

FORMAL AND INTERACTIVE LECTURES: PROS, CONS, AND TEACHING ALTERNATIVES

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Abstract: The article under research has been devoted to the lecture and types of lectures that are important today to get and share information about a particular subject in higher educational establishments. The purpose of the article is to define the lecture, to differentiate types of a lecture, to point out some pros of interactive and cons of formal lectures, and to try to give some practical recommendations to make lectures interactive and productive. The article also states out specific features of lectures, other types of lectures today together with formal types. The results of the study showed the role of interactive lectures, how they are more enjoyable and communicative for students to gain theoretical knowledge at the institutions. There were suggested the useful tips to organize lectures and some effective techniques of interactive lectures. The article under consideration might be interesting to instructors, lecturers, and scholars who conduct lectures for students at higher educational establishments and help how to stay on top on their professions and subjects.

Keywords: a lecture (formal, interactive), lecture materials, cooperative learning strategies, brainstorming, buzz lecturing, task-based learning, a lecturer

Introduction

Lectures are always looked upon as a necessary but a very boring part of any study till now. It is because that lectures have been carried out only in formal character, this type of communication is characterized as a monologue addressed by one person to many, and often prepared in advance. Words are used with precision, the vocabulary is elaborate.

Let's try to define the lecture. According to business dictionary, “**A lecture** is formal presentation by an expert in the subject matter that may be followed by a question-and-answer session.” According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, “**A lecture** (from the French 'lecture', meaning 'reading' [process]) is an oral presentation intended to present information or teach people about a particular subject, for example by a university or college teacher. Lectures are used to convey critical information, history, background, theories, and equations. A politician's speech, a minister's sermon, or even a businessman's sales presentation may be similar in form to a lecture. Usually the lecturer will stand at the front of the room

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and recite information relevant to the lecture's content.” According to Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners (2007), “**A lecture** is a talk to a group of people about a particular subject, especially at a college or university.” **A**

lecture is: the act of reading; a discourse on any subject; especially, a formal or methodical discourse, intended for instruction; a reprimand or formal reproof from one having authority; a rehearsal of a lesson. **Lectures** are a straightforward way to provide information knowledge to students quickly. In a lecture, instructors have a greater control over what is being taught in the classroom because they are the sole source of information.

Necessity is said to be the mother of invention. In recent years necessity has forced language teachers and educational experts to formulate innovative and exciting methods of language teaching that may be employed effectively with large classes. My sole objective in presenting the given article is to define the lecture, to differentiate types of a lecture, to point out some pros of interactive and cons of formal lectures, and to try to reach some possible conclusions.

There are many factors, requirements to be taken into account when presenting lecture materials and assessing the students' knowledge on the given theme, theory.

The lecture on the higher educational establishments is considered to be both one of the organization forms of learning and methods of studying. The possible aims of the lecture are:

- to formulate the systematic notion about the subject;
- to handle the students with scientific cognition;
- to supply future specialists with the rules and regulations concerning the given scientific-practical sphere;
- to provide a summary of the key items or terms;
- to link the students experience with learning;
- to make learning two-way process;
- to encourage the students verbalize their thoughts and ideas clearly;
- to organize lectures student-oriented;
- to have the students work cooperatively to share their knowledge of a lecture.

Before presenting a lecture on one theoretical discipline the lecturer should be asked some of the most important questions:

- Does the material of the lecture match learner objectives?
- Is the material student-oriented or teacher-oriented?
- Is the material devoted to interactive learning?
- Is the material socio-culturally appropriate?
- Is the material up-to-date?
- Is the text of the lecture and comparison input suits the level of the students in the classroom?
- Does the material attract the students' attention and visually attractive?
- Is the language of the lecture text easy to write and to understand?
- Is the material relevant to real life?
- Does the teacher give reasonably accurate answers to students' questions?

- Does the teacher use checking (questioning, elicitation) techniques to focus students' attention?
- Does the teacher's voice vary sufficiently to make her meaning clear and command students' attention?
- Is there given facts of contemporary scholars? or very many questions.

Literature review

A lecture itself and conducting lectures comes from the 14th century, but at that time the purpose of a lecture was just reading, an action of reading. The person presenting the lecture was called a reader because information in a book was read to students who would then copy the information all down. From time to time, the mode of a lecture has been changing. Even if to compare the lectures in the 20th century and conducting lectures today, in the 21st century is much more different. Several years ago when I was a student we came to the lecture just to listen to the lecturer, to take notes, that was all. Our task was to attend the lectures and follow the formal reading prepared by the scholar. Many lecturers were, and still are, accustomed to simply reading their own notes from the lectern for exactly that purpose. Nevertheless, modern lectures generally incorporate additional activities, e.g. writing on a chalk-board, exercises, class questions and discussions, or student presentations, scientific discussions, task-based learning, and solution of scientific problems.

Today, lecturing is a teaching method that involves, primarily, an oral presentation given by an instructor to a body of students. Many lectures are accompanied by some sort of visual aid, such as a slideshow, a word document, an image, or a film. Some teachers may even use a whiteboard or a chalkboard to emphasize important points in their lecture, but a lecture doesn't require any of these things in order to qualify as a lecture. As long as there is an authoritative figure (in any given context) at the front of a room, delivering a speech to a crowd of listeners, this is a lecture.

The use of innovative technologies has changed the form of lectures. There are a lot of opportunities to conduct 50 minutes or one hour class staying at a top. A lecturer can use a video, graphs, charts, images, PowerPoint Presentations, websites, internet, flashcards, and overhead projectors to make their formal readings more powerful and productive.

There several types of lectures that can be done at the university or institutions which are popular today. They are formal or typical, interactive, video, buzz lectures.

During a formal or typical lecture, an instructor stands before a class and present information for the students to learn. Students are expected to listen and take notes during formal lectures, and there is limited interaction and exchange between teacher and student (Kunanbaeva, 2005).

Interactive lectures are classes in which the lecturer interacts with learners, tries to involve each of them to participate in learning process and breaks the lecture at least once per class to have students participate in an activity that lets

them work directly with the material. The goal of interactive lecture is to engage students by finding ways for them to interact with the content, the instructor, and their groupmates. Accordingly, interactive lectures include segments of lecture *combined with* segments where students interact. One of the things that make the lecture interactive is the ability of the instructor to choose the content of the lecture segments based on the students' needs (Wenzel, 1999).

A **video lecture** is essentially an educational video; an academic lecture of the type given at university level, recorded and published online. **Video lecture** is a kind of asymmetric video conference, during which a distant speaker and his listeners interact with each other by means of video conferencing solutions. Video lectures can be performed in a form of a multi-point video conferencing (speaker and a group of remote students), as well as in one-on-one mode (speaker and the audience in a hall). In contrast to video broadcasting or video streaming, video lecture involves more interaction with the rest of the participants. Apart from the fact that the speaker is broadcasted to a wide audience, he has the ability to control the attention of the audience by watching all of the participants on a computer screen. That is why this video conferencing mode is often used in distance learning, where the audio-visual contact with students is important for the teacher (trueconf.com).

Buzz lecture is a way of encouraging participants to listen or read carefully and of checking their retention of input. In this technique the lecture or reading is paused from time to time and participants talk in twos or threes to summarize to each other what the lecturer has just said or the section of the article that they have just read (<https://mycourses.nile-elt.com>).

First, some disappointing news for those of us who lecture: lectures are ineffective, as compared to other teaching methods, for teaching values, inspiring interest, developing personalities, or instilling behavioral skills. So why lecture? That's the central question in Donald Bligh's *What's the Use of Lectures?* The answer seems simple enough: "Use lectures to teach information. Do not rely on them to promote thought, change attitudes, or develop behavioral skills if you can help it". The logical question to ask next is "How can a lecture best teach information?" Bligh offers eight principles to follow for using lectures to teach information.

- Make the lecture meaningful to the students. Lectures are easier to comprehend when they connect with students' everyday realities.
- Use "whole learning" to teach understanding and "part learning" to teach specific information. In my course on American society and popular culture, I open each lecture by asking students to think sociologically about the topic at hand and to identify important sociological research questions ("whole learning"). I then move to "part learning" as I teach the specific findings of research that has been conducted in particular areas.
- Organize the subject. Summaries, overviews, and concept can provide an overarching narrative for each lecture. The syllabus and the construction of exams, papers, and assignments provide a similar narrative for the entire semester. This

level of organization aids student learning by connecting the specific components of the course together into a comprehensible whole.

- Put new information to use swiftly. Quizzes, short papers, discussions, and assignments provide an opportunity for students to put new knowledge to work, thus improving their retention.

- Use repetition within lectures. State the key points at the beginning and at the end. Repeat the definitions of concepts and important conclusions often.

- Frequently provide feedback on learning. Students learn better when they know how to evaluate their own progress. Testing knowledge early and often improves student learning.

- Keep students alert. (Poor posture indicates low student attention.) Mix up visual and auditory stimulation. Provide an element of novelty in each lecture. Interject your lecture with "change-ups" that will energize your students' attention spans

- Connect new concepts to previous lectures. By drawing on previous knowledge to teach new information, you reinforce the earlier concept while making the new information easier to learn (Bligh, 2000).

Data and methodology

In order to analyze aforesaid issues I would like to give some *pros of interactive lectures* in comparison with formal ones. Among its outstanding features of interactive lectures are:

- 1. It is two-way process not only teacher-oriented, but it is also student-oriented.** Both the lecturer and students are involved in a lecture. There are some activities which the lecturer can use. For example, brainstorming questions – at the beginning of the lecture, before the presentation of the theme you will give a list of questions (approximately 8-10 questions) to check what the students already know about the topic. It does not matter if the students know the answer or not, because at the end of the lecture you ask the questions once more and check if they can answer accurately; ranking activities – students in groups rank qualities, factors, or items from the most important to the least important; categorizing – students have a list of ideas, facts. They must divide into related categories; problem solving – students are given a problem and cases to study and then they must come up with a solution.

- 2. It gives the students much-needed practice in the listening, writing and at the same time, speaking skills.** Students are able to develop all four (reading, listening, writing, speaking) skills during the lecture.

- 3. It creates good rapport between the teacher and the students.** The relationship between a teacher and students is based on trust and respect. This atmosphere is not easy to create in the short time available to you during the lecture. In order to have good relationship with students during the lecture you should have realistic expectations of your students and be organized and methodical, use a clear speaking voice with sufficient volume to be heard at the back of the class, but do not speak more loudly than is necessary and control your

pace of speaking, always face the students whilst you speak. If you are writing on the blackboard, cease and turn to address the students when making explanations.

Remember that we all respond better to praise, encouragement and fairness than to criticism and doubt. Also performance must always be related to ability. Therefore, praise not only good work but also substantial effort.

4. It links lessons or parts of lessons. You try to find out the links of the subject, the time of the lecture with other disciplines and themes. At the middle or end of the lecture you come again to the beginning of the lecture, giving questions about the parts of the lecture, the list of literature, aims and principles of the lecture to make a conclusion of the lecture. You point out the theme, subthemes in order to make a revision of the lecture again with the help of the learners.

5. It makes learners get prepared to the lecture in advance. The theme of the lecture the lecturer is presenting will not be new to learners, because in order to take part in question-answer process, sharing information or discussion of some typical or pragmatic-professional tasks they got ready beforehand. It helps to reteach where necessary.

6. Some cooperative learning skills can be developed. Students learn how to cooperate effectively with others working in large or small groups. Students can cooperate and talk to each other face-to-face. Cooperative learning gives the students the opportunity to work one-to-one with others in class. Through this activity, students become better acquainted with each other and begin to feel more comfortable sharing personal ideas and values. Two benefits from using cooperative techniques are:

a) academic achievement – it gives a significant possible effect on student learning; higher-order cognitive skills are best improved by the more open-ended methods;

b) self-esteem – it is assumed that students in cooperative groups will feel more liked by their groupmates because of the increased opportunities to interact (Kral, 1996).

7. It gives an opportunity to solve problems. As it is two-way process in interactive lectures students have an opportunity to solve typical, pragmatic-professional tasks to get ready at every lesson to the final examination. According to the main topics of the lecture the teacher prepares some tasks to be done during the intended time to cover the subject area. For example, compare and contrast with your mother tongue; analyze the given word, phrases, sentences; state out, categorize; show the differences, etc.

8. One of the things that makes the lecture interactive is the ability of the instructor to choose the content of the lecture segments based on the students' needs. If students have difficulty answering a question, or an activity goes astray in many or most student groups, it's time to find a new and better way to deal with the material.

9. Students rate a more interactive and student-centered lecturing style as more likely to imply a higher degree of learning.

Bearing all this in mind, I would like to describe some *cons of formal lectures* have been used as a way of conducting lectures by most teachers of the universities. There are some examples:

1. It is one-way process only oriented to a teacher. It is in the form of monologue addressed from one person to many. Students are not involved in this process, the teacher prepares a text of the lecture and presents it before the class. Lectures categorized as teacher-centered. They do not provide the opportunities for students to formulate many questions, initiate topics, or challenge one another's thinking.

2. It develops only listening and if the students wish writing skills of the students. If they do not wish they do not make notes.

3. It does not create any relationships between a teacher and students. Here the teacher has a lecture mode, machine-like character, see themselves as omniscient and patronizing. The teacher remains aloof, somewhat unapproachable to his or her students, partly the cause of the formal atmosphere of the classroom (Amirzhanova, 2005).

4. It does not encourage cooperative activity. Students work independently and compete for recognition with their peers.

5. It does not attract students. It is boring, some students have an opportunity to sleep and not to follow the procedure of the lecture. Students can be busy with their own business. Some students may find lectures boring; the length can cause them to lose interest. Because the instructor does all the talking, students may not feel that they are able to ask questions as they arise during lectures.

6. Students do not get prepared to the lectures as they know it is not assessed, they are not obliged to answer these questions, share information or knowledge on the given topics.

7. Students who are not auditory learners or have other learning styles may not be as engaged by lectures. Such students may have a harder time absorbing the material. Students who are weak in note-taking skills may have trouble summarizing or in identifying the main points they should remember from lectures.

8. Passive: Not only do people see the lecture method as a biased, one-way road, but they also see it as a wholly passive experience for students. Not being actively engaged in a discussion over certain material can make the material itself seem worthless to a student (Rob, 2010).

Findings and Results

No doubt interactive lectures attract students, help to encourage the students' outlook on the discussed topics, materials. It is important to encourage students' interest in the lectures using this type of the lecture. The following tips which I will give help the lecturers to stay on top.

The useful tips:

- Lecture notes, questions for discussion should be prepared as thoroughly as possible; they are to provide you with the structure and content of your lecture.

- Use audiovisual aids as realia (things we use every day), tape recorder, flash cards, overhead projector, handouts. Ensure that you have suitable alternative material available to give a fully prepared and purposeful lesson.

- To develop cooperative learning skills at the lectures keep in mind the following assumptions: 1) cooperative skills must be learned, because most students have not been taught to work effectively with others, they cannot do it; 2) the physical and spatial arrangement of the classroom affects cooperative work, if students in classes are to cooperate, activities must be structured so that students can cooperate and talk to each other. They need to talk face-to-face; 3) peer support and group dynamics are the keys to successful group work. The members in the group are the ones who determine how well the group will function.

- To prepare typical and pragmatic-professionally oriented tasks in advance according to the presented theme. There are some examples of typical and professionally oriented tasks.

Typical tasks: give the scheme, table or diagram of something; compare and contrast some notions; choose the correct equivalence of something; supply with information; fill in the gaps with necessary term or word; point out the main criteria; pick up the examples of something; match the terms with their definitions; put in correct order, etc.

Professionally-oriented tasks: make an analysis of something; make up the theme or subthemes of the lecture; make a survey of something; make up a multiple-choice test, puzzles, crosswords, dictations; write out a part of a lecture, the seminar plan; give a report of something and categorize; find out similarities and differences; explain the typical associations; choose one notion and give important features; make a research work on something; comment on the theoretical and practical importance, etc.

- To create special quality to the teaching or conducting a lecture:
 - a) flexibility of voice, profile and pace
 - b) the empowerment of students through profile, elicitation and relinquishing control
 - c) an ability to link lessons or parts of lessons
 - d) an ability to teach more than just a subject.

Here are some samples of typical and pragmatic-professional tasks on theoretical courses:

Table 1 - Some samples of typical and pragmatic-professional tasks on theoretical courses

Typical tasks	Pragmatic-professional tasks
1. Fill in the gaps with missed functions of a word. After characterize each function according to their importance <i>A word hasfunctions</i>	1. Explain the logical associations in the following groups of meaning for the same words. Define the type of transference

- 1) *nominative*
- 2) _____
- 3) *significative*
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____

2. Match the classification types with the morphemes. Explain your choice

- 1) *According to the role*
 - a) *prefix, suffix, infix*
- 2) *According to the position*
 - b) *lexical, grammatical*
- 3) *According to the functions*
 - c) *simple, stylistic, pragmatic*
- 4) *General classification*
 - d) *productive, non-productive*
- 5) *According to the meaning*
 - e) *functional, derivational*
 - f) *denotational,*

connotational
g) *roots, affixes*

3. Match the types of compound words with their definitions and explain your choice

- 1) *neutral*
- 2) *morphological*
- 3) *syntactic*

which has taken place.

A. *The wing of a bird-the wing of a building; the eye of a man-the eye of a needle; the hand of a child-the hand of a clock; the heart of a man-the heart of the matter; the bridge across the river-the bridge of the nose; the tongue of a person-the tongue of a bell; the tooth of a boy-the tooth of a comb; the coat of a girl-the coat of a dog.*

B. *green grass-green years; black shoes-black despair; nickel (metal)-a nickel (coin); glass-a glass; copper (metal)-a copper (coin); Ford (proper name)-a Ford (car); Damascus (town in Syria)-damask; Kashmir (town in North India)-cashmere*

2. There are given some examples of semantic change. Explain what type of semantic change do they belong. Prove your answer and give the differentiating features
e.g. knight-originally meant a boy, then a young servant, then a military servant, then a noble man
marshal-originally meant a horse man, now it is the highest military rank

e.g. villain-originally meant working on a villa, now it means a scoundrel

gossip-originally meant god parent, now a chat one's personal life or matters

3. You have already known about antonyms and types of it. The following group of words do not belong to the types of antonyms we have discussed at all, but they

4) idiomatic

a) the compounds whose meaning do not correspond to the separate meanings of their constituent parts

b) the compounds which are realized without any linking elements by mere two stems

c) the compounds in which two compounding stems are combined by a linking vowel or consonant

d) the compounds which keep articles, prepositions and adverbs in their structure

are opposites. Your task is to explain what are they and match the examples with the types of opposites.

1) Gradable antonyms

2) Complementary antonyms

3) Mixed antonyms

4) Converseness

a) Kind-cruel-unkind, wise-stupid-silly-unwise, active-passive-inactive

b) Large-small, happy-sad, wet-dry

c) Single-married, first-last, alive-dead

d) Over-under, buy-sell, wife-husband

Some effective techniques of interactive lectures:

- **Question of the day** exercises are short activities for the beginning of class that engage students with the lecture material in a short project that requires students to think actively about the content. The instructor poses a question that is generally not multiple-choice but rather requires short explanations, annotations, calculations, or drawings that develop communication skills as well as higher-level thinking.

- **Buzz lecturing.** Give the students selected reading issues on the discussed topic or theme or subtheme of the lecture. Students should work in twos or threes and discuss the reading or question, then one student from the group starts speaking and from time to time stops to listen to other students' opinion and continues arguing or summarizing what she/he said and criticizes others' views.

- **Short writing.** At the beginning of each lecture the lecturer asks students to take a half piece of paper and ask them write answers to questions asked by him/her in brief. A teacher reads the question and the students just write the key. After they have written the teacher gives the correct answer, students self-check and a teacher organizes a small talk to work on mistakes.

- **ConcepTest** questions are conceptual multiple choice questions that are used to assess student understanding. Students work on the questions individually. These questions can be used to promote higher-level thinking such as analysis, critical thinking, and synthesis. As these questions take little time, a lecturer can ask several in a class period. They provide a quick objective assessment of students' prior knowledge or of how much of the class understood your lecture.

- **Problem solving.** Ask the students read the incident or situation/problem and describe it. List statements of inference. Relate the behaviors from their perspective. Later ask them try to give possible solutions and justify their answers.

- **Task-based learning activities** (*comparing, problem-solving, classifying, sorting, surveying the issues discussed in the lecture*).

- *Scientific discussion. Students are given an issue/topic/theme to present in class. One student presents his or her topic/issue in front of the class, others should listen to. After the presentation the listeners ask questions related to the topic. The presenter answers and gives examples, proof. Other students should give their ideas on the issue from their perspective. At the end the students summarize the topic/issue with the help of the lecturer. Then the second student continues with her or his presentation.*

- **K-W-L chart.** Divide into three groups and before presenting the topic/theme ask the students fill in the “K” column to share as a group what they **KNOW** about the subject/issue. After fill in the “W” column what they **WANT TO KNOW** about the given topic/issue. After having read the article they fill in the “L” column to share what they **LEARNED** about the topic/issue.

- **Question-Answer Session.** Asking effective questions to be answered by students. Here students can ask questions from each other or the lecturer asks questions to check background knowledge of the students, to lead to the topic, to hint to the terms or issues to be studied in class.

- Role playing activities put the student in the position of a relevant decision maker forcing them to apply the content to determine a policy or solve a problem. This often calls upon higher order thinking skills and the synthesis of ideas and when students do this it groups, negotiation skills become important as well.

Conclusion

I feel that the important mode of a lecture as new ways of conducting a lecture in language learning classrooms has great potential as teaching device. It creates self-confidence in students and encourages them to participate confidently and successfully in class. Further, it builds up the students-confidence for future real-life situations when they put their theory to actual use. Interactive type of lecture is most helpful because the learner receives a good deal of individual attention and can link the theory with practice.

All of the activities used to make lectures interactive involve a learning curve for both instructors and students. Instructors must learn how to develop good questions, analyze the student responses, and incorporate that information into the following lecture segment or the next class period. As with many active-learning techniques, interactive lectures may take longer to cover any given topic than non-interactive ones. Mazur (1997) recommends that the lecturer save time by only going over more difficult and important material rather than duplicating the coverage of the textbook.

Making lectures interactive by including interactive techniques can:

- foster active engagement and accountability;
- promote student retention and learning of the material presented during lecture;
- give students practice in developing critical-thinking skills; and
- enable instructors to assess how well the class is learning that day.

Rather than having only individual students answer questions when called on, interactive techniques allow *all* students to participate. This engagement leads to deeper learning and retention. Interactive lectures promote deep learning, foster student engagement, imply a higher degree of learning, and interactive activities can engage students in many different ways with varying contexts and learning goals.

Of course, this type of lecture is not a new idea for many methodologists, but hardly ever this is used in language learning classrooms in our country. Most of the teachers prefer traditional formal lectures to interactive ones because they never consider changing teaching style and do not want to realize. They are lack of new, innovative methods as teaching. If this article can inspire others who are more qualified to take an interest in the interactive lecture as a teaching device, it will have fulfilled my chief own in writing it.

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