

STUDENTS' INTEREST IN GENERAL ENGLISH CLASS AND THEIR REACTION TOWARDS TEACHING METHODS

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Abstract: This article discusses about a few points which make the students interested in learning General English, students' reaction on teaching method used by the lecturers, and additional description used to explain certain materials. This study is important because teaching non English Department students is challenging. This study is included into a qualitative research. The used theories are teaching-learning theories. Hence, the theories of research methodology and a few linguistic theories are taken. General English remains Basic English course given either in the first semester or in the second one. Through this research, it appears that discussion method and lecture method are still needed. However, the students will be more delight if learning process is supported by visual media or if they often get challenges. Further, General English materials still continue being developed as new curriculum is released.

Keywords: *general english, teaching method, students' reaction*

INTRODUCTION

General English is an English lesson taken in the first or second semester for non English Department students. It is challenging for the lecturer because suitable teaching methods, the ability to understand students' capability in understanding materials provided in the module, and the teacher's will to understand the students' interest are required. For students, it is challenging because they have a chance to improve their English and they can measure their ability through exercises in General English class. Students' interest in General English class is different because it is affected by their needs, their capacity, and their goal which are also heterogeneous. Therefore, different teaching methods and teachers' willingness to develop their linguistic skills are needed to motivate their students.

Teaching method is a method used for teaching. Surya (2004, p. 78) states that "teaching method which is used by the teacher should be varies in accordance to the purposes and taught materials. By using various teaching methods, the teacher does not only use one method but also other relevant methods in turns."

Further, Pidarta (1990, p. 19-21) mentions at least eight teaching methods. It includes; giving a lecture, involving either a practitioner or an expert, involving the students in question-answer activity, involving students in a discussion, sharing experience, field study, the use of projector, and giving a number of tasks which later will be discussed and will convince feedback.

Beside the teaching method, learning media is also needed to help the teacher to deliver the material and also

to make the students more interested in the teaching and learning activity. Pidarta (1990, pp. 23-24) systematically lists learning media as: Mass media, such as newspaper, flyers, brochures, and magazines, other books out of the used textbooks as their basis, the results of research, experts/practitioner/panel, society or schools where the cases were taken, images, photos, slides and the projector, cassette-video along with its television, calculator, and computer. However, Pidarta (1990) notes that some lecturers may not use all of these media because the usage depends on the lectures' personality and the material they deliver.

During General English Class, discussion may take place and there must be some feedback. Mortiboys (2005, pp. 40-41) state that on courses where participants have been learning a skill, create the chance for one to perform a skill (learner A) and for another to observe the performance (learner B). Guide B in the principles of giving effective feedback, which include: start with the positive, sandwich the negative between the positive, confine his/her feedback to the amount the recipient can handle rather than the amount he/she would like to give, make sure the feedback is something the recipient is in a position to act on, make observations not inferences, be specific rather than generalizing, and leave the recipient feeling motivated.

Students' intelligence is different from each others. Hence, their types of learning must be different. Mortiboys (2005, pp. 36-37) proposes seven types of learning activity that suit each intelligence. They are: Linguistic, Logical-Mathematical, Spatial/Visual, Bodily/Kinaesthetic, Musical/Auditorial, Interpersonal, and Intrapersonal. Linguistic responds well to learning activities which involve a variety of text and auditory stimulus, the chance to talk

through new concepts, public speaking, creative writing, and verbal debate. Logical mathematical responds well to learning activities which involve; using abstract symbols to represent concrete objects and concepts, seeing patterns in ideas and relationships, solving logical puzzles and working out sequences, cause and effect analysis, calculating, and estimating. Spatial/Visual responds well to learning activities such as those which involve; imagining, drawing, designing, construction, painting, and mind-mapping (DePorter, Reardon, & Singer-Nourie). Bodily/Kinaesthetic responds well to learning activities such as those which involve; movement, touch or other physical experiences, hands-on projects, role play, and working with objects. Musical/Auditorial responds well to learning activities such as those which involve; working with sounds and keeping rhythm (DePorter, Reardon, & Singer-Nourie, 1999). Interpersonal responds well to learning activities such as those which involve; cooperative learning, considering issues from a range of perspective, interpersonal problem-solving, giving feedback, receiving feedback, and active listening. Intrapersonal responds well to learning activities such as those which involve; time for reflection, self-assessment, feelings responses, and developing self-awareness.

In addition to the seven learning activities stated above, Surya (2004, p. 78) classifies learning methods into four, namely: lectures, self-study, concurrent learning, and collaborative learning.

Lectures is a learning model which is conducted by following lectures from the lecturers. The main characteristics of this learning method is the students listen to the explanation given by lecturers, activities and environment controlled by the lecturers, retrieved knowledge depending on the ability of the students in accepting the material delivered by

the lecturers, lack of technology support, and lasting in authoritative atmosphere.

The second learning model is self-study. It is conducted by the students independently in the rest of the activity. The characteristics of this model are; focusing on one's thought, self-directed process, the content of the knowledge in a form of reflection and integrity, using multimedia, and internal self-estimate.

The third learning model is concurrent learning. This model is conducted by the responsibility endured by the learners solely but in togetherness atmosphere with the others and interact to each others either directly or indirectly. The characteristics of this model are; the learning activity is conducted participatively, in an open forum, in circumstance where everyone respects each others, in which material is in its perspective, and democratic atmosphere supported by technology.

The fourth learning model is collaboratice learning. This model is conducted collaboratively, that is: collaboration in which learners help each other in a team. The characteristics of this model are; the learning activity is conducted through a cooperation to get concensus, the availability of various values and value mutual understanding, the decision made based on the agreement made by the members or based on value determined by the members of a team.

Briefly, there are three points highlighted why this research needs to be conducted. For the lecturers, this research is expected to be able to improve their ability to teach or to choose appropriate approach while lecturing, to convince the lecturer to consider using appropriate media, and to develop teaching design for General English class. For the students, this research is expected to enable them to improve their English skills which has

not developed yet. For those who was not interested in English, this research is expected either to move or to motivate them.

METHOD

This case study discusses about how teaching methods used by the lecturer affects the students' interest in General English class. This situation fits to a theory formulated by Heigham and Croker (2009) which states that for a qualitative researcher a 'case' can be seen as a bounded system comprised of an individual, institution, or entity and the site and context in which social action takes place, the boundaries of which may not be clear, and are determined by the scope of the researcher's interests.

The participants of this research are several students who come from Faculty of Economy, Faculty of Business and Management, and Faculty of Language for the period of September-December 2014. The data for this study were taken from questionnaires given to the students. Two questions in the questionnaire were adapted from IKAD form. In addition, fifty three indicators used to mark students' answer had been spread before conducting this study. However, only twenty eight were taken and were reliable.

Further, the questionnaires were analyzed by following these steps: 1) Listing all answers in accordance to the questions, 2) Calculating some similar answers by using sticks, 3) Reclassifying the answers and making some new labels where it is necessary, and 4) Rephrasing the new classification in order to make the explanation understandable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the analysis results of the questions listed in the questionnaires

which are given to the students are discussed. The first set of questions relates to students' interest/personal motivation. The first question demands the students to answer the question shortly. While the second question demands the students to write down their thoughts even though in fact most of them expressed their wish.

The second set of questions relates to teaching method used by the lecturer. The first question demands the students to answer how the teaching method conducted by the lecturer was and

whether it is understandable or not. Hence, their answers are varies and depend on their view and their experience in class. The second question demands the students to express their thought about 'innovative teaching method'.

The third question relates to additional context or description to help the students to understand the material. The students were asked wheteher or not the addition is sufficient or not to help them to understand the topic which was being discussed.

Table 1. Questions related to students' interest/personal motivation

No	Questions	Responses	Total
1.	Are you interested in learning General English?	Yes	25
		Not Really	7
		A Little	2
		No	1
2.	What did you expect in the first and second meetings of General English?	The introduction of subjcts/Syllabus/ curriculum	2
		Interesting	1
		To deepen English sentence structure	1
		Holiday	1
		Do not hope anything	3
		Grammar	1
		Enable to master English Grammar	1
		Expect to understand all subjects in General English	4
		Wish to have enjoyable learning	1
		Hope to get motivation which urges the students to study	1
		Want to master the subjects in General English immediately	2
		The lecturer is expected to be able to deliver the materials clearly	1
		Want to deepen Basic English skills	1
		Prioritizing conversation	1
		Discuss the importance of English	1
		The lecturer is expected to teach by using Power Point	1
		Want to be able to speak English fluently	1
		TOEFL	1
		Want to have a lot of discussion	2
		The lecturer is expected to deliver some new interesting materials	1
The lecturer is expected to deliver materials digestively and effectively	1		
Want to experience more attractive teaching	1		

and learning method	
Want to experience attractive and dynamic teaching method	1
Want to experience proper and attractive teaching method	1
Want to measure English proficiency of the students	1

Based on the students' answers presented in the table above, in the first and the second meetings of General English class, the students mostly expected to be able to improve their English competence, to experience new teaching-learning process, to have motivation/encouragement from the teacher, and to be introduced to lecture material, syllabus, and curriculum more deeply.

The students who are interested in improving their English competence usually hope to be able to converse in class or to have a conversation class. Meanwhile, the others wish either to be able to deepen their knowledge on basic English grammar or to try TOEFL. The students' English competence can be improved by writing some free writings or by trying to create some English sentences (usually five sentences) with different tenses. By doing these activities, the students were encouraged to open dictionaries to find certain words which they have not yet recognized.

In General English class, the students were often involved in discussion. First of all, they were given some simple questions related to the topic which was going to be explained. These simple questions are often addressed as 'Warming Up'. For instance: When they are going to learn *Subject and Verb Agreement*, they were asked to judge which one of the following sentence has a proper Subject-Verb Agreement;

1. She is a huntress vs. She are a huntress.

2. A water is being ordered vs. A bottle of water is being ordered.

If their answer for the first question is *She is a huntress* and for the second question is *A bottle of water is being ordered*, then their answers are correct. Hence, it can be assumed that they have known the basic of S-V Agreement and the lecturer can either give deeper explanation or move to another point of the topic.

After giving those simple questions and the theories, module-based exercises were given and the students were asked to finish it within a few minutes. Afterwards, they will be involved in a discussion. During the teaching and learning process, power point was not used. The lecturer relied on the white board and markers.

In term of motivation, the students tend to make a high EPT score (that is 500) as their target. Regarding this, they often get reminded that they will regret if they only hope to get high score. Therefore, they were encouraged to think the importance of learning English for their future.

In the first and second week of the lecture, the students expected to be introduced to lecture material, syllabus, and curriculum more deeply because most of them generally graduated from senior high school with a little understanding about English grammar. They generally recognised English topics (e.g: tense types, passive voice, and active gerund and infinitive) but they have not yet recognised other materials, for examples: S-V Agreement (more

advance level), parts of speech, infinitives.
dependent clauses, passive gerunds, and

Table 2. Questions related to teaching method used by the lecturer

No	Questions	Responses	Total
1.	How was teaching method conducted by the lecturer? Is it understandable?	Easy to understand	7
		Quite good	6
		Good and tactful	4
		Understandable but a bit boring	5
		Quite attractive, quite audible, but rather boring	1
		Good but sometimes complicated	1
		Quite good	1
		Quite clear and flexible but a bit boring	1
		Poor	2
		Monotonous	2
		Fair	1
		Good	4
		Very Good	2
		Quite motivational because the students have some chances to ask	3
		Less interactive	1
		Plain, tend to be dull	1
		Too stiff	1
Still need to be improved because there are some students who do not understand English	1		
2.	What do you think of "innovative" teaching method that should be applied in General English class?	Do not be too formal	2
		Slow and gradual material delivery	1
		Games are needed	4
		Providing a quiz once a week	1
		Entertaining the students	1
		Providing some intriguing words as examples and discussing them with the students	1
		Studying while playing with some words	2
		Just the way you are	1
		It will be great for the lecturer if she let her students converse in English among themselves	1
		Joke is needed	4
		Practices for examples singing and conversing in English	2
		Students' debate is needed	1
		Material delivery should be clearer in the future.	1
		Speaks slowly please	1
		The students should be given some opportunities to answer questions before the class more often	1
		Give quizzes in form of games in every meeting in the first ten minutes and the result of the quizzes give contribution to	1

marking system.	
Making discussion groups to discuss about current situation	4
'Questions and Answers Activity' concerning to dialy routines (depending their backgrounds, jobs, etc) is needed among the students	1
Explain simple thing but it can be understood	1
Use power point and video/music as teaching media	4
Do not discuss theories too much	1
Talk to the students in English and direct them so that they understand the materials given by the lecturer	1
English conversation is needed	1
Always give module-based practices in order that the students do not get bored	1
Many examples of various sentences and of various questions should be abundance.	1

Based on the answers, teaching methods used by the lecturer convinced various reactions; fourteen students say that the teaching method used by the lecturer is very good, twelve students state that teaching method used by the lecturer is pretty good, nine students answer that teaching method used by the lecturer is good, eight students consider that teaching method used by the lecturer is bad, and only one student state that teaching method used by the lecturer is fair.

Here, the lecturer uses both lecturing method and giving a number of tasks which later demand feedback. The lecturer uses lecturing method because the students need to know some new theories. While lecturing, the lecturer often uses either part of movies or part of a song to give an interesting illustration. For example: 1) The lecturer quotes and writes on the white board Marisha's line from the movie *Van Helsing* to illustrate the use of infinitive: "Do you like **to fly**, Ana?" 2) The lecturer quotes and writes on the white board Dr. Tutopolus's line from the movie *Godzilla* to illustrate countable plural noun

without ending-s: "*Where are the fish?*" or 3) The lecturer quotes and writes on the white board the title of *Frozen* popular theme song: **Let it go** to illustrate the formulation of *Let+ Object Pron+V base*.

As it has been mentioned above that after giving simple questions and theories to the students, module-based exercises were given and the students were asked to finish it within a few minutes. Afterwards, they will be involved in a discussion which later they get some feedback if the material has already been recognized.

Before the discussion began, the students were encouraged to write their answers on the white board. They became brave and were eager to write their answer after the lecturer assured them that they would not get chastised or got zero score because of their mistakes. The lecturer decided to use this kinaesthetic in order to prevent the students getting bored or falling asleep in the class.

However, a few students seemed unconvinced with this method because they expected either to experience a

concurrent learning where they could form a group discussion to discuss current issue in the society or to experience a collaborative learning where they can communicate with each others by asking their fellow about their activity. They might be interested in taking a role or interested in game but these would be completely kinaesthetic which probably would distract their concentration in learning process.

The teacher used lecturing and self study method mostly in the class because the students still needs to learn a few concepts. However, based on the students' opinions, innovative teaching methods were also applied. They include; 1) *Practice*: Some students wish to converse in English either with their

friends or with their lecturer while the others wish to learn English by singing certain songs or by experiencing relevant practices, 2) *Interesting learning media*: The students who wish to experience effective teaching-learning process expresses that they want the teacher to use Power Point, 3) *Jokes*: Certain students need certain jokes to raise their spirit to learn, 4) *Moderate Information Delivery*: Some students need some information explained in a slow and rhythmic voice, and 5) *Providing Challenges*: Some students need to get some challenges. The challenge can be in a form of pop quizzes, debate, *question and answer* game among the students, etc.

Table 3. Questions related to additional context or description to help the students to understand the material

Question	Responses	Total Responses
Did your lecturer give sufficient description/ additional sentences on the materials?	Yes	28
	Not Really	1
	No	1

The following are the students' reaction towards whether or not the lecturer give sufficient description/additional sentences on the materials; twenty eight students give positive respond and only one student is not sure whether or not the lecturer gave him/her sufficient description/ additional sentences on the materials. Besides, the similar result is shown for a negative answer.

During the teaching and learning activity, the lecturer gives additional description when the students are confused and do not understand about certain topics. The following examples will give illustration about how the lecturer gives sufficient description/additional sentences on the materials:

1. *Water **boils** at 100 degrees Celsius.*
Answer: Right

2. *The water **boils**. Can you turn it off.*
Answer: Wrong
3. *Look! That man **tries** to open the door of your car.* **Answer:** Wrong
4. *Can you hear those people? What **do** they **talk** about?* **Answer:** Wrong
5. *The moon **goes** round the earth.*
Answer: Right
6. *I must go now. It **gets** late.* **Answer:** Wrong
7. *I usually **go** to work by car.* **Answer:** Right
8. *'Hurry up! It's time to leave.' 'Ok, I **come**.'* **Answer:** Wrong
9. *I hear you've got a new job. How **do** you **get** on?* **Answer:** Right
10. *Shhhhh! Sheila **sleeps**. Don't make much noise.* **Answer:** Wrong
11. *'_____ (you/listen) to the radio?' 'No, you can turn it off.'*

12. '_____ (you/listen) to the radio everyday?' 'No, just occasionally.'

Analysis:

Sentence number 1 and number 5 must use *simple present* because everyone knows, admits, and accepts the truth that *water boils at 100 Celcius* and *the moon goes round the earth*. Number 7 must use simple present because there is a word "usually" which is generally used to describe habit or daily routine. Number 9 must use simple present because the the speaker asks about one's condition.

Sentence number 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10 are considered wrong because the sentences should use *present continuous tense* because all events illustrated in the sentence in every number are the events which are occurring. This can be seen from situational context given in each number. If the students have adequate vocabularies and personal experience and try to imagine themselves in the situation depicted within the provided sentences, they will be able to understand the context.

The same case stand for sentence number 11 and 12. If the students have adequate vocabularies and personal experience and try to imagine themselves in the situation depicted within the provided sentences, they will be able to conclude that they must use *present continuous tense* to answer question number 11. To answer number 12, the students can consider the words "everyday" and "occasionally" as keywords to determine tense type which must be used.

CONCLUSION

General English remains the first basic English lesson in either the first or the second semester. Through this research, it is revealed that lecturing method and discussion method conducted between the lecturer and the students are still needed. However, the students will be more delight either if the learning process is supported by visual media or if they often get challenged. Thus, in class, there are some times where the students have opportunities both to review what they have studied in both junior and senior high school and to show their ability to use their English writing skill properly.

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Drummer

A drummer, sick of all the drummer jokes, decides to change his instrument. After some thought, he decides on the accordion. So he goes to the music store and says to the owner, "I'd like to look at the accordions, please." The owner gestures to a shelf in the corner and says, "All our accordions are over there." After browsing, the drummer says, "I think I'd like the big red one in the corner." The store owner looks at him and says, "You're a drummer, aren't you?" The drummer, crestfallen, says, "How did you know?" The store owner says, "That 'big red accordion' is the radiator."

(Source: <http://www.study-express.ru/humour/funny-stories.shtml>, picture: www.google.co.id)