

The Students' Voices on Lecturers' Instructional Communication Strategies in EFL Class

Nurdevi Bte Abdul

nurdevi@unismuh.ac.id

Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar

Nunung Anugrawati

sadapotto.andi@yahoo.co.id

Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar

Ummi Khaerati Syam

sadapotto.andi@yahoo.co.id

Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar

Abstract

This paper is concerned with communication that occurs in the classroom. It aimed at investigating students' responses on lecturers' instructional strategies in EFL class. Instructional communication is a field of study that certainly is essential to teachers of speech communication. It focuses on communication variables that can affect any instructional situation, classroom context, or school environment, it is of value to teachers of any subject matter in any discipline as well as to those such as parents who are not teachers by profession but who do engage in instruction periodically. This research used qualitative research method with a case study design. This research was conducted in natural setting. This study was conducted at the campus of state and private universities in South Sulawesi, namely State University of Makassar and Muhammadiyah University of Makassar. There were six lecturers involved in this research from two different universities, and 20 students. Two kinds of instruments were used in collecting data namely observation and interview. In interpretation, it followed Discourse Analysis approach to present the data in extract form. The results the lecturers applied nine strategies to keep the students active the class. Those instructional strategies are using code – switchig, grouping, the use of Information and Communication Technology, feedback, walking arround, humor insertion, question-answer, and scoring system. It can stated that most of students gave positive responses on lecturers' instructional communication strategies in EFL classroom. They revealed that the strategies applied helped them to actively participate in the classroom.

Keywords: instructional communication, strategy, positive response, EFL class

INTRODUCTION

Communication plays essential role in classroom interaction of lecturer and students. Communication which is related to teaching and learning activities is named instructional communication. Instructional communication is a field of study that certainly is essential to teachers of speech communication, but is one that has a broader attraction to teachers beyond our discipline. Since its emphasis is on communication variables that can affect any instructional situation, classroom context, or school environment, it is of value to teachers of any subject matter

in any discipline as well as to those such as parents who are not teachers by profession but who do engage in instruction periodically.

According to Fall (2010) defines instructional communication is the study of how communication relates to learning within any environment. This includes traditional and nontraditional teaching in schools, educational television, training in companies, and distance learning. This course first asks the question of what learning is, and then consider the ways that communication influences learning a revealed in the existing research and theory in instructional communication.

In addition, Sellnow, et.al (2015) states instructional communication examines communication among teachers and students in conventional classroom context. The instructional communication research focuses on affective, cognitive, and behavioural learning as outcome variables. Similar to McCroskey and Virginia (2009) instructional communication is advanced study. It involves a model of instruction and outcomes of each phase, students' needs, ways of meeting students' needs, students' test anxiety, students' classroom anxiety, student's learning styles, classroom management, instructional strategies, students' misbehaviour, teacher misbehaviour, student self-concept, instructional learning systems, and teacher burnout.

Every lecturer has own way to communicate the teaching materials in the classroom. Therefore, using appropriate strategies in the class is essential to the students' learning outcomes. As Sellnow et.al (2015) states learning outcomes by which instructional communication may be measured include affection (appreciation, perceived value, utility), cognition (knowledge, comprehension, understanding), and behaviour. Moreover, the strategies used by the lecturers should also engage students to actively participate in the classroom activities. Effective learning process occurs when both teacher and students interact and participate in learning activities. Participatory type of learning process will encourage mutual exchange of information; stimulate interests as well a recognition of respect among the teachers and students (Abdullah,et.al,2011).

Based on the result of observation checklist, it indicates that the lecturer applied various strategies to keep students participating actively in classroom, such as applying ICT to support learning activities, conducting questions-answer, and giving feedback. In line with Mahmud (2017) who applied classroom presentation as a teaching strategy to build good interaction between teachers and students and among students in the class, and Daddi (2016) who utilized strategies of checking attendance, seating arrangement, teaching-learning activity, correction, and assessment in language learning. Keeping students active in the classroom is depending on the instructional communication strategies used by the lecturers. It indicates lecturers and students have the same expectation in language learning process in terms of strategies used by the lecturers and active participation from the students. Therefore, this study was investigating students' responses on instructional communication in EFL classroom.

METHOD

This research used qualitative research method with a case study design. This research was conducted in natural setting. It involved collection, analysis, and interpretation of comprehensive narrative and nonnumerical data in order to gain insights into instructional communication issue. The researcher collected the data in the field where participants experience the issue or problem under this study. It provided thick description of the research focus. The researcher collected data in the class where the issue existed in order to gain thick data. This study was conducted at the

campus of state and private universities in South Sulawesi, namely State University of Makassar and Muhammadiyah University of Makassar. There were six lecturers involved in this research from two different universities, and 20 students. Two kinds of instruments were used in collecting data namely observation and interview. In interpretation, it followed Discourse Analysis approach to present the data in extract form.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The students' responses on lecturers' instructional communication strategies were collected from interview in Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Most of the students give similarities on the strategies used by their lecturer in English Class Language Teaching. The responses are presented in the following extract of FGD.

1. Discussion

Discussion is one of the strategy used by the all the lecturers in this study. The students are divided into some groups and discuss the topic given, then show the presentation in front of the class.

Extract 01

“ Because when we have discussion I we have have difference idea and than we make a lock an than we make problem solving, and than why I like the when I wanna speech because when I wanna speak I know there is new vocabulary that I know that my friends talk that, for example I don't know what is the bahasa indonesia mengajari an than my friends talk that this is bahasa inggrisnya, and than I know that this I know the one new vocabulary and than I try to my self to speak up I'm from english department so I must speak up in English.”

The extract 01 indicates that discussion enables the students to share their idea with the group members. The student asked for helping him to know the meaning of new vocabulary. In his opinion, mastering vocabulary is important because he is English department and he must be able to speak English. The vocabulary mastery supported him in speaking. Discussing the difficult topic with group members is more efficient than work alone.

2. Code - Switching

The lecturers used code-switching in some conditions. This strategy helps the students understand the meaning of lecturers' explanation and instruction. It is applied only when the students did not understand of topic presented by the lecturer.

Extract 02

“Because, semua siswa tentu saja memiliki ability tidak sama, so ada orang yang cepat menaggap dan ada orang yang tidak. I think when the teacher or the lecture us two language an than after that she explain with Indonesia language I think bahasa Indonesia itu memperkuat bahwa maksudnya seperti ini jadi siswa dapat menangkap lebih baik.”

The extract 02 concerns with languages used by the lecturers in the class. Usually the lecturers presented the materials in English, but some of the students did not understand of the explanation.

In this case, the lecturers switch the languages to Indonesian to ensure the students are able to receive the information given. As the above students said that lecturer need to switch the language to Indonesian for reinforce the meaning, thus the students can understand.

3. Grouping

Before asking students to answer the questions, the lecturers arranged the students work in group and let them discussed with members. This strategy gives chances to all group members shares thier idea of the topic or issue given.

Extract 03

*“ our lecture talk as to make per to finish an assignment for example I think is not to effective because sometimes *..... maybe that only one person very active in the discussion to doing to finish the assignment one person depends on the other it's no effective, I think the effective way to finish the assignment just to *..... them individually and talk them to finish it one by one for example, that our lecture should arrange the place there sit ”*

The extract 03 shows that work in group let students to finish thier assignment effectively. Mixing the students based on their competence is fair, it is because every students has difference ability. The passive student needs active students to complete their assignment. Thus, grouping active and passive students are effective way to keep the sudents paerticipate in the classroom.

Extract 04

“I think is normal position for me because we can see another team activity about our friends we can easy to share with our partner.”

In relation to previous extract, another student percieved that grouping is normal position because the students can look each other. This way could encourage them to share idea and it is esier to discuss.

Extract 05

“Menurut saya Mom I like to sit the position like this, karena I think is the effective position while kita bisa face to face exclusive with teacher yang dilakukan oleh teman-teman is the effective to teacher supaya bisa melihat keaktifan dari studentnya.”

In addition, from extract 05, it indicates the students like group position because it is effective position. In group the students could make face to face position to discuss. Besides, the lecturer also can walk around to control and check students' activeness.

4. The use of Information and Communication Technology

In technology era, most of the lecturers renew thier teaching strategy by applying Information and Communication Technlogy (ICT) as supplement tools to motivate students in learning.

Extract 06

“just like him the material of the translation it self come from the WA it self so that we use a phone as media from learning the material procces”

The Extract 06 displays that using Information and Communication Technology is media in learning process. The lecturer sent the file from the handphone to the students by using WA application. This application give benefit for lecturer and students to communicate the materials effectively. The students got the instruction before the class begin. It means that the students have time to do well-preparation at home.

Extract 07

“Karena lebih menyenangkan, karena bisa ki liat kayak video. Jadi kita lebih mengerti sama dijelaskan ji juga, jadi kalo nda dimengerti, ditanyaki lagi, dijelaskan lagi pakai papan tulis.”

Similar to the extract 07, ICT in terms of using LCD Projector as media in teaching and learning is also applied by the lecturers. The lecturers prepared some slide presentations and it is supported by some tools in laptop. The students thought using such kinds of this ICT is pleased, it is because they can watch the video. Even the lecturer presented the materials in that way, but the students were allowed to give questions for unclear explanation. Then, the lecturer gave additional explanation by writing in the whiteboard.

5. Feedback

Giving feedback directly to the students are done by some lecturers in the classroom. The function is to motivate students to revise their mistake.

Extract 08

“Actuallyi like that strategy from Mom Herlina yang focus kepada ketika dia mengoreksi di papan tulis yang translationnya dan Mom juga feed back kembali ke kita apakah kosa katanya itu benar atau tidak”

The extract 08 shows that giving feedback is one of lecturer’s strategies to activate the students’ participation in the class. From the extract, the students like this strategy. It because the lecturer give correction directly by showing the right way on the whiteboard. The students are also invited to revise it, such as aksed the students to check the word choice.

6. Walking around

Walking around in the class is important to facilitate students’ needs in working their assignment. The lecturer also checked students’ activeness by walking around and give some helps to students.

Extract 09

“for me I love the way her teach us because Mom Herlina kalau mengajar dia pasti selalu jalan-jalan jadi dia selalu share sama kita yang mana lagi, yang mana lagi, and she walking she ask us and help if we get typcal stak in sentence”

Extract 09 shows that student’s response on the strategy used by the lecturer in terms of walking around. The students love this way because the lecturer walk to the students and find out

thier difficulties. In this strategy, the lecturer gave help directly to the students such as showing the right words or the right sentence of the assignments.

7. Humor

In teaching and learning process, the lecturer inserted some jokes to keep the students spirit and to make them relax in the class.

Extract 10

“Strategy of mam Ma lesson is so fun, she make me active in class and the class is not boring”

Extract 10 shows that making some jokes in the class help the students feel relax. As the student mentioned above, the lesson is fun and it makes the students to be active. This strategy is efective to avoid boring situation in the classroom.

Extract 11

“ strategy in teaching is she makes me to “tegang”, but is also fun. Why I say fun? Because she “asik diajak ngobrol, gitu” dan juga I think she can make us better in the future.”

Dealing with the previous response, extract 11 emphasized even in serious situation, making joke by the lecturers are expected by them. This strategy could make the them be better in the future.

8. Question-Answer

Some lecturers begin the class by giving question to the students such as small quiz. It is aimed at knowing the students’ prior knowledge.

Extract 12

“She also give us a free asking her. Just like the word we doesn’t know. How to speak for now, the word, is.. she always like, just ask me. So like that. And not only that. She also make us to speak in the public. So sometimes we nerveous in the speak in public. But because her teaching just like speak slowly and people say yes, she like that. And I think its really really good for me. “

Extract 12 indicates that students have an opportunity to give questions to the lecturer. The students are told to feel free to ask for help. Giving opportunity to the students to give questions or answer is good strategy to activate the students’ participation in the class. It also could minimize students’ nervous in speaking.

9. Scoring System

One of the indicator of students’ sucess is depend on thier score. Scoring system is applied to motivate students study hard about the subject. The students get high and low score based on thier activeness during teaching and learning process occure.

Extract 13

“ the lecturer give plus and minus when we can answer, respon the questions given, so I can more serious in study, because if I just keep silent I will not get score”

“I like the way he show us the group score in the slide, because we can know our ability, then for next presentation my group will make well preparation before show”

Extract 13 shows scoring system is regarded as one of the best strategy to motivate students to study hard. High score is only given to the active students, then low score is give for them who are passive in the class. In this strategy, the lecturer gave plus and minus symbol in attendance list. Moreover, the students could make well-preparation for next meeting if they got low score.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

There are many instructional strategies in EFL class found at higher education. Some engage students to be active participant and some do not. From the discussion above, it indicates that the lecturers applied a variety of strategies at the beginning to the end of the class. This finding leads the researcher to claim that the strategies applied by the lecturers can be categorized as active instructional strategies and passive instructional strategies. The category is based on the students responds and their activity. Dealing with those instructional strategies, investigating response of the research subject toward research content is important to do in order to get information about the strategies applied by the lecturers in teaching English at higher education classroom. In this study, students' responses on instructional communication strategies were examined from students' view as they were involved in the classroom. They responses were obtained through focus group interview. In short, the students mostly evoked positive perception toward those instructional strategies in terms of code – switching, grouping, the use of Information and Communication Technology, feedback, walking around, humor insertion, question-answer, and scoring system.. They revealed that the strategies applied helped them to actively participate in the classroom.

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