

Model of Learning “SHARINGPLUS” for Higher Level Students Viewed from Sociological Perspectives

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Abstract

This paper is proposed to describe the coherence of concepts in “SHARINGPLUS” with social theories. It is cross sectional research viewing teaching practice implemented by informants of the research. The informants include six lecturers who taught Qualitative Research Methodology at six Programs of Studies at an educational college, called “STKIP PGRI Sumatera Barat”, twelve lecturers who supervised theses with qualitative approach, and one of their supervised students. Sampling technique is purposive. The type of data is descriptive taken through interview and they were categorized based on each concept and discussed with the theories of Sociology. Findings show that the concepts “Stimulating”, “Patient”, “Loving”, “Unforgettable”, and “Sympathetic” are coherent with social exchange theory, “Appropriateness-based”, “Revising”, “Illustrating”, and “Goal oriented” are coherent with action theory, and “Handled with consensus” and “Negotiating” are coherent with communicative action theories. Thus, the model combines three paradigms (Durhkemian, Maxian, and Weberian, with eleven concepts).

Keywords: SHARINGPLUS, learning, social theory, social exchange, action, communicative action

Introduction

SHARINGPLUS is the model proposed as the result of research about lecturers’ discourse ideology. The previous research was done at English Study Program, STKIP PGRI Sumatera Barat. This research is the continuation of the previous research about the model of discourse used by lecturers at English Study Program at STKIP PGRI Sumatera Barat. In this research, lecturers from other Study Programs as informants were investigated to find out their teaching practices applying the concepts found in the model. The proposed model was investigated from what other lecturers thought and argued about the model for strengthening the previous research result.

This research is important to do to ensure other lecturers’ practice in their class. The result of previous research showed that lecturers applied the concepts “SHARING”, but did not apply PLUS. In addition it was also found that different lecturers were found using different concept, for example, participant A emphasized on “A” (Appropriateness) for students’ work, but the others did not. This research did not only focus on implementation of the concepts, but also on the social theories which support the use of each concept. Therefore, this research is aimed at finding out which concepts applied by the lecturers and what theories support the concepts. Moreover, the result of this research can be contributed for enhancing lecturers to apply the model in their classroom activities.

SHARINGPLUS is a model of communication investigated after the researcher did a research about lecturers’ discourse when communicating learning task. It is a model-based discourse, not based on teaching method, technique, or the strategy. In the previous research about discourse ideology, SHARING (Stimulating, Handled with consensus, Appropriateness-based, Revising, Illustrating, Negotiating, and Goal-oriented) is the ideology enjoyed by the students so that they became actively engaged in classroom activities. After reviewed, SHARING still needs completed with psychological factors, as Patient (P), Loving (L), Unforgettable (U), and Sympathetic (S). Thus, the model becomes SHARINGPLUS, which serves the students’ physical and psychological needs (Yelfiza, 2016). As SHARINGPLUS is the model of lecturers’ discourse ideology, it can be used as a model of communication in teaching which concerns with eleven concepts.

Social Theory

Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory was formulated by Homan (1961) with economic orientation. Homan portrayed human behavior as the consequent rewards and punishment. The theory has the central concept that humans exchange resources which include food, products, or other objects, information, affection, money, services, and status (Turner, 2001) p. 700. Moreover, exchanging resources can be done if humans have got reciprocal relation and it is maintained as long as the rewards of the exchanges exceed the costs, or until a more “profitable” (Dowding, 2012). Therefore, they need mutual cooperation in their lives and their interaction is mainly influenced by reciprocal activity either directly or indirectly (Wischniewski, Windmann, Juckel, & Brüne, 2009).

There are three assumptions of social exchange theory. First social exchange theory can be goods or service, tangible or intangible for fulfilling human’s needs. Second, individuals try to maximize rewards and minimize punishment. Third, social interaction results from the fact that humans control others’ necessities by giving reward and that they can get reward if they give reward to others (Burns, 1973). Social exchange theory is concluded as the theory which views human needs each other to satisfy their need, so they give and accept reward. Specifically Blau exemplifies that social exchange theory with his operating premise that by giving a favor to someone, one will accept equal reciprocal favor. In addition, social rewards and social benefits are dependent on personal relationship (Dowding, 2012).

Viewed from some ideas about social exchange theory above, generally the scholars have opinion that the exchange in the theory is relevant to the goods and services. What the people change each other can be goods with goods and good with service, or service with goods and service with service. For example, if a person gives something to another person, he will accept something or a favor from him. However, he may not expect it unless he will be satisfied and his favor becomes useful. In Islamic teaching, hoping a return of goods or favor from others after giving something or favor is not recommended. If people do favor to others, though they do not receive equal favor, they are certain that they will get more favor from God (QS. Hud: 15-16). In summary, exchange in this situation is between goods or services with faith. People with the faith will not limit giving goods or services or do favor to others even though they cannot get any returns directly since they must get the return from God.

Communicative Action Theory

Communicative action is firstly proposed by Habermas, who refers to the structures of the life world. He used communicative action as the basic category for social science. Schutz also refers to the structure of life in his theory. However, he stresses on the distinction between mediated and immediate social action or the distinction between mass media communication and face to face communication. He argues that in communication, speakers share the features of action and social action. Communicative action is conceived as intentional form of action which should have validity claims and be performed automatically in a routine action. In addition, communication is characterized by reciprocity implying understanding action from one to the other (Knoblauch, 2013).

Sociological functionalism paradigm separates cognitive aspect of human action from any properties systematically emerging. Meanwhile, social reality during social relation among actors will be shaped by cognitive rules. Rationality of communicative action is found in the concept of “frame” as the modes of organizing social reality (Eder, 2007). Therefore, in communicative action, people need to link social reality and their cognitive competence. Since individuals have different life experience either their personal experiences or social experiences, their communicative action will vary. Their experience as cognitive competence will be used as means to relate with the members of society. Their level of cognition will be useful for them in organizing the social reality so that they can avoid conflict in interaction.

Action Theory

Action theory sees human’s action from different points of views. Weber in typology of action works based on purposively rational action seeing the action is based on individual preferences. His work develops rational choice theory which is significant to rational actor model. The model is very influential in rational actor theory, called normative model of action. In this model, action is based on normative orientation useful to constitute action goals and select the means. As Durkheim and Parson argue that social order becomes stable because of normative action orientation, it is a dilemma between rationality of action and normative theories of action in amoral orientation of one’s interest, so it is categorized into non-rationality (Turner, 2001) p. 271. In contrast, Dewey (1958) used critics of the means-ends for his theory. He introduces the roles of goals for the organization of action as the concept of “ends-in-view.” He refers to the fact that the goals are not externally set, but emerge in the action process in a reciprocal interaction between means and goals. At the beginning of the action process, the goal is not specific, but it becomes clearer after the actor understands the possible means to gain the goal. Moreover, the critique was also done by Luhmann (1968), who assumes that actors have goals and apply means

to achieve these goals, but he consider constraints on their possible causes of action because the complexity of social situations and their interrelation influences the outcome and it is difficult to identify multiple causes (p. 273) . Through his critique, he proposes to see goal setting from functionalist perspective as a means to reduce complexity.

The three kinds of action theories above are acceptable, but each theory still has some weaknesses when they are related to the model the researcher proposes, since they see one factor of human action which is naturally caused by so many factors. They do not see psychological factor that is very important in goal attainment, such patient, love, unforgettable, and sympathetic which can lead the students to have willpower.

Method

This research is a cross sectional research with expertised-based evaluation (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). SHARINGPLUS has been found as a model of communication used to communicate learning task (Yelfiza, 2019). The model was generated from a study of lecturers' discourse ideology previously done and one of the lecturers' ideology is called SHARING. Since it was critical discourse study, the ideology considered more appropriate in the case study was SHARINGPLUS. The belief should be proved to gain scholars' approval. Thus, in this research the validity of this model is evaluated from sociological theories. Informants of this research were taken from six study programs, which include Indonesian, Geography, Biology, Sociology, History, and Guidance and Counseling Study Programs. The other informants were chosen from thesis supervisors with one of their supervised students. Therefore, six lecturers, 12 supervisors, and 12 students were interviewed. Data were collected by interviewing lecturers, supervisors, and their supervised students. Then, data were analyzed by describing, exploring, categorizing, and evaluating them with social theories as mentioned above.

Results and Discussion

As stated before, this article discusses the concepts of "SHARINGPLUS" applied by the lecturers and sociological theories which support the concepts. The findings are displayed based on each concept accompanying with data and each concept is discussed with theory of sociology.

Concepts in "SHARINGPLUS" and the Relation with Sociological Theories

Stimulating

Lecturer as the manager of the class wants the students to do the task correctly by informing that if they can do the task as expected, they can achieve higher score for the task, but not vice versa. Moreover, if they do not do the task they will not be allowed to take the class. On the other hand, the students as the followers believe with what the lecturer asked if the explanation about the task is clear and the lecturer does what she or he said. Thus, the lecturer changes the task submitted by the students with the score or another appreciation such as accepting or rejecting the task or adding or reducing the score. For example, "... *resumenya tu dinilai tu. Yang tidak masuk tepat waktu akan dikurangi 1*" (...summarizing learning material was scored. Those who submitted the task late will be punished by reducing one point of scores).

The lecturer' statement about reward and punishment is used to stimulate the students orally. On the other hand, the students respond to the stimuli by doing the summary and submitting it on time. It is relevant to social exchange theory with which the degree of their discipline attitude is appreciated or punished with scores as supported by the main tenets of social exchange theory which includes 4 ways. First, the theory always weighs the cost and benefit of the relationship is worth to enter or to pursue. Second, every relationship emphasizes different costs and benefits. Third, if the time of relationship affects their choice, the students can know how the time affects them in deciding their choice. Fourth, the students' reason of changing decision based upon the point and the time is because of various rewards/costs they perceive over their lifetime (Ribarsky, 2013).

The other stimuli which are coherent with the theory involve stating learning objectives and telling the advantages of doing the task for their future education. Information about learning objectives in general is given in the first meeting of a semester. It will be best if it is reminded to students in every meeting, so that they can direct their activities to gain the objectives, "...*Sehingga mereka punya pengetahuan tentang konsep-konsep dasar yang berkaitan dengan metode kualitatif. Itu yang pertama. Nah, kalau untuk tugas yang kedua kan target akhirnya kan adalah proposal....*" (... So they have knowledge about the basic concept related to qualitative method. It is the first one. Then for the second task, the final target is writing a proposal).

The targets of learning are socialized to students through a lesson plan which is distributed to students in e-learning or through syllabus presentation in the first meeting. The students who understand the target of learning can be motivated and they plan their learning activities to achieve the target. But as some students did not concern with the target of the lesson, they sometimes did not do the tasks as expected as the following data as said by supervisors "*Pada umumnya banyak yang tidak siap, oleh itu terlihat dari pada saat ditanya apa yang dia tulis itu dia tidak bisa menjawab.berapa yang ketahuan itu hasil contekannya dari hasil skripsi*

mahasiswa yang lain....” (In general the students are not ready. It can be seen when they were asked about what they wrote, they could not answer it... several students were identified plagiarism from other students’ thesis).

The stimulus was not directly linked with proposal writing and mini research. Punishment and reward for instance, was focused much on the process of learning in general, that is writing proposal. The information about the target per-chapter is also general about the content of each chapter as “*Mampu dan paham mencari teori dan karya sastra*” (being able to find related theory and literary work), “*Mampu memilih metode yang cocok*” (Being capable of choosing appropriate methodology) and “*Memahami latar belakang dan mengetahui bagaimana fenomena atau isu-isu dilapangan.*” (understanding background and how the phenomena and issues in the field).

On the other hand, indicators of their attitude which must be built should be based on those which support their writing research skill, for example, carefulness, industriousness, and honesty. These characters are reflected to the completeness and appropriateness, number of sources, and the originality of the task. Meanwhile, their discipline to submit their task though it is useful, it is not related to their skill in writing a thesis. It can be proved through one of the lecturer’s answer, “*Hampir semuanya dapat nilai A, tapi ketika setelah selesai kuliah, bertanya, minta judul buk, pusing memikirkan judul*” (almost all students got A, but after finishing learning Research, they asked lecturer about a title, since they got confused). Thus, even though they can finish their task, it does not guarantee that they can do it. The finding can be formulated by using the key behavioral process ‘arbitrarily applicable relational responding (Hughes & Barnes-Holmes, 2014), “if humans learn that A-is similar with B and that B is similar with C. Then, they will act as if B is A and C is B, so A is C and C is A.

Therefore, the finding shows that the students think if they submit the task on time or ask and answer a question, they will get a point, and the point determines the success of lecturing. Thus, they suppose that if they submit the task on time, they will get successful in the subject. Therefore, this misunderstanding can be avoided if lecturer uses analytical rubric and presents it to the students earlier in the first meeting in the semester and in every meeting. On the other hand, if they understand that it is not the only factor determining their success, they will learn to actualize self-capabilities and self-processes (Andreev, 2014) and every students need different stimulus (Liang, Chang, Yao, & King, 2016).

Handled with Consensus and Negotiation

The lecturer and the students made a consensus about the rules that must be applied which are relevant to the task submission. Before achieving the agreement, the lecturer let the students negotiate with the lecturer, if they disagree with the rules. Since there are many kinds of tasks from chapter I to V, many students could not do them maximally. A conflict occurred that some students did not do learning tasks, submitted them late, and did it by cheating. Meanwhile, when they failed or found their grade low, they came to the lecturer and begged for the additional tasks in order that their grades can be revised. It is emphasized that consensus does not only occur in initial meeting, but also proceeds in medial, and at the end of the meeting. It should include all aspects of life in the class, the society, culture, and the personality. The tasks as “*Ada review yang diberikan pada referensi.... Kemudian nanti di lokal mereka presentasi.... hasilnya adalah sebuah proposal*”(Reviewing references.... Then they presented their task in the classroom.... The result is writing a proposal) must be clearly exposed to the students since the first meeting.

In oral presentation tasks, some students did not participate much in discussing inside or outside of the classroom. This situation caused them only to read the slides while presenting the topic and could not answer any questions about what they talked about. Therefore, in group work as the social cooperation, lecturer should know a mechanism to coordinate their individual action (Bianchin, 2015). They should make consensus to finish their task after having negotiation by making job description and report what agreement they have made to the lecturer. Moreover, the lecturer and the group also make consensus about the grade the students can achieve depending on their actions during the task. Therefore, to reach understanding of the action, the lecturer can use communicative action to link the action plans of different students. The theory can be combined with Social decision scheme theory of Davis (1975) which proposes:

- (a) group decisions combine or aggregate a distribution of member preferences to form a collective response, (b) different processes such as majority, truth wins, or proportionality may be formalized as social decision schemes, and (c) the predictions of different decision schemes may be competitively tested against actual group decisions as tests of the group processes modeled by the decision schemes.” (Laughlin, 2011)

In forming a collective response, lecturer can take the concept of social welfare as the basis to define social choice problems. He or she then arranges the preferences as a set of alternatives of tasks (Candean, 2013). Furthermore, the set of alternatives of learning task can be chosen. For example, if they choose alternative A, they will get A, B, for B, and C for C.

Appropriateness, Revising, Illustrating, Goal Oriented

Goals and means are both the elements of social action theory as stated previously. If the students have decided to do a certain task, they will state it as the goal. They will maximize their potential to gain the appropriateness based on the target they have chosen. They may make invalid task firstly, but they should know their mistakes or weaknesses of their task. They can know it from the lecturer or from their friends through a discussion. If they know after they read sources they can revise their task directly, but if they do not know it, lecturer's feedback by illustrating their mistakes can open their eyes of their weakness so that they revise their task.

From the data collected from lecturers and supervisors, it is found that in general the lecturers did not emphasize students to do the tasks correctly. They concerned more with the learning process followed by the students, with exception if the problem is about methodology "*Tugas yg sama akan diulang kembali dan menghadap dosen*" (Two or more tasks which are similar should be redone and the doers should meet the lecturer) and Grading was based on students' discipline and the coherence between method and the data. Thus, teaching activities are not always oriented in the product (high skill) as theorized by Weber and Parson above, but in a certain situation, the process is the dominant factor (Dewey). Dewey's notion becomes the model used by most lecturers, but explanation about what procedures the students should follow along with the rules, should be emphasized clearly. It should be arranged since the earlier meeting so that they can set their time to do the task (Luhmann). All activities are relevant to action theory (Turner, 2001). However, after the students do the task, the lecturer illustrated the result by giving feedback as, "*Memberikan ide terhadap cerita-cerita yang disampaikan mahasiswa*" (Giving her opinion about the students' story) and "*Memberikan feedback berupa komentar pada tugas-tugas mahasiswa*" (giving feedback in form of comment to the students' tasks). This activity is called illustrating by which the students can see their weaknesses from the lecturer eventhough they have tried to revise their task repeatedly. In short, the students' actions to gain the target of learning can be managed well if they are well set and best efforts are deployed by repeatedly revising the draft following the feedback given by the lecturer through illustration or example of the correct and incorrect task. Then, the lecturer manages the class which is oriented on the target (goal), called goal-oriented.

Patient, Loving, Unforgettable, and Sympathetic (PLUS)

Patient, loving, unforgettable, and sympathetic are the lecturer's characters needed to encourage the students' to perform the task completely and perfectly. It still relates to action theory which views that individuals do action because of the goal. Reviewing action theory proposed by Parson, Dewey, and Luhmann (Turner, 2001) researchers add one more theory which supports the previous activities concerning to the extent of the students' efforts, called "willpower" (Yelfiza, 2016). Having the goals which are well set and following the process of achieving the goals completely, but with no willpower to gain the goals, the students can be frustrated if the goals cannot be achieved. On the other hand, if they love doing the task, they will be patient to accomplish it eventhough it is a very complicated task. For example, "*Jika penelitian adalah berat bagi mahasiswa, diberikan waktu untuk diskusi diluar kelas*" (If the students feel the task is difficult, they are given opportunity to discuss outside).

Their experiences in doing the task, "success and failure" structure their lifeworld and may have impact on their characters. Moreover, the students have different traits, characteristics, and behavior in learning because they have different human capital, different effect of social resources on academic achievement, educational attainment, and occupational success (Spengler, Damian, & Roberts, 2018). When the lecturer loves all students, she or he will provide the time availability to guide students, "*Memberikan kesempatan kepada siswa untuk menemui dan diskusi ketika mengalami kesulitan*" (Giving opportunity for students to meet and discuss with her when they find difficulty).

On the other hand, with students' various experiences, the lecturer can manage task activities. The students are free to choose the topic which is coherent with their experience in their childhood, with their peers, their parents, brothers and sisters, or with their earlier or current communities. The lecturer's task is to facilitate students which might find difficulty in a certain situation which makes a lecturer unforgettable for students. For example, "*Menguatkan dan memberi semangat mahasiswa di saat putus asa terhadap tugas skripsi yang dibuatnya*" (Motivate the students, especially when they become frustrated with their thesis).

The concepts "PLUS" are relevant to the theory of communicative action. Since they have different life world as caused by some factors above, they may have different degree of altruism. The lecturer becomes sympathetic with students who face difficulty as proved by datum "*Memberikan perlakuan khusus kepada mahasiswa yang memiliki kemampuan rendah dalam membaca dan dipantau setiap minggunya*" (Treating the students with low reading ability specially and they are monitored every week). Moreover, PLUS are also associated with emotional intelligence significant in determining students' performance on task. DCSE (2007) suggests: "Lecturer must keep relationship with them and among them so that the students feel that everyone understands, respects, values their beliefs, values, and feeling during communication is required to create"(Bates, 2016)

Discussion

SHARINGPLUS model concerns with relationship among participants. Sociological theories view what target humans achieve their target, when they relate to each other, how they maintain the relation and why they do relation (social exchange theory). Everyone will get benefits from the relationship. If one of the participants gets benefits but not the other, relationship will be ruined which influences communication. Moreover, if communication cannot run well, it is impossible to achieve the target of communication. In learning, therefore, sociological theory is a good solution for lecturer to apply in order that learning target can be obtained maximally.

SHARINGPLUS is also associated with action which should be performed by the addressee in communication. Since the communication of learning task is addressed to students, the lecturer addresses the information to students in order that they do action (action theory). The information is certainly about the targets and what benefits they can obtain if they do the action. As they have not yet recognized the characteristics of learning subject, it is reasonable that they do not achieve the targets. That is why such information from the lecturer is required for students to direct their efforts. Furthermore, lecturer helps students set the targets, decide what kinds of tasks they should do and monitors the process. It is important to recognize how the students proceed in this subject. During monitoring, plan of the next action, such as students revising the draft and lecturer giving the feedback can be done. All activities of action must contribute to the result of learning or the quality of learning task.

Finally, effective relation through interaction must come from enjoyable classroom situation since teaching and learning are constructed through social interaction (Araujo, Rodrigues, Pietri, & Santiago, 2018). PLUS in the model contains characters needed to emerge during their relationship (communicative action theory). The emergence of the characters may be originated from the lecturer first and transmitted to students. Since the class is enjoyable, learning task becomes enjoyable for students as well. They will not become stressed when facing a certain task. But they will do it maximally as they can. They possibly ask the lecturer for the task if the lecturer does not give it, since they become pleased when meeting with the lecturer.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The activities of SHARINGPLUS are based on lecturer-students and students-students relation. To have effective relation, three theories of sociology, social exchange, action, and communication action have become essential. The three theories come from different sociological paradigms. Social exchange theory emerges from Durkheimian paradigm, action theory is from Maxian paradigm, and communicative action theory is from weberian paradigm. The three paradigms are combined in SHARINGPLUS, so this model uses eclectic approach in sociology. Social exchange theory concerns with the benefits of learning activities, action theory focuses on process of learning which must be followed, and communicative action theory concerns with the techniques to obtain the goals. They cannot be separated from one to the other.

Based on the conclusion, recommendation is given to readers who are interested in studying this model. SHARINGPLUS can be developed in any kinds of activities which are proposed to increase humans' performance on task. It can be developed by teachers at any level of education and by business affairs. However, consideration about performers' characteristics is determiners of this model. Thus, before trying to develop this model, researcher is suggested to do need analysis of the performers. Furthermore, recommendation is addressed to lecturers of any subject. They are expected to develop this model in their subjects and implement it in their classroom activities.

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