

**TEACHER TALK FOCUSING ON INSTRUCTIONS IN UNIVERSITY  
ENGLISH CLASSES**

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**Statement of Originality**

The work described in this Final Year Project, entitled  
**“Teacher Talk Focusing on Instructions in University English Classes”**  
is to the best of the author’s knowledge that of the author except  
where due reference is made.

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **TEACHER TALK FOCUSING ON INSTRUCTIONS IN UNIVERSITY ENGLISH CLASSES**

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This study aims to identify the types of teaching instructions that frequently used by the instructor in university English classroom based on the teacher talk being used in their lecture session. Teaching instructions refer to the way teacher teaches the curriculum. This is the important element to help the students to get the knowledge and learn from the teacher. However, there is little research done on teaching instructions specifically used by instructor in university English classroom. Therefore, this research attempts to find out the types of teaching instructions used and how English instructor manages instruction in University English classroom. The study involved three instructors of Preparatory English 2 course. Data were obtained from audio observation of Preparatory English 2 classes. The transcriptions of the recordings were analysed based on framework of Ornstein & Lasley II (2004) on the types of teaching instructions. The finding shown that the most popular teaching instructions used by the instructors are lecturing, questioning, giving direction and practice and drill. The researcher also found that, the instructors used and incorporated that teaching instructions in their lecture sessions for certain reasons or purposes.

## **ABSTRAK**

### ***PENUTURAN GURU YANG MEMFOKUSKAN KEPADA ARAHAN DI DALAM KELAS BAHASA INGGERIS DI UNIVERSITI***

Aziyanawati binti Mohamad Othman

*Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti jenis-jenis “teaching instruction” yang kerap digunakan oleh pensyarah di dalam Kelas Bahasa Inggeris di universiti berdasarkan penuturan guru yang digunakan semasa sesi pengajaran mereka. “Teaching instructions” merujuk kepada cara guru mengajar sukatan pelajaran. Ini merupakan elemen penting untuk membantu para pelajar dalam menimba ilmu pengetahuan dan belajar daripada guru. Walaubagaimanapun, hanya sedikit kajian berkaitan dengan “teaching instructions” yang telah dijalankan khususnya yang digunakan oleh pensyarah di dalam kelas Bahasa Inggeris di universiti. Oleh itu, kajian ini berusaha untuk mengenalpasti jenis-jenis “teaching instruction” yang digunakan dan bagaimana pensyarah Bahasa Inggeris mengendalikan arahan di dalam kelas Bahasa Inggeris di universiti. Kajian ini melibatkan tiga orang pensyarah yang mengajar kelas “Preparatory English 2”. Data untuk kajian di perolehi melalui rakaman lisan di kelas “Preparatory English 2”. Transkripsi rakaman tersebut dianalisa berdasarkan jenis-jenis “teaching instruction” yang dikenalpasti oleh Ornstein & Lasley II (2004). Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa jenis-jenis “teaching instruction” yang popular digunakan oleh pensyarah adalah “lecturing”, “questioning”, dan “practice and drill”. Penyelidik juga mendapati bahawa, pensyarah menggunakan dan menggabungkan “teaching instructions” tersebut untuk sebab-sebab dan tujuan-tujuan tertentu.*

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Overview**

This chapter includes a broad field of the research topic and slowly moves on to a specific area which is the background of the study. Next, it will touch on the problem statement. After that, it will continue to the objectives and research questions. Then, it will go to the significance of the research. After that, it will touch on the operational definition of terms. Finally, researcher will elaborate on the scope of the study and finally the summary.

### **1.1 Introduction**

According to Goh (2005) classroom management is divided into two major tasks. The first one is to facilitate learning among students in the classroom and another one is to establish order within the classroom. This study focuses with the first one that is to facilitate learning process. In order to facilitate learning process, effective instructions are needed in encouraging high rates of academic engagement (Carnine, 1976, cited in Oliver & Reschly, 2007).

Moreover, classroom management strategy is defined as a way or procedure used by teachers during teaching and learning process that could produce the best learning environment for effective teaching and learning to take place. The techniques used in the classroom will help to achieve effective management and enhance students' involvement in the learning process. Jones (2004) did a research on students' participation in academic group discussion in the classroom and claimed that the students restrict their contribution in classroom interaction. They prefer to remain silent and speak only when spoken to by the teacher. Thus, questioning is one techniques of instruction used by the teacher to monitor the students' understanding at the same time, encourage students participation in classroom.

Therefore, teachers must use effective instructions to hold students' attention, avoid confusion and frustration to students. Teacher must be effective and creative in managing their instructions to facilitate increase students achievement. This is important because it will prevent academic and behavior difficulties from occurring in the classroom and make the teaching sessions can take place smoothly and efficiently

## **1.2 Background of the Study**

Teacher plays one of the most important roles which is as an instructional expert. As an instructional expert, the teachers are the person who plans, guides and evaluates learning. Teachers are responsible in making decision about the content to teach, teaching materials to use, the best method to teach the selected content and how to evaluate the intended learning (Moore, 2003).

Teachers must know and expert about the subject or topic that they are going to teach because students will expect that teacher as instructional expert to have all the answers about the subject matters. Moore (2003) claimed that teaching is the

action of a teacher imparting skills or knowledge or giving instruction. Other than that, teaching also can be view as an attempt to assist students in acquiring skills, knowledge or attitude (Clark and Starr, 1986, cited in Moore, 2003). Therefore it is important for teachers to manage their instructions carefully for that purposes. Moreover, teachers can use a variety of media and methods, to help students in learning process. This is to enable teaching and learning process take place effectively and efficiently.

Effective teaching and learning cannot take place without clear and comprehensible instruction by the teachers. This is the element to help the students to get the knowledge and learn from the teachers. Teachers must present information with a high degree of clarity and enthusiasm, focus on one point at a time, avoiding digressions and ambiguous phrases or pronouns. From the teachers' instructions, it will illustrate the types of instructional method will be used in their teaching process (Oliver & Reschly, 2007).

As an instructional expert, the teacher is fully responsible for the engagement of negotiation of meaning during classroom interaction. Therefore, various types of teacher talk are employed by teachers to deliver their input to the students during classroom instruction or interaction (Tsui, 1995). This allows learners to obtain feedback about their language use and especially their errors made to ensure the input provided is comprehensible.

According to Cullen (1998), teacher talk is a potential source of comprehensible input for the learners to enhance language learning through constant meaning negotiation and feedback. However, studies have shown that in most English classroom, the major part of its interaction is generated by the teacher asking questions. According to Tsui (1995), a typical English lesson in a Hong Kong classroom contains nearly 70 percent of teacher talk with teacher asking questions,

nominating students to answer the question, the students answering the question and the teacher providing the feedback to the response.

Furthermore, Doyle, Goh & Zhang (2004) agreed that such dominance of teacher talk in the classroom also persists in Malaysia where it is functions as technique to check students' comprehension, to ensure they have acquired the knowledge imparted, to focus their attention and participate in the lesson. Most of aspects are closely related to teaching instructions used by the teacher in delivering his or her lesson.

In the quoted researches above, the emphasis is on the types of teaching instructions that frequently used by teachers in general. However, there is little research done on instructions specifically used by instructor or teacher in university English classes. Therefore, this research will attempt to find out how English teachers manage instruction in University English classroom in order to capture students' attention in learning process. This research will attempt to identify of the types of instruction frequently used by teachers in University English classes based on the types of teacher talk being used in their lecture sessions.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

An English lesson will not be taught effectively by an instructor or teacher if he or she has problems in managing instructions for the target learners. If the instructions in classroom are clearly understood by the student, the teaching-learning process can be done systematically and effectively.

According to Bereiter and Scardamalia (1989), teachers need a knowledge base about instructional methods to enhance their creativity in teaching. Such a knowledge base would offer the best methods for certain situations in order to

manage their instruction in classroom. The key for teachers to improve teachers' instruction is they must have sufficient knowledge about the types of instruction to be used. Moreover, they must know the appropriate time it can be used. It is useful for teachers to think of different instructions.

An effective instruction is needed by teachers to maintain positive student behavior towards the learning process. Moreover, highly effective instruction will reduce academic and classroom behavior problems. Because of this reason, teachers will need to upgrade their skills in giving instruction and in deciding which types of instruction to be used at certain time in teaching or lecture sessions. In order to make a decision about it, there are some of the elements that teachers must consider such as level of proficiency of the target learner, the content, the goals, the learning environment and so forth. It is important for teachers to provide instruction that appropriate with students' level in order to engage students actively in English lesson.

This research will attempt to find out the types of instruction used by the teachers in University English classes based on the teacher talk used. The researcher will study on teacher talk and identify the types of instruction are frequently used in university English classes.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

There are two objectives for this research:

- 1.4.1 To identify the types of teaching instruction used in Preparatory English 2 classroom and to find out the type of teaching instruction frequently used by the instructors.
- 1.4.2 To find out the purpose of the instructors using that instructions and how they incorporate that instructions in their lesson.



## **1.5 Research Questions**

This research aims to answer the following questions:

- 1.5.1 What types of teaching instructions identified and frequently used by the instructors in Preparatory English 2 classroom?
- 1.5.2 What are the purposes of the instructors using that teaching instructions and how they incorporate it in their lessons?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

It is important to investigate the types of teaching instruction used by teacher in university English classes as it provides good feedback about the teaching instruction to be used in the classroom. At the same time, the finding of this study would provide an understanding on what types of teaching instruction can be used in order to help learners to acquire language skills. The information eventually used as references especially for the novice language teachers who have not much experience in adapting to the learners' demand or expectations of language learning. It is hope that, this research can be used as reference in order to get knowledge about the teaching instruction to be used in English classroom.

## **1.7 Operational Definition of Terms**

### ***1.7.1 Teacher talk***

Teacher talk is a general term for different types of teacher talk. Ellis (1998) stated that, teacher talk is a general term for different types of teacher talk which refer to as “special language the teacher uses when addressing second language learner in the classroom.” it can be categorized according to the linguistic aspects and functions.

According to Poppi (n.d), teacher talk referred to the modifications in teachers' speech which can lead to a special type of discourse. When teachers use 'teacher talk' they are trying to make themselves as easy to understand as possible by the students, and effective teacher talk may provide essential support to facilitate both language comprehension and students' production.

Flanders (1970) explained that "techniques for analyzing classroom interaction are based on the notion that these reciprocal contacts can be perceived as a series of events which occurs one after another" (Flanders, 1970 as cited in Tarricone & Fatherston, 2002). It is a system to code spontaneous verbal communication in classroom (Tarricone & Fetherston, 2002). McDonough & McDonough (1997) pointed out that FIAC enable real-time observation or analysis on recording transcripts. Besides that, it serves as a checklist of categories to categories verbal behavior especially in classroom observations (McDonough & McDonough, 1997).

In this study, teacher talk referred to the kind of language used by the instructors for instruction in the classroom. It is the oral form of teacher talk that is under this investigation. It refers to the language that teachers use in language classrooms rather than in other settings.

### ***1.7.2 Teaching Instructions***

According to Arends (2004), teaching instructions or strategies are the implementation of multi means of teaching strategies or instructions used by teachers in order to help students learn. It includes teachers' explanation and demonstration of ideas, helping students with their tasks and organizing students to form study group. The good choice of instructions could facilitate

teacher to manage students' learning to ensure that the objectives of the lessons are achieved (Arends, 2004).

Glanz (2004) explained that, the differences in the delivery of instructions were help to meet the different learning styles of the students. The effectives teaching strategies that the selected should consider the learning style preference, visual preference, auditory preference and kinesthetic preference of the students (Glanz, 2004).

Meanwhile, Huitt (2003) pointed out that instruction as "the purposeful direction of the learning process" and is one of the major teacher class activities along with planning and management. Professional educators have developed a variety of models of instruction, each designed to produce classroom learning.

In the present study, teaching instructions refers to the way teachers teach the curriculum. According to Bruner (1966), cited in Moore (2003), instruction is "*an effort to assist or shape growth*". This definition and the role that teachers perform imply that teachers need to be concerned with all aspect of students' development. The purpose of instruction is to help students learn.

However, in this study, the researcher is interested to find out whether teachers in university English classes use the teaching instructions as has been out lined by Ornstein & Lasley II (2004). The types of instructions stated by Ornstein & Lasley II (2004) are practice and drill, questioning, lecturing and experimental teaching.

The study provides insight in terms of the framework chosen for the study. It was noted by the researcher that some teacher talk focusing on instructions identified from the transcriptions were not stated in Ornstein & Lasley II (2004) framework. However, they were prominent types of instructions and used in most of the lecture sessions. Those prominent types of instructions were giving directions and criticizing or justifying authority. These types of instruction were added into the existing framework of Ornstein & Lasley II (2004).

Those two types of instructions were adapted from Flanders Interaction Analysis Category (Flander, 1970). Giving direction and criticizing or justifying authority were considered as instruction because it was used when teacher give commands or order students to do something. Newman (2001) claimed that, giving direction is used to indicate close supervision and direction by the teacher. Moreover, it also used for statements intended to produce compliance. Meanwhile, criticizing or justifying authority was intended to change students' behaviour from non-acceptable to acceptable pattern (Newman, 2001).

Table 1: *Framework on the types of teaching instructions adapted from Ornstein & Lasley II, 2004.*

Lecturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Giving facts or opinion about content or procedures</b>, expressing his own ideas, giving his own ideas, giving his own explanation about the content.</li> <li>• <b>To present complex conceptual ideas efficiently.</b></li> <li>• Example: <i>“Next paragraph, the neighbors rustle in and out, the doctor drives away, a window opens like a pod abrupt mechanically... meaning the neighbours come and go and the doctor leaves. Suddenly a window flung open.”</i></li> </ul>
Asking Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Asking a question about content or procedures</b>; based on teacher ideas, with the intent that the students will answer.</li> <li>• <b>Teacher must act as if expects an answer.</b></li> <li>• Examples and <b>Category of question</b>: <i>What does an adjective modify?(knowledge), what does the words hasta la vista mean?(comprehension), how would you distinguish between fact and opinion in the article we read?(analysis), who can write an email?(synthesis), what is wrong in this sentence?(evaluation).</i></li> </ul>
Drill and Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching a <b>specific skill or process</b>, learning as <b>repetitive process</b> and <b>memorization</b> the lesson, <b>repetition is used to maximize correct responses</b> and to prevent misconception. to teach the students who lack basic skills or knowledge of academic subject matter such as <i>grammar rules</i>.</li> </ul>
Experimental teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fostering critical or creative learning</b>, engages the student into the process of <b>authentic investigations</b> to seek the real solution to the problem (<i>Science Process Skills: analyze the problem, develop hypotheses, collect and analyze information, conduct experiments,</i></li> </ul>

	<i>make inferences and draw conclusion).</i>
Giving Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Directions, commands or orders</b> to which a student is expected to comply.</li> <li>• Example: <i>Ok, look at this sentence, please read this sentence together.</i></li> </ul>
Criticizing or justifying authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Statements intended to change students' behaviour</b> from non acceptable to acceptable pattern, stating why the teacher is doing what he is doing.</li> <li>• Example: <i>I can't hear your voice, louder please.</i></li> </ul>

### 1.8 Scope of the Study

This research is only for English lecturers who teach for Preparatory English 2 classes in University Malaysia Sarawak. In this study also will try to study the types of teaching instructions used in university English classes by the experienced English lecturers in University Malaysia Sarawak. Therefore, the finding of the study may not reflect the types of instructions used by teachers who are teaching other subjects.

### 1.9 Summary

This chapter has given an overview of the background of the study and why the study is worth addressing. The chapter also mentions about the objectives underlying the study and specifically addresses the research questions to work on. Care has been taken to explicitly define the specific terms used in the study to help readers' understanding. Basically, the following chapter will review, among other aspects, some related studies on instructional methods.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This section reviews some related literature related to classroom management. It is divided into sections with their elaborations. This literature review touches on teacher talk, teaching instructions, and the types of teaching instruction.

#### **2.1 Teacher Talk**

Having studied the SLA for many years, Ellis (1985) viewed teacher talk as special language that teachers use when addressing L2 learners in the classroom. There is systematic simplification of the formal properties of the teacher's language. Moreover, Ellis (1985) stated that, studies of teacher talk can be divided into those that investigate the type of language that teachers use in language classrooms and those that investigate in the type of language they use in subject lessons.

He also mentioned that, the language that teachers address to L2 learner is treated as a register, with its own specific formal and linguistics properties (Ellis, 1985). Moreover, Ellis (1988) stated that teacher talk characterised by functional adjustment similar to the ‘training strategies’ characteristic of adult input to children in his teacher speech research.

According to Ma (2006), teacher talk in English classrooms is regarded as special variety of the English language. So, it has its own specific features which other varieties do not share. Because of the restriction of the physical setting, special participants as well as the goal of teaching, teacher talk has its own special style.

Ma (2006) also mentioned that teacher talk is a special communicative activity. Its goal is to communicate with students and develops students’ foreign language proficiency. Teacher talk is used in class when teachers are conducting instructions, cultivating their intellectual ability and managing classroom activities (Feng Qican, 1999 as cited in Ma, 2006). Besides, teachers use the language to encourage the communication between learners and themselves. Therefore we can say teacher talk is a kind of communication-based or interaction-based talk.

In this study, teacher talk referred to the kind of language used by the instructors for instruction in the classroom. For this term, *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* defines it as “that variety of language sometimes used by teachers when they are in the process of teaching. In trying to communicate with learners, teachers often simplify their speech, giving it many of the characteristics of foreigner talk and other simplified styles of speech addressed to language learners” (Richards, 1992 as cited in Ma, 2006).