

MAKING USE OF THE READING FOR DEVELOPING STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY

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PREFACE

This paper discusses the slots that an English teacher can use for developing students' speaking ability through the Pre-Reading-Whilst Reading-Post Reading (PWP) technique.

The background of the paper is that the teaching of English at the Senior High Schools in Indonesia emphasizes on the development of the students' reading ability while speaking is almost neglected for some reasons. This paper suggests that the teacher make use of the slots offered for the development of the speaking ability.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Background of the Problem

In Indonesia English has become a compulsory subject for the Junior High Schools (called Sekolah Lanjutan Tingkat Pertama) and the Senior High Schools (Sekolah Menengah Umum) for a long time. In those schools English is offered in every quarter.

The Junior High School comprises nine quarters and so does the Senior High School. It needs mentioning here that the English language serves as a foreign language in the country. In short, we can say that a student who has finished his or her senior high school, has completed eighteen quarters which is equivalent to six years of studying English. Even though English is not used as a medium of daily communication in Indonesia, it has been given a serious attention in the curriculums of the two levels of the schools. It gets at least four periods a week. A period is, more or less, about forty-five minutes. At the Senior High School English is treated differently. To level one and level two English is offered four

periods per week. Periods offered differ from one department to another department at level three. The present curriculum (the 1994 Curriculum) of the Senior High School offers three different departments, such as the Department of natural Sciences, Social Sciences and Language. The first two departments get less periods than the other department.

All I know, the Departments of natural sciences and social sciences get four periods per week in each quarter. The Department of language gets five periods per week. The numbers of periods for these departments remain unchanged from quarter to quarter. The former remains four periods per week whereas the latter gets five periods per week.

Totally, the offered number of periods per year for the three departments can be read in the Basic Course Outline (GBPP) of the 1994 Curriculum of the Senior High Schools (SMU). The departments of natural sciences and the department of social sciences get totally 170 periods each in the year (in the third year only). This means that a graduate of these departments has

experienced-at least-442 periods of studying I learning English which comprise 136 periods at level one, another 136 periods at level two and 170 at level three.

The department of language gets 374 periods in the third year of the SMU. This, of course, means that a graduate of this department has experienced - at least - 646 periods in the three years' study at the SMU. This number comprises 136 periods at level one, 136 periods at level two and 374 periods at level three.

In a Junior high school, English - from what I know - also gets four periods per week. Normally, we have twelve effective weeks in a quarter. So, at least, a junior high school graduate has studied the language for four hundred thirty-two periods. This number is made up from three years times three quarters times four periods.

The Senior High School as mentioned above offers four hundred forty-two periods for the department of natural sciences and the department of social sciences. The two departments, of

course, offer less periods than the department of language. So we can say that, at least a seniors high school graduate of the two departments has experienced eight hundred and seventy-four periods of English lessons. This number of periods is made from 432 period's gotten at the junior high school and 442 gotten at the senior high school.

Different from the two departments, a graduate of the department of language has experienced one thousand and sixty-eight periods of English lessons. This number of periods comprises 432 periods at the junior high school and 646 at the senior high school.

Even though Senior High School graduates have experienced so many periods with English at school, we-the teacher-find that they are not able to speak the language fluently, or even I can say that, in general, they cannot simply express their ideas and feelings or emotions in English satisfactorily.

Complaints about the students' speaking inability can be heard throughout the country. We often hear the complaints through both formal and informal talks or chats. The newspapers and magazines also often put public complaints about this problem.

In addition to that, I myself also observed such a case in my supervision during my students' teaching practice at several senior high schools in several places which is held every semester. The senior high students hardly speak English at school. Even during the English lessons, even though the teachers mostly speak in English as once suggested by the Improvement Centre for Teacher Works (BPG), a government-owned centre.

I should mention here that each department teaches-at least the following (department of language offers more):

- Structure (in a communicative way)
- Reading (for Comprehension)
- Listening
- Speaking, and
- Writing

The six subtopics (developed from one sub theme in the curriculum) above should be covered normally in one meeting or more.

In practice reading (for comprehension) and structure have got very serious attention from the English teachers, even though the former gets more emphasis, due to the students' preparation for the final test. It is also worth mentioning here that speaking is excluded from the final test or examination. Reading aloud is always neglected due to the shortage of time, for the sake of the examination, etc.

The Purpose of the Writing

As stated earlier an Indonesian senior high school graduate is not able to speak in English even for everyday conversations. This problem, of course, may be caused by several factors: environmental, linguistic, interaction as well as instructional factors.

It was also mentioned that reading (especially reading for comprehension) has been strongly stressed by the English teachers for several reasons. And speaking has been far left behind.

This paper is aimed at proposing a way or ways for the teachers to develop or promote speaking ability of the students without having to change the emphasis on reading for comprehension to speaking. It would suggest how to make use of the PWP technique mentioned before that the English teachers in our country are familiar with for the development of the students' speaking ability. The PWP is the abbreviation of Pre-reading, Whilst-reading and Post reading.

The Limitation of the Problem

This paper is limited to the discussion of the contribution of the reading technique to the speaking ability of the Senior High School students in Indonesia. It will try to look at slots through which speaking ability can be promoted.

What I mean by reading here is a reading activity in which the students and the teacher are involved in a classroom interaction, and speaking is the students' ability to use the language communicatively, even in very simple English. As France Johnson

quoted by Paulston (1976:156) says that communication requires interpersonal responsiveness, rather than the mere production of language. This is actually what I mean by speaking ability: the students can respond interpersonally by using the language, no matter how simple it is.

The Importance of the Problem

The problem seems to be very important because, as I mentioned earlier, that a graduate after studying for very many periods at school (even though not intensively done) comprising at least one thousand one hundred and forty-two periods is still not able to speak English satisfactorily, even for simple communication. And also-as I mentioned earlier, that reading for comprehension has got paramount attention while speaking seems to be neglected. In fact, a teacher can make these two skills go together for several reasons. Since this paper is aimed at finding ways or slots when using the reading technique (PWP) to help the teacher develop the students' speaking ability, this problem has made itself important.

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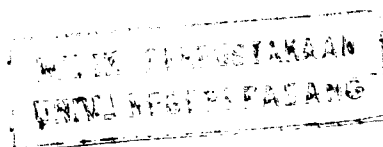
What the School Does with English

I wish to say again that one lesson unit –according to the present curriculum-comprises the topics that follows (even the department of language gets more topics with, of course, more periods):.

- Structure
- Vocabulary
- Reading (for comprehension)
- Listening
- Speaking, and
- Writing

Each unit in the curriculum – at least – gets four periods per week meaning four times forty-five minutes.

Among the six topics, reading (for comprehension) gets the most attention from the English teachers. In practice, the teachers tend to focus more on the contents of the text than on the process of reading itself. They seem to feel satisfied when they can finish the



whole reading material, not when they can make the students learn through the process. As the result, more time is spent by the students to silently read the text, not to use the language on the basis of reading. I am of the opinion that an English teacher can make use of the reading text to develop the students' speaking ability. In other words, a teacher can simplify the reading passage and use more time to develop the students' speaking ability because they can do it.

So far, speaking has been neglected by the teachers, not because they do not think this skill is important or they cannot teach it, but because they are tied to the curricular objectives and to the lengthy reading materials to cover in a very limited time.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Reading

Reading is an approach of decoding a particular writing system into a language or a process of getting meaning from written materials. Reinking and Scheiner (in Kustaryo 1988:2) say that

reading is an active process of interacting with print and monitoring to establish meaning. While Kustaryo (198:2) agrees that it is the meaningful interpretation of printed or written symbols. So reading is actually not just to verbalize the written or printed words or materials without understanding the messages or information from the text as efficiently as possible (Grellet 1985:3). From the points mentioned above, we could conclude that reading involves one's recognition of the written forms and his intellectual power to interpret the meaning or the information in the text being read.

To understand a written text involves several factors such as lexical, grammatical a cultural, and connections between sentences, paragraph structure, the organization of longer elements a written text may have, and perhaps many other factors.

There are three kinds of reading processes, namely bottom up, top down and interactive processes. According to Eskey in Simanjuntak (1986:7), bottom up process involves exact, detailed, words and spelling patterns and larger language units. In this process first a reader takes in letters, combines the letters into words

then combines the words to form phrases, clauses and sentences of text. Top down process, on the other hand, involves the reconstruction of meaning based on skilful sampling of the text, the use of linguistic redundancy, the role of the prior knowledge in prediction and the necessity for reading at a reasonably rate. In this model of reading process the background knowledge to predict the meaning of the text plays an important role in comprehension. The other model of reading process is the integrative process. This model involves the cognitive behavior and begin and with schemata. Schemata is the previously organized knowledge will enable the readers' long term memory. This knowledge will enable the reader to make expectation about the language of the text, and about the larger conceptual structure of the text. Through these expectations a reader will develop accurate predictions in interpreting the meaning of the text as a whole.

Speaking

Speaking is a very important skill that has contributed a lot in our life because we communicate our ideas, thoughts and feelings

mostly through speaking. It is, however, not an easy skill to achieve, because it is a more complex language skill since a speaker (when he wants to speak) has to do the following:

- to decide what he wants to say
- to choose the pattern he is going to use
- to select the words that fit into the pattern and convey his meaning
- to use the correct arrangement of sounds, voice pitch, and forms
- to make sure that what he wants to say is appropriate in the situation
- To place his tongue and lips in certain positions to produce sounds (Finnocchiaro 1964).

Bygate (1987: ix) supports the idea above that in order to be able to speak (a foreign language) a speaker needs to know a certain amount of grammar and vocabulary.

We can conclude, in short, the idea above by quoting Hymes as quoted by Paulston et al. Hymes says that communicative

competence (in which speaking is involved) must include not only the linguistic form of a language but a knowledge of when, how and to whom it is appropriate to use the form.

III. THE TECHNIQUE AND ITS USE

The Reading Technique

As I mentioned in the introduction, the technique of teaching reading that the Senior High School teachers in Indonesia are familiar with (as they are suggested) is-as I called it-the PWP technique. Pre Reading, Whilst reading and Post reading. In this paper I will focus more on this technique of teaching reading and relate it to its contributions to the promotion of the students' speaking ability. In my opinion, this technique is actually good because it can integrate the teaching of the all four language skills.

Dubin and Bycina (in Murcia 1991:202-4) describe clearly the goals and the techniques a teacher can use in each stage of the PWP technique, as follows:

1. The Pre-reading Stage

Goals:

- to activate the students' knowledge of the subject
- to provide the students with the language preparation
- to motivate the students to want to read the text

Techniques:

- the use of pictures, movies, field trips, values clarification, exercises, role plays and text surveying and previewing

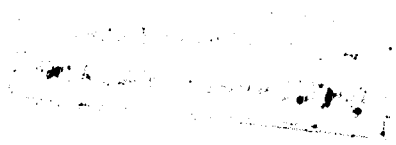
2. The Whilst Reading Stage

Goals:

- to help the students to understand the specific content
- to perceive the rhetorical structure of the text

Techniques:

- the teacher provides the student with a list of questions that lead their attention to the major idea of the text before they read.



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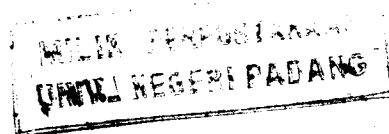
- Guide o-rams' is a series of statements, instructions and/or questions that lead the students through the assigned reading and indicate what information is important, how a paragraph or section is organized and what to be learned
- Pattern Study Guides focus the students' attention on the ways that paragraphs, or larger unit of text are typically structured or organized.

3. The Post Reading Stage

Goals:

- To review the content
- To work on bottom up concern such as grammar, vocabulary and discourse features
- To consolidate what has been read by relating the new information to the students' knowledge, interest and opinions

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Technique:

- Put the students in pairs or small groups to compare and verify their responses to the questions and graphics and check the result with the entire class
- Integrate the new information from the text with the students already know. It can be done through a writing assignment, discussions, debates, role plays and project work.

How a Teacher Can Make Use of the PWP Technique to Promote Speaking Ability

In this part, I will describe what a teacher of English of the Senior High School can do to develop the students' speaking ability. The description will be based on the goals and the techniques offered by the PWP technique mentioned above.

1. The Per-reading Stage**1.1 Goal 1: To activate the Students' knowledge of the subject**

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Subject

A teacher can use a picture or movies to activate the students, about the subject. He can show a picture or a movie dealing with the topic being taught. Then he can begin to ask his students about the picture of the movie before asking the students to read the passage prepared. He also has to encourage the students to answer or talk about the picture or the movie voluntarily while he should not pay serious attention to the students' language problems (pronunciation, grammar, etc). If the teacher can do this in a very wise manner, the students will be encouraged to speak in the language.

1.2 Goal 2: To provide the students with the language preparation

To understand the passage a reader must, of course, know the vocabulary and the grammar of the language used in the passage, and the teacher should help his students to understand the vocabulary and the grammar before they read

(Paulton, et al. 1976:60). Paulston also suggests that the students should be taught phrases for talking themselves out of trouble such as 'How do you say this in English?', 'Is that right?' 'What is the word for the thing that...?'

Here the teacher has two things to explain to the students: vocabulary and grammar. While the useful phrases like shown above might not be taught any time the teacher presents the reading materials.

To promote the speaking ability, the vocabulary to be presented should be in the form of question and answer between the teacher and the students. The teacher should encourage and facilitate the students to talk and argue among themselves.

1.3 Goal 3: To motivate learners to want to read

The students should be motivated to read the text. This goal can be achieved simultaneously through the interaction in two activities above.

2. The Whilst Reading Stage

2.1 Goal 1: To help the students with the specific contents

This goal is achievement by providing the students with a list of questions that lead their attention to the major ideas of the text before they read.

In my opinion, these questions should be discussed first before the students begin to read the passage. The teacher again has to involve and encourage them in the discussion of the question.

This way can also help the students easily find the answers when they read the passage. The discussion can be about the vocabulary, grammar and meaning of the questions. The teachers' questioning skills really play an important role in the discussion, especially for the less proficient students.

2.2 Goal 2: To perceive the rhetorical structure of the text

Since this goal is only about how the paragraphs or larger units of the text are organized and is not about the

activity of preparation before doing the reading, the teacher and the students cannot do much talking and speaking activities.

3. The Post Reading Stage

3.1 Goal 1: To review the content

In this step, the teacher and the students review the content of the passage by answering the questions that they have previously discussed before the students began to read.

He can divide the students into pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss their answers in English as much as they can and the teacher should always be ready to help them with the vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation when they want it.

After the pair or group discussion, one pair or group is assigned to tell the class their answers. The rest of the class is encouraged to speak or respond to the answers given by the pair or the group. They must be able to maintain good classroom atmosphere during the discussion.

3.2 Goal 2: To work on bottom up concern

After reviewing the content of the text, it is advisable that the teacher discusses again unfamiliar, structures of the sentences and discourse features in the text. The discussion must be in English. He should involve and encourage his students to actively participate in the discussion. There are a lot of things that the teacher can discuss about vocabulary, structure and discuss about vocabulary, structure and discourse features of the text. All of these can be the cases of speaking improvement ability of the students.

3.3 Goal 3: To consolidate what has been read by relating the new information to the learners' knowledge, interests and opinions.

To achieve this goal, the teacher can do two kinds of talk with the students. First, he can ask his students about they have understood from the passage. He can also ask the to work in pair or in group in which each of them has to tell his friend (s)

what he has understood from the text, and after that the teacher asks them (maybe some or even a few) individually to tell the class what his friend in the pair or in the group has told him. Then he can continue to ask the class about their knowledge, interest and opinions concerning the ideas in the text.

IV. CONCLUSION

From the discussion above, we can conclude that the PWP technique really offers a lot of slots which an English teacher can use for the promotion of the students' speaking ability. He plays a very important role;

- to facilitate learning, especially through questions and answers between the teacher and the students, pair work, group work and class discussions
- to encourage his students to actively participate in the discussions facilitated by the teacher
- to provide the students with the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary and the understanding of grammar found in the text

- the teacher's questioning ability plays very important role for the success of the PWP technique in the promoting the students' speaking ability

V. SUGGESTION

Buefly, I want to suggest that, since the promotion of speaking can be done through the making use of the PWP technique in the teaching of reading for comprehension, the teachers of reading apply this technique as an alternative.

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