

# Efforts Made in Enhancing Communication Skills of Student University Librarian in the Digital Age

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**Abstract**—Library and Information Science (LIS) students as Students of Non-English Department (SNED) need advancement in terms of approach from their facilitators (lecturers or instructors, that is). The approach should bring with it an atmosphere of enlightenment of which nature should be inspiring, triggering, and entertaining in a way. Elements of teaching philosophy playing a greater role in putting the atmosphere come into existence is evident. As English Language Learners (ELLs) majoring in LIS, they would find it rather discouraging to learn English since they might not see the importance of studying other than their major, LIS. However, as university students, they are there to exercise their critical thinking. Learning English to communicate at their age with confidence requires more cognitive effort. The aim of the present study is to generate flair of this kind of ELLs through well-proven mode of approach. The present study using a qualitative approach with descriptive method of research with interview and observation as instruments results in significantly positive impact. It is indicated that any facilitator's efforts made towards advancement in terms of mainly speaking and, writing using acceptable English to communicate with confidence gives room for a promising future learning points.

**Keywords**—*approach; learning; foreign language; flair; facilitator; acceptable English*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In-class English sessions generate rooms for advancement in terms of students' willingness to get communicated with their peers and their facilitators as well. The teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) to students of non-English departments (SNED) as English language learners (ELLs) needs a certain approach in encouraging them to communicate using English language in a more appropriate, confident way. To these students in their older age, learning a foreign language requires more cognitive effort [1]. One of the SNED groups at Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan (FIP – Faculty of Education) falling into this category is Library and Information Science (LIS) at Prodi Perpustakaan (Perpustakaan dan Sains Informasi - Library and Information Science) group of students. To obtain a positive impact from the learning process through English 1 and English 2 lectures to the students of this category, for instance, a developed learning method through an appropriate approach is imperative. As university students, they are there to exercise their critical thinking [2]. In fact, they are

professional-to be [3]. insists that *although English is regarded as the common international language of business, not every business globally use English on a regular basis*. Not being “at home” in both cultures – English and Indonesian, this category of ELLs communicate a bit less acceptable especially when communicating with native speakers. They are beyond awareness of the target language (English) as a living phenomenon when communicating their ideas expressed in especially a spoken form. Teaching philosophy as it is understood by UPI lecturers exists to lead university students as learners to a possibility of various betterments towards, eventually, some kind of advancement [4]. The pace of FIP – UPI in developing its resources towards advancement has something to do with its image and educational philosophy it conveys insists that university students should trigger themselves to broaden their horizons their own way. In facilitating their students, the lecturers face challenges [5], and make efforts to find every way possible to bring with it a solution to generate an impact student will benefit from.

ELLs communicate with less than acceptable sense on the other party's part. Part of the reason is that the ELLs have no room to express their ideas by involving themselves thoroughly as said that *language barriers make it difficult to give direction, explain your expectations, or provide performance feedback to those with whom you cannot communicate effectively* [6]. ELLs as communicants need to involve themselves well in differences of culture and language, which is difficult to perform: avoiding themselves from being awkward and unnatural in their performance. Experts were cited when saying *Language is the air we breathe and the water we swim. It comes as naturally to us as seeing the sky or digesting our food. It is as vital a part of our name and personality. But what if we suddenly had to breathe different air or swim in different waters?* [7]. Evidently, the culture in which the students in discussion live influences and shapes their feelings, attitudes, and responses to their experiences and interactions with the party they communicate their messages. Experts see this notion by saying that language represents the culture since the words refer to the culture, as belief and practices of a society, but the representation is never complete or perfect. This phenomenon leads to an understanding on the learners' part that what works in their first language (Indonesian language) may not work in English. They are somewhat impeded by this cultural relativity in that their attempts to achieve the other party's comprehension

have proven to result in communicating their ideas less acceptable: communication breakdowns being unavoidable. It is evident that language barriers make it difficult to give direction, explain your expectations, or provide performance feedback to those with whom you cannot communicate effectively [6]. SNED as ELLs should be proficient enough in both their ideas and the other party so that the message they utter to that other party of communication is understood accurately, clearly and naturally. An expert in linguistics says that ELLs should be able to deliver their ideas expressed in speaking according to the rules, style, and grammatical points of the target language so that their message is avoided from being awkward and unnatural. In other words, ELLs should be literate enough culturally and linguistically. Another expert echoes that literacy proves to be a method enabling students to explore more [8]. Other than that, ELLs' knowledge of target culture of the language plays a greater role as coined as *"Most frequently confronted that students to a great extent know the rules of language, but are not knowledgeable enough about the target culture"* [9] and, as a communication tool with two parallel streams which prompt to an awareness of a difference between the languages, it makes it possible for any sociocultural and sociolinguistic constraints to hamper the communication.

A factor of confidence plays a key role to enhance a good communication among ELLs: feeling secure, intimidation-free atmosphere, being relaxed, and flair-based initiative are necessary, to name a few. Continuous improvement should inspire learners to enhance their communicating ability supposedly their own way [10]. A number of ways to help assisting the ELLs towards the end could be encouragement, entertaining, appreciation in its various forms, rooms for creation on the ELLs' part and lots more. Mature students organized in small groups of discussion tend to have a higher level of confidence [11]: generating flair at the same time regardless of mistakes unforcedly made. It is confirmed that lecturer, teacher, instructor should find every way possible to "soften" the voice every time showing mistakes takes place. Accordingly, any student being exposed to his failure leading to making him the object of ridicule would surely withdraw from attempting to get understood and received by the whole class. A worth citing, a "true story" account by one SNED student as ELLs is inspiring: *Okey guys, this is Multimedia Room. There is place for browsing, searching, downloading, and typing. All facilities this room free for user. And this is postgraduate room. We can access in repository upi for see this collection. Now we will wend second floor. This library have relict deposits. Okay, this is magazine and France Corner. This room will be relaxing for user. And than user can copy essay, thesis, disertasi and other collection in foto copy room. Free from copy can using preservation of collection.* Every single letter of the words forming each sentence is copied exactly as it appears in the student's note, including, one word "untranslated" namely *"disertasi"* (Cf. English *"dissertation"*).

The role a facilitator plays in generating flair for the ELLs "colours" the atmosphere of the class sessions. Through a mode of approaching students namely FIESTA (*Fun and interesting, Interactive, Explorative, Systematic, Technology*

*savvy, Autonomous*) combined with IBA (Interest-based Approach), for instance, an atmosphere of being monotonous, awkward and boring can be avoided. The mode serves as the points of departure in terms of generating the students' flair. A pleasing atmosphere of a learning process in the classroom is more than likely taking place. ELLs' feeling of secure is maintained in such a way that they are eager to use their English "without" risks. As experts in the field echo, students are basically given room to see a good chance to express their ideas in the target language (English) without even feeling worries since a feeling of secure develops instead. One way of making sure that risk-free initiative on the students' part takes place is by thinly disguising the "unforced" mistakes students have frequently made. As for putting into action the "F" in the FIESTA, some sort of interactive educational games would be a good start. It has been had believed that game-based learning needs to be a basic strategy to prevent awkwardness from happening during classroom sessions [12]. A student-centered interactive sort of game called SCISA (Student-Centered Speaking Activity) proves to be a possibility in encouraging students to communicate without risks. This way, confidence on the students' part plays a key role in making sure that they are "on the right track". Indeed, it's because there are no "corrections" in whatever exposures by any parts of the learning process during the session. There goes one student's remarks from an interview *"LM105 class sessions make me feel so happy and anxious at the same time because there are a lot of games"*. Other accounts by other students run like: *"FIESTA makes the class interactive"; I find it easier to understand the materials through this activity"; I think this method is good since it brings with it fun and prevent me from being bored all the way from beginning through the end of the semester"*. As many as forty-one students took part in an emic mode of interview and observation: students' responses resulting in some significant contribution to an even more promising teaching-learning process.

Sources of making mistakes having to do with the absence of linguistic and cultural barriers may lead to frustration. Rusmono shares findings that the less comprehensible part of the student's ideas expressed when speaking might happen without their being aware [13]. Efforts they make, then, need to be appreciated to some extent in that the facilitator should always prevent the students from being exposed to an atmosphere that possibly reveals some embarrassment especially a very personal one as discouragement could emerge. The whole part is that students should feel secure and, as a result, they are sure that they are freed from any kinds of intimidation. Saving one's face is what experts in language say.

## II. METHOD

This research employed a qualitative method with an interview and observation as tools to collect data from 41 informants. Through a naturalistic approach, the informants' emic construction was built to put interactions among realities in which the researcher directly interacted with the informants to gain selected set of data.

### A. Research Design and Approach

Through naturalistic approach, the present study seeks to attain an understanding on a process (rather than a product) of speaking activity being observed in that a phenomenon resulting from the process is studied [14]. In-depth information is gained through interviews by paraphrasing or following-up questions. Neutralization is set to balance possible insufficient information during the interviews.

### B. Participants and Data Collection Process

Interviews with forty-one informants and observation in which field work and field study are carried out involve documentary analysis. The interviews are set on planned background while the observation is done naturalistically to provide participation of the informants: opinions, perceptions, judgements, intuitions, experiences, and academic behaviors.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There is a greater inclination towards an atmosphere of being relaxed and accordingly brings with it an encouragement on the students' part: communicating ideas with confidence. Approaching with its various ways of friendliness by the facilitator is the key to the successful creation of interesting, entertaining yet still academic in sense of learning which eventually removes any alienations.

When a class is organized into groups, students start feeling secure since each of the members of the group has something unseen to discover his/her weaknesses (missprouncing words, missusing appropriate acceptable English expressions during exchanges, using some sort of L1-Language 1-native language, to express ideas in the "real" English). To explain a concept, for example, students use their "Englishes" to their own classmates and, as long as their the classmates understand, no problems seem to arise. This way, no feeling of making mistakes is bothering while actually mistakes are in every part of "their English". No interruptions are done by the facilitator and no revisions are recommended during the interaction between students and their classmates. Let alone blaming students because of their unforced mistakes. Lecturers, teachers, instructors or any facilitators at various levels of education need to always keep the volume down everytime correcting student mistakes should take place. "Softening" is exactly what a "notification" of exposing the mistakes is all about. Putting a student in a difficult position will be understood as a penalty, which, at the end, will kill the students' emotional will to be accepted through his/her efforts to communicate in English. Willingness to speak during the sessions in various interactive activities in itself is a blessing already. Every single utterance should be regarded as "correct" in every possible way. By employing a pleasant and even a funny body language, a facilitator might be looking more like a comedian in front of the class: gestures used, language used, anger kept down, friendly eye contact. Letting students see a big chance to have an access to an enlightenment pleases their hearts and this would lead them to getting rid of hesitation in expressing their ideas when communicating. This way, self-confidence goes hand in hand with every single idea they express regardless of, unfortunately, almost unacceptable

English to especially native speakers. The interviews with the informants indicate that differences among individuals exist from various causes like, for example, locality. This would lead to a social life of people living around a place forming certain environment. Not to mention individual peculiarities difficult or almost impossible to be discussed.

Making efforts to make expressions during a dialog in an interesting topic always brings with it some positive impacts. ELLs see the difference their own knowledge. As a facilitator, giving unfaourable remarks on the ELLs' speaking performance should be avoided. It is a must to give remarks on the students' performance that will have a positive impact meaning that students as ELLs should be freed from double burdens: linguistic and cultural shortcomings. Even more imperative is that students should be avoided from building a less promising mental achievement. It is suggested therefore that if uselessness is what follows after the remarks, even worse painfulness deep in their heart, giving remarks should be halted. Thus, preventing ELLs especially SNED in this case from comments unlikely bringing positive impacts is a brilliant idea. The SNED need to be encouraged to adapt what they are really interested in with the aims their instructors keep attempting to achieve.

## IV. CONCLUSION

Making effort to generate flair and to eventually elevate any earnest intentions of the SNED as ELLs to use English will never be futile. Nor will it be hopeless. The instructors playing the role as facilitators approaching the students with enthusiasm results in positive responses from which flair with its energy builds confidence on the ELLs' part. Although rooms created for the ELLs to fill the gap between their own language cultures and foreign language cultures may still be far from being perfectly provided, an initiative has been launched and will hopefully lead to a bit better promising future. Giving an ounce of credits to the ELLs for any drives of speaking in English proves to be conducive. With their critical thinking, it leads to an emerging self confidence on their part and, as they go along, will generate more comprehensible communication in especially spoken form. Varieties of cultural and linguistic backgrounds will not contribute that significant to hampering incomprehensibility and will therefore ameliorate constraints to effective learning since students more than likely benefit from their learning. Temporary "negligence" to linguistic and especially cultural standards has resulted in a conducive process of learning English as a foreign language. It may even enrich the existing students' "Englishes" to some extent. Replacement of the negligence by the facilitator's artificial conduct of enlightenment drives students to perform with confidence and with the feeling of not being intimidated by risks. Benefits are for the ELLs to gain since endless efforts of creating a pleasing atmosphere by the facilitator has taken place. The aim is obvious: an initiative to communicate in English with confidence and risk-free attempts. The impact is potentially promising in terms of developing and implementing innovative instructional program for the SNED as ELLs. At least, a little first step towards advancement has been initiated. Challenges are to be faced by all parties involved in the efforts made.

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