

Constructing positive interaction in the EFL classroom: Positive discourse analysis study

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ABSTRACT

Positive interaction is one of the important factors that support students' engagement and development in the classroom. The previous study focused on the use of positive language to promote the teachers' ideas without deeply discussing how that language can contribute toward engagement dynamic of lecturers and students. This study examines how English lecturers use language that contributes to positive interaction in their classroom during the teaching and learning process. The researchers adopted a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through audio recordings of six English lecturers at a private university in Malang. Data analysis was conducted using the positive discourse analysis framework, focusing on coding based on communication strategies used and categorizing related to positive discourse. The analysis shows that lecturers contribute to using positive discourse and validate student contributions, provide effective scaffolding and mitigate criticism, empower through collaboration and inclusivity, enforce rules with politeness and contextual flexibility, and demonstrate contextual awareness. This finding can be a source for English lecturers and teachers to design a more supportive and polite approach used in everyday life. This research has some limitations, such as the number of participants and audio recording data, which do not capture face mimic, gestures, and body language that support building positive interactions. This limitation becomes a consideration to understand that these findings are contextual based which cannot be generalized. For further research, it is recommended to expand the scope of participants, cultural contexts, and multimodal data to capture the nonverbal dimension of positive discourse.

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INTRODUCTION

In the context of teaching English as a foreign language, creating a conducive and harmonious learning environment is a fundamental prerequisite for achieving optimal learning outcomes (Shi, 2021). This

conducive environment refers not only to the availability of physical facilities, but also includes the interactional dynamics that are built between teachers and students, as well as among students themselves, which significantly affect motivation and active participation in the learning process (Nurmawati et al., 2019). A peaceful learning environment, characterized by positive instructional communication, has been shown to increase student engagement and promote the process of peacebuilding in the classroom (Shi, 2021).

Language, in this case English as the medium of instruction, is a crucial element underlying the strategy to maintain, create, and build peace, with positive communication at the core of the “language of peace” that facilitates multidimensional understanding through verbal and nonverbal interactions (Fu, 2021). Language is the primary instrument for humans to position themselves socially and interact, forming a close relationship between language and society. Through discourse, as explained by Halliday and Hasan (1985) and Van Dijk (1990), language can be used as a negative ‘weapon’ to oppress and belittle, but also as a powerful tool to build a peaceful, democratic, socially just, and liberated society. Schools, as the main scenario that reflects the types of discourse practices that occur in the wider community (Bowles & Gintis, 1976), are spaces where peaceful interactions can and should be developed.

The use of positive language by teachers can contribute to influencing student engagement and the peace-building process (Shi, 2021). Positive language used in classroom interaction refers to language usage in interaction that creates a better atmosphere of study, so students can freely express ideas, ask questions, respond to classmates' opinions, and answer questions (Katili, 2021). Nurmawati et al. (2019) said that positive politeness exists in the classroom, creates effective interaction between teachers and students, and the atmosphere in the classroom becomes lively and friendly. Discourse choices influence the relationship between grammar, interaction, and social structure. It shows that the shape, type, or topic of the language (verbal or non-verbal) has a role in explaining something (Calle-Díaz & Rogers, 2023). It was also stated by Van Dijk (1990) that humans use their discourse as a tool for building peace and promoting inclusive interactions, democracy, and social justice in the classroom. A comprehensive understanding of the specific mechanisms by which certain linguistic choices can foster a supportive, inclusive, and peaceful classroom environment, thus necessitating research focused on discourse analysis (Adhari et al., 2022; Fu, 2021).

This study adopts a qualitative approach with discourse analysis methods to examine in detail verbal interactions in EFL classrooms, particularly by looking at how teachers' communication styles influence positive dynamics and the process of peacebuilding in the learning environment (Safitri et al., 2023). The researcher used in-depth interviews with the aim of finding opportunities for teachers and students to build a peaceful and harmonious classroom atmosphere, as well as how to maintain this atmosphere through positive discourse analysis (PDA). This approach is in line with the theoretical trends of positive discourse analysis from Bartlett (2012), Caldas-Coulthard and Coulthard (1996), Macgilchrist (2007), Martin (2004), Martin and Rose (2007), Mosley and Rogers (2014), and Rogers (2018), which focus on how the discourse practices of teachers and students can contribute to creating a harmonious atmosphere in the classroom.

The previous research by Calle-Díaz and Rogers (2023) discusses critical ethnography to look at one cycle of classroom interaction to find opportunities for peacebuilding and peacekeeping through analysis of discourse practices. Garcia et al. (2022) explored formative intervention, and positive discourse analysis helped reconstruct teachers' discourse to promote more inclusive interactions with diverse learners. In this research, Acosta found that teachers tend to use more positive and inclusive discourses to give the chance to promote their ideas. In other research, Katili (2021) focused on lecturers' utterances that consist of lecturers' sentence construction and speech acts. His study found that negative speech acts were an expressive illocutionary act of anger that built a negative classroom situation. Based on the previous research, this research fills the gap by exploring the use of language by Indonesian EFL lecturers in the teaching and learning process, which is analysed using PDA. This research provides several substantive benefits: It provides practical guidance for teachers in improving positive communication styles through the use of positive language,

contributes to academic discourse on the use of PDA in education, and helps create more inclusive and harmonious learning, which is essential in a multicultural context such as Indonesia (Prayitno et al., 2018).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Positive discourse analysis (PDA)

Discourse analysis is one of the tools for understanding how language constructs social reality. Traditionally, critical discourse analysis (CDA) has dominated this field, focusing on revealing how power, ideology, and inequality are reproduced through the use of language (Bukhari & Xiaoyang, 2013; Mullet, 2018). However, in the last two decades, a complementary approach known as positive discourse analysis (PDA) has emerged (Gu, 2023; Taylor & Hikida, 2023). PDA, first proposed by Martin (2004), offers a different perspective by shifting the focus from domination and oppression to the identification and analysis of discourse practices that promote empowerment, harmony, constructive social change, and peace (El-Masry, 2024; Ibrahim, 2023; Stibbe, 2017).

Unlike CDA, which is oriented towards criticizing how power is exercised over individuals to maintain inequality, PDA aims to understand how power is used with individuals to achieve social goals that lead to the creation of a better world (Calle-Díaz & Rogers, 2023). PDA not only analyses problematic discourses, but also investigates “spaces of resistance” where harmony and resilience collaborate for the good of society (El-Masry, 2024). In other words, PDA seeks to find opportunities and mechanisms for social change by examining how positive discourse contributes to the development of social structures, institutional life, and identity (Taylor & Hikida, 2023). This shows that PDA is not only descriptive but also advocacy-oriented, encouraging designs and interventions that empower individuals and bring about social change (Stibbe, 2017). Martin (2004) even asserts that PDA must adopt a positive, harmonious, and friendly perspective, serving as a source of inspiration and motivation (El-Masry, 2024). Appraisal Theory often serves as the theoretical basis for PDA, due to its focus on how writers/speakers express emotions, opinions, and value judgments (Ibrahim, 2023).

Peacebuilding in EFL Classrooms

English language education not only serves as a means of mastering linguistic skills, but also has significant potential as a platform for peacebuilding (Birch, 2022). The language classroom environment, with its intercultural interactions and focus on communication, offers a unique opportunity to develop pedagogy that addresses dehumanizing interethnic and linguistic conflicts (Morgan & Vandrick, 2009). In this context, EFL teachers have an important role as “models of peaceful and nonviolent behavior for language learners” (Aldana-Gutiérrez, 2021).

The concept of peacebuilding in EFL classrooms involves more than just teaching subjects; it is a relational practice closely tied to students' daily lives (Aldana-Gutiérrez, 2021). Peace education encourages discussion about differences to understand and manage conflict by fostering positive relationships, reassuring social schemas, and coordination between groups and cultures (Fu, 2021). This requires the development of interpersonal skills and intercultural awareness, given that individuals from different cultures may have different perceptions of the same thing (Chu & Zeng, 2021). Therefore, EFL teachers as peacebuilders must educate students about how they produce language and its consequences, as well as the peaceful dimensions of language (Chu & Zeng, 2021). Research shows that the inclusion of multicultural strategies not only makes learning more meaningful but also contributes to peaceful coexistence (Castillo et al., 2020).

Teacher communication strategies for a harmonious classroom environment

Creating a lively and friendly classroom atmosphere between teachers and students is key to promoting effective interaction (Nurmawati et al., 2019; Ruswandi et al., 2024). This greatly depends on the communication strategies used by teachers. There are several effective teacher communication strategies for building a positive and harmonious learning environment. The first is the politeness

strategy, where the use of both positive and negative politeness strategies has been proven crucial in EFL classroom interactions. Positive politeness strategies focus on the positive side of students by showing interest and willingness to listen, encouraging students' willingness to communicate, and maximizing teacher-student interaction (Febriansyah et al., 2021). This creates positive interpersonal relationships and avoids potential conflicts (Mahmud, 2019; Rifai, 2022). Teachers often use praise, humor, and encouragement as forms of positive politeness (Ding, 2021; Rusdiah, 2017). The second communication strategy is constructive feedback and encouraging language, where effective teachers provide constructive feedback and use encouraging language rather than blaming language (Winanta et al., 2020). Positive, instructional, and non-blaming language is highly recommended to create a positive classroom atmosphere (Ozsezer & Saban, 2016). This includes giving praise as a good way to provide positive feedback on students' efforts and motivate them to learn better (Winanta et al., 2020). This strategy is also important for fostering students' emotional and cognitive engagement (Aliabadi & Weisi, 2023). The third is effective verbal and nonverbal communication, which involves not only what is said (verbal) but also how it is said (nonverbal) (Ruswandi et al., 2024). Teachers use verbal communication such as greetings, prayers, advice, calling students by name, giving feedback, and humor. Meanwhile, nonverbal communication includes enthusiasm in teaching, eye contact, body movements, vocal variation, smiling, relaxed posture, and appropriate physical contact (Rusdiah, 2017). The combination of both creates a more open and comfortable atmosphere for students (Winanta et al., 2020). Last is creating psychological safety, where effective teachers build psychological safety so that students are not afraid to make mistakes, see mistakes as a natural part of the learning process, and feel supported to take risks in language learning (Ding, 2021; Fu, 2021). Emphasizing that mistakes are normal in learning and creating a punishment-free environment are key to encouraging speaking courage (Ding, 2021).

Based on these communication categories, the data are identified and coded using indicators for each category. Politeness strategies are identified through the use of humor, praise, personal greetings, etc., while constructive feedback and encouraging language are analyzed by examining how teachers give constructive feedback, show appreciation, and motivate students, etc. Verbal communication is identified by recognizing the interaction in giving feedback, calling the students' names, etc. Meanwhile, psychological safety is analyzed through teachers' strategies of normalizing mistakes, providing reassurance, reducing the fear of making errors, and giving students opportunities to try again. Overall, the use of PDA provides a suitable framework for investigating how linguistic interactions in EFL classrooms can shape a peaceful and harmonious environment.

METHOD

Research design

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. The qualitative approach was chosen to enable exploration and comprehension of the phenomenon of peace discourse in the specific context of EFL classes. The case study design allows researchers to capture the complexity of verbal interactions that shape positive discourse, with a focus on interpreting meaning and sociocultural context (Komarawan et al., 2025). This design also allows for the identification and analysis of communication patterns that contribute to the creation of a harmonious classroom atmosphere.

Participants

Six English lecturers from a private university in Malang, Indonesia, participated in this study. Each lecturer consented to having their teaching and learning interactions recorded, and agreement regarding the use of the recordings as research data was established verbally.

Instruments

This study utilized audio recordings from the observed class sessions; these recordings served as the primary data source for discourse analysis, enabling transcription and a more in-depth micro-analysis of language use.

Data analysis procedures

Data analysis was conducted using PDA, specifically the framework developed by Martin (2004) and enriched by the perspectives of Bartlett (2012), Caldas-Coulthard and Coulthard (1996), Macgilchrist (2007), Martin and Rose (2007), Mosley and Rogers (2014), and Rogers (2018). This method was chosen for its ability to reveal how language use builds positive relationships, promotes constructive dialogue, and facilitates conflict resolution. The steps of data analysis include:

1. Data transcription: Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim to convert spoken data into written text that can be analyzed.
2. Coding and categorization: Transcripts were analyzed to identify patterns of positive discourse and communication strategies used by lecturers. The codes that emerged from the data include politeness strategies, constructive feedback and encouraging language, effective verbal and nonverbal communication, and creating psychological safety
3. Thematic analysis: After coding, a thematic analysis was conducted based on positive discourse themes.
4. Data interpretation: From the categorization, data were interpreted based on theory and context.

FINDINGS

Building recognition and positive learner identity

The discourse initiated by lecturers in the classroom demonstrates a form of recognition and fosters the development of a positive student identity. Positive remarks such as expressions of appreciation for students' work contribute positively to the students, as illustrated in the following data,

- A1.11 : *Itu bagus. Bagus sekali penelitianmu. Ya. You chose the right topic* (That's good. Your research is excellent. Yes. You chose the right topic)
- A2.8 : We appreciate your work. Applause.
- A5.13 : That's a good observation

The three data (A5.13) *That's a good observation* (A1.11) *Itu bagus. Bagus sekali penelitianmu. Ya. You chose the right topic* (That's good. Your research is excellent. Yes. You chose the right topic), and (A2.18) *We appreciate your work. Applause* demonstrates a pattern of lecturer communication that consistently acknowledges students' contributions and achievements. Within the politeness strategy (PS) framework, these three offer praise, appreciation, and recognition of the students' work to foster good manners. This function, however, becomes more significant when viewed in conjunction with constructive feedback and encouraging language (CFEL). The lecturer's praise is not merely generic; for instance, "*That's a good observation*" directs appreciation toward the student's intellectual contribution, while *You chose the right topic*" recognizes students' ability to make academic choices. In *We appreciate your work. Applause*, this recognition encompasses everything from individual assessments to public acknowledgment through the use of *we* and *applause*.

Concerning effective verbal/paralinguistic communication (EVPC), the use of simple and clear evaluations, employing intensifiers such as *bagus sekali* (excellent), and applause enhances the communicative effect of praise. This practice also contributes to creating psychological safety (CPS) when students receive recognition for their ideas, decisions, and efforts prior to any further evaluation or correction. Therefore, viewed holistically, these four categories demonstrate that a lecturer's positive statements are not merely a means to create a pleasant classroom atmosphere; rather, students are portrayed as individuals capable of making decisions and making valuable contributions to the academic community through repeated acts of recognition that focus on academic contributions. From the perspective of PDA, this pattern reflects the formation of a positive learner identity;

lecturers can view students as talented academic participants who are valued and recognized for their presence, rather than merely as recipients of instruction or objects of evaluation.

Building agency and empowerment

The discourse in classroom interaction constructs agency and the student's empowerment. This happens when students show doubt, uncertainty, or face difficulties in the teaching and learning process, as shown in the utterances below;

- A1.27 : *Pokoknya mau presentasi aja, mau maju aja. Nanti ada ide. Beneran. Believe me. Trust me.* (The main thing is just to give the presentation—to just get up there and do it. The ideas will come later. Seriously. Believe me. Trust me.)
- A3.31 : *Kalau kamu bisa, mau seberat apa pun ya tetap aja bisa* (If you're capable, then no matter how difficult it is, you can still do it.)
- A4.23 : It's ok, come here, let me show you... Come on, don't be like this; don't waste your time

The three utterances A1.27, A3.31, and A4.23 demonstrate a style of communication that encourages students to view themselves as capable of taking action in challenging or uncertain situations. Within the framework of PS, the lecturer uses language that fosters friendship and solidarity; for example, *Believe me, Trust me, and It's ok* to reduce interpersonal distance and provide reassurance. Related to CFEL, all three utterances do not focus on the student's shortcomings, but on their capabilities and the potential to proceed with the task. In the utterance *Ideas will come later*, for instance, the lecturer views the uncertainty of the presentation material as something students can learn from if they have the courage to take the initiative. A similar approach is evident in *If you are capable, then no matter how difficult it is, you can still do it*, where student ability is compared against the level of difficulty to ensure that difficulty is not equated with an inability to act. Meanwhile, *It's ok, come here, let me show you...* Combining efforts to calm the situation with offers of assistance ensures that the support goes beyond mere words.

From the perspective of EVPC, the use of imperatives, concise expressions, and code-switching *Believe me. Trust me* reinforces the persuasive and motivational impact of the utterances. Regarding the CPS, the lecturer indirectly acknowledges that students may experience doubt or difficulty without framing it as failure. Instead, by offering reassurance and assistance, the lecturer creates a safer environment for students to take risks and remain engaged in activities. From the perspective of PDA, what matters is not only the language used by the lecturer but also how that speech alters the students' positioning. They transform themselves from individuals who are hesitant or facing difficulties into individuals who possess choices, capabilities, and the capacity to act. Thus, the three data sets reveal a discursive movement from hesitation/difficulty to reassurance, perceived capability, and finally action, ultimately constructing the students as agentive, resilient, and empowered learners. Consequently, the PDA aspect of these findings lies in how the lecturer's language opens up and reinforces possibilities for action for the students, rather than simply in the positive nature of the words used.

Building collaboration and inclusion

The lecturers try to build collaboration with the students in the classroom. In the lecturer's discourse, they attempt to invite students to be their partners rather than just students. In the PDA perspective, this practice is very important to encourage students to be more active and collaborate in academic activities.

- A5.35 : Can you please show your work on the slide so we can check together?
- A2.36 : Come on. Let's check together.

The utterances “*Can you please show your work on the slide so we can check together?*” and “*Come on. Let's check together*” demonstrates how the lecturer frames the assignment review process as a joint

activity rather than a unilateral evaluation of the student's work. The phrase “*Can you please*” reflects positive politeness, as the directive is delivered in a mitigated manner that leaves room for the student to respond, while *we* and *let's* reduce the distance between lecturer and student by positioning both within the same activity. This pattern also illustrates CFEL, because the lecturer does not immediately point out errors or shortcomings in the students' work, but instead invites them to evaluate and consider the matter together. Regarding EVPC, the use of the word *together* in both utterances serves as a powerful linguistic marker, indicating a spirit of cooperation and collaboration. The expression *Come on* further encourages the student to participate actively.

Simultaneously, this communication pattern supports CPS; The review process is not an occasion where students face an authority figure looking for faults in their work. Instead, it is an opportunity for students to receive support to improve their work. From the perspective of PDA, this data is important because lecturers view students as partners in academic activities. The use of *we*, *let's*, and *together* creates a more discursive and inclusive relationship in which lecturers and students share responsibility for the review process. Thus, the discourse shifts from individual evaluation toward shared participation, ultimately constructing the student as an active, included, and collaborative academic participant. The positivity in this data, therefore, stems not primarily from words of praise, but from the way relationships and roles within the academic interaction are represented through inclusive and collaborative language.

Building psychological safety through emotional recognition

Lecturers' discourse also encourages the mental and emotional safety of the students. It helps students to be relaxed and confident in facing classroom activities. The lecturers try to understand the students' condition by asking about their feelings and giving praise, as in the following utterances,

- A1.14 : Take a deep breath,
A5.15 : Are you guys happy?
A4.16 : *Kenapa kok resah-gelisah gitu?* (Why are you so restless and uneasy?)
A2.17 : Next, if you meet Pak Yunus, you can show him your questionnaire. *Oke?*
Yakin? Jangan galau-galau. Kalau galau nanti gak ngerjain. Kalau ini sekarang sudah oke, apa masih galau? Apa yang membuat galau? (Next, if you meet Mr. Yunus, you can show him your questionnaire. Okay? Are you sure? Don't be nervous. If you're nervous, you won't be able to do it. If it's okay now, are you still nervous? What's bothering you?)
A3.29 : *Kenapa kok nggak yakin? Bagus sekali itu.* (Why aren't you sure? That's excellent.)

The data demonstrates that the lecturer's attention extends beyond mere task completion to encompass the students' emotional state during the learning process. Expressions such as *Take a deep breath* and questions like *Are you guys happy?* or *What is making you anxious?* exemplify the CPS by acknowledging that emotions and doubts are valid subjects for classroom discussion. Lecturers first take the opportunity to understand the reasons behind students' anxiety; they do not dismiss that anxiety or immediately shift the discussion to academic tasks. This strategy is reinforced by positive politeness (PS) manifested through informal greetings, personal questions, and expressions that foster rapport, while CFEL appears when student doubts are met with reassurance and confirmation that the work is actually on the right track, as seen in the remark, *why aren't you sure? That's actually very good.* Consequently, a student's weaknesses or uncertainties cannot be used as grounds for assigning them a negative assessment. Regarding EVPC, the variety of speech forms ranging from brief instructions, questions, and repetitions to informal expressions like *galau* (anxious/troubled) creates a communicative style that is responsive to the students' emotional state.

From the perspective of PDA, the process of reframing doubt is a prominent component. Doubt is viewed as a temporary state that can be acknowledged, discussed, and overcome, rather than as a sign of incompetence. The question *What is making you anxious?* even empowers the students, giving them a voice and the right to articulate their own learning experiences. When that question was

subsequently followed by the remark *That's excellent*, a discursive shift occurs—moving from emotional uncertainty toward acknowledgment, reassurance, and, ultimately, the re-establishment of participation. Consequently, the sense of security observed in this study does not stem solely from the friendly language used by the lecturer; rather, it arises from a discourse that enables students to remain competently engaged, even when grappling with doubt or emotional pressure. In this way, classroom interaction fostered students who felt emotionally acknowledged, confident, and willing to participate, while positioning emotional vulnerability as compatible with the learning process—rather than as a weakness to be concealed.

Building a development-oriented academic identity

Positive discourse also appears in the way lecturers shape the students' achievement as a part of their development. Lecturers not only give appreciation but also give lectures through this discourse, such as recognition, direction, and hope for the future. Based on those perspectives, lecturers see students as developing entity, has capability and can continue into the future, as stated in the data below,

- A1.32 : *Ini kritikal diskursus analisis tentang representasi budaya juga. Jadi, temukan produk itu lebih banyak.* (This is also a critical discourse analysis regarding cultural representation. So, look for more of those products)
- A1.33 : *Bagus itu, tinggal disiapkan instrumennya.* (That's great; the instruments just need to be prepared.)
- A1.34 : *Kamu telah membuat kemajuan yang baik. Kamu telah menemukan pembimbing dan juga judul kamu sudah diperbaiki sekarang. Kamu bisa terus bekerja di draf kamu, tetapi pastikan kamu semua mengisi matriks penelitian, ya?* (You have made good progress. You have found a supervisor, and your title has now been revised. You can continue working on your draft, but make sure you fill out the research matrix, okay?)

This interaction reveals an interesting communication pattern, as lecturers do not consider the academic process concluded simply because students have produced commendable work. Instead, they view student achievements as a foundation for further development. This is clearly evident in the remark, *That's good; now the instruments just need to be prepared*, where the recognition of an idea's quality is immediately followed by guidelines for subsequent action. The pattern demonstrates a blend of PS and CFEL. Lecturers do not state academic expectations or immediately emphasize students' weaknesses; instead, they choose to begin their feedback by acknowledging the students' achievements. In the phrase *You have made good progress*, for instance, the student's advancement is made explicit through the verb choice *have made*, while *You can continue working on your draft* opens up a future-oriented perspective. From the standpoint of EVPC, constructions such as *just need to...*, *can continue...*, and *will...* provide clear direction regarding subsequent steps while maintaining an optimistic tone. Elements of CPS arise because failure is not viewed as failure, but rather as a normal part of the refinement process. Even the phrase *We can look into that further later*, positions learning as a continuous process rather than a requirement to master a topic instantly.

From the perspective of PDA, the strength of this data lies in how lecturers construct narratives regarding student progress. Students are defined by what they have achieved rather than by what remains unfinished. Discursively, students are viewed as developing academic agents capable of refining and continuing their work, as well as taking responsibility for it. In other words, a positive orientation toward data stems from more than just rewards such as *good* or *great*. However, from the perspective of lecturers, a student's academic journey is portrayed as a dynamic growth process filled with various opportunities. This demonstrates that PDA in classroom interactions can operate through the formation of a progressive academic identity—one oriented toward potential and the future—rather than merely through positive assessments of current achievements.

DISCUSSION

This study aims to investigate how English as a foreign language (EFL) lecturers in Indonesia use language to create a harmonious classroom atmosphere. The findings indicate that the use of polite, positive, or supportive language is not the only way Indonesian EFL students and their teachers engage in positive discourse during learning interactions. The way teachers position students within academic interactions is actively shaped by their communication practices. Lecturers employ language aligned with five identified themes: recognition and positive learner identity, agency and empowerment, collaboration and inclusion, psychological safety, and development-oriented academic identity. They demonstrate that their language shapes students into individuals who are competent, capable of action, valued, engaged, and continuously developing. Consequently, these findings shift the focus from what lecturers say to how their utterances shape students' identities, relationships, and potential actions, thereby broadening the understanding of positive classroom communication.

The first finding regarding the building of recognition and a positive learner identity indicates that acknowledging students' contributions is an important positive discourse. Utterances such as *That's a good observation, you chose the right topic*, and *We appreciate your work* serve not merely as praise but as an acknowledgment of the quality of the students' thinking, academic choices, and efforts. This finding relates to research on Student Voice, which aims to reduce disagreement and build constructive interpersonal relationships between teachers and students (Adhari et al., 2022; Fu, 2021). These research findings broaden the perspective that recognition also serves an identity-forming function.

The second finding concerns building agency and empowerment. It demonstrates that positive discourse is also employed to transform doubt into the courage to act. Utterances such as *Believe me. Trust me, if you're capable, then no matter how difficult it is, you can still do it*, and *It's ok, come here, let me show you*, illustrate how lecturers provide encouragement, reassurance, and assistance when students face doubt or difficulties. These findings relate to the concepts of scaffolding and criticism mitigation when the teacher provides gradual assistance without using students' mistakes or limitations as grounds to blame them (Fu, 2021). The function of the utterance extends beyond the mere provision of assistance; discursively, the language employed by the lecturer shifts the student's position from one of hesitation to one of capability for action. This demonstrates a discursive progression from hesitation to reassurance, and subsequently to confidence and agency. The results indicate that everyday interactions can enhance empowerment in the classroom. For instance, when teachers use positive language with students, it enables them to address issues and take action. This supports the argument that positive discourse may reduce conflict and foster collaboration, signs that peace has been established within the classroom (Heriyawati et al., 2019).

The next finding is building collaboration and inclusion, which is clearly evident in the use of expressions such as *we can check together* and *let's check together*. The use of *we*, *let's*, and *together* signifies more than mere politeness; these words transform the task review process from a one-way activity into a collaborative effort between teacher and student. These practices are in line with the importance of promoting constructive dialogue among students from diverse backgrounds, which is a key component of positive discourse analysis in building harmony (Efendi et al., 2023). By encouraging collaboration, teachers not only increase student active participation (Nurmawati et al., 2019), but also proactively build positive relationships and facilitate conflict resolution in the classroom, which is in line with multicultural insights to reduce conflicts among students (Sunarwi & Amin, 2025).

Furthermore, findings regarding the construction of psychological safety through emotional recognition indicate that students' emotional states are taken into account during academic interactions. Utterances such as *Take a deep breath, What is troubling you?* and *why are you so restless and uneasy?* That is actually excellent demonstrate that lecturers do not overlook students' doubts, anxiety, or uncertainty. Conversely, the condition is recognized, inquired about, and addressed through reassurance. This finding is in line with Shi's (2021) study that maintaining students' self-esteem and building psychological security are fundamental prerequisites for achieving optimal learning outcomes. When that question was subsequently followed by an affirmation such as *That's excellent*, the students'

uncertainty did not transform into a negative identity. Students continue to be viewed as individuals capable of participation. This pattern demonstrates that positive discourse can foster a relational environment that encourages participation and mitigates potential conflict during classroom interactions. This concept is linked to efforts to build peace within the classroom (Heriyawati et al., 2019).

Recent findings regarding the construction of a development-oriented academic identity indicate that lecturers tend to frame the academic process as an evolving journey. This is evident in remarks such as *That's good; the instruments just need to be prepared* and *You've made good progress... You can continue working on your draft*. This pattern aligns with research on the use of scaffolding, constructive feedback, and the mitigation of criticism (Fu, 2021). These findings further reinforce a developmental orientation regarding student identity, viewing students as individuals who are evolving, possess potential, and have the capacity to continue their academic journeys. This pattern illustrates a developmental trajectory that begins with achievements and culminates in a future characterized by diverse possibilities and ongoing growth.

This way demonstrates the importance of understanding how language influences students' perceptions and experiences (Safitri et al., 2023), as well as how linguistic choices can promote inclusivity and a sense of belonging among learners (Trinaldi et al., 2022). In a multicultural context such as Indonesia (Prayitno et al., 2018) the ability of teachers to adapt communication strategies to students' emotional states and backgrounds is important for mitigating tension and supporting transformative peace (Heriyawati et al., 2019).

Overall, the conceptual model linking positive discourse with indicators of peace in the classroom, such as conflict reduction, increased collaboration, and acceptance of diversity (Heriyawati et al., 2019) has proven to be relevant and implementable in teaching practice. This effective communication practice is not only about knowledge transfer, but also about forming a solid foundation for transformative peace among students through supportive and inclusive verbal interactions (Allo et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

Positive classroom interaction forms the foundation of effective language learning; however, research on classroom discourse rarely analyzes specifically how lecturers' language choices shape socio-emotional dynamics within the classroom. This study aims to identify English lecturers' communication strategies that contribute to positive interaction. The analysis revealed four integrated themes of positive discourse: fostering learner recognition and positive identity; building agency and empowerment; establishing collaboration and inclusion; and creating psychological safety through emotional acknowledgment. Lecturers implemented these themes by validating student contributions, providing effective scaffolding alongside criticism mitigation, fostering inclusive collaborative empowerment, enforcing rules with politeness and contextual flexibility, and remaining responsive to students' emotional needs. The findings indicate that these practices form an integrated communication pattern that consistently creates a safe, supportive, and harmonious classroom environment. Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on classroom discourse by demonstrating that lecturers' language serves as a tool for constructing identity and learning agency, rather than merely transmitting linguistic content. Practical implications include: (1) concrete guidelines for lecturers to design supportive communication strategies; (2) a foundation for developing teacher training programs that emphasize interpersonal communication competence. Socially, the findings reveal the mechanisms by which positive discourse reduces language anxiety, enhances emotional well-being, and encourages active participation from less confident students, thereby contributing to positive change within the language learning community. Future research should expand the scope across institutions and cultural contexts to test the generalizability of the findings; integrate multimodal data (video) to capture the non-verbal dimensions of positive discourse; and explore students' perceptions of the lecturers' communication strategies and conduct a longitudinal study to measure the long-term impact on learning outcomes and motivation. Future research is expected to yield an

evidence-based classroom communication model that is scalable and adaptable to various language teaching contexts in higher education institutions.

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