THE ASSOCIATION OF TEACHING ENGLISH
AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
IN INDONESIA

The
62nd TEFLIN

International
Conference
2015

Denpasar, 14th - 16th September 2015

PROCEEDINGS
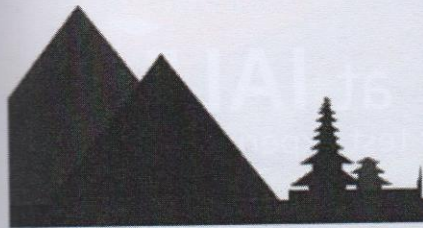
Teaching and Assessing L2 Learners
in the 21st Century

BOOK 4

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF LETTERS AND CULTURE
IN COLLABORATION WITH
POST GRADUATE STUDY PROGRAM, UDAYANA UNIVERSITY

THE ASSOCIATION OF TEACHING ENGLISH
AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
IN INDONESIA

The nd
62 TEFLIN

International
Conference
2015

Denpasar, 14th - 16th September 2015

PROCEEDINGS

Teaching and Assessing L2 Learners
in the 21st Century

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF LETTERS AND CULTURE
IN COLLABORATION WITH
POST GRADUATE STUDY PROGRAM, UDAYANA UNIVERSITY

TABLE OF CONTENT

THE SUPPORTING FACTORS AND BARRIERS OF STUDENTS COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN A SPEAKING CLASS

Restu Mufanti

mufanti@yahoo.com

Muhammadiyah University of Ponorogo

Jl. Budi Utomo No. 10 Ponorogo, Jawa Timur

ABSTRACT

This study was intended to investigate the supporting factors and barriers of students to communicate in a speaking class at a college level. The study was triggered by the fact that most of the students were passive and speechless during a speaking class. Many students showed only minor improvement although they had taken the class of speaking for at least five semesters. Qualitative research design was used to investigate the phenomena. A questionnaire for 23 participants and an in depth interview for the most passive 6 students were used for data. The participants were the students of the English Department. Data analysis indicated some supporting factors and some barriers for the students to actively speak in class. The supporting factors covered encouragement, empathy, and care from others students as well as the teacher. The barriers to communicate in a speaking class mostly came from the students themselves, namely: worry, scare, shyness, unconfidence, and uncomfortableness. Moreover, the study also showed that the only place for them to practice their communication in English is only class. Based on what has been shown by this study, it is suggested to support as what they need and eliminate their barriers to facilitate students as what they need. Teachers need to a range of techniques that can be used to address the problems, a range of techniques how to encourage, empathy, and care. Furthermore, Teachers also need to a range of techniques to eliminate the students' feelings much on worry, scare, shyness, unconfidence, and uncomfortableness.

Key words: supporting factors, barriers, speaking

INTRODUCTION

Make students to speak well in English is one of the learning outcomes which is designed in the curriculum by the English department. The curriculum designers know that speaking is the most skill needed by students. Richards and Renandya (2002 : 201) say that a large percentage of the world's language learners study English in order to develop proficiency in speaking. The curriculum designers also know that speaking is the most complex and difficult skill. Speaking in a foreign language has been considered the most challenging and complex (Nunan, 2003; Zhang, 2009). To facilitate it, the curriculum provides five courses to build the student's speaking, starts from basic speaking until the advance speaking. It is believed that giving five levels of speaking to the students can make them to speak English well. Unfortunately, not all students who pass each level of speaking have good proficiency in their speaking. However, they are in the grade sixth and even they graduate from the English department, they cannot speak English well.

In one side, getting learners to speak in class can be difficult (Zhang & Head, 2009). Speaking is skill in which people need to practice everyday to master it. To speak well, learners have to master grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, accuracy and pace. Speaking also needs students to be confidence and brave to speak. It means speaking is complex skill. Learners have to learn complex thing to be a good speaker. As stated by Hinkel (2005: 485) speaking is the most complex and difficult.

Students are realized they need to develop their speaking proficiency. They believed that people will consider their ability in English from their speaking proficiency. This is apparent in

Riggenback and Lazaraton (1991) students of second or foreign language education programs are considered successful; if they can communicate effectively in the language. However during the speaking class, most of them are passive, even they tend to keep silent. As what happen in class of speaking for debate, during the class the teacher tried to make discussion, give some questions and life the class but only several students who actively respond to the teacher. Most of them are silent. Realizing the importance of speaking, it is very important to find the students' problems and students' need to support them to speak up. This phenomena attracts the researcher to find the supporting factors and barriers of students to communicate in a speaking class. By knowing their barrier factors, the teacher will know how to help students overcome their barriers. In one side, knowing their supporting factors, the teacher will know how to always support them to communicate actively in speaking class.

METHOD

A qualitative study using questionnaire distributed to a class and in depth interviews focus to six students was conducted to fourth semester from English department to determine their supporting and barriers to communicate in speaking class. The participants of this study were selected from the classes where speaking is taught and those who passed the previous speaking; speaking for daily communication, speaking for group communication and speaking for speech. Data was collected after mid-examination was conducted to gain their experience after joined 7 meetings speaking class and mid-examination. The participants are 23 students who take the same course, then among these students, six were selected as the ones having the lowest score and having the most problem in speaking. Having been selected as the participants of the study, these six students were interviewed by the researcher self who also teaches speaking.

The procedures in collecting the data were; the questionnaire was distributed among a group of 23 students to know the supporting and barriers factors to communicate in speaking class. The participants were required to fill out the questionnaire then collected for the purpose of analysis. Then, the researcher ranged the participants' responses to the items in the questionnaire to be selected the six lowest participants who have the most problem in speaking. Next, the selected participants were interviewed. The form of interview was unstructured-interview so the researcher could develop the questions based on the participants' answers. The results of interviews were analyzed and described to get the answers of the research that is to know the supporting and barriers factors in speaking class. Last, conclusion and suggestion were made and written in this paper.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings of the study are presented under two key themes; the supporting factors of students communicative activities in a speaking class and the barriers factors of students communicative in a speaking class.

The Supporting Factors of Students Communicative Activities in a Speaking Class

The findings related to the participants' responses on the questions of supporting factors to communicate in a speaking class are encouraging, empathizing and caring from other students and teachers. The data obtained through interviews strengthen these findings as the excerpts below:

> I need encouragement from my friends to make me confident to answer teacher's questions, I want to speak but yaaa I cannot, but please involve me always. (Interviewee 1).

I cannot speak English mom, please understand me, please help me, i just practice my English in class. (Interviewee 2)

I want if I speak and make errors, my friends do not laugh me, I need encouragement and empathy from my friends, a speaking out classroom is needed to facilitate (Interviewee 3)

Three things that can make me respond to teacher's questions in speaking class; encouragement, empathy and caring, i need more practice outside. (Interviewee 4)

We need to care each other in class, yes from my friends and teachers, especially good students should care to the students like me because my English is bad, …..ehm…they can help me and give me opportunity to speak in class, eh….not only them who speak and the teacher be more care too especially to me as you know mom, my English is bad, I am afraid and shy. Yaa, supporting is really I need it mom. (Interviewee 5)

My English is not good, I am not confident to answer your question. I need more care and empathy to make me confident. So far, I feel, no one care of my problem. (Interviewee 6)

The excerpts above show that their Speaking proficiency is poor that make them are not confident to communicate in speaking class. Their responses to the interviews show they need to be encouraged, empathized and cared. As in Mufanti's study (2014) suggested that supportive teacher behaviors, i.e., building learners' confidence, giving motivation during teaching, listening attentively to students while speaking, giving hints and encouragement, being responsive to students questions, creating natural setting and showing empathy to students need to be provided in speaking class activities to explore learners social strategies. Those are related with what the students' need to support them to communicate actively in speaking class. Encourage reluctant students to speak in the language classroom is suggested based on the cognitive, affective and situational framework (Hue, 2010). Empathy is the "capacity" to share and understand another's "state of mind" or emotion in which it   as the process of understanding a person's subjective experience by vicariously sharing that experience while maintaining an observant stance when it is used appropriately can be a communication tool (Ioannidou & Konstantikaki, 2008). Moreover, Caring each other is common in a social life since we life in Asian country. Caring in reality is also needed not only in a social life but also in learning second or foreign language. As what students stated in interviews, they need to be cared from others to support them to communicate with others in speaking class.

The students' responses to the interviews describe how the students expect from the class; their friends and teachers. They hope emotionally understood, more time for speaking activities outside the classroom and warmth-class. These are able to stimulate passive students begin to speak up. Encourage them to speak even only one or two words, empathy to give them time to correct their errors in speaking and care them by placing them meaningfully.

The Barriers Factors of Students Communicative Activities in a Speaking Class
From the results of questionnaire, feeling worry, scare, shyness, unconfidence, uncomfortableness become their most barriers to communicate in a speaking class. It is strengthen by the results of interviews to the six selected students as described in the excerpts below:

I am shy, not confidence, worry making mistakes, I cannot speak English.(Interviewee 1)

I think I feel what you said mom, yes worry, afraid, shy, unconfident, not comfortable in class, shy my friends laugh me, I am nervous when you call my name mom. (Interviewee 2)

I am not good as my friend 'A' and 'B' mom, yaaa, when when…ehmm… I see they speak, ehm…. I feel shy and unconfident. Ehmmmm….I want to speak but I cannot. (Interviewee 3)

All mom, I am worry, scare, shy, unconfident, uncomfortable, I don't know why I learn something that from the beginning I cannot, so I think I am late to learn English, for me English is difficult mom and speaking is really difficult, really I cannot speak English. I cannot, sure I cannot. (Interviewee 4)

I need motivation because my English is bad, because I am worry to make mistake, shy when speak in front of class, unconfident speak in front of friends, uncomfortable with my English, because my English is bad. (Interviewee 5)

Shy is the most problem, I am shy Speak in front of you and friends (Interviewee 6)

The excerpts describe the barriers factors felt by students. Speak means producing words, phrases, sentences through the organ of speak loudly in order to the listeners can catch the message of our speaking. Speak forces speaker to perform. Moreover speak needs others as the listeners. It means that in speaking the students' confidence is crucially needed. They also should be able to eliminate the feeling of worry, shy, afraid and uncomfortable. In fact, these feelings are happen to all learners who learn target language. The six participants are the example of learners who state their feeling honestly. From the results of interviews, the students admitted that their speaking is poor. These conditions make them underestimate their self that influence their emotionally into negative feeling. Building techniques to help them eliminate these negative feelings are essentially needed to make them to start to speak.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

The findings discover supporting factors needed by students, they are; encouragement, empathy and care and explore to gain the students' barrier factors to communicate in a speaking class; worry, scare, shyness, unconfidence, and uncomfortableness. The discussion to the findings clearly explains that class is designed not only to attract the students' cognitive but also to create emotionally atmosphere so they feel to be supported each other and can eliminate the barriers they have since we understand well that speaking forces students to perform in front of others. After knowing those factors, it is suggested to support as what they need and eliminate their barriers to be brave to start to be communicative in speaking class. Furthermore, teachers need to a range of techniques that can be used to address the problems, a range of techniques how to encourage, empathy, and care. Teachers also need to a range of techniques to eliminate the students' feelings much on worry, scare, shyness, unconfidence, and uncomfortableness.

REFERENCES

Hinkel, E., (2005). Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Inc.

Hue, N.M., (2010). Encouraging Reluctant /EFL Learners to speak in the classroom. The Internet TESL Journal. Vol. XVI, No.3

Ioannidou, F., Konstantikaki, V.)2008). Emphaty and Emotional Intelligence: What is it really about?. International Journal of CaringSciences. Vol.1, Issue 3, pp 118-123.

Mufanti, R. (2014). A social Strategy of University Learners of Low-Level Speaking Proficiency. Jurnal Dimensi dan Pembelajaran Vol.2 ,No.2.

Nunan, D. (2003). Practical English Language Teaching. New York: McGraw Hill.

Richards, J.C., Renandya, W.A. 2(2002). Methodology in Language Teaching. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Riggenbach, H., & Lazaraton, A. (1991). Promoting Oral Communication Skills. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed), Teaching English as Second or Foreign Language. 2ⁿᵈ ed. Pp. 125-136.

Zhang, Y. (2009). Reading to Speak: Integrating Oral Communication Skills. English Teachhing Forum. Vol 1, No.1, pp 32-34.

Zhang, X., Head, K. (2010) Dealing with Learner Reticence in the Speaking Class. ELT Journal. Vol.64, No.1.