

INTEGRATING STRATEGY-BASED INSTRUCTIONS IN 7th-GRADE SPEAKING CLASSROOM AT SMP MUHAMMADIYAH 2 BATU

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ABSTRAK

Pembelajaran bahasa kedua (L2) dan penguasaan bahasa kedua (SLA) mengedepankan strategi belajar sebagai peran penting pembelajaran bahasa. Strategi belajar menjadi pondasi yang penting dalam pembelajaran dan penguasaan bahasa untuk membentuk pembelajar yang baik. Penelitian ini adalah pengabdian masyarakat dengan menerapkan *Strategy-Based Instructions* (SBI) pada sekolah menengah pertama Muhammadiyah 2 Malang. permasalahan siswa terhadap kemampuan berbicara bahasa Inggris disinyalir terdapat pada kurangnya pengetahuan terhadap strategi berkomunikasi lisan (*Oral Communication Strategies*) atau OCS. Karena itu peneliti mengimplementasikan SBI yang menggabungkan OCS dengan model metakognitif. Penelitian ini terdiri atas empat pertemuan dengan fokus sebagai berikut: (1) mengenalkan OCS dan model metakognitif, (2) melatih penggunaan strategi bantuan dan interaksi buatan menggunakan kegiatan percakapan, (3) menggunakan strategi luaran buatan dan strategi pemanfaatan waktu melalui kegiatan percakapan, (4) menggunakan strategi memperpanjang percakapan dan strategi menyelesaikan percakapan dengan kegiatan percakapan, penelitian ini diharapkan mampu memberikan praktik baik kepada guru dari sekolah mitra sebagai bagian dari peningkatan dan pengembangan profesionalisme mengajar.

Kata Kunci: *Strategy-based instruction*, strategi komunikasi lisan, pelatihan metakognitif, penelitian pengabdian masyarakat

ABSTRACT

Second language (L2) pedagogy and second language acquisition (SLA) have acknowledged the significant role of learning strategies. It, then, suggests the significance of learning strategies in second language learning or, even, acquisition, especially helping students be better learners. With regard to this, a community service project is proposed to implement this SBI in SMP Muhammadiyah 2 Malang. The students' problem in speaking ability seems to derive from lacks of knowledge about oral communication strategies (OCSs). Therefore, the project team plans to implement an SBI which is mostly the combination of OCSs and metacognitive model. The project implementation falls into four meeting with the focus described as follows (1) Introducing OCSs and metacognitive training model, (2) Employing help-seeking strategies and modified interaction strategies through conversation tasks, (3) Employing modified output strategies and time-gaining strategies through conversation tasks and (4) Employing maintenance strategies and self-solving strategies through conversation tasks. This project is expected to give best practice to the English teachers of partner school as a part of teaching professionalism improvement and development.

Keywords: *strategy-based instruction*, oral communication strategies, metacognitive training, community service project

Introduction

Learning Community

A preliminary research was conducted to understand contextual aspects of a particular learning community (a partner school) and issues on English teaching and learning faced by the school as well. The learning community being discussed here is SMP Muhammadiyah 2 Batu. As known from its name, the school serves secondary level of education, particularly junior high one. The school, which is situated in Sidomulyo Sub-District of Batu, has more or less 150 students in three different levels, namely 7th, 8th and 9th grades. Each grade is divided into two sections (A and B). Therefore, there are six classrooms in total with more or less 25 students for each class. These students learn English as a compulsory subject as regulated by the national curriculum used in the school. The national curriculum, employed by the school, is *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan* (KTSP) which promotes Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as the recommended teaching principles to English teaching and learning since the curriculum is designed and developed within theme-based and skill-based frameworks. Implementing English teaching and learning, the school hires two English teachers with relevant education background. These teachers have been teaching English in the school for more than 5 years. In terms of sharing teaching work, they split themselves to teach the 7th-grade and 8th-grade classes and work together to teach 9th-grade ones.

As the focus of the project is on the 7th grade, the preliminary research specifically explored the problems or issues faced by the students and the teacher of this particular class with regard to English teaching and learning. It shows

that both the students and the teacher still face some problems and issues related to English teaching and learning.

The first problem is that teaching English in this particular school is likely to be challenging since the students' proficiency is low in general. The teacher needs to struggle over the curriculum demand and students' proficiency. It is not unsurprising that their proficiency is low. The school location turns to be the main reason for students' proficiency. By location, it means that, in such a remote area, it is understandable that the students will have limited access to develop independent learning (internet connection, books, and etc), teachers with good qualifications, low motivation, and etc. Another reason is that 7th-grade students seem to be in adaptation process, especially with reference to learning English, as they did not necessarily learn English when they were at Elementary school. The current curriculum does not require elementary-school students to learn English as a compulsory subject. Therefore, they

The second problem is the students' confidence in Speaking using English. The teacher stated that his students' motivations are regarded as good, but they do not seem to be confident with their own performance in speaking. They seem to be afraid of making mistakes, especially in terms grammatical ones. In addition, the teacher feels that lack of vocabulary might also hinder the students' performance in speaking. It is strongly related to the point being discussed in the previous paragraph regarding low proficiency. As the result of this problem, communication breakdowns are likely to happen whenever the students perform conversation tasks. In this regard, both the

students and the teacher agree to work on giving the speaking problem as the main focus for the project after considering the urgency and practicality aspects of the problem and the project being carried out.

In accordance to the speaking problems, the preliminary research also shows that the teacher never teaches some speaking or oral communication strategies to help the students manage the communication breakdowns. This opens the first initiation of the project to propose strategy-based instruction (SBI) to help the problems faced by both the students and the teacher. To conclude, both project team and the teacher formulate the list of problems in the speaking classrooms of the 7th grade at SMP Muhammadiyah 2 Batu. The list covers:

- a. The teachers' lack of knowledge about the SBI or learning strategies
- b. The students' lack of knowledge about and experience in SBI and learning strategies
- c. The syllabus which does not promote or suggest SBI in the speaking class
- d. The assumption that strategies cannot be taught and should be developed by the students themselves
- e. Limited evaluation or feedback given to students

Problem Justification

As previously mentioned, the preliminary research has been conducted to formulate and prioritize the problem faced by English teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 2 Batu. The students of Grade 7A have problems in using oral English during conversation task. Five items have been identified as the factors of the problem. The problem prioritization and factor identification are based on the preliminary research. The research covers

classroom observation, interview with the English teachers, and discussion. The first stage of the research was the interview with the English teachers. It is conducted to gain information of any problems faced by the teachers. The results of the interview are two points being discussed in the Section 1 of this chapter. Secondly, classroom observation is performed to prove and provide triangulation of the problem. One-day observation results in confirmation of what have been said by the teachers. Lastly, the discussion between English teachers and project team is held to prioritize the problem based on the needs of the school and the urgency of PPDS project. Eventually, both sides agree to work on SBI modelled by lecturers in four meetings to address speaking problems in particularly conversation tasks. In addition, choosing the specific class as the subject of this project, Grade 7A which consists of 24 students, is also decided during the discussion phase.

Strategy-Based Instruction

Second language (L2) pedagogy and second language acquisition (SLA) have acknowledged the significant role of learning strategies (Rubin, 1975). More proficient L2 learners are believed to have special learning techniques or strategies which are different from less proficient ones. McDonough (1995) and Cohen and Macaro (2007) posit that learners' strategies behavior is positively correlated with their learning results. It, then, suggests the significance of learning strategies in second language learning or, even, acquisition, especially helping students be better learners.

Further, some scholars have made categorizations of L2 learning strategies. Among all of them, Oxford and

Bury-Stock (1995) introduce six categories of the strategies, namely (1) memory strategies, (2) cognitive strategies, (3) compensation strategies, (4) metacognitive strategies, (5) affective strategies and (6) social strategies. These strategies have been found to be commonly used by L2 learners to improve their language skills. Particularly in improving speaking ability, Nakatani (2005) has formulated all the findings of previous studies on learning strategies used to improve communication skill and the categorizations made by Oxford and Bury-Stock (1995) into a set of oral communication strategies (OCSs). His OCSs involve (1) help-seeking strategies, (2) modified interaction strategies, (3) modified output strategies, (4) time-gaining strategies, (5) maintenance strategies and (6) self-solving strategies. These strategies are intended to help learners deal with potential communication breakdowns in conversation.

Help-seeking strategies allow learners to ask for the interlocutor's assistance in the conversation. It usually happens when learners have lack of target language knowledge which likely causes potential communication breakdowns. In this case, there are two types of strategies, namely appeal for help (*I'm sorry I don't understand*) and asking for repetition (*I beg your pardon*) (Nakatani, 2005).

Modified interaction strategies provide learners with ways to signal negotiation to their interlocutors when they face communication difficulties. These strategies fall into confirmation checks (*my reservation no? no bargain?*), comprehension checks (*Do you see?*) and clarification requests (*why? What do you mean*) (Nakatani, 2005).

Modified output strategies allow learners to rephrase their utterance or expressions as a response to negotiation signal from their interlocutor. These strategies offer space for learners to repair their utterance.

Customer : 10 o'clock? I heard 9 o'clock.
 Travel agent : Which one? Pardon?
 Customer : *I heard the flight time is 9 o'clock.* (Nakatani, 2005)

Time-gaining strategies keep the channel of conversation open. Learners can be taught to use fillers (*Well, let me see ...*) and filled pauses (*oh..., umm...*) in order to keep the communication going. These strategies are also good at giving some time for learners to think of specific vocabulary, grammar, or other language items upon producing response or utterances (Nakatani, 2005).

Maintenance strategies are strategies used to maintain conversation by giving positive active response and shadowing.

Positive active response

Customer: *Really?*
 Customer: *I see, OK.* (Nakatani, 2005)

Shadowing

Travel agent : We have a bargain tour for four days.
 Customer : *Four days. Ah. . . OK.* (Nakatani, 2005)

Self-solving strategies are always used when learners have some communication problems due to their lack of target language knowledge. Overcoming the situations, they do not rely on their interlocutors. Instead, they can do paraphrase, approximation, and restructuring.

Paraphrase: Trying to explain the word *harbour*

Customer: *the place for ships . . . like bay (instead of harbor)*

Approximation of the word *accept*

Customer : Do you *available* travelers' check?

Restructuring of request

Customer : *May I see . . . sorry, can I use travelers' check?*
(Nakatani, 2005)

In addition to OCSs, Nakatani (2005) also suggests that metacognitive strategies training can improve the effectiveness of OCSs use. Metacognitive strategies are significant in planning, monitoring and evaluating learners' own learning or use of strategies (Brown, 2001; Rubin, 2005). In this regard, metacognitive strategies raise learners' awareness of OCSs use in their performance. Saputro (2008) provides evidence of the effectiveness of metacognitive training in rising learners' awareness of OCSs and improving speaking performance. In short, the combination of OCSs and metacognitive strategies are likely to cope with learners' problem in having conversation or even improve their communication skills in L2.

In short, the teaching of OCSs using the metacognitive model / SBI model serves as the core idea of the whole project. In this regard, OCSs cover:

- a. Help-seeking strategies
- b. Modified interaction strategies
- c. Modified output strategies
- d. Time-gaining strategies
- e. Maintenance strategies
- f. Self-solving strategies

In addition to OCSs, the metacognitive model is proposed as the framework to teach OCSs. Teaching OCSs and

metacognitive strategies in L2 classroom is not impossible. Most of the time L2 teachers seek for model or framework in teaching strategies. In response to it, Chamot et al. (1999) provides a practical model or framework of strategy-based instruction (SBI) which can be integrated to current curriculum in any context without necessarily challenge it (Chamot, 2005). The metacognitive model falls into some stages:

- a. Preparation
- b. Presentation
- c. Practice
- d. Evaluation

The OCSs and metacognitive training using the above framework are proposed for this PPDS project. This project addresses the contextual problem faced by both teachers and students and is expected to provide best practice to the English teachers of SMP Muhammadiyah 2 Batu so as to improve and develop their teaching professionalism.

Method Implementing Strategy-Based Instruction

This project follows FTTE's 2015 Research and Community Service project regulations. The PPDS project requires FTTE's lecturers to teach a subject relevant to their professional background in a partner school (an elementary or secondary school) to share their innovation and best practices in teaching methods or techniques. The lecturers, in this case, are expected to give an example of teaching English using proposed technique or method directly in the classroom for four meetings. These four-meeting implementations are the medium of transferring both theoretical and practical knowledge of best teaching practice.

1. Project Procedure

The procedure of the project is described as follows:

- a. The project team conducts a preliminary research to SMP Muhammadiyah 2 Batu to gain information about the contextual problems faced by the English teachers and also about school condition for situation analysis.
- b. The project team discusses the results of the preliminary research with the English teachers of SMP Muhammadiyah 2 Batu to eventually come to an agreement of the prioritized problems. They serve as the focus of the project.
- c. The project team writes the PPDS project proposal to FTTE. The proposal is to be presented in front of the board of reviewers, and, thus, revised based on the feedback of the reviewers.
- d. The project team performs implementation stage at the partner

school. The implementation, as noted previously, falls into four meetings of teaching and learning process (the details of the meeting are described in Section 4). In this stage, the project team also carries out some research to meet the expectation of FTTE for journal publication and to fulfil what have been written in Target and Output Section,

- e. The project team writes the report of this project and submits it to FTTE. This report is to be presented in front of the board of examiners and, thus, revised based on their feedback.
- f. The project team also writes up their research findings and published them to relevant publishers.

2. Details of Plan

As the project requires the project team to implement the PPDS program in four meetings, the detailed plan of the project is described as follows:

Meeting	Description
1	The focus of the first meeting is to introduce OCSs and <u>metacognitive training</u> (SBI framework) to the students. Some tasks are also designed and developed to not only give theoretical, but also practical knowledge of OCSs and <u>metacognitive training</u> . Further, students are expected to ask questions if they are not sure about the materials being taught.
2	This meeting is the start of the integration of SBI in Speaking classroom based on KTSP. The lesson plan for this particular meeting is designed to facilitate two types of OCSs (namely help-seeking strategies and modified interaction strategies) within <u>metacognitive training</u> through accomplishing conversation tasks. The conversation tasks are to be relevant to the competence standard and basic competence of KTSP.
3	This meeting is the continuation of the first meeting in which the lesson plan is designed to facilitate modified output strategies and time-gaining strategies within <u>metacognitive training</u> through accomplishing conversation tasks. The conversation tasks are to be relevant to the competence standard and basic competence of KTSP.
4	This meeting is the last meeting in which the lesson plan is designed to facilitate maintenance strategies and self-solving strategies within <u>metacognitive training</u> through accomplishing conversation tasks. The conversation tasks are to be relevant to the competence standard and basic competence of KTSP. In this meeting, there is also a session to evaluate the project in general. The session involves project team, English teachers, and the students of Grade 7A.

3. Teachers' Role and Participation

The partner school in this project is mainly the subject of the project, particularly English teachers and the students of Grade 7A. However, this project expects more roles and participations of the partner school to support the project. The expected participations of the partner school are as follows:

- a. Providing accommodation (classroom, LCD and screen, and etc) for the projects (English teachers and partner school)
- b. Monitoring the project implementation (English teachers)
- c. Engaging in the project implementation (English teachers)
- d. Evaluating the project implementation (English teachers and partner school)

Result

Implementing Strategy-Based Instruction in the junior high school resulted in several changes in the strategy of oral production of the students. The changes mostly affected by the new strategies implemented by the students in dealing with their weakness on prolonging conversation and also their confidence in talking. Based on the analysis, the result of the research can be elaborated into stages to illuminate the conduct happened on each metacognitive stages. The model and the explanations of each stage are as follows:

1. Preparation

In this stage, the opportunity to activate background knowledge in terms of what strategies to cope with communication difficulties when talking to someone else in L2 in a conversation are given to the students. The teacher has the role as the facilitator and a form of

discussion is applied to elicit the students' current use of strategies. The conduct started by directly asking the students what they usually do when they are trapped in the situation leading to the communication breakdown in a conversation. Afterwards, the teacher let the discussion flow until all the students have expressed their ideas regarding their current use of strategy. Every student's responses are not considered as right or wrong in this stage. Then, the teacher gave the students the follow up question about the effectiveness of their current use of the strategies. Similar treatment to the first question, the students are free to express their idea. During the discussion, the teacher identified the students' current use of the strategies and what they feel about the effectiveness of the strategies. The information gained from the discussion is significant for the teacher in determining a change on the students' strategies to the teacher's proposed strategy, or treat the teacher's proposed strategy as the additional learning strategies since every individual have different strategies that are effective, less effective, or ineffective in coping with the communication breakdown.

2. Presentation

In this stage, the teacher became the source of knowledge and model, and explained the characteristics, usefulness, and the implementation of the strategies. The teacher also modelled the use of the strategies by performing a conversation with one of the students and thinking aloud the process of using the strategies, and played a little game with the students recalling the strategy modelled by the teacher. The modelling helps the students to picture themselves using the strategies in a conversation and aware of their cognitive ability.

Moreover, the teacher also introduced, explained, and modelled the student's journal to understand their strategy in later activity. The information of whether or not the students implement the strategies and the strategies work effectively on the students can be taken from this student's journal. The teacher needed to harness 20 minutes for this stage effectively by giving clear explanation, model, and discussion so that the students know what the strategies and the journal are, why they should implement them, and how to implement them.

3. Practice

After obtaining all the information about the strategy use and visualizing themselves using the given strategies, the students practiced new learning strategies with the task or conversation. The students given the task in this classroom integration in the form of conversation, then the teachers asked the students to practice a conversation in pair. Afterwards, a clear instruction and context in regard to the conversation was well explained by the teacher. The conversation requires one of the students to act as the tourist who just arrives in Malang, Indonesia to see a cultural exhibition while the other as the Malang native who is aware of the cultural exhibition. In the scenario, the tourist forgets the place in which the exhibition takes place, and, thus, decides to ask the native. After that, the native told the exhibition place, how to get to the place. Finishing the conversation in a session, the students next swapped the role to perform another session of the conversation with the same context. Following the scenario, the students interacted with their partner as the interlocutor. They are given only one minute to prepare their conversation practice in order to minimize the possibility

that the students and their partner write their dialogue. In this stage, the students applied the strategies in order to accomplish the tasks with minimum occurrence of communication breakdowns. Whenever they are stuck due to their lack of knowledge of the target language, they are expected to negotiate meaning by using the help-seeking strategy and modified output strategy.

After performing the second conversation, the students answered the questions in their journal. The student's journals described the effectiveness of the strategies on supporting the students' communication.

During the practice stage, the teacher acted his/her role as the facilitator. The teacher walked around the class to monitor the students' performance and helped the students regarding the task accomplishment and strategy use. The reinforcement of the strategy use was done by reminding the students to apply the help-seeking strategy and modified output strategy.

4. Evaluation

In this stage, the students self-evaluated their performance and strategy use during the practice session, and by doing this, the students developed their metacognitive awareness of their learning process as it is important in maintaining the effectiveness of the strategies in the future. In this proposed integration students evaluated themselves by making use of the record and writing their evaluation in their journal. Further, the students discussed their performance with their partner of interlocutor in the previous conversation. The feedback from their partner or interlocutor gave a meaningful insight for the students on the effectiveness of the strategy use since their partner can really

see the performance during the interaction process. At the end, the students decided whether or not the strategies work effectively for them to overcome their difficulties in communication.

Discussion

In a positive point of view, based on the result, integrating Strategy-Based Instruction is evidenced improving the students' strategy in conducting L2 conversation as it proposed on its function. But, in another perspective, while it is suggested that the students are replicating the strategies, the students are mostly copying the strategies without further modification to show higher critical thinking. It is previously assumed that copying will be in parallel to the background and the initial state of the students, and also related to the conduct of teaching and learning from the school, but there is an expectation that the students will be able to further improving the strategies in deeper understanding. Yet, integrating SBI in 7 grade students is considered as a successful trait as there are evidences of improvements of the way the students involve themselves in the conversation such as the students are able to ask for reinforcement, the students are able to use strategy such as time-gaining, the students are asking for detail, the students are able to show understanding on the topic of the conversation, students are able to prolong the conversation in L2, and students are able to produce a comprehensible output.

Acknowledges

The acknowledgement regarding financial supports is given to the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of University of Muhammadiyah Malang

through the blockgrant project, while the acknowledgement regarding the cooperation in data collection is given to SMP Muhammadiyah 2 Batu.

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