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## PROMOTING PROFESSIONALISM IN STRENGTHENING TEACHERS' CHARACTER

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## DAFTAR ISI


| | Page |
|---|---|
| **COVER** | i |
| **KATA PENGANTAR** | ii |
| **DAFTAR ISI** | iii |
| Creative Construction in Indonesian EFL Learners<br>*Adhi Nurhartanto (Lampung University)* | 1 |
| The Use of Authentic and Modified Text in Teaching Reading<br>*Afini Rahmadia Putri (Lampung University)* | 5 |
| How Successful Language Learners Employ Learning Strategies in an EFL Context in Indonesia<br>*Ag. Bambang Setiyadi (Lampung University)* | 10 |
| The Influence of Motivation towards Vocational Students English Achievement<br>*Ahmad Syafii (Lampung University)* | 21 |
| An Analysis of Cooperative Principles in an EFL Listening Class<br>*Amelia Agustiara (Lampung University)* | 28 |
| Promoting Reading Comprehension Skill By Means of Cooperative Learning at the Tertiary Level<br>*Asep Hardiyanto (Lampung University)* | 33 |
| English Teaching Profesionalism and Character Building<br>*Antoni Iswantoro, M.Ed (MAN 1 Bandarlampung)* | 39 |
| The Roles of English Teacher in Students' Speaking Activities<br>*Ayu Nurjannah, Feni Munifatullah (Insan Robbani Islamic Junior High School, Lampung University)* | 45 |
| Teaching Grammar Through It Based Game. A Teaching -Learning Innovation (A Classroom Action Research)<br>*Dermawati (Lampung University)* | 49 |
| Teacher's Illocutionary Acts in Correcting Students' Exercises<br>*Dhona Karitka (Lampung University)* | 55 |
| An Introduction to Tenor – A Part of Register (Systemic Functional Linguistic)<br>*Diena Yashinta (Indonesia University of Education)* | 60 |
| Speech Act Analysis between Main Characters Of *Frozen* Movie<br>*Dwi Ratih Agustina (Lampung University)* | 66 |
| Alternatives Assessment: Attitude, Perspectives, and Problem<br>*E. Ngertirosa EWK (Teknokrat University)* | 72 |
| Developing Lesson Plan for Teaching Vocabulary by Using Multiple Intelligences at the Sixth Grade of SD Ar-Raudah Bandar Lampung<br>*Eka Anggia Rini (Lampung University)* | 77 |

# THE ROLES OF ENGLISH TEACHER IN STUDENTS' SPEAKING ACTIVITIES

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**Abstract**

*This article was purposed to discuss the roles of EFL teacher in this era, especially in classroom speaking activities. As we know that English has position as international language and compulsory subject in Indonesia. The teaching of speaking skill has become increasingly important in the English as foreign language. Teaching speaking is not easy since producing spoken language has often meant a difficulty for students. Whereas, speaking is perceived as measurement of language mastery. Therefore, it needs teachers' effort to enhance students' want to speak English. English teacher has many roles in classroom activities, such as Controller, Organizer, Monitor/Assessor, Prompter, Participant, Resource, Tutor, and Observer. In relation with speaking activities, the roles of teacher are focused on being prompter and participant. However, there are some problems frequently found in speaking activities which should be solved in order to get successful learning. The writer offer different point of view from English teachers' role; Teacher as Facilitator, Resource Developer, and Character Building Initiator. This discussion is hoped can be addressed for better improvement in teaching English*

**Keywords** : *roles, teacher, speaking, classroom activities*

## INTRODUCTION

English is a crucial language in this globalization era since it plays an important role to convey information. The position of English as international language automatically leads most countries in the world to use English as medium of communication. Meanwhile, in Indonesia English is considered as a foreign language (EFL). English is taught in educational institution from Elementary School to University as a compulsory subject. In learning English, the students are expected to master four English skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and all of which are important to support the goal of communication, that is, being able to understand and express information, idea, feeling, developing knowledge, technology, and culture.

Nowadays, along with the position of English as international language, the teaching of speaking skill has become increasingly important in the English as foreign language (EFL). Teaching speaking is not easy since producing spoken language has often meant a difficulty for students. As the statement that speaking is the most complex and difficult skill to master (Hinkel, 2005, p. 485), whereas speaking is most often used to communicate by people. No doubt, mastering the art of speaking is the most important aspect of learning a foreign language. The environment in Indonesia also provides less support for the English learners, because English is not spoken in the community. Based on Kayi (2006) , speaking refers to the gap between linguistic expertise and teaching methodology. Linguistic expertise concerns with language structure and language content. Teaching speaking is not like listening, reading, and writing. It needs habitual formation because it is real communication and productive skill so it needs practicing as often as possible. It also requires meaningful interaction in the target language in which speakers is concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding (Krashen, 1981:1).

Therefore, it needs teacher's effort to enhance students' want to speak English. It is strongly asserted by Cole (2008) that it is the teachers' role to provide effective plans/strategies in accomplishing students' educational needs, whose general purpose is to communicate using the language being learnt. These statement means that the English teacher has important role as their responsibility to make student speak English by providing suitable teaching strategies in the classroom. As Dörnyei and Murphey (2003) explained, the success of classroom learning is very much dependent on:

a. How students relate to each other and their teacher
b. What the classroom environment is

c. How effectively students cooperate and communicate with each other
d. The roles not only the teacher plays but also the learners engage in

Being a teacher means that being a facilitator for their student. The successful of speaking activity depends on teacher's guidance along learning activity. Having a duty as facilitator is that the teacher has to facilitate EFL learner based on their needs. According to Harmer (2007), the term 'facilitator' is used by many authors to define a particular teacher, one who is democratic (where the teacher shares some leadership value with students) rather than autocratic (where the teacher is controller of everything which goes on in the classroom activity). The teacher is also as the one who fosters learner autonomy where the students not only learn by themselves, but also take a responsibility for what they learn. So, it is clear from those statements above that the roles of teacher are vital, both providing suitable teaching strategies in the classroom and being students' facilitator, even more than that.

## THE ROLES OF ENGLISH TEACHER

It is clear that in this era, 21st century, teaching English needs improvement for better learning achievement. Firstly, it will be started from teachers' roles. If the teacher can play their roles well, the result of learning will be effective. There are 8 different roles that teachers can adopt. They are Controller, Organizer, Monitor/Assessor, Prompter, Participant, Resource, Tutor, and Observer. However, some other type of classroom procedure should be covered by different roles. For students' speaking activity, these following specific roles are relevant if the teacher wants student to speak fluently:

1. **Prompter**

When the students are involved in a role play activity or some simple instruction in classroom, sometimes they lose what will be the next turn, or they lose for words. This is teachers' turn to be prompter. Based on Harmer (1991), when we prompt, we need to do it sensitively and encouragingly but, above all, with discretion. If we are too adamant we risk taking initiative away from the student. If, on the other hand, we are too retiring, we may not supply the right amount of encouragement.

2. **Participant**

It is a very important role to be participant because the teacher will lively being the classroom. When students carry out speaking activities in the class, the teacher will be situated on the 'backstage' or at his or her desk to allow students' performance. The teacher also gives feedback and correction when it is needed. However, there are also times to teacher involving in students' activity as participant. If the teacher participate, it will automatically lead the student to enjoyable situation. An important disadvantage would be that when the teacher takes the role of participant, he/she can lead or take over the activity, preventing students from participating freely (Harmer, 2007).

## PROBLEMS IN SPEAKING CLASS

In line with the importance of speaking ability, there are some problems frequently found in speaking activities. These students' obstacles should be managed by the English teacher correctly in order to get successful learning.

a. Students can't talk or say anything or keep using their first language in the class

When the students feel shy about talking in front of class, they can't talk or say anything. They are suffer from a fear of making mistakes and automatically it leads them into nervous situation. Speaking in front of peers and teacher is not easy task, for them. It needs courage and motivation, both inside and outside such as good atmosphere and interesting topic. The other problems is that the class is dominated by students who have had better speaking than others. In further, it might happen because of the bored class activities.

One classroom problem found in the class is that many students still keep using their native language to fulfill their assignment and simple instructions in class. It might happen because they want to share idea with the language they know. Or they mix their language in order that their friend understand what they say. This problem is in line with students do not want to talk or say anything in foreign language but they keep their first language. This is teachers' duty to build English environment and being their reminder to use English in class.

b. The difficulties of managing class

The number of students which range 30-40 students for each class will be a problem for their teacher. It is a very difficult duty to handle many students in the classroom. The students will hardly get teacher's individual attention. They also hardly get chance to practice the language. It is also hard for teacher to keep contact, have a feedback in learning activities, and manage good and creative teaching sessions for them. However, big class has benefits such as : the students can share many ideas and feeling, colour the class with their uniqueness, and help each other for some English project.

c. Materials of learning do not fulfill students' need

Being an English teacher means that being creative facilitator. They have to relate their material with outside situation, so their students will interest with all materials. In fact, many students do not feel comfort with what the teacher bring in class. From the writers' observation, if the topic of material does not relate to students' live; they may find themselves confused or bored. Therefore, it needs teacher who can give good and interesting material for them.

d. The lack of motivation in learning English

Motivation in learning English has important role to stimulate students' mastery in the target language. The lower motivation they have in expressing their own idea, the lower chance to be successful in learning English especially in speaking will be. Some students still think that English is not important subject. Therefore, for those who think the importance of English might take a part in speaking activity. The motivation itself will affect their effort to be better in learning, especially in speaking task or assignment.

**DEVELOPING TEACHERS' ROLE**

As stated in previous part that teacher has many roles for teaching EFL learners. Since the problems of speaking should be solved, teachers' role can be developed to be wider. The secret of successful English teaching is discovering means of making the students like to do what the teachers want to give in the class. The teaching and learning process is also about partnership. So, we can't blame one side without considering the others. It means that the teacher and students have to be engaged each other. The engagement is very crucial to create productive class. In relation with speaking problems, the writer suggests that there are some roles of English teacher can be developed:

1. Teacher as Facilitator

As the writer stated before that having a duty as facilitator is that the teacher have to facilitate EFL learner based on their needs. It is the teacher as a facilitator who has to facilitate that process, but above all, to act as a guide to students by creating appropriate situations in order to acquire the desired knowledge (Dash, 2008). It is a challenge for teacher because the students are venturing into the unknown. Their activities in classroom will take risk especially in communicating with English. Being a facilitator means being patient and living with their silence, collecting their idea before they speak. This also means to allow more mistakes and give feedback after they have spoken in the class, at the end of assignment, even at closing of class. The role of being facilitator have to cover the ability to facilitate students' learning into suitable level and good materials. Facilitator also have a duty as a connector to schools' matter'. By this, the writer means a teacher as one who not only knows the English matter and the methodology, but also how to work with other human beings.

2. Teacher as Resource Developer

Teachers act as a resource when students need the help of the teacher. That is, when students ask how to say or write words or sentences, need to know the meaning of unknown words or simply ask for information during the different activities they carry out in the classroom (Hedge, 2000). Spratt (2005: 145) summarizes this by stating that "the teacher can be used by learners for help and advice". Teacher act as a resource developer means that teacher develops their knowledge in order to be more creative in teaching activity. Since the application of Curriculum in Indonesia is frequently changed, the flexibility is needed. This is the teachers' duty to produce new innovation for teaching speaking. Teacher has a responsibility as source about how students' progress in learning English. A teacher can do something different in order to encourage his/her student to speak. They can create some enjoyable speaking class by doing some activities such as discussion, games, or role play.

3. Teacher as Character Building Initiator

Based on Oxford Dictionary of English, Character Building is 'Requiring effort or endurance to degree that strengthens or improves a persons' character'. Teaching is always has relation with improving someone to be better. The term 'Character Building' was launched by the Government since

2010 in order to build generation through education. In this occasion, the teacher plays a very important role as an actor to initiate students' character. Before applying Character Building value in teaching and learning process, the teachers have to adapt these values into lesson plan. They also have to adopt it to teaching material and speaking class activities. This material and activities must proper to students' level and needs. Faiziyah (2013) stated that teacher should gain more knowledge in terms of Character Building so that they can implement Character Building well in the teaching and learning process. It is also important for teacher to use direct statements in teaching values so that the students can sense the Character Building directly. It means that Character Building value should be initiated and arranged by teacher in process of teaching, especially speaking. Teacher can initiate speaking activities ( i.e role play, discussion, critical thinking question ) which can inspire to speak politely and clearly. The most important part is that those value must be resembled by the teacher. Teacher is a role-model for their students. So, if the teacher has a good personality, it is easy for students to imitate him/her. The good starting point will be begun by the good teacher. So, Character Building Initiator means that the teacher is not only teach knowledge about English but also become a good model for students to be imitated.

## CONCLUSION

This article above clearly considers that there are many roles of English teacher in classroom activities. However, some other type of classroom procedure should be covered by different roles. The roles of teacher framework describe the roles of English teacher for speaking class. In fact, the teaching and learning English speaking in Indonesia faced many problems. Consequently, the writer offer different point of view from English teachers' roles. This discussion can be addressed for better improvement in English teaching, especially for teaching speaking skill.

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