

TEACHERS' INTERACTION STRATEGY TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS' WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE

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Abstract

Being able to communicate using target language highly depends on the Willingness to Communicate (WTC). This study is aimed to find out what the difficulties encountered by the teacher when trying to encourage student's WTC and how they cope the problems. This study took place in Ende East Nusa Tenggara. In collecting the data, the writer used semi-structure interview. The result revealed that there are some difficulties faced by the teacher while encouraging student's WTC. Those were: the students were afraid of being corrected, incomprehensible input of the student related to the material and the learning schedule arrangement. The second, the teacher used teacher-fronted strategy that is also known as IRF, facilitator-oriented strategy and learner-oriented strategy to encourage student's WTC. In conclusion, based on teachers' perspective, the students were willing to communicate if the teacher facilitated them by some suitable strategies. This study suggests any English teacher that should concern on WTC of student. The teacher should depend on good teaching: employing one strategy alone does not potentially bring success in encouraging student's WTC. Then, employing all the three strategies in single meeting are possible to strongly encourage student's willingness to communicate. Beyond that, this present study is expected to contribute to the comprehension of teachers' influence to learners' WTC particularly to language teacher development.

Keywords: *Willingness to communicate (WTC), Interaction strategy*

Background

Earlier time, teaching target language was significantly emphasized on language structure, but more recently, myriad of language institutions has paved the way for communicative competence by prioritized it as the purpose of language teaching (Cetinkaya, 2005). Therefore, being able to communicate using target language is one of the indicator that the EFL learner has successfully achieved one of the aims of learning target language.

In order to achieve that goal, EFL learner should have strong willingness to communicate (WTC). MacIntyre & Doucette (2010) assert that the increasing of WTC among language learners lead to

more successful language acquisition. In other words, being reticent to communicate during learning language can debilitate the process of mastering language. In a similar vein, Richmond & Roach (1992) argue that the learner who are unwilling to communicate will generally be considered as unproductive or incompetent comparing to the learner who are actively express their idea orally.

As shown above, EFL teachers as facilitator of language knowledge, they should find out the best way how to encourage the students' willingness to communicate. The teachers must provide an activity that possibly could cope the reluctance to speak. In light of the evidence from Cao & Philp (2006)

indicated that elements of the language learning process within classroom context that promote learners' WTC are closely related to teachers. For example, teachers are the creator of topic, type of task, interlocutor interaction (teacher or peers) and pattern of interaction: teacher-fronted situation, dyad, and small group. Then, it is concluded that teacher-related factors seem to significantly promote students' WTC.

The same phenomena happen in Indonesia which English language learned as a foreign language. English language class is the only opportunity for interaction and communication using English. In such a circumstance, it is possible to find the learners that have unwillingness to communicate in the class. Then, to make students having strong WTC, the teacher should find some interaction strategies to encourage the student to communicate using English during teaching-learning process. For instance, the interaction strategy must give the students many opportunities to express the opinion. Therefore, teacher can reduce the teacher's talk and provide the student more chance to express their opinion. Lei (2009, p. 75) argues that the definition of good teacher' talk is merely seen through the quality, instead of the quantity and it can be assessed by how well it can facilitate learning and encourage communicative interaction in the classroom. Driving from that issue, the researcher conducted a study what are the teacher's interaction strategies to encourage student's WTC in MTs. Negeri Ende.

Research Methods

The researcher used qualitative descriptive design to answer the two research problems which are 1) the problems that make the teacher difficult to encourage student's willingness to communicate in English. 2) The teacher's interaction strategy to encourage student's WTC. This

study employed snowball sampling method in selecting the subjects in interview process. Sugiono (2016, p. 125) describes the way of using snowball sampling is reflecting to the target result by means the researcher will start to pick two or more participants to collect the data and the total participants will increase until the target data is fulfilled. The subject of the study was the teachers who teach English in MTs Negeri Ende. The total subjects chosen were six junior high school teachers. In order to answer the research problem, the researcher used interview to gain the data. In this research, semi structure interview was used to get in-depth information. Therefore, while doing the interview, interviewer used note and audio recording as the tool to record the information.

Finding & Discussion

The result of two research problems will be briefly explained as follows:

1. The problems that make the teacher difficult to encourage student's willingness to communicate.

There are some problems that make the teacher difficult to encourage student's WTC such as:

- a. afraid of being corrected.

The teachers state in interview that:

..... *the student who missed pronounce the word or have the wrong answer related to the question commonly get negative feedback from the other student and that make them shy and afraid to talk again in the other opportunity*

The students often have no willing to communicate because they were afraid of getting negative feedback from their friends. The teacher observed that every time the students gave the wrong answer or wrong pronunciation they suddenly got negative feedback from their schoolmate. In this case, students must aware that making mistake is something command

and experienced by everyone who seek to develop. Moreover, when correction can cause a problem in arousing students to communicate, teachers and students can have an agreement related how often and to what situation the correction is necessary. Park (2010) conducted study about teachers' and students' preferences for error correction. The result revealed that in necessity of error correction, both the students and teachers agreed students' spoken errors should be corrected, but the students argued that in the necessity of corrective feedback to a much greater extent. Timing of error correction, they mostly agreed that the correction timing is conducted after the students finishing the speech and as soon as the student made an error received the lowest agreement. While on types of error need to be treated, serious spoken error that might lead to misunderstanding should always be corrected.

b. Incomprehensible input related to the material

This can be proofed from the teachers' answer in interview:

.....when they don't really understand the material they often keep silence

The teacher often found this kind of case in her classroom. The student was unwilling to communicate because they did not know what to say. Harmer stated (1998), the teacher should make student exposing the language, understanding the meaning and its form and practice it to facilitate students with the 'new' language. Hamouda (2013) studied about students' reluctance to participant in English classroom. He found that some students avoid to express their opinion orally due to the several factors which were low English proficiency, fear of speaking in front of others, negative evaluation, shyness, lack of confidence and preparation, and fear of making mistakes. In his study, he also found that the strategy often used by the

students to cope those factors is by rehearsal before speech whom they called as the preparation. Teacher also could slow the teaching process or avoid fast teaching to provide the time for students to catch up the material. Providing some new vocabularies might be possible debilitate their comprehension related to the material.

c. The learning schedule arrangement

This can be proofed from the teacher's answer in interview:

.....Sometimes the students gave the major attention to another subject like mathematics

The schedule that was arranged also influences the students to participate in the class. For instance, the English teacher often found the student's doing Mathematics homework during teaching process because the next subject after English was mathematics. The math teachers often gave the homework to the students. Instead of doing it at home, the students were doing it in English class time. From that case, it can be interpreted that if the students' focus on doing the other subject while English time, they will not participate in learning process effectively. Then, automatically the teacher will feel difficult to arouse student's willingness to communicate. This case seems rarely mentioned in any finding of research but it's often occurs in pedagogical field.

2. The interaction strategy used by the teacher to encourage student's willingness to communicate in English

In this research, the teachers used some strategies to encourage student's WTC which were:

a. Teacher-fronted strategy

This can be seen from the result of interview:

.....I often gave them the question related to the material. Some of them answered it based on their understanding. I never gave negative feedback even the language was not correct. Because of they would feel easily down and afraid to express the idea again. I used picture and visual aids if it's available in the school or asked student to bring before explaining the related material. When the students were capable of expressing the idea, I gave them reward in term of complement

In this activity the teachers used question and answer, in order to get the response from the students, the teachers often use the learning tool like picture, visual aids to stimulate students about the response of the question. The last, the teacher gives the feedback related to the response. The feedbacks included the compliment and motivation and giving reward. The teacher always gives complement even the response was not correct. Because the teachers aware that giving negative feedback would decrease the student's willingness to communicate and the most effective feedback was giving complement. Because the students were like to be praised by the teachers and that grow their spirit to participate even more. This type of strategy had been used by several teachers in teaching language process. It is still widely used in language classroom interaction (Kyriacou and Issitt, 2008 cited in Ingram and Elliot, 2014). However, when it comes to its effectiveness, Xie (2008) showed that although the teachers had provided good interaction, students' responds were still rarely occurred.

b. Facilitator-oriented strategy

This can be seen from the result of interview:

..... sometimes I asked another student to express the different opinion. However, in this situation, encouraging them is really

necessary since most of them were only talking after instructed (asked to do so).

In this activity, the same what the teacher mostly does in IRF, however, the F here is not feedback but Follow up. The teacher didn't directly give the comment after one of student finished the answer instead she invited other students to join the question and answer. This commonly happen when the question about expressing the opinion about something. The teacher asked whether the other student have different opinion about the topic. This also happens in answering the question related to the text, if one student did not give satisfying answer the teacher would ask another opinion from another student. As pointed out by Lee & Ng (2010), in this type of strategy, teacher can be more open space toward the interaction among students.

c. The teacher used learner-oriented strategy

This can be seen from the result of interview:

.....in order to arouse the students' participation, I used who/what am I game recently, I also used role play sometimes

In order to give an opportunity to talk for the students, the teacher did several ways such as applying students' center. To apply this, the teacher used game and peer work and share to make this activity successful. For example, the teacher used "who/what am I" game for the topic of descriptive text. In this game, the teacher divided the students into 4 groups. The teacher showed the familiar picture than one group giving the clue by describing the identity so other groups guessed what the picture about. The teacher sometimes asked the student to do the role play. Garrett & Shortall (2002) argue that this strategy can benefit passive learners as their motivation to participate may growth due to the group support and cooperation of meaning they are involved.

Conclusion

Reflecting in English foreign language context, some difficulties often faced by the teacher while encouraging student's WTC. In this study, the difficulty of the students were afraid of being corrected, Incomprehensible input of the student related to the material and the learning schedule arrangement. In addition, based on the aimed on this study, the teachers were also asked how they could cope the problem by making students more engaging to speak, the researcher found three strategies used by the teacher to encourage student's WTC. Which were teacher-fronted strategy that is also known as IRF, facilitator-oriented strategy and learner-oriented strategy.

Based on the result of this study, it indicated that teacher plays important role to encourage EFL student's willingness to communicate. Since the higher opportunity of EFL student can practice their English is during the classroom instruction. So, finding the appropriate interaction strategies to encourage the student's WTC with help them to reach the teaching foreign language objectives.

This study suggests any English teacher that should concern on WTC of student. The teacher should depend on good teaching: teacher cannot depend on one strategy during learning and teaching process. one learning strategy cannot promise success can encourage student's WTC. Then, employing all the three strategies in single meeting are possible to strongly encourage student's willingness to communicate. Beyond that, this present study is expected to contribute to the comprehension of teachers' influence to learners' WTC, particularly to language teacher development.

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