

Teacher Directive Discourse and Active Learning in Indonesian High Schools

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Abstract: This research is intended to find relationship between teacher directive discourse (TDD) and teacher active learning (TAL). The independent variable was TDD, which was divided into command, request, and suggestion by Keidler (1998). The dependent variable, TAL, was distributed into five sub-variables: group work, class activity, questioning and assessing, learning source, and displays. Demographic variables were type of school (public or private), and degree of closeness of teacher and students. Respondents were 138 grade-11th students in two high schools filling up a self-constructed and validated 52-item questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed twice, in Mathematic and English subjects. Data treatment includes mean score, percentage, ANOVA and Pearson Correlation. Finding includes a moderate level and dominantly request type of TDD, which in the private school was significantly subtler (more on suggestion). The TAL level was quite high (quite active), in the public school was significantly higher (more active). Teachers who maintain tight closeness have significantly higher TAL. A significant, weak and negative correlation between TDD and TAL were also found. Teachers are recommended to use various types of directive discourse, and less on suggestion. Firm commands are needed to obtain active participation. Increasing students' active learning is also recommended by promoting close relationship between teacher and student.

Key word: directive discourse, active learning, classroom discourse, teacher discourse

1. Introduction

Active learning has been well acquainted in Indonesia, especially in the country's national educational system since early 80s. A program called Student Active Learning Methods was well known during that time. Ever since, several active learning programs have been introduced to education system, such as Active Creative Effective and Joyful Learning in the late 90s, and Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) in the early 2000s. In 2005, active learning concept was inducted as part of national standard of curriculum thru a Government Regulation. The regulation enforced that teaching and learning process in educational institution were administered in an interactive, inspired, joyful, challenging, motivating student to participate actively and provide enough room for student's initiative, creative, and individual input based on his or her interest, competence, and physical or psychological development. Therefore, the Indonesian government has established active learning

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program as part of National Development Scheme (Puskurbuk, 2012).

Active learning has become a broad learning approach, which centers the focus of classroom activities to students, rather than to teachers. This well-known approach promotes active peer interaction among students, in addition to participative engagement in activities designed to help them develop new knowledge. Belen (2007) argues that the fundamental principle of active learning is students' main duty is to take care for their own learning. Students' first hand participation more crucial to learning than the way lesson is taught, or how well resources are customized. Teachers were no longer the main source of information and learning should no longer be limited on what a teacher knows. In addition, learning resources are beyond textbooks, but extend to any authentic materials found in environment or media. Students worked collaboratively with other students to develop new understanding, and gain insight from sharing of thought on different matters. Teacher should have little control neither on the progress of learning nor on the direction of shared knowledge. The success of learning depended mostly on their ability to developed new knowledge through interaction and engagement.

Modern learning approaches promote active and interactive learning as fundamental activity. Some of the approaches, namely reciprocal learning, peer collaboration, cognitive apprenticeship, problem-based teaching, and anchored instruction, include collaborative interaction in the core design. These approaches enabled each student who comes from different background and possesses certain skills work cooperatively to seek mutual comprehension and shared conception in a particular subject (Nurhadi, 2002). The importance of active learning through dynamic and equal interaction between tasks, teacher and students in learning has been a common belief underlying each design. The learning experience was gained through interaction, in which a student compares his or her reality and belief system with the one' teacher or peers, and then develop a new proven reality.

One of identifying indicator of active learning is the need of context in teaching learning process. Active learning uses context as a set of boundary in which learning activity occurs (O'Neil & McMahon, 2005). Decontextualized knowledge would never afford competence to perform an authentic task. Learner should cope with a certain concept in a complex environment, and experience complex interaction with the environment, which determine how or where this concept would be applied. Learning in authentic situation enabled students to be engaged in a particular and relevant task in a particular setting (Johnson, 2002).

Active learning also promoted integrative knowledge. Learning has been seen as a complete series of knowledge construction, and should not be constricted to different compartment of discipline or field. Knowledge was seen as a whole integrated entity, and therefore learning should not be limited but integrate complex task, problem, and context using approaches from multidiscipline and comprehensive analysis (O'Neil & McMahon, 2005). This multidiscipline approach focused on integration, due to the fact that our brain deals easily with whole picture rather than smaller parts. This process allowed students to think critically and creatively within a certain context (Brown, 2001). After all, the learners would manifest themselves in the real world, rather than in a world that is separated in different subjects. The real world consisted of a collection of numerous facts, problems, dimension, perception and complexity (Siberman, 2004).

The procedure of active learning approach should not be limited to teaching and learning activities, but also should include the assessment process. Assessment in this sense should be seen as two-way interaction between teacher and students, and inseparable from learning. Integrative assessment worked hand-in-hand throughout the teaching and learning process, in which learners are evaluate cognitively, emotionally, and kinesthetically in a whole process of learning (Siberman, 2004).

According to Belen (2007), active learning could be elaborated into these seven principles, which are:

(1) Active learning allowed students to construct meaning individually and collectively according to constructivist's theory.

(2) Active learning promoted, employed, and valued personal uniqueness and complexity of student as integral learning process.

(3) Active learning developed intrinsic motivation, borne from competence and self-confidence of student's own potential to solve new problem based on experience.

(4) Active learning required the students to construct their own knowledge.

(5) Active learning used teacher role as facilitator who help students obtain their own comprehension of materials, not as instructor.

(6) Active learning enabled students to obtain by themselves fact, principles, and concept, as the learning activity promotes them to predict, make assumption or hypothesis, and think intuitively.

(7) Learning was seen as a process in which knowledge were created through a transformation of experience. Knowledge is, thus, a combination of making sense of experience and transform it to different setting.

Indicators of an active teaching a learning process in the classroom setting, according to Belen (2007), could be seen from these five procedures in the classroom. They are: group work, class activity, questioning and assessing, the use of resources, and the use of display. These indicators could be used as a guide in observing teaching in learning process.

Group work could be indicated by activities such as giving equal and adequate chance for all students to work in small group (3-6 people), in a given time line. Group work should receive clear instruction according to certain competence, using adequate instruments and material. Teacher would facilitate and create mutual respect among group member, to elicit their confidence in giving input and chance to self-discovery.

Class activity in an active learning should reveal an activity, which connect one competence to another, and attract students' interest, motivation and engagement. Students were challenged to think creatively, as they were promoted to questions, to explore, and express ideas and feeling. They would also give and receive peer compliment upon expressing ideas and completion of task. The environment was joyful and the students feel free to express feeling and to commit mistakes. Various activities were conducted individually, in pairs, in small group and in large group, which stimulate various senses, using various types of media and facility. Students were challenged to think, to seek information and to discover answer, as well to make critical questions. They were also developing social skills and building, and displaying projects.

Questioning and assessing in an active learning classroom could be indicated by teacher's creative open questions that would require students to think critically. Each student was given enough time to answer to his or her peer's questions bravely. Teacher used various type of assessment, which is depended on material type; they also avoided multiple-choice test. Teachers provided students with meaningful tasks, which is directly attributed to authentic world of the students. The type assessment should match a particular competence, and provide feedback to each given tasks. A special devised form of observation or scoring rubric is provided, which allow them to assess comprehensively including the attitude of students. Complete records on alteration in attitude and performance were administered, so as the teacher could provide enrichment program for those who need.

The use of various learning source in active learning could be indicated by the use of school environment, social institution, culture, printed media, electronic media, and students' experience as resources for learning.

Classroom displays could reveal the process of active learning classroom. Plenty of students made display, which portrays fine individual and group projects, and the availability of learning portfolio for each student could

become the indication of active classroom activities. Displays should be arranged neatly and artistically, and should be placed at student eye level, to make it readable or at student eye level.

2. Teacher Directive Discourse

One of the main prerequisite for administering active learning approach is the ability of teacher to communicate, especially to encourage student. Teacher's choice of discourse in managing a conductive classroom could prove crucial in encouraging or discouraging students. According to Syah (2004) teacher communicative ability has been a part of basic teacher competence, which is required from all teachers. Each qualified teacher, should be equipped with pedagogic competence, which include ability to employ effective, emphatic and courteous discourse to students in communication.

In her study, Reyes (2000) defined communicative expertise as part of teachers' skill to communicate and express themselves verbally and non-verbally, which is able to increase and maintain interest and attention of students to facilitate learning. Communicative expertise is vital to enable teacher maintain student attention, to direct the students to the tasks and to manage classroom activities. Reyes distinguishes this communicative expertise into 5 manifestations, which are:

(1) Proficiency in communication using good language, indicated by fluency, articulation, and clearness in using language.

(2) Proficiency in using non-verbal language (facial expression, hand movement, body movement) to become unintended yet meaningful visual media.

(3) Competence in developing two-way communication, characterized by good listening strategy and openness.

(4) Clarity in giving explanation, instruction, and in questioning, thus no need for repetition.

(5) Proficiency in using language, which enable classroom interaction and participation.

Communicative skill helps teachers generating different types of discourse and using them relevantly to certain function. The more eloquent and relevant a teachers' discursive pattern and word-choice, the more effective their communication will be. In linguistics theory, Kreidler (1998) has proposed a systematic classification of 7 discursive patterns. They are: assertive, performative, verdictive, expressive, directive, commissive, and phatic (p. 183). These seven types of discourse could be explained as follows:

(1) Assertive utterance. The function of assertive utterances is when a person use a language to state what he or she knows or believe in, purposely to inform something. This deals with knowledge and data, or about what had happened, whether it is true or not.

(2) Performative utterances. The function of performative utterances deals with to state, name, or nominate something. A person with a certain right to make their statement acceptable to others in a particular situation utters this discourse.

(3) Verdictive utterance. The function of verdictive utterance is to give assessment or evaluation on what other people have done. This includes giving score, rank, price, praise, or critics.

(4) Expressive utterance. The function of expressive utterance is to indicate an action before it is performed or failure to perform and action. This discourse is retrospective in nature, in which the speaker involved in an action. Common expressive words are acknowledge, deny, and sorry.

(5) Directive utterance. Directive utterances were used when the speaker want to move the listener to do

something. Directive discourse was classified as suggestion, request and command according to the degree of politeness.

(6) Commisive utterance. Commisive utterances required the speaker to do or perform a commisive action. The function is to utter promise, oath, vow, or threat.

(7) Phatic utterance. This type of utterances does not have a particular verbal function, but used to maintain courtesy among the society. For example, phrases like thank you, welcome, excuse me.

One of the most common discourses used by teacher in the classroom is directive discourse. This type of utterances are usually use when teacher distribute new activity or task, or even instruction. Kreidler (1998) divided this directive discourse into three, which are 1) commands, 2) requests, and 3) suggestions. He continued elaborating the categorization as follows: "A command is effective only if the speaker has some degree of control over the actions of the addressee. A request is an expression of what the speaker wants the addressee to do or refrain from doing. A request does not assume the speaker's control over the person addressed. Suggestions are the utterances we make to other persons to give our opinions as to what they should or should not do" (pp. 183-194). Verbs associated with commands are to require, to force, to forbid, and to assert. Requests use verbs like to invite, to ask, to appeal. And the verbs to indicate suggestion is to advice, recommend, to remind, etc.

In communicative interaction, a certain conversation could occur effectively when the addresser and the addressee shared mutual background knowledge. Both speaker and listener should make initial oral agreement that whatever topic they choose, should be connected to each other. The realization of this conversation follows two general principles in communication, which is cooperation and courtesy.

3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to establish a relationship between teacher directive discourse as evaluated by students and the degree of active learning. Specifically, the purpose of this study was to:

(1) Find the level of teacher directive discourse performed by teacher conductively in the classroom and evaluated by the students. Teacher's discourse were identified and classified to find dominant directive discourse. It is also compared in terms of school type (public vs. private) and degree of closeness of teacher and student.

(2) Find the level of active learning in classroom, and to compare the active learning based on school type (public vs. private), and degree of closeness of teacher and student.

(3) Establish the relationship between teacher directive discourse and active learning.

Independent Variable in this study was the teacher directive discourse. It was the type of utterances teacher used to employ to cause the students to do something. Kreidler's (1998) theory was used to divide three levels of teacher directive discourse based on degree of politeness, which is 1) commands, 2) requests, and 3) suggestions.

Dependent variable in this study was the active learning. Active learning was indicated by theory of Belen (2007) on five indicators of active learning procedures, which are 1) group work, 2) class activity, 3) questioning and assessing, 4) learning source, and 5) displays.

The first demographic variable of this study was the type of school, public vs. private school. Another demographic variable in this study was the degree of closeness of teacher and student, i.e., how close the relationship between a teacher and his or her students, and how well they know each other. There were three degree of closeness: tight closeness, moderately close, and distant relation.

When a teacher maintains a close relationship with the students, the teacher would know them thoroughly.

Pedagogic competence as one of the required competence for teacher demanded teacher to know their students thoroughly — a theoretical comprehension on the development psychology on the students, and a complete grasp of their attitude and character, to help them develop their optimal progress (PP No 16 Tahun 2007) (Tahun, 2007, p. 16).

Close relationship between teacher and his or her students were promoted in modern instructional design. Several instructional design models place students characteristic as the foundation or the starting point in lesson development or choosing the right materials (Lever-Duffy et al., 2003). Therefore, a teacher should initially get acquaintance with the students before determining what classroom activities or materials should be introduced to them. Detailed student profile, should include demographic data such as age, previous school, residence, family background, religion, and special needs. A good teacher should identify each student and his or her personal background.

4. Research Method

This research employed descriptive, comparative and correlational research design to analyze quantitative data on teacher directive discourse and active learning. This study was conducted at two high schools in North Sulawesi Province, involving 138 students using cluster-sampling method. Respondents filled two sets of questionnaire, one in mathematic class assessing their math teacher, and another one is in English class assessing their English teacher.

Instrument for this study was a 109-item questionnaire, which is self-constructed using the two grand theories of variables. Questionnaire was pilot tested and validated in a reliability and validity analysis. Statistical treatment used was Mean score, Percentage, ANOVA and PEARSON Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, with a significant value at $\alpha .05$.

Data was interpreted in 7-scale Likert rating (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1994), with the lowest to highest level of teacher directive discourse starts from: 1) very harsh (strict command), 2) harsh (command), 3) quite harsh (firm request), 4) moderate (moderate request), 5) quiet lenient (subtle request), 6) lenient (suggestion), and 7) very lenient (subtle suggestion). The active learning was also interpreted into 7 levels, with the lowest to highest level starting from: 1) very low (very passive), 2) low (passive), 3) quite low (quite passive), 4) moderate (moderate), 5) quiet high (quite active), 6) high (active), and 7) very high (very active).

5. Finding and Recommendation

There are seven findings of this study; the first finding dealt with the level of teacher directive discourse. This study found that the teacher uses moderate request directive discourse which is interpreted at the level of moderate with a mean score of $(M) = 4.04$. Between two subjects being evaluated, English had a little higher mean score of $M = 4.09$, than Math which is at $M = 3.99$. Both subjects were placed in moderate level, with request as dominant type of discourse.

This finding also revealed that the dominant teacher directive discourse used in the classroom is request (63.77%), followed by subtle request (22.46%). Item-per-item analysis found an outstandingly high item with $M = 5.26$ is item #2. This implied that when “a teacher prevented students to do a bad thing” he or she used lenient discourse of suggestion. On contrary, another outstandingly low item with $M = 2.43$ is item #9, which explain that when “a teacher attempted to quite the students who were making fun of their friend” he or she used harsh

discourse of command.

The second finding dealt with active learning level of classroom. This study found that the active learning process inside the classroom was quite high, and the respondents consider themselves as quite active with a mean score of $M = 5.41$. On both subjects, Math was a little bit higher at $M = 5.43$ than English at $M = 5.39$. However, the active learning in both subjects was classified as quite high or quite active.

Moreover, in the five categories (sub-variables) of active learning, three were found in the level of high or receive active participation, and two were in the level of quite high, or receiving quite active participation of the respondents. The high three categories were group work ($M = 5.74$), class activity ($M = 5.56$), and questioning and assessing ($M = 5.52$). And two of the quite high or quite active categories were learning source ($M = 5.29$) and displays ($M = 4.70$). The two sub-variables, in which the active learning process was quite high, are the ones dealing with school facility. They also depended upon students' access to various resources, and their affordability to prepare neat displays. Economic factor might contribute to the decline of learning source and displays, compared to group work, class activity and questioning and assessing activities.

The third finding of this study dealt with the comparison of teacher directive discourse between public school and private school. Public school ($M = 3.85$) was lower than private school ($M = 4.14$) in terms of teacher directive discourse. The difference was significant with significance value $P = .003$ which is lower than $\alpha .05$ and $F = 9.04$ in an ANOVA table. This finding implied that private school teachers use more lenient directive discourse, and subtler discourse than of public school teachers. This might be caused by the social control in private school are higher, since teacher treat students more courteously.

The fourth finding of the study dealt with the comparison of teacher directive discourse among three degree of closeness between teacher and their students. Finding revealed that in Math, teacher with tight closeness relation ($M = 4.12$ ($N = 21$)); has more lenient directive discourse compared to teacher with moderately close relation ($M = 3.99$ ($N = 96$)); and distant relation ($M = 3.83$ ($N = 21$)). In English, the same pattern occurred, that teacher with tight closeness relation ($M = 4.32$ ($N = 16$)); has more lenient directive discourse compared to teacher with moderately close relation ($M = 4.08$ ($N = 93$)); and distant relation ($M = 3.99$ ($N = 29$)). However, no significant difference was found according to ANOVA test. Therefore, both subject teachers did not make any difference to students based on their degree of closeness in terms of directive discourse.

The fifth finding deals with the comparison of active learning between public school and private school. Public school ($M = 5.61$) had higher active learning process than private school ($M = 5.30$). And the difference is significant with a significance value of $P = .032$ which was lower than $\alpha .05$ and $F = 9.04$ in an ANOVA table. Therefore, public school had significantly higher score in active learning, or had more active students than private school.

In terms of sub-variables of active learning, public school had significantly higher in all five categories: Group work (Public $M = 5.88$, and Private $M = 5.66$), Class activity ($M = 5.79$ and 5.44), Questioning and assessing ($M = 5.76$ and 5.38), Learning source ($M = 5.43$ and 5.21), and Displays ($M = 4.90$ and 4.58). The higher active learning process in public school might raise due to similar the socio-economic status for the majority of its students.

The sixth finding dealt with the comparison of active learning among three degree of closeness between teacher and their students. Finding revealed that in Math, teacher with tight closeness relation ($M = 5.83$, $N = 21$), had more lenient directive discourse compared to teacher with moderately close relation ($M = 5.39$, $N = 96$), and distant relation ($M = 5.21$, $N = 21$). In English, the same pattern occurred, that teacher with tight closeness relation

(M = 5.83, N = 16) had more lenient directive discourse compared to teacher with moderately close relation (M = 5.28, N = 93) and distant relation (M = 5.51, N = 29). An ANOVA test had confirmed a significant difference of active learning in terms of degree of closeness between teacher and their students. Therefore, teacher who had tight closeness relation with students tend to have higher active learning, and a more active classroom compared to teachers with moderately close or distance relation to their students.

The last finding deals with correlation between teacher directive discourse and active learning. Finding revealed a significant, weak and negative finding between both variables. Significant correlation was attained from a $P = .005$ which is lower than $\alpha = .05$. Pearson correlation revealed an $r = -.235$, signified negative and weak correlation. Negative r suggested a flipped-direction relationship between teacher directive discourse and active learning. When the teacher directive discourse went higher, the active learning became lower, and vice-versa.

This finding implies a need for strict and tough command for classroom management, to manage student to learn actively. A clear and strict direction makes student understand that teacher are steadfast in making the student learn. More control should be use to involve the student, to push them so they would engaged in learning, no other way.

Several recommendations are offered from the findings, they are as follows:

(1) To improve active learning which is still in quite high or quite active level. Special attention should be given to improving learning source and displays.

(2) To improve active learning of private school by benchmarking to the public school.

(3) To improve active learning by using tight closeness relationship between teachers and their students. When a close relationship established, active learning should become easier.

(4) Teacher to employ various types of directive discourse. A strict and clear command is still needed to maintain conducive classroom management, which is needed in improving active learning.

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