



EXPLORING TEACHERS' STRATEGIES IN TEFL

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the teachers' teaching strategies in teaching English as a foreign language at SMP Bethesda Palembang. Kayi's theory has fifteen strategies that can be applied by English teachers to teach speaking in the teaching and learning process. Several teaching methods include discussion, role-play, simulation, information gap, brainstorming, story-telling, interview, story completion, reporting, card games, picture narration, picture description, and spotting the differences. A qualitative descriptive method was utilized for this research, and two teachers as samples. To gather data, the researcher used questionnaires, interviews, and documentation as instruments in this research. The results of this research show that Teacher 1 employed strategies such as conversation, speeches, interviews, and discussions. In contrast, Teacher 2 used presentations, reporting, project-based learning, games, interviews, and story retelling. Teachers use those strategies because the strategy makes the students participate in teaching and learning activities. Overall, the teachers implemented a variety of strategies to teach speaking skills.

Keywords: *Teachers' strategies, English Foreign Language, Speaking Skills*

1. INTRODUCTION

A teaching strategy is a crucial factor that supports the teachers' efforts in the classroom. During the teaching and learning process, the strategy employed by the teacher is vital. It helps teachers facilitate students' learning activities and can make the teaching and learning process. (Thohirah, 2024) more effective and engaging. This approach significantly impacts students, as it involves them actively in learning activities, preventing boredom and ensuring the achievement of learning objectives (Hayati et al., 2021). To achieve learning strategies, the teaching and learning process will not be effective ((Yukamana, 2024).

In Indonesia, English is taught and learned as a foreign language (Apriyani et al., 2023), which means it is not the primary language spoken in the country. The primary languages in Indonesia are Bahasa Indonesia and various regional languages. Learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Indonesia become a necessary skill (Kiruthiga & Christopher, 2022) in teaching English, the primary goal is to help students master four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing ((Ria Rezeki et al., 2022). Speaking is essential for interaction and participation in global activities (Davis & Tahrur, 2022). Moreover, in the current industrial 4.0 era, most technologies are operated using English instructions

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(Andika et al., 2023). Therefore, English teachers must focus on developing

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students' speaking abilities. Among the four skills, speaking is considered the most critical for English learners to master. For many, success in language learning by the extent to which students can speak and communicate (Purnama & Nurdianingsih, 2019). Teaching strategies in speaking activities are crucial (Apriyani et al., 2023) for addressing students' difficulties with speaking activities. In light of this, some studies have been conducted by scholars (Anggraeni et al., 2020) who studied the teachers' strategies in teaching speaking skills at SMA, and found that strategies of teaching speaking that the teachers used were role-play, brainstorming, writing, conversation, blogging, picture description, learning assignment, conversation, modeling, role-play, brainstorming, writing, questioning, reading, explaining, and playing ice hockey. Then ... investigated the teacher's strategies for teaching speaking skills to Junior High School students speaking skills, he concluded that the teacher used role play, drilling, games, picture describing, and storytelling to teach speaking. Furthermore, (Et.al, 2021) also studied the effects of a cooperative learning strategy to ameliorate Malaysian ESL students' speaking skills. It is not an uncommon issue that ESL/EFL (English as Second/Foreign Language) students face some difficulties in interacting fluently in the English language it is a problem faced by students around the world. Based on the narrative explanation above, the writer concluded that it is necessary to conduct another research relevant to teachers' strategies to improve speaking skills because the writer saw there were a few topics about this, especially in Indonesia. Therefore, the

writer initiated to conduct further research.

The researcher noted that the seventh and eighth-grade students, particularly those in their second semester, struggled with speaking. The primary issue is their limited exposure to English, which impairs their ability to understand texts, express themselves clearly, and perform various academic tasks effectively. Contributing factors include minimal language exposure, poor reading habits, and insufficient practice. Secondly, a lack of confidence affects many students, with only a few willing to practice speaking English. This lack of confidence stems from feelings of embarrassment and shyness when speaking in front of peers and teachers, as well as a lack of internal motivation. Thirdly, pronouncing and articulating new words poses a challenge, especially for students without an English background from their previous schooling. Teachers find it difficult to use only English as students may not understand, leading to frustration. Additionally, students often rely on their native language, which interferes with learning new English vocabulary. Fourthly, poor reading habits adversely affect speaking development, comprehension skills, and overall academic performance. Fifthly, peer pressure to use their native language instead of English discourages active participation in English-speaking activities. Students' fear of making mistakes also hinders their willingness to practice and engage in conversations. Finally, some classrooms focus primarily on reading and writing skills, leaving few

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opportunities for students to practice speaking English.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching strategy means a plan, and method or series of activities to achieve particular. In language teaching there are three related terms aspects: approach, method and techniques (Richards & Schmidt, 2013). Approach means in language teaching the theory, philosophy and principle underlying a particular set of teaching practices. Different theories about the nature of language and how languages are learned (the approach) imply different ways of teaching language (the method), and different method make use of different kinds of classroom activity (the techniques). The definition of method in language teaching means a way of teaching a language that is based on systematic principles and procedures, i.e. which is an application of views on how a language is best taught and learned and a particular theory of language of language learning. Different methods of language teaching such as the direct method, the audiolingual method, and total physical response from different views of:

- a) the nature of language
- b) the nature of second language learning
- c) goals and objectives in teaching
- d) the type of syllabus to use
- e) the role of teachers, learners, and instructional materials
- f) The Table 2 shows that strategy is a part of procedures used by the teacher.

Teacher's strategies for speaking skills are very important to overcome

students' difficulties in speaking. In (Razi et al., 2019) several experts proposed some strategies for teaching speaking, such as role-play, drilling, games, picture describing, and storytelling. Teaching speaking can be challenging and rewarding. It needs strategies, based on (Anggraeni et al., 2020), this research has displayed fifteen strategies for teaching speaking. They are discussion, simulation, role-play, brainstorming, storytelling, information gap, interviews, story completion, reporting, playing cards, describing pictures, finding the differences, picture narrating, learning projects, and playing ice ball. The writer will observe these fifteen strategies in the class.

Here are some explanations:

1) Discussion

A discussion occurs when two or more people share their thoughts on a main issue or topic. Within the classroom context, teacher-led or facilitator-facilitated whole-class activities are the primary focus of conversations. Pupils might or might not be looking for a solution to an issue. A classroom discussion should ideally be primarily student-led, with the teacher acting only as a facilitator and prompter to keep the conversation moving. Talks are a fantastic exercise that enhance the dynamic of the classroom by bringing life, enthusiasm, engagement, social contact, contemplation, and introspection. Students build on each other's ideas and offer suggestions to each other in a well-designed and executed discussion exercise. Similar to brainstorming sessions, discussions involve gathering

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and sharing the collective knowledge of students.

2) Simulation

In a simulation student is immersed in a "world" that the teacher has created to simulate a real-world setting where students interact. The boundaries of this "world" are within the teacher's control, and she uses them to support the learning objectives for the students.

3) Role-play

Involve students in role-playing exercises where they assume different roles and scenarios, enabling them to practice speaking in varied contexts and enhance their conversational abilities. Role-playing can be classified into two main types, as outlined by Larsen-Freeman (2000). Highly structured role-play, often called scripted role-play, involves students interpreting predefined dialogues or texts provided by the teacher. In this format, students follow guidance on what to say, typically sourced from the textbook, with the aim of reinforcing language concepts effectively. On the other hand, loosely structured role-play, also known as unscripted or free role-play, requires students to improvise and determine the language used and the direction of the conversation. Successful implementation of this activity depends on thorough preparation by both the teacher and the students.

4) Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a kind of large-small group discussion that helps students come up with a variety of ideas for possible next steps or solutions on a given subject. The instructor can

introduce a topic, pose a query or issue, or start a brainstorming session with one of these methods. Students then discuss potential responses as well as pertinent terms and concepts. When ideas are called out, the teacher or a scribe summarizes them on a whiteboard and accepts contributions without bias or judgment. Then, these concepts are investigated, typically in an open-conversation approach.

5) Story telling

Utilizing storytelling serves as a versatile tool for enhancing listening, speaking, and writing skills. Storytelling fosters language acquisition by expanding students' vocabulary and facilitating the acquisition of new language structures (Dujmovic, 2006). Students often derive repeated enjoyment from the same stories. When implementing this strategy, teachers can diversify presentations by incorporating books, pictures, or animated characters. It is essential for teachers to exhibit creativity in varying the methods used to present the story. Storytelling serves as an effective method for instilling values in students without adopting a patronizing approach (Asfandiyar, 2007). In employing storytelling as a classroom activity, the process itself holds significant importance, as extracting the values or messages embedded within the story can enhance students' speaking skills. Additionally, teachers must ensure that students comprehend and internalize the narratives being conveyed. Moreover, teachers can utilize storybooks to present images and narrate stories as part of their instructional strategy. Teachers must possess the ability to proficiently engage in storytelling themselves.

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6) Information gap

In speaking class, information gap is helpful exercise. One Individual has specific knowledge that needs to be shared with others in an information gap activity in order to solve an issue, obtain data or come to a conclusion. Activities of this kind work incredibly well in an L2 classroom. Every student has the chance to speak in the target language for a longer amount of time thanks to them, and as a result, they naturally create more speech than they would otherwise. Furthermore, talking to peers is less scary than giving a presentation.

7) Interviews

Communication that involves asking questions and receiving responses. Interviews are useful tools for teaching speech because they encourage thought processes. During an interview, the question is revealed by interviewer, to which the interviewee listens and answers.

8) Story completion

Students participate in a full class, circle-based, free-speaking exercise that is rather entertaining. A teacher narrates a story for this exercise, but after a few phrases, the story ends. Each student then picks up where the preceding one left off in their narrative. Every pupil is expected to provide four to ten sentences. Students are able to contribute new narratives, events, characters, and so forth.

9) Reporting

The goal is to give students information in a straight ward uninterrupted way. It is similar to a well-

liked television format, such as news casting and programming, which many people never fail to watch. This is the case because it accurately informs them about certain occurrences that occasionally occur. Comparably, the report-writing approach accomplishes the same goal by providing students with appropriately well-organized bits of information.

10) Playing card

When forming random Teachers can use a regular deck of cards to add both structure and novelty in creating random groups for classroom work. Cooperative learning is an effective classroom strategy for increasing achievement, improving attitudes, and cultivating relationships among students.

11) Describing a picture

Utilizing picture descriptions is regarded as an effective method for teaching speaking skills to beginners in English language learning. By observing images, students are encouraged to recall and associate the depicted scenes. This approach is particularly advantageous during the optimal stage of brain development in students. Therefore, it should be fully leveraged in foreign language acquisition, particularly in developing speaking proficiency. Brandon (2012) suggests that employing picture-based strategies facilitates the teaching of vocabulary with tangible meanings. Furthermore, according to Hornby (1995, p. 138), a picture serves as a representation that aids students in conceptualizing the nature of something. This implies that employing the picture description strategy facilitates students' retention and comprehension of new

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vocabulary. Additionally, when a teacher presents a new picture to introduce new vocabulary, attention to pronunciation becomes crucial. Describing pictures assists students in directly grasping the meanings of words depicted in the image

12) Find the differences

Students can do this task in pairs, and each pair will receive two distinct images—for instance, a photo of boys playing football and another of girls playing tennis. Pupils in discuss the photographs' differences and/or similarities in pairs. Based on Kayi's theory mentioned above, the researcher concluded that using the Story Completion method will help students become more proficient speakers. One of the most efficient ways to investigate kids' thoughts and enhance their oral language or speaking abilities is through story completion. Completing a story has always been important when describing a story.

13) Picture narrating

By giving students a series of photographs in order, picture narrating strategies help them develop their vocabulary and inventiveness while practicing speaking with their classmates Nunan (2018). According to Szpotowicz (2012), developing speaking abilities requires participation in meaningful, realistic interactions.

14) Learning project

The aim of these experiences is to broaden students' opportunities to discover, empathize with, and understand problems from various perspectives. Through these activities, students either encounter or create a direct "experience"

related to the course topic or project question (e.g., "What makes a shoe fit well?" or "How challenging is it to carry water over long distances?"). This experience initiates a cycle of reflection, discussion, analysis, and evaluation of the skills necessary to guide subsequent activities. Ideally, these experiences involve exposure to situations and individuals not typically encountered in traditional classroom settings, enhancing the authenticity and significance of problem-based learning (PBL) problems cemented during this process.

15) Playing Ice ball

This is an engaging and interactive strategy to facilitate learning. Playing ice ball involve students participating in a fun and dynamic game that encourages interaction, teamwork, and active learning.

Furthermore, Chen (2002) highlighted several advantages offered by games in language acquisition, particularly in enhancing speaking skills. Initially, games shift the focus of instruction towards a student-centered approach. This encourages increased interaction among students, thereby enhancing the value of classroom learning as each learner gains opportunities to speak and demonstrate their proficiency in the target language. Secondly, games foster communicative competence, a fundamental goal in language education. Thirdly, games establish meaningful contexts for language utilization. Many game activities are purposefully designed to address specific aspects of the target language, thus facilitating effective language practice.

3. METHODS

This research utilized a qualitative method as a core component. The study aims to investigate the strategies teachers use to teach speaking at SMP Bethesda Palembang, the learning strategies of the students, and students' perceptions toward teachers' strategies. Specifically, it seeks to understand how these strategies are implemented in teaching speaking skills. To achieve this, the study will involve conducting interviews, observations, and narrative research to gain an in-depth understanding of the techniques employed by the teachers. Further in conducting the study, the following steps will be done:

1. This study chose two English teachers
2. Preparing the observation checklist and interview guidelines for the study interview
3. Observing the class activities
4. Collect the data from RPP
5. Preparing document
6. Analysis of the obtained
7. data from observation, interview, and documents
8. Interpreting the findings from those instruments
9. Draw a conclusion based on the obtained data

Data analysis will be done by gathering observations and interviews, following the three approaches Miles (2017) outlined. The study included three main stages: condensing,

displaying, and drawing conclusions. Condensing involves selecting, focusing, simplifying, and transforming empirical materials like field notes, interview transcripts, and documents. Displaying the data helped in comprehending and analysing the findings further, extending the condensation process. The researcher chose a narrative format to present the findings. The final stage of the analysis consisted of drawing logical conclusions and validating the data against the research questions. The outcomes from observations and interviews were subsequently narratively presented.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**Teacher 1**

The first question that is given by the writer is related to the learning objective of the teacher. Because as a good teacher, she/ he should make goals for the day before coming to class.

Specifically, I look at the material we are going through and look at the lesson goals. For instance, I teach "Let's Talk" and usually the lesson is over a specific topic, eg. "Vacations" or "Animals". For those classes, my goal is to increase the student's confidence, vocabulary, and speaking abilities regarding that particular topic. (Teacher 1, May 2024)

Based on the interview above, the writer asked about teaching strategies used by teacher use to create a supportive and engaging environment for speaking practice in the classroom.

I like to employ a 3-fold approach to every lesson in my teaching: auditory, visual, and kinesthetic. For auditory, I have the student's listen to an English conversation and answer questions. This

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tests their hearing and comprehension abilities. I also like them to repeat different words when appropriate. For visual, I like to use slides (when appropriate) that are applicable to the lesson. I also always write down words that they have questions about on the board. This is so they can see how different words are spelled. For kinesthetic, I like to have the students practice what they have learned. This is extremely important so that they can directly and immediately apply what they have learned. It must be put into practice.

According to teacher 1's answer, it can be understood that teacher 1 used conversation/ discussion. After that, the writer asked the way to assess the student in speaking.

It is relatively easy to gauge a student's speaking abilities. After a few minutes of conversation, I can see the depth of their vocabulary, breath of their grammar, and ease of speaking. From there, I can adjust my lesson plans to better apply to the average of the student's speaking level. With large classes it becomes difficult but for private classes it is very easy to do.

Teacher 1 commented that it was easy to measure their English level when they spoke. The teacher knew the students' vocabulary and grammar. After allowing them to speak, the teacher could adjust the next lesson to be applied. Then, the writer asked how the teacher incorporated speaking activities into lesson plans while ensuring coverage of other language skills.

I have been given the main task of increasing the student's motivation and

desire to speak English. Because of that, I focus mainly on speaking (kinesthetic). That is why almost every class, I have the students presenting something as part of their group work. But inevitably, when the students are preparing their speeches, they will have vocabulary questions so that also helps increase their vocabulary. Finally, when their spoken grammar is incorrect, I do not directly correct them, but I repeat what they said but using the correct grammar.

Based on the result of the interview above can be understood that teacher will give motivation and desire to invite students to improve their speaking skills. He/ she had the students present something that made the students prepare the speech. Next question, the writer asked the types of speaking activities most effective for Junior High School students, and gave the reason.

I think the most important thing is that the activities that are given to them relate to their lives. Because of that, I open skip lessons from the book that I know the students would not be interested in or do not apply. For instance, there are several lessons over „writing emails“, „writing letters“, and „how to speak in a job“ that would not be helpful. If the students enjoy the lesson, the odds of them retaining the information drastically increase.

According to the answer above teacher 1 also used the interview to improve students' speaking skills, he/ she also gave applicable material. —Speak in a job was a very useful activity given by the teacher. The next question is the way the teacher creates speaking tasks to

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accommodate students with varying proficiency levels.

This is the task that is the most difficult when teaching large classes. The smaller the class, the closer you can guarantee that the students levels are similar. But with large classes, we are often in situations where some students are beginners and some are advanced. There is no good answer to accommodate everyone. What I try to do is find a lesson that is “in the middle”, hard for the beginners and somewhat easy for the advanced students. This is what makes private classes much more valuable for the student, if available.

Based on the result above teacher 1 always planned his/ her lesson that accommodate all levels. After that, the writer asked whether the teacher used technology and multimedia resources in teaching speaking skills to your students.

Since I only teach once a week, my role as a teacher is focused on speaking and outside of that very limited. As a result, I do not employ much technology in my lessons. I do; however, have recordings that I play every class as part of the auditory portion of teaching and also, when appropriate, use the projector to show them different things. If I was their full-time teacher, I would use technology much more extensively.

According to the result above teacher 1 actively used technology in her/ his lesson. Next, the writer asked the way the teacher provided feedback on students' speaking performance, and encouraged self-assessment and peer feedback.

The best way is through 1-on-1 conversation, but that is difficult in a large class. During the group times, I like to go around to the individual student"s and speak with them. Usually if they have a speaking mistake, I repeat what they said but in correct English. Also, once a month we provide evaluations so that, hopefully, they can see their progress. An example of the speaking rubric is below:

| English Speaking Grading Rubric | | |
|---------------------------------|--|--------------|
| Name: | | |
| Date: | | Class: |
| Category | Detail | Score (1-10) |
| Pronunciation | Uses correct intonation and is easily understood by a native speaker | |
| Grammar | Uses correct sentence structure, verb tense, and parts of speech | |
| Vocabulary | Displays depth of vocabulary, used in the correct context | |
| Fluency | Speaks with confidence and ideas flow smoothly | |
| Content | Information is relevant and can fill the time requested | |
| Sub-Total | | |
| Total % (multiply by 2) | | |

| No | Strategies for Teaching Speaking | Teacher 1 | Teacher 2 |
|-----|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. | Discussion | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2. | Role-play | ✓ | ✓ |
| 3. | Simulation | ✓ | ✓ |
| 4. | Information gap | ✓ | - |
| 5. | Brainstorming | ✓ | ✓ |
| 6. | Story-telling | - | ✓ |
| 7. | Interview | ✓ | ✓ |
| 8. | Story completion | - | - |
| 9. | Reporting | - | ✓ |
| 10. | Card Games | - | - |
| 11. | Picture | ✓ | - |

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| | | | |
|-----|---------------------|---|---|
| | narration | | |
| 12. | Picture description | ✓ | - |
| 13. | Spot differences | - | - |

5. CONCLUSION

Two teachers used their distinct approaches to develop speaking skills in the classroom. The primary tactics employed by Teacher 1 were conversation, discussion, speech, presentation, and interview. To get the students involved in the classroom activities, both tactics are applied. They can practice and get better at speaking if they participate actively in school activities. In addition, other techniques are employed, such as role-play, picture, simulation, brainstorming, information gap, story completion, describing pictures, and learning projects. Every method that teacher 1 employs to instruct speaking.

Teacher 2 used six methods to instruct students. They are presentation, role-play, project learning, play games, reporting, and retelling. The students participated in activities by employing tactics. These activities helped students hone their speaking abilities. In addition, other techniques like discussion, simulation, brainstorming, information gap, interview, and finding differences.

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