

English teacher's strategies in teaching speaking to young learners

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Abstract

The teaching strategy should be done by both the teacher and learner in the teaching and learning process. Because of it, the learning activity becomes effective and efficient. The teaching strategy is crucial, as it significantly influences the success of the teaching process. Teaching English to young learners must be effective and interesting. In fact, teaching speaking to young learners is a skill that can be quite challenging for EFL teachers to teach. The data were obtained from three English teachers at a primary school. The instruments used to collect data were closed-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, which were transcribed in a descriptive manner. In addition, the data analysis employed involves data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. The results of this study indicated that the strategy employed by the teacher in teaching speaking was varied, including role play, songs, games, watching video short stories, drilling, demonstrations, and discussions. These strategy helps students learn vocabulary more easily and become excited in mastering vocabulary, so that it greatly supports the improvement of students' speaking skills.

Keywords: teaching strategy speaking, , elementary learners.

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INTRODUCTION

There are four skills that should be mastered by students in learning English, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Speaking is one of the essential abilities to communicate with other people. Therefore, speaking is a key for communication among people in daily life in order to change the information. Brown (2004) stated that speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information orally. So, the students who learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL) have to master the speaking skill in order to be able in expressing their minds, ideas and thought spontaneously. As speaking skill is crucial for students to allow them to communicate with other people globally. Therefore, learning English especially speaking is a crucial part in communication skill. However, speaking skill also often receive less attention than other skills.

As stated by Slattery and Willis (2001), cited in Hakim (2011), English is being provided into initial classroom, such as Kindergarten and Elementary school, so that the teachers are needed to teach it into young learners. In preparing every child to have a good communication skill, teaching speaking is a primary requirement to be taught not only for adult learners but also for young learners. Teaching English to young learners has different strategies with adults in delivering materials.

To develop speaking skills at primary schools, interesting exercises and interactive assignments must be utilized by teachers as there are various issues that schoolchildren may encounter when teaching speaking in English classes (Breka, 2015). That is why the teacher

must often more active and adaptable than teaching adults. It is also as a challenging job for the teacher to teach speaking skill for the students.

The teacher should be creative in choosing materials because it can give positive impact to students' motivation. Teachers has to able to stimulate the students' interest. Teachers need to manipulate several strategies to support the teaching and learning process, due to the fact that English is not the mother tongue for most of the students. The teachers' strategy gives a lot of influence on the students' conversation. Besides, teacher strategies will help students speak mastery. The level of speaking of students is also influenced by teacher strategy in speaking.

Furthermore, case-study research was conducted in this research in order to find a deep investigation about the technique used by the teacher when teaching speaking to young learners. According to Meriam (1988 cited in Nunan,1993), qualitative case study can be defined as an intensive, holistic, description, and analysis of a single, entire, phenomenon, or social unit.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative method as the fundamental aspect of the study. Fraenkel & Wallen (1990) describe that qualitative research is research studies that investigate the quality of relationship, activities, situations, or materials. In line with that, this research was conducted to investigate the teacher's strategies in teaching speaking to young learners. In this case, this research investigated some techniques used by the teacher in teaching speaking. The participants of the research were three English teachers who have currently teach English to young learners.

According to Zarinpoush and Gamulka in (Khotimah, 2021) interviews were divided into 3 forms, they are structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured interviews. In this study, researchers used semi-structural interviews. A semi-structural interview aims to get detailed answers from respondents because in this semi-structural interview questions can develop into new questions from questions that have been prepared previously (Nur Arafah, 2018). To collect the data, the researcher uses direct observation, semi-structured interview, and document as the instruments. The data were obtained by writing and recording. After the observation and interview were done, the researcher used written documents to support the data from the interview and observation. Therefore, the analysis is presented in a form of descriptive explanation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

In collecting data, researcher gives several questions about strategies used by teacher in teaching English speaking to young learners. The kinds of questions about strategies used by teachers in teaching English speaking to young learners are listed as follows:

a. How long have you been teaching here?

Teacher 1: I started teaching at this school about five years ago.

Teacher 2: Teaching at this school is new experience to me. I started teaching six months ago.

Teacher 3: I started teaching here seven years ago.

b. What are the problems in teaching English speaking to young learners?

Teacher 1: In learning speaking English, students still have difficulty with pronunciation. They are afraid to practice in front of the class. Sometimes, they pronounce English words same with read the word in Indonesian language. For example, the word "bus" is read as "bus". Students' vocabulary is also still very poor.

Teacher 2: Students still have a very limited English vocabulary. Sometimes, they are able to follow the teacher's pronunciation during drills, but they are finding it difficult to write in English words.

Teacher 3: Poor English vocabulary makes students less motivated to learn English. Students find it difficult to memorize English vocabulary.

c. What kind of strategies do you use in delivering speaking lessons?

Teacher 1: I usually use songs to introduce basic English vocabulary. When I use songs in English lessons, students become enthusiastic in the learning process. In addition, I often use role-play in speaking lessons. I also often use the demonstrate method in class.

Teacher 2: When teaching English, especially speaking, I use simple games. I do this to encourage student participation in class. Students get bored easily if I only use lectures and memorization. Watching English storytelling videos is also very popular with students. After watching the video together, I ask questions related to the story and vocabulary in the video. I still sometimes use lectures in class activities, but very rarely.

Teacher 3: I use lectures and drills to teach speaking. I just follow the existing guidebook. Sometimes, I also invite the children to role-play in short dialogues.

d. Can you describe the condition in the class when you implement the strategy?

Teacher 1: I use songs or role-plays when students start to lose motivation in learning. When students don't understand, activity in the class becomes significantly less and the class becomes quiet. However, if students feel comfortable and can answer the questions, they will be more active in learning.

Teacher 2: I use strategies in learning after observing the level of activity in the classroom. Students are more active in learning when games are used. In addition, students' understanding is also faster when using games, watching videos, and role-playing than with the lecture method.

Teacher 3: The classroom is quiet when students do not understand the material. At that time, I give them time to discuss what they do not understand. Sometimes, students will ask questions one by one in front of the class regarding the material.

e. What are the problems that you faced when implementing the strategy?

Teacher 1: There are no problems when implementing the strategy. There is a little problem when students are not motivated to learn English. Therefore, I have to provide more creative material and activities.

Teacher 2: More effort is needed to increase children's interest in learning. So far, there have been no problems in implementing this strategy.

Teacher 3: There were no problems in implementing this strategy.

f. Did you ever integrate technology in teaching speaking?

Teacher 1: I very rarely use technology in teaching in class. Sometimes, I just watch English story videos from YouTube. I am not very familiar with technology. Besides that, I don't have time to edit materials using technology.

Teacher 2: Sometimes, I use technology in teaching English in class. This is because there are many applications and websites that can support learning activities in class. Students are also very active in participating in learning activities with the use of digital technology.

Teacher 3: I rarely use learning media from technology in class.

Discussion

The discussion focused on the strategies teaching speaking that are applied by the teacher based on data that found. Besides, it discussed what problems that faced by teachers when implementation the strategies to young learners.

a. How long have you been teaching here?

The data showed that there are different experiences in teaching English to young learners. The first teacher has been teaching young learners for 5 years, the second teacher for 6 months, and the third teacher for 7 years. The length of teaching experience can also influence differences in teaching styles.

b. What are the problems in teaching English speaking to young learners?

Mostly, all teachers face the problem of students' limited vocabulary. If their vocabulary is still very limited, students will find it difficult to pronounce or write the words. Students' English pronunciation is correct after imitating the teacher saying the words in English, but they are afraid of making mistakes when asked to say in English words by themselves. Students' difficulties in learning English speaking can also affect their confidence.

c. What kind of strategies do you use in delivering speaking lessons?

All three teachers still use the demonstration method, but the second teacher rarely uses demonstration method in speaking lessons. All teachers also apply role-play strategies in the learning process. Role-play can increase students' motivation to learn English speaking. The first and second teachers also use songs to introduce English vocabulary. When songs are used, students are very active in participating in learning activities. In addition, students will find it easier to memorize vocabulary. The three English teachers introduce new vocabulary to students with their things in surrounding. This strategy is also very suitable for elementary school students. The second and third teachers sometimes invite students to learn through short English story videos. After watching the short English stories, the teachers provide time for questions and answers related to the videos. This provides opportunities for students to be more active. In teaching English speaking, the second teacher often uses simple games in the learning process. The teacher often gives quiz or games in class because teacher know the reaction of students is good in this strategy.

d. Can you describe the condition in the class when you implement the strategy?

The learning strategies used by teachers greatly affect the condition of students in the learning process. The class appears quiet when students have difficulty following the English material provided by the teacher. Conversely, the class can be active because of the students' enthusiasm in learning. Students participate actively when they are interested in the strategies used by the teacher. The use of games, quizzes, songs, and watching short English story videos can motivate students to learn English speaking.

e. What are the problems that you faced when implementing the strategy?

Mostly, the three teachers did not encounter any problems when implementing the strategies used. Teachers only need more creativity in preparing interesting material for students. The implementation of songs, games, watching short story videos, or lectures has its own advantages and disadvantages. If teachers only use songs in the learning process, it can also create boredom among students. Therefore, teachers must be able to collaborate on the strategies used in the classroom.

f. Did you ever integrate technology in teaching speaking?

There are still many teachers who have not optimally utilized technology in the learning process, especially in teaching English speaking. They still often use conventional methods in learning. However, the second teacher sometimes uses AI to increase students' interest in learning process.

CONCLUSION

There are several strategies that have been applied in the English-speaking learning process by teachers, including songs, watching short story videos, role plays, games, and discussions. Teachers use strategies in learning according to the conditions of the students in the classroom. Students still have difficulties in learning English, especially speaking. Their limited vocabulary give affects their motivation to learn English speaking. Therefore, teachers use various learning models in the classroom to foster students' interest in learning process. Teachers can use a variety of teaching strategies, not just demonstration and discussion strategies. It is intended that students can experience learning with other strategies. Teachers should be able to increase the frequency of using learning media such as digital media and add insight into the use of technology.

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