

TEACHING SPEAKING FLUENCY BY USING READERS' THEATRE STRATEGY TO STUDENTS AT SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstrak

Tujuan penulisan dari artikel ini adalah untuk menjelaskan penerapan *Readers' Theatre* sebagai salah satu strategi yang mampu meningkatkan kelancaran siswa dalam berbicara Bahasa Inggris pada satuan Sekolah Menengah Atas (SMA). Di dalam strategi tersebut terdapat 4 aspek pendukung yang saling terintegratif dalam proses pembelajaran, yaitu: *listening*, *writing*, *reading* dan *speaking*. Langkah awal, siswa mendengarkan sebuah cerita pendek berbentuk *narrative*. Selanjutnya, siswa menjawab beberapa pertanyaan dari cerita yang ditampilkan. Langkah kedua, siswa secara berkelompok menulis naskah drama sesuai dengan cerita yang mereka dengarkan atau siswa memilih dari naskah yang telah ada. Langkah ketiga, siswa membaca dialog tersebut. Poin yang paling penting yakni kemampuan siswa dalam berbicara dengan memperhatikan kecepatan, *pausing*, volume, dan keterbacaan dalam berbicara. Kegiatan ini dilakukan berulang kali. Hasil akhir dari *readers' theatre* adalah siswa mampu menampilkan drama di depan kelas. Dengan adanya strategi ini, siswa akan mampu berbicara dalam bahasa Inggris secara lancar.

Keywords: speaking, fluency, readers' theatre, teaching speaking at Senior High School

A. Introduction

Nowadays, English is used for international communication. English become a crucial need in the development of the world because English is used as the medium language on the process of developing all of the people' interaction. The people not only used English in education but also in government, industry and tourism. It is increasingly important for people to have ability in English. Due to

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these reasons, English become one of the languages that should be learned as one of the international languages in the world.

Beside other three skills, listening, reading and writing, one of the skills that can be seen is the ability to communicate orally or speaking. Speaking skill is a productive skill that involves three processes; they are producing, transferring and processing information.

To provide students with English skill, the government has put guidance on the curriculum and the competence standard as the goal of learning process. As referring to the Basic Competence in *KTSP 2006(School Based Curriculum)* for Senior High School for teaching speaking in Indonesia:

The basic competence of speaking for the first semester of first year students in Senior High School is expressing meaning in simple monolog text by using spoken language with accuracy and **fluency** to interact with the society in recount, narrative, and procedure text. (Depdiknas: 2006). (Translated by the writer).

From the basic competence above, there are two point aspects: accuracy and fluency. Accuracy focused on the use of correct grammar in transferring the message. Meanwhile, fluency focused on how the message can be transferred smoothly without much hesitation but less paying attention with the using of grammatical. Both of them are essential in speaking. However, in this explanation, the writer just focuses on fluency.

Fluency is the goal on the conversation. The goal of fluency is to enable speaker to integrate the previously encountered language into an easily accessed. As Nation (1990) argues that fluency focused on the messages that are being communicated and not the language form. A fluent speaker does not have to stop many times to think of what to say next or how to phrase it. In addition, a fluent speaker also being able to decide readily when it is appropriate to use vocabulary in speaking.

Based on the experience the writer had in the teaching field practice program, there was some problems faced by the students. The first problem occurs when the students are not evoked in the way of their teacher in teaching. When the strategy or the way teacher manages the class cannot attract the students, they might as well get bored. The second one is the students have difficulty to express a meaning fluently while they have to remember the words. It happens because the lack of vocabulary they have. The students choose to write down their idea in a paper first rather than have to speak up in front of their friends, naturally. When they are forced to talk, they cannot search the dictionary, while in writing they can open the dictionary and find the words.

Lack of time to speak also becomes a problem in speaking. The students just have a little time to speak because the teacher often teaches the students to study other skill especially reading rather than speaking. This condition makes them cannot practice their speaking ability in English well. The last reason is students will lose their self-confidence if they speak in front of the people. They believe everybody will laugh at them. Many students were shy and not predisposed to express themselves in front of the class. It happens because the students are rarely to do the learning activities in outdoor.

In order to solve these problems, one of the learning strategies that involve students is by using readers' theatre strategy. Readers' theatre is one of the repeated reading activities that is founding by several researchers. However, this strategy can be used to practice other skills integratively.

In this strategy, there are four aspects in English can be applied integratively. They are listening, reading, writing, and speaking. In this strategy, the students work in-group to write down the script that they will be performed. Then, they read the script. Next, the students practice some basic skills to improve speaking fluency; rate of speech, volume, and pausing in several repeated activities. At last, the students will perform the readers' theatre in front of the people at the end of the activity.

There are many advantages that can be obtained by using this strategy. This strategy gives many chances for the students to release their emotion, feeling and idea in writing and speaking skill in teaching process. In that process, they can discuss and share the ideas together. Furthermore, the lack of vocabulary also can be solved. The important one is the students will have much time to speak. Having much time to speak really helps students to improve their speaking through some practices given. At last, readers' theatre strategy helps students to increase their self-confidence. Looking at the advantages of readers' theatre as one of the strategy in teaching English, the writer is interested to modify and use this strategy integratively in four aspects of English: listening, writing, reading, and speaking.

Murcia (2001:103) who defines speaking as an activity requiring the integration of many subsystems. That is, the subsystems are the simultaneous demands on speaking. There are monitoring and understanding the other speaker, thinking about one's own contribution, producing that contribution, monitoring its effect and soon. Additionally, Chaney in Kayi (2006:1) states speaking as the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts. From two definitions above, it can be seen that speaking is the process of integrating several subsystems as a process to build and share meaning to other people in a variety of purposes.

Furthermore, Juan (2006:151) states speaking is an interactive, social and contextualized process that serves a number of functions. Bailey in Sari (2011:7)

states that speaking is a productive aural/oral skill, which consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning.

Since speaking is seen as an important skill, speaking can connect the four skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. According to Farris (2005:227), speaking is important for the development of the other language arts: thinking, reading, writing and listening. Thinking is actually enhanced by one's need to organize, conceptualize and clarify the ideas and feeling. Besides, speaking also facilitates reading, especially in the area of vocabulary acquisition. In writing skill, speaking especially use when people are exposed to have an interactive discussion about a topic or main idea with their peers. Meanwhile, in listening, a good speaker tends to be a good listener: they are genuinely interested in what other say.

From all of those definitions above, it can be concluded that speaking is an active productive oral skill, which consists of several integrated subsystems in order to build and share the meaning in a purpose. The processes involves in speaking are producing, receiving and processing information between a speaker and a receiver.

Hedge (1993:275) defines fluency as the ability to link units of speech together with facility and without strain or inappropriate slowness or undue hesitation. Moreover, Kormos and Denes (2009:4) states that fluency is an aspect of oral communication to express human idea, feeling, opinion and thought or information which helps people to communicate one another without hesitation, repetition and false start. Raine (2011:1) defines fluency as the area of language ability, which relates to the speed and ease with which a language learner performs in one of the four core language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Moreover, Nation and Newton (2009:102) states fluency also has some characteristics:

1. Fluent language use involves “the processing of language in real time”. That is, the learners will demonstrate with speed, speech rate and number of filled pause and number of unfilled pause.
2. Fluent language use does not require a great deal of attention and effort from the learner. The fluent speakers do not have to use complex grammatical structure.
3. Fluency is a skill. Although it depends on quality of knowledge of the language, and its development involves the addition to and restructuring of knowledge, in essence it involves making the best possible use of what is already known.

From those above definitions, it can be clearly seen that fluency is an ability to talk or speech without much hesitation, repetition, false start and few pauses. Fluency does not too concern with the use of correct grammatical while speaking. This ability also influences by several basic skill of speaking, for example speech rate, speed, pauses and length of speech.

Readers' theatre is a strategy in improving reading fluency that asks students to role a character on the script. This activity is a formalized dramatic presentation of a piece of literature. Young and Ferguson in Farris (2005:237) who defines readers' theatre as a presentation of fiction, nonfiction, or poetry that is expressively and emotionally read aloud by several readers, and contributes to improve reading fluency, comprehension and confidence. Kaye (1995:13) states readers' theatre as a creative, fluid art form that presents all styles of literature, focusing on the experience found in the writer's text and encouraging the active imagination and intellectual participation of the audiences. It is clear that readers' theatre is a presenting a piece of literature in front of the audiences that is expressively read aloud by the readers to improve their fluent oral reading.

In addition, Keehn (as cited in Turner, 2005:52) states readers' theatre is one of the methods researchers have found as effective in developing fluent oral reading-rereading, modeling, explicit instruction, reading in manageable texts, and readers' theatre. According to Kay (2008:133), readers' theatre is an inclusive, literature-based learning process involving readers of all abilities. It is a form of drama, which emphasizes the dramatic portrayal of various roles and characters through reading. Besides, Dixon (2010:7) argues that readers' theatre is telling a story by reading aloud from the script with several processes involves.

From the previous definitions stated by the experts, it can be concluded that readers' theatre is a presentation of a piece of literature, like drama, that will be emotionally and expressively read aloud by the students in front of the people. This strategy conducted several processes involves. It is use to develop reading fluency, comprehension and confidence. However, it can be implemented in teaching speaking fluency.

B. Discussion

1. Preparation

There are some preparations need to prepared, such as lesson plan, media, script, and props and costumes in implementing this strategy.

a. Lesson plan

In this strategy, there are two lesson plans that are used in the teaching process. The first lesson plan focuses on listening and writing. While, the second lesson plans focus on reading and speaking.

b. Media

The teacher can prepare some medias in the teaching process. There are the recording of a story in narrative genre and series of pictures. The teacher should find a recording that are close related with students' age. The maximum length for the recording is about 2 until 3 minutes. The teacher can play it 2 times for the recording. The recording can be played by laptop or tape.

The other media is series of pictures. The series of pictures should be based on the story given. It will make the students easier to imagine the story. In addition, it can be shown by the infocus or just glue the pictures on the thick paper and hang it on the whiteboard. The pictures should be clearly seen by all of the students.

c. Script

Determining the script that the students will use to perform a theatre can be done in two ways; students' made and teacher' made. First is students' made. The students' in-group makes the script from the recording at the beginning of the teaching. Second, teacher is made. Teacher can write or download the prepared script from the internet. Teacher read it first and tried to understand the story. Teacher selects the prepared script based on students' age.

In script, there should be various expressions that have they learned before. For example, in the first semester of first grade students in Senior High School, they have learned some expressions at the teaching process, such as expression of introducing someone, accepting invitation, accepting or refusing appointment, happiness, getting attention, sympathy and giving instruction. These expressions involve in order to practice the emotions on the dialogue. The students at the process of speaking fluency later will practice these expressions.

d. Props and costumes

The next preparation is props and costumes. Prop is a set of portable equipment that used to set a play. Then, costume is a set of clothes that worn by an actor or performer for a role. However, the props and costumes are optional preparation. It can be used on any minimal preparation or it can be denied. It is happens because the purpose of readers' theatre is on speaking, not in how students in acting.

2. Implementing of Readers' Theatre in Teaching Process

1. Meeting I (2 x 45 minutes) (focus on listening and writing)

a. Pre Teaching Activity (10 minutes)

Teacher starts teaching by greeting the students. Then, teacher starts to prepare the students to study physically and psychologically. Teacher asks the students to pray together at the classroom. The next activity is the teacher motivates the students to study. The next activity is the teacher checks the

students' attendance by calling their name from attendance list. After that, teacher reviews the previous lesson to remind the students of the last lesson by asking questions. Explaining the purpose of the lesson for the day is the next activity in learning process. It must be included in teaching process. Explaining the purpose of the lesson can guide the teacher and students to achieve the goal of the learning.

b. Whilst Teaching Activity (70 minutes)

The first process in this activity is exploration. Students are asked to listen a story in narrative genre. The story has spent 2-3 minutes. The teacher can play it two times. The students can understand the story by series of pictures that are shown on the infocus or hang on the white board. Then, the students answer some questions based on the story given. For example, "where did the story happen?" or "who are the characters involved at the story?" Students can discuss the answer together. This discussion will spend 10 minutes. From this activity, the students will understand the story over all.

The next process is elaboration. Teacher divides the students into several groups. Each of the group has 4-6 members. Teacher explains to the students how to make a good script. They have to write down their idea about the story on that paper. The idea can be in words, phrases, questions or in sentences. Then, students are forced to make a draft script for the theatre. After the discussion, the students can write a complete script for readers' theatre performance.

Once done, students give the script to their teacher. The teacher reads the script for a while. Teacher has to confirm that the students make a complete script that is the title, narration, and the character should be included at the script.

c. Post teaching activity (10 minutes)

At the end of this meeting, teacher tells to the students that they are going to perform a theatre from the script next meeting. The students have to prepare themselves to read the script as a task at home. To end the class, the teacher can give a video or song to refresh their mind, so the activity in the class can be ended happily.

2. Meeting II (2 x 45 minutes) (focus on reading and speaking)

a. Pre Teaching Activity (10 minutes)

The activity is as same as at the first meeting. The teacher prepares the class for starting the lesson, tells the aim of the lesson and checks the students' attendance.

b. Whilst Teaching Activity (70 minutes)

The first activity in exploration is the teacher asks students to read the script again. The students are assigned to make a list of characters involved at the script. Students work in-group. The procedures are:

1. Students should copy the script, a set of script is used to read and list all of the characters involved at the script. Another script is used to determine dialogues.
2. Then, teacher and students decide how many narrators are assigned to speak in various scenes. After that, students have to highlight each of characters' dialogue.

After this activity is done, teacher asks students to read aloud the script. Teacher should ensure that the students comprehend the story that is remade.

Teacher start the process of teaching into elaboration process. While the students reading the text, the teacher pays attention with the speech rate, volume and pausing. Now, the speaking fluency activity will be started. Teacher divides script into several scenes. Each of the scenes should have various expressions. There are several exercises that should be learned by all of the students to perform a theatre:

1. Speech rate

It requires students to say words clearly and distinctly, so that the audience can understand what they are saying. Teacher assigns students to practice several tongue twisters in rapid rate.

For example:

- Better buy bigger rubber baby buggy bumper
- Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers

2. Volume and Force

Volume is the degree of loudness with which the students reads. While, force is the emphasis the voices places on certain words within a selection. Teacher gives several lists of emotions. Have the students' illustrate the situation in a spoken phrase or sentence and try to imagine the situation from the kinds of emotions. The examples of the list are:

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| - Joy | - Anger |
| - Excitement | - Depression |
| - Hate | - Honesty |
| - Pride | - Disgust |

Then, teacher asks students to say sentences with force. Students should pay attention with the meaning of the sentences changed according to the force they gave to certain words.

3. Pausing

Have students to say a sentence without any punctuation or pausing. After that, ask them to give a symbol on the script to indicate brief pauses [/], and give [//] to indicate longer pauses. For example:

“Although the bus was late / she still missed it after breaking her heel / in the gate//”

All of the students' in-group must practice these exercises. The students read and say the script involve speech rate, volume and force, and pausing. The teacher guides the students to practice those exercises. The procedures are:

1. Students sit in the group. Then, the teacher divides some scenes. Each of the scenes has various expressions. For example, there are three expressions in each scene. These expressions are used to be involved with the emotions for each dialogue.
2. The first group gets the first scene with several expressions on the scene. The second, third and the fourth group get another scene.
3. The first group practices the expressions based on the characters on the scene. For example, on the first scene, the characters are Little Red Riding Hood and Wolf. There are three expressions on that scene. Therefore, there are two students will practice these expressions. The students practice it many times until they can say the dialogues without read the script. After the two students practice and understand how to express the expressions, the other members also have a chance to practice as a Little Red Riding Hood and Wolf. When their friends have already practice, the other can comment the performance. It can be from rate of speech, volume of their voice and pausing.
4. After all the member in-group has already finished for one scene, they can roll the script with another group who has another scene with several expressions. The other groups also have to roll the script, so they can learn much kind of expressions.
5. Then, the students have an audition in-group. The groups' determined a role for each member based on group' discussion. It can be seen from the exercises before whether who is compatible to have acting and who will be the narrators.

The last process in whilst teaching activity is confirmation. The teacher reinforces some exercises that the students should master in speaking fluency. The performers are ready to perform their theatre in front of many people. They can choose to perform the theatre just one scene for each group or a complete scene for one group. Teacher also can help the students if the groups need a help to be one of the character on the script. At last, the students can set the class as a stage for performing readers' theatre.

c. Post Teaching Activity (10 minutes)

The last activity is the teacher gives achievement to the groups who have already success in performing a readers' theatre. The teacher gives a reward to the students, like giving a present and reward score. The teacher and the students as the performers need to discuss again for getting improvement later.

C. Conclusion

Based on the discussion in the previous chapter, speaking fluency is one of the important skills in English. The speaker can share the ideas smoothly without much hesitation and few pauses. The teacher can teach this skill with an attractive strategy that gives a chance for student to express their feeling, ideas and emotions freely. Therefore, the teacher can facilitate them by using an interesting strategy to improve their speaking skill like the readers' theatre strategy. Readers' theatre strategy is a presentation of a piece of literature that is read expressively by the students and at last activity, they will perform it in front of the people. In the teaching process, the writer applies this strategy in four skills of English integratively: listening, writing, reading and speaking.

The concept is students are assigned to listen a narrative story. Then, students re-write the story that they have heard or find it from the internet in form of theatre script. After the script is already done, students read aloud the script and comprehend it. At last, in preparing the performance, the students practice some basic exercises to improve their speaking fluency. The exercises are speech rate, volume and force, and pausing. Finally, as the final product, the students as performers will perform the theatre in front of many people.

It is suggested for the teacher to use readers' theatre as a strategy to teach students' speaking fluency. It will be an effective way because readers' theatre makes students collaborate with their peers and help them to share ideas together. In that case, they have a real-life communication in English. In addition, teacher also can work with the students rather than just instructing from the outside.

Moreover, students are suggested to pay more attention to some exercises or practices that involve in readers' theatre strategy, like how to pause a sentence, speech rate, and volume and force. These skills really need to improve speaking skill. Finally, it is helpful for the teacher and students to use this strategy as a way to teach and improve students' speaking fluency.

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