EXPLORING THE DYNAMICS OF SHORT CONVERSATIONS IN ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT STUDENT OF INSTITUT PARAHIKMA INDONESIA

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Abstract

This study explores the dynamics and effectiveness of short conversations in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) among students in the Islamic Education Department at institute Parahikma Indonesia. The research aims to understand how short conversations can enhance students 'speaking skills, confidence and overall academic communication abilities. Employing a qualitative case study design, data were collected through students' questionnaires and classroom observations. The study concludes that incorporating short conversations into EAP courses fosters practical language use and fluency, providing valuable insights for better teaching practices and curriculum development. Future research should focus on the long-term impact of short conversations on academic performance and the integration of multiple language skills.

Keywords: Short Conversation; English for Academic Purposes; Communicative Language Teaching; Language Proficiency.

INTRODUCTION

The significance of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is underscored by the pervasive use of English as the lingua franca in academic and research communities worldwide. As higher education institutions continue to internationalize, the ability to communicate effectively in English has become crucial for students and scholars EAP courses aim to provide non-native English speakers with the language proficiency needed for academic success, such as composing research papers, giving presentations, and engaging in seminars and discussions (Cheng et al., 2004). EAP encompasses English for (Academic) Science and Technology (EST), English for (Academic) Legal Purposes (ELP), and English for Management, Finance, and Economics. (Ningsih et al., 2023). Beyond language proficiency, EAP fosters critical thinking, academic literacy, and cultural competence, essential in today's interconnected global academic landscape.

EAP focuses on developing skills directly applicable to academic contexts, such as mastering academic writing conventions, understanding and using discipline-specific vocabulary, and employing critical reading strategies to analyse and evaluate academic texts (Allen, 2016). Oral communication skills, including presenting research findings and engaging in academic debates, are also emphasized. By providing tailored instruction that addresses the unique challenges faced by non-native English speakers in academia, EAP plays a pivotal role in levelling the playing field, ensuring all students have the opportunity to excel and contribute meaningfully to their fields of study.

EAP courses tailored to developing speaking skills are vital in preparing students for the oral communication demands of academic environments (Ekpelezie, 2024). These courses focus on various aspects of spoken English, including pronunciation, fluency, and the ability to formulate coherent and persuasive arguments. Activities such as short conversations, presentations, discussions, and debates allow students to practice and refine their speaking skills in a supportive setting (Khasawneh, 2023). Moreover, these courses often emphasize listening skills, enabling students to better understand and respond to the contributions of their peers and instructors.

However, several challenges can impede the effectiveness of EAP speaking courses, especially when it comes to short conversations. One significant issue is the varying levels of English proficiency among students, which can lead to difficulties in ensuring all participants are equally engaged and benefiting from the activities. Additionally, students may experience anxiety and lack of confidence when engaging in short conversations in a second language, particularly in front of their peers (Russell, 2020). This anxiety can hinder their ability to participate fully in class discussions and short exchanges. Another problem is the limited opportunities for authentic short conversation practice in an academic context outside of the classroom, which can restrict the progress students make in developing their speaking skills (Hwang et al., 2024). To address these challenges, instructors need to create a supportive and inclusive classroom environment, provide ample opportunities for practice, and offer constructive feedback to help students build their confidence and competence in short conversations in English.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a widely-adopted approach to language instruction that prioritizes interaction and communication as the central goals of learning a new language (Qasserras, 2023). This method emerged in the late 20th century as a response to more traditional, grammar-focused methods that were seen as insufficient for developing practical language skills.

CLT fundamentally promotes the use of authentic language by emphasizing meaningful communication and interaction. The approach encourages learners to use the target language in real-world contexts, rather than merely practicing decontextualized grammar and vocabulary exercises. By engaging in activities that reflect genuine communicative situations, students gain practical experience and develop their language skills in a more holistic and functional manner.

In CLT classrooms, learners participate in tasks that require authentic use of the language, such as role-plays, simulations, and problem-solving activities. These tasks are designed to mirror everyday interactions, allowing students to practice language that they are likely to use outside the classroom. For instance, a role-play might simulate a conversation at a doctor's office or a job interview, requiring students to use appropriate phrases, vocabulary, and social conventions. This focus on realistic communication helps learners understand how language operates in different contexts and improves their ability to navigate various social and professional situations.

Moreover, CLT fosters interaction by encouraging collaborative learning. Students often work in pairs or groups, engaging in dialogues, discussions, and debates that require them to negotiate meaning and express their ideas clearly. This interactive approach not only enhances speaking and listening skills but also promotes critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Through meaningful communication and interaction, CLT

ensures that language learning is dynamic, engaging, and directly relevant to the learners' real-life needs and experiences.

Short conversations perfectly align with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles by promoting practical language use and fluency through authentic interaction. They simulate real-life interactions, emphasizing meaningful communication over mere grammatical accuracy. This approach helps students internalize vocabulary and structures more effectively, while also developing their ability to convey thoughts and respond naturally. Short conversations encourage interaction, turn-taking, and clarifying misunderstandings, fostering a learner-centered environment where students actively participate. Additionally, these conversations integrate multiple language skills, leading to a balanced development of communication competence.

By practicing short conversations, learners engage in genuine communicative scenarios, improving their fluency and confidence. This interactive, meaningful approach mirrors real-world communication, making it an effective method for language acquisition.

The article titled "Integrating Short Conversation and English Conversation Applications to Improve Students' Speaking Skills" by (Mariam et al., 2022), discusses the use of short conversations and English conversation applications to enhance students' speaking skills and engagement. The study, conducted with 39 third-semester Arabic Education students at an Islamic university in Central Java, Indonesia, utilized qualitative classroom action research over two cycles. Data was gathered through observation, pre-tests, and post-tests. Findings showed improved speaking abilities, increased student participation, confidence, and enthusiasm in speaking classes. The study suggests this approach as an effective strategy for addressing challenges in English speaking skills. Incorporating short conversations in EAP courses can help teachers apply CLT principles to promote practical language use and fluency among students.

The article titled "Teaching Speaking by Using Short Conversation" by (Fadilla et al., 2014), aims to describe the use of short conversations in teaching speaking. The authors argue that short conversations can help students express their ideas orally, making them more creative and engaged in speaking activities. The study highlights the crucial role of speaking skills in English education and identifies common challenges faced by students, such as limited vocabulary, pronunciation issues, and lack of motivation. The authors suggest that short conversations can address these challenges by providing students with opportunities to develop conversational skills in a conducive environment. The method used in the study involves classroom activities where students engage in short conversations on various topics. The results indicate that using short conversations in teaching speaking can improve students' fluency, confidence, and overall speaking ability. The authors recommend incorporating short conversations into English speaking classes to enhance students' speaking skills effectively.

The article titled "Implementing Short Daily Conversation in Improving Students' Speaking Ability" by (Meiratnasari et al., 2024), aims to describe how students' speaking ability improved through short daily conversations. The study was conducted as classroom action research in two cycles at SMAN 1 Kretek, Bantul, Yogyakarta, with 25 students of XI IPA 2 as participants. Information was sourced from pre-tests and post-tests 1, and post-test 2, and analyzed using a descriptive quantitative approach. The results showed significant improvement in students' speaking abilities, with mean scores increasing from

56.4 in the pre-test to 66.12 in post-test 1, and 79.24 in post-test 2. The study concluded that short daily conversations effectively enhance students' speaking skills.

The reviewed articles highlight the benefits of using short conversations to improve students' speaking skills but mainly in general contexts, leaving a gap in understanding their role in English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Specifically, the studies do not address the unique demands of academic language, the development of higher-order language skills, the long-term impact on academic performance, or the integration of multiple language skills. Future research should focus on these aspects to provide a comprehensive understanding of how short conversations can effectively enhance academic language proficiency in EAP settings.

The aim of this study is to investigate the dynamics and efficacy of short conversations within the framework of English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Specifically, the study aims to understand how short conversations can enhance students' speaking skills, confidence, and overall academic communication abilities. By examining both the students' and instructors' perspectives, the research seeks to identify the key components of successful short conversations and the challenges faced during these interactions. Additionally, the study will provide insights into the strategies that can be employed to improve the effectiveness of short conversations in EAP settings, ultimately contributing to better teaching practices and curriculum development.

The research will focus on understanding the primary elements that constitute effective short conversations in an academic context. It will investigate students' perceptions of their experiences and the challenges they face with short conversations in EAP classes. The study will also identify the strategies and methods that are most effective in facilitating short conversations to enhance academic language skills. By addressing these areas, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role short conversations play in academic English learning and offer practical recommendations for educators to enhance their instructional approaches.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach, specifically a case study design, to explore the dynamics of short conversations in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) among students in the Islamic Education Department at Institut Parahikma Indonesia. Data collection methods include student questionnaires and classroom observations. The questionnaires were responded to by 12 students from the department, providing insights into their perceptions, experiences, and challenges related to short conversations in EAP. Additionally, classroom observations were conducted to capture real-time interactions and the practical application of short conversation techniques in an academic setting.

To enrich the data, previous studies and relevant literature were reviewed to understand the theoretical underpinnings and contextualize the findings. The collected data were then analyzed using thematic analysis, allowing for the identification and categorization of recurring themes and patterns. Coding was employed to systematically organize the responses, facilitating a comprehensive examination of the participants' experiences and the effectiveness of short conversations in enhancing their academic language skills. This methodological approach ensures a robust analysis, providing

valuable insights into the practical implications of integrating short conversations into eap courses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Key Components of Short Conversation

Turn-taking

Turn-taking is a fundamental component of effective short conversations, as it ensures that all participants have the opportunity to contribute to the dialogue (Ryan & Forrest, 2021). In the context of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), turn-taking allows students to practice listening and speaking skills in a balanced manner. The findings from classroom observations indicate that structured turn-taking activities help students manage the flow of conversation and reduce instances of overlap or interruptions. This practice fosters a more organized and respectful communication environment, which is essential for academic discussions where clarity and coherence are paramount.

Moreover, turn-taking encourages active participation and engagement from all students, promoting inclusivity in the classroom (Bögels & Levinson, 2017). Students reported that having designated turns to speak increased their confidence and reduced anxiety, as they had a clear understanding of when it was their turn to contribute. This structured approach to conversation also provided students with the opportunity to prepare their responses thoughtfully, leading to more meaningful and substantive contributions. Overall, turn-taking not only facilitates smoother interactions but also enhances the quality of academic discourse by ensuring that each student's voice is heard.

Use of Academic Vocabulary and Phrases

The use of academic vocabulary and phrases is crucial in EAP settings, as it helps students articulate their ideas more precisely and professionally. The study found that incorporating academic language into short conversations significantly improved students' ability to express complex concepts and arguments. By practicing these conversations, students became more familiar with discipline-specific terminology and learned how to use it appropriately in various contexts. This exposure to academic language also helped students develop a better understanding of the conventions and expectations of scholarly communication.

Additionally, the intentional use of academic vocabulary and phrases in short conversations was found to enhance students' overall language proficiency. Through repeated practice, students were able to internalize and recall academic terms more easily, leading to increased fluency and confidence in their spoken English. The findings suggest that focusing on academic language in short conversations not only prepares students for academic success but also equips them with the linguistic tools needed for professional and scholarly interactions. This emphasis on academic vocabulary is especially beneficial for non-native English speakers, as it bridges the gap between conversational and academic language proficiency.

Non-verbal Communication Cues

Non-verbal communication cues, such as body language, facial expressions, and gestures, play a significant role in the effectiveness of short conversations. In EAP contexts, these cues complement verbal communication by adding depth and clarity to the spoken message. The study revealed that students who were aware of and effectively used non-verbal communication cues were better able to engage their peers and convey their points more convincingly. Observations showed that incorporating non-verbal elements in practice sessions helped students become more expressive and better at interpreting others' non-verbal signals, which is crucial for effective communication.

Furthermore, the findings highlighted the importance of non-verbal communication in building rapport and fostering a positive classroom atmosphere. Students who actively employed non-verbal cues, such as maintaining eye contact and using appropriate gestures, were more successful in establishing connections with their peers and instructors. This not only enhanced the dynamics of short conversations but also contributed to a more collaborative and supportive learning environment. By emphasizing non-verbal communication in EAP instruction, educators can help students develop a more comprehensive set of communication skills that are essential for academic and professional success.

Students Perception and Engagement

Attitude Toward Short Conversation

Many students have a positive attitude toward participating in short conversations in English, as it helps them gain new knowledge and vocabulary. They report increased confidence in speaking after engaging in these conversations and consider short conversations crucial for developing academic English skills. Some students prefer planned conversations as they allow for better preparation, while others find short conversations beneficial in class activities, aiding in better understanding and application of the language.

Impact on Language Learning

Short conversations have a significant impact on language learning. Students frequently use the skills learned in class in real academic situations, which helps them understand academic material better. Engaging in short conversations positively affects their listening and speaking abilities and supports their academic writing tasks by improving their ability to express ideas clearly. Additionally, short conversations assist students with various academic tasks, such as presentations and discussions.

Challenges and strategies

Common Difficulties Faced by the Students

Students face several common difficulties during short conversations. Pronunciation issues and limited vocabulary are significant barriers to effective communication. Some students struggle to keep up with the speed and flow of conversations, while others find

it challenging to initiate and maintain conversations, especially in spontaneous situations. Anxiety and lack of confidence are also prevalent, hindering students' ability to participate fully in short conversations.

Effective Strategies for Improving Short Conversation Skills

To overcome these challenges, students employ various effective strategies. Preparation in advance helps them feel more confident and ready for short conversations. Practicing with peers is another effective method, as it allows students to improve their skills in a supportive environment. The use of technology, such as language learning apps and online resources, is beneficial for practicing short conversations. Constructive feedback from instructors and peers helps students refine their conversation skills. Applying these skills in real-life situations, such as speaking with native speakers or participating in discussions, further enhances their proficiency.

CONCLUSION

Short conversations significantly enhance students' speaking skills, confidence, and overall academic communication abilities. The study highlights the importance of turn-taking, the use of academic vocabulary and phrases, and non-verbal communication cues in facilitating effective short conversations. Students generally have a positive attitude toward short conversations, finding them beneficial for gaining new knowledge, improving fluency, and building confidence. However, challenges such as pronunciation issues, limited vocabulary, and anxiety were also identified. Effective strategies for overcoming these challenges include preparation, practicing with peers, using technology, and receiving constructive feedback.

Future research should focus on exploring the long-term impact of short conversations on students' academic performance and language proficiency. Additionally, studies could investigate the integration of short conversations with other language skills, such as reading and writing, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of their role in EAP. Research could also examine the effectiveness of different types of short conversation activities and their impact on various student populations, including those with different levels of English proficiency. Finally, future studies should consider the use of technology and digital tools in facilitating short conversations and enhancing students' engagement and learning outcomes.

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