Techniques Mostly Used by English Teachers of SMAN 4 Wira Bangsa Melaboh in Teaching Speaking

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Abstract

Speaking is one of language skills required to learn for all senior high school students. SMAN 4 Wira Bangsa Meulaboh is one of senior high schools whose students have a good speaking proficiency as they succeed in winning some competition held in West Aceh regency. This study aimed at finding out the techniques mostly used by English teachers to teach speaking at SMAN 4 Wira Bangsa Meulaboh. This study was a qualitative study. Total sampling technique was employed to select three English teachers at SMAN 4 Wira Bangsa Meulaboh. The instrument used to collect the data was interview. The result showed that there was no dominant technique used by English teachers at SMAN 4 Wira Bangsa. They used debate technique, role play and jigsaw. The teachers also said that they frequently change the techniques based topic of the subject. The interview results also indicated that all of the teachers tried to present authentic material to the speaking class. Based on the interview, it was also obtained that the common mistakes did by English teachers were overused of mother tongue and choosing technique without considering the students' level. It is expected that the teachers do collaborative work in determining which technique work better to certain topic compared to other techniques.

Keywords: *Techniques, Speaking, English Teachers*

1. INTRODUCTION

Senior high school students are expected to be able to carry out conversation in English. Gan (2012, p. 8) mentioned that there are several factors regarded as the main obstacles in learning spoken communication i.e. vocabulary inadequacy, grammar difficulties, pronunciation, and inadequate opportunities to speak in class and also poor input from environment outside class. Therefore, an English teacher should select appropriate to boost up students' speaking performance.

There are some schools in Meulaboh that have complete facilities such as SMA 1, SMA 2, SMA 3, and SMA 4 Wira Bangsa. However, among many other schools SMA 4 Wira Bangsa Meulaboh succeeded to win some English competitions

especially debate and speech contest held almost every year. Recent data showed that the school has consecutively won three English debate competitions in a row.

These stunning achievements have encouraged the writer to investigate the way of teaching applied by English teachers at SMA 4 Wira Bangsa Meulaboh in teaching their students speaking skill. The research will be focusing on investigating teachers' preferred techniques to be used in boosting up theirs students speaking skill.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of Speaking

Lustigová (2011, p. 19) defines speaking is the capability to practice linguistic knowledge in a real live context. Chaney and Burk (1998, p. 13) also argues that speaking is about verbalizing meaningful sentences in certain situation. In other words, speaking is a means of communication that humans have to express what they have in their minds by talking to other speakers involving linguistics competence and performance.

2.2 Elements of Speaking

Knowing the elements of speaking is pivotal for those who teach English. Hinkel (2006, p. 6) stated that ESL or EFL teachers and learners should aware of fluency, accuracy, and lexicogrammatical structure to have a meaningful communication. He added that vocabulary, grammar, discourse and information structuring as well as phonology are some elements that should be simultaneously trained by students.

Among these elements, Ano (2004. p. 2) said that, generally, elements of speaking can be divided into two parts, fluency and accuracy. Fluency is about number of words spoken in certain time, number of pauses, and number of repeated words produced during speaking. Meanwhile, accuracy covers a wider area such as grammar, lexical, pronunciation, sociolinguistic competence, and pragmatic competence. Thus, it can be concluded that accuracy which consist of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and fluency are among some important elements should be mastered by students in learning speaking. The description is as follows.

1) Vocabulary
   According to Bauer (1998, p.2), vocabulary consists of words, how they change, how they relate to each other, and how to use them in contexts.
2) Grammar
   Debata (2013, p. 482) says that grammar takes an essential role in developing speaking competence. Nunan (2005, p. 154) stated that grammar is arranging the correct words in a form of sentence. The grammatically correct sentences will enable students to carry out a meaningful conversation.
3) Pronunciation
   According to Mancer (1995) as quoted by Muchtin (2012, p. 9), pronunciation is the way in which a language or a particular word or sound is pronounced. Campos (2010, p. 6) stated that correct pronunciation will not only improve the way of students produce utterances while they are speaking but also it will make them speak more clearly and more accurately.
4) Fluency

An ability to speak a language well without stopping or making mistakes is called fluency. Hieke (1985) as quoted by Mucthin (2012, p. 10) defined fluency is as an ability to use long sentences with few pauses, coherent, creative, and imaginative. Furthermore, Richard (1999, p. 75) states that fluency is a capability to produce a comprehensible discourse, easy to follow, and free of errors and breakdowns in communication.

5) Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension is an individual active process focuses on selected aspect, constructs meaning from passages, and relates what they hear to the existing knowledge (O'malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, P. Rosso, & Kupper, 2012).

2.3   Techniques in Teaching Speaking

Larsen-Freeman (1986) elaborated eight teaching methods commonly used in teaching for ESL or ESL learners, i.e. Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method, Audio-Lingual Method, Silent-Way, Suggestopedia, Community Language Learning, Total Physical Response Method as well as The Communicative Approach.

Harmer (1998, pp.88-92) selected four common techniques to teach speaking, i.e. information gap, surveys, discussion, and role-play. Furthermore, Kayi (2006) mentioned several techniques which can be applied in speaking class including discussions, role play, information gap, brainstorming, storytelling, interviews, story completion, reporting, picture narrating, picture describing, and find the differences.

An English teacher should have sufficient understanding about the approaches as well as teaching methodology in teaching English as a foreign language. The Technique should be used appropriately and in line with the approach and the method that has been chosen.

3.   METHODS

This was a descriptive qualitative method. According to Ary et.al (2006, p. 24) qualitative research focuses on understanding social phenomena from the perspective of the human participants in the study. The writer tried to register the teacher's choice in terms of techniques to be used in teaching speaking and their opinion about it.

This study was carried out at SMAN 4 Wira Bangsa Meulaboh. The study was conducted on August 11, 2017. The instrument used by the researcher to collect the data was interview guide consisting 10 questions designed by the writer himself to answer research questions. The form of interview used was open-interview. This form was seen as an informal interview and it is appropriate to make the respondents feel free to express their ideas (Seliger&Shohamy, 1989). The writer will use Indonesian to avoid ambiguity that can possibly influence the information obtained from the interview.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) say that research data should be arrange well to make readers understand more easily. Therefore, the writer analyzed and formulated the results of interview. The writer transformed it into interview transcript and translated into English then presented in a form of narration.

4.   RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1   Research Result

Based on the question number 1, two of three respondents agreed that the best way to enhance students speaking skill is by giving them an opportunity to talk. One respondent, on the other hand, believes that speaking does not require any specific way. It applies the same way as learning other skills such as listening, reading, and writing.

From the question item number 2, debate technique, role play, communicative link, and jigsaw are the techniques commonly used by the teachers to teach speaking at SMAN 4 Wira Bangsa Meulaboh. It appears that all of the teachers used different techniques.

According to the results of question number 3, teachers are aware of the strengths and the weakness of the techniques they use to teach speaking. Teacher I says that although debate technique gives more proportion for students to talk, it often requires more time spent to finish one topic compared to another technique. Teacher II believes that think pair share is effective to boost up students' speaking skill yet it requires teacher to do full supervision during the class. In addition, teacher III argues that communicative link and jigsaw demand more students to participate but it will only be applicable to small number of students.

In line with question number 3, in question number Teacher I says good time management is needed to carry out debate technique in speaking class. Teacher II believes that providing more motivation for students is effective to keep students spirit in learning. Competition such as debate can be held regularly to make students more enthusiastic to practice, teacher II adds. Teacher III who often uses jigsaws says that there is no specified weakness during the implementation of technique as long as the number of students does not exceed 25 students because jigsaw is not applicable for large class.

Regarding question number 5, all of the three teachers are certain that their techniques in teaching speaking are in line with the curriculum of 2013. Teacher III says that actually all of the techniques can be modified to make it suit to the 2013's curriculum.

The question number 6, regarding the variations of techniques in teaching speaking, shows that all of them use variations of techniques to teach their students. The variation is based on the appropriateness with the topic they presented in their class.

In question number 7, the three teachers show different points of view. Teacher 1 says that fluency is the most important aspect in speaking. Teacher II is strongly sure that vocabulary is the most important thing for students. Moreover, teacher III says that despite grammar, fluency are important, pronunciation is most important elements.

Question number 8 illustrates that all of the three teachers share the same opinions in terms of the sources of learning material. All of them utilize internet, beside compulsory book, and newspaper.

Related to question number 9 about the common mistakes made by English teachers in teaching speaking, the two of the research respondents share their experience by observing other teachers yet teacher I says that he has never been in any chance to observe another teacher so that he has no specific answer. Teacher II says that the most common mistake found in teaching speaking is an overused of Indonesian language during the speaking class. She says that actually teacher should at least combine between English and Indonesian instead of using Indonesian most of the time. In addition, teacher II says that teachers sometimes

forget about the urgency of considering students' level before using certain strategy.

Finally, the last question covers teachers' confidence about the techniques which have been used during their speaking class. Teacher II says that she is confident that, based on her opinions to teach English for over tens of years, it is very effective. Moreover, teacher III says that teaching speaking is very complex. She illustrates the effectiveness of the techniques that she has been used was about 65%.

4.2   Discussion

Majority of English teachers at SMAN 4 Wira Bangsa do believe that the best way to teach students to speak in by giving them a chance to practice their speaking skill. All of teachers also used some techniques which are categorized as teacher-centered-learning i.e. debate technique, role pay, think pair share, and jigsaw. A research carried by Alam (2013) found that a student-centered-learning with group discussion form is an effective way to improve ESL learners speaking skill because it offers students a better learning environment. Another study carried out by Mothlaka in 2012 also concluded that a learning model with an interactive communication allows students to obtain an opportunity to develop their ability to speak in the target language.

Furthermore, all of the teachers were all aware off the strength and weakness of the skill they used. More importantly they knew the way to minimize the weakness of certain skill. For example, a teacher using role play needs a better time management so that all of the students get equal allocation of time. Another example, those who teach speaking by means of jigsaw should be really aware of number of students in one class since it is not suitable for large class.

Variation of techniques that introduced in speaking class is very pivotal. The research finding suggests that all of the teachers varied their technique based on the topic and classroom condition. Variations in class are very important. A study carried out by Devici in 2016 revealed that learners aged 18-22 years old may face worse feeling of academic boredom due to repetitive situation in classroom setting.

Regarding the most important element in speaking skill, teachers also showed slightly different opinion. They mentioned fluency, vocabulary, and pronunciation. A research carried out by Otlowski (1998) and Purcell and Shutter (1980) as concluded by Adams-Goertel (2013, p. 121) shows that teaching pronunciation only gives a little effect on second language learners' pronunciation proficiency because attaining pronunciation skills is a complex process.

Teacher has been able to utilize internet, beside book and newspaper, as learning source. Internet and newspaper can be categorized as authentic materials. A study conducted by Stanley in 2005, as cited by Man-Man (2006, pp. 126-127) revealed that authentic media can be used as an effective media to teach speaking skill.

There were two common mistakes found based on the results of interview. First, there were the overused of Indonesian and unsuitable techniques to students' level. A study carried out by Voicu (2012) revealed that teacher should only use mother tongue in certain situation such as comparing L1 and L2 grammar, for beginner, and translation exercise. The research finding suggests that teacher may occasionally switch to mother lounge when it is necessary.

In terms of students level, Harmer (1998, p. 13) stated that although there are many kinds of activities that can be used at any level, there are also some activities that are more suitable only for certain level. For example, while drilling as a pronunciation practice or a simple conversation can be used to teach the beginner, these are not appropriate for intermediate or advanced students.

5.   CONCLUSION AND SUGESSTION

The results of the study show that there were no dominant techniques used by teachers. They used debate, role play, think pair share and jigsaw. They often vary the techniques based on the topic of the subject and students' condition. They understand about the pros and cons of the techniques they used. All of the techniques are in line with current curriculum. They do not share the same opinion about the most important elements of speaking. Yet they sometimes use internet to obtain authentic materials to the speaking class.

The writer expected that teachers build collaborative work with another teacher to discuss about their experience in teaching speaking so that they can assess, evaluate, then decide which classroom setting works better. Second, it is expected that the school principal to provide more chances outside the class for students to practice their speaking ability.

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