

## THE USE OF SMART AND ACCURATE TECHNIQUE IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT AND SPEAKING ABILITY AT SMA 1 BATANG ANAI

**Lilisuryani**

SMA N 1 Batang Anai

e-mail: [lilisuryani23@gmail.com](mailto:lilisuryani23@gmail.com)

### Abstract

Speaking is one of the important skills among the four skills in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This is because speaking is fundamental to human communication. Just look at what happen in daily life in terms of how many people involve in speaking as compared to writing. Most of the time people speak more than write. Another reason is that many students equate being able to speak a language as knowing the language and therefore view learning the language as learning how to speak the language. Therefore, in order to strengthen students' motivation in learning English, it is highly recommended that teachers enhance speaking skill in the classroom. However, there are many problems happen in the classroom when it is time to speak. One of the problem is that the students do not talk or say anything at all in the classroom. They feel really shy about talking in front of other students. Another reason is that the students' silence may simply because the class activities are boring. To tackle the problem above, it is recommended that the teachers increase students' engagement because it is an important component in English classroom activities, especially speaking. Engagement serves to encourage the development of English skills through a more active form of student-centered learning. Students' engagement can also provide the teacher with some confidence that learning takes place during the lesson. Researches show that learning is an active, not a passive process and that students learn best and retain more by actively doing. This paper reports a best practice on the use of *smart and accurate technique* in improving the students' engagement and speaking ability at SMA N 1 Batang Anai. This technique was applied to the third year students in the second semester of 2017/2018 academic year. The result shows that by using this technique, the students' engagement in the classroom was really improving. The students, who used to be silent, scrambled to take turn in speaking. The students who used to be passive tended to involve actively in classroom activities. The students who used to be shy started to talk a lot. As a result, their speaking ability was also improving significantly.

**Key words:** *smart and accurate, engagement, speaking ability*

### A. INTRODUCTION

#### 1. Background of The Problem

There are four skills to be taught in English as a Foreign Language namely listening, reading, speaking and writing. These four skills can be grouped into two

kinds of skills. They are receptive skills and productive skills (Nation, 2009). The former one includes listening and reading while the later includes speaking and writing.

Among those four skills, speaking is one of the important skills. Mundhe (2015) says that speaking is necessary because the crucial function of language is for interaction and communication. When people wants to express their ideas, opinion, and desires, they speak. They also speak to establish social relationship and friendship with others.

Speaking skill is also very beneficial for personal life and success. Gillis (2013) states that the ability to speak skillfully provides the speaker with several distinct advantages. Furthermore he says that the capacity to put words together in a meaningful way to reflect thoughts, opinions, and feelings provides the speaker with at least four important advantages. The first advantage is the ability to inform, persuade, and direct. People with good speaking ability can clearly and confidently gain the attention of the audience. This ability provides golden opportunity for the speaker to make the message known. It is a good speaker who is able to gain and hold the attention of the audience, with well-chosen words in a well-delivered presentation, forming an effective, informative, and understandable message. The second advantage is the ability to stand out from the rest. It is not an ordinary ability to stand before others and speak effectively. Many people are deathly afraid of speaking in front of public; others have little ability to form thoughts into sentences and then deliver those words in a very well manner. The third advantage is the ability to benefit derivatively. Well-developed verbal skills can increase one's negotiation skills. It also improves self-confidence. A growing sense of comfort comes from speaking in front of larger and larger audiences. A reputation for excellence in speaking can accrue over time, thereby imparting a certain credibility to the speaker. The fourth advantage is for career enhancement. The ability to speak well has always been greatly valued by employers. It is, and always will be, an important skill, and well worth the effort in fully developing.

Lawtie (2004) states two reasons why teachers should teach speaking in the classroom. The first reason is related to motivation. Many students equate being able to speak a language as knowing the language and therefore view learning the language as learning how to speak the language. For them, learning a language is similar to speaking the language. Therefore, the students will be de-motivated and lose or at least decrease their interest in learning the language if they do not have a chance to learn

how to speak the language or do not get any opportunity to use the language in the classroom. On the other hand, if they experience what they need in learning the language especially if the activities are taught in the right way, speaking class will be a lot of fun for them. It will also raise their motivation and interest in learning English. English class will become a fun and dynamic place to study. The second reason is related to how the language is used for communication. Speaking is fundamental to human communication. Just look at all the different conversations people have in one day and compare that with how much written communication they do. It can be seen very clearly that in daily lives people speak more than we write.

## **2. Problems**

The fact shows that the students' speaking ability at SMA N 1 Batang Anai is still dissatisfying. The students' score on speaking test is often still very low. There are 32 students in one class. There are more than 50 % students got low mark in speaking.

The common situation happens in the classroom when it is time to speak is that some students tends to be silent or do not say anything at all in the classroom. They do not participate when the teacher give them a chance to speak. Even when they are asked to speak, they refuse to say something. There are only about 20% students speaks in the classroom.

Based on the teacher's observation and interview to some students, this problem happens because of several reasons. First, the students are reluctant to speak because they are tired. This usually happen when English lesson is on the 7th or 8th period. Second, the students are silent in the classroom because they are shy to speak. Shyness is related to the students' personality. Third, the students do not want to speak English in the classroom because they are afraid of making mistake. The students are afraid of making mistake because sometimes when they make mistake, others laugh at them. Fourth, the students do not participate in speaking activity because they are not really interested in English. These students tends to do other activities when they are learning English.

In accordance with this idea, Littlewood (2004) in Savaşçı (2013) discovered that there are six factors that hinder participation in the classroom. The six factors are 1) tiredness, 2) fear of being wrong, 3) insufficient interest in the class, 4) insufficient knowledge in the subject, 5) shyness and 6) insufficient time to formulate ideas.

Brown (1999) states that there are several factors that affect students' speaking performance such as; anxiety, nervousness, and lack of self-confidence. Ur (1995) says that there are four reasons which make the students reluctant in speaking English. The reasons are as follows. The first reason is inhibition. Inhibition is usually caused by fear of making mistakes, losing face, criticism and shyness. The second reason is nothing to say. This happens when the learners have problems with finding motives to speak, formulating opinions or relevant comments. The third reason is low or uneven participation. Low or uneven participation is often caused by the tendency of some learners to dominate in the group. The fourth reason is mother-tongue use. Mother tongue use particularly common in less disciplined or less motivated classes. For the students, sometimes it is easier to directly express their ideas on their mother tongue rather than bother themselves to also think about the language at the same time as thinking about the ideas to express.

### **3. The strategy to Solve the Problems**

To solve the problems above, the writer uses smart and accurate technique. This technique is used to improve the students' engagement and speaking ability in English.

Smart and accurate technique is derived from a type of a competition. This competition tests the students on how smart or fast and accurate they are in answering the questions. This competition is usually done in groups. There are usually three groups competing at one time. Each group consists of three students. There are three judges for each round in the competition. These judges score to each group based on their answer to the questions. The questions are sometimes read by the judge or a certain person appointed to do that. Sometimes, they are given to the groups in an envelope. There is a moderator and score writer. The system in this competition is then used in teaching in the form of game.

## **B. DISCUSSION**

### **1. Reasons of Choosing the Strategy**

The reason to apply this technique in classroom activities especially speaking is because it facilitates students' engagement and speaking ability in learning. Engagement is necessary in learning English. Engagement has a positive correlation with the students participation. The more the students engage in classroom activities, the more the students will participate in their learning process. Students' engagement has primarily and historically focused upon increasing achievement, positive behaviors,

and a sense of belonging in students (Taylor, 2011). Another reason is that almost everybody likes games including students. Games are usually fun and enjoyable. Games also facilitate students to engage more in the learning process.

Rebekah (2013) gives five reasons to use game in the classroom. First, students learn through the process of playing the game. By playing a game, students may be able to understand a new concept or idea, take on a different perspective, or experiment with different options or variables. Second, games provide a context for engaging practice. Students need a lot of practice to internalize important vocabulary and structures. However, for the practice to be meaningful, students must be engaged. Games facilitate this. Third, through games, students can learn a variety of important skills. There are countless skills that the students can develop through playing game such as critical thinking skills, creativity, teamwork, and good sportsmanship. Fourth, while playing games, students develop a variety of connections with the content and can form positive memories of learning. The fun, silly or interesting moments tend to stand out in students' memories, and they latch on to the vocabulary/structures they are studying. A positive emotional connection can facilitate learning. Furthermore, many games feature a variety of different stimuli. Some students might remember the vocabulary words from acting them out. Others might remember reading the clues. Other students might remember hearing classmates call out answers. Games can provide a variety of sensory experiences for students. Fifth, games grab students' attention and make them actively engage in the activity. Since the students really enjoy playing games, it can be used as a good way to focus their attention. It can also lead them to actively immerse in English. This can be especially useful in a wide variety of ways. A game allows students to quickly engage and transition back to the content they are working on. When the students, for example, do hours of state-mandated standardized tests, the students are often tired of sitting and probably lose a lot of energy in the process. At this moment, an energetic game with lots of movement may be just what they need.

## **2. Implementing the Strategy**

This technique was applied to the third year of students of SMA 1 Batang Anai, second semester, 2017/2018 academic year. It was used in speaking class on the topic of narrative text. The following is the explanation on how this technique is implemented in the classroom activities.

At the beginning of the class, the students choose their role for the activity. There are six kinds of roles which are needed to be played by the students. All of the students must take part in one of the roles available. The following are the roles which should be taken by the students.

- 1) Nine participants as the members of three groups which compete in the competition. The participants will answer the questions given by the questioners. In order to get a chance to answer the questions, the participants ring a certain bell.
- 2) A moderator. The moderator regulates the game. He/she invites the questioners to ask questions. He/she also invites the participants to answer the questions given by the questioners.
- 3) Three judges. The judges score the questions given by the questioners and the answer given by the participants. The judges also give reasons why they give such score.
- 4) A Score writer. The score writer writes the score got by the questioners and participants.
- 5) Two moderator assistants. Assistant 1 pays attention to the questioners who firstly raise hand and has the right to ask question. He/she then mentioned the person's name to the moderator. Assistant 2 pays attention to the participants. The participant or the group who firstly ring the bell has the right to answer the question. He/she then mentioned the group's number or name to the moderator. These assistants also record the name of the students who asked and answer questions including how many times they ask and answer questions.
- 6) The rest of the students are the questioners which are grouped into three. Each group of the questioners supports one group of participants. They belong to the same group. Their scores are combined at the end of the game.

After knowing their role, the students watch a short video of a tale (narrative text). The students may watch the video once or twice. After that the students sit on their own seats in accordance to their role. The video is used as the material to be asked. The students may ask question based on what they watch in the video or they

may also ask the implied questions based on the video. The following are the steps to do after watching the video.

- 1) The moderator invites the questioners to ask questions.
- 2) Assistant 1 pays attention to the questioners and mentioned the name of the person who raises hand first to the moderator.
- 3) The moderator asks the person mentioned by assistant 1 to ask questions.
- 4) At the same time, the participants who know the answer ring their bells.
- 5) Assistant 2 pays attention to the participants. The assistant mentioned the name of the participant or the group who rings the bell first.
- 6) The moderator asks the participant to answer the questions.
- 7) The judges score the question and the answer. They also give reasons why they score that way.
- 8) The score writer writes the score on the board.
- 9) Then the round starts all over again from the beginning when the moderator invites the questioners to ask questions.
- 10) At the end of the game, the score writer together with other students counts the score gained by each group.
- 11) Based on the total score, the winner is determined.
- 12) The group with the highest score wins the games. The teacher then give present to the winner.

### **3. The Obstacles in Implementing the Strategy**

There were some obstacles faced by the teacher in implementing smart and accurate technique in teaching and learning process. The obstacles were:

- 1) At the beginning of the class on the first meeting, not so many students engaged in the activity.
- 2) The class was rather noisy especially when the moderator invited the questioners to ask questions. The students did not only scramble to raise their hands but also make a sound to attract the assistant's attention. Besides, the students clapped hands when their group got good score. This condition sometimes disturbed other classes. To overcome this, the teacher closed the door and asked the students not to speak loudly.
- 3) Moving the students' tables and chairs took some time and a bit noisy

### **4. The Supporting Factors**

The implementation of smart and accurate technique could be carried out properly due to several contributing factors:

- 1) The availability of laptop, LCD (Liquid Crystal Display) and speaker to show video.
- 2) There are a lot of materials like video available on the internet. This plenty material can be easily downloaded to be used in the classroom.
- 3) Watching video before starting the game was an interesting activity. The students liked it and focused paying attention.
- 4) Since there was the winner, the students were excited during the process. They wanted to be the winner.
- 5) There was a camera to make the documentation

## **C. THE RESULT**

### **1. The Impact of Applying the Strategy**

After implementing smart and accurate technique in the classroom, there were some good impacts could be reached such as:

Firstly, the students were more active in learning English. The students' engagement in speaking activity improved a lot. Almost all of the students or approximately 90 % of the students engaged actively in speaking activity. They all involved and were excited doing the activities in the classroom. This technique also give chances to all students to practice their English through an enjoyable learning.

Secondly, the class became more dynamic because all students not only listened to teacher's explanation but also did practice asking and answering questions. They listened, spoke, smiled and even laughed during the activity which made the teaching learning process run in enjoyable environment. Moreover, the character building could be built such as collaboration, curiosity and self confidence. The twenty first century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication could be achieved.

Thirdly, the students' ability in speaking enhanced. It could be seen from the results of their achievement in the aspect of skills. There were more than 90 % students got good result on the speaking test. Moreover, the students' self confidence to use their English was also increasing. They did not feel burdened to speak anymore.



## 2. The Development Alternative

At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher showed video to the students. As a variation, reading a text and listening to the recorder can also be used beside watching video.

The writer implemented this smart and accurate technique in speaking class by using narrative text. This technique can also be used in teaching descriptive, exposition, news item and other kinds of text. This techniques can even be implemented by other subjects like Indonesian language, geography, history and others.

## D. THE RESULT

### 1. Conclusion

Speaking ability is one of the important skills in English therefore it is necessary that the students have a good capability in it. This good capability can only be reached if the students's engagement speaking activity can be made available in a fun way. Therefore, the teacher needs to provide the technique which can facilitate the students to achieve this goal. The teacher should design the activities to make it easier to reach this teaching objectives. The activities should be challenging. The activities should also be able to improve the students' engagement to speak and use their English. Smart and accurate technique which focus on listening and speaking can accomodate this.

After implementing this technique, the students' engagement in English activity is improving a lot. The enjoyable atmosphere make the students motivated to use English and as the result improve their speaking ability. This can be seen from the improving of students' speaking achievement and their self confidence to use their English.

### 2. Recomendation

Based on the conclusion above, there are some points to be recommended.

They are :

- 1) The teacher could implement smart and accurate technique in teaching English especially if the teacher wants to improve the students' engagement in English activity.
- 2) The teacher could use smart and accurate technique to motivate students to speak and in the end improve students' ability in speaking.

- 3) The smart and accurate technique could be used for both 2016 curriculum and 2013 curriculum. The activities in this techniques are used to reach the objectives of learning English especially speaking skills.
- 4) The support from school stakeholders is needed to make this technique applied well.
- 5) Other English teachers or even other subject teachers could use this technique in their learning teaching process.

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