

EFL Teacher's Tactics In Teaching Speaking at Senior High School

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Abstract

This research is aimed to describe the strategies utilized by the English teacher in teaching speaking to the tenth-grade students of SMA Islam Negeri Athirah Bone. This research explores how innovative methods improve students' speaking proficiency, offering insights into adaptable strategies for language teaching. This study utilizes a qualitative research design focusing on interviews. The study was conducted with one English teacher as the research subject. The findings of the research indicate that the teacher utilized a variety of strategies, in this case, role-play, dialogue, group discussion, modeling use of media or technology, storytelling, peer teaching, simulation, interactive games, presentations, language games, think-pair-share, task-based learning, question and answer sessions, improvisation activities, use of authentic materials, and error correction and feedback sessions. It is concluded that the teacher utilized diverse strategies in teaching and speaking to the tenth-grade students of SMA Islam Athirah Bone. Additionally, the implication of this research is that educators in different levels of education can adopt a variety of interactive techniques to adapt to students' various learning style and needs.

Keywords: Teaching strategies, speaking skills, EFL.

A. Introduction

Speaking skills play a crucial role in language learning, but they are often undervalued in language education (Rao, 2019). Traditional approaches tend to prioritize reading and writing, leaving speaking less developed (Thomas, 2019). According to Ali (2020), speaking is a vital skill for foreign language learners, crucial for effective communication and idea expression. However, many excel in written English, speaking presents greater challenges, as it requires generating and organizing thoughts (John, 2020). The difficulties include pronunciation, fear of mistakes, limited vocabulary, and syntax differences (Normawati, et al,

2023).

In Indonesia context, limited English Exposure and the structural differences between Indonesian language and English hinder students' ability to develop speaking skills. Additionally, low motivation and overcrowded classrooms further complicate the learning process (Singh, 2024). Traditionally, speaking has been overlooked in favor of grammar and writing (Guebba, 2021)

Some solutions emerge for this issue, for example, the use of technology like language apps and multimedia, as well as interactive activities such as role-play and debates (Nagy, 2021). Akanda & Marzan (2023) emphasize the importance of designing teaching strategies that foster participation, supported by better resources, teacher training, and English immersion opportunities (Turakalove & Marupova, 2021).

This study focuses on the growing need to focus on speaking skills, which are essential in today's interconnected world. For English as a foreign language (EFL) learners, mastering speaking skills is critical for real-world communication, both academically and socially. The focus of this study is on the strategies that teachers employ to teach speaking skills to the tenth-grade students at SMA Islam Athirah Bone. The study examines how different strategies are used in the classroom to improve students' speaking abilities.

This research is significant because it explores the strategies used by a teacher in one of the best private schools in Bone regency. It explains how the implemented "kurikulum Merdeka" allows teachers to apply a broader range of strategies, offering insights into how innovative teaching methods can be used to enhance student's engagement and speaking proficiency. The study could also help educators adapt their strategies in line with the students' unique needs, potentially serving as a model for similar educational settings.

Several studies have explored the strategies the teachers use to develop students' speaking. For example, Sukardi (2019) highlighted the use of cooperative activities, role-play, and creative tasks as effective strategies in teaching speaking, with students showing positive responses to these methods. Similarly, Marleni (2019) emphasized that performance-based activities like "show-and-tell" and presentations were frequently used by university lecturers to enhance students' speaking abilities. Moreover, Anggraeni et al. (2020) examined various strategies, including discussions, role-play, brainstorming, and modeling, to teach speaking at SMA Negeri 1 Palopo.

These previous research, similarly with the current studym suggest that a combination of strategies can be effective in improving speaking proficiency and that teachers often tailor

their approaches to suit the needs of their students. While previous research has provided valuable insights into different strategies for teaching speaking, there are still gaps regarding the application of these strategies in specific educational settings, such as private schools with unique curriculum. Most existing studies have focused on public schools or university settings, with limited research conducted in schools that implement the “kurikulum Merdeka”.

The primary contribution of this research is its focus on a private school setting, where the teacher is not limited to traditional strategies but can explore a variety of approaches. This offers a fresh perspective on how different methods can be used to meet students’ varied needs.

The core research problems revolve around the use of the teaching strategies used to enhance speaking skills, in tenth grade at SMA Islam Athirah Bone. The study’s objective is to investigate the strategies used by the teacher in teaching speaking to the tenth grade students of SMA Islam Athirah Bone. By focusing on this specific setting, the research aims to provide deeper insights into the impact of various approaches in language teaching.

B. Research Methodology

This research is a qualitative research, with case study approach research design, focusing on the specific strategies used by a teacher at SMA Islam Athirah Bone on teaching speaking to the tenth grade students. The case study is suitable for this research because it allows a deep exploration of the varied teaching strategies within real-life classroom setting. The subject of the research is highly experienced English teacher (coded TS). The research was conducted at SMA Islam Athirah Bone, in a class of 23 tenth grade students, where an interview was conducted with the English teacher of that class. For the data analysis, Miles et al’s (2014) interactive model was used. This model includes data condensation, presentation, and drawing conclusion.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Results

Strategies used by teacher

Language games

TS uses language games that align with lesson objectives and students’ proficiency levels, such as Pictionary or Charades. The games are integrated into the lesson plan to reinforce vocabulary and encourage spontaneous speaking. TS organizes students into small groups, monitors the activity, and conducts a debriefing session to discuss outcomes.

Extract 1

“I believe that these language games introduce an element of fun and competition, encouraging students to practice speaking in a relaxed atmosphere, which helps lower anxiety and fosters spontaneous language use” (TS, September 7th 2024)

Think-pair-share

TS uses the Think-pair-share method where students first think individually, then discuss with a partner, and finally share with the class. This method structures speaking practice and gradually builds confidence.

Extract 2

“In my experience, this strategy provides students time to think individually, discuss in pairs, and then share their thoughts with the class, promoting structured speaking practice while building confidence gradually.” (TS, September 7th 2024)

Task-Based learning

TS designs activities around specific tasks aligned with the student’s interests, such as role-playing or project-based assignments. TS thinks that the strategy can encourage practical language use.

Extract 3

“I believe that by focusing on meaningful tasks, students practice speaking in real-world situations, which helps them use language naturally and improve fluency” (TS, September 7th 2024)

Question and answers sessions

TS facilitates Q&A sessions where students ask and answer questions about their hobbies, promoting interactive dialogues and active listening. TS believes that Q&A sessions provide a structured opportunity for students to practice formulating and responding to questions, which enhances their ability articulate thoughts and engage in meaningful dialogue.

Extract 4

“I think these sessions give students a chance to practice both asking and answering questions, which boosts critical thinking and ensures active engagement in speaking activities.” (TS, September 7th 2024)

Improvisation Activities

TS incorporates improvisation activities where students respond spontaneously to prompts related to their interests, enhancing fluency and quick thinking. By responding without prior preparation, TS argues that students can enhance their fluency and creativity.

Extract 5

“I believe these activities help students think quickly and respond in real time, promoting spontaneity and the ability to express themselves without relying on prepared speech.” (TS, September 7th 2024)

Pronunciation drills

TS conducts regular pronunciation drills focusing on specific sounds, stress patterns, and intonation to improve clarity and accuracy in spoken English. This strategy, as explained by TS, can make the students receive targeted practice that helps them correct errors and refine their speech.

Extract 6

“I think giving timely feedback helps students understand and correct their mistakes, which is crucial for improving their speaking accuracy and fluency.” (TS, September 7th 2024)

Use of Authentic materials

TS uses real-life resources such as articles, videos, and podcasts related to students’ hobbies to expose them to natural language use and contexts. TS believes that this strategy is crucial for understanding and replicating natural speech patterns.

Extract 7

“In my experience, authentic materials expose students to real-life language and contexts, helping them understand and mimic natural speech patterns, pronunciation, and intonation.” (TS, September 7th 2024)

Error correction and Feedback Sessions

TS provides constructive feedback on pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary usage during and after speaking activities, highlighting errors and offering suggestions for improvement. TS implies that timely and constructive feedback helps students recognize and correct their mistakes, which is critical for improving accuracy and fluency.

Extract 8

“It is pretty helpful, because providing timely feedback helps students understand their mistakes and learn how to correct them, which is crucial for improving accuracy and fluency.” (TS, September 7th 2024)

Role-play

TS uses role-play to stimulate real-world scenarios where students act out conversation related to their hobbies, allowing them to practice practical language use, TS thinks that by acting out relevant situations, students gain experience in using language context, which enhances their communicative competence.

Extract 9

“I believe role play stimulates real-world situations where students must speak in character, which helps them practice practical, everyday language in a fun and engaging way.” (TS, September 7th 2024)

Dialogue group discussions

TS organizes small group discussion on topics related to students’ interests, facilitating

collaboration and critical thinking through structured conversation. TS states that group discussions are very effective in improving collaboration and critical thinking.

Extract 10

“In my view, this strategy improves collaboration and critical thinking because students share ideas, debate, and discuss various topics, improving both their speaking and listening skills.” (TS, September 7th 2024)

Modeling

TS demonstrates specific speaking activities or tasks before students perform them, providing a clear example of expected language use. TS perceives that by demonstrating correct speech patterns and language use, TS helps students understand expectations and improve their pronunciation and intonation.

Extract 11

“In my perception, demonstrating correct speech patterns or dialogues provides students with a clear example to follow, especially useful for pronunciation and intonation practice.” (TS, September 7th 2024)

Use of media

TS integrates various media, such as videos and audio recordings, into lessons to expose students to diverse language use and support speaking activities. TS believe it is a very helpful to use media in language learning, since it provides dynamic and interactive opportunities for students to practice speaking.

Extract 12

“It is good for students on utilizing videos, podcasts, or apps, because it provides dynamic and interactive ways to practice speaking, allowing students to engage with authentic materials at their own pace.” (TS, September 7th 2024)

Storytelling

TS uses storytelling by having students share stories about their hobbies, fostering a relaxed environment for practicing spoken English. TS uses this strategy because she believes that storytelling is an effective method for developing narrative skills and fluency.

Extract 13

“I think storytelling encourages students to tell stories can develop narrative skills, fluency, and the ability to organize their thoughts clearly while speaking.” (TS, September 7th 2024)

Peer teaching

TS employs peer teaching in her classroom by having students with higher proficiency levels assist their peers with lower proficiency levels. TS views peer teaching as a highly effective strategy that hold the strengths of more proficient students to support their peers.

Extract 14

“ in my view, wgen students teach other, it reinforces their own learning while also building their confidence in speaking as they explain concepts in their words.” (TS, September 7th 2024)

Simulation

In her teaching, TS uses simulation to creat real-life scenarios where students practiced speaking about their hobbies. With its similarities with role-play, TS argues that simulation exercises are instrumental in connecting the gap between classroom learning and real-life application

Extract 15

“This is similar to role-play I believe, simulations recreate real-life environments, such as meeting or a travel scenario, giving students a chance to practice speaking in a controlled yet realistic setting.” (TS, September 7th 2024)

Interactive Games

TS uses interactive games into her lessons to encourage speaking practice in a fun and engaging way. TS believes that interactive games provide a dynamic and enjoyable way for students to practice speaking

Extract 16

“Students love games, in my experience, interactive games encourages students to speak in a fun, low-pressure environment, fostering interaction and engagement while developing speaking skills.” (TS, September 7th 2024)

Presentation

TS integrates presentations as a key strategy for developing students' speaking skills. Students were tasked with preparing and delivering presentations about their hobbies, which provided them with the opportunity to practice organizing their thoughts, presenting information clearly, and speaking fluently.

Extract 17

“I believe giving presentations develops formal speaking skills, including organization, clarity, and fluency, while also helping students build confidence in front of an audience.” (TS, September 7th 2024)

2. Discussion

This study revealed several key findings related to the impact of differentiated instruction, peer teaching, and the integration of Technology on students speaking skills in an Indonesian High School context. One significant finding was that the use of differentiated instruction where tasks were tailored to students varying proficiency levels, proved effective in improving students speaking abilities. Peer teaching also emerged as an impactful strategy,

allowing higher levels students to assist their peers. Thereby reinforcing their own understanding, and fostering a collaborative learning environment.

Additionally, the integration of technology, specifically tools like Speech Ace and flipgrid played a crucial role in enhancing speaking skills. Speech Ace provided real-time feedback on pronunciation, allowing students to make immediate corrections, while flipgrid facilitated interactive and engaging speaking activities. However, there were some challenges related to the long-term retention of correct pronunciation indicating that while technology aids in real time learning, It may not always guarantee sustained improvements without additional support.

Unexpected findings emerged regarding student motivation through interest-based topics. Contrary to existing literature which suggests that integrating personal interests into lessons and enhances motivation, this study found that an exam driven context, personal interests did not always lead to better performance in speaking skills. This nuanced result suggests that interest-based teaching may need to be balanced with curriculum goals to achieve comprehensive outcomes.

Previous studies support the findings related to differentiated instruction and peer teaching. For example, Blaz (2024), argued that differentiated instruction allows teachers to adapt content and processes to meet students diverse abilities. This research aligns with Blaz's findings as the teacher. In this study, TS, successfully implemented, differentiated instruction tailoring tasks to different proficiency levels, which led to improved speaking performance.

Similarly, the concept of peer teaching has been shown to enhance learning in various studies. Yang at al (2021) highlighted that peer teaching fosters collaboration allowing students to learn from one another. This study supports this as observations showed that higher level students, not only reinforce their understanding, by teaching their peers, but also help those struggling with speaking tasks. This aligns with Topping's argument that peer teaching can improve engagement and learning outcomes in language education.

The integration of technology is also related to some other research. Suvarova et al. (2024) implied that digital tools can enhance language acquisition through interactive and personalized experiences. This research is related to those findings. Showing that Speech Ace and Flipgrid provided students with valuable feedback and interactive speaking opportunities, positively impacting their speaking skills.

Aeni et al., (2024) found that using digital-based games, such as Bamboozled, increased student motivation and engagement. Similarly, in this study, the integration of technology tools

made the classroom more interactive and enjoyable further motivating students to participate in speaking activities. This highlights the alignment between the use of digital tools and increased student engagement in language, learning.

Although previous research such as Robertson and Padesky (2022). suggests that integrating students' personal interests into lessons significantly enhances engagement. This study found that interest-based topics did not universally improve all aspects of student performance particularly in exam driven contexts. While personal interests did increase participation, they did not always translate into improved speaking skills especially when the curriculum was focused on standardized test preparation. This difference from prior findings suggests that interest based topics alone, may not be sufficient to improve speaking skills and may need to be balanced with structured educational goals.

This contradiction may stem from the educational settings, emphasis on exams, where personal interests are less aligned with the objectives of improving specific speaking skills. It suggests that a combination of interest-based topics and curriculum driven tasks might be necessary to achieve better speaking outcomes in exam oriented environments.

While previous studies such as Yang et al (2021) emphasize the benefits of technology in improving pronunciation. This research found that students struggled with long-term retention of correct pronunciation despite using speechace. Although this tool provided immediate corrections, students required additional support to retain these improvements over time. This indicates that while technology is effective for short-term learning, it may not be sufficient for sustained improvement.

This finding highlights a potential gap in the effectiveness of using technology for pronunciation improvement. Long-term retention may require a combination of technology and more traditional teaching methods, such as face-to-face, feedback and repetitive practice to ensure sustained progress.

This study's findings, align with constructivist principles, particularly Vygotsky (1978) concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). In the observed classroom, peer teaching and collaborative learning reflected by Vygotsky theory that social interaction is critical for learning. By allowing students to work with peers at different proficiency levels, TS helped them advance more rapidly in their speaking skills. The use of peer teaching as a scaffold mirrors Vygotsky idea of guided learning, where students move from assisted to independent performance.

The findings also support the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT) as

outlined by Richards (2006). TS employed activities such as role-playing games and real life communication exercises that emphasized fluency over accuracy. These activities align with the CLT emphasis on using language for meaningful communication rather than focusing solely on grammatical correctness. The success of these activities in improving speaking fluency demonstrates the effectiveness of CLT in promoting practical language skills.

Behaviorist theories such as those proposed by Skinner (1957) emphasize the role of repetition and reinforcement in language acquisition. However, this study found that repetitive drills alone were not enough to improve speaking skills. While repetition played a role in pronunciation practice, students achieved greater progress when engaged in more interactive and meaningful communication activities. This suggests that behaviorist principles may need to be complemented by more social and communicative approaches to fully develop speaking abilities.

Cognitive load Theory (sweller, 1988) posits that excessive cognitive load can hinder learning. This research found that the introduction of new technology tools, while beneficial, sometimes overwhelmed students, contributing to cognitive overload. This suggests that while technology can support learning, it must be introduced carefully to avoid placing an excessive cognitive burden on students. This finding points to the need for careful consideration of students' cognitive capacities when integrating new instructional methods.

This research stands out for its focus on a specific educational context in Indonesian high school, where global strategies were adapted to meet local needs. TS' use of technology, differentiated instruction, and peer teaching was tailored to the sociocultural context of her students at adding a layer of specificity, not often addressed in broader studies, such as Auld 2022. This emphasizes the importance of context specific strategies in education, highlighting the need to adapt global teaching methods to local environments.

Traditional research often emphasizes the teacher's role as the primary source of instruction. However, this study observed TS taking on more of a facilitator role. Guiding students through self-directed learning and peer collaboration. This shift from a teacher centered model to a more student-centered approach, represents a significant departure from conventional teaching practices. Reflecting more contemporary views on education, that prioritize learner autonomy and active engagement.

D. Conclusion and Suggestion

The research reveals that the teacher employed diverse strategies in teaching speaking to the tenth students of SMA Islam Athirah Bone. The strategies included role-play, dialogue, group discussion, modeling, use of media or technology, storytelling, peer teaching, simulation, task-based learning, question and answer sessions, improvisation activities, use of authentic materials, and error correction and feedback sessions. However, some strategies like debates and pronunciation drills were not utilized.

For future researchers, further research should explore the effectiveness of different speaking strategies across various educational contexts, focusing on how these methods impact students with diverse backgrounds and proficiency levels. Longitudinal studies are also needed to assess the long-term effects of interactive and technology-based speaking strategies on students' language proficiency and confidence. Additionally, innovative approaches such as virtual reality simulations and gamified learning experiences should be investigated to determine their effectiveness in enhancing speaking skills, as these methods offer engaging, immersive ways to improve communication abilities.

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