HOW LECTURERS CONSTRUCT INTERACTIVE AND COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN "ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES" CLASSROOMS

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ABSTRACT

English Lecturers are responsible for designing various teaching approaches, instruction, and efficient classroom management procedures to promote a productive atmosphere and interactive classroom experience for all, especially in English for Specific Purpose (ESP) classes. Therefore, this study aimed to explore by what methods lecturers construct interactive speaking activities in English for Specific Purpose (ESP) classes. This study used qualitative design through a case study approach. It was conducted in Politeknik Negeri Media Kreatif, Makassar Indonesia. Ten students of the Publishing study program participated in this study. First, the researcher collected the data from observations, focused group discussions, document analysis, and photographs or videos. The data were then analyzed in six stages: preparing raw data, organizing and preparing data for analysis, reading and coding data (themes or descriptions) by hand or a computer, and connecting the theme/description. The last was interpreting the meaning of the theme/description. The finding shows lecturers constructed interactive speaking activities by starting with asking the students challenging in learning English and what the students hoped in ESP for publishing course. Then the lecturer covered the ESP materials by designing various communicative and interactive activities that were categorized into three primary activities: individual presentation, paired oral performances, and group speaking practice. These activities developed the students' motivation, self-confidence, and English communicative competence.

Keywords: *Interactive activities; communicative competence; teaching innovation; ESP classes.*

INTRODUCTION

The teachers claimed that students have low motivation to learn English (Yulia, 2013). Manurung (2019) supports the statement by finding that internal factors contribute to the difficulties in students' speaking performance. The aspects are the students' lack of vocabulary, their hesitance to make mistakes, and their fear of speaking. These challenges generally happen for students who learn English for general Purposes (EGP) (e.g., Learners in the English Department). Learners who study EGP may have higher learning motivation than those who learn English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (e.g., learners in the publishing department who study English for publishing).

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Strevens (1988) indicates that ESP may be stated differently in terms of the definitions. However, what is essential things is that ESP is "designed to meet specified needs of learners; related to the content, to particular disciplines, occupations, and activities; and centered on the language appropriate to those activities, in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics" (Strevens, 1988, p. 84). Therefore, ESP learners are not only required to get familiarized with general English vocabulary. However, they must also demonstrate their competence in the language within specific areas (e.g., publishing, agriculture, science, business, technology, etc.). Therefore, according to Yulia (2013), teachers or lecturers must encourage their students to learn English by developing their teaching methods and speaking capability in class to stimulate students' integrative motivation that English is beneficial for their future.

Franklin and Harrington (2019) echo teachers are obligated to take responsibility for the various teaching methods and classroom instruction, efficient classroom management strategies, and successful evidence-based teaching and learning pedagogies to promote a positive classroom experience and atmosphere for all. Mantiri (2015) also informs that the role of teachers, as well as the attitude and motivation of learners, are crucial elements of language learning and teaching. Positive motivation and attitude, whether instrumental or integrative and intrinsic or extrinsic, are the key to successful learning. Teachers undoubtedly play a significant position in students' language learning outcomes that could burn or decrease students' motivation. Therefore, language teachers and learners need to know their roles to nurture the best ways to thrive in language teaching and learning. Besides, the comprehensive approach to language learning and the other factors, such as the environment, also play a significant position in language teaching and learning success.

Ayu (2019) affirms that organizing interactive activities such as forcing students' engagement in group performance and discussion seems to be a great way to facilitate students to learn English in a meaningful way and make them communicate productively in English during the teaching and learning process. According to Fahri (2018), the variation of the topics avoids boredom in the learning because the students may experience different things in each meeting. The broad and challenging issues also produce new information and knowledge while students can practice language skills during the learning process. Moreover, their new knowledge in the class makes the students feel passionate and enthusiastic about learning. However, even though the topics vary, when the teachers or lecturers can not cover the material based on their interactive teaching methods, they will be nothing. Therefore, this research aims to explore by what methods lecturers construct some interactive speaking activities in English for Specific Purpose (ESP) classes.

METHODOLOGY

The study conducted qualitative methods using a case study approach. Case study eases the triangulation of multiple methodologies, sources, and evidence to observe the complex, context-dependent phenomena (Paddock, Wilson, Walshe, & Todd, 2019). Qualitative research data could be picked up

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using several different methods (Suardi & Pratiwi, 2022; Wa-Mbaleka, 2020; Bhattacharya, 2017). This research was conducted in Politeknik Negeri Media Kreatif located in Makassar. Ten students agreed to participate in this study. They were the students of the Publishing study program registered in English for specific purpose (ESP) courses in 2022. The study was conducted in three months, from Februari to April 2022. In this study, the researcher did observations, focused group discussions, document, and took photographs or videos to capture all phenomena found. The observations were done throughout the study. In comparison, focus group discussions were only conducted twice at the lecture's beginning and end. The first FGD aimed to grab the students' need analysis in learning this ESP for publishing. In contrast, the second FGD was concerned with asking the students' perceptions on the implementation of this course during one semester. Furthermore, ESP for publishing took place during the covid pandemic using a blended learning system. Thus, the research was carried out by referring to the learning system at the time by collecting data online and offline. Wa-Mbaleka (2020) explained that one of these data collection techniques attractively is the researcher herself/ himself. It underlies why most experts consider the researcher the main instrument. Regarding this claim, the researcher was also the primary data collection instrument. Besides, the researcher used an observation checklist, video recorder, camera, book note, pen, laptop, and internet connection as additional instruments. The data found were then analyzed in six stages, adopted from Cresswell (2014). First, preparing raw data (transcripts, field notes, pictures, etc.), organizing and preparing data for analysis, read all data, coding data (themes or descriptions) by hand or a computer, connecting the theme/description, and then interpreting the meaning of the theme/description.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

As has been explained, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) refers to teaching and learning the language to a specific group of individuals with a purpose (Salazar, 2017) and interest. Thus, ESP for publishing facilitates students with teaching and learning the English, which are related to publishing materials. The students who take this study program are students who concerned and are interested with publishing world, such as writing, editting, printing, promoting, etc.

Students Initial Perception about English

Based on the first focused group discussion conducted at the beginning of the research, the students hope the course could motivate and facilitate the students to use English actively for communication, especially in connection to their field of study. They said that English is burdensome, complicated, and tedious. Pratiwi (2018) supported the finding. This negative perception causes them to be reluctant to learn English unless they are forced to attend classes because of the demands of grades. Furthermore, they want innovation from the lecturers to design this monotonous English class into an interactive one.
From the data collected, four students said English was difficult, three stated English was boring, and two claimed English was burdensome. On the other hand,

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only one student positively perceives English. She commented that English is interesting. The chart is as follows
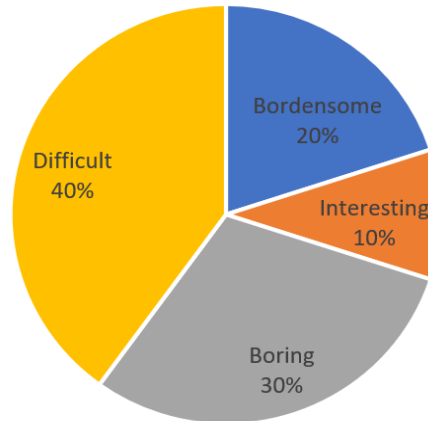

Diagram 1. Students' Intial Perception of English

Communicative and Interactive Activities in ESP Classes

Six chapters were provided for the teaching and learning process in one semester. They were *the Introduction to a Publishing, Types of Publishing, Digital Publishing, 9 Strategies to be a Good Writer, the Book Publishing Process, and Working Opportunities in the Publishing Industry*. These six publishing themes are then covered with various activities for communicative goals, such as role-play, interview, discussion, telling the story, writing an English article, promoting a product, etc. These various activities were grouped into three main categories. They were individuals presentation, paired oral performances, and group speaking practice. Even though all these models aimed to reach communicative learning goals, they were different in the practice mechanism.
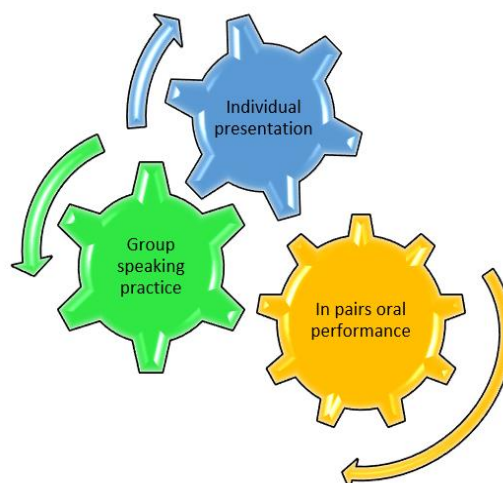

Diagram 2. ESP for publishing main activities

The first model activities were done one by one student. This individual speaking presentation obliged the students to make speaking performances

individually in front of their classmates. When a student was speaking alone in front of the class, the others acted as the audience. When this process took place, the atmosphere was quiet. No voice could be heard except the presenter because other classmates were watching and listening carefully. This activity often made students anxious and nervous among the three models of classroom speaking practice. This situation sometimes resulted in losing concentration when trying to convey ideas. Therefore, it required an appropriate strategy to overcome the obstacles faced when practicing individual presentations. The more the lecturer gave presentation assignments, the more often the students applied techniques to manage their anxiety. So that students would be more skilled and closer to success.

The second model of ESP classroom activity was speaking in pairs, or the researcher named *pair oral performance*. In this activity, the students sat face to face. They primarily conducted conversation or chitchat about the topic provided by the lecturer. The lecturer also often set up interview exercises. In this activity, two students took turns acting as the interviewer and the one being interviewed. In the implementation, the whole students in the class practiced their speaking skills together simultaneously, so the class atmosphere became noisy. In addition to improving speaking fluency, correct pronunciation, and increasing vocabulary, the assignment of speaking models aimed to train students' concentration and focus. This activity also involved high action and mobilization in the classroom because they were often instructed to exchange partners while the activity was still in progress.

The lecturer did not take part in the conversation. She was just a facilitator who gave a brief explanation and controlled the activity to run smoothly based on the target. The lecturer also moved around the class to help the students who found problems expressing opinions. The teacher even approached students who were less active to motivate and help them.

Next, the last model was group speaking practice. In the implementation, the class was divided into two or several groups. This model's speaking courses included role play, discussion, debate, and games. Each group usually competed to show their best. Therefore, achieving these goals required cooperation and mutual respect for opinions among group members. This activity model also required students to be more active. Like the pair speaking practice model, the atmosphere in the class was also noisy and fun because all the students carried out high mobilization and activity in expressing opinions. In this model, the lecturer acted as a facilitator who directed the learning process. I present figure 3 as an example of the group speaking discussion.

Figure 3 Group speaking dicussion

Although each presentation model had a different type of assignment, in general, the activities done by students and the lecturer were the same in the learning process. For example, when performing the speaking task, the students could directly ask for clarification related to the idea expressed to ensure the correctness in terms of content, vocabulary, and grammar. Other activities included asking and answering questions related to the presentation's content, asking for corrections or evaluation, and getting help when finding the problems in speaking. While empathizing and cooperating with others were also essential when giving the speaking task in groups. These students' activities helped students find various learning strategies that had not been applied and developed learning strategies that were rarely used, either self-taught or from strategy training provided by the lecturer.

At the same time, the lecturer also carried out a series of activities, such as delivering a brief explanation and instructions, creating ice breaking, asking questions related to the content of the presentation, answering questions related to the instruction, giving corrections about the performance if it is necessary, giving a motivation, teaching and training the learning strategy, and helping students. Figure 4 illustrates how this process takes place.
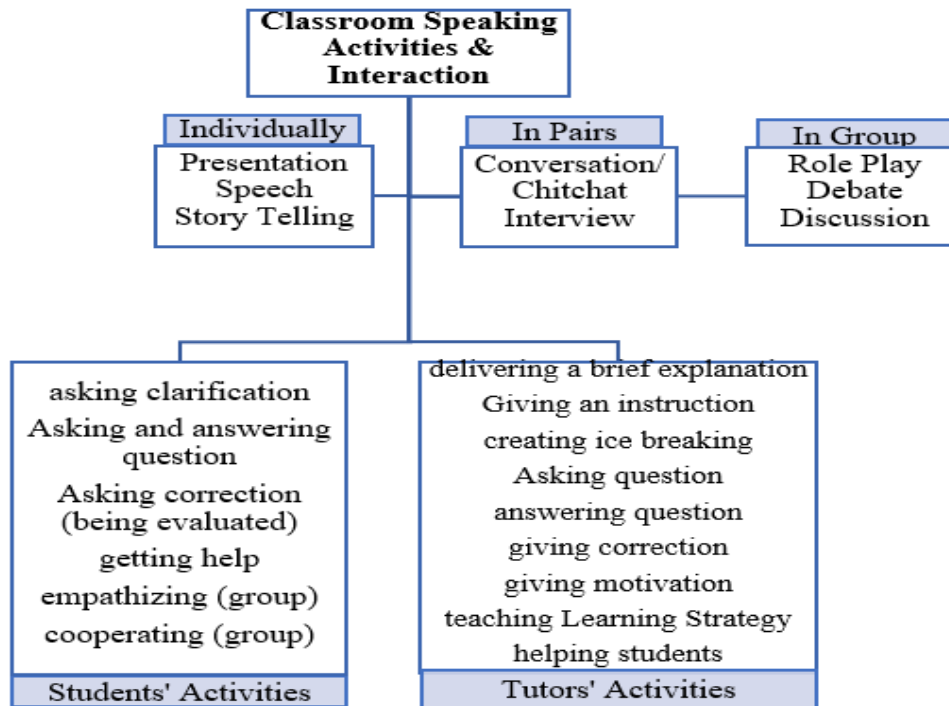
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Figure 4. The Interactive Classroom Activities and Interaction

How Students Feel about the Interactive Activities

In the first Focus Group Discussion conducted at the beginning of the lecture, most students negatively perceived English. But on the other hand, participants changed their mindset after the lecturer carried out a series of activities to analyze these non-English major students' needs, goals, and interests till she could successfully design interactive and communicative activities in the ESP class for the publishing students. During the observation, the students looked so happy and they enjoyed the learning activities. They followed all the lecturer instructions, move from one corner to another corner, and run from one partner to other partners. They smile and speak up without feeling burdensome.

When the researcher asked whether they enjoyed or not the activities during one semester, a participant stated

"Yeah, we enjoy the activities. Melakukan wawancara, saling bertanya, dan mengemukakan pendapat dengan teman kelas meningkatkan keberanian saya berbicara dan mengekspresikan pendapat karena ketika salah, saya tidak merasa insecure karena teman saya juga melakukan beberapa kali kesalahan. jadinya kita saling membantu dan mensupport satu sama lain."[Yeah, we enjoy the activities. Doing interviews, asking questions, and expressing opinions with partners increased my courage to speak and express my opinions. I did not feel insecure when I was wrong because my friends also made several mistakes. So we helped and supported each other]."

The statement implies that students were more confident in speaking and negotiating the meaning with parners. Another participant confirmed that the vocabulary related to publishing is growing. He felt lucky to be able to practice writing English news which was then required to do an individual presentation. All students should report the news like journalists. At first, he felt burdened, but the lecturers never gave up on conveying positive values when students mastered English for publishing. In addition, motivated classmates also had a positive attitude toward this course. Thus, the atmosphere for learning English begins to feel comfortable.

The observation also found that students were happy and enjoyed the learning activities. They follow all the instructions, move from one corner to another corner, and run from one partner to other partners. They smile and speak up without feeling burdensome. These interactive activities develop the students' motivation, self-confidence, and competence.

CONCLUSION

English Lecturers are responsible for designing various teaching approaches, instruction, and efficient classroom management procedures to promote a productive atmosphere and interactive classroom experience for all, especially in English for Specific Purpose (ESP) classes. It is since ESP learners are not only required to get familiarized with general English vocabulary. However, they must also demonstrate their competence in the language within specific areas. The study result supports the statement that initially, ESP for publishing students English is difficult, boring, and burdensome. Then in the teaching and learning process, lecturers covered the ESP materials by designing various communicative and interactive activities that were categorized into three primary activities: individual presentation, paired oral performances, and group speaking practice. These activities developed the students' motivation, self-confidence, and English communicative competence.

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