

TEACHERS' STRATEGIES AND CHALLENGES IN TEACHING SPEAKING TO YOUNG LEARNERS

Indra Sudrajat¹, Hanni Apriliani²

^{1,2}STKIP Pasundan, Indonesia

Email: indra.sudrajat22@gmail.com¹

First Received: February 2022

Final Proof Received: March 2022

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find out the teacher's reflection on the strategies used, to find out the challenges and how the teacher overcomes the challenges faced when teaching English to young learners. To be able to achieve a learning goal, teaching English speaking to young learners must be effective and interesting. But in fact, teaching speaking to young learners is a skill that is quite difficult for EFL teachers to teach. Therefore, this study tries to find out the strategies used by teachers, the challenges faced, and how to deal with these challenges. The research method in this research is a qualitative descriptive method. Data were obtained from three English teachers in a kindergarten in Bandung. The instruments used to collect data were close-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews which were transcribed descriptively. In addition, the data analysis used is data reduction, data display, and conclusions. The results of the research showed that the teacher used three strategies to teach English speaking in young learners' classes including drilling, games, and songs. Meanwhile, the researcher reveals the research findings related to the challenges faced by teachers are divided into two, namely; internal and external challenges. Internal challenges include the mother tongue which is still a challenge for students and the lack of vocabulary. External challenges include a lack of exposure to English outside the classroom. To overcome these challenges, teachers must apply different teaching strategies, provide opportunities for students to speak English in the classroom, adequate learning facilities, classroom management, create a pleasant classroom atmosphere, and do self-reflection.

Keywords: *Challenges, English speaking, teaching strategies, young learners*

INTRODUCTION

Teaching English to young learners is one of the ways that can be implemented to educate children in mastering English better. In line with Brown (2000), stated that teaching language at a young age is easier to get a better result and have more English skills. In early primary grades in many countries, English is a compulsory subject (Garton et al., 2011). It confirms up the claim that the best period to practice English is in early childhood. Speaking is one part of language. Speaking is a form of human communication that is extremely significant in today's world. According to Burns and Joyce (as cited in Torky, 2006), Speaking is a collaborative process of creating meaning, absorbing information, and digesting it.

Teaching speaking to young learners is very important in today's era (Seamolec, 2006 in (Pratama & Awaliyah, 2016)). In line with Linse (2005) stated that speaking is equally important in young learners' language development. In response to this, many schools in Indonesia are introducing bilingual programs in which schools try to build a foreign language environment. Currently, most schools in Indonesia are competing to

give the best education to the children, one of which is by offering bilingual classes for their students (Rosiana, 2019). Therefore, English is now not only taught to elementary school students, but also to kindergarten students.

It is very important to increase self-potential in children because they have flexible articulation in pronouncing new words, this opinion is supported by Zhang (2009), young learners are more effective and quick in learning sound systems, while adults have difficulties in the learning process because of their age. Therefore, teaching speaking to young learners is an effective way. But keep in mind that teaching speaking to young learners is not easy.

Teaching is a very complex teaching and learning activity involving teachers and students. In a learning process, it is highly recommended for professional teachers to be able to increase knowledge related to the subject matter, students, curriculum, pedagogy, and also teacher performance.

In addition, to be able to achieve effective and efficient teaching and learning objectives, a teacher must have the right strategy in teaching. Silver (2007) cited in Handayani (2019), strategies are various forms of planning used by teachers to teach in the hope of achieving a learning goal. It means, to be able to achieve an effective learning goal, the teacher must be able to choose the right strategy in teaching. Currently, in speaking class of young learners, each teacher has used various strategies to help students speak in the speaking class, such as repetition, role-play, brainstorming, oral interview, watching videos, games, digital storytelling (Pratama & Awaliyah, 2016). And there are still some students who didn't try, even have difficulty, and are insecure to speak. However, it is very important that the strategy applied is relevant to their needs and interests. So, this study aims to find out the teacher's strategies used, to find out the challenges and how do the teachers cope with any challenges encountered while teaching speaking to young learners.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking

Richards and Renandya (as cited in Sartipa, 2019) stated that speaking is a component of communication. Based on the statements above, speaking is a way of communicating by transferring the purpose of speaking using the list of words that we have. According to Chastain (in Harahap et al., 2015), speaking is an active skill because in the process it generates an idea, message, suggestion, and we need to practice it. To increase the skill in communicating in English, it is not enough in the classroom but practices outside of the classroom. Moreover, Fulcher (2003) stated speaking is the oral use language for communicate with others.

The researcher concludes from the explanation above that speaking is what we say in response to what we see, feel, and think. We want someone to hear us while we are feeling something. Therefore, speaking is a process of interaction or exchange of ideas between two or more parties.

According to experts, there are several definitions of speaking. According to Harmer (2007), speaking is the ability to speak fluently, the characteristics of a person not only needing language but also having the ability to process information and language directly. Chaney (in Murda et al., 2020) speaking is the activity of creating and communicating meaning in various situations using verbal and nonverbal symbols.

Young Learners

Curtain and Dahlberg (in Siswanto, 2017), define Young Learners into four based on their age, they are first, Pre-school students ages 2-4 years normally still at kindergarten school. Second, primary students aged 5-7 years. And third, intermediate students aged 8-10 years who are formally enrolled in elementary school, and finally, early adolescent students aged 11-14 years who are formally enrolled in junior high school. According to Sarah Phillips, young learners mean the children from the first year of formal schooling (five or six years old to eleven or twelve years old of age) Phillips (Rini, 2016). It means that young learners are an elementary school or first-grade, junior high school students.

Based on the statements above, young learners refer to those who take the kindergarten program in particular institutions. Young learners are youngsters under the age of six who have not yet begun compulsory schooling and have not yet read. However, in our country (Indonesia), children as young as six years old have started school and can read.

Strategy

A strategy is a plan for reaching a goal. In the teaching and learning process, a strategy is an action that both the teacher and the learner should engage in in order for a learning activity to be effective and efficient. Of course, the teacher is responsible for developing the approach, which is then implemented by the students in their learning activities. According to E. Stones and S. Morris (in Gill & ., 2017) teaching strategy is a broad plan for a lesson that comprises structure, anticipated learner behavior in terms of instructional goals, and a list of methods that will be used to carry out the strategy.

According to Anjaniputra (2013) role-playing, creative projects, and drilling are some of the cooperative activities utilized in teaching speaking. Furthermore, there are several common tactics that can be employed in young learners' classrooms, such as songs, poems, chants, theater, stories, games, and Total Physical Response (TPR) exercises. All these activities can affect learners and enhance their learning of the language (Khameis in Maulidar et al., 2019).

Challenge

The challenge most frequently identified was teaching speaking. Previous research has identified teachers' levels of English and language teaching methodologies (Unal & Ilhan, 2017) as being problematic. However, until now skills in teaching speaking have not been recognized as a challenge in teaching speaking. The most common thing is to make the children speaking, "convince them that speaking English is something they can do". It could be that many children are reluctant to speak in front of their classmates, especially in a foreign language.

METHOD

The research method used in this research is a qualitative descriptive method.

Respondents

The participants of the research were three English teachers who have currently teach English to young learners at a kindergarten school in Bandung.

Instruments

Questionnaire

According to Sugiyono (2013) a questionnaire is a data collection technique by using questions posed to respondents to be answered. Moreover, (Arikunto, 2006) said that the questionnaire is a collection of written questions that are used to obtain the required information from respondents.

According to Abdullah in Khotimah (2021) a questionnaire is a document in the form of written answers from respondents, in the form of questions posed by choices or short answers. Types of questionnaires: Open-ended questionnaire, Close-ended questionnaire, Rating scale questionnaire, Likert-type scales questionnaire, Semantic differential questionnaire, Multiple-choice questionnaire, and Rank order questionnaire.

Interview

Interviews are an appropriate method when there is a need to gather in-depth information about people's opinions, thoughts, experiences, and feelings. Interviews were divided into 3 forms, according to Zarinpoush and Gamulka in (Khotimah, 2021), structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured interviews.

In this study, researchers used semi-structural interviews. A semi-structural interview aims to get detailed answers from respondents because in this semi-structural interview questions can develop into new questions from questions that have been prepared previously (Nur Arafah, 2018).

Procedures

In collecting data, this research took several steps. According to (Ahmad, 2017) stated research has at least three main steps in collecting data, namely: pre-field step, research step, and data analyzing step.

Pre-field step, the researcher determines the research location, approaches the respondents with the intention of conveying the objectives and topics to be studied, then prepares research permits and instruments, namely questionnaires and interviews.

Research step, at this stage the researchers began to go down to the field to get the results of the data from the questionnaires and interviews that had been prepared previously. This research was conducted in 2 meetings, the first day of filling out the questionnaire and the second day of the interview. Data were obtained by writing and recording.

Data analyzing step, research results that have been obtained from questionnaires and interviews began to be analyzed and then explained in the form of a description.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data analysis used in this study was adopted from the qualitative data and analysis technique in Sugiyono. Sugiyono quoted Susiyanti (2019) which includes:

- a. Data reduction
Data reduction is the process of selecting basic data in accordance with research from the findings in the field in the form of written notes or recordings.
- b. Data display
The reduction data is presented in the form of brief descriptions, charts, graphs, percentages so that it is easy to understand both overall. The data is described so that the research results are clear and legible the researcher displays the data in good sentences.
- c. Conclusion

The data obtained were concluded in the form of sentences by the researcher. Whether the goal has been achieved or not, if desired has been reached, discontinued study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Strategies Used by Teachers in Teaching Speaking to Young Learners

In collecting data, teachers were given several statements about strategies used to teach English speaking to young learners. The kinds of strategies by teachers in teaching English speaking to young learners are listed as follows:

Table 1. The Strategies Used by Teachers in Teaching Speaking to Young Learners

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I use roleplaying to teach speaking in young learner class.	-	33,33%	66,67%	-	-
I use games to teach speaking in young learner class.	100%	-	-	-	-
I use drilling to teach speaking in young learner class.	33,33%	66,67%	-	-	-
I use problem-solving to teach speaking in young learner class.	-	-	100%	-	-
I use discussion to teach speaking in young learner class.	-	-	100%	-	-
I use songs to teach speaking in young learner class.	100%	-	-	-	-

So, based on the table above, it can be concluded that all participants use games, drilling, and song strategies in teaching English speaking to young learner class. Games are used because they are fun, suitable for children and students are easier to accept the material. Drilling is used because it can practice pronunciation and add new vocabulary. And the song strategy is used because in everyday life children are closer to singing and movement so students are easier to accept the material.

The Challenges Encountered by Teachers in Teaching Speaking to Young Learners

Based on the questionnaire, teachers faced several challenges. The following table shows the result of the questionnaire regarding the challenges in teaching English speaking to young learner class:

Table 2. The Challenges Encountered by Teachers in Teaching Speaking to Young Learners

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have challenges in teaching speaking to young learner classes.	-	66,67%	33,33%	-	-

I was constrained by a crowded class in teaching speaking to young learner class.	-	-	100%	-	-
I have problems in determining strategies to teach speaking to young learner class.	-	-	-	100%	-
Students have mother tongue barriers in learning to speak English in class.	33,33%	66,67%	-	-	-
Students have problems with a lack of vocabulary in learning to speak English in class.	33,33%	66,67%	-	-	-
Lack of supporting facilities for learning to speak English in young learner class.	-	-	66,67%	33,33%	-
Students have boredom problems in learning English-speaking in young learner class.	-	-	66,67%	33,33%	-
Students have learning motivation constraints in learning English-speaking in young learner class.	-	-	66,67%	33,33%	-
Students have difficulty speaking English due to a lack of exposure to English outside the classroom.	-	66,67%	33,33%	-	-

In conclusion, the researcher divides the challenges faced by teachers when teaching English speaking to young learners into two factors including internal and external factors. Based on the results of the table above, internal challenges include mother tongue and lack of vocabulary. Lack of vocabulary makes children less confident when speaking. And the external factor is the lack of exposure to English outside the classroom. Because English in Indonesia is a foreign language, students' opportunities to speak English are very limited.

Encountering Challenges in Teaching English Speaking to Young Learner Class

Challenges in teaching speaking English to young learner classes need to be encountered in order to create better and meaningful teaching. In the results of the interview, the three participants stated their opinions on how to deal with these challenges, which in this case were based on the results of the questionnaire.

Table 3. Encountering Challenges in Teaching English Speaking to Young Learner Class

Statements	Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly
------------	----------	-------	---------	----------	----------

	Agree		Disagree		
I use various teaching strategies in teaching speaking to young learner class.	66,67%	33,33%	-	-	-
I always give opportunities for students to speak in English.	66,67%	-	33,33%	-	-
Adequate facilities and teaching aids (e.g. projectors, flashcards) are very important to make speaking lessons more meaningful.	66,67%	-	33,33%	-	-
I classify students according to their abilities.	-	66,67%	33,33%	-	-
I always try to create a pleasant classroom atmosphere.	100%	-	-	-	-
I always do self-reflection every time I finish teaching.	33,33%	66,67%	-	-	-
Self-reflection can help me measure my abilities and improve the quality of my teaching.	33,33%	66,67%	-	-	-
Self-reflection can help me in growing my confidence while teaching.	33,33%	66,67%	-	-	-
Self-reflection can help me to stay up-to-date and innovative.	100%	-	-	-	-
Self-reflection can help me understand students.	100%	-	-	-	-
Self-reflection is a reminder for me as a teacher to stay humble and keep working hard to achieve results.	100%	-	-	-	-

In conclusion, to face challenges in teaching English speaking to young learners, including applying different teaching strategies, providing opportunities for students to speak English, adequate learning facilities, classroom management, creating a pleasant classroom atmosphere, and teachers doing self-reflection.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion in this research is based on the research findings and discussion. First, the teachers' strategies used in teaching speaking to young learner classes. English teachers in one kindergarten school in Bandung use various strategies to teach and

improve speaking abilities. Some of the main strategies most often used by English teachers are games, drilling, and songs. This strategy is reported to improve language learning because of the pleasant learning atmosphere, high enthusiasm, and communicative situation between teachers and students.

Second, the challenges faced by the teachers when teaching speaking to young learners. This study shows that the challenges faced by teachers include the mother tongue which is still a challenge for students, the lack of vocabulary knowledge possessed by students, and the lack of exposure to English outside the classroom. In order to face these issues, this research also finds ways to deal with these challenges. These include applying different teaching strategies, providing opportunities for students to speak English, adequate learning facilities, classroom management, creating a pleasant classroom atmosphere, and doing self-reflection.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad, N. (2017). *The Implementation of Talking Stick Method in Teaching Speaking at The Eight Grade Students' at SMP Islam Thoriquil Huda Cekok Babadan Ponorogo in Academic Year 2016/2017*.
- Anjaniputra, A. G. (2013). Teacher's Strategies in Teaching Speaking To Students At Secondary Level. *Journal of English and Education*, 1(2), 1–8.
- Arikunto, S. (2006). *Prosedur penelitian : suatu pendekatan praktik*. Rineka Cipta 2011.
- Brown, H. D. (2000). *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy* (Second). Longman.
- Fulcher, G. (2003). *TESTING SECONG LANGUAGE SPEAKING*.
- Garton, S., Copland, F., & Burns, A. (2011). *Investigating Global Practices in Teaching English to Young Learners*. www.britishcouncil.org
- Gill, A. K., & . K. (2017). Teaching Approaches, Methods and Strategy. *Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4(36). <https://doi.org/10.21922/srjis.v4i36.10014>
- Handayani, U. D. (2019). *English Teacher's Strategy in Teaching Speaking* (Vol. 8, Issue 5).
- Harahap, S. S., Antoni, R., & Rasyidah, U. (2015). *An Analysis on Students' Speaking Skill at Second Grade SMP 8 Rambah Hilir*.
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (Fourth). Pearson Education Limited.
- Khotimah, N. H. P. (2021). *Online Learning in Vocational High School during Covid-19 Pandemic: EFL Teachers' Challenges in Teaching English*.
- Linse, C. T. (2005). *PRACTICAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING : YOUNG LEARNERS*.
- Maulidar, K., Gani, S. A., & Samad, I. Ab. (2019). Teacher's Strategies in Teaching Speaking for Cadets. *English Education Journal*, 80–94.
- Murda, L. A. F., Flora, & Huzairin. (2020). *The Effectiveness of Collaborative Learning in Improving Students' Speaking Skill*.
- Nur Arafah. (2018). *Students' Process in Perceiving Feedback of Blended Learning Application*. 2011.
- Pratama, E. Y., & Awaliyah, Y. (2016). *Teacher's Strategies in Teaching Speaking to Young Learners Erik Yuda Pratama & Yani Awaliyah English Education Study Program Ibn Khaldun University of Bogor*. 19–31.
- Rini, S. (2016). Overview English asa Second Language for Young Learners. *Register*

- Journal*, 9(1), 52. <https://doi.org/10.18326/rgt.v9i1.52-59>
- Rosiana, R. U. (2019). *Fenomenologi Guru dalam Program Pembelajaran Bilingual di SD Islam Bilingual Annisa Semarang*.
- Sartipa, D. (2019). Talking Stick In Speaking Ability. *Edukasi Lingua Sastra*, 17(2), 159–164. <https://doi.org/10.47637/elsa.v17i2.48>
- Siswanto, A. (2017). *Teaching English to Young Learners: A Reflection Form Englaoshi Community*. *April*, 31–34. <https://doi.org/10.24176/03.3201.04>
- Sugiyono. (2013). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif dan R&D*. Alfabeta.
- Susiyanti, D. (2019). *Teachers' difficulties in teaching english as a foreign language at smk muhammadiyah 3 makassar*.
- Torky, S. A. E. F. (2006). *The Effectiveness of a Task- Based Instruction program in Developing the English Language Speaking Skills of Secondary Stage Students A thesis Supervised by*.
- Unal, M., & Ilhan, E. (2017). A Case Study on the Problems and Suggestions in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning at Higher Education. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 5(6), 64. <https://doi.org/10.11114/jets.v5i6.2302>
- Zhang, Q.-M. (2009). Affecting factors of Native-like Pronunciation: A Literature Review. *Korea Education & Research Institute*, 27(2), 33–52. <http://cau.ac.kr/~edusol/see/list/Vol27-2/CAKE027-002-4.pdf>