two boys, with little cattle **here and there**... this one... A cow, right? With?

Students: Girl, little girl...

In the examples above, we can see that the coordinated binomial phrases used by the teacher are the type of *verb and verb* and *adverb and adverb*. The teacher used the expression *go and get* when she asked one of the students who did not wear any shoes in the classroom to go to her desk to get and wear her shoes, and the teacher used the expression *here and there* in the sentence "*Two boys, with little cattle here and there.*" to show that there were so many little cattle everywhere or in various places.

The Realization of Inserts in the EFL Teacher-Student Classroom Interactions

Inserts contributions are essential to the interactive character of speech because they show the sign of relations in the interactions between the speaker, hearer(s), and discourse (Biber et al., 2002). Inserts are classified into nine categories; interjections, greetings/farewells, discourse markers, attention-getters, response-getters, response forms, polite formulas, expletives, and hesitators.

In this research finding, inserts have become the most formulaic expressions being used compared to other types of formulaic expressions. The number of inserts used in this study is 301 times, 172 times used by the teacher, and 129 times by students. From those nine categories of inserts, all of those categories were used in the interactions: greetings and farewells were used 15 times (7 times used by the teacher and eight times used by students), response elicitors were used 37 times (36 times used by the teacher and only one time used by students), response forms were used 77 times (9 times used by the teacher and 68 times use by

students), polite formulae were used 67 times (61 times used by the teacher and six times used by students), discourse markers were used 16 times (15 times used by the teacher and only one time used by students), interjections were used 25 times (13 times used by the teacher and 12 times used by students), expletives were used nine times (5 times used by the teacher and four times use by students), attention signals were used four times (2 times used by the teacher and two times used by students), and hesitators were used 51 times (24 times used by the teacher and 27 times used by students). The realization of inserts in this study can be seen in the following example:

Teacher : **Good morning**, everyone!
Students: **Good morning**, Miss!
Teacher : Okay, how are you today, fine
Students: We are fine, Insha Allah.
Teacher : It was a long holiday, but I heard that SMP students.
Students: **Yaaa…**
Teacher : …are having a holiday right now, are you okay with that?
Students: **Nooo…**
Teacher: Of course, you should be okay because they are your junior. They are your sisters, **right**? So, hopefully, hopefully, you will, later you will have a longer holiday than them, **okay? Right**, so this week will be our last unit for the unit that we have in our book. Unit12. **Okay, um…** in the text, sorry, in the file, in the screen here, what can you see?

From the excerpt of the interactions between the teacher and students above, we can see that inserts are used heavily. There are five types of inserts being used there; they are greetings and farewells (*Good morning*), response forms (*Yaaa, Nooo*), response elicitors (*right, okay*), discourse markers (*right*), and elicitors (*um*). Another example of the use of inserts can also be seen as follow:

Example

Teacher: We need to think of something else.
Student: **Aargh…**
Teacher: Okay, I don't think we, **erm**… we can connect to the internet,
Student: **Oh no….**
Teacher: But here's good news, we will play a game, still play a game. Yeah… So, I want you to

think of one sentence, together with your partner.
Student: About what, Miss?
Teacher: Using 'too' and 'not enough, okay? Think of it first. You will get one minute to think.
Student: What's the… **erm**, what's the sentence?
Teacher: It's up to you, you may write on a piece of paper with your name at the back. It's okay.
Student: Miss, What we have to do is...
Teacher: Think of one sentence, **please**, with 'too' or 'not enough. Together with your partner!
Student: Miss, can we make two sentences?
Teacher: Two sentences, it's okay… **Hey**, Sofia!
Student: **Hey**, the internet is on…

In the above example also, we can see some types of inserts being used in classroom interactions; they are interjections (a*argh, oh no*), hesitators (*erm*), polite formulae (*please*), and attention signals (*hey*). The discussion section will discuss a more detailed analysis of how inserts are realized in classroom interactions.

The Performance of Formulaic Expressions Realized by Teachers and Those Realized by Students in the Classroom Interactions

In this section, the researchers highlight the overall discussion about the formulaic expressions realized in classroom interactions by explaining the similarities and differences.

By evaluating the formulaic expressions realized by the teachers and the students in the present study, it was found that the teachers used the formulaic expressions a lot more than the students. However, the orders of the frequency of formulaic expressions used by the teachers and the students are similar, as well as some expressions used. The formulaic expressions frequency is the first inserts, the second is lexical bundles, the third is idiomatic phrases, the fourth is free combinations of verb + particle and the last one is binomial expressions. There are also many similar expressions used by the teachers and the students in the classroom interactions, especially in the two most used types of formulaic expressions; inserts and lexical bundles. This finding is in line with the study by Adaba (2017), Biswas (2015), Devi (2015), Congmin (2013), Petek (2012), Nasruloh (2013), and Wang and Castro (2010), who believe in the impact of the teacher-

student classroom interactions on ELT, especially in the second language acquisition.

The finding shows that somehow the input of the formulaic expressions realized by the teachers is related to the use of formulaic expressions by the students because when we read or listen to correct English, they will stay in our memory, and then we will be able to construct the similar expressions or sentences by ourselves. This finding is in line with what Ellis (1994) stated about L2 acquisition that there is the possibility that students learn formulas from the high frequency of specific patterns or routines in the input of their teacher because input frequency is one of the factors influencing the development of second language acquisition. That is why English teachers always have to upgrade and improve their speaking skills to speak English naturally because they are the role models for the students. As Kalisa (2013) stated, the utterances produced by teachers in the classroom are exposures for the students to learn English; students could learn by imitating and modifying what they heard from the teacher based on their creativity in producing spoken language utterances.

However, surprisingly, the data findings also show that there are some formulaic expressions that were not used by the teachers but used by the students. It can be seen from the following examples; "Yeah, starts running out of them…" (S1/138), "We have the right to…" (S4/24), "Switch the lights on…" (S2/163). Those three expressions: *running out of, we have the right to,* and *switch the lights on,* were not found to be realized by the teachers. Even though the teacher is one of the most accessible inputs for students, the teachers' talk or instruction in the classroom interactions is not the only input students can get. This finding is in line with the study by Basa, Dani, and Novria (2018), which stated that the input in language learning is multidimensional; not only from the teacher in the classroom but also students can get it from other sources such as from the English textbooks, friends, families, podcasts, social media, Etc.

After analyzing the data, it can be said that the pedagogical implication of this study is that this study can be used as a review of the teacher-student classroom interactions performance, especially in seeing how fluent and natural the teachers and the students in their classroom interactions are. The result showed us that the teachers and the students realized all of the five types of formulaic expressions formulated by Biber et al. (1999) and that most of the formulaic expressions used in classroom interactions are native-like. It is hoped that by reading this study, teachers especially will be aware of the importance of formulaic expressions roles in their classroom interaction with their students because mastering formulaic expressions is essential to help their students to be able to speak English fluently and native-like.

CONCLUSIONS

This study was aimed to answer the six research problems. Based on the results, some conclusions have been made. First, regarding the realization of lexical bundles in the EFL teacher-student classroom interactions, it was found that out of 14 categories of lexical bundles, nine categories of lexical bundles were realized by the teachers and the students. Second, we could see from the result that the teachers and the students realized five out of seven categories of idiomatic phrases in the classroom interactions. Third, the findings showed that free combinations of verb + particle were also realized quite heavily by the teachers and the students. Fourth, the teachers and the students used binomial phrases slightly in their classroom interactions. Fifth, the researchers found that all of the types of inserts were used heavily by the teachers and the students. Furthermore, by evaluating the performance of formulaic expressions in the classroom interactions, it can be concluded that the teachers and the students realized all of the five types of formulaic expressions formulated by Biber et al. (1999). Even though teachers used the formulaic expressions a lot more than the students, the orders of the frequency of formulaic expressions used by the teachers and students are similar, as well as some expressions used. Surprisingly, there are some formulaic expressions that were not used by the teachers but used by the students. It shows that teacher is not the only input for students in learning English.

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