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LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION IN INTENSIVE COURSE (IC) CLASSES:

A Study at the First Semester Lecturers of English Department

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By:

INDAH KHARISMA

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ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

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**Language of Instructions in Intensive Course (IC) Classes:
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**Indah Kharisma (indahkharisma@ymail.com)
Drs. Kamaluddin, M.A., Ph.D
Yuni Budi Lestari, M.A.**

Abstrak—Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki bentuk bahasa instruksi di dalam kelas Intensive Course (IC) dan efektivitas bahasa instruksi yang digunakan oleh dosen IC. Hal ini penting bagi dosen untuk mengembangkan kesadaran tentang pentingnya bahasa instruksi yang jelas untuk manajemen kelas yang baik. Selain itu, observasi, wawancara, rekaman dan catatan digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data. Enam dosen IC berpartisipasi dalam studi ini. Sebanyak 516 bahasa instruksi diidentifikasi dengan menganalisis transkrip rekaman video pelajaran. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Imperatif (54%) lebih sering digunakan oleh para dosen daripada deklaratif (30%) atau interogatif (16%). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa bahasa instruksi yang efektif harus sederhana, jelas, dan sistematis bukannya rumit atau terlalu formal, terutama untuk taraf pelajar pemula. Faktor yang paling sering dikaitkan dengan instruksi yang efektif adalah respon dan partisipasi siswa. Rekomendasi dibuat untuk memperbaiki efektivitas dosen dalam memberikan instruksi.

Abstract—The study is aimed at investigating the forms of language of instructions in Intensive Course (IC) classes and the effectiveness of language of instructions used by the IC lecturers. It is essential for lecturers to develop an awareness of the importance of clear language of instructions for good class management. Moreover, observation, interview, recording and note-taking were used to collect the data. Six IC lecturers participated in the study. A total of 516 language of instruction were identified by analyzing the transcript of videotaped lesson. The findings indicated that Imperatives (54%) were used more frequently by the lecturers than Declaratives (30%) or Interrogatives (16 %) in IC classes. The study revealed that effective language of instructions should be simple, clear, and systematic rather than complicated or too formal, particularly for beginners or pre intermediate students. The factor that the most commonly linked to effective instructions was student response and participation. Recommendations were made to improve on the effectiveness of university lecturers in giving instructions.

Key words: Teaching, Instructions, Language of Instructions, Intensive Course (IC) Classes

A. Introduction

Many Asian countries including Indonesia have serious response to the growing need to foster communicative abilities in English where English is taught as a foreign language. As a global language, its various areas have been largely investigated, especially that of English teaching and learning. Considerable research has gone on in recent years into exactly what happens in the English classroom—what and how students learn, what teachers actually do, and what

kind of events takes place. Sometimes the findings show that what happens is not what is expected when lessons are being prepared and taught.

Teaching is a complex and dynamic activity, during the lesson many things occurred simultaneously. Managing the classroom is essential to effective teaching, but the skills of managing an entire classroom full of students so that they are willing to learn are not easy. Effective classroom management is actually useful for managing both discipline and academic productivity, whereas there are several problems related to classroom management. Nonetheless, the researcher decided to focus on one particular area: giving instructions.

Instruction is a means that provides detailed information about how to do something. One of the components affecting the success of the activity is effective classroom instructions. The quality of classroom instruction will affect the quality of student's achievement and satisfaction in gaining experience and knowledge of the material learned. However, it is surprising that so little research has been conducted in this area. The scant research that exists on instructions investigates some guidelines on how to give instructions (Liruso & Villanueva de Debat, 2003; Sanchez, 2007). Other research that is still relevant to this thesis investigates the forms that teachers use to express directives (Tapper, 1994; Goatly, 1995). Furthermore, there is no research concerned with the classroom instruction in English Department of Mataram University. Hence, Instruction is one of the aspects of class management that might need more work.

Making instructions clear for language students can be a challenge. Unfortunately, there is no magic formula for giving instructions that works for all

students in all situations. In order to conduct the research intensively, it is important to give clear limitation of research topic. This research is specifically focused on observing and analyzing language of instructions used by the lecturers in Intensive Course (IC) classes. This effort is going to be applied in the first semester lecturers of English Department at University of Mataram Academic Year 2013/2014. The objectives of the research are to find out the forms of instruction used by the lecturers in Intensive Course (IC) classes and to discover its effectiveness.

1. Classroom Management

Teachers face overwhelming demands and challenges in the classroom. Classroom management is essential skill the teacher should have; also, it is the key component in any educational setting. It deals with the way teachers maintain order in the classroom in order to achieve academic objectives (Doyle, 1986 cited in Burden and Byrd, 1999, p.162). A well-managed classroom can provide an exciting and dynamic learning experience for everyone involved. Unfortunately, this process can be often interfered with the students' behavior.

Classroom management is the process of organizing and conducting the business of the classroom. According to Doyle, 1986 (as cited in Burden & Byrd, 1999, pp. 162-163), classroom management refers to actions and strategies teachers use to maintain order. The ways of maintaining order in the classroom is so-called classroom management.

Arikunto (1992, p. 67), defines classroom management as an effort conducted by a person who has responsibilities in teaching and learning process or who helps

with the intention that the optimal conditions will be achieved; so that, learning process can be implemented as expected.

Every expert has a different perspective on defining 'classroom management', because it is not easy to give a universal definition that can be acceptable for everyone. Because of the difficulty in exactly defining the word management; therefore, the limit of content is vague.

2. Classroom Instruction

Instruction constitutes element of classroom management (Harmer, 2007; Gower, et al., 2005). Instructions are used to tell students what they are supposed to do. Nevertheless, Brown (2001) in *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy (2nd ed.)* does not include instruction as one of classroom management elements.

Holmes (1983, cited in Tapper, 1994) analyzes directives in L1 classrooms in New Zealand and Britain. Holmes groups teacher directives into three main categories: imperatives, interrogatives and declaratives. She has identified five variations in addition to imperative. They are as follows: you imperative, present participle; verb ellipsis; imperative + modifier; and Let + us.

Sardegna (2005) in her findings of a study on classroom instructions claimed that the purposes of instructions being set by teachers were to increase concern of specific issues and needs, to show useful strategies, to provide essential feedback, to direct students in learning and keep them on track at the same time. In other words, the findings insisted on the importance of instructions to students that the effective instructions would be beneficial for them to obtain specific guidance,

focused and clear instructions which lead to successful accomplishment of learning tasks. Besides that, similar study has also matched this finding in which Kinoshita (2003) proposed the importance of instructions as the medium to show how strategies, efficiently are supposed to be used in learning. Besides raising students' awareness while learning, effective instructions are claimed to be significant in providing students with systematic practice, reinforcement and self-monitoring of their strategy use while attending to language learning activities in classroom.

Even though the instructions seem to be fairly easy, at the end teachers have to instruct students more than once. It is common to see a teacher repeating instructions to a group of students while the ones who understood are already working. In order to help teachers solve that problem, Gower *et al.* (2005, pp. 40-42) in *Teaching Practice A handbook for teachers in training* outlines a set of ways of giving effective instructions no matter how complex the desired outcome is (i.e. Attract students' attention, Use simple language and short expressions, Be consistent, Use Visual or written clues, Demonstrate, Break the instructions down, Target your instructions, Be decisive, Check students' understanding).

B. Methodology

This research investigated the effectiveness of instruction language used by lecturers to manage their classes. As Best and Khan (1989, p. 89) state, qualitative research describes events, persons, and so forth scientifically without the use of numerical data. The emphasis is on the stated experiences of the participants and

on the stated meanings they attach to themselves, to other people, and to their environment. It provides a new insight into a social phenomenon. It is also in line with what Straus and Corbin propose (as cited in Basrowi and Suwandi, 2008, p.1), “Qualitative research is an attempt to analyze society life, history, behavior, organization functioning, social movement, and interrelationship”. Thus, this effort employed a descriptive qualitative research design.

The population of the research was the first semester lecturers of Intensive course class in Academic year 2013/2014. The total of the population was six lecturers. In this research, the researcher took all of the population as the sample.

To gain deeper insight and understanding, the data were obtained through direct observation, recording, note taking, and interview. Moreover, recording and note taking also added significant value towards the findings of this research. After collecting the data, the researcher follows the procedures of analyzing data, which involved identifying, classifying, describing, and explaining. The recording data from observation and interview were transcribed into written form. Languages of instruction found on transcription were highlighted, and then the researcher made lists of those languages of instruction used by the English lecturers. The researcher then classified language of instructions used by the lecturers according to three categories—imperative, declarative, and interrogative. The researcher described language of instructions used by the lecturers, the forms of its effectiveness, and the students’ response by giving examples. At the last stage of analyzing data, the researcher explained the effectiveness of lecturers’ instruction based on the description.

C. Findings and Discussions

Based on the previous chapter, there were six participants of this research—four male lecturers (Mr. A, Mr. Z, Mr. W, Mr. AR) and two female lecturers (Mrs. BL and Mrs. AD). Each of the lecturers had been teaching English as a foreign language for several years. There were around 33 mixed ability learners in each class, males and females, and it was their first year of learning English at University level.

1. Language of Instruction Forms

After the analysis of the data (see Appendix 3 for a sample of transcriptions), language of instructions was classified according to three forms—imperatives, declaratives, and interrogatives. Then, all three forms are summed, so that a total of 516 languages of instruction were identified from the transcripts of the video-recorded lectures.

Table 1 Language of Instruction Forms

No.	Lecturer	Imperative	Declarative	Interrogatives
1	Mr. A	57	21	20
2	Mr. Z	38	30	11
3	Mr. AR	35	30	10
4	Mr. AW	42	33	9
5	Mrs. BL	49	27	19
6	Mrs. AD	60	13	12
	Total	281	154	81
	% total	54%	30%	16%

The table shows the frequency of language of instruction forms. 281 instances (54%) were imperatives; 154 (30%) were declaratives; 81 (16%) were interrogatives. It is interesting to note that out of 516 instruction instances, the

imperative is the most frequent form. Declaratives make up the next more frequent form, and interrogatives are ranked the third.

It is interesting to note that although instruction is realized by three different forms, the lecturers generally tend to use only one or two forms most often. Imperatives are by far the most frequent form used. It is in line with Holmes (1983, cited in Tapper 1994) findings.

Every form of instruction language can be functioning as imperatives, but the sentence structures are really different. Although imperatives are more direct form than another two forms and are the most frequently used, not all of imperatives are effective as well as declaratives and interrogatives. Some of instruction languages found above are classified as ineffective. The ineffectiveness of the language forms was caused by the problem faced by the students in carrying out the activities; they showed inappropriate response in receiving the instruction.

Instructions have less impact when stated as questions or requests, because the student may believe that he or she has the option to decline. The lecturer who attempts, for example, to quiet a talkative student by saying, "*Dian, could you mind keeping your voice down so that other students can study?*" should not be surprised if the student keep talking. Students may struggle to respond appropriately to instruction language. Lecturers should not forget that wordy instructions do not work effectively, particularly with learners of low English proficiency, even though those wordy instructions are considered more polite.

Furthermore, the type of questions asked more frequently by the lecturers was yes/no questions that expect mainly some yes/no type responses. Some of them

aimed to check students' understanding of the instruction points, for example, *'Are you allowed to show your sheet to each other?'*, it checks a key aspect of information gap activities. However, some questions are asked only to check students' progress, one of the example is *'Have you finished?.'* Also, yes/no questions were sometimes asked to draw students' attention, for example, *'Can you hear me from the back?'*, *'Is the picture clear enough?.'* Besides, WH-questions were asked in order to check if the students know the answer of the exercises given, for example, *'What have you got for number 1?'*, *'Who will answer the next question?.'*

From observation, it can be found that students' responses were generally brief (mostly of three words or less) when the lecturers asked yes/no questions. Those questions are easy for students to understand and they have short, manageable answers. However, when WH-questions were asked, the students' responses tended to be longer.

2. Effective and Ineffective Language of Instruction

Language of instruction is a key tool that lecturers use in leading learning and this was shown very clearly in the lessons studied here. Amazingly, while some students may remain focused on task; however, this is not the case for all students; other may appear to be confused. That is why, if directions or instructions are not effectively and clearly delivered, there will be a number of students who will simply not have assimilated what is to be done or have only caught part of the information. Table 2 summarizes the aspects regarding to effective and ineffective language of instructions.

Table 2 Effective and Ineffective Language of Instruction

Effective	Ineffective
Focusing students' attention	Not focusing students' attention
Using short and simple language	Using too formal/rarely used words
Avoiding too much L1	Too much using L1
Grading and Adjusting the language level	Misjudging students' level of language
Checking students' understanding by asking questions related to the given instruction	Checking students' understanding by Asking 'Do you understand?'

The effectiveness of lecturers' instructions is a very significant element for the teaching and learning process to be successful. More qualitative analysis involving, for example, interviews with lecturers (see Appendix 4), is required to shed light on the reasons for the choices lecturers make.

The first step to give a successful instruction is to understand students and their capacities. From the interview, the factor that the lecturers most commonly linked to effective instruction was student response and participation. Approximately, most of those who described an effective instructional experience included aspects related to this factor. All successful lecturers have gone through trial and error, when learning how to give effective instructions. That is why lecturers should prepare everything carefully beforehand.

Furthermore, the students were also asked during the interview (see appendix 5) to describe about what ways they like to be instructed. Findings from this research indicated that most respondents agree that the lecturers should use simple, clear language in order that their instructions become effective. Using simple and clear language was the most frequently trait mentioned in the interview. This finding suggests that students look forward to and appreciate the

instructions that are simple and clear rather than complicated or too formal (rarely used).

Some examples of instructions below are given for further clarification:

Example 1

Reading and vocabulary, exercise 2, pp.42-43 (see appendix 6)

T : There are seven headings, and also seven paragraphs in there. Look! Paragraph one has been done for us. Oke, so what do you have to do?

S : Match between the paragraphs and the headings.

T : Good. You have 10 minutes to finish. Don't worry about understanding every word, because understanding the key idea doesn't require you to understand all these words.

In example 1, the lecturer emphasized that there was no problem if they did not understand every word in each paragraph, because they were supposed to only match between the headings and the paragraphs. They focused on the key idea, not on the meaning of every word in the paragraph. By doing this, the students could finish the activity in time.

Example 2

The students had to do a role play, describing a suspect to the police (task: speaking, p.48):

T : OK, student A – you are all witnesses. Student B – you are all police officers. So who are the witnesses?

Ss : (the A's raise their hands)

T : And who are the police officers?

Ss : (the B's raise their hands)

T : Great! All the witnesses read the card on page 142 and all the police officers read the card on page 145. Witnesses - think about what you are going to say to describe the suspect. Police officers, think about what questions you should ask the witness. Now, what will you do first, read the card or speak?

Ss : Read the card.

The example above has no grammar and vocabulary associated with an imaginary situation. For example, if you were the witnesses ..., ...imagine ... It also has no unnecessary polite language I'd like you to ... and it has no redundancies such as I mean..., actually..., guys... The lecturer realizes at the end he needs to check his instructions and this is a positive thing. His way of checking students' understanding is asking students a question containing the instruction sequence and this is easy.

Example 3

T : What have you got for number 2, Baiq Shinta?

S : (silence)

T : What is the answer for number 2?

S : (respond)

The words 'have got' can be confusing for beginners. Most of them think that 'have got' is related to 'Present Perfect Tense', whereas it is nothing to do with it. When the students seem to have problems in understanding the instructions, the lecturer modifies his/her language of instructions. Giving clear instructions is useful in order to make students feel more secure in the lesson. It means they could begin tasks more quickly, which increased time for learning. It is also

important to note that lecturers should give students a little thinking time and not expect them to answer questions immediately.

Another aspect from this study indicates that for effective instruction to be delivered, the lecturer should check students' understanding. The lecturer uses questions to check key aspects of the instructions or sometimes asks the students to choose the pictures that best illustrate the meaning of a particular word or sentence. However, if part of his instructions are obvious, for example, "*work in pairs*", then it is not necessary to check this aspect of the activity. The lecturer should check aspects that are more confusing for students.

Most commonly, what makes the instruction language become ineffective is that the lecturers misjudged students' abilities and prior knowledge. Each of lecturers has different assumptions about their students' ability. Sometimes language of instructions they use is either too easy or too difficult for students. Consequently, inappropriate levels of instruction used by the lecturers can make the students become demotivated.

Moreover, it can be observed that students' and lecturers' perceptions of ineffective instructions coincide with regard to a number of attributes. Both groups describe the less effective lecturer as someone who does not demonstrate respect for his/her students, does not care if their students understand or not, cannot explain the instructions clearly, is not systematic while giving instructions, misjudges students' language level.

One common depiction of the ineffective instructions that surfaced throughout the interviews of students was the inability of lecturer being able to explain a complex topic simply through the use of simple language.

In the following example, lecturer's instructions are quite long and complicated and the students' silence probably means they do not understand them, at least not completely, and this makes them reluctant to answer. To present a complicated instruction, poor lecturer explains everything at once. He did not do it step by step.

Example 4

T : Well, it is a worksheet. It contains some items of personal identity. There are two columns. First column is the list of personal identity which should be answered with your classmate data. The second column is for other classmate. It means that you should make a conversation with two classmates you don't know before. Then I want you to make notes on your partner's answers and then go back into your seat. And then you should tell your friends in front of the class about the answer you got. OK? Do you understand?

Ss : (Silence)

T : Do you understand?

Ss : Yes (very quietly)

The instruction above is likely to be difficult for beginner or pre intermediate level students. The lecturer realizes at the end he needs to check his instructions and this is a positive thing. However, his way of checking is asking students to repeat the whole instruction sequence and this is difficult.

Besides, the lecturers are local residents who speak the local language natively. They are usually able to speak the students' L1 fluently. The implication is that some IC lecturers who share similar native language prefer to use L1 for giving instructions. It is difficult to break the habit. Hence, it is almost unavoidable that instruction will be given not only in English. In fact, the general assumption that has prevailed for some time is that English ought to be learnt through English, and not by the use of L1, which has to be prohibited in the classroom. According to Ellis (1997) several authors maintain that L1 has no essential role to play in English teaching and that too much L1 use might deprive valuable input in the L2. Learning to give effective instructions in the target language is well worth the effort. It provides an opportunity for students to acquire language naturally in an authentic, purposeful context, and at the same time it gives them the satisfaction on being able to show understanding through their responses. Thus, the lecturers should try not to switch to Indonesian as the students would make optimal benefit from classroom language.

Example 5

T : Anak-anak buka buku kalian halaman 42. Liat exercise 2. Disana ada tujuh judul dan tujuh paragraph, dan yang harus kalian lakukan adalah mencocokkan judul dengan isi paragraph. Kalian diperbolehkan membuka kamus apabila kamu menemukan kata-kata yang sulit. Kerjakan sendiri-sendiri, setelah selesai kita check jawabannya bersama-sama.

(Everybody open your book page 42. Look at exercise 2. There are seven headings and also seven paragraphs and you should match between the headings and the paragraphs. You are allowed to open the dictionary if you find some

difficult words. Do it individually, after you finished we will check the answer together.)

From the observation, it can also be found that 4 of six lecturers check students' understanding by asking, "*Do you understand?*", "*Do you get it?*", "*Do you know what I mean?*". It also found that six of seven students tended to answer "*Yes, I do*", although they do not. It can be proved by looking at the interview transcripts (see appendix 5). The students who eventually answer 'yes' may have understood the instructions, but they could just be saying 'yes' to save face or because they think that if they say 'no', they will invite more difficult questioning from the lecturer. The problem is that those questions do not give lecturers a clear indication of whether his students have understood or not.

D. Conclusion and Suggestion

From the result and discussion in previous chapter, it can be concluded that: First, in this particular class, a total of 516 languages of instruction were identified from the transcripts of the tape-recorded lectures. The most frequent form of language of instruction is imperative forms (54%); Declaratives make up the next more frequent form (30%), and interrogatives are ranked the third (16%). Second, it is apparent that in the above class that being clear, consistent, and systematic with instructions and expectations will reduce the likelihood of disruption and interruptions. The lecturers should then make sure that students understand the instructions by asking them what they are supposed to do. The use of gestures can be also useful for giving clear instructions. Third, language of instructions

becomes ineffective because the lecturers misjudge students' abilities and their level of knowledge, use long expressions and too formal or rarely used words, use too much L1 in classes, and check students' understanding only by using "Do you understand?". It is suggested for future researchers to conduct studies on a larger sample size within various semester and various educational institutions in order to obtain more in-depth responses from the participants

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