

TEACHER'S STRATEGIES IN TEACHING SPEAKING TO STUDENTS AT SECONDARY LEVEL

Agung Ginanjar Anjaniputra*
agung.ginanjar.anjaniputra@gmail.com

*Graduated in February 2013 from English Education Study Program of Indonesia University of Education

Abstract: This study is aimed at portraying teacher's strategies in teaching speaking to students at secondary level and recognizing students' response towards the strategies by involving an English teacher and a class of 22 students. In collecting the data, classroom observation and interview were conducted to identify the strategies of teaching speaking, and questionnaire was administered to the students to gain the data about their response towards the strategies under the umbrella of descriptive research. The result revealed that the strategies used by the teacher were cooperative activities, role-play, creative tasks, and drilling. In the meantime, students' response towards the strategies resulted in positive attitude as they responded that the strategies helped them to speak, as well as concerned oral production of students whose participation was emphasized.

Keywords: *Teaching strategies, the teaching of speaking, secondary level*

Introduction

The teaching of speaking is having high concern in many language programs and teaching strategies cannot be denied as a factor influencing the teaching outcome. Strategies employed to achieve the ability to write and speak would be different because the goals of each skill are not the same. The former is concerned with the ability to produce written language, whereas the latter mainly focuses on producing oral language. Moreover, the strategies for teaching the English skills should be made appropriate for each skill in order to attain the expected outcomes. Regarding strategies for teaching speaking, it is ironic that, based on experience of the researcher during studying in high school, most of students of secondary school were not able to speak English. Furthermore, those who graduated from secondary school do not have sufficient ability for English speaking as the teaching of English in Indonesia is considered unsuccessful (Nur, 2004; Renandya, 2004; as cited in Cahyono and Widiati, 2011).

As Reiser and Dick (1996) argue that teachers can use different strategies of teaching to achieve teaching-learning goals and objectives. It is correspondingly asserted by Cole (2008) that it is the teacher's role to provide effective plans/strategies in accomplishing students' educational needs, whose general purpose is to communicate using the language being learnt. These imply that it is teachers' responsibility to make students speak English by employing suitable teaching strategies of speaking.

Given that teacher's strategies are important to attain the lesson objectives, which affect the teaching learning circumstances, and speaking skill is typically a sign of successful language learning (Brown and Yule, 1999), these become the focus of the study. Considering those explanations, this research is conducted to find out strategies employed in teaching speaking to students of a senior high school in Sumedang and students' responses towards the strategies.

Literature Review

- **Strategies of Teaching Speaking**

A various number of speaking teaching strategies are utilized and used in the classrooms for many circumstances. Among others, the strategies of teaching speaking are cooperative activities, role-play, creative tasks, and drilling. Cooperative activities can encourage negotiation of language item (Newton and Nation, 2009). Role plays are activities where students are asked to pretend to be in various social contexts and various social roles (Harmer, 2001; Thornbury, 2005; Solcova, 2011). Creative tasks resemble real-life tasks as Solcova (2011) asserts that students develop their fluency best, if engaged in tasks where all their concentration focuses on producing something, rather than on the language itself. Drilling, as Thornbury (2005) argues, is a strategy to improve pronunciation by imitating and repeating words, phrases, and even whole utterances. It functions to make students pay attention to the new materials and emphasize words, phrases, or utterances on students' mind, move new items from working memory to long term memory, provide means of gaining articulatory control over language (Thornbury, 2005).

In addition, designing activities for teaching speaking requires some principles to consider. Firstly, speaking activities need to maximize the production of language to provide the best conditions for autonomous language use (Brown, 2001; Thornbury, 2005). Secondly, the activities should be performed in situations where students can show interest, understanding, and ask questions or make comments, called interactivity, and include competitive element where students work together to achieve certain purpose (Thornbury, 2005).

Thirdly, teachers bear in mind what student needs, from language-based focus on accuracy to message-based focus on interaction, meaning, and fluency to encourage the use of authentic language in meaningful contexts (Brown, 2001). Besides, meaningful contexts for each activity is important to relate new material with what has been learned and experienced by students so that it can be stored in the long-term memory of students (Brown, 2001; Richards and Rodgers, 2002). Meanwhile, the functions of speaking including talk as transaction aims to exchange information or goods, and talk as interaction aims to maintain social relationship (Brown and Yule, 1999; Brown, 2001; Bailey, 2005; Thornbury, 2005; Richards, 2008).

- **Students at Secondary Level**

Regarding the teaching of speaking to students at secondary level, teachers should bear in mind that treating students fairly, impartially, and with respect is a must for teachers since the students need an adult in charge of the classroom (Rowley and Hart, 1998; Brown, 2001). Moreover, people's perception on them could influence their performance (Brown, 2001). As a result, any small mistake can make students embarrassed so that working in group can ease their burden on a task (Brown, 2001; Flemming and Stevens, 2004; Hammack and Grayson, 2009). Thus, feedbacks should be delivered in a way that does not obstruct students' utterances, for instance after students' performance and without pointing out to individual error (Brown, 2001; Harmer, 2001; Bailey, 2005; Linse, 2005; Thornbury, 2005; Nation and Newton, 2009). While constant interruption to

student speaking in front of class can cause the loss of speaking fluency (Harmer, 2001; Thornbury, 2005; Nation and Newton, 2009).

Methodology

Having chosen qualitative study by employing descriptive research, the researcher conducted in one of state senior high schools in Sumedang, which involved an English teacher and a class of 22 tenth graders from that school. Meanwhile, the instruments were classroom observation and interview, administered to the teacher in attempt to portray speaking teaching strategies used by the teacher, as well as questionnaire administered to the students to recognize their responses towards the strategies.

Results and Discussion

Of the four observations, the following table shows the result of the observations:

Teaching Strategies of Speaking	Observation 1	Observation 2	Observation 3	Observation 4
Cooperative Activities	√	√	√	-
Role plays and Simulations	√	√	-	-
Creative Tasks	-	-	√	√
Drilling	√	√	√	√

Cooperative activities provided the students with contextual and meaningful topics important to relate new material with what has been learned and experienced by students (Brown, 2001; Richard and Rodgers, 2002). It also provides students with the aid of others, meaning that students can discuss problems with their partner, as mentioned above that the use of cooperative activities can encourage negotiation of language item (Newton and Nation, 2009). Hence, the more students are exposed to language item and contextually meaningful activities emphasizing on oral production, the more they are helped to speak English.

In addition, the teacher prompted the students to participate in the activities, and students' speaking is emphasized. Moreover, an activity involving competitive element where students work together can increase language productivity (Thornbury, 2005). However, people's perception on them could influence their performance (Brown, 2001). Fortunately, the teacher could anticipate this situation by having students work in group to ease their burden on a task (Brown, 2001; Flemming and Stevens, 2004; Hammack and Grayson, 2009), as it had the students classify the expressions, make dialogues, and rearrange steps of how to make something as teams.

It also had the students deliver their work in front of the class, discuss with other groups and at the end, get feedbacks not only from the teacher but also from other groups. As stated, appropriate feedbacks are delivered after students' performance and without pointing out to individual error (Brown, 2001; Harmer, 2001; Bailey, 2005; Linse, 2005; Thornbury, 2005; Nation and Newton, 2009). Besides, constant interruption to student speaking in front of class can cause the loss of speaking fluency (Harmer, 2001; Thornbury, 2005; Nation and Newton, 2009).

Meanwhile, in role play strategy, the teacher did not focus on certain students. As stated by Brown (2001) and Rowley and Hart (1998) that treating students fairly, impartially, and with respect is a must for teachers in secondary level. Furthermore, in terms of function of speaking proposed by Brown and Yule (1999), Brown (2001), Bailey (2005), Thornbury (2005), and Richards (2008), the activity used talk as interaction because it served to maintain social relationship and had purposes to be friendly and nice to interact with others.

Creative tasks as Solcova (2011) asserts that students develop their fluency best, if engaged in tasks where all their concentration focuses on producing something. Instead of thinking of language, the students focused on making the procedure of making food or drinks, so that the activity was to develop fluency. It is based on a principle that teachers bear in mind what student needs, from language-based focus on accuracy to message-based focus on interaction, meaning, and fluency (Brown, 2001).

Employing the strategy, the teacher added some expressions to make the activity look real. There were the one delivering the procedure and others listening, so that interaction between the speaker and the listeners can be built up. Moreover, according to Brown and Yule (1999), Bailey (2005), and Richards (2008), the function of speaking in this activity was talk as transaction. As argued by Thornbury (2005), speaking activity should be performed in situations where students can show interest, understanding, and ask questions or make comments.

Furthermore, the teacher intended to make the students interested in the lesson by adding the expressions and choosing the topics related to students for they will react well to the speaker. Reacting to others by showing interest in the topic of conversation can provide fluid interaction (Thornbury, 2005; Richards, 2008). Moreover, materials related to students' lives and interests can increase students' involvement in the classroom (Brown, 2001; Harmer, 2002; Rowley and Hart, 1998; Hammack and Grayson, 2009).

The last one is drilling, simply a fine-tuning for articulation, as Thornbury (2005) argues that drilling is a strategy to improve pronunciation. Drilling yields several benefits, allowing students to pay attention to the new materials presented by teachers, emphasizing words, phrases, or utterances on students' mind, moving new items from working memory to long term memory, and providing a means of gaining articulatory control over language (Thornbury: 2005).

In the meantime, regarding the strategies used by the teacher, the overall result shows positive feedbacks on the strategies used by the teacher. It reveals that 16 students (72.72%) agreed that the lessons help them speak English, 15 students (68.18%) agreed and six students (27.27%) strongly agreed that the activities require students to be active and to participate in the class, particularly in speaking, 15 students (68.18%) agreed that the lessons facilitate varied students visually, motorically as well as audibly, and 14 students (63.63%) agreed that the lessons make them brave to speak English.

The strategies the teacher used help and encourage students to speak English as speaking activities need to maximize the production of language to provide the best conditions for autonomous language use (Brown, 2001; Thornbury, 2005).

This also implies that the strategies for speaking require students to produce the language orally. It is also supported by Brown's principle (2001) of criteria for speaking activities, which is to encourage the use of authentic language in meaningful contexts.

Conclusions

The strategies of teaching speaking that the teacher used were cooperative activities, creative task, role play, and drilling. While, students' responses towards the strategies reveal positive attitude as they responded that the strategies helped them to speak, as well as concerned oral production of students whose participation was emphasized. Thus, it is suggested that teachers use strategies of teaching speaking in accordance with students' characteristics and level of proficiency, and provide materials involving students to be active by using various available media for the implementation of teaching speaking.

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