

## Teachers' Strategies to Improve Students' Self-Confidence in Speaking

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<a href="mailto:listyani@staff.uksw.edu">listyani@staff.uksw.edu</a>	<i>Speaking become one of the important skills among other skills such as listening, reading and writing. However, some students felt not confident to deliver words or sentences in English. The purpose of this study was to find teachers' strategies to improve students' self confidence in speaking at SMK 1 and SMK 2 in Tamiang Layang. This study used qualitative study. All data were analyzed qualitatively. Instruments used were interview questions and observation protocol. In this study, there are no statistical calculations. Participants' ideas, feelings, and stories were accommodated and then analyzed descriptively. The participants were four teachers from two different schools which are SMK 1 and SMK 2 in Central Borneo, Indonesia. Data were audio-recorded, then transcribed. After the transcription, themes were then drawn based on the transcribed interviews. Participants' statements which answered the research questions were highlighted and coded or classified according to certain topics. Those data were analyzed to answer the research questions in this study. Based on the findings, there was found four strategies that the four teachers used in speaking class activity. Those strategies are role-play, small group discussion, storytelling, and songs. These strategies were very helpful to encourage students' self confidence in speaking, because each strategy giving a chance for students to practice speaking. Besides that, the advantages that students got from those, help students increase their vocabulary and pronunciation, build an interaction between passive and active students, and make the class more fun and not boring.</i>

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays English has an important role in this era and become an International language. Many people use English to communicate and have a good relationship with people from many other countries. Learning English in our life has thus become a necessity. When learning English, it is important for us to master the four English skills such as listening, speaking, writing, and reading. There are many other components that also support the process of learning English, such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, and some others. Nonetheless, speaking is one among other important skills that needs to be mastered in learning English, since this skill is needed in oral communication with other speakers of English all around the globe.

As highlighted above, speaking skill is very useful in communication. However, the fact shows that in learning English, some people lack confidence to deliver sentences in a spoken way, and most of them think that speaking skill is harder than other skills. According to Dincer & Yesilyurt (2017) speaking skill is considered as one of difficult skills among the other four skills (writing, speaking, listening, and reading). This raises a special concern for some researchers and ways to make students get more interested in and improve their speaking are often suggested.

In spite of the fact that speaking is important for students in practicing their capability to produce words, sentences, or ideas in English, there are barriers that may demotivate students in speaking such as lack of confidence, feeling of anxiety, difficulty to express sentences appropriately, and some other problems. It is clear that there are some problems encountered by students in speaking. One of the problems is students' lack of confidence in expressing words, sentences or ideas in English.

According to Tuan & Mai (2015), the first problem is inhibition. Students often feel unsecured when they try to express something in a foreign language. They are afraid to make errors in speaking, get bad comments, or feel embarrassed and scared when people are looking at them while they speak. Melendez et al (2014) assert that students with low proficiency level of English have their own characters like feeling anxious while speaking, sweating, becoming silent whenever the teacher asks them to speak, or even starting to cry due to loss of the words.

In the case of students' lack of confidence, teachers have an important role to find effective strategies to motivate students who lack confidence. It is challenging to find because there are many problems that appear from the students. If the students are demotivated in speaking due to lack of confidence, their learning process will be affected.

It is important for the teachers to find the right strategies in developing students' speaking skill especially for their future careers. Kuivamaki (2015) says that in vocational schools, English is needed for their future such as social and healthcare fields, customer service and have a good speaking skill for business and administration. Based on the importance of enhancing students' speaking skills in learning English, a piece of research on this matter was done. We perceived the need to share the ways some vocational school teachers implemented in helping their students' speaking skill improve.

Data were gathered through some interviews with the teachers and an observation conducted in some classes at SMK 1 and SMK 2 in Tamiang Layang, Central Borneo, Indonesia. We chose those schools because we were interested to do the research outside of Java, which surely give new insights and knowledge about schools in that area.

Based on the students' problems in speaking, this study is aimed at finding the teachers' strategies in motivating students who lacked confidence in speaking. The strategies were a great help to encourage students revealing words, sentences or ideas in their own way and made them feel confident to speak out everything in their mind.

Then the research question that will be answered in this study is: *What are teachers' strategies to overcome students' lack of confidence in speaking English in vocational school?*

Hopefully, the results of this study can be beneficial for the students to gain more confidence in speaking and very helpful for them in the future to improve their level of speaking. It is hopefully also useful for the teachers to implement the strategies in their classes whose students have similar problems.

### ***Speaking Skill***

There are a lot of definitions of speaking that have been suggested by experts in language learning. According to Afsar and Asakereh (2016), speaking is an important skill that needs to be developed as for EFL/ESL students in enhancing successful communication in various contexts.

Another opinion comes from Kusri (2012), who defines speaking as a process in oral communication that includes between the speaker and listener to share information. In the same way, Inayah (2015) supports this idea. She says that speaking is the central language skills to be improved for language learners. From the experts' definitions above, it can be concluded that speaking is a process of communication that requires to be developed to build a successful learning.

### ***The Importance of Speaking***

In learning English, we need to master the four skills such as reading, speaking, listening and writing. Among these four skills (reading, speaking, listening and writing), speaking seems to be an important skill to show how we can use the language effectively in a conversation. According to Leong and Ahmadi (2017), speaking as a significant skill that needs an ability to carry out the informations in a conversation. Similarly, Al-Roud (2016) asserts that speaking is the most important skill in the language to build communication between people effectively.

Another opinion comes from Derakhshan et al (2016), saying that among four skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) speaking becomes an important part in communication. In short, speaking is an essential skill that concerns more about how people use the language to encourage a good communication one to another.

### ***Problems in Speaking***

In mastering the speaking skill in English, there are some problems that may appear in the mastering process. For example, Afisa (2015) mentions a factor that makes students feel anxious to speak English, that is, when they find it difficult to use words appropriately. Normawati and Muna (2015) also assert that the obstacles faced by students in speaking activities are inability to deliver words and feel shy when speaking. The other similar factor comes from Ibrahim. He says that *“lack of self-confidence can be thought under the both titles of psychological and attitudinal barriers that makes learner hard to speak in foreign language and even in mother tongue”* (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 15). As a result, there are some factors that affect students in speaking such as anxiety, low of confidence, shyness, and difficult to express words, ideas or sentences in appropriate way.

### ***Self-Confidence***

Kanza mentions her idea about self-confidence. She says that *“Generally, self-confidence is someone's feeling of trusting and believing in his/her abilities to do things in successful*

way”(Kanza, 2015, p. 24). We cannot deny that in learning fields, self-confidence has an important role in learning process to be successful. Self-confidence is also important in developing speaking skill. According to Kanza (2015), self-confidence becomes one of the key factor in enhancing speaking skill through presentation because with this factor, the speaker can deliver their opinions or ideas clearly. Jamila (2014) argues that unmotivated learners who lack confidence and have high level of anxiety cannot achieve their goals in speaking skill. Thus, self-confidence is the key to achieve the goal in encouraging speaking skill.

### ***Teachers’ Strategies to Enhance Students’ Speaking Skills***

When a teacher teaches speaking in class, it is expected that good teaching strategies would be the key to reach successful teaching. Anjaniputra (2013) states that teaching strategies are the factors that can influence the teaching of speaking class. Derakhshan (2015) also says that new strategies can be used for teachers to develop the ESL learners in communication and speech without feel under pressure. Imane also support this idea. He mentions that “*Strategies often help learners to avoid the failure in the oral communication and psychological aspects that obstacle their speaking performance*” (Imane, 2015, p. 11).

In order to encourage students in speaking, teachers can use *role-play*. According to Siwi (2014), role play is an alternative strategy enhancing students in their speaking skill. Kucuker (2004) argue that role play takes a lot of time such as in preparation, practice, and assessment. However, role play can be useful to enhance students’ speaking skills.

Another strategy come from Rokni & Qarajeh (2014). *Storytelling* is also a technique that can help students develop their speaking ability. However, Gafu & Badea (2011) remind teachers that storytelling should not always be used for the speaking activity in the class because this can make the students feel unexcited.

Meanwhile, Argawati (2014) suggests a different strategy. She argues that *small group discussion* also has an important role to improve students’ speaking skill and increase their vocabulary. Another strategy is suggested by Romero et al. They say teachers can also use *songs* as a strategy for speaking class. They mention that, “*In fact, they have used songs as a resource to develop communicative abilities properly in a foreign language, providing students with the*

*opportunity to talk with confidence and giving teachers the chance to teach in a fun way”* (Romero et al, 2012, p.12).

Teachers can also use *technology* as a medium to encourage students in speaking. According to Wu et al (2011), the use Computer-Mediated Communicator (CMC) is beneficial to improve speaking skill when we communicate with native speaker. Not only technology, but also *collaborative learning* also has an important role in speaking. Al-tamimi (2014) also supports collaborative learning an efficient way to develop speaking skill and build a positive students' attitude. Therefore, teachers' strategies becomes an essential tools to be successful in speaking skill.

#### *Previous Studies on Strategies to Improve Students' Self Confidence in Speaking*

There are some previous studies that investigated about strategies to improve students' self confidence in speaking. This related study comes from Askia, Manurung and Wahyudin (2016). Research was conducted in SMP Negeri 1 Dako Pemean. Their study was aimed to examine how active learning strategy could enhance students in speaking. The method of this study used pre-experimental design. The result of their study showed that the researchers tried to use active learning strategy to see improvement the students in speaking. To encourage students more active in speaking, the researchers used some technique. There are small group discussion, games and drama.

Grisales and Cruz (2017) also have a similar study related with different strategies. This study was conducted in Public School in Ibague, Columbia. The aim of this study was to see how podcasting language learning strategy and collaborative learning improved the tenth graders in their speaking skill. The method of the study used qualitative approach. Results showed that those language learning strategies mentioned above helped the students improve their self-confidence, self-esteem, and their learning development. Podcasting made students comfortable to perform and enhance their speaking skill. The last finding is collaborative learning this strategy involved students to be active in a discussion, this also developed students in speaking skill.

Another study came from Alam & Uddin (2013). This study was conducted in a rural context in Karachi, Pakistan. The aim of this study to was to improve students' oral communication (OCSs) in Lower Secondary Public School in Karachi by integrating lessons with the National Curriculum for English Language (NCEL) 2006. Qualitative research method

was used by the researchers. They found that strategies like demonstration, role-play and discussion gave benefits in improving students in speaking.

To conclude all of the previous studies discussed in this section, there are some strategies to encourage students' self confidence in speaking such as group discussions, games, role-play, collaborative learning, podcasting, language learning strategies, and demonstration. Those strategies can be successfully implemented in learning language, especially in speaking skill.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### *The Context of the study*

The research was conducted in April 2018 in two vocational schools, which are SMK 1 and SMK 2 of Tamiang Layang, Central Borneo, Indonesia. These schools used the National K-13 for the curriculum . The number of students in one class was fifteen students. This study was aimed at finding teachers' strategies in motivating students who lacked confidence in speaking.

### *Participants*

To get the data, we conducted interviews with four English teachers in two vocational schools in Tamiang Layang, which were SMK 1 and SMK 2. The four teachers were female and each teacher had been taught English for eight years when the study was done. We selected two English teachers from each school.

### *Methodology*

As the issue is about teachers' strategies to improve students' self confidence in speaking, we used the method of qualitative study with semi-structured interviews. We chose this method because we needed different kinds of in-depth information and experiences from the teachers about their strategies to develop students' self confidence in speaking class.

### *Data Collection Instruments*

In this study we used the interview protocols. The type of the interviews was semi-structured. There are five questions using Indonesian language to ask the four participants. The questions were related to teachers' strategies to encourage students in speaking. An audio-

recorder in a mobile phone was used to record the interviews. Data were then qualitatively analyzed.

#### *Data Collection Procedures*

For the data collection procedures, we interviewed four teachers from two different schools which were SMK 1 and SMK 2 of Tamiang Layang, Central Borneo. It was conducted in April and May 2018. We recorded the conversation with the participants and also took notes to obtain more detailed information.

#### *Data Analysis Procedures*

After finishing the data collection procedures from the interviews, we transcribed the data recording into the written text. After doing the transcribed the data, we classified, identified, and determined which themes to focus. The themes were drawn based on the strategies used by the four teachers. They are strategy 1 (roleplay), strategy 2 (small-group discussion), strategy 3 (storytelling) and strategy 4 (songs). These themes were arranged based on the strategy which was used by the least number of teachers, moving to the strategy used by more teachers.

*“Thematic analysis is a type of qualitative analysis. It is used to analyse classifications and present themes (patterns) that relate with the data. It illustrates the data in great detail and deals with diverse subjects via interpretation”*, says Ibrahim (2012), as by cited Boyatsis (1998, p. 40). It means that through thematic analysis, the themes could be obtained.

## **RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

In this section, we would like to explain the results of the interviews and observations with the teachers from two vocational schools which are SMK 1 and SMK 2 about their strategies in teaching speaking. In this study, there were four strategies that the teachers used to improve students' self-confidence in speaking. Those strategies are role-play, small group discussion, storytelling, and songs.

### **Strategy 1: Role Play**

The first strategy that the teacher used in speaking activity is role play. Actually, role play helps students in improving their speaking skill. Ardriyati (2009) also says role play is helpful to make students involved in speaking and build an interaction with each other.



In this activity, the teacher asked students to play a character then practice the dialogue with his or her pair. This excerpt below strengthens the benefit from role play:

*To encourage students in speaking, sometimes I asked students to do a role-play in class. This activity can also help the students to increase their vocabulary. (Teacher A, May 2, 2018, researchers' translation)*

Role play is a strategy that helps students in speaking especially for silent students or students who do not want to speak. Not only helps their speaking, but also vocabulary. This discussion is related with the previous theory in the literature review mentioned by Siwi (2014) that role play is an alternative strategy to enhance students' speaking skill. Thus, role play is very useful to improve students in their speaking skill.

As role play is very helpful for speaking, however, there is also a disadvantage from role play. Only one of the four teachers used role-play in teaching speaking. It is very likely that the reason was because the preparation needed more time and special properties should be provided such as costume and some others. Kucuker (2004) also mentions that role play takes a lot of time in the preparation, practice, and assessment. There was only one teacher who used this strategy, that is teacher A.

### **Strategy 2: Small Group Discussion**

This section discusses about small group discussion strategy. It is a strategy that teachers did not always use in speaking activities, but this strategy helped teachers improve the students in speaking. Antoni (2014) strengthens this idea, he says that “*The role of friends found in small group discussion technique became the main factor that influences students' speaking skill*” (Antoni, 2014, p.63). Besides to encourage students speaking in English, this strategy also gives some benefits for students such as helping in pronunciation and build an interaction between pasive and active students. In this strategy, the teacher gave a reading text for the students, then the teacher asked them to understand the text. After that, the students started to do the discussion and each group explained what they got from the text in front of the class.

An excerpt below shows how small group discussion strategy helped in improving students' speaking skill:

*To motivate the students to speak in class, I would ask them to understand a text individually, then they made a group discussion. After they have finished the discussion, each group should present the result of their discussion. This activity helps the students in pronunciation and encourage them to communicate between passive and active students. (Teacher B, 25 April, 2018, researchers' translation)*

From Teacher B's explanation, small group discussion activity helped the students to enhance their speaking skill, because in this activity they had to speak their ideas or share opinions with their friends in a small group. This activity also give some advantages. First, the teacher helped them in giving correction on the pronunciation, and this strategy could also create a conversation between active and passive students. From the result above, this strategy is related to the theory mentioned in the literature review. Argawati (2014) says that small group discussion also has an important role to improve students' speaking skill and increase their vocabulary. Applying small group discussion improves students in speaking. However, teachers need to handle or control the class well so that all of the students get actively involved in the discussion.

### **Strategy 3: Storytelling**

The third strategy to encourage students in their speaking is storytelling. In this activity, the students have to retell a folktale, their own experience, or short stories. Storytelling is also helpful in improving students' self confidence in speaking, especially for passive students. This excerpt below supports the fact that storytelling is a good way to enhance students' speaking skill:

*To develop students' self confidence in speaking skill, I asked students to write their holiday experience in a form of short story. Then, they have to tell their stories one by one in front of the class. (Teacher C, 25 April, 2018, researchers' translation)*

Storytelling does not only use folktales. Students can also use their own experiences. Teacher A mentioned that she used video text for storytelling activity in her speaking class. Here is an excerpt from Teacher A who used video text for storytelling:

*In speaking class activity, I also used storytelling. In this activity, I gave the students a video text and asked them to listen to the video text. After that, the students retold the video text but not in the same way as the given one. (Teacher A, 2 May, 2018, researchers' translation)*

The use of storytelling in speaking class activity is evidently useful to improve students' self confidence in speaking. Usually some students are shy, but in storytelling, they can talk about folktales, short stories, or their own experience. It means that this strategy is quite successful in helping the teacher in speaking class.

As mentioned in the literature review before, it is proven that storytelling can become a good strategy to enhance students in speaking skill. Rokni & Qarajeh (2014) also strengthen this; they say storytelling is also a technique that helps students in developing their speaking ability. Gafu & Badea (2011) claim that storytelling should not always used for the activity in the class because this will make the students feel unexcited. It means if storytelling is done too often in the speaking activity, students will not feel the fun and they may get bored. There were two teachers who used this strategy in their speaking class, Teacher C and teacher A.

#### **Strategy 4: Songs**

The last strategy used is songs. Songs are a tool that the teacher used to encourage students who were not confident in speaking. This activity is pretty fun for the students, because they can choose their favorite English songs and also it helps them in pronunciation. An excerpt strengthens the advantages from songs:

*I used songs strategy and it helped the students in speaking. In this activity, I asked the students to choose their favorite English songs. Then, they should remember the song and lyrics well. After that, one by one, the students sang in front of the class. Songs are very helpful to improve students in speaking, and also their pronunciation. (Teacher D, 2 May, 2018, researchers' translation)*

This strategy was also used by teacher A, she used it to make students interested in her speaking class and also enhance their speaking skill. This is an excerpt from teacher A:

*To make my speaking class more fun, I chose songs as our activity. In this activity, students can choose their favorite songs freely. After that, I asked the students to sing in front of the class. (Teacher A, 2 May, 2018, researchers' translation).*

In the class, the teacher asked the students to choose their favorite songs, for example Shape of you by Ed Sheeran or Someone like you by Adele. Then, they listen to the song first and remembered the lyrics. After that, one by one, students should sing in the front of the class.

Even though not all students sang in a good way especially on pronunciation, there was a little bit improvement for students in practicing their speaking confidently through songs. As usual, some students were very shy, but through this activity, they could sing confidently.

On the whole, songs are proven as a strategy that teacher used successfully. It was helpful to encourage students' self confidence in speaking, make a speaking class more pleasant, and help students in pronunciation. This strategy was related with the theories in the literature review about improving students in speaking skill. Romero et al asserts, *"In fact, they have used songs as a resource to develop communicative abilities properly in a foreign language, providing students with the opportunity to talk with confidence and giving teachers the chance to teach in a fun way"* (Romero et al, 2012, p.12). There were two teachers who used this strategy in their speaking class, that are teacher D and teacher A.

## CONCLUSIONS

The findings and discussion showed that there were four strategies that the four teachers at two vocational schools in Tamiang Layang used to help students involved in speaking class. The first strategy was role-play, in which students played a kind of roles and practiced a dialogue with their pairs. This activity can encourage students to speak and increase their vocabulary. The second is small group discussion. This activity involved students to speak and have an interaction with other students in a group. From the activity, the students became more interactive in class, and it helped them in pronunciation. Then, the third strategy is storytelling. The teachers used this strategy to develop students in speaking ability. For example, teacher asked students to write their holiday experiences or tell an imaginative story in the form of short story. After that, one by one, students retold their own story in a class. The last strategy is songs. The teachers used this strategy to improve students in speaking, pronunciation, and also create a positive atmosphere in class.

Other teachers at other secondary schools can also apply these strategies, depending on the class situations and needs. These four strategies can be used to enhance students' speaking skill and to motivate students in learning English. Roleplay, storytelling, songs, and small-group discussion should be alternatively used based on what strategy is needed most at different times and situations.

In this study, the four strategies that teachers from SMK 1 and SMK 2 used were successful to improve students' self confidence in speaking. It was proven from the results of the interviews with the teachers. Then, the benefits from those strategies not only enhanced students in speaking, but also helped them in their pronunciation, increased their vocabulary, and made a class speaking more fun. Each of the teachers had their own styles and preferences in using speaking teachers' strategies depending on the contexts, the class situation, the students' level and their background in learning English.

This research has some limitations in some aspects. One of them is the participants. This study only had four English teachers to be interviewed. It is suggested that future researchers can have more than four participants, so that more insights and more various strategies to improve students' self confidence in speaking can be obtained. Also, it is limited in the methodology. This research only used one method, that is semi-structured interview. It is recommended that future researchers use more methods, so that data can be validated. Also further explanations about teachers' strategies to improve students' self confidence in speaking skill can be elaborated more.

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