STUDENTS' LEARNING STRATEGIES IN IMPROVING SPEAKING SKILL

(A Study at the English Education Department of Bung Hatta University)

Thesis



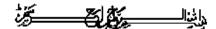
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ABSTRACT

Apriliza. 2009. Students' Learning Strategies in Improving Speaking Skill (A study at English Education Department of Bung Hatta University)

This research was a descriptive study which purposed to describe learning strategies that were used by high, average and low achievement students of English education department of Bung Hatta University. This research was aimed at describing what strategies they have used in learning speaking, and what strategies are better improved their speaking skill. Respondent of the research was the third year students of English Education Department of Bung Hatta University enrolled in 2008/2009 who has passed speaking II subject. Data were collected from speaking test, questionnaire, and interview.

After doing the research, it was found some important findings. First, it was found that speaking learning strategy that is most frequently used by high achievement students was memory strategy with mean score (3.9). Second, speaking learning strategy that was most frequently used by average achievement students were memory and social strategies that have the same mean score (3,5). Third, speaking learning strategy that was most frequently used by low achievement students was social strategies with mean score 3, 3. The last one, it was found that ten subs of each strategies, they are setting goals and objectives, paying attention, making positive statement, practicing, self evaluating getting help, paying attention, positive thinking, practicing naturally, self evaluating, creating mental link, organizing and scheduling, getting help, cooperating with others and asking question and sharing ideas that are most frequently used by high achievement students, regarded as better speaking learning strategy to improve students speaking skill.

Based on the above finding, the researcher concluded that the strategies which have been found to be most frequently used by the high achievement students in speaking might be considered as effective strategies for particular group of EFL learner to improve the students speaking skill. For the speaking lecturers, it also suggested to train the average and low achievement students to use the strategies used by high achievement students identified.

ABSTRAK

Apriliza. 2009. Students' Learning Strategies in Improving Speaking Skill (A study at English Education Department of Bung Hatta University)

Penelitian ini adalah sejenis penelitian deskriptif yang bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan strategi belajar yang digunakan oleh mahasiswa jurusan bahasa inggris FKIP Universitas Bung Hatta dengan 'speaking achievement' yang tinggi, rata-rata dan rendah, dan mendeskripsikan strategi-strategi yang lebih baik dalam meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara bahasa inggris mahasiswa. Responden dalam penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa tahun tiga jurusan bahasa inggris FKIP Universitas Bung Hatta yang terdaftar pada tahun ajaran 2008/2009 yang sudah mengikuti mata kuliah speaking II. Data diambil melalui tes 'speaking', angket dan wawancara.

Setelah melakukan penelitian, ditemukan beberapa penemuan penting. Pertama, ditemukan bahwa strategi belajar 'speaking' yang paling sering digunakan oleh mahasiswa dengan 'speaking achievement' tinggi adalah 'memory strategy' dengan skor mean 3,7. Kedua, ditemukan bahwa strategi belajar 'speaking' yang paling sering digunakan oleh mahasiswa dengan 'speaking achievement' rata-rata adalah 'memory stategy' dan 'social strategy' dimana kedua strategi ini memiliki skor mean yang sama yaitu 3,5. Ketiga, ditemukan bahwa strategi belajar 'speaking' yang lebih sering digunakan oleh mahasiswa dengan 'speaking achievement' rendah adalah 'social strategy' dengan skor mean 3,3, dan yang terakhir ditemukan bahwa ada sepuluh sub strategi dari masing-masing strategi yaitu strategi 'setting goals and objectives, paying attention, making positive statement, practicing, self evaluating getting help, paying attention, positive thinking, practicing naturally, self evaluating, creating mental link, organizing and scheduling, getting help, cooperating with others and asking question and sharing ideas yang paling sering digunakan oleh mahasiswa dengan 'speaking echievement' tinggi dikategorikan sebagai strategi belajar speaking yang lebih baik untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara bahasa inggris.

Berdasarkan penemuan di atas, peneliti menyimpulkan bahwa strategistrategi yang disebutkan sebagai strategi yang paling sering digunakan oleh mahasiswa dengan 'speaking achievement' tinggi dapat dikategorikan sebagai strategi yang efektif untuk beberapa kelompok pelajar bahasa inggris untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara bahasa inggris mereka. Untuk dosen mata kuliah 'speaking' juga disarankan untuk melatih mahasiswa yang 'speaking acievement'nya rata-rata atau rendah untuk menggunakan strategistrategi belajar yang sudah diidentifikasi digunakan oleh mahasiswa yang 'speaking achievement'nya tinggi tersebut.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

Speaking as one of fundamental skills of English has to be learned by using good strategies. Strategies can be developed by students when they are stimulated by the environment such as teachers, friends, etc. to be able to speak English. They have to create comfortable condition to themselves first. It is dealing with Oxford (1990) who states that the first that every individual can do is to create a comfortable condition and stimulate self confidence in learning new language.

In fact, a great number of students still ignore about their learning strategies, especially in learning speaking. If learners want to learn speaking, they have to have good strategies. Without those strategies they will have difficulties in improving their speaking ability. In the real life, it can be seen that many learners have strategies but unfortunately they do not know how to keep those strategies exist in their learning process. As well, they do not have environment to stimulate themselves to develop their learning strategies.

Research and theories in speaking learning strongly suggest that good language learners use a variety of strategies to assist them in gaining command over speaking skill. Thus, speaking strategies are considered as one of the fundamental factors that promote students' self-regulated and motivated speaking. It is foundation of students' self-regulated and motivated speaking. A motivated

and self-regulated speaker will encourage himself to settle his own planning in determining his speaking strategies which contribute a great deal of success to his speaking ability. It also makes speaking activity easier, more enjoyable, and more affective. Learning strategies in speaking can be used in line with the students' need, and depend much on the individual language development.

Many studies have discovered that the use of certain language learning strategies were related to the level of the proficiency or achievement in learning a target language (Chamot and Kuper, 1989; McGroarty and Oxford, 1990; Philips,1991). The research finding have provided empirical information on the characteristics of successful and unsuccessful language learners. They have offerd descriptions about characteristics that could distinguish successful language learners from unsuccessful one. Chamot (1987) uncovered that successful learners employed a wider range of approaches or language learning strategies to deal with the learning problem that they encountered, compared to unsuccessful language learners.

It is known that a great number of Indonesian students still have problem in mastering English, especially spoken English. Most of students get difficulty in speaking after studying it for about six year in high school as well as in university. They feel scare and lazy to speak. In this case, they do not only tend to be passive during teaching learning activity but also being out side of classroom. This phenomenon is also faced by the students in English Department of Bung Hatta University. After doing preobservation to the students previous score in speaking, it was found that 25% of students' achievement in speaking are still in weak and

poor category. Ideally, the students of this English Department use English to speak in college environment. In fact, the students in this English Department do not use English in their daily communication, which give a bad influence on the students' speaking motivation. It can be conclude that social interaction plays more important and motivational role in learning a language, especially spoken English as a foreign language.

Another students' speaking problem is related to age or maturational constraints. There is a contradiction opinion among linguistic expert about the influence of age in learning language, especially spoken language. Krashen, Long, and Scarcella (1982) argue that acquirers who begin learning a second language in early childhood through natural exposure achieve higher proficiency than adult learners. Oyama's study (1976) also shows that many adults fail to reach native-like proficiency in a second language or foreign language. It is fact that the English department students of Bung Hatta University still have limitation to pronounce the target language fluently with native-like pronunciation. Even if they can utter words and sentences with perfect pronunciation, problems with prosodic features such as intonation, stress, and other phonological nuances still cause misunderstandings or lead to communication breakdown. In this case, the students do not seem to have the same innate language-specific endowment or propensity as children for acquiring fluency and naturalness in spoken language.

It is also assumed that another source of the students speaking problems faced by English education department students of Bung Hatta University could take place in learning strategies in speaking used by the students that is regarded

as a crucial factor in the success of students' English speaking. Naiman et al (1976:3) noted that good language learner appeared to use a large number and range of strategies than poor learners, the implication of understanding strategies used have seemed increasingly important. Therefore, English Department students of Bung Hatta University perhaps think that learning strategies will not make change in speaking. That is why they do not use better strategies of speaking in order to be able to speak communicatively in English in daily communication.

The phenomena above attract an interest of the researcher to conduct a research that more concerned in analyzing the students learning strategies in improving speaking ability especially the third year English Education Department students of Bung Hatta University because they have taken speaking II subject already.

B. Identification of the Problem

Due to individual differences, some students might use speaking learning strategies which were different from some other students. Students having differents styles of learning might use different language learning strategies. Factors that influenced the choice of language learning strategies that have been identified by researchers are, personality, affective variables such as motivation, attitudes and learning goal, career orientration, gender, language teaching method and aptitude (Oxford and Nykos, 1989)

The use of language language learning strategy by language learners was related to the level of foreign language achievement that they gained. The students

who used the more appropriate and the more effective speaking learning strategies demonstated a higher level of speaking achievement in the target language, compared to the students who used the inappropriate language learning strategy. Based on the results of severak studies (Ellis, 1994; Chamot, 1987; Chamot and Kupper, 1989) as discussed previously, the researcher has come to a conclusion that the successful language learners employed a wider range of language learning strategies than less-successful language learners.

C. Limitation of the Problem

There are many problems that influence students' achievement in speaking. In this case, the resaercher will focus her study only on learning strategies used by the students in improving their speaking ability.

D. Formulation of the Problem

The problem of the study is formulated as follows: "what learning strategies do the third year English Education Department students of Bung Hatta University use to improve their speaking ability?

E. Research Questions

Based on the formulation of the problem above, there are research questions to be answered as follows:

- 1. What speaking learning strategies are most frequently used by the high achievement students at the English Education Department of Bung Hatta University?
- 2. What speaking learning strategies are most frequently used by the average achievement students at the English Education Department of Bung Hatta University?
- 3. What speaking learning strategies are most frequently used by the low achievement students at the English Education Department of Bung Hatta University?
- 4. What speaking learning strategies are better improves the students speaking skill.

F. Purpose of the Study

In general, the purpose of this study is aimed at identifying the students learning strategies in improving their speaking skill. In particular, the purpose of this study is to identify:

- 1. Speaking learning strategies that are most frequently used by the high achievement students in English Department of Bung Hatta University.
- Speaking learning strategies that are most frequently used by the average achievement students in English Department of Bung Hatta University.
- 3. Speaking learning strategies that are most frequently used by the high achievement students in English Department of Bung Hatta University.
- 4. Speaking learning strategies that is better improves the students speaking skill.

G. Significance of the Study

The research would contribute to both lecturer and learners of English Department of Bung Hatta University. Lecturers' knowledge of students' speaking learning strategies could help the lecturers select and design appropriate material and technique of teaching speaking communicatively and will simultaneously show the students which strategies are appropriate for speaking. The lecturer can also show which strategies might facilitate speaking and how to correctly make use them. To learners, on the other hand, they can improve their speaking ability through having some strategies that have been identified.

H. Definition of the Key Term

Some terms are used in this research needed to be defined in order to avoid misunderstanding. They are speaking learning strategies, and speaking ability of the students.

1. Speaking learning strategies

Speaking learning strategies refer to that language learning strategies employed by the students in developing their speaking ability.

2. Speaking skill

Speaking ability is the extent to which the learners or speakers achieve instructional speaking objective or a set of intended speaking outcome. Those were obtained by conducting a speaking test as a technique that is classified as a measurement and as an instrument of measuring a sample of behavior.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION AND SUGGESTION

After discussing the data analysis presented in previous chapter of speaking learning strategy used by education students of Bung Hatta University, some conclusion, implication and suggestion are formulated.

A. Conclusion

Based on the research question about speaking learning strategy used by education students of Bung Hatta University and data analysis, it can be concluded that there were twenty nine speaking learning strategy were used by high, average and low achievement students of English Education Department of Bung Hatta University and the use of speaking learning strategy is related to the students achievement. It will be specifically concluded as follow:

- Answering the first research question about speaking learning strategy that
 is most frequently used by high achievement students, it was found that
 metacognitive strategies with mean score 3.8 are the first ranking order.
 Then it is followed by memory strategy with mean score 3.7 as the second
 ranking order.
- 2. For the second research question about speaking learning strategy that is most frequently used by average students, it was found that memory and social strategy have the same mean score (3,7) as the first ranking order

- and followed by metacognitive strategy with mean score 3,4 as the second ranking order.
- 3. Answering the third research question about speaking learning strategy that is used by low achievement students, it was found that social strategies with mean score 3,3 are the first ranking order and followed by metacognitive strategies with mean score 3,1 as the second ranking order.
- 4. Concerning with the fourth research question about speaking learning strategies that is better improves the students speaking skill, it was found that setting goals and objectives, paying attention, making positive statement, practicing, self evaluating getting help, paying attention, positive thinking, practicing naturally, self evaluating, creating mental link, organizing and scheduling, getting help, cooperating with others and asking question and sharing ideas that are most frequently used by high achievement students, regarded as better speaking learning strategy to improve students speaking skill.

B. Implication

The implication of the research can be drawn as follow:

- The decision maker can make or review the curriculum to be a guide line for the next curriculum planning. The curriculum should be based on the learning process.
- 2. In designing speaking syllabus, lectures and curriculum designer should consider and pay more attention to the speaking learning strategy

- especially those that have been used by high achievement students in speaking.
- 3. The students of English education of Bung Hatta University or any other English speaker as EFL learners should attempt to use some speaking learning strategies especially those have been found to be effective, in order to improve their speaking skill.

C. Suggestion

In relation to further research, it is suggested to:

- Do the same research with larger respondents by modifying certain strategy
 where necessary in order to cover strategies that the students might use but
 not included on the strategy suggest by oxford.
- 2. Do the same researches by using other technique of collecting data such as think aloud?
- Do the same research that relates the use of language learning strategy to communicate competence in the target language, not only linguistic competence.
- 4. Do the same research in order to confirm whether the importance of cognitive and strategy

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