

The Students' Attitude towards the Lecturer's Transactional Expressions

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Abstract

The study is the description of students' attitude towards the use of lecturer's transactional expressions in the teaching and learning process. One class of English Department was chosen randomly from three respective universities in Makassar. The questionnaire was distributed and the students' responses were collected. To analyze the students' responses, Likert Scale was used. Based on the analysis, it was found that the students have positive attitude towards the use of the lecturer's transactional expressions with 70.36 mean score. The result implies that the lecturer's transactional expression is one of the decisive factors in the teaching and learning implementation. For the students, such expression gives an enormous impact on their behavior, which automatically afflicts their successful learning outcome. For the lecturers, the use of transactional expression is the conveyance vehicle of successful teaching quality.

Key words: Students' attitude, Lecturers' transactional expressions

1. Introduction

During the past 40 years, teacher talk has been considered as one of the important aspects in carrying the teaching and learning process. It plays a pivotal role in building up the rapport between teacher and students. Harnessing the talk, teacher communicates his points of view, delivers information about the subject lesson, and coordinates the classroom conditions. Likewise in the English as a foreign language class at the university level, lecturer talk is used as a means of communication and a language input for the students' language proficiency. To use it in communication, Féngqicàn (1999) notes that teacher/lecturer talk is a kind of communication-based or interaction-based talk that connects teacher/lecturer and students to communicate. In the classroom conversation, lecturer always has a series of interaction and communication. His involvement with his students in the interaction and communication is the major line of the lecturer's teaching goal. Principally, he is the pivotal person that bridges and carries the community's demand and the government's rules to students in the classroom.

In another view, lecturer talk is also a source of target language as well as a language model for students. Cullen (1998) emphasizes that teacher/lecturer talk is the valuable source of comprehensible input for the students. When lecturer asks some questions particularly, his utterances can automatically affect the quantity and quality of student interaction in the lesson. Therefore, lecturer talk affects the students' target language proficiency as well as the atmosphere of the classroom condition.

Predominantly, the messages or information that the lecturers convey to their students are expected to be clear, meaningful, and accurate since their purposes to reveal their intentional meanings are to execute their teaching plan which is in accordance with the objectives of educational system. In this regard, the message-oriented talk is in need. Such kind of talk reveals the so-called transactional expressions. Brown and Yule (1987) state that transactional expressions reveal message-oriented information in the communication. The transference of the message through clear, meaningful, and accurate information is the reason for speaking. As a result, both the lecturers and students have to reach a consensus in their transactional speech.

However, to reveal clear, meaningful, and accurate expressions of lecturer talk is not easy. Some or maybe all students still do not understand what their lecturer means. Besides, lecturer is obliged to tell information about classroom rules, administration, curriculum-related, classroom organization, or assessment, for instances, during the teaching and learning process. That seems overwhelming to take not only for students but also for lecturer, who is in charge in designing the teaching and learning process. Lecturer should put in fair portion between matters of subject lesson and classroom management (Silver & Kogut, 2009). Thus, clarity, meaningfulness, and accuracy of lecturer's transactional expressions are an aching need in the implementation of any teaching and learning process.

Specifically, lecturer uses variety of language use in revealing his transactional expressions. Mostly, he arranges his utterances through various language forms which organize and modify the patterns of his language structure. To state his purposes to speak, he uses various language functions which are then revealed in the language forms. In EFL classroom, lecturer does not use a target language in most of the time during the teaching and learning process. Since English as a target language is not his mother tongue, he switches codes of Indonesian language and English. As one of the communicative strategies, the speakers switch more than one linguistic variety between two or more languages (Gumperz: 1982). Besides these verbal forms, lecturer uses non-verbal forms to communicate their meanings. The use of non-verbal forms strengthen and emphasize lecturer's meaning. Andersen (2007) emphasizes that non-verbal communication represents two-thirds of all communication. It can portray a message both verbally and with the correct body signals. Eventually, a clear message can be delivered justly right when the body language matches with the verbal message.

Thus, to see whether the lecturers' transactional expressions affect the students' understanding, the study of this paper will describe how the students believe and react toward them. Specifically, students' belief and reaction are students' attitude towards the use of lecturer's transactional expressions in running the teaching and learning process. The students' attitude may vary in positive, negative, or neutral category. The clearer, the more meaningful, and the more accurate the lecturer's transactional expressions, the better the lecturers' quality assurance in performing their teaching process and the higher the students' understanding in executing their learning process.

2. Lecturer Talk

Many scholars and researchers have examined that teacher/lecturer talk plays a pivotal role in the process of teaching and learning. The term lecturer talk is considered the same with the teacher talk in which both share the same functions and importances in the process of teaching and learning. Mercer (1995) cites that teacher/lecturer talk reflects the requirements of a curriculum as teachers/lecturers guide their learners towards common knowledge. It is, thus, discourse guides, a role tied to their pedagogic obligations, with classroom talk as the means of negotiating the curriculum or is employed as a tool for managing participation in learning activities. More specifically, Nunan (1991) points out that the importance of teacher/lecturer talk is not only for managing the classroom conditions but also it benefits the students to acquire their target language model. To manage the students' movements in the classroom, the lecturer uses his clear and meaningful talks. When he directs and comments upon the students' activity using the target language, for instances, the students automatically absorb input of the target language use as well as they practice how to respond to their lecturer's saying.

Supposedly getting responses and making interaction with the students, the lecturer creates a communicative activity. Féngqícàn (1999) asserts that teacher/lecturer talk is a special communicative activity. Both the lecturer and the students share ideas on the best learning strategy and the clearest understanding of the lesson. When the lecturer opens a communication with his students, he cultivates his intellectual ability. He figures out gaps of information about his students' learning conditions that may exist during his talk. In addition, the lecturer does more in order to strengthen the students' understanding or to enhance their language proficiency. He shares and tells more ideas on the possible ways of learning process. Thus, the lecturer talk becomes intense. Besides, he uses the language to encourage the communication between him and his students. Therefore, the lecturer talk is a kind of communication-based or interaction-based talk.

3. Transactional Expressions

The lecturer talk comprises various expressions. They are used to communicate the lecturer's intentional meaning. The lecturer's expressions are messages for every classroom communication. The transactional expressions which the lecturer uses in the communication reveal clarity, accuracy, and meaningfulness of the messages. Specifically, Brown and Yule (1987) and McCarthy (1991) define transactional expressions as message-oriented language which a speaker and a listener share clear, meaningful, and accurate information in the conversation. When spoken language is used for a transactional function, what is primarily at issue is the transference of information. The purpose of the lecturer in speaking is primarily to communicate his message.

To reveal the transactional expressions, there are two kinds of forms, namely: verbal and non-verbal. The verbal forms are language forms, language functions, and code-switching. On the other hand, the non-verbal

form is gesture. Harmer (2007) defines *language forms* as the tools for creating the organizational patterns of language used to communicate and *language functions* as the tasks or purposes for which language is used to communicate. Grosjean (1982) defines *code-switching* as the shifting that occurs between two or more languages simultaneously or interchangeably within one conversation. In addition, Auer (1998) divides four types of code-switching: inter-sentential which occurs outside the sentence, intra-sentential which occurs within a sentence, tag which switches phrase or word, and intra-word which occurs within a word. Floyd and Guerrero (2006) defines *gestures* as purposeful movements of the head, shoulders, arms, hands, or some of the parts of the body. These four forms of transactional expressions are used by the lecturer to transfer his meaning in the classroom conversation.

Principally, the lecturer uses variety of language use to communicate his intentional meaning in the English as a Foreign Language class. To plunge the students into the use of English, the lecturer speaks his intentions using various language functions, such as: to describe, to give examples, or to ask a question. His purposes to speak are channelled through organizational patterns of language, such as: particular words, phrases, or kinds of sentences. In another situation, the lecturer uses various types of code-switching to emphasize his points of information. Since the students still practice the use of English in the communicative activity, the lecturer switches to the codes of the students' first language. During the classroom talk, the lecturer naturally functions the use of gestures to strengthen the core of his intentional meaning. When directing or showing the students what to look at in the learning material, for examples, the lecturer's gestures indicate certain movements, such as: pointing or holding the book and opening the intended pages. All these communicative actions denote how the lecturer says what he means to his students through transactional expressions. Thus, the clarity, meaningfulness, and accuracy of the lecturer talk are the features of the lecturer's transactional expressions which aim to convey the real intentional meanings.

4. Students' Attitude

Attitude is one of the affective components that contributes to someone's personal quality. In EFL class, a certain attitude is caused by various stimuli. Specifically, students' attitude is influenced by various classroom conditions. One of the classroom conditions is the lecturer talk which is manifested by the use of transactional expressions in the classroom talk. Stern (1983) assumes that students' attitude is believed to influence their behavior. The students may understand or misunderstand so as to like or dislike their lecturer's ways of talking or their lecturer's point of information. The feeling of like or dislike transmits through their behaviour, such as respectively they ask more questions to their lecturer about certain points of information and they do their assignment or they may just sit still and wait for their friends to finish the assignment. Therefore, the stimuli caused by the meaning transference of the lecturer's expressions are at a fundamental issue.

To define the students' attitude, Gardner (1985) points out that an attitude is the evaluative reaction of someone's belief and opinion toward something or somebody he faces. For the students, attitude is their evaluative reaction which may turn into positive, negative, or neutral. Their reaction is caused by how clear, meaningful, and accurate their lecturer's expressions in the classroom talk. If they can catch the lecturer's meaning and understand it better, they can execute what they are told. This implies that the students have positive attitude towards the lecturer talk. On the other hand, if they can not understand the lecturer's meaning or they understand but they do not want to respond it, they may choose not to do what is told or they may just sit quietly. With these reactions, they may have respectively negative or neutral attitudes.

Thus, the students' attitude gives a real impact to their behaviour in the learning process. The lecturer's use of transactional expressions is one of the causes that affect the students' belief and opinion. The students react towards the lecturer's saying and hence, the lecturer has to make sure that his saying is clear, meaningful, or accurate enough. Above all, the lecturer's use of transactional expressions represents the lecturer's teaching quality. His intelligible expressions are the real means that bring a successful communication in the classroom and, to a larger extent, that reach the teaching and learning goals.

5. Research methodology

The study was a descriptive qualitative which was aimed to find out and describe the students' attitude towards the use of their lecturer's transactional expressions. It collected the students' responses by distributing the questionnaire. The population was all students of English department at university level in Makassar. The samples were 62 students who were chosen from one respective class randomly using lot. They were 32 students

from State University of Makassar, 12 students from Hasanuddin University, and 18 from STKIP YPUP (School of Teaching Education). The data were tabulated, scored, and categorized using Likert Scale. Then, the descriptive accounts were given to interpret the data.

6. Findings and discussion

It is found that the students' attitude towards the use of lecturers' transactional expressions is categorized positive with 70.36 mean score. This means that the students have positive opinion and belief about their lecturers' transactional expressions as the means of classroom talk to carry the teaching and learning process.

Having distributing the questionnaire, 62 students from three universities respond to 20 statements which are valued in 10 positive and 10 negative statements in turn. The ensuing figure shows the height of each bar of the positive and negative items which corresponds to the number of students' responses. The height of each bar denotes the number of students who chooses the accumulated result of Strongly Agree and Agree options in the positive statements and of Strongly Disagree and Disagree options in the negative statements.

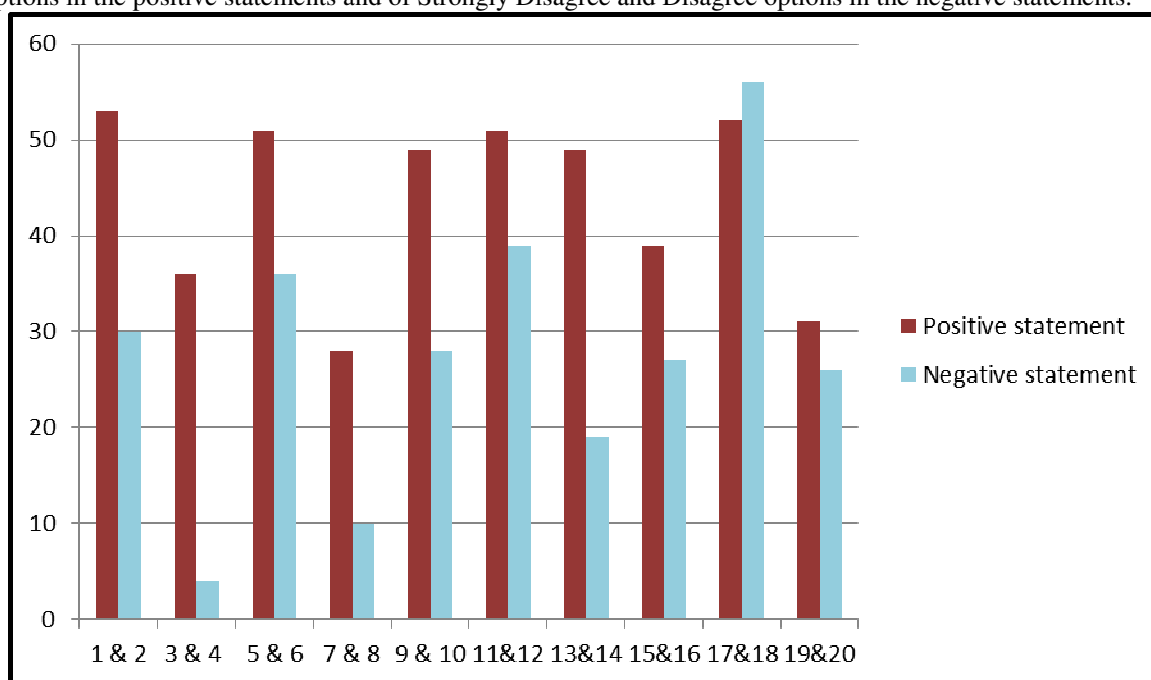


Figure 1. The students' responses on the lecturers' transactional expressions

Since the items are designed in two values, positive and negative, the height of each bar shows the number of students who prefer them. The students' responses which show how they believe and react to the use of their lecturers' transactional expressions are categorized positive. However, looking at the bars of the positive and negative statements, the percentage of the bars in the two values is somewhat different. Supposedly, the two values show similar result of percentage because they are tallied based on the students' preferences on the positive and negative statements. Summing the percentage of Strongly Agree and Agree options in the positive statements and of Strongly Disagree and Disagree options in the negative statements, the following summation construes its description.

In the first statement '*I can understand what my lecturer says to me*', 53 (85.48%) students admitted that they could understand their lecturer's transactional expressions. Their lecturer revealed clear, meaningful, and specific points in English. In reverse, the second statement '*I cannot understand what my lecturer says to me*', 30 (48.39%) students found that their lecturers confused them with their expressions. With the different results of the two opposite statements, some students understood their lecturer's classroom instructions and some were still confused. The situation indicates that when the lecturer instructed them with the learning directions, some students who understood the lecturer's points executed the directions while some others saw and followed their friends who already did the directions.

In the third statement '*I like when my lecturer talks in English all the time*', 36 (58.06%) students agreed that English should be used as the language of the classroom when proceeding to the teaching and learning process. However, when it is confirmed to the fourth statement '*I don't like when my lecturer talks in*

English all the time', 4 (6.45%) students preferred not to use English all the time in the class because of their lack of understanding. With the distinct results, some students liked to listen to their lecturer speaking English all the time during the teaching and learning process because they could benefit input of English use. However, only few of them were still lost in understanding the meaning of the lecturer's whole expressions.

In the fifth statement '*I can understand what my lecturer wants when he/she directs me to do something in the learning process*', 51 (82.26%) students could get the definitive point of their lecturers' expressions, especially when they were in the process of learning activity. This implies that the lecturers used clear and meaningful expressions in the language instructions. In the reverse statement '*I cannot understand what my lecturer wants when he/she directs me to do something in the learning process*', 36 (58.06%) students disagreed that they could understand their lecturer's instruction in the classroom. The result of the two opposite statements indicates that only a few of them could understand their lecturer's language instructions. They believed that their lecturer was clear enough to direct them to do the learning activity while some others were still confused.

However, when responding specifically to the seventh statement '*I can understand what my lecturer wants me to do when he/she talks to me in English once*', 28 (45.16%) students could understand well once their lecturers talk in English. However, when the reverse statement '*I cannot understand what my lecturer wants me to do when he/she talks to me in English once*' was responded, 10 (16.13%) students agreed that they still want their lecturers to talk using English repeatedly. The two different results indicate that a few students understood their lecturer's points when their lecturer talked in English once the first time. This means that their lecturer's expressions were not clear, meaningful, and accurate enough for some students.

In the ninth statement '*my lecturer's whole expressions can stimulate and direct me to study well*', 49 (79.03%) students were motivated by some information which their lecturers presented in the class. However, the reverse statement '*my lecturer's whole expressions cannot stimulate and direct me to study well*' changed the students' reaction that 28 (45.16%) students believed that information their lecturers presented in the class gave no input to their learning strategy. The opposite results denote that some students felt that their lecturer's information through stories, experiences, or facts inspired them to study and to understand English well.

More specifically, the eleventh statement reveals '*many times, my lecturer's expressions inspire me to study well*'. 51 (82.26%) students believed that their lecturers guided and directed them to study and to keep up their motivation. The opposite statement '*many times, my lecturer's expressions cannot inspire me to study well*' changed 39 (62.90%) students' positive response. This means that playing role as a facilitator to encourage the students to study well through stories and facts, the lecturer could only convince a few students.

Next, the students' response with the statement '*I like when my lecturer combines some Indonesian sentences into English expressions*' is extended divergently. It was found that 49 (79.03%) students agreed if their lecturers' use of English was combined with Indonesian language in the classroom talk. The use of English and Indonesian language interchangeably was the way the students could improve their understanding, particularly about the language use and the points of the subject matter. However, the students still doubted that the use of two languages could help them improve their English proficiency and their understanding about the subject matter. With the reverse statement '*I don't like when my lecturer combines some Indonesian sentences into English expressions*', it was found that 19 (30.64%) students did not support the situation of combining the use of English and Indonesian language. This implies that some students liked if their lecturer combined the use of English and Indonesian language in his entire talk.

Turning extensively into the combination use of English and Indonesian language, 39 (62.90%) students had more agreement. Responding the statement '*I think it is better if my lecturer uses some Indonesian words or phrases into his/her English expressions*', they preferred if their lecturers switched English words or phrases to Indonesian language. In this way, they could distinctly figure out the meaning of their lecturers' transactional expressions. The reverse statement '*I think it is not better if my lecturer uses some Indonesian words or phrases into his/her English expressions*' changed 27 (43.55%) students' response. The two different results imply that a few students suggested their lecturers should combine the use of the two languages in some words or phrases in their lecturer's entire expressions due to their intense understanding of the lecturer's meaning.

As another form of using transactional expressions, 52 (83.87%) students purported to the statement '*I can understand better if my lecturer uses gestures based on his/her expressions*'. However with the opposite statement, 56 (90.32%) students had a problem with the use of their lecturer's gestures in delivering his speech. These distinct results indicate that their lecturer's movements of the head, shoulders, arms, and hands suited his speech performance. Most students felt that their lecturer's gestures were in no trouble in their lecturer's communication.

To confirm the students' understanding of their lecturers' use of transactional expressions, 31 (50%) students assured positively the statement '*I think I have responded my lecturer's expressions with correct answers and proper ways*'. With the slightly different result in the opposite statement, 26 (41.93%) students admitted that they did not respond their lecturers' questions, comments, or suggestions pretty well. This means that a few students believed that they could understand their lecturer talk because they could respond their lecturer talk well.

Thus, it is worth noting that the illustration of the students' attitude towards the use of the lecturers' transactional expressions has shown that many students react positively. The students' positive attitude indicated that the students benefitted from their lecturer's transactional expressions as the classroom talk carried in the teaching and learning process. The benefits the students gained were transferred separately in the various uses of the lecturer's transactional expressions. In terms of language use, some students liked and understood their lecturer's use of transactional expressions as confirmed in the first, second, third, fourth, seventeenth, and eighteenth statements of the questionnaire. The lecturer's transactional expressions served as a language instruction and communication in the teaching and learning process. Through the instructions, the lecturer communicated their teaching goals. In this way, the students benefitted the use of English, particularly, in the certain contexts of communication. To support the situation, Long (1996) cites that the language the teacher uses in the classroom interaction facilitates acquisition from the conversational and linguistic modification that occur in the teacher talk and that becomes the input the students need. Mostly, the students absorbed inputs of English language use through various language functions and some models of organizational patterns of language which the lecturer used in his transactional expressions. They also benefitted intense meaning through the combination use of English and Indonesian language as confirmed in the thirteenth and fourteenth statements. In addition, the lecturer's gestures were of another powerfully convincing meaning in his talk as seen in seventeenth and eighteenth statements. The lecturer's gestures were the physical movements that were naturally involved while he talked. Floyd and Guerrero (2006) stated that one of the functions of gesture is reinforcing or modifying what is said in words. The lecturer used supporting movements of head, shoulders, arms, and hands to repeat and emphasize the points of his expressions.

More specifically, the use of the lecturer's transactional expressions still doubted the students' understanding. Even that some students could understand the lecturer's intentional meaning, a few of them could not catch what the lecturer meant in his language instructions as confirmed in the fifth and sixth statements. What is more, a few of students were still lost once their lecturer talked in English. They still needed their lecturer to repeat his English use a few times. This situation was supported by the seventh and eighth statements. Nunan (1989) points out that teacher talk is the crucial importance for both classroom management and language acquisition. Whenever the lecturer uses English as the language instruction in managing the classroom conditions as well as in facilitating the students' language acquisition, he still had to make sure that his English use through the transactional expressions was adequate in clarity, meaningfulness, and accuracy. With the diverse background, the students had different level of competence, particularly in English use. Therefore, the lecturer was assumed to use English in a proper proportion. However, to combine English with Indonesian language, only a few students liked if the two languages combination could be transpired in the forms of words or phrases as seen in the fifteenth and sixteenth statements. Some students preferred their lecturer to use the combination of the two languages in the forms of sentences as seen in the thirteenth and fourteenth statements. As cited by Malik (1994), the code-switching between two languages is functioned as to emphasize linguistically and socially the meaning of messages in the conversation. Therefore, information which the lecturer shared in the classroom conversation was better combined in English and Indonesian language in the forms of sentences than of words or phrases. Since the classroom communication run with the different purposes, the lecturer was assumed to intensify his meaning in a bunch of sentences.

In terms of a certain function, the lecturer's use of transactional expressions contained inspirational information which can stimulate the students to study. Mercer (1995) cites that teacher/lecturer talk reflects the requirements of a curriculum as teachers/lecturers guide their learners towards common knowledge. The lecturer used inspiring stories or experiences and encouraging facts as common knowledge to broaden and encourage the students to study well. As a whole, some students were stimulated by the lecturer's information through inspirational stories as confirmed in the ninth and tenth statements. However, only a few of them were stimulated with the stories when the lecturer shared the stories many times. This means that the students needed more various inspirational information in relation to their learning strategy.

In terms of the students' response, the lecturer's use of transactional expressions still confused a few students as seen in the nineteenth and twentieth statements. Even the lecturer had attempted various ways to convey his intentional meanings, It was not entirely clear, meaningful, and specific enough for the students.

Those few students agreed with that. They did not think that they had understood their lecturer's transactional expressions well because of their lack of English understanding and of their misunderstanding of their lecturer's way of speech delivery. In congruence with Matsumoto's study (2010), the students had fear and anxiety about being lost and totally misunderstanding what their teacher was saying. With the same results, in the present study, the students thought that even their lecturer had effective use of English with natural linguistic features and flawless vocalics, they still doubted that they could not respond to their lecturer's expressions well. Nevertheless, they showed their positive attitude.

Thus, it can be inferred that the use of lecturer's transactional expressions has been a real conveyance vehicle of the various purposes of the lecturer's teaching goals. For the students, they gain practical benefits of their language acquisition with the various uses of the lecturer's transactional expressions. Besides, they got input of common knowledge through inspirational stories and encouraging facts. Thus, they reacted positively towards their lecturer's use of transactional expressions. Such expressions presented by their lecturer gave an enormous impact on their behavior, which automatically afflicts their successful learning outcome. For the lecturer, the benefits his students gained through the use of transactional expressions was one of the decisive factors which implies his success in his teaching implementation. In that regard, the lecturer showed desired teaching quality. Hence, it assured that his students could understand some aspects of his language use and finally they executed the learning process.

7. Conclusion

To sum up the results, the students have positive attitude towards the use of the lecturer's transactional expressions. The students' positive attitude was channelled through three extents, in terms of the lecturer's language use, of a certain function of teaching, and of the students' response. Initially, the students reacted positively towards the variety of language use, entailing the clear, meaningful, and accurate use of language forms, language functions, code-switching, and gestures, in making the students understand. The students also benefitted from the lecturer's inspiring information to keep up their motivation to study but they were not benefitted from single story. Lastly, the students' response was of little useful due to the students' lack of English understanding and of their misunderstanding of their lecturer's way of speech delivery.

Thus, based on the conclusion, it is suggested that the lecturer use various uses of transactional expressions in conveying information, particularly about the subject matters and the classroom condition management, during the teaching and learning process. The lecturer is also suggested to use various inspirational stories to stimulate and to keep up the students' motivation to study. With such stories, the lecturer is suggested to encourage the students to improve their English understanding.

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