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Conversational Implicature on Instructional Communication of Online TOEFL Class

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Abstract: Instructional communication becomes important strategies in online class since it relies much on the instructions from the teachers. However, previous research only discovered the instructional communication in face-to-face TOEFL classes and EFL online classes. Therefore, this research aims to: (1) Analyze the conversational implicature on instructional communication of online TOEFL class; (2) Discover the instructional communication patterns for online TOEFL class. This research involves qualitative approach utilizing content analysis method. The specific product analyzed in from the three meeting videos of online TOEFL class owned by one of tutoring institutions in Indonesia. The results show that the most implicature uttered by both the teachers and the students is obeying with 62 utterances followed by violating the maxim with 39 utterances. In addition, that the pattern of the instructional communication for the online TOEFL class is based on the degree of the materials being discussed, the types of activities, and the center of communication. Therefore, teachers need to pay attention to the degree level of the materials, types of activities, and the center of the communication when develop instructional communication in conducting online TOEFL class.

Keywords: Conversational implicature, instructional communication, online TOEFL class

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Introduction

Instructional communication roles as a basis for teachers to assess students' comprehension, clarify misunderstandings, provide motivational support, and create an inclusive learning environment (Nassar, 2021; Powell & Powell, 2015). Instructional communication refers to the process of sharing and exchanging information between teachers and students in an educational setting with the primary goal of promoting learning. It encompasses both verbal and non-verbal forms of communication that are used to deliver educational content, guide students' learning processes, and foster understanding (Sutiyatno, 2018; Vlachopoulos & Makri, 2019). Effective instructional communication ensures that the

messages transmitted by the teacher are clear, engaging, and adapted to the needs and comprehension levels of students. This type of communication goes beyond simply delivering information; it involves active listening, feedback, and interactive dialogue to facilitate knowledge construction and critical thinking (Nurakhir et al., 2020).

In addition, Bailey and Lee (2020) & Vlachopoulos and Makri (2019) stated that instructional communication becomes important strategies in online class since it relies much on the instructions from the teachers. Moreover, the learning in online class relies primarily on digital platforms, where communication can be more asynchronous, less personal, and sometimes hindered by technological issues. When the

instructional communication between students and teachers is not in an appropriate pattern, miscommunication will appear (Albalawi & Nadeem, 2020). The miscommunication between teachers and students causes students' knowledge is not gained optimally. Moreover, with the limitation activities in online TOEFL class, it has led to the higher chances to have numbers of miscommunications (John et al., 2019; Watson & Wu, 2023). Therefore, to avoid these problems, studies that discovered the patterns of instructional communication based on the conversational implicature needs to be conducted. It is because conversational implicature draws the clear idea whether the utterances spoken are appropriate to the questions from interlocutors (Green, 2019; Sofyan et al., 2022; Suryadi & Muslim, 2019).

Several studies have analyzed the instructional communication in face-to-face TOEFL classes and EFL online classes. First, research from Arifuddin et al. (2023) who found out that the products of instructional communication in listening TOEFL class is students' listening ability, factors affecting listening, and the profile of the English teachers' pragmatic ability. In addition, there are five primary causes of difficulty, such as "Speech Rate Delivery", "Voice", "Sentence Complexity", "Mishearing", and "Colloquial". Research from Khotimah et al. (2022) also discovered that the formulaic implicature that could be found in Listening Comprehension in TOEFL test preparation were idiomatic, scalar, sequential, and indirect criticism implicature. In addition, in terms of EFL online classes, Alsmari (2020) found out that the flipped classroom actually affects the conversational implicatures of EFL students. Other than that, Dewi (2021) found out that violation of maxims occurred in various kinds of utterances at EFL online class, such as violations of the maxim of quality, the maxim of quantity, the maxim of relation, and the maxim of manner.

However, no research has discovered the conversational implicature in instructional communication conducted in online TOEFL class. Therefore, this analysis aims to discover the patterns of instructional

communication based on the conversational implicature in online TOEFL class. Therefore, this research aims to: (1) Analyze the conversational implicature on instructional communication of online TOEFL class; (2) Discover the instructional communication patterns for online TOEFL class. The communication pattern discovered contributes to the enhancement of teachers' awareness and formulate how to avoid misunderstanding and miscommunication between teacher and students when conducting the online TOEFL class. In addition, the results of this research can contribute to the knowledge enrichment regarding the instructional communication pattern in online TOEFL class.

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In the Introduction section, you should clearly state the objectives of your work at the end. Prior to presenting the objectives, you should offer a sufficient background and a brief literature review. This review should highlight the existing solutions or methods, identify the best of previous research, point out the main limitations of these studies, explain what the authors aim to achieve in addressing these limitations, and demonstrate the scientific merit or novelty of the paper. Detailed literature reviews or summaries of results should be avoided.

Method

This is a qualitative approach utilizing content analysis method. In this research, this method aims explores the deeper data for the conversational implicature on the instructional communication of online TOEFL class. Therefore, the data analyzed becomes more comprehensive and can discover the patterns within the existing content (Mohajan,

2018). The online TOEFL class this report analyzes is the classes from one of tutoring institutions in Indonesia. The specific product analyzed is the zoom meeting recording of the classes from meeting 1 to meeting 3. These meetings were chosen because the researcher wanted to highlight and compare the communication implicature in each meeting for comprehensible of the data analyzed. The materials in each meeting includes: (1) Gerund; (2) Preposition & appositive; (3) Present and past participle.

This research was analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis technique. This technique enables researchers to emphasizes the data analysis carried out by describing the descriptive form of each data functionally and relational. The procedure of this analysis is based on qualitative method design by Kultsum et al. (2023). Firstly, the analysis instrument was formulated for the data which was transcribed from the zoom meeting recording. Secondly, the results of transcription were numbered into some

utterances and categorized into different excerpts. Thirdly, utterances that did not belong to two-way instructional communications were omitted; then the final excerpts were categorized into different types of implicatures. Fourthly the results of the analysis were displayed into tables and discuss the findings. Lastly, the findings from the analysis were concluded, then those were formulated into the recommendation based on the analysis.

Results

Analysis Results of the Conversational Implicature

From the analysis conducted, approximately 88 excerpts with 101 conversational implicature. These excerpts show the two-way-interactive communication between the teacher and the students (Detailed in **Appendix**). The analysis results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Analysis of the Conversational Implicature in Each Meeting

| Meeting | Material | Number of Utterances | | | | Total |
|--------------|---------------------------|----------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------|
| | | Maxim of Quantity | Maxim of Quality | Maxim of Relevance | Maxim of Manner | |
| 1 | Gerund | 17 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 28 |
| 2 | Preposition, Appositive | 26 | 10 | 6 | 7 | 49 |
| 3 | Present & past participle | 15 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 24 |
| Total | | 58 | 17 | 16 | 10 | 101 |

According to the analysis results in Table 1, the highest number of maxims identified is the maxim of quantity with 58 utterances. It is followed by the number of maxims of quality which is 17 utterances, maxim of relevance which is 16 utterances, and maxim of manner which is 10 utterances. It happens because most of the instructional communications in these meetings were checking students' understanding relating to

the materials being discussed (E.g. Excerpt 7, 9, 10 in Meeting 1).

In addition to that, to find pattern in more detail, the analysis of the conversational implicature in each maxim was conducted. This aims to identify whether the utterances are included in obeying or violating the maxims. The results of this analysis are in Table 2.

Table 2. Analysis of the Conversational Implicature in Each Maxim

| No | Maxim | Number of Implicature | | Total |
|-------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|-------|
| | | Obeying | Violating | |
| 1 | Quantity | 44 | 14 | 28 |
| 2 | Quality | 10 | 7 | 17 |
| 3 | Relevance | 3 | 13 | 16 |
| 4 | Manner | 5 | 5 | 10 |
| Total | | 62 | 39 | 101 |

From Table 2, it is shown that the most implicature uttered by both the teachers and the students is obeying with 62 utterances followed by violating the maxim with 39 utterances. This happens because students frequently answer the teacher's questions with the appropriate amount of answer (E.g. Excerpt 19 in Meeting 2 & Excerpt 14 in Meeting 3). The example of the these implicatures are discussed in the following.

Excerpt 8. Meeting 1

T: Verb forms *itu terdiri dari V1, V2, be, and modals. Nah, kalau begitu "Ving" itu Verb bukan?*
S: *Bukan*

The context of Excerpt 8 Meeting 1 is the explanation carried out by the teacher about the types of verbs in English. When the teacher asked whether "Verb -ing" is categorized as verb or not, the students directly answered, "No". This answer is identified as obeying the maxim of quality. It is because the students had evidence that, from the teacher's explanation, she did not mention Ving as the part of Verb in this context.

Excerpt 8. Meeting 2

S3: *Why can't it be the subject?*
T: *Like this. If noun, gerund, or pronoun become the object of preposition, they cannot be the subject anymore. Whatever comes after preposition, they cannot be the subject anymore. So, If I am saying like this, "in making a good writing of contemporary arts is easy." Let see. What do you think of this sentence? Do you think it is correct or not?*

The context of Excerpt 8 Meeting 2 is relating the teacher's answer that the gerund, in the sentence discussed, was not categorized as the subject. Thus, the student asked followed up question why this happened. Then, the teacher answered by explaining other parts too, such as noun, gerund, and pronoun, that did not directly explain why the gerund in that context could not be the subject. Therefore, the teacher violates maxim of quantity.

Excerpt 6. Meeting 3

T: *Apa yang bisa menjadi object dari preposition?*
S6: *Object of preposition*

The context of Excerpt 8 Meeting 3 is the teacher asked the background knowledge of students about the object of preposition. However, student 6 answered it with the answer that is not the appropriate for the question. Therefore, it is considered that student 6 violates the maxim of relevance.

Instructional Communication Pattern for the Online TOEFL Class

From the analysis discovered based on the excerpts identified, it is found the pattern of instructional communication for the online TOEFL class. Therefore, it shows that the pattern of the instructional communication for the online TOEFL class is based on the degree of the materials being discussed, the types of activities, and the center of communication. From the three causes, it shapes the types of implicature that exists in the online TOEFL class. Therefore, this analysis reports the formulated pattern is in Figure 1.

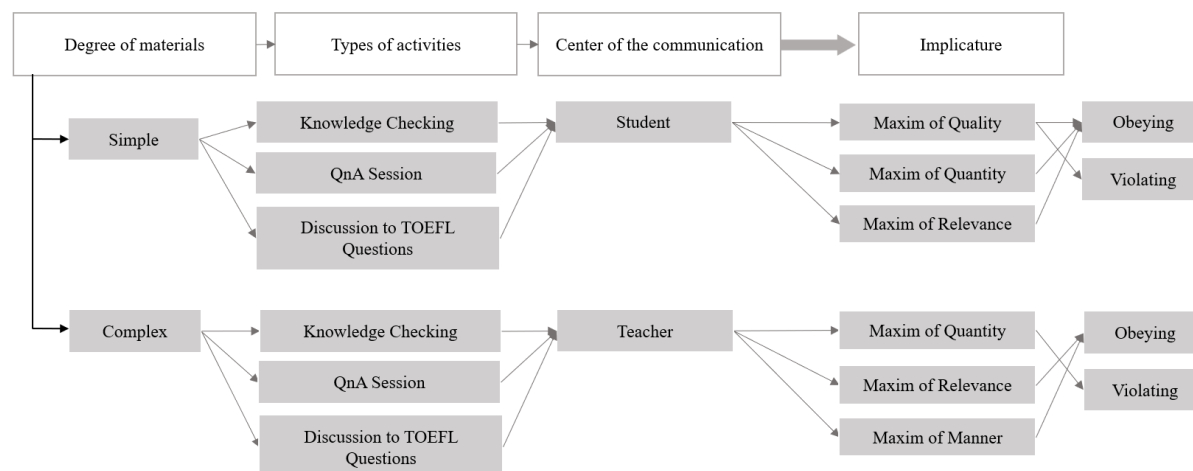


Figure 1. Instructional Communication Pattern Formulated

Figure 1 shows the instructional communication pattern happened in online TOEFL class. The instructional communication pattern in this class is based on three aspects, such as: (1) The degree of the materials; (2) The types of activity; and (3) The center of the communication. When the materials are simple (e.g. preposition, appositive), the center of communication is more on the students. It is because the teachers gave more opportunities to the students to answer the teacher's questions. This leads to the fact that students tend to obey the maxim of quality, quantity, and relevance and they did much in the maxim of quality violation. In addition, when the materials are complex (e.g. gerund), the center of communication is most at the teachers. It happens as the teacher mostly explain the materials so that students understand deeply regarding the materials being explained. When the communication relies on the teachers, they tend to obey the maxim of relevance and manner as well as maxim of quantity.

Discussion

The results indicating that the maxim of quantity is the most frequently used in instructional communication align with previous research on effective teaching practices. The maxim of quantity, which involves providing the appropriate amount of information—neither too much nor too little—plays a central role in classroom settings, particularly when teachers are checking students' understanding of the

material. Prior studies (Hamdan & Elandeef, 2021; Kwok et al., 2020) have shown that teachers tend to offer explanations, give examples, and ask clarifying questions, all of which require balancing the amount of information shared. This supports the idea that teachers prioritize giving students enough information to comprehend the subject without overwhelming them, which enhances the learning process. The frequent use of this maxim reflects a pedagogical focus on clarity and precision in conveying instructional content.

Similarly, the relatively lower occurrence of the maxims of quality, relevance, and manner may be linked to the nature of classroom dialogue, where the teacher's primary goal is to ensure comprehension rather than strictly adhering to the truthfulness (quality), relevance, or clarity (manner) of each utterance. In addition, Gultom (2022) suggests that while these maxims are important, they might be secondary in contexts where the main objective is to facilitate learning through repeated clarification and confirmation of students' understanding. For instance, checking comprehension often leads to repetitive and clarifying utterances that may not always require strict adherence to the other maxims (Knight, 2023; Mikha, 2023). This finding supports the idea that instructional communication is more about ensuring the correct transmission of knowledge and less about rigidly following conversational maxims, adapting to the immediate needs of the learners.

In addition, the pattern is based on material complexity, types of activity, and communication center, align with previous research on teacher-student interaction in online TOEFL classes. When the materials are simpler, such as prepositions or appositives, the communication tends to shift toward the students, who are given more opportunities to engage actively. This supports findings from Searles (2022) and Jaiswal & Al-Hattami (2020) that suggest student-centered communication encourages active learning, critical thinking, and better comprehension. In these instances, students are more likely to adhere to the conversational maxims of quality, quantity, and relevance as they provide accurate and adequate responses to the teacher's questions. The observed frequent violations of the maxim of quality, however, can be explained by students' attempts to contribute to the discussion, even if they sometimes provide incorrect or incomplete information, which is a natural part of the learning process (Hasan et al., 2024; Jannah, 2022).

When the instructional focus is on more complex topics, such as gerunds, the communication becomes more teacher-centered, as the teacher takes the lead in delivering detailed explanations and guiding students through difficult concepts. Previous research (Moore et al., 2023; Strom & Viesca, 2023) has shown that when material complexity increases, the role of the teacher in controlling the flow of communication becomes more prominent. Teachers, in this scenario, tend to adhere to the maxims of relevance and manner to ensure that their explanations are clear, concise, and directly related to the topic at hand. Additionally, the maxim of quantity remains essential, as teachers must provide sufficient information for students to fully grasp the material without overwhelming them. This aligns with Woods & Gencturk (2024) suggesting that, in teacher-centered communication, maintaining clarity and structure is critical for student understanding, especially with complex content.

The interplay between material complexity and communication patterns highlights the dynamic nature of instructional

communication in online TOEFL class. The shift from student-centered to teacher-centered communication, depending on the complexity of the material, suggests that teachers are mindful of adjusting their communication strategies to meet the needs of their students. This finding supports the research by Mallillin (2022) indicating that effective teachers are flexible in their instructional approach, modifying their communication patterns to either foster more student interaction with simple materials or to provide comprehensive instruction with more difficult concepts. In both cases, adhering to conversational maxims—especially relevance, manner, and quantity—ensures that the instructional communication remains effective, contributing to students' overall learning outcomes (Sarasua, 2022).

Therefore, based on the results, to improve instructional communication in online TOEFL classes and avoid misunderstandings, teachers should adapt their approach based on the complexity of the material. For simple topics, such as prepositions or appositives, teachers should give students more opportunities to engage by encouraging them to ask and answer questions, while providing timely feedback to address quality violations. This can be done through interactive activities like quizzes or discussions to help students practice and clarify their understanding. For more complex topics like gerunds, teachers should take a more central role, ensuring that their explanations are clear and structured, adhering closely to the maxims of relevance, manner, and quantity. Teachers can enhance this by using step-by-step explanations, visual aids, and providing multiple examples to help students grasp the material deeply. Regularly checking for comprehension and offering opportunities for students to ask clarifying questions during both simple and complex material discussions will ensure effective communication and reduce misunderstandings.

Conclusions

From the analysis conducted, it is concluded that the total of two-way-instructional communication between the

teacher and the students in the classes analyzed are 88 excerpts with 101 conversational implicature. In addition, the highest number of maxims identified is the maxim of quantity and obeying the maxim as the highest number of implicature. Because of this, degree of the materials being discussed, the types of activities, and the center of communication. Based on the results, the recommendation is that teachers need to pay attention to the degree level of the materials, types of activities, and the center of the communication when develop instructional communication in conducting online TOEFL class.

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