

THE USE OF TEACHER TALK IN TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE AT SMP N 8 SUNGAI PENUH

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Abstract

Teaching is commonly defined as a process to transfer knowledge or information to the students. In transferring the knowledge, building communication with students is important for the teachers. The sentences that are used by the teachers can be medium of the students to achieve course objectives in learning English language. This study is conducted to find out the types of teacher talk are used by English teacher in teaching English language at SMP N 8 Sungai Penuh. It was conducted by using descriptive research. The participants in this study were English teachers who teach English and the students who learn English at SMP N 8 Sungai Penuh. The findings reveal that the teachers used referential question, display question, content feedback, Initiation Respond and Feedback sequence, student initiated to talk during teaching and learning English process occurred.

Key words: English teacher, teacher talk, teaching English language.

A. INTRODUCTION

English language is one of the subject that is taught in junior high school. In teaching English subject the teachers tend to use some variation of sentences such as instruction, question, request, and etc. The sentences are used by the teachers in the classroom determine to a larger degree of successful class. As stated by Ellis (1985:145) the language that teachers address to second language students is treated as a register. It means that the sentences are used by the teachers can be medium of the students to achieve the course objectives in learning English language.

In relation, the kind of language used by the teacher while giving instruction in the classroom is known as teacher talk. Crookes(2003:78) describes that teacher talk is often used to characterize teacher's speech. This characteristic can give positive or negative impact to the students. Good teacher talk can help the students in understanding something. Furthermore, bad teacher talk can make the hearer underestimate with their capacity in understanding something. Briefly, Crookes believes that teacher talk can give negative or positive impact depends on the characteristic that teachers used while communicate with their students.

The teacher talk that are used by the teachers in communicating with the students tend to be different each other. Cullen (1998:181) presents several categories of teacher talk. He tries to make simple categories of teacher talk. Cullen's categories are more focus on the kind of teacher utterances while teaching English. They are referential question, content feedback, speech modification, hesitation, and rephrasing, and negotiate meaning with the students.

Moreover, Lei (2009: 75-78) also suggests some categories of teacher talk. Lei's categories are quite similar with Cullen's categories actually. Since communicative approach become popular in English language teaching in recent years, Lei proposes some categories of teacher talk that focus on making the students to be communicative while teaching and learning process occurred. The purpose of Lei's categories is to facilitate learning and promote communicative interaction in the classroom. Based on the reason, it is considered to use in conducting this study. Lei's categories are divided into five features. The first feature is referential questions; questions for which the teacher does not know the answers and therefore has a genuine communicative purpose. According to Mehan (1979:37), referential questions are questions with no fix answer. For example "*What is your idea of living in a big city??*" or "*what did you do in the weekend?*". Lei (2009:75) states that referential question is different with display question. It is proposed to make the students speak up in the class by delivering their ideas. On the other hand, according to Nordquist (2015:1) display question is the question to which the questioner already knows the answer. He added the display questions are often used for instructional purposes to determine if the students are able to display their knowledge or factual content. In brief, referential question is used to make the students can practice the language. However, display questions is used to know the students understanding of the knowledge.

In addition, Lei (2009:75-78) is very suggested to used referential question in nowadays classroom, since it have communicative purposes. It can make the students speak up and practice the language. Furthermore, in the real life the majority teachers tend to use questions without communicative purposes. It also can be a marked difference between typical classroom talk and non classroom talk in this respect.

The second feature is content feedback. Feedback is a vital concept in most theories of learning and is closely related to motivation. According to Winne and Butler in Petchprasert (2012:2) feedback is information with which a learner can confirm, add to, overwrite, tune, or restructure information in memory, whether that information is domain knowledge, meta-cognitive knowledge, beliefs about self and tasks, or cognitive tactics and strategies. Briefly, feedback should provide information specifically relating to the learning process to improve the students in understanding about what they are learning and what they have already learned. In language teaching and learning, there are varying types of feedback can be provided.

Feedback on content involves responding to the content of what students are saying, rather than commenting solely on the form. In addition, content feedback tends to be more focus on discussing the information that the students convey in teaching and learning process (Cullen, 1998:181). For example, after asking a question the teacher will be more focus on discussing the answer or information given by the students rather than about form that is used by students while speaking.

Baghzou (2011:10) stated that content feedback had a positive effect on students in terms of diminishing mistakes and improving their performance. Moreover, if a teacher wants to improve his/her students' motivation, then he/she should make use of feedback on content first and let grammar accuracy as a last step when students come to refine their answer. Teachers should help their students to express themselves and to communicate with others, and avoid into a grammar exercise.

The third feature is IRF Sequence; also known as a teacher **I**nitiation, a students **R**esponse, and a teacher **F**eedback. IRF sequence can be illustrated by using the example below: the teacher asks a question and the students give the answer, then the teacher provides his/her comments on the students' answer as feedback. This is the typical sequence of the classroom talk. However, the structure of spoken discourse outside the classroom is usually more complex and flexible than this. Based on this reform process, the three features above will produce good expression in the teaching. To make it clear, the following transcripts can illustrate two kinds of IRF sequences.

Transcript A:

- T: Who is O' Henry? (Initiation/ display question)
S1: Of course, a writer. (Response)
T: Good. (Feedback)
Who knows more about the writer? (Initiation/ display question)
S2: A famous writer. (Response)
T: Right. (Feedback)

(adapted from Cherry Kendra 2016)

Based on the example above, it can be seen that the teacher tends to use display questions with the purpose is to know if the students understand the text and the words, and to enable them to display their knowledge. Teacher's feedback toward the students' responses is simply acknowledgements to see that the answer is acceptable. The talk obviously follows the IRF sequence. The teacher asks a question, then the student responds, and the teacher asks another.

On the other hand, this following transcript shows another kind of IRF sequence.

Transcript B:

- T: Hi, Sunny, do you like reading novels? (I/RQ)
S1: Yes, of course. I read a lot in my spare time. (R)
T: Ha, the same with me. Then, which novel do you like best? (F/ I)
S1: Oh, "Gone with the Wind" is my favorite book, and I have ever read "A farewell to Arms". I could say it is perfect.
(R)
T: I have read it for several times, to tell you the truth. And I find the "Gone with the Wind" is very attractive indeed. Now, here comes the question, have you read the "The Gift of the Magi"?
(F/I)

(adapted from Cherry Kendra 2016)

This example seems as natural interaction between teacher and the students. Real communication was seen when the students began to differ in their opinions. In the class talk, most of the questions are referential with the communicative purpose and the teacher's response was on the content rather than on the form.

The fourth feature is Student Initiated Talk. According to Lei (2009:76) acquisition is facilitated by the negotiation of meaning in interaction. It can make the students take initiative to talk in the classroom. Teachers should try to negotiate meaning with the students by asking for clarification and repetition, and giving students opportunities to interrupt the teachers. He also pointed out the teacher should ensure that she and the students play their proper roles in problem solving processes. However, some teachers do not give the students a space to get meaningful negotiations. They have completed authority to ignore the students' contribution. It can make the teaching objectives will not be achieved. The following two transcripts show the difference between teacher initiated (Transcript C) and learner initiated (Transcript D) talk.

Transcript C

S: Excuse me, I don't understand this word.

T: Ok. Let me see if I can help. Ah, yes, delegate'. Well, for example, if I ask you to do the things that I normally do, like cleaning the blackboard or giving out your exercise books, etc. I am delegating. ' Is that clear for you now?

S: Yes. I think so.

T: OK.

Transcript D

S: Excuse me, I don't understand this word.

T: Hm, delegate. So the meaning has to be found. Do you remember seeing it before anywhere?

S: Ah, yes, now I remember. I think it was in the last unit. (flipping through the pages) Here it is. It means to get someone else to do something that you normally do yourself.

T: Yes, can you think of an example?

S: Yes, like when you ask one of us to clean the blackboard, or give out the books. Then you delegate those jobs to us, right?

T: Good.

(adapted from Cherry Kendra 2016)

The last feature is Teaching of Value Rather Than Significance. It is necessary to draw a distinction between two different kinds of meaning. The first kind of meaning is called significance, and the second kind is value. During the class, the value should be taught rather than significance. The students are concerned in the value since they can find the significance in text books and dictionaries easily. In teaching Value, the teacher is more focus on giving knowledge by showing the function of that knowledge rather than showing the meaning of it. For example; the teacher opens the door, and saying “I am opening the door”, after that he asks a number of students to do the same and he says “they are opening the door”, and so on. The teacher tries to show what the present continuous tense signifies and how students can use the rule to develop sentences.

In summary, in using teacher talk the teachers should consider with types of teacher talk that will be used in teaching and learning process. However, different teachers tend to use different types of teacher talk. The teachers should use the appropriate type of teacher talk with the classroom environment. It is proposed to give good impact toward the students’ motivation in learning.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study is descriptive research since this study described the phenomena in the field. Data in this study were teachers’ utterances that consist of teacher talk while teaching English subject at SMP N 8 Sungai Penuh. The source of data in this study is English teachers who teach English subject at SMP N 8 Sungai Penuh. The data were collected on January 28 to April 31 2017 through doing observation at the observed classes. In conducting observation, the researcher came to the class and recorded the teachers while teaching English. The researcher set up the videorecorder during English teaching and learning process and did observation. It was proposed to get the teachers’ utterances that consist of types of teacher talk. The data that have gathered from the video recording is analyzed by the researcher. The researcher used some steps to analyze the

qualitative data proposed by Gay (2012: 387). They are: reading/ memoing; in this step, the researcher read the data from the observation notes and see the video recording of teaching and learning process. Then, the researcher make the transcript of teacher's utterances based on the video recording. It is proposed to make the researcher be more familiar with the data and identifying the main themes. Then, the researcher do coding. Coding is proposed to code the teacher's utterances that consist of teacher talk. Classifying; in this stage, the researcher classifies the data and then categorizes them based on the main themes. In this study, the researcher classifies the types of teacher talk suggested by Lei (2009: 75-78) that have been used by English teacher in teaching and learning process. Describing; examining the data in depth to provide detail description of setting, participants, and activities. In this stage, the researcher describes the teacher talk used by English teacher after classifying them.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the observations were conducted three times at observed classes of SMP N 8 Sungai Penuh, it could be known that both of English teachers used referential question, display question, content feedback, IRF sequence, and student initiated talk during teaching and learning English process occurred. Both of teachers were used referential question during teaching English subject but the frequency the teachers used it is different. Teacher one used RQ more often than teacher two. Furthermore, the teachers also used display question in teaching English subject. The data of observation showed that both of the teachers mostly used DQ rather than RQ (see appendix 6). It is supported by Lei (2009:78) who found that in the real life the majority teachers tend to use question without communicative purpose (DQ). However, he suggested to use referential question rather than display question since it can make the students speak up in the classroom. The second type is content feedback. Both of teacher also used it in teaching English subject. Teacher two used CF more often than teacher one. The third type is IRF sequence. Both of teachers used it in teaching English subject. The next type is student initiated talk. both of teachers also used it in teaching English subject. Teacher two used SIT more often than teacher one. the last type is teaching value rather than significance. Both of teachers did not use it in teaching English subject. Based on the explanation above, it can be seen that both

of teachers tend to use several types of teacher talk suggested by Lei (2009); referential question, content feedback, IRF sequence, student initiated talk, and teaching value rather than significance. They tend to use same types of teacher talk while teaching English subject in the classroom.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the finding it can be conclude that the teachers did not use all of the types of teacher talk while teaching and learning English process occured. There are some types of teacher talk used by the English teachers while teaching English subject such as referential question, content feedback, IRF sequence, and student initiated to talk. Furthermore, they did not use teaching value rather than significance while teaching English subject.

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