ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Exploring the Lecturer's Strategies in Building the Closeness to Stimulate the Student's Interest in Learning English

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Abstract

Students' interest in learning is usually based on the strategies of lecturers or teachers who teach in the classroom. This study aimed to exploring the lecturer's strategies in building closeness to stimulate students' interest in learning English. This type of research is qualitative. Data in this study are the lecturer's strategies in building closeness to stimulate students' interest in learning English. The data sources in this study are interviews and documentation with a lecturer and two students majoring in English Education at Universitas Muhammadiyah Parepare. This research was conducted at Universitas Muhammadiyah Parepare. In this study, the researcher used several theories to analyze the lecturer's strategies in building closeness to stimulate students' interest in learning English.

The results of the study show that there are several strategies used by lecturer in building closeness to stimulate students' interest in learning English, including: 1) Transfer of knowledge and sharing experiences, 2) Giving motivation, 3) Giving support, 4) Exploring learning topics, 5) Meeting the needs of students in the learning process. The findings reveal that these strategies contribute to forming positive relationship between lecturers and students, thereby facilitating a more effective learning process. The study is significant in the fields of educational psychology, teaching methods, and learning styles, offering in-depth insights into how the lecturer's efforts to build closeness can impact student interest in learning. The closeness referred to here is a positive relationship between the lecturer and students in the classroom that can influence the effectiveness of the learning process. A positive relationship can help the lecturer in enhancing students' interest in learning English. Data were collected through interviews and documentation, and analyzed to uncover the impact of these strategies.

Introduction

According to Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 12 of 2012, Chapter I, Article I, it is stated that education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-mastery, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills needed by themselves, society, nation, and state.
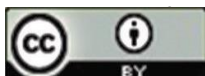
Education has an important role in improving the quality of human resources. Mardhiyah et al. (2021) argue that much special attention is directed at the development and progress of education in order to improve the quality of education. Quality education will produce quality human resources as well. Apart from that, before assessing the quality of student learning outcomes, one of the important things that must be considered is the student learning process, especially the lecturer's strategy for stimulating student understanding when the learning process in class takes place. One of the things that influences the teaching and learning process is the relationship between lecturer and students at school. The direct relationship that influences the closeness of students and lecturer is communication. Siswati et al. (2020) emphasized that interaction and communication between lecturer and students are the two most influential aspects. Lecturer connectedness is associated with how close or connected students feel with their lecturer.

Establishing a good lecturer-student relationship is very important for the smooth running of teaching activities. This way, it will automatically encourage academic success and help students achieve their desired educational goals. A harmonious lecturer-student relationship will make students more enthusiastic about learning and participate in the learning process as fully as possible. Therefore, the lecturer's strategy of building closeness with students is one of the things that can stimulate students' own interest in learning English. Lecturer strategies for forming closeness with students in the classroom during the learning process can trigger motivation for learning, especially when learning English.

This is in line with what researcher found from observations made on 6th semester students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Parepare. There is a phenomenon that occurs in the sixth semester student class at the Universitas Muhammadiyah Parepare. Based on the results of pre-observation that researcher conducted with several students who were in semester 6, they said that the phenomenon that occurred when they were learning English was that their level of understanding of the material being taught depended on how close they were to the lecturer who was teaching. It cannot be denied that there are some English subjects that are difficult, but they think that if the lecturer is friendly and able to make their awkwardness disappear, it will be easier for them to understand the material being taught. This then underlies the researchers' efforts to look more deeply into the lecturer's strategis in building closeness to stimulate the student's interest in learning English.

In accordance with the results of the researchers' observations, this is also in line with what was found by Hajovsky et.al. (2020) suggests how teacher influence classroom teaching to build relationships with students taught at school. These findings show how important it is to build good relationships between teachers and students at school. Based on the description above, it can be seen that the relationship between teachers and students is very important in the learning process because it has a lot of influence on the students' learning process itself. What needs to be studied more deeply is that researchers will explore teachers' strategies for building closeness to stimulate students' interest in learning English.

Methodology
Research Design

This research is qualitative and conducted with a phenomenological approach. Smith (2023) said that this approach aims to explore and understand how individuals experience and assign meaning to certain events or situations in their lives. Phenomenological research has a goal, namely to interpret and explain the experiences experienced by someone in this life, including experiences when interacting with other people and the surrounding environment.

Participants and Sampling Techniques of the Study

The subject of this research was an English lecturer who taught at Universitas Muhammadiyah Parepare. The sample for this research were an English lecturer and the sixth semester students in Universitas Muhammadiyah Parepare expecially English Education Students.

Data Gathering Instruments
Interview

According to Kriyantono (2020), interviews in qualitative research can also be called in-depth interviews or intensive interviews and are mostly unstructured. Interviews in qualitative research are conducted with the aim of obtaining in-depth qualitative data. According to Lincoln and Guba (2023), interviews can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured, depending on the research objectives and the nature of data being collected. Interviews was conducted by researcher for the reason that researcher was able to ask questions directly to participants face to face. By using interview techniques, participants are also more able to convey information directly so that researcher are able to get more detailed answers to the questions asked by researcher to participants. The outline of the interview that the researcher asked to the respondent was about what strategies he used when teaching so that he could build closeness with students which was able to arouse students' interest in learning English.

Documentation

According to Fuad and Sapto (2023), documentation is any form of recorded information, wheter text, images, or sound, that can be used as a reference and evidence in the research and evaluation process. Researcher use documentation techniques in data collection on the grounds that the documents and data required will be easier to obtain from the research site, and information through interviews will be more clearly proven in document form.

Methods of Data Analysis

Data reduction is defined as the process of selecting, focusing on simplifying, abstracting, and transforming data that emerges from written notes in the field. In this research, researcher collected data from various interviews with research sources. Data presentation can also be interpreted as a process of making reports regarding the results of the data and information that have been found by researchers. In this research, the researcher tries to present data related to the results of the researcher's interviews with research sources regarding what is considered to be a problem in the research. In this research, researcher draw conclusions from data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. Conclusions were also verified during the research. The verification may be as brief as a second thought that passes through the analyst's mind while he is writing a review of field notes.

Analysis and Discussions

The Lecturer's Strategies in Building Closeness to Stimulate Student's Interest in Learning English

Data was taken from interview and documentation. The interview was conducted with an English lecturer and two students in the sixth semester by providing semi-structured interview questions. In this section, the researcher has set up several questions related to the research. In addition, the interview process showed varied answers from respondents. Researcher collected data by recording the interview process using a smartphone.

In this section, the researcher tried to explore the lecturer's strategies in building closeness to stimulate student's interest in learning English. The researcher conducted interview in Bahasa Indonesia so that communication could run well and effectively. The results of the interview are divided into two, the first being an interview with the lecturer and the second being an interview with the student. After the data was collected, the researcher found that there were several strategies used by the lecturer in building closeness to stimulate student's interest in learning English.

The first strategy is transfer knowledge and sharing experience. In this strategy, the lecturer positions himself as a lecturer who used the transfer knowledge and also shares experience with the student in the process of the approach that he takes so that he can stimulate the interest of students in learning English. So, the experience that he is been through that correspond to the subject he will pas on to the students will help awaken a good relationship between the lecturer and the student. In this strategy, the lecturer used a group discussion method, which is able to get the students to share their tips and tricks for learning English according to their experience. These group discussions are said to able to make them share learning strategies.

The second strategy is giving motivation. In this strategy, at the beginning of learning, at the middle of learning, or even at the end of learning, the lecturer does not forget to motivate the student so that it can arouse their interest in learning English. The lecturer emphasizes to the student how important it is to master English in today is global world. The motivation the he gave can be considered by the student to continue to learn about English more deeply. Motivation, such as the importance of the fluency in English for the future career, becomes something that can stimulate student's interest in learning English.

The third strategy is giving support. In this strategy, the lecturer explained that the strategy he is going to used next is to giving support. When the student has an obstacle, the lecturer provided a solution to the student's obstacle so that it can revive the interest of the student in learning. In addition to arousing student interest in learning, it is also able to build close relationship between lecturer and students so that the learning process goes well. When the student answer a question and the student's answer is incorrect, instead of bragging, the lecturer acknowledges it and gave some compliments so that the student feels appreciated and that the student's interest in learning English remains.

The fourth strategy is exploring the learning topics. In this strategy, before a lecturer teaches in a classroom, the lecturer first explores the learning topics that will be discussed in the classroom. This strategy is used as a method for building closeness with the student. So, the lecturer will raise a case related to the learning topic and explain how to solve the issue. This will trigger a discussion, which can help the teacher build closeness with the students so that the learning process can go well.

The fifth strategy is meeting student's need in learning process. In this strategy, to build closeness with students so that it can stimulate students' interest in learning English. Apart from the existing learning design, the lecturer also combines what students want and what students need apart from the things listed in the learning plan in order to fulfill these requirements, what students need to learn English. So, the lecturer don't just focus on learning design, lecturer also ask what students need or students want so that the learning process can run smoothly.

To validate the findings from the research results of the lecturer, researcher delve deeper into the matter and conduct interview with students. From the interview with students, the students confirm that the strategies used by the lecturer in class are indeed true, and according to the students, all of the lecturer's strategies help them feel closer to the lecturer and can help stimulate student's interest in learning English.

According to the students, the method of transfer knowledge and sharing experience by the lecturer helped them build closeness with their lecturer. Based on the interview results, the method of transfer knowledge and sharing experience is considered capable of building closeness between lecturer and students. The first student said that the method does help build closeness with students, but not too closely. Meanwhile, the second student agreed that the lecturer's strategy can build closeness with students because the lecturer is one of those who communicates casually with them, making students feel relaxed and free to talk to the lecturer.

The next strategy from the lecturer is to giving motivation. According to the interview results from students, they stated that the lecturer almost gives motivation to the students in every meeting, and according to them, the lecturer's strategy is capable of motivating them to continue learning English. Based on the interview results from the students, the method of giving motivation by the lecturer is considered to motivating them to learn about English. Both agreed that the lecturer's strategy of providing motivation helps them stay motivated in learning English. They mentioned that when the lecturer motivated them, they continue to feel encouraged.

The next strategy employed by the lecturer in building closeness to stimulate student's interest in learning English is giving support. According to the interview results with students, instead of getting angry, but rather providing solutions to student's challenges is considered highly effective in boosting students' learning enthusiasm. Based on the interview results, the method of giving support is considered capable of building closeness between lecturer and student and it can stimulating their interest in learning English. They said that when the lecturer provides support to students, it helps increase their interest in learning because they no longer fear asking questions. However, they also mentioned that it depends on the student, as some students may receive support but still fail to arouse their interest in learning.

The next strategy that the lecturer used is to raise case example that are appropiate to the learning topic and then discuss them in class to find solutions to the case problems. According to the two students who were interviewed, they said that this method really helped them to build closeness with the lecturer who taught. Because according to them, exchanging ideas triggers the building of closeness between lecturer and students. Based on the interview results, it can be concluded that discussions for exchanging ideas can help foster closeness between students and lecturer. Both of them agreed that exploring learning topics helps build closeness between the lecturer and students. They

said that the closeness between students and the lecturer gradually develops as the lecturer frequently engages in discussion with the students.

The last method that the lecturer used in building closeness to stimulate student's interest in learning English is to meet student's needs and desires in learning. From the results of interview with students, the strategies employed by the lecturer can help building closeness with the students and garner recognition. From the students themselves the strategies used by the lecturer are capable of increasing their interest in learning English. The first student said that the strategy was less effective in building closeness with the lecturer but was very helpful in making students interested in learning. Meanwhile, the second student felt that the strategy was very helpful.

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Discussions Results

In this part, the researcher will discuss the research findings. The aspect proposed in this study is that of discussing lecturer's strategies in building closeness to stimulate student's interest in learning English. The results of the research findings will be discussed as follows :

According to the results of an interview with an English lecturer, strategies are important in learning as a way or method that makes it easier for students to learn. According to Budio (2019), this strategy is a tool for achieving a goal. There are several strategies used by lecturers in building closeness to stimulate students' interest in learning English. Some of the strategies used by the lecturer are as follows:

The first strategy used by one of the English lecturer at Universitas Muhammadiyah Parepare is the transfer of knowledge and sharing experience. In this strategy, the lecturer forms a group discussion and then makes it an effort in which the lecturer will act as a transfer of knowledge and also a sharing experience between the lecturer and the student. So, the lecturer used his experience and also the student's own experience as an opportunity to build his closeness with the student because sharing experiences means forming communication between students and also lecturer. This is what helps the closeness between the two be awakened. This is in line with the theory of Siswati et.al. (2020), which emphasizes that the interaction and communication between teachers and students are the two most influential aspects. The teacher's relationship is related to how close or connected the student's feelings are to the teacher. Building a good teacher-student relationship is essential for the smoothness of teaching activities. In this way, it will automatically drive academic success and the desired educational goals. This is also in line with Sainio *et.al.* (2022) stated that the student-teacher relationship is very important for young people.

The second strategy is to giving motivation. In this strategy, either before learning, in the middle of learning, or even at the end of learning, the lecturer will motivate the student so that it can arouse the student's interest in learning English. The motivation that the instructor gives can be a consideration for the students so that they are more enthusiastic about studying English further. This is in line with Rahman's theory (2021) that motivation is one of the factors that influence student success. A person will get the desired results in learning when there is a desire to learn. Motivation can serve as a driving force for achieving good results. Someone's going to do something because there's motivation in him. Having high motivation for learning will yield optimal results. This is also in line with Scales et.al theory (2020) that the importance of demonstrating a strong student-teacher relationship and a strong student-teacher developmental relationship has an important effect on student motivation and achievement in school.

The third strategy is to giving support. In this strategy, the lecturer gives his support to the student, which is to confess the student's mistakes in learning. When a student has an obstacle, the lecturer will find a solution to the obstacle so that the student's interest in learning remains. In addition to being able to arouse the interest of students in learning, it is also able to help the lecturer build proximity with the student because, instead of bullying the student, the lecturer tends to give compliments and solutions that are obstacles to the student. It's able to build a good relationship between the lecturer and his pupil. It is also in line with Hajovsky et al.'s (2020) theory that teachers can influence classroom teaching to build relationships with students taught in schools. These findings show how important it is to build good relationships between teachers and students in schools.

The fourth strategy is to exploring learning topics. In this strategy, the lecturer will explore the learning themes that will be discussed in class later. In the strategy, he will raise a case that matches the learning topic and then explain how to solve the problem. This is used as his method for building closeness with the student due to the case selection. This will trigger a discussion so that it can be a way to awaken the closeness between him and the student so that it can stimulate the interest of the student in learning English. This is in line with the theory of Margijanto and Purwanti (2021). In their study, they say that teachers are expected to be aware of the importance of positive teacher-student relationships and how to initiate positive interactions. Not only that, teachers are also asked to manage expectations of a positive teacher-student relationship so that teachers continue to provide their best help without personal impact if the student's condition is not easily reached or approached.

The last strategy is to meeting the needs of students in the learning process. In this strategy, in order to build proximity to stimulate students' interest in learning English, the lecturer finds out what the student needs and wants so that, apart from a learning plan, the faculty will organize what becomes the student's needs so that the interest of the student continues to exist. The lecturer meets the students' needs, so this is the reason that the student remains interested in studying English because of what they need and want fulfilled by the lecturers. This is in line with the theory of Amaliah and Sudan (2021), who said in their research that recognizing and helping students effectively helps teachers build positive relationships with students.

This is in line with the research by Suharti et al. which states that every learning process must meet the following requirements :

1.   There is a goal to be achieved.
2.   There is material or media that becomes the content of the interaction.
3.   There are students who are actively experience.
4.   There are teachers who do.
5.   There are methods used to achieve the goal.
6.   There are situations that allow interaction to occur.
7.   There is an assements of the results of these interactions.

This study also reveals how a learning process should lead to the activation of both lecturer and students in the learning process. These findings support Sudajana's (2016) research, which states that the relationship between teacher and students in carrying out teaching and learning activites can be seen in the following ways :

1.   Questions and answers, or dialogue between teachers and students, and students with teachers.
2.   Teacher assistence to students who have learning difficulties, both individually and in groups.
3.   The teacher is always in a teaching-learning situation as a learning facilitatot.
4.   There is an oppurtunity to recieve feedback on an going basis from the learning outcomes obtained by students.

Based on the previous explanation, the conclusion that can be drawn is that lecturer or teacher who teach must be able to communicate well with their students. Because the impact of a good relationship between lecturer and students is improved academic achievement for students. A positive relationship between students and lecturer or teacher will influence the learning process. This support previous research from Sainio

et.al. (2022), Freire *et.al.* (2019), Mensah and Koomson (2020), and Jadoon *et.al.* (2020), that lecturer must build positive relationship between themselves and students.

Conclusions

Based on research findings and discussions on the strategy of lecturer in building closeness to stimulate student's interest in learning English at Universitas Muhammadiyah Parepare, the researcher concluded that there are various strategies that lecturer used to build closeness while stimulating students' interest in learning English. These include: 1) Transfer of knowledge and sharing of experience; 2) Giving motivation; 3) Giving support; 4) Exploring learning topics; and 5) Meeting the needs of students in the learning process. Furthermore, from the analysis that has been done, the researcher can conclude that some of the lecturer' strategies in building closeness to stimulate students' interest in learning English are rated to be very helpful in the process of learning English where English. With such strategy, it can help students develop their learning spirit as well as their interest in learning English. It can make it easier for students to achieve their learning goals.

Recommendations

The above findings and the conclusions derived from them led to the recommendations presented hereunder:

Universitas Muhammadiyah Parepare, specifically in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, English Department, should pay more attention to the teaching strategies of lecturer for students. Effective teaching strategies that build closeness and good relationship with students will improve the learning process and enhance students' motivation and interest in learning.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations that should be noted. First, the sample includes only one English lecturer and two English students, which may not fully represent the broader population. Second, the methodology employed relies solely on interviews and documentation, which may not capture the participants' experiences in depth. Third, the data were collected over a period of two weeks, so the results may not reflect long-term changes.

Declaration of conflict of interest

This manuscript has been produced by a sole author. Therefore, there is no conflict of interest.

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