

THE INTEGRATION OF STIRRING AND SETTling ACTIVITIES IN COMMUNICATIVE ESP CLASSROOM WITH THE USE OF LMS

Putu Tika Virginiya¹⁾ and Ni Made Lisma Martarini²⁾

¹⁾ Politeknik Negeri Bali

tikavirginiya@pnb.ac.id

²⁾ Institut Bisnis dan Teknologi Indonesia

lisma.martarini@instiki.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the integration of activities, especially stirring and settling activities, using Learning Management Systems (LMS) in communicative English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. While settling activities help with comprehension and language input retention, stirring activities are based on the principles of communicative language education and are designed to pique learners' interest and activate past knowledge. This study intends to clarify the best practice of communicative language teaching in ESP environments by thoroughly explaining the integration of the activities by using LMS and teachers' perceptions of it. The results of this project will advance pedagogical knowledge by providing useful ways to enhance technology-mediated language training and encouraging authentic communication, meaningful interaction, and active participation among ESP learners. The study employs a qualitative approach, including classroom observations, interviews, and documentation to gather comprehensive data on pedagogical practices, teachers' perceptions, and learning outcomes.

Keywords: *ESP, LMS, Classroom Management*

1. INTRODUCTION

English subjects are taught as a foreign language in Indonesia as a compulsory subject, even in vocational high schools and universities, and it demands different knowledge of materials, methods, and strategies (Muliyah & Aminatun, 2020). In order to help students learn target language competencies that are relevant to their specific academic or professional contexts, communicative language education has long been recognized as important in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) pedagogy (Goh, 2012; Hyland, 2019; Scrivener, 2005; Yang, 2016). These specialized uses are frequently related to the workplace: call center operators, hotel receptionists, pharmaceutical salespeople, architects, and many more (Scrivener, 2005). Many approaches have been taken into account in teaching ESP, and Scrivener (2005) mentions that ESP means to combine the knowledge of teaching English and the topic going to be taught; "Go on teaching all the normal English you already teach in all the ways you know how to do already but use lexis, examples, topics, and contexts, that are relevant to the students and practice relevant specific skills." ESP teachers are expected to learn many new things that will help them make their teaching better and more effective, this includes what new teaching techniques to implement (Jendrych, 2013).

The way that pupils learn has a big influence on the teaching style. In contrast to conventional methods that solely focus on grammar and vocabulary, communicative language teaching (CLT) prioritizes meaningful contact and authentic discourse (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013; Richards, 2005). This method takes into account how language use is evolving in everyday contexts. The CLT method can be used with a variety of teaching strategies and resources, including group projects (Crisianita & Mandasari, 2022; Greenier et al., 2021; Turgunova & Abdurahimovna,

2023), problem-based learning (Malikovna et al., 2022; Seibert, 2021), role-playing (Irkinovich, 2022), and discussion (Dos Santos, 2020). Most of the activities with the CLT approach promote communication that involves two-way communication.

However, to foster student autonomy, teachers usually assign different types of homework, such as written assignments, compositions, or study sessions. It is crucial that educators assign the appropriate type of work to their students (Harmer, 2007). Teaching English classes can be boring and monotonous and an efficient way to minimize these obstacles is to make a profit from the so-called stirring activities, as a way of lightening up the atmosphere in the classroom and providing enough practice in exploring the English language (Kalischová & Dudková, 2014). Teaching students of all ages, from young learners to adults; adults often experience greater anxiety when learning than do younger students (Harmer, 2007). Scrivener (2005) mentions that “experiment with a mixture of quiet, working-alone activities and activities that require active participation” could be applied to teenage classes as much as to adults.

Incorporating stirring and settling exercises (Kalischová & Dudková, 2014) into communicative ESP classrooms is one way to create a dynamic, interactive learning environment that supports language development. Stimulating activities are designed to capture learners' attention, stimulate their curiosity, and activate prior knowledge in order to lay the groundwork for meaningful interaction and engagement. The teacher can integrate stirring activities at any time during the lesson when the energy level is decreased. The following types of stirring activities have been based on the modified list proposed by Clarke (2010): mingle activities, music and songs, drama activities, technology-based activities, and movement games. Role-plays, brainstorming sessions, or multimedia presentations, are the examples such as the CLT approach (Scrivener, 2005), are some examples of these exercises that are intended to pique students' attention and encourage them to participate actively in language learning assignments. Conversely, settling activities let students think back on their education, integrate new words and linguistic patterns, and reinforce what they have learned about language. Stirring activities are described as a teaching tool that helps learners to become more active and more motivated.

Recent technological developments have completely changed the language education field by providing new and creative ways to improve teaching methods and maximize student results. One such technology instrument that has been widely adopted in educational settings globally is Learning Management Systems (LMS), previously called a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) (Harmer, 2007; Scrivener, 2005). Personalized learning experiences catered to individual needs and preferences, improved access to learning resources, and increased student cooperation are just a few advantages of integrating Learning Management Systems (LMS) into communicative ESP training (Dogoriti et al., 2014; Prasetya, 2021). LMS platforms streamline the teaching and learning process by acting as a central location for managing course materials, promoting communication between teachers and students, and delivering evaluations. Additionally, because LMSs are flexible and scalable, teachers can modify their lesson plans to suit the requirements, preferences, and learning styles of a wide range of students. This fosters diversity and accessibility in language training (Rudneva & Valeeva, 2017; Salekhova et al., 2019; Stepanova et al., 2021; Virginiya et al., 2023).

In communicative ESP classrooms, integrating stirring and settling activities through LMS may have advantages, but the practices of this educational strategy has not been thoroughly studied in the study. This research attempts to contribute to the ongoing conversation on language education and inform pedagogical practices targeted at fostering learners' communicative competence and language proficiency in ESP contexts by examining the effectiveness of this pedagogical approach and identifying best practices for its implementation.

This study employs a qualitative research approach to investigate the integration of stirring and settling activities within communicative English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classrooms using Learning Management Systems (LMS). The qualitative approach allows for a nuanced understanding of pedagogical practices, learner experiences, and the impact of technology-mediated instruction on language learning outcomes. Three primary data collection methods are utilized: classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation analysis, to answer the research questions: (1) how is the integration implemented as best practice in ESP communicative classroom?, and (2) what are the teachers' perceptions on the integration of stirring and settling activities in ESP classrooms using LMS?

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Subjects being interviewed and observed are currently teachers or lecturers in either a vocational school or vocational university where they have to teach ESP (English for Specific Purposes) to their students. Subjects are varied, such as English for Room Division, English for Food and Beverage, English for Events and MICE, English for Travel and Tourism, English for Business, English for Public Speaking, English for Hospitality Purposes, and even English for Engineering. It was found that all teachers being interviewed have designed the use of LMS (Learning Management System) as media in the teaching-learning process. They have implemented LMS starting at different times, from last year to since 2009. Canvas Instructure is one of the most popular LMSs used among the teachers being observed and interviewed after the use of Google Classroom. Among others, Edmodo, Schoology, and their locally developed LMS are used in the teaching-learning process. Two subjects mentioned that they always use the LMS in every meeting, three often use it, three others sometimes use it, and only one rarely uses LMS in his teaching and learning process. However, most of the teachers interviewed are not familiar with the term stirring and settling activities: 55.6% are familiar with the terms, and 44.5% are not.

Stirring and Settling Activities Best Practices with the Use of LMS

Based on the results of the observation, one of the subjects (Subject 2) significantly used the Learning Management System (LMS) in the classroom as well as the activities designed in the system. The teacher used Canvas Instructure as the LMS and it was used from the beginning of the semester, in which the students were given the tutorials and self-regulated learning materials that can be accessed within the LMS. Canvas Instructure was used for its extensive features, which not only enable teachers to upload materials from various sources, but also interact with the students in real-time discussions, and help collect the assignments and assessments with personalized rubrics, and announcements (Al Khoeri et al., 2021; Fatimah & Nurfitriani, 2022; Virginiya, 2023). Subject 2 stated that the use of LMS would help her in with the lesson planning she prepared beforehand. She would usually use the discussion feature on the "brainstorming" session in her lesson, have the students engage in group discussions, and have them write their ideas in the "discussion section" set in the LMS. As the answers would appear in real-time, the teacher could easily track and discuss the ideas collected in the section as a whole class. The LMS also helped her in organizing her teaching stages as it would enable her to set the sequence of learning whether the tasks should be done sequentially, with prerequisite modules, or minimum scores to be achieved in quizzes or assignments.

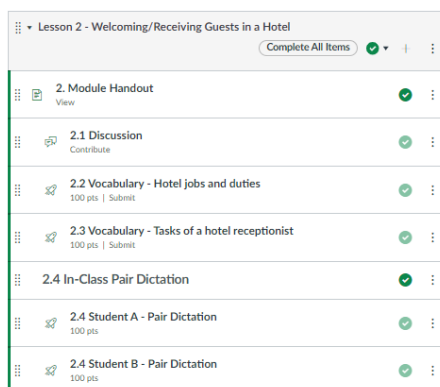


Figure 1. Example of LMS application with stirring and settling activities

Stirring and settling activities are set in the LMS with a code “IC” that refers to In-Class Activities. An example of stirring activities is “Finding Someone Who” - the teacher would set the “hints” to be questioned around in the LMS, and have the students type the answer in the LMS to be viewed later as a whole-class discussion. Another example is when Subject 2 provides external links to Wordwall, Quizziz, or else hints of various communicative activities that can be done by the students. At some time, she would prepare a spinning wheel with topics to be discussed in groups or pair-speaking activities. An example of a communicative settling activity that is set in the LMS is “reading dictation. Here, the teacher would set two sets of incomplete reading passages for the pairs to read to one another. The activities were set with passcodes that would be shared in the face-to-face meeting, and a timer would also be set to help the teacher “maintain” the students’ focus on the task. Follow-up activities are to discuss the reading comprehension questions and pair-check the answers. Therefore, LMS is used at its maximum features to provide stirring and settling activities to promote communicative ESP classrooms.

Teachers’ Perceptions on Integration of Stirring and Settling Activities Using LMS

All teachers agree that multimedia content integration is needed. Therefore, videos, audio recordings, or interactive modules are interspersed into the ESP lessons through LMS. E-learning is more effective and can enhance teaching and learning activities. Before teaching materials are accessed and saved in repositories, educators must properly prepare them (Rabiman et al., 2020). Various ways were used from attaching links of multimedia from multiple sources to the LMS, to attaching and embedding videos audio, and interactive games. Subject 2 explained that LMS was currently used for communicative teachings such as pair-dictation reading which enabled students to have guided conversation and reading continued with follow-up questions to check the student’s understanding on the reading text dictated to each other. Subject 4, meanwhile, used LMS to have the students observe the uploaded video and then have interactions and discussions to have suggestions regarding the news which is about travel safety. Next, students would need to type the result of the face-to-face discussion on the LMS. On the other hand, other Subjects mentioned that LMS is used to upload learning materials and assignments which students would need to access and upload their assignments to the LMS.

LMS does not only provide better communicative ESP teaching but also encourages personalized learning (Jureynolds et al., 2023; Martindale & Dowdy, 2010; Santiana et al., 2021; Sudianto et al., 2019; Zainuddin et al., 2019). “As LMS is customized,

teachers may provide the specific learning materials that students need to learn especially in vocational context the curriculum is made based on industrial needs" mentioned by Subject 5. Subject 8 also adds that LMS supports interactive learning effectively since LMS helps the teacher to expand their teaching not only during learning in the classroom but also outside of the classroom. Many activities have been done by the teachers in fostering collaboration and interactions among students using the LMS in their ESP classrooms, such as pair-dictation reading, guided pair-speaking with hints, group discussions, pair-work writing (Subject 2), group projects (Subject 6, 7, and 9), and group assignments (Subject 1, 3, 8).

Stirring activities are usually injected at the beginning of the lesson such as in Find Someone Who activities or mingling activities to discuss the given topic. Subject 1 and 9 mentioned that filling the information gap is one of the activities that can be done as stirring activities as well. However, none of the subjects mentioned transitioning from stirring activities to settling activities as a two-stage activity. Most of them stated that "ask them to go back to their sitting, and then ask them to give their feedback about the activity". Technology and LMS itself here play a role in providing the information paperless before the students do either the stirring or settling activities.

3. CONCLUSION

A promising strategy for improving language learning experiences is the incorporation of interactive and engaging activities using Learning Management Systems (LMS) in Communicative English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. Educators can foster a dynamic learning environment where students actively engage in communicative tasks and develop higher-order thinking abilities by adopting Learning Management System (LMS) platforms. This enables for the integration of in-class and out-of-class learning (Konoplianyk et al., 2021)

Furthermore, the integration of multimedia resources through Learning Management Systems (LMS) can greatly aid in the advancement of students' listening comprehension skills as well as their professional and communication ability (Rebenko et al., 2019; Virginiya, 2023). Students can legitimately practice a variety of English skills through the design of integrated communicative activities utilizing LMS, resulting in a more thorough language learning experience (Sevy-Biloon, 2018). Furthermore, LMS can be used as an instrument for cross-cultural learning, giving students access to foreign cultures and pertinent material unique to their ESP course (Bocanegra-Valle, 2015).

The premise that ESP classroom practices should help students integrate language knowledge with discipline-specific content for real-life communication further supports the efficacy of incorporating interactive activities in communicative ESP classrooms with LMS (Hung, 2022). Within the context of the ESP course, students can improve their communicative competence in certain domains by emphasizing reasoning and argumentation skills (Margaryan et al., 2022).

In conclusion, the incorporation of interactive exercises via LMS integration in communicative ESP classes offers a thorough method of language learning that blends theoretical understanding with real-world application. Teachers may improve communicative competence, intercultural awareness, and skill integration by utilizing the characteristics of Learning Management Systems (LMS). This will ultimately improve the language learning experience for students with exceptional needs.

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