

# The Discourse Analysis of Diction Effects on Teachers Used in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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## ABSTRACT

Proper diction relates to the choice of words used in conveying an idea. Diction in speaking becomes a difficulty for English teachers in classroom interactions. Especially for beginner English teachers, some of them are still unfamiliar with choosing the right/good vocabulary for describing and explaining material in teaching or using English to give some instructions. This study aimed at finding out the effect of diction used by the teachers during the interaction in the EFL class. This research applied qualitative research design and applied discourse analysis method, specifically conversational analysis of the teachers' utterances. Respondents who participated in this research were two English teachers and students respectively. The researchers collected the data through observation by recording teachers' voices and interviews. This research found that the words or terms used by both teachers had an impact on the interaction, feedback and students' interest in learning English. Miscommunication, misunderstandings, as well as a few feedbacks occurred in the classroom. There were a few learning aspects faced by both observed teachers to use proper word choice. They were source of materials, teaching media and tools, as well as teacher training. All of them constrained those English teachers to employ the proper words during interaction in the classroom. Teachers are expected to be careful in choosing words or terms so that communication between teachers and students is well established.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Every EFL teacher has to comprehend classroom communication and work to enhance instruction in second languages as well as encourage students to learn how to use them (Myojin, 2007; Pratiwi, 2019; Zulfah et al., 2015). In Indonesia, English as a Second Language (ESL) textbooks have undergone multiple

revisions in less than ten years, although no notable advancements have been made in second language acquisition. It is a fact that improving teaching and learning capacity cannot be accomplished by only changing conversational textbooks to increase teachers' academic understanding.

In the Indonesian context, a few English teachers, whether on purpose or not, provide chances for the learner's progress since their linguistic and educational goals are in line with one another. However, sometimes in EFL classroom interactions, the teachers are unable to promote learners' engagement by creating a context in which students are involved (Sardi et al., 2017, 2022). Some teachers appear to discourage conversation and foster student involvement. Many of them struggled to control their language use and to match the linguistic and pedagogical target. As a result, the teachers are unable to maximize pupil engagement, which is both conducive to and conducive to the acquisition of a foreign language.

Furthermore, it is essential to understand if the words the English teacher will use to describe ideas are appropriate for particular/general situations or not because speaking concentrates not only on the thoughts or ideas that are uttered but also on the concepts of the words the teacher will use. As a result, English teachers find it challenging to express clearly during class discussions. Some English teachers, particularly those who are just starting out, are still learning how to select appropriate terminology to describe and explain lesson materials or to use English to deliver directions. They simply remember as much terminology as they can without ever thinking about how to apply it in their classroom instruction. Furthermore, for instance, (study case), when a teacher wants to instruct the students to put tables in the stated place or position, most of them will say "Could you arrange these tables?" They use the word of "arrange" not "set". Actually, both of these words (arrange and set) have the same meaning but different in using it. So, the right word that is right used in this context is "set" (could you set these tables). Those are some mistakes that teachers usually make, and it turns out that they are used in teaching media without considering several aspects of pedagogy (Humaeroah et al., 2023; Sardi et al., 2017).

Additionally, Walsh (2006) stated that the consideration of how a teacher constructs the learner's participation in face-to-face classroom interaction is through their choice of language or diction use. Walsh (2006) puts it, there is little doubt that, like any type of academic environment, being a member of an EFL classroom comes with its own set of restrictions: a) teachers are the chief speakers in the classroom, b) they often choose who starts and finishes a turn, c) the procedure of a lesson is put forward mostly by teachers, d) the course content is generally chosen based on teachers' syllabi, e) most questions are posed by teachers and f) teachers are responsible for modifying their level of knowledge to that of learners. His research revealed several methods that teachers could enhance their teacher talk to encourage and maximize student participation in classroom education.

In order to take into account this problem, the writer has brought up this case in research entitled *The Discourse Analysis on Teachers' Diction used in TEFL at SMPN 2 Lembang, Regency of Pinrang*. The writer has determined to take SMPN 2 Lembang at Pinrang as the object of research because the writer was one of the voluntary teachers at the moment that had some experience teaching there. Also, the researcher considers the English teacher there might have some errors while teaching English in using diction. Thus, it is vital to discover the effect of the use of word choice whilst teaching-learning activities in a sort of teacher-learner communication at SMPN 2 Lembang, Regency of Pinrang. Regarding the research questions above, this research aims to get some information about the types of diction used by the EFL teachers in common and the effect raised in teaching-learning activities.

Theoretically, it is the preliminary investigation of English classroom interaction toward middle school learners, which could be the source for upcoming researchers as well as teachers within diction used as a medium of instruction. Nonetheless, this study practically helps EFL teachers use proper word choices whilst teaching, communicate with the learners, and analyze or evaluate the teaching result.

This study is under the discipline of Sociolinguistics. The present research intends to show how EFL Teachers in the Regency of Pinrang, as non-native speakers at SMPN 2 Lembang, perceive certain utterances may create potential miscommunication among the students in terms of spoken or written form communication through classroom teaching activities. The researchers elaborated this kind of

research by considering a discourse analysis study. Regarding this research, the data will be collected from some verbal communication between the teacher and students of the research which is conducted in the classroom. The researchers limited this study by focusing on the use of diction or word choice in teaching particularly when explaining and giving instructions.

Some of the studies that have been conducted include Chen (2010) about Dictionary use and EFL learning, Fageeh (2014) about online dictionaries for etymological analysis, Shen (2013) about Vocabulary Knowledge and Dictionary Use on EFL Reading Performance, Alhaisoni (2016) about EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of dictionary use and preferences, and research others. Research on the diction used by teachers in TEFL has not been found to date. Therefore research is focused on the impact of diction used by teachers in TEFL. It is hoped that this research can answer questions including how the impact of using words or terms has on teacher communication in class and the learning aspects faced by teachers.

## 2. METHODS

This research applied qualitative research design. Instruments used to collect the data included interviewing and observation. The methods include visiting the school and observing the EFL instructors at SMPN 2 Lembang, Pinrang while they were instructing, and then taking notes. The researchers then gave a classroom observation report for both EFL teachers taken during. This study, in particular, focused on the interaction between EFL teachers and students at SMPN 2 Lembang, Pinrang, because it was of particular interest. All English instructors teaching English courses at the secondary school were consulted for this study. The Pinrang SMPN 2 Lembang teachers were taken into consideration by the researchers as informants.

To collect the data, the researchers utilized observation notes and interview. The kind of observation used in this research is overt participant observation. In accordance with this study, the kind of interview is a conversation between two or more people where questions are asked by the interviewer to elicit facts or statements from the interviewee. The aim of this step was to find out some information about the EFL teachers using diction as well as the students at SMPN 2 Lembang, Pinrang. Following data collection, the information was analyzed in a few steps using observational data and interview results. The method of data analysis, which involved data collection, reduction, display, and conclusion drawing, was based on Miles and Huberman's data analysis.

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The word choice used by the two EFL teachers investigated has effects that could certainly appear in classroom interaction. The teachers' diction affected the feedback or the communication between the teachers and the learners and/ or the learner to the learner. Occasionally, teachers need long time in the elaboration session or providing example to the learners due to the terms used in their utterances. The following extractions prove that the words uttered by the teachers could influence classroom interaction to achieve the learning objectives.

### 3.1 Less Interactive feedback

The teachers explain a topic to the students using Indonesian-English or vice versa. However, the learners did not respond the teacher's question immediately because the teacher could not provide another example or words that could be easily understood. Instead, the teachers used Indonesian. The students remained silent due to the teacher's language as well as possibly did not recognize the words. This can be seen in the following extractions:

Extract 53

T : *Siapa yang tahu apa itu get well card? Get well card nah.. get well card ini adalah ketika kita ingin mengirimkan eh ucapan kepada seseorang yang sedang sakit.. lekas sembuh.. biasanya kalo disingkat GWS.. get well son [soon]. Lekas sembuh.. ahh misalnya ada teman kita sakit ingin kita kirimkan sebuah kartu makanya itu dinamakan adalah get well card yah isinya tergantung you*

*just say ehh.. get well son friens [friends] lekas sembuh teman, yah like that, the next ehh congratulation card.. congratulation card.. who knows congratulation card?*

Ss : (Silent).

In this extract, the teacher tried to define of get well soon card. However, the mispronunciation of word soon which sounded son made the students interpret differently. Also, the teacher did not give chance to the students to respond her question at least waiting for the learners' definition. The teacher just kept explaining. As a result, when delivering questions, the students were just silent. Considerably, the teacher should pick another words or terms to use in explaining particular English terms of the course subject.

Extract 54

T : *Mengerti tentang greeting card, any question? Any question so far? Ada pertanyaan sejauh ini? No, berarti sudah paham semua? Paham? Iyya, ok emm.. now I will.. I will give you example, for the congratulation card saya ingin memberikan contoh kartu ucapan yaitu ucapan congratulation.. (Writing down on the whiteboard).. iyya ok.. ehh % there is example, congratulation. Congratulation, we are happy knowing you won the competition selamat jadi.. congratulation is means selamat .. we are happy you know what is the meaning we are happy? We we what is the meaning we.*

Ss : *Kami.*

T : *Yah kami.. happy?*

Ss : *Bahagia.*

This extract indicates that the teacher is lack of terms to define a specific word in English. The word happy is supposed to be easily recognized by the learners. In fact, it is found no comments on the floor for the first question compared to the next question which was louder, clearer and slower. Furthermore, mispronunciation and SVA problems are found in this extraction. The first is competition is pronounced /compotisyen/, which must be heard /,kɒm.pə'tɪʃ. ə n/. Subsequently, the sentence congratulation is means should certainly be congratulation means.

In the interview session, the teacher conveyed that learners are difficult to catch the point of the conversation. So, the teacher sometimes has to write down the words on the whiteboard. However, presenting the words in English terms simply is much more effective rather than in Indonesian. Hence, the learners also could know the words with its synonyms and use it orally and literally.

### 3.2 Miscommunication

In this case, teacher-student communication is effective when the messages are delivered successfully. However, it is occasionally found truncated or incomplete messages when the teacher gives instructions to the learners. In other words, the teacher is failed to communicate with the students clearly. It is caused by several fundamental factors such as: unobvious enunciation, misspelled words, ungrammatical utterance, less common words and etc unless the teachers clarify and confirm the words with extra information through redefining, exemplifying and translating. This following extraction clearly illustrates the miscommunication between the teachers and the learners.

Extract 55

T : *Ok, time is over, iyya, attention please.. perhatikan! iyya ok.. ehmm.. apa.. ehh saya, everyone sorry everyone.. come forward! to..to read your test [task], membaca tugasnya and.. the other people you have to listen your friend, jadi yang lain harus mendengarkan temannya, ok. The first.. Nurul, come forward, disini, raise your voice! Besarkan suaranya! Always – elweis -- For the future.. applause untuk Nurul.. ok the next Salman, come forward!.. ehh raise [raise] your voice! Besarkan suaranya!*

Ss : *Iyye.*

This extract shows that the terms used by the teacher when instructed by the students are misinterpreted by the students. It was noticed in the classroom observation that the teacher said come forward to let the students stand in front of the class. Contrarily, the pointed students thought it was

an instruction to return to the seat. Thus, the teacher then mentioned the name while showing the place where the student had to stand. This means that using another appropriate words or phrase to define a term is needed as well as showing the gesture. If it is necessary, translating to Indonesian or local language could be the last decision. Also, the teacher used phrases come forward and raise your voice in the same time which made the current student did not know what to do till the teacher spoke Indonesian saying *besarkan suaranya* which means turn up the voice.

### 3.3 Positive Feedback

The previous negative effects towards the teacher word choice in the classroom interaction do not merely indicate that the teacher could not use appropriate words and elaborate the course materials very well. This following extraction shows that the teacher is able to guide the students to discover the meaning of certain English terms. Even though the teacher mixed her language, the students were able to get the point. In this case, everyday conversation or informal diction was used to underpin the teacher interaction with the learners.

Extract 56

T : *Oke, now, open page forty seven!*

Ss : *Halaman berapa bu?*

T : *Forty seven, empat puluh tujuh oke, now we are going to study about chapter 3. Chapter three is growing up. Grow, ada yang tahu what is the meaning of grow and up? Pernah dengar kata grow? Growing up biasa kalian dengar itu di iklan? Kalau ada iklan sirup peninggi badan. Grow, growing up, grow itu artinya tinggi. So, up anybody know what is up? Iksan what is up? Tadi apa dibilang waktu up? Ke -- so, grow is*

S : *Tumbuh.*

T : *And up is?*

Ss : *Keatas.*

This extraction illustrates the teacher's effort to let the learners discover the meaning of *Growing up* into Indonesian. Giving examples of where the phrases are commonly used and guiding the students to recognize word by word is required. Successfully, the teacher made the students find the meaning of the word. However, translating the whole words was not done by the teachers so the meaning was still lexically Indonesian translation.

It is true that in the interview session, the teacher demonstrated the significance of guiding the students to translate the words into smaller pieces. Providing contextual examples corresponding to the terms is also thoughtful.

### 3.4 Misinterpretation or Misunderstanding

This is the last effect of the word choice by the teachers investigated in this study. There are two extractions dealing with misinterpretation or misunderstanding that occurred to the learners. In this case, the learners become failed to understand what the teacher said as well as the teacher explained incorrectly to the learners. Both occasions are usually found in the class, particularly in LT. These could be seen in the following extractions:

Extract 57

T : *Dan...Hasnawir. Declining, nah sekarang you look for decline! Tidak ada kata ing tapi decline plus ing. Tadi accepting kan, hmm kenapa? Kasih keras suaranya!*

Ss : *Kemunduran.*

Teacher B, recorded on December 7th, 2016, 9:38 AM

This extraction deals with appropriate words chosen by the teachers resulting misinterpretation. "You look for decline!" is pretty unpleasant even with shouting compared to "Can or Could you look for decline meaning?" which addresses meaningful instruction. As a result, the learners without any consideration, responded the teacher's question by giving mismatched Indonesian meaning that is

*kemunduran*. It is caused that the teacher did not give a prior knowledge about the ongoing topic or relevant words. Even though the teacher had elaborated what was going to learn at the moment that was invitation. Surprisingly, the teacher did not deliver an extra explanation why *kemunduran* does not make any sense with the current topic. The teacher just told the meaning “menolak” straight away, regardless telling the word class, the function and the proper meaning.

Extract 58

T : *Apa Ismail?*

Ss : *Ungkapan.*

T : *Jadi tolong Ismail, di perhatikan Ismail. For Farhan, for?*

Ss : *Empat.*

T : *Betul-betul (disappointed). Apa for Hafsa?*

Regarding this extraction, it is found that there is a word which has a similar sound that may make the learner confused or misunderstood. It occurred to this class in which word four and for. The teacher intended to ask the meaning of for. However, the learner meant it as four. The use of synonyms or further definition of words is required requiring the teachers to use appropriate words to define an English term. Before telling the meaning, the teacher should stimulate the learner by addressing the other word of for that is to or saying this is not related to number and giving an English example like I give flower for her. This may be easily answered by the learners and let them discover the meaning by the word help.

Actually the teacher appealed to the ways how she make the learner recognize the meaning of a word mostly by translation. Once in a while, the teacher used English elaboration when the student asked for a word's meaning or based-textbook definition.

The EFL teachers' interactions and communication with the students are shown in the current study. The teachers' participation in the classroom dialogue was examined using discourse analysis, more especially conversational analysis of teacher talk. Phonological analysis, morphological analysis, syntactical analysis, and politeness level are all factors in analyzing teacher discourse (Wong, 2002; Wong & Waring, 2020). The study does, however, discuss the teachers' diction or word choice during teaching-learning activities, which may be related to those four components of teacher discourse.

Turning now to the diction effects, that could certainly appear while using appropriate and inappropriate words in teaching is the feedback or the communication between the teachers and the learners and/ or the learner to the learner. The rapport which comes with student interest, encouraging participation and showing enthusiasm can be potentially influential (Hafner, 2014; Hendry & Dean, 2002; Hyland, 1998). Teachers who talk simply, obviously and slowly will enable the students to lend their eyes. Using common and less common words or frequent and less frequent words must be considered and taking into account the learner's need, learning style and motivation. Formal word choices are better to be introduced routinely maintaining the students' vocabulary mastery. Also, it could enrich the teachers' academic words and be able to be a proper source of knowledge (Bonnet & Breidbach, 2017; Coyle, 2006; Tachaiyaphum & Sukying, 2017). Meanwhile, informal words could appear as a friendly medium of instruction indoors or outdoors, but it still remains proper enunciation.

On the one hand, it is found that the constraints perceived by two EFL teachers investigated proper word choice; teaching media, materials source, teaching tool and teacher training to use appropriate words in the classroom interaction. Furthermore, the teacher interruption, teacher echo and turn completion were destructive features or obstructive factors. An EFL teacher can decrease teacher interruption by extending wait time and reducing teacher echo. Then, turn completion happened. There was no negotiation of meaning and therefore learning decreased. Reducing these items in the class result in increasing language learning. Hence, using some appropriate word terms and strategies in second language learning could decrease the destructive features and increase learning.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Both the EFL teachers have contributed to the language learning. However, it has emerged some effects to the classroom interaction. The word choice used by the teachers in this case an informal diction let the learners more likely to understand what the teachers say because the language seems to be repetitious, familiar and frequent or common. On the other hand, sometimes the words are lexically error. The teachers seldom use synonym and English term definitions to the students which discourage them from recognising new words and affect the students speaking, spelling and pronunciation even how they understand the meaning of the words that sometimes mismatch. Also, teacher-learner communication will occasionally be meaningless and least interactive in the class. It is because the teachers speak mostly Indonesian and seldom introduce uncommon words that are much more academic in learning reading and writing. The limitation of this research is the number of teachers studied, and it cannot prove quantitatively the impact on teachers. Therefore the suggestion for further research is to research with a wider range of informants so that the data is represented.

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