

Teachers' Creativity in Developing Speaking Skill of Junior High School Students in Yogyakarta

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Abstract

One of the two most determining factors in the teaching-learning process is teacher. Teacher backgrounds which affect the teaching-learning process cover wide aspects to include creativity. This paper reports a study to describe teachers' creativity in developing the speaking skills of their students in Junior High Schools in Yogyakarta. The study belongs to qualitative research which data were collected from observation and interviews to four teachers selected from all English teachers in Yogyakarta teaching in both private and public schools based on their creativity in developing speaking skills. The observations were backed up with video-recording to catch detailed teacher-students interaction based on which the phenomenon understudy can be described. Follow-up interviews with teachers and students were conducted to help her in-depth understanding of the nature of creativity of the teachers, and thus triangulate the data for the study. Findings show that teachers' creativity was exercised in encouraging students, questioning and teacher praising, using the learning material, developing learning activities, and Internet and Communication Technology. Further analysis found the teachers' creativity was also employed in giving positive feedback and response, understanding students, mistake, and clear questions.

Keywords: *teachers' creativity; teaching-learning activities; the role of the teacher*

Background

English is offered to the secondary schools as one of the mandatory subjects. The aim of issuing this policy is to enable the graduates to catch up with the development of science and technology for the betterment of Indonesia (Noss, 1976). After more than 70 years of the policy

implementation, there was no significant change in the objectives of the teaching of English to the junior as well as senior high school students. The formulation of the recent teaching English objectives in the newest curriculum which is to develop students' communicative competence in English (Depdiknas, 2013) is still relevant to the earlier formulation of the objectives. The 2013 Curriculum for English subject defines the objective of the teaching of English as the development of students' communicative competence by means of developing the four language skills integratively (Depdiknas, 2013). To support this, the ministry has also provided the textbooks for both students and teachers to help implement the policy consistent with the guideline. Further, some kind of training, workshops as well as scaffolding have also been offered to the teachers focusing on how to use the books in creating effective learning and teaching activities. In classroom practice, however, so many teachers still unable to practice what has been preached. This could be observed, especially in developing the speaking skills. Speaking skill is an important aspect to acquire when learning a second or foreign language and the success of learning the language is measured from the performance of learners to speak the language learned.

Out of the four language skills, speaking has been most valued in society. It means that students having good English speaking skills are considered to have a plus value. Students have also developed the same thing; they are proud to be able to speak English. However, the development of the skill is not easy. Woodrow identifies speaking skills very difficult to develop for most foreign language learners because it is highly 'anxiety-provoking' (in Burns and Spiegel, 2018:5). This means that foreign language learners are often confronted with so much anxiety that hold them from speaking out. More specifically Thornbury (2012) describes strong tendency among foreign language learners of limited having limited knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and phonology to be restrictive from their peers. Therefore, so many factors should be taken into account in the teaching of speaking skill in class. This phenomenon also happens in the Indonesian context. In junior high schools, where the 2013 Curriculum has been ineffectively implemented, the teaching of English has undergone so many problems, especially how effective teaching speaking skills is conducted.

Based on the problems briefly described above the present paper report a case study describing how four English teachers in four Junior high schools in Yogyakarta Regency have put their best efforts in developing their students speaking skills. This research focuses on teachers' creativity in developing classroom activities in their classes. ERIC (1966) Thesaurus includes the term 'creative teaching' to refer to 'teaching that results from the teacher's creativity, not to teaching that is intended to develop the learner's creativity.' In this study, the term creative teaching is used to refer to teachers utilizing their own creativity to design systematic teaching solutions, adopt appropriate teaching techniques, and change teaching methods or arrange reasonable and effective teaching activities.

Literature Review

Developing Speaking Skill

Language teaching has long been associated with the development of the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. It has been a tradition that listening and reading skills are categorized as receptive while speaking and writing productive. The practice of the teaching of speaking skills in foreign language context has experienced a roller coaster because once it became a priority in learning, while in another era it was sometimes neglected. This condition results, in most cases, from the language teaching methods applied in classes. Before the 19th century when Grammar Translation Method (GTM) was internationally adopted, the teaching of speaking skill, including listening skill, was neglected because the emphasis in the teaching was to develop the written form of language focusing on students ability to read, translate and thus write in English (Richards, 2010, Brown, 2007). At this time the teaching of language skills tends to be segregated or isolated for putting more emphasis on the components covered in each skill. Proponents of this segregation put their argument that as each skill is unique, each requires different types of cognitive and social processes, that are used in different ways (Richards and Burns 2012). So as the case with problems of the teaching of these skills that need specific conditions different from others. Thus, segregation is the best option to take.

With the introduction of the Communicative Approach to language teaching in the 70s, the trend of the teaching language shifting from focusing on language forms more to language functions (Richards, 2010; Brown 2007). Following this, the teaching of language skills also has shifted from segregation into integration in that teachers are supposed to teach the language skills integratively. Burns and Speigel (2018:4) resume the argument for integrating the teaching of language skill based on the self-evidence of what is happening in real daily communication. In daily tasks, such as doing shopping or bargaining prices in traditional markets, dealing with clients where the speakers have to make dynamically and intimately employ the four skills to get the message through. Based on this condition, the teaching of language skills in the communicative approaches tends to be integratively practiced. This practice prevails in the teaching of English in Indonesian high schools with the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum nationwide. However, for some specific reasons, some teachers put more emphasis on developing specific skills.

Creativity in teaching Speaking

There are some characteristics teachers have which are believed to contribute to the quality of teaching process in class. Dunkin and Biddle describe them as teacher backgrounds which consist of, among other, teaching skill, teacher training experience, and teacher formative experience (in Johnson, 1980:11). Each of these categories consists of several indicators which can be a separate indicator of teachers' efficacy. Under teaching skills, Dunkin and Biddle mention intelligence, motivation, personality traits and still leave some banks in which creativity fits. It means that teacher's creativity contributes to his/her teaching skills which further positively contributes to the teaching process. For successful implementation of creative teaching, the environmental factors that need to be taken into consideration include expectations and interactions as well as teachers' teaching experience and beliefs (Hart, 2000; King, 2001).

Alderman (1999) pointed out those teachers' self-beliefs are the single biggest influential factor in students' learning effects.

Lin describes creative teaching as a creative, innovative and imaginative approach to teaching (in Burns and Spiegel, 2018: 11). Further, he also mentions that creative pedagogy includes creative teaching, teaching for creativity and creative learning. From this perspective, it can be inferred that a teacher is creative if s/he possesses a capability to intuitively create improvisational elements to create a conducive learning climate of the classroom. In foreign language class, those efforts are associated with the quality of interactive relationships between teachers and learners to make the teaching process better. It is also especially important that pedagogical solutions focus on students' perspectives in the classroom.

In second and or foreign language class, teachers' creativity is so important to win students' attention in the classroom. Creative teaching can be observed from teachers' efforts in creating some forms of improvisational performance where there is tension between structure (goals, content knowledge, emotional support, classroom management) and freedom (ability to react to student group reactions) (Lin in Burns and Speigel, 2018: 13). This way, teachers' creativity is still in line with principles of effective teaching which is enriched with personal creations in learning activities to make the lesson more effective.

Based on the discussion of some literature above it is understood that teacher's creativity is very much needed to spur the students' activity in the teaching-learning process. To develop the students' speaking skills, especially the Junior High School students, a teacher is expected to be creative and able to attract students to exercise expressing their opinions, thoughts, and feelings verbally. In such condition, teachers' creativity is badly needed to facilitate students performance. Thus the teacher has an important role to help the students able to speak English well with their friends in the classroom. The present study was designed to describe the English teachers' creativity in developing the students' speaking skill in Junior High School in Yogyakarta. More specifically, addresses the following questions.

- a. What technique does the teacher use in teaching speaking?
- b. Which of the techniques is creative?

Methodology

Based on the nature of the research and its objectives, this research was conducted based on principles of a case study because it aims at describing the English teachers' creativities in developing students speaking skills in detail. As the unit of analysis consists of four cases, Stake (2005) refers this as a 'multiple case study'. A case study, in this study, is a detailed investigation of a single individual or group (Stake, 1985) of English teachers teaching speaking skills in junior high schools. This study was conducted in order to understand the case, which at the end could be useful to understand other cases.

Research participants

Four English teachers from four different junior high schools in Yogyakarta were involved in the study. The four teachers were purposely selected (Johnson, 2005) based on their

creativity in teaching English. In addition, they were also involved because of their voluntary agreement. These four teachers were all graduated from four year-teacher training institutes. In Indonesia, they are called 'Sarjana Pendidikan'. These teachers are teaching English in Indonesian classes with more than 30 students in each class. For the ethical issues and to ensure their privacy, the names of teachers are disclosed. Instead, the researcher used pseudo names of T1 for teacher 1, T2 for teacher 2, T3 for teacher 3, and T4 for teacher 4. To conduct the interviews, the researcher used an interview guide based on the blueprint concerning the teachers' creativity. The interview technique was chosen because as cited by Seidman (1991), as a method of inquiry, interviewing is most consistent with people's ability to make meaning through language.

Data

Primary data for the study is in the form of words, actions, and decisions exercised by teachers in developing their classroom activities. In such events, teachers usually perform those tasks by means of any techniques of their selection which they believe to be effective. Out of these, the techniques that are considered very effective and or creative will be considered to be data for this study. These data were collected through (1) classroom observation, (2) video recording the classroom activities. (3) in depth-interviews which are audio recorded, and (4) document analysis. In brief, the in-depth interviews, questions and answer, class observations, and documents related to the learning and teaching process are sources of data which enable the researchers to triangulate among different aspects of the same things. As stated by Patton (2002: 47), one of the basic types of triangulation is the data triangulation. In this case, the researcher uses a variety of data sources in order to get valid data.

Setting

The research was conducted in four junior high schools in Yogyakarta city. These schools were purposively selected based on the accessibility of data needed to describe the research questions. The criteria for the selection are the teachers teaching English in these schools showing creativities in teaching especially in developing their students' speaking skill. Based on the criteria three public schools; SMPN 5, SMPN 10 and SMPN 1 Yogyakarta were chosen and one private school; SMP Pangudi Luhur. The decision to choose these schools was also supported by the observation during Lesson Study, MGMP committee. Another criterion got from the teachers' scores in UKG test. This criterion was used to choose those with high scores in the test.

Findings and Discussion

Based on data analysis, there were four strategies used by the teacher participants. They are encouraging students, questioning, and teacher praising, using internet and communication technology, using the learning material and developing learning activities. Each of these is briefly elaborated as follow.

Encouraging Students

Teacher encouragement can take many forms, such as offering feedback, boosting a student's confidence, or providing structure to a student overwhelmed by the task. Teachers provide the encouragement or positive support that their learners need to move forward. Creativity develops when teachers encourage curiosity, exploration, confidence, risk-taking, and balance. Curiosity and desire to explore even things taken for granted seem to be some of the important factors that build towards creativity. From the research observation, the researchers found that there are many different ways of giving encouragement and motivating the students. The researcher observed the teaching-learning process of T4 and T1 that after giving example on the expression of offering and discussion the content of the dialogue, T1 often gave the students questions and she often encouraged the students to be active in responding T1 questions. T1 students performed in front of the class confidently after drilling and practicing in a group through speaking game.

Teachers can support and reward exploration to enhance creativity. Having self-confidence helps learners persevere. It enables them to champion their point of view and work. While success builds confidence, failure can tear it down. Fearful people, lacking confidence in their abilities, will often fail to produce creative work. Therefore, encouragement for all work, not just successful efforts, is important. The researchers found two teachers, T3 and T2, which shared typical creativity in activating the students to join and activate their students in classroom discussion. T3 was creative in designing the activities which encouraged the students to speak English. T3 possessed friendly character and it was one of the ways to make the students develop self – confidence. T3 had a unique way of motivating students. T3 friendliness made his students felt comfortable and had self-confident to spontaneously active in class. T2 is one of the typical teachers who go around motivating and encouraging the students to speak English confidently. T3 and T2 knew very well the name of their students.

The findings above show three important things related to encouragement to the students. They are encouraging the students to talk, encouraging the students when they make mistakes and encouraging the students to clarify their ideas and feeling. Those three things are considered important in the learning-teaching process. This is supported by the available theories which have been done before. The ways of encouraging the students which the participants recommend are helping the students in their difficult situation and support them to state what they think by giving confirmation that the teachers will not get angry with their ideas. Those two ways are truly helpful for the teachers to encourage the students.

Helping the students in their difficult situation will improve the students' bravery in composing the sentences or solving the problems. Helping the students will motivate the students to speak also. When the students get difficulties in composing and uttering the sentences they want to, the teachers can help them. The students develop their confidence that their teachers will not leave them but they will help them to get the right things. Showing the understanding and acceptance of the students' mistakes in the learning process and their ideas give a good feedback to the students.

Here, the teacher can show his positive response and convince the students that he will not be angry for the mistakes which the students have made. This can motivate them to try more

and more. They are not afraid of stating their ideas/thinking because they know that their teachers will not be angry with them. They are not afraid also if they make mistakes in their learning process. So, they have their courage to try more and more. This will lead to their improvement in their learning. By giving these kinds of good response to the students, the teachers can stimulate the students' motivation in joining the English class. The other thing which the participant recommended is pointing to the students. In fact, this way gives a kind of support for the students to be involved in the learning-teaching process. Pointing to the students is also another way of showing the teacher's belief in the ability of the students.

Giving Questions

Teacher's questions play an important role in the learning-teaching process. This functions in many ways and one of them is arising the students' concentration on related problems. Therefore, the skill of the teacher in giving the questions, the language used by the teacher and the time and the question itself are crucial things to consider.

The questions which are directed to the students must be clear and easy to understand. Clear questions here mean that the teacher should state the question clearly. Therefore, the teacher must speak loudly and clearly in their articulation or pronunciation. Besides that, the use of language which is the same level as the students have is required also. This clearness of speaking will help the students to understand the questions. Besides that, the clearness here also means about the simplicity of the questions. The complicated questions will make the students confused to answer; even this can lead the wrong understanding of the questions.

Students state that the help of the teacher is the main concern. Even students do not understand the questions because of their lack of English vocabularies; students still feel comfortable because their teacher always helps them. This causes their feeling of comfort. In giving questions should be challenging not only yes and no question but the question which direct and lead students to arouse their curiosity.

The challenging questions will stimulate students to think. This is once again used to shape their thinking process. Teacher's creativity in giving questions is a good way to practice a problem-solving. These kinds of questions suggested are puzzles and crosswords. The use of the game is also suggested here. The other thing they like is having questions which are related to their daily life. They know what is happening and it will be easier for them to understand the questions. Teachers also can give the questions which are not related to the lesson. The teachers can ask about their daily life or hobbies or something else. This kind of question can increase the relationship between the teachers and students. The more intimate their relationship is, the better the students and the teacher can get along. This can increase the students' motivation in the class because students can enjoy their relationship with the teachers which results in their enjoyment of the learning-teaching process. Besides that, this kind of question can make the atmosphere in class is not tense.

Praising the Students

Praise is considered important as the other factors discussed above. This can increase the students' motivation. However, the English teacher must be careful because the wrong given

praise will damage the relationship between the students and the teachers and break the well-built atmosphere. The good relationship and well- built atmosphere here are related to the positive classroom, developing the students' self-esteem and also raising the students' motivation. Related to this praise, they are that the first praise is related to the lesson and the second one is not related to the lesson. Praise which is related to the lesson is given when the teacher will show their appreciation of what the students have done in the learning-teaching activities. Praise which is not related to the lesson is given for anything which is not related to the learning-teaching activities.

The teachers would have better address the praise to the whole class. This can increase the students' motivation because they know that their teacher appreciate their effort and this can show how far they have reached. This kind of praise makes the students happy and shows the teachers attention to the students. Giving a praise which is directed to a certain student in a class will emerge the feeling of envy in the class. This is potential to break the positive atmosphere in the class. The praise which is not related to the lesson can be a disturbance to some students as stated by the participants. As stated before, the danger of it is emerging the feeling of envy in the class. However, it is good to improve their motivation in joining the class, because the relationship between the teacher and students are closer. Related to this part, many experts have presented their theories about the teachers' praise. Pasch, et.al (1991:138) shows that praise is a useful tool to create a positive atmosphere in class and develop the students' self-esteem. What the teacher should pay attention is the time to give the praise. Routine and monotonous praise can make the students feel bored. Costa (1985) in Pasch, et.al (1991:138) emphasizes the importance of giving praise to the students. He shows that praise can develop the unmotivated students or lower grade students. Davies and Pearse (2000:14) show that praise is important also to give them feedback on what they have achieved. This will result in their increasing motivation after knowing what they have achieved.

Creative Practice with ICT and Realia

Computerized media and a multimedia environment can be helpful for learning foreign language vocabulary. However, the materials in the studies have mainly been commercial or teacher-produced. ICT and realia provide a variety of different approaches as well as learning styles that reinforce the material delivered in other formats. Enjoyment is very much a part of effective learning, thereby captivating learners' interest, increasing personal discovery, generating enthusiasm and the desire to learn thereby instilling an interest from within to improve the learners' motivation. Students love working with especially using ICT and realia an instrument to aid in the development of their language skills. Using ICT and realia attracts them because it is challenging, yet it is a part of their everyday lives.

Learning Activities

There are many activities to promote speaking as follows. They are 1) Discussions, after a content-based lesson, a discussion can be held for various reasons. The students may aim to arrive at a conclusion, share ideas about an event, or find solutions in their discussion groups. Before the discussion, it is essential that the purpose of the discussion activity is set by the

teacher. In this way, the discussion points are relevant to this purpose, so that students do not spend their time chatting with each other about irrelevant things. Role Play, one other way of getting students to speak is role-playing. Students pretend they are in various social contexts and have a variety of social roles. In role-play activities, the teacher gives information to the learners such as who they are and what they think or feel. Thus, the teacher can tell the student that "You are David, you go to the doctor and tell him what happened last night, and..."

Simulations are very similar to role-plays but what makes simulations different than role plays is that they are more elaborate. In simulations, students can bring items to the class to create a realistic environment. For instance, if a student is acting as a singer, she brings a microphone to sing and so on. Role plays and simulations have many advantages. First, since they are entertaining, they motivate the students. Second, they increase the self-confidence of hesitant students, because, in role play and simulation activities, they will have a different role and do not have to speak for themselves, which means they do not have to take the same responsibility.

Information gap activities serve many purposes such as solving a problem or collecting information. Also, each partner plays an important role because the task cannot be completed if the partners do not provide the information the others need. These activities are effective because everybody has the opportunity to talk extensively in the target language.

Brainstorming, on a given topic, students can produce ideas in a limited time. Depending on the context, either individual or group brainstorming is effective and learners generate ideas quickly and freely. The good characteristics of brainstorming are that the students are not criticized for their ideas so students will be open to sharing new ideas.

Students can briefly summarize a tale or story they heard from somebody beforehand, or they may create their own stories to tell their classmates. Storytelling fosters creative thinking. It also helps students express ideas in the format of beginning, development, and ending, including the characters and setting a story has to have. Students also can tell riddles or jokes. For instance, at the very beginning of each class session, the teacher may call a few students to tell short riddles or jokes as an opening. In this way, not only will the teacher address students speaking ability, but also get the attention of the class.

Students can conduct interviews on selected topics with various people. It is a good idea that the teacher provides a rubric to students so that they know what type of questions they can ask or what path to follow, but students should prepare their own interview questions. Conducting interviews with people gives students a chance to practice their speaking ability not only in class but also outside and helps them become socialized. After interviews, each student can present his or her study to the class. Moreover, students can interview each other and "introduce" his or her partner to the class.

This is a very enjoyable, whole-class, free-speaking activities for which students sit in a circle. For this activity, a teacher starts to tell a story, but after a few sentences, he or she stops narrating. Then, each student starts to narrate from the point where the previous one stopped. Each student is supposed to add from four to ten sentences. Students can add new characters, events, descriptions and so on. Before coming to class, students are asked to read a newspaper or magazine and, in class, they report to their friends what they find as the most interesting news.

Students can also talk about whether they have experienced anything worth telling their friends in their daily lives before class.

One way to make use of pictures in a speaking activity is to give students just one picture and having them describe what it is in the picture. For this activity, students can form groups and each group is given a different picture. Students discuss the picture with their groups, then a spokesperson for each group describes the picture to the whole class. This activity fosters the creativity and imagination of the learners as well as their public speaking skills.

Learning Materials

Based on the class observation, it can be noticed that there are many possible sources of materials can be used by teachers such as internet. Teachers can search for materials and save them for the future classes. Many teachers go abroad during vacations these days, and they can collect materials from TV and radio in English-speaking countries. These sources provide a variety of materials. The information is current and the language is natural, but the content has to be selected carefully. Newspapers, magazines, advertisements, and other types of printed material are very useful. Teachers can take photos, make videotapes or record audio tapes. If they make plans before they go overseas, they may be able to make a good video or audio programs. Teachers always need to examine their materials carefully from the point of view of what is appropriate for their students and the classes they are teaching. Language instruction has five important components--students, a teacher, materials, teaching methods, and evaluation.

Technology, such as LCD, slides, video, and audio tape recorders, video cameras, and computers, supports instruction/learning. Though students should be the center of instruction, in many cases, teachers and students rely on materials, and the materials become the center of instruction. Moreover, textbooks and other commercially produced materials are also very important in language instruction. Therefore, it is important for teachers to know how to select the best material for instruction, how to make supplementary materials for the class, and how to adapt materials.

Findings indicate that teachers' creativity was exercised in encouraging students, questioning and teacher praising, using the learning material, developing learning activities, and Internet and Communication Technology. Further, it can be inferred that teachers' creativity was also employed in giving positive feedback and response, understanding students' mistake, and clear questions.

Conclusion

This section deals with the conclusions of this study based on the research question. The students perceive that those six aspects of teacher's creativity discussed in this research influence them in their L2 learning motivation. They are encouraging students, questioning, and teacher praising, using internet and communication technology, using the learning material and developing learning activities.

Based on this, this section will give some suggestions to English teachers because this research purposes to increase the quality of English learning teaching. It is good for the English teacher to know the students' language proficiency so the teacher can adjust the level of the

language used with the students' level of language they master. The English teacher needs to improve their creativity and helpful characteristic because those two things can create a good atmosphere in L2 class. The chance for the students to speak and be involved in learning teaching process needs to be added. The vocabulary enrichment should be put into the main consideration so the students can increase their knowledge. This helps them more skillful which can lead them to be a more autonomous person.

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