Strengthening Non-English Teachers' Ability in Using English as Instructional Language

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to prove the effectiveness of communicative approach to strengthen non-English teachers' speaking ability in using English as their instructional language. The study was carried out at SD Lab-school FIP UMJ, South Tangerang in the even semester of 2023/2024 academic year. There were 30 teachers of all grades participated in this study. This research was mixed-methods with statistics descriptive approach. Both speaking pre-post tests and observation were used in collecting the data. The results of the tests were analyzed by using simple calculation and reported in the form of average score. Meanwhile, the results of the observation were described descriptively. The findings of the quantitative approach revealed that on the average the learners performed better in the post-test and their average score escalated up to 22.17 points from the pre-test. Whereas the results of the observation as part of qualitative approach showed that the learners were able to manage their speaking problems better in which they became more confident, had more vocabularies and were able to construct proper sentences. To conclude, this research work confirmed that communicative approach was effective to strengthen non-English teachers' speaking ability.

Keywords: communicative approach, teaching method, speaking ability

ABSTRAK

Studi ini bertujuan untuk membuktikan efektivitas dari pendekatan komunikatif untuk memperkuat kemampuan berbicara bahasa Inggris guru non-bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa pengantar instruksional. Studi ini dilakukan di SD Lab-school FIP UMJ, Tangerang Selatan, pada semester genap tahun akademik 2023/2024. Terdapat 30 orang guru dari semua jenjang kelas berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian campuran dengan desain statistik deskriptif. Uji berbicara sebelum dan sesudah serta observasi digunakan sebagai alat pengumpul data. Hasil dari uji berbicara dianalisis melalui hitungan sederhana yang disajikan dalam nilai rerata. Sedangkan hasil observasi sebagai bagian dari metode kualitatif, dideskripsikan secara deskriptif. Hasil analisis kuantitatif menunjukkan bahwa peserta melakukan performa speaking yang lebih baik pada uji setelah penelitian dimana nilai rerata mereka meningkat sampai dengan 22,17 poin dari hasil capaian pada saat uji sebelum. Sementara itu, hasil dari observasi menunjukkan bahwa peserta mampu mengatur kesulitan yang mereka hadapi ketika berbicara bahasa Inggris dengan baik dimana mereka menjadi lebih percaya diri, memiliki lebih banyak kosakata dan mampu membangun kalimat dengan lebih tepat. Sebagai kesimpulan, penelitian ini mengkonfirmasi bahwa pendekatan komunikatif efektif dalam memperkuat kemampuan berbahasa Inggris guru non-bahasa Inggris.

Kata kunci: pendekatan komunikatif, metode pengajaran, kemampuan berbicara

INTRODUCTION

In this current globalization era, English is undoubtedly needed by almost all professions as well as teachers of non-English subject. In Indonesia, where English is taught as a foreign language, becomes one of compulsory subjects should be taught in all levels of education starting from early childhood education until higher study.

Thus, mastering this subject for non-English teachers is also required since at Elementary level particularly, students in each of the class are taught by one teacher called 'home-room' teacher who handles all subjects. Mampuono (2022) said that English as an international language holds significant role in various fields of life to gain new skills and develop knowledge and technology. This opinion is intended to all people without classifying their jobs or professions.

Based on the pre-liminary study conducted by the researchers at SD Lab-school FIP UMJ, it was found that majority of the teachers still have low proficiency in English, especially in Speaking skill. There were several causes shared by the teachers, including: low self-confidence, lack of vocabulary, lack of practice, unsupportive environment, limited English knowledge since most of the teachers did not graduate from English major.

Referring to these findings, the researchers intended to hold an English in-house-program for these teachers focusing on improving their speaking proficiency that at least can support their daily instructional activities through the employment of Communicative Approach (CA). Samad & Kafryawan (2021) cited Chamod (1990) argued that adult learners who are more strategic will have higher sense of confidence and or self-efficacy in their language learning. In the same vein, Dolati & Maousavi (2014) claimed that effective language learners are aware of the importance on using strategy in becoming competent speaker since the strategy used is the instrument for self-directed, active involvement in developing their communicative competence.

According to Jabeen (2014), as the objective of language teaching is to make the learners be successful in communicative skills, teaching them English by employing communicative approach becomes pivotal. Further she added that in this approach, a variety of activities such as role playing, dialogue, pair work, group work, and others speaking practices are important to be designed by the teachers to encourage the learners to use the language they learnt based on the context.

Despite its limitations, Qasserras (2023) who used the term 'communicative language teaching' (CLT) to refer to 'communicative approach gathered the data from previous research and reported that this approach enhanced students' language proficiency, critical thinking, communicative competence, problem solving skills and promoted learner autonomy.

In line with this research result, Misliyadi (2023) also found that adopting communicative approach empowered students with effective speaking skills that will support their future professional and academic endeavors. Communicative approach creates learning model to understand grammar in building spoken sentences fluently and properly based on the context (Suemith, 2011).

There was a plethora of prior studies which discussed communicative approach in teaching speaking skills, however, the ones that involved non-English in-service teachers were still scarce. Therefore, the researchers were intended to fill this discrepancy to strengthen non-English teachers' ability in using English as instructional language. This research work was

led by the research question: "How effective communicative approach is in strengthening non-English teachers' ability in using English as instructional language?" The researchers believe that this study will give positive contribution to the theories of EFL especially in terms of teaching approach in speaking skills. Besides, this study might also give new insights to non-English teachers on how to improve their English to support their professional development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research applied mixed-methods with descriptive statistics research design. Descriptive statistics, as explained by Muñoz (2024) focuses on describing data from the chosen sample which can be classified into ordinal, nominal or numerical variables. It is a kind of method that visualizes, organizes, and presents data informally and meaningfully.

This research was carried out in the even semester of 2023/2024 academic year for 12 meetings at SD Lab-school FIP UMJ, South Tangerang. There were 30 Elementary teachers of all grades participated in this study. In collecting the data, both speaking pre-test and post-test were administered to measure these in service teachers' progress before and after the experiment. Besides, the researchers also used observation to elaborate their data analysis. All the results of these two tests were analyzed through simple computation and presented in the average score, while the observation results were descriptively described to strengthen the quantitative findings.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study were referred to the speaking tests' outcomes achieved by the learners in the pre-test and in the post-test. The following Table 1 presents those outcomes:

Table 1. Learners' speaking pre-test and post-test

Score	Pre-test	Post-test
Total	1730	2395
Average	57.66	79.83
Progress	up to 22.17	

From Table 1 above, in the pre-test, total score gained by the learners was 1730 with the average of 57.66, whereas in the post-test, total score hit by them was 2395 with the average score of 79.83. These results indicated that the learners performed much better in the post-test or after they were trained by using communicative approach. The achievement reached in the post-test was 22.17 higher than the pre-test.

These findings were in line with the research results of Gutierrez-Heras and Camino (2022) who reported that students' speaking achievement improved in their experimental research of implementing communicative approach.

Based on the researchers' observation, majority of the learners had problem with their self-confidence. This affected their speaking performance in which they were shy, tended to keep silent in the middle of their speech, and even ended their talks in a very short time. Ananda & Hastini (2023) found in their study that self-confidence was one of the biggest factors affecting students' speaking performance. This unconfident was found by them caused by several factors including: feeling afraid of making mistakes, having limited vocabulary, lack of grammar, shyness, nervousness, feeling under-pressure and uncomfortable, and feeling insecurities when their friends had better performance.

The second problem the learners had in terms of speaking was in vocabulary mastery. Most of them relied on their friends' help to tell them

English words when they performed their speaking tests. Amalia & Anggraeni (2021) also found in their study that one of the major issues faced by the students in speaking was limited vocabulary. They said that the students were easy to get bored in memorizing English words, besides the students also felt difficult to memorize the words not in their native language.

The third issue faced by the learners was grammar. Most of them still did not know how build grammatically sentences, especially in terms of tenses. Similar to this issue, Soreh, Pelenkahu, Muntuuntu (2022) also invented linguistic problems as students' challenges in speaking English, and one them was poor grammar in which the students were not able to construct English sentences accurately.

The three challenges faced by the learners above were able to be minimized in their post-test in which they had better self-confidence, more vocabularies and were able to build English sentences properly. This was because they enjoyed while learning through various communicative activities facilitated by the researchers, such as building dialogue, role-playing, discussing, and doing brief presentation.

CONCLUSION

The effectiveness of communicative approach employed in this research was proven by better performance of the learners in the post-test in which they achieved higher average score compare to the one in the pre-test, up to 22.17 points. Besides, the results of the observation also supported these findings in which the learners became more confident, had more vocabularies and were able to construct sentences properly in the post-test.

Due to several limitations in this research, the researchers suggest further studies to add more variables to get wider insights such as learners' prior knowledge of English, learning styles, and or learning motivation. Therefore, the increasing of the learners' speaking ability might also be caused by some other factors.

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