Teachers’ Problems in Teaching Speaking To Young Learners

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the teachers’ problems in teaching speaking to young learners at Jasmine Education Center. Those problems were gathered from classroom observation and interviewed the teachers. In order to investigate the teachers' problems in teaching speaking to young learners, the researcher used qualitative study to gather the data in this research. The researcher observed the problems found on two English teachers at Jasmine Education Center. The researcher followed the observation guide from Bryne. Additionally, an interview was intended to find out the teachers’ answers in order to know teachers’ problems in teaching speaking to young learners. The interview guide was taken from Kayi. The classroom observation showed that the problems found related to class management which were response towards learners and proper environment in teaching and learning process. The answers of the interviews, the researcher found that the teachers’ problems in time prediction in teaching, the way the teacher commented students’ mistakes and lack of ability in analyzing students’ difficulties in learning. In conclusion, the researcher successfully found the problems on the teachers in teaching speaking to young learners in Jasmine Education Center.

Keywords: Teachers’ problems, speaking skill, teaching young learners

1. INTRODUCTION

English is largely used in the world. Since the demand of English becomes high, it has been taught from elementary level up to university level. English is taught with the goal to develop learners’ language skills and enable them to communicate in English. To achieve these objectives, the students should master the four language skills. Those are listening, speaking, reading and writing. In learning English, speaking is one of the important aspects that students need to master. Florez (2000) says that speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information.
Regarding the importance of speaking, teacher needs to use the appropriate method in order to achieve the goal in speaking class. Every problem encountered by the teacher in the classroom ought to have some settlements so that the teacher knows how the speaking class should be progressed. When the researcher conducted a preliminary research at one of organizations in teaching English for young learners namely Turun Tangan Aceh, Banda Aceh from February to June 2014, the researcher was informed that the teacher in that organization had a problem in teaching speaking to the students. The problems were quite unclear. That is why, the researcher was interested in looking deeply into this problems. Geringer (2003) in Noom-ura (2013) stated that teacher is a crucial factor in learners’ progress in language learning.

In Indonesia, speaking English is a quite difficult since it is not used in our daily communication. Actually, speaking is good to be learnt by young learners at the elementary school. The two of those competencies are called linguistic competence and linguistic performance. It is in accordance with Chomsky in Clark & Ave (1977) who states that linguistic competence is one’s capacity to use a language, while linguistic performance is the actual application of this competence in speaking or listening. Furthermore, Brown (2004) states that competence refers to one’s underlying knowledge of a system, event, or fact. It is the non-observable, idealized ability to do something, to perform something. Performance is the overtly observable and concrete manifestation or realization of competence. It is the actual doing of something: walking, singing, dancing or speaking. Form the above elaboration in relation to the teacher’s problem that the researcher found when she conducted a preliminary research, this study is in investigating the problems encountered by teachers in teaching speaking to young learners.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 Speaking

Burke (1998) states that speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts. Speaking is an activity involving two or more people in sending and receiving the information or the message in oral form. Thornbury and Slade (2006) state that speaking is social, in the sense where it establishes rapport and mutual agreement, maintains and modifies social identity and involves interpersonal skill. This social element is expressed through wishes, feelings, attitudes, opinions and judgments, which can clash with the formal nature of the classroom when teaching speaking.

According to Gumperz (1999) speaking is cooperatively constructed which is based on contributions, assumptions, expectations and interpretations after participants’ utterances. Thornbury (2005) points out that speaking is also a multisensory activity because it involves paralinguistic features such as eye-contact, facial expression, body language, tempo, pauses, voice quality changes, and pitch variation which affect conversational flow.

Nunan (2003) states based on it is function, speaking is defined as a way to verbally communicate for mostly interpersonal and somewhat transactional purposes. Burns and Joyce (1999) explains that speaking is an active process of negotiating meaning and using social knowledge of situation. It means that speaker and interlocutor have to understand each other about the topic that they are speaking or discussing so that the conversation can run well. Furthermore, Nunan
(2003) also stated speaking skill involves many language elements such as grammar, vocabulary, intonation, pronunciation, stress and the choice of the language functions.

2.2 The Teaching of Speaking

Kayi (2006) states that there are several meanings of teaching in producing the English speech sounds and sounds patterns, choosing words sentence stress, intonation patterns and the rhythm of the second language. Kayi also mentions that selecting the right words and sentences in according to the proper social settings, audience, situation and subject matter, managing the students thought in a meaningful and logical sequence, using language as a ways of showing values and judgments and using the language responsively and fluently are also important matters in teaching speaking.

Based on the definition above, it can be understood that teaching speaking should improve students’ communication skills, because only by improving students’ speaking ability, they can express themselves and learn how to follow the social and cultural rules that are appropriate in each communication circumstance. The teacher of English has to able to create an interesting classroom situation, thus the students feel enjoyable during the class and keep on practicing their speaking ability (Rasyid, 2016).

2.3 Teacher’s Problem in teaching Speaking

In teaching speaking, teachers face some problems. According to Greene, and Preety (1967) teachers often face the problems form, the duration of teaching and learning process is limited. The material on the text books is different from the lesson plan. Teacher’s problems are the quantity of the students in the class because a better class should have 12 to 20 students because young learners need more attention in learning. He also stated that another problem which is encountered by a teacher came from the availability of the text books for the students.

Learning a foreign language is very useful if the lesson material relate to our daily activity or using real media to increase their curiosity in motivating the students (Ningsih&Fata, 2015). While Hammalainen (1995) said that the way to increase students’ motivation of learners in studying is using movies, body movement, globe, picture and tape recorder.

Others problems that are commonly faced by the teacher stated by Ur (1996) are related to individual learners personalities and attitude to the learning process and learning speaking in particular. Inhibition – fear of making mistakes, losing face, criticism, shyness. Nothing to say – learners have problems with finding motives to speak, formulating opinions or relevant comments. Low or uneven participation – often caused by the tendency of some learners to dominate in the group. Mother-tongue use – particularly common in less disciplined or less motivated classes, learners find it easier or more natural to express themselves in their native language.

3. METHODS

The researcher applied descriptive research to conduct this study. According to Mouton (1996) descriptive research attempts to accurately portray situation and events, and sometimes to describe their interrelationship in the hope of obtaining
useful information, often in order to plan subsequent experimental study. The descriptive research is used to find out the teachers problems in teaching speaking perceived by teachers at Jasmine English Course. In this study, the researcher takes the data from interviews, observation.

In this study, after gathering the data through the interview and observation, the researcher analyzed the data. The data analysis was undertaken by organizing the collected data systematically. To analyze the result of interview, the researcher transcribed the conversations from the recording. An explanation of the transcription codes in the table below is provided by (Ali, 2000).

Primary data was obtained from interview guidelines and classroom observation. The main data was from interview guidelines which were gotten from the teacher's answers. The data was discussed narratively. The data from classroom observation which have been identified was then analyzed. Next, all the Finding of this study was interpreted narrative.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Findings

There were two teachers observed by the researcher at Jasmine Education Centre. The first teacher was observed on Monday, July 18 2016. The observation was conducted in the class namely LITTLE BUNNY 1. The researcher acted as a non participant observer. So the researcher did not take any part in the class. The researcher only sat and observed all the teaching and learning process. There were 3 aspects needed to be observed by the researcher which are pre-speaking stage, while-speaking stage and post-speaking stage. On pre-speaking stage, the researcher observed how the teacher started the class. On while speaking stage, the researcher observed the aspect of the teacher on how the teacher examined their students. The last stage, the researcher observed on how the teacher gave feedback and managed to end the class well.

The first teacher class started the class on august 4th 2016 at 16.30. The researcher arrived at Jasmine Education Centre at 16.00, entered the class and sat directly in the back. On pre-speaking stage, the teacher started the class with SALAM and greeting her students enthusiastically. The teacher started the teaching and learning process by asking her students to open their book and asked some simple and general questions related to the lesson which would be discussed. The teacher told her students to open their book on page 15th about “introducing my self” and asked a question what their name is.

The teacher explained the (introducing myself) material including enriching vocabulary and knowing structure of the text. The teacher called some students to read loudly and asked them to conclude with their own words what they have read. The teacher told the students to create a question for each of them. One of the questions was the student asked, “What is your name?” to their friends. Then, the teacher explained the problem which is usually faced in learning the lesson. Finally, the teacher asked the problems faced by the students and wrote it down on white board.

On while speaking stage, the teacher gave a 5 minutes break to the students. After that, she continued the class by asking her students to find the peer and sit in pair. The teacher ordered the students to discuss the question that they had created. The teacher walked around the class and corrected some pronunciation
mistakes by saying a correct pronunciation such as “mei nem” into “may nem” without interfering them. The teacher did not do any action, she only helped the students if necessary.

On post-speaking stage, the teacher in this stage acted as a manager. She set the students in class well by asking them to sit in pair and asked them not to interrupt other students. After that, the teacher asked the students to speak about what they have discussed. After listening to each student’s opinions, the teacher guided the students to give feedback to each other by asking them to repeat her words “thank you for your comment friends”. The teacher gave a mark to the students based on how well they spoke in the class. The teacher also told to the students in the end of the class that they have met the goal that day. The goal was to be able to think about an issue and deliver our opinions related to the issue given in the class. The purpose of this activity is to improve the students’ speaking ability.

The second teacher was observed on Wednesday, July 20 2016. She taught the class namely LITTLE BUNNY 3. The second teacher entered the class at 19.30 and invited the researcher to enter together with her. The teacher introduced the researcher to the students and asked the researcher to sit on the back. The procedure was similar to the previous class. The researcher as a non-participant observer, the researcher was only sat on the back and observed 3 aspects of speaking class. The aspects were pre-speaking stage which the researcher observed the way the teacher stated the class, while-speaking stage that was observed by the researcher about the process speaking task given and the post-speaking stage where the researcher observed how the teacher review, gave feedback and end the class.

During the pre-speaking stage, the teacher also said SALAM and greeting the students by asking “how are you?” to her students. And then, the teacher joked to activate the class. In this class, the teacher asked the students about students’ hobby and related it to some movies and songs that the students familiar with. The teacher asked every student to write their opinions about the text that they have discussed. The teacher gave students 10 minutes to think and write. The teacher walked around to check in case the students need her assistant.

The teacher asked the students to stop when the times was up and called everyone to say their opinion one by one. The teacher gave them 1 minute to talk. The teacher did not correct anything. The teacher only watched the way her students talk without interfering. The teacher only offered assistance when her students were stuck and asked for her help. The last, on the post-speaking stage, the teacher was in managing the class and the students. She explained to the students all the mistakes made by the students and gave feedbacks to them. For example when the students said “My hobby is playing games, playing football and watching” the teacher explained that it should be (My hobbies are to playing games, football and watching). She also asked to every students if they want to object or any other suggestion related to the learning material that they discussed. The teacher did not forget to mark all of the students’ achievement in her score book. She closed the class by giving them motivation and tell them the importance of that day’s lesson and the goal of learning it.

The findings of interview, the researcher decided to code the first teacher with A and the second teacher is B. The first question which the researcher asked for both teachers is if the teachers provide maximum opportunity to their students to speak
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English by providing them with a rich environment that contain collaborative work, authentic materials and task and shared knowledge. Both of the teachers stated the same answer. They said yes that they always tried to give maximum opportunity to the students. Below are some comments made by the teachers concerning the maximum opportunity that they provide to their students:

"(...) Yes/ I always give a maximum opportunity to the student." (A)

"(...) Yes/ Of course/ For me/ the maximum opportunity in class is my top priority." (B)

The second question was related to the positive attitude from the students. Both of the teachers told me yes they always show their positive attitude in the class. The first teacher added by saying there were only a few students who have been hyperactive in the class, but they sit on the back. We called them kinesthetic. They always tried to make some moves in learning. They are asked to sit on the back so that they cannot disturb the other students. Below are some comments made by the teachers concerning the positive attitude made by the students:

"<Attitude?>/ umm.../ Yes/ Most of the students show their positive attitude in the class/ but there are some students who are hyperactive/ we put them on the back because they belong to kinesthetic group." (A)

"Yes (...)/ I always see their positive responds in the class." (B)

The third question was about the difficulty in involving each student in every speaking activity. Both of the teachers faced the difficulties sometimes. One teacher said that the problems related to the lack of involvement of the students in the class because they lacked of courage. Another teacher told that the students are sometimes confused in explaining their opinions in English. So the students prefer a short answer.

"Sometimes (...)/ they are sometimes confuse in explaining their idea in English/ (...) so they often choose/ a simple/ or short sentence/ Ummm... to be said." (A)

"Hmm... hmmm... (...)/ The difficulty related to the lack of involvement the students in the class/ Because they lack of courage." (B)

The fourth question was about the duration of speaking time for the teachers and the students. The first teacher told that she spent about 90 minutes in the class which 20 minutes spent for the teachers to explain, 45 minutes for the students to be involved and the rest of the time she spent for observing the class. Otherwise, the second teacher stated that she has never counted the duration while she taught.

"I spend about 90 minutes in class/ but I don’t really pay attention on the time we spend for speaking/ I spend 20 minutes in explaining/ 45 minutes students’ participation/ and 25 minute/ observe the class." (A)

"I’m sorry/ umm.../ I don’t know/ I have never counted the duration of the activity in the class." (B)

The fifth question was about the problems face in commenting students’ responses. Both of the teachers told that they have never faced any problem when they commented their students’ mistakes, opinions, presentations and etc. that are related to the students’ activities in the class.

"No (...) / I’ve never faced any difficulty at all." (A)

"I am sorry/ I also don’t/ I don’t really remember any difficulty." (B)

The sixth question that researcher asked was about the eliciting question such as “what do you mean?” and “how did you reach that conclusion?”. Both of the teachers have different answers. The first teacher stated that she tried to ask that
question when her students gave an unclear answers or opinions. However, regarding to the questions the second teacher answered that she rarely asked the questions because she tried to respect the opinions given by the students. Below are their comments:

"I try/ ummm / I tried to/ to ask that question when my students give/ (...) an unclear answer or idea." (A)

"<Elicit question?> You mean like (...) / ummm/ ok... I understand/ I think I rarely ask any kind of question/ because I try to respect them." (B)

The seventh question was about how the teachers correct students’ pronunciation mistake while they were speaking. Both of the teachers stated the different methods in correcting the students’ pronunciation mistake. The first teacher said that she usually let the students speak until they finish. The teacher made lists of the students’ mistakes and corrected them after the speaking was done. Meanwhile, another teacher told that she corrected the students directly when the students made mistakes.

"I/ umm.../ I usually let/ the students/ (...) speak until they finish/ I make list of mistake to correct it/ and ask them to repeat the correct sentences in correct pronunciation." (A)

"I correct/ (...) them/ immediately/ provide them with/ umm.../ (...) the correct pronunciation/ and ask them to/ repeat the word with/ with the.../ with the right pronunciation." (B)

The eighth question was about the problems encountered in managing students in the class while they were doing the speaking activities. The first teacher stated that there were some problems related to pronunciation and grammar while another teacher stated that the problems are about time management. A student could spend much time in thinking which would limit the time and reduce the chance for the other students to speak.

"I think that/ most of them usually say/ umm... speak/ wrong pronunciation and grammar." (A)

"I think/ The problems related to time limitation/ sometimes/ when the students shared opinions about/ certain topics/ they/ they took too/ too much time/ so/ not every student/ umm.../ (...) chance to speak they idea." (B)

The ninth question was about the way the teachers diagnose the problems faced by the students who had difficulty in speaking. The first teacher told that she tried to listen carefully every speaking activity from the students to diagnose the difficulties face by the students. The second teacher told that the pauses which are created by the students while speaking were the signs showing that the students faced difficulties. Below are the comments stated from the teacher about how to diagnose the problems:

"In analyzing the students/I think.../ I always listen/ wholly explanation/ and conclude the difficulties students/ face." (A)

"Usually/ students who have problems/ while speaking/ will take a lot of pauses/ when they speak/ so umm.../ (...) they are in trouble." (B)

The last question was about how the teachers provide students more opportunities to practice the spoken language. Both of the teachers have the same ways in answering this question. They gave topics to the students or some questions and asked them to share their opinions with each other and let them speak up.

"I always/ make a topics/ for the students/ to discuss with each other/ and they will speak." (A)

"I give topic to be discussed/ and/ and then/ ask them to speak up." (B).
4.3 Discussion

Teachers’ task in teaching is to create situation or relate the situation where the students will experience real life communication or activities in their daily life which led them to have a chance to practice oral language. The second teacher conducted it well. She implemented the first stage. She asked the students about a movie that was so famous at that time. She tried to communicate well in order to activate the class. Learning a foreign language will be very useful if the lesson material is related to our daily activity or using real media to increase the curiosity in motivating the students.

Both first teacher and the second teacher explained the new vocabulary and the structure of learning material that they will discuss well. The teacher must not skip the part of the pre-speaking stage because Kumaravadivelu (2003) says that language is best learned when the learners’ attention is focused on understanding. So, when the students understand well about the lesson they will more focus and have a good spirit in studying. In this stage there were 6 steps missed by the second teacher. She skipped all the reading tasks. The skill in this class was speaking, but they needed reading text to be read then the students should create a question to be discussed with their friends. They activated the speaking class through that way. Those steps were suggested by Bryne (1991) on his/her observation sheet. The second teacher missed all of them but the first teacher conducted some of the steps on this pre-speaking stage.

On while-speaking stage, there are 3 steps which teacher should do in accordance with Bryne (1991). The first teacher conducted all of the steps well. While the second teacher only conducted 1 of 3 steps. The second teacher did not divide the students into small group or pair. So, the teacher asked the students to do it individually and the teacher just walked around the class but did not do any action.

The last stage is post-speaking stage. Bryne (1991) states that there are 5 steps in this stage. Both of the teachers conducted well in managing the class and gave feedback to their students. But in correcting serious mistake, the first teacher called the student who made a mistake to go to her desk and corrected there while the second teacher corrected directly after the students answered and did the mistake. Looking at the findings of the interview on the second question, the teachers stated the same answers. They told that the students who were hyperactive should be placed in the back in order not to disturb their friends. Actually, the teachers should give more attention to these students instead of putting them on the back of the class. As a result, if the students still stayed in the back, they would not get minimum chance to participate in the classroom.

The next problem found by the researcher was class time management (Ayu, 2016). The first teacher gave specific duration for each activity in the class. However, the second teacher did not predict her teaching time. To always remember and predict teaching time is always necessary for any teacher. In fact, in order to meet the goal, the teacher should manage time well before she entered the class. If she did not manage the time well, she could not fully deliver the scheduled teaching activities.

The researcher also found the problems in the way the teacher asked elicit question such as “what do you mean?” and “how do you come to that conclusion?”. The first teacher answered she always asked that question to her students when
she found an unclear answer. In this case, the teacher should be aware of that she was teaching young learners. Those questions contained negative impact for young learners. Young learners must be treated gently by the teachers. If we asked those questions, they would not know how to answer. It was best if the teacher remained silent and smiled to the answers given by the students. When asked about how both teachers observed the difficulties from the students, both teachers have different opinions. The first teacher only explained about the way that only satisfy but not to the students as she stated that she only listen carefully to her students’ conversation and find their difficulties. The way to find students difficulties in the classroom should be more specific than just listening to them. Nevertheless, the second teacher observed students pauses so that she knows that the students had difficulties in expressing their ideas.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

It can be concluded some teachers’ problems on teaching speaking to young learners. The problems were that teachers did not relate the material given with our daily activity, teachers treated the young learners almost similar to older learners, teachers were lack of creativity in the class, the teacher did not properly manage the class and teachers did not predict the time in teaching speaking to their students which limit the time and reduce the chance of more students to speak. The researcher expected that other researchers are interested in placing some efforts in order to develop this topic better or can do more than this. Other researchers are recommended to get more understanding and information related to this topic. The researcher also expected that there will be many more researchers who are willing to explore the topic related to finding out some problems which are commonly faced in teaching young learners and how to overcome it.

REFERENCES


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