

# THE SPEECH FUNCTIONS IN THE CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN THE FOURTH SEMESTER ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS OF MURIA KUDUS UNIVERSITY AND SOME FOREIGNERS

**Titis Sulistyowati**

## **Abstract**

The fourth semester students of the English department of Muria Kudus University are suggested to take Academic Field Trip in order to provide the students some experiences outside of their campus. By observing the English Department students' interactions with English speakers from other countries, I expect that I can gain clear illustrations on their abilities in maintaining good conversation by applying appropriate speech functions in the conversation. The main purposes of the study are describing the speech functions chosen by the students and the foreigners, explaining the role relation enactment among them, and also describing the contribution of speech functions in language education. The data of this study are transcriptions of the students and the foreigner's oral communication. I classify the speech functions produced by the participants into the speech functions classes introduced by Eggins and Slade. The results of the study over the four conversations show that the opening speech functions are produced mostly by the students; it indicates that the students play as the initiators. The foreigners show their respect and appreciation to the students as they respond to the student initiations by producing more responding and continuing moves. The number of turns and moves produced by the students and foreigners are quite similar; it indicates that both of the participants get the same chance to take their roles. The foreigners as tourists show they interest to some tourism objects by describing to the students some objects they have visited and by comparing to their own country. Learning language cannot be separated from its culture, therefore speech functions and cultural understanding should be taught in the classroom as part of language discourse.

**Key words:** *speech function, role relation enactment, conversation, foreigner*

## **Introduction**

In the nature of conversation, simultaneously a message is organized and delivered among the speakers. This organization of message is carried out in the act of speaking conducted by the participants in the conversation. Messages in conversation, explained by Halliday (1994: 68) can be recognized as speech role. The messages are conveyed in

just two terms; giving and demanding. Either the speaker is giving something to the listener or he is demanding something from him.

To communicate effectively, we should organize the messages that we want to convey through conversation clearly. The organization of messages involves giving and demanding and this exchange might be more complicated than it seems. If we are demanding something, it means we are inviting to give, and if we are giving something, it means we are inviting to receive.

In the English Education Department of Muria Kudus University, English is given as a foreign language. Here, the students are trained to become professional English teachers. To give them sufficient knowledge, the department has designed the curriculum which enables them to possess the language skills, such as listening, writing, speaking and reading.

As foreign language learners, the students have limitation in speaking ability. Instead of understanding other aspects in studying foreign language, such as cultural differences, social interactions, and the politeness norms, they also find other difficulties on discourse, lexis and grammar, and phonology/pronunciation, and also vocabulary.

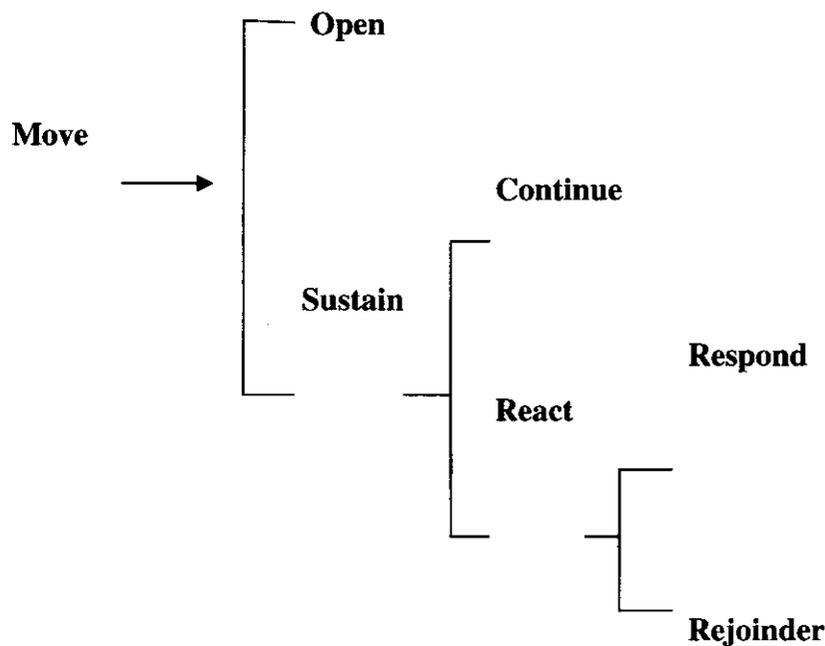
By observing the English Department students' interaction in communicating with English speakers from other countries, I expect that I can gain clear illustrations on their abilities in constructing conversational structure. One of aspects in conversational structure is realized through the speech function choices in the conversation moves used by both students and foreigners. Through this observation I expect that I can observe their capabilities in applying their grammar knowledge from their speaking class into real social roles, such as negotiating the relationship of solidarity and intimacy in participating in the oral communication.

The major problem I want to solve in this study is how the speech function is used in casual conversations between the English students of Muria Kudus University and the foreigners, which is elaborated in terms of speech function choices and the role enactment pattern.

## **Speech Function Classes**

Eggin and Slade (1997: 192) describe the speech functions and their sub classes in a speech function network. The speech functions are opening speech function and sustaining speech function. There are two kinds of opening speech functions; attending and initiating. Sustaining speech functions can be elaborated in to continuing speech function and reacting speech function. There are two kind of reacting speech functions, they are reacting speech function; responding and reacting speech function; rejoinder.

Figure 2.3 Speech function network



Source : based on Eggin and Slade: 1997

### Opening speech function

There are two main opening moves; attending move and initiating move. Attending move intents to search attention from the other interactant in the conversation, while initiating move deals with giving and demanding, exchanging goods, services or information as the commodities of the conversation. Opening moves are not elliptically

dependent on prior moves, they are usually cohesive in other non structural ways, such as through lexical or referential cohesion. (Eggins and Slade, 1997: 192-193)

Eggins and Slade state that attending moves include salutation, greeting and calls, all of which function to prepare the ground for interaction by securing the attention of the intended interactant. (Eggins and Slade, 1997: 193)

Eggins and Slade describe that initiating moves deal with the basic opposition between giving and demanding, goods and services and information. Grammatically, these moves deal with statement and question which then differentiated into fact and opinion. The difference between fact and opinion is usually expressed lexically; with opinions containing either expression of modality, or appraisal lexis. Fact and opinion usually lead to different types of exchanges and genres. Opinion exchanges argument, while fact exchanges often remain brief or develop into story telling. (Eggins and Slade, 1997: 193-194)

Table 2.5 Speech function labels for opening moves

Speech function	Example
Attending	Hey, David!
Offer	Would you like some more wind?
Command	Look
Statement: fact	You met his sister
Statement: opinion	This conversation needs Allenby.
Question: open: fact	What's Allenby doing these days?
Question: closed: fact	Is Allenby living in London?
Question: open: opinion	What do we need here?
Question: closed: opinion	Do we need Allenby in this conversation?

Source; Eggins and Slade, 1997: 194

### Sustaining Speech Function

Sustaining moves keep negotiating the same proposition. Sustaining talk maybe achieved by the speaker who has just been talking (continuing speech functions) or by other speakers taking a turn as he react to the first one (reacting speech function). (Eggins and Slade, 1997:195)

### **Sustaining: continuing speech functions**

Continuing speech functions keep negotiating the same proposition produced by the same speaker who has just been talking. Continuing speech functions have two main options; to monitor, to prolong, and to append. (Eggins and Slade, 1997: 195)

In monitoring moves, the speaker focus on the state of the interactive situation, for example by checking that the audience is following, or by inviting another speaker to take the turn, in this case the invited response is set up as a supporting response. (Eggin and Slade, 1997: 195)

Prolonging moves refer to those where a continuing speaker adds to their contribution by providing further information. The prolonging option is divided into elaboration, extension, and enhancement (based on logico-semantic relations by Halliday). (Eggins and Slade, 1997: 196-197)

In Eggins and Slade (1997:199), it is mentioned that appending move is mid-way between a continuing: prolonging speech function and a reacting developing move. Appending moves occur when a speaker make one move, loses the turn, bur then as soon as they regain the turn they produce a move which represents a logic expansion of their prior move.

Table2.6 Summary of Continuing Speech Function

<b>Speech Function</b>	<b>Example</b>
Continue: monitor	You know? Right?
Prolog: elaborate	At least he's doing well-at least he is doing well in London. <i>He's cleaning them up</i>
Prolog: extend	Well, we've got a whole lot of garbage tins that's good. <i>But you have got to fill them up before everyone else does</i>
Prolog: enhance	Maybe it's easy. <i>Then if you have a story .... you can speak</i>
Append: elaborate	St: What is the different between Yogya and others?

	F: what is the different between Yogya and the others? St: <i>Yogya with others ... Surabaya and umm ...</i>
Append: extend	F: Prambanan Ramayana? Do you know? St: No, it's new F: <i>maybe we are going to Kaliurang</i>
Append: enhance	F: For me this time is for business St: umm... business? T: <i>So, that's why I 'm going to different places of Java.</i>

Source: Eggins and Slade, 1997:201

### Reacting speech functions: responding

There are two types of reacting moves: responses and rejoinder. Responses are reactions which move the exchange toward completion, while rejoinders are reactions which in some way prolong the exchange.

Responding reactions negotiate a proposition or proposal set up by the previous speaker. There are two options of responding; supporting and confronting. Supporting move require response while confronting moves are dispreferred or discretionary responses. Supporting moves are subdivided into developing, engaging, registering, and replying, while confronting are disengaging and replying.

Table 2.7 summary of sustaining responding speech function

Speech function	Example
Engage	Hi- <i>Hi</i> Nick- <i>Yea</i>
Register	That's our claning lady <i>-Oh, the cleaning lady</i>
Comply	Can you pass me the salt please? <i>-here [pass it]</i>
Accept	Have another? <i>-thanks [take one]</i>
Agree	Jill's very bright actually. <i>- She is extremely bright.</i>

Acknowledge	D' you remember? <i>-Oh, yea</i>
Answer	Where's Allenby? <i>-In London</i>
Affirm	Have you heard from him lately? <i>-Yes, I have</i>
Disagree	Is he in London now? <i>-No</i>
Non-comply	Could you pass me the salt, please? <i>-No, sorry/can' reach.</i>
Withhold	When is he due back? <i>-I've no idea</i>
Disavow	Did he? <i>-I didn't know that</i>
Contradict	You know? <i>-No</i>

Source: Eggins and Slade, 1997: 208

### Reacting speech functions: rejoinder

Eggins and Slade (1997: 207) simply state that rejoinder moves are moves to set underway sequence of talk that interrupt, postpone, abort, or suspend the initial speech function sequence. The moves do not only negotiate what is already on the talk but also give further understanding and details. Rejoinder is not only negotiate what is already on the table but it query it (demanding further details) or reject it (offering alternative explanation)

Tracking moves involve checking, confirming, clarifying, or probing the prior move. These are realized through interrogative and/or rising intonation. Eggins and Slade (1997: 2009) mention there are four main types of tracking moves. Checking moves check on content of the prior move which has been missed or misheard. Confirming moves look for verification of what the speaker indicates they have heard. Clarifying

moves look for additional information in order to understand a prior move. Probing moves offer further details or purpose implication for confirmation by the initial speaker.

Challenging moves confront prior move by actively rejecting negotiation or by querying the veracity of what has been said or the sayer's right to say it. Based on Eggins and Slade (1997: 211-212) opinion, there are three main types of challenging moves. Detaching moves seek to terminate the interaction, to avoid any further discussion. Rebounding moves send the interaction back to the first speaker, by questioning the relevance, legitimacy or veracity of prior move. Countering moves express confrontation by offering an alternative, counter position or counter interpretation of a situation raised by prior speaker.

Table 2.8 Summary of sustaining rejoinder speech function

Speech function	Example
Check	... and straight into the mandies- <i>Straight into the what?</i>
Confirm	Well he rang Roman-he rang Roman a week ago- <i>did he?</i>
Clarify	Well he rang Roman-he rang Roman a week ago – <i>What he rang Denning Road, did he?</i>
Probe	[nods] <i>Because Roman lives in Denning road also?</i>
Resolve	What's her name? <i>It's Stefanie, I think.</i>
Detach	What, before bridge? <i>-So huh [non verbal]</i>
Rebound	This conversation needs Allenby- <i>Oh he's in London so what can we do?</i>
Counter	<i>You know?- No, you don't understand Nick-you?</i>
Refute	<i>I-no no – I always put out the garbage.</i>
Re-challenge	<i>Well he rang Roman- he rang roman a week ago.</i>

Source: Eggins and Slide, 1997: 213

## **The Nature of Conversation**

Halliday says (1985: 76) that 'there is a tradition regarding to spoken language as formless and featureless'. But he then explains that spoken language has its own characteristic which it might not be found in written language. In speech, there are some possibilities in making some mistakes; but it was not formless. The term formless in speech is an artifact of the transcription. The formality of the spoken language that we used in conversation will depend on the context and situation when we are conducting conversations.

Based on its orientations, Eggins & Slade (1997: 18-20) differentiate the nature of conversation in to pragmatically oriented and casual conversation. Pragmatic conversation refers to pragmatically oriented interaction, it is conducted in serious tone and accompanied by various expressions of politeness (e.g. would that be....? Thanks very much, just a moment). While casual conversation is not motivated by a clear pragmatic purpose, which display informality and humor. It also sometimes includes informal characteristics such as colloquial expressions of agreement (e.g. yeah, yep).

## **Method of Investigation**

The subjects in this study were students and foreigners. The students were the third semester students of the English Education department at Muria Kudus University, Central Java, Indonesia, while the foreigners were the tourists from several countries who spent their vacations at Yogyakarta, Central Java, Indonesia.

## **Data and data sources**

The data of this study was transcription derived from the students and the foreigner's oral communication. The conversations were recorded in video CD. After selecting process, finally I decide four conversations as the source of the data.

## **Units of Analysis**

In this research, I classified the units of analysis into turns and moves as the discourse analysis. One turn consisted of several moves. Moves were realized through clauses. Turns were all the talks produced by one speaker before the other speaker got in.

in one turn. Move were units after which speakers changes could occur without turns transfer. Clauses were the largest grammatical units. A clause consisted of subject + finite, plus a predicator, and combination of complements and adjuncts with some elements possibly ellipse.

### Data Analysis

The data gathered were then analyzed through these following procedures:

- (1) Identifying the turn of each speaker.
- (2) Identifying the number of clause.
- (3) Identifying the moves.
- (4) Coding speech function.
- (5) Interpretation; (i) synoptically, by quantifying overall turns, moves and speech function choices of each speaker; (ii) dynamically, by tracing through the speech function choices as the conversation exchange unfolds (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 215).

### Findings

After the speech functions are analyzed and summarized through the conversation one by one, in this section I will summarize the whole finding from the four conversations. Due to the analysis of the role relation enactment pattern between students and foreigners, I ignore the moves from other participant (e.g. lecturer and tourist guide).

Table 4.13 Students and Foreigners' Number of Speech Function Choices, moves and turns

Speech Function	Students	F (%)	Foreigners	F (%)
Opening				
-Conversation I	12	100%	-	0%
-Conversation II	11	57.9%	8	42.1%
-Conversation III	9	90%	1	10%
-Conversation IV	7	100%	-	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>81.25%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18.75%</b>
Continuing				

-Conversation I	11	33.3%	22	66.7%
-Conversation II	6	24%	19	76%
-Conversation III	5	29.4%	12	70.6%
-Conversation IV	2	8.3%	22	91.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24.2%</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>75.8%</b>
<b>React: responding</b>				
-Conversation I	17	43.6%	22	56.4%
-Conversation II	15	51.7%	14	48.3%
-Conversation III	14	33.3%	28	61.7%
-Conversation IV	1	10%	9	90%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>61%</b>
<b>React: Rejoinder</b>				
-Conversation I	15	58.3%	10	41.7%
-Conversation II	10	56%	8	44%
-Conversation III	7	43.8%	9	56.2%
-Conversation IV	5	38%	8	62%
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>50.7%</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>49.3%</b>
<b>Moves</b>				
<b>Conversation I</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>50.46%</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>49.54%</b>
<b>Conversation II</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>46.15%</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>53.85%</b>
<b>Conversation III</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>59%</b>
<b>Conversation IV</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>27.8%</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>72.2%</b>
<b>Total Moves</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>43.2%</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>56.8%</b>
<b>Turns</b>				
<b>Conversation I</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>55.70%</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>44.30%</b>
<b>Conversation II</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>50.75%</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>49.25%</b>
<b>Conversation III</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>47.8%</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>58.2%</b>
<b>Conversation IV</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>Total Turns</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>49.8%</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>50.2%</b>

In term of the number of turns and moves from whole conversation, the information is served in table 4.13. The table describes the number of moves and turns in each conversation. The number of turns produced by the students and foreigners in each conversation as noted in table 4.13, cite that turns produced by both participants are quite similarity in their number. In overall production of turns from the whole conversation the students produce 49.8% turns, while the foreigners produce 50.2%. This suggests that in this casual conversation the participants take equal turns. It means that participants are considered having the equal relation, as casual conversation is the interaction among equal.

The number of moves produced by both students and foreigners are also quite similar, realizing again that they are equal in position. However the proportion of the number moves changes when I compare to the production of turn between participants. The students produce 43.2% moves, while the foreigners produce 56.8% from the whole moves production. Compare to the production of moves, the percentage of the foreigners moves are higher than the foreigners' number of turns, so I suggest that the foreigners produce more moves in one turn.

#### **Role Relation Enactment in the Conversations between the English Department Students of UMK and some Foreigners**

The opening moves are dominated by questions. The questions can be either fact or opinion. This is in case of that the students usually initiate the talk by exploring the foreigners' country or about their experience in Yogyakarta or Indonesia. The question of opinion moves are produced by the students when they intend to figure out the foreigners' feelings or opinion about visiting Yogyakarta Indonesia.

In those conversations, the students play their role as the local community which shows their hospitality by trying to communicate and interact with the foreigners. The students here try to figure out some aspects which might attract the tourist while they are visiting Yogyakarta. The aspects can be the tourist destination in Yogyakarta, like the ancient Borobudur and Prambanan as the part of national heritage, or the beauty of Gunung Merapi and Kaliurang as the part of natural wonder. The foreigners also search for something different or unique for example

handicraft. The students also introduce Batik as one of Indonesian traditional handicraft which has already famous worldwide.

The foreigners, who play as tourists, produce moves as the reaction of the students' opening moves. Their moves are dependent to the students' moves. They produce more reacting moves based on the information demanded by the students. They usually produce information about their countries, the reason why they visit Yogyakarta, or the interesting part in Yogyakarta.

As the dominant initiator the students get the power to control the commodities exchange through the interaction. The foreigners on the other hand, their moves are dependent on the students' prior move. The assumption is that the students as the local community, firstly they want to find the information from the foreigner about their countries and what is so specific about them compared to Indonesia. Secondly, they also need to know whether the foreigner enjoy visiting Yogyakarta. Thirdly they need to introduce some local values like tourism objects or traditional crafts so that they can show the interesting parts of Indonesia and hopefully the tourist will visit Indonesia on the other occasion.

The low opening moves which are produced by the foreigner doesn't means that there is not enough interaction between the participants. As the result of the opening moves produced by the students, the foreigners produce many continuing moves and reacting: responding moves. From the whole conversation the foreigners dominate continuing moves by producing 75.8% from the whole production and they also produce high number of responding moves (61%). (table 4.13)

The number of continuing moves and responding moves produced by the foreigners indicate the foreigners' respect and enthusiasm in interacting with the students. It is proved by the way they respond to every initiation produced by the students. They provide the information demanded by the students not only in one moves but in sequence of continuing moves either by prolonging or appending. Although the students and the foreigners have recently met, but tracing to the number of moves production produced by them, I can conclude that their interaction is quite intimate.

From the number of turns and moves produced by the foreigners (192 moves and 120 turns) and the students (146 moves and 119), I can conclude that the foreigners produce more moves in one turn. It means that the foreigners dominate the conversation by producing more moves. This domination explains that the foreigners are good in negotiation. On the other hand the students produce few moves in one turns. It indicates that the flow of the exchanges is depended on the foreigners' moves.

Most of the opening moves produced by the students are dominated by interrogative, this suggest that the students as the initiators focus their negotiation on demanding information from the foreigners. The foreigners react to the initiation by providing more statements, as they provide the demanded information. Those mood choices determine the conversational achievements. The achievements in these conversations focus on exchanging information and give less attention on the interpersonal negotiation or exploring the interpersonal relation among speakers. Therefore rather than conducting interpersonal conversation, the students tends to conduct transactional conversation.

### **Contribution to Language Education**

This research reveals the semantic pattern used by the interactants. This pattern refers to the choice of lexical items and words used by the interactants. From the choice of those items indicates the directness of expressive meaning in talk. The students use wh-interrogative to ask some questions and directly mention the commodity that they intent to exchange. The foreigners provide the information demanded in quite direct way by continuing prolonging or appending in form of clause complexes base on logico-semantic relation (extending, elaborating, enhancing).

To initiate talks, people can use various mood choices, not only by using interrogative. We can use statement, command, or offer to initiate talk. The use of statement indicates that we are not showing our inferior role to our opponent. Even when we actually demanded something from our opponent, we can use statement as the initiation. When someone says "I heard that your mother's in hospital", he/she

actually implies that he/she clarifies whether the information is correct and indicates further information from the hearer.

Besides introducing the speech function to the students, the teacher can also introduce about mood system and the function of the mood. It is because the production of speech functions and moods determine the role relation and the power among speakers. These terms can be introduced through Functional Grammar or Discourse study.

Based on the result of my investigation into the students' interaction I have explained previously, there are some aspects that should be evaluated either by the students or the teachers. These aspects are related to the language education, theoretically or practically. Theoretically, the students shall be introduced to some theories related to the strategy of how to conduct a conversation successfully. Practically, as language learners, the students should master all the language skills well. The skills include reading, speaking, listening and writing. To communicate orally, the students shall be able to speak fluently and clearly.

Learning English is not only able to use the language correctly, but the students should also be able to use appropriate utterances based on the right context. The context include, to whom we speak to and what kind of relation we want to develop, what topics are exchange and the achievement of the transaction, and also the mode whether it is done spoken or written.

## **Conclusion**

From the interaction between students and foreigners in the four conversations, most of the openings are produced by the students. The students domination is proved by their production of opening moves, from the whole texts, they dominate 81.25% of all the opening moves. It means that the students are good in initiating sequential of talk or they play as the initiators.

As the result of the opening moves produced by the students, the foreigners produce many continuing moves and reacting: responding moves. From the whole conversation the foreigners dominate continuing moves by producing 75.8% from the

whole production and they also produce high number of responding moves (61%). It indicates the foreigners respect and enthusiast in interacting with the students.

From the finding, I can conclude that participants have equal relation. The role is that the students as the local community, firstly they want to find the information from the foreigner about their countries and what is so specific about them compared to Indonesia. Secondly, they also need to know whether the foreigner enjoy visiting Yogyakarta. Thirdly they need to introduce some local values like tourism objects or traditional crafts so that they can show the interesting parts of Indonesia and hopefully the tourist will visit Indonesia on the other occasion.

To have good conversation, the students should also understand about speech functions and the strategy of how to take turns. To initiate talks, people can use not only questions, but also statement, command, or offer to initiate talk. If we want to get involved in an interaction, we cannot directly interrupt and create new initiation, but we have to wait to be selected by the current speaker or to find the perfect moment to self select without changing the topic being discussed.

### **Suggestion**

Theoretically, Speech functions need to be introduced to the students in order to give them more knowledge on how to maintain successful conversation. Successful conversation can be realized through the choice of speech function produced by the speaker. The choice of speech function of one speaker will effect on the other speaker speech function choice as respond, and the sequence of exchanges in conversation reveals the relation among speakers. To give the students knowledge about the use of speech function, the teacher or lecturer should also include speech function aspect in their teaching material, especially in Discourse or Functional Linguistics subject.

Practically, as students of English education department, the students should be able to communicate by using appropriate English in written or spoken. In spoken communication, their English should be understandable, both by local community or foreigners. It is because people learn English in order to communicate with people all over the world. To speak English well means to master all the criteria, like using the right grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. Except all those linguistics aspect that

should be maintained by the students from their classroom, they should also be able to communicate in real context out of their academics environment.

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