AN ANALYSIS OF THE TEACHER TALK TO TEACH SPEAKING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT TO THE SEVENTH GRADERS OF SMPN 1 SIDOARJO

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Abstract

This study focuses on the teacher talk in teaching speaking descriptive which conducted in a seventh grade classroom of SMPN 1 Sidoarjo. This research aims to find out the features of teacher talk occur in the speaking descriptive classroom in the seventh grade of SMPN 1 Sidoarjo and to describe how the features teacher talk affect the students’ learning process during the teaching of speaking descriptive to the seventh graders of SMPN 1 Sidoarjo. In this research, the researcher considers the teacher talk as the
language in the classroom that takes up a major portion of class time employed to give directions, explain activities and check students’ understanding (Sinclair & Brazil, 1982). The SETT framework designed by Walsh (2006) is used to identify the features of teacher talk occurs during the learning process. Moreover, this study is conducted in the form of descriptive qualitative research where the researcher as the non-participant observer on the classroom. The subject of this study is a junior high school English teacher and the seventh graders of SMPN 1 Sidoarjo. The instrument used were observation checklist and field notes.

From the data that has been taken, it is obtained that the features of teacher talk used by the teacher in teaching speaking descriptive in the seventh grade of SMPN 1 Sidoarjo are scaffolding, direct repair, content feedback, extended wait-time, referential questions, seeking clarification, confirmation checks, extended learner turn, teacher echo, teacher interruptions, extended teacher turn, and display questions. Moreover, the features of teacher talk used also have been proven to help the students understand better about the subject and elicit students’ contribution during the learning process.

In conclusion, the researcher has found that the teacher who teaches speaking descriptive in a seventh grade classroom of SMPN 1 Sidoarjo has performed some features of teacher talk from SETT framework. Those features of teacher talk used are found to be able to elicit students’ contribution and assist the students’ descriptive monologue skill development in the speaking descriptive learning process.

Kata Kunci: English Teaching, Speaking, Descriptive Text, Teacher Talk.

INTRODUCTION (TIMES NEW ROMAN 10, BOLD, SPASI 1, SPACING BEFORE 12 PT, AFTER 2 PT)

Teacher talk is a part of classroom interaction that also related with the students’ learning activity. By performing the appropriate teacher talk, teacher can motivate students to be actively involved in the speaking descriptive classroom since the speaking that has to be performed by students is in the form of monologue. Therefore, the researcher eager to know about (1) What features of teacher talk which occur in teaching speaking descriptive to the seventh graders of SMPN 1 Sidoarjo? (2) How can the teacher talk affect the students’ learning process in speaking descriptive classroom in the seventh graders of SMPN 1 Sidoarjo? Based on the research questions above, the aims of this research are (1) To find out the features of teacher talk which occur in teaching speaking descriptive in the seventh grade English classroom of SMPN 1 Sidoarjo. (2) To describe how the features of teacher talk affect the students’ learning process during the speaking descriptive classroom in the seventh grade of SMPN 1 Sidoarjo.

The teacher talk actually has become an issue that has received attention from many researchers because it is a part of classroom interaction. Moreover, interaction is the collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings or ideas, between two or more people (Dagarin, 2004: 128). It also has a similar meaning in the classroom. This make the class development and success depends on the greater extent the interactions between the teacher and students (Tsui, 1987: 355). Therefore, in the classroom when teacher has to interact with students, appropriate and suitable teacher talk is needed.

Swain (2009: 100) argues that the collaborative dialogue for teacher-students interaction is both “social and cognitive activity, it is linguistic problem-solving through social interaction,” and is therefore an occasion for language learning. While teacher talk is the language in the classroom that takes up a major portion of class time employed to give directions, explain activities and check students’ understanding (Sinclair & Brazil, 1982: 77) and cannot be separated with the learning process.

Teacher talk plays a very important role in the teaching process as an interactive device because language-based L2 learning is often enhanced when teachers have a detailed understanding of the relationship between teacher talk, interaction and learning opportunity (Walsh, 2006: 169). Therefore, as a role model in the classroom, teacher must know how to improve students’ participation and activeness in the learning process.

SETT (Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk) framework was used because as stated in Walsh (2006: 62), SETT is designed to help teachers both in describing the classroom interaction of their lessons and fostering an understanding of interactional processes. The researcher also use SETT to identify the features of teacher talk because in SETT, pedagogy and interaction come together through talk: pedagogic goals are manifested in the talk- in- interaction. SETT is also used to portray the relationship between pedagogic goals and language use, which acknowledged that meanings and actions are constructed through the interaction of the participants, and which facilitated the
An Analysis of the Teacher Talk

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research used descriptive qualitative design where the researcher as the non-participant observer on the classroom. Since this research focused on the teacher talk, the subjects of the research were a junior high school English teacher of SMPN 1 Sidoarjo and the students of the seventh grade (7 Acceleration) class.

The classroom was observed during the speaking descriptive learning process where the teacher taught 20 students in 7 Acceleration class. Moreover, the observation checklist and field notes were taken by the researcher during the classroom activity. Moreover, the video recording was used to record the classroom activity. Then it was transcribed to help the researcher analyze the teacher talk.

The way to collect the data in this study was by recording the teaching process in the form of video. The researcher was a non-participant observer. The data of the study were the result of video-recording analysis which is taken from the teaching process in the classroom. The data were also the result of observation checklist and field notes that had been taken by the researcher during the observation.

The data was analyzed in the form of descriptive. The researcher transcribed the video-recording by adapting the transcription system from Van Lier and Johnson (as cited in Walsh, 2006: 165). After the video was transcribed, the researcher divided the teacher talk categories based on the SETT framework. Then, the data that had been taken from the video transcription, observation checklist and field notes were analyzed and presented in the form of description to make a conclusion on the result of the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Features of Teacher Talk

It is apparent when studying spoken interaction that different speakers have different levels of competence and varying abilities to express their ideas and achieve understanding. Much of what happens in language classroom was concerned with individual performance rather than collective competence. As a part of language teaching and classroom interaction, the teacher talk was defined as the language in the classroom that takes up a major portion of class time employed to give directions, explain activities and check students’ understanding (Sinclair & Brazil, 1982: 77). Having been given a close examination of the transcript, the following features were found in the teacher talk performed by the teacher during the teaching of speaking descriptive in the seventh grade of SMPN 1 Sidoarjo.

Based on SETT (Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk) in Walsh (2006: 66), the researcher found that the teacher only performed twelve features of teacher talk they were scaffolding, direct repair, content feedback, extended wait-time, referential question, seeking clarification, confirmation checks, extended learner turn, teacher echo, teacher interruption, extended teacher turn, and display question. Turn completion and form-focused feedback were not performed.

In the extract below, the teacher apparently rephrased learner’s contribution. The scaffolding was used by the teacher (in line 4) so that learners are assisted in saying what they really mean.

Extract 1

1 L1: “I am in canteen”
2 T: “ah, you were in canteen, did you eat your lunch?”
3 L1: “er... yes, I ate.”
4 T: “nice, you ate your lunch... you must be full now...”

Through scaffolding, by shaping learner contributions and by helping learners to really articulate what they mean, teachers are performing a more central role in the interaction, while, at the same time, maintaining a student-centered, decentralized approach to teaching.

Besides scaffolding, from extract 2 below, the researcher identify that the direct repair (correction an error quickly and directly) was used by the teacher during the teaching process. Moreover, although the error correction is not of central concern in the teaching process, the teacher did not disregard errors. In the extract above, the teacher use teacher-learner interaction form that was used for an informal conversation at the beginning of the lesson or for leading students into a less guided activity (Dagarin, 2004: 129). Here, the teacher showed her concern through the students’ contribution.

Extract 2

1 L2: “I buy snack in koperasi Mam”
2 T: “so, you BOught snack, right?”
3 L2: “Yes, I bought snack (smile)”

In the teaching process, feedback from teacher needs for students’ achievement. One form of feedback in the teacher talk features is content feedback (Walsh, 2006: 66). Content feedback in which the teacher gave feedback to the message rather than the words used was shown in the extract 3 below. In line 3-5, the teacher responded to
the message and not the linguistic forms used to articulate a particular message.

Extract 3
1 T: “where have you been?”
2 LL: “/eating/ in class/ playing/”
3 T: “okay, good, where have you been L1?”
4 L1: “ah, yes... in break time...”
5 T: “yes, where were you in the break time? what place?”
6 L1: “I am in canteen”
7 T: “ah, you were in canteen, did you eat your lunch?”
8 L1: “er... yes, I ate.”
9 T: “nice, you ate you lunch... you must be full now...”
10 L1: “yes (laugh)”

Moreover, in extract 3 above, the teacher responded in an almost conversational way to almost all of the learners’ turns. The teacher offers no evaluation or repair of learner contributions. Instead, teacher assumed an almost symmetrical role in the discourse.

In the teaching English especially in mastering speaking skill, teacher needs to elicit students’ response. As Arsham (as cited in Rana, 2007: 115) stated that the function of communication included transaction and interaction, therefore students response can be used to determine their participation in the learning process. In the extract below, the teacher pauses of several seconds (in line 8 and 11) which allowed learners time to think, formulated and gave a response. Those attitudes were in the field of extended wait time in the features of teacher talk which explained by Walsh (2006: 66) as allowing sufficient time (several seconds) for students to respond or formulate a response.

Extract 4
1 T: “okay, like I said before... describing a place... here your bedroom... you must... first is give identification of the place... example... I will say “My bedroom is comfortable bedroom” or “I love my wide bedroom” or “My beautiful bedroom is my favourite place in my house”... what I said is I want you to recognize my bedroom... I want you imagine my bedroom that it is BEAUTIFUL or COMFORTABLE or WIDE... okay, L1 (T points at L1) if you see this picture, how you will identify it... please... make a sentence...”
2 L1: “this is my... most... valuable place... in my home”
3 T: “great... so, L2 what is the point of L1’s sentence? What is the identification?”
4 L2: “valuable”
5 T: “not just valuable... but most valuable place in his house, okay?”
6 L2: “oh, yes”

Based on the research, the researcher also found referential questions (genuine questions to which the teacher does not know the answer) asked which was stated by Nunan (1988: 23) as one of characteristics of the genuine communication. Moreover as Matsumoto (2010: 57) said, referential questions have a strong correlation with students’ creative responses, which often lead to further teacher-student interactions. The referential question in line 1-5 above had shown how teacher expect students’ response. By responding to the teacher question, the students had involved simultaneously to the learning process.

Extract 5
1 T: “okay, and what about in your house? What place that you like the most in your house?”
2 LL: “/ garden/ dining room/ living room/ bedroom/ bathroom/ kitchen/ balcony/”
3 T: “okay... L4, what about you?”
4 L4: “I like my bedroom”

Moreover, on the extract 6 below, the researcher found that the teacher used seeking clarification (lines 1-7) as the features of teacher talk performed. It showed that the teacher was not entirely satisfied with the first response and insists on the insertion of ‘identification’ to make sure that this contribution is as accurate as possible. This is a good example of a recast.

Extract 6
1 T: “okay, good comments L11... nah, I see before that L13 don’t identify his room first... is it right L13?”
2 L13: “yes Mam (L13 is shyly smiling) I focus on description... I think”
3 T: “so, what you supposed to do first before the description part?”
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Another feature of teacher talk found by the researcher was shown on the extract 7 below. The teacher used confirmation check to make sure that teacher has correctly understood learners’ contribution (Walsh, 2006: 72). In the learning process, teacher tried to confirm whether the teacher understanding about the students’ contribution or response was in line with the students’ intention while delivering his/her contribution. Teacher confirmation helped to avoid misunderstanding between the teacher and students.

Extract 7
1 L3: (raising hand) “MAM... so, if I say “My room is the fullest room”... so in description, I say... reason from what make my room the fullest room... is it correct?”
2 T: “so you mean, you use “My room is the fullest room” as the identification, then you give detail description what make your room become the fullest room... is that what you mean?”
3 L3: “yes”
4 T: “you are right... good... so, is everyone understand?”
5 LL: “yes”

In the classroom interaction, teacher provided chance for students to deliver information or do spoken activity. As one of features of teacher talk, especially in the speaking class, extended learner turn must be performed. Based on the research, teacher had given big opportunity for extended learner turn. The extended learner turn was mostly happened during the descriptive monologue practice as a learners’ activity. Here, the teacher allowed learners to complete a turn and make a full and elaborated response. Often teachers interrupt and close down space when learners were attempting to articulate something quite complicated. However, during the students’ task activity (descriptive monologue practice) teacher did the opposite and allowed the student space in the interaction to make a full and useful contribution.

Moreover, to amplify the contributions of learners who have spoken too quietly, teacher can use the teacher echo (Lindstromberg, 1988: 3). The extract below was the evidence as the result of observation conducted.

Extract 8
1 T: “okay, come on... one sentence about your bedroom”
2 L4: “my bedroom is wide and nice”
3 T: “my bedroom is wide and nice... very good sentence...”

In line 3 above, the teacher echo the student’s response. The teacher used teacher echo to furnish the class as a whole with intelligible versions. However, Echoing could subtly reinforce some learners’ belief that the only truly worthwhile model is teacher talk (Lindstromberg, 1988: 3). In this case, the researcher found that the teacher used echoing to restate the students’ response in aiming the praise to encourage the whole class in responding teacher talk.

As echoing can be used to encourage or motivate the students, sometimes the teacher was found interrupting the learner’s response or contribution. Below were extract about teacher interruption.

Extract 9
1 L11: “er... I say to him... you must better... also describe many things on the table”
2 T: “it’s okay, continue”
3 L11: “because he only say... there is many things on the table”

Based on the extract 9 above, researcher found that interruption occurred but naturally and in a supportive way. This kind of interruption would result in no major breakdown on the students’ learning process.

In delivering the material, the teacher used the extended teacher-turn. As Walsh (2006: 66) stated, extended teacher-turn was when the teacher turn was more than one clause. Moreover, the extended teacher-turn as presented in extract 10 below (in line 1-9) seemed long in terms of the interaction with the students, but it was necessary to spend sufficient time on clarifying the new knowledge before the learners took turns to practice it.

Extract 10
1 T: “nah, here... another picture... I will describe this picture... okay... “This is my COMFORTABLE bedroom... it is wide, so I can put many things in my bedroom... you can find a big comfortable bed in the middle (T points at the picture while describing) beside the bed... there is a small, black table with drawers... my room has big window... I also put comfortable chair near the
6 window... the wall painting is white, same with the bookshelf colour beside
7 the window... I love white, so many things in my bedroom is white... I can
8 sleep and enjoy reading book in my bedroom”...
   nah, is anyone want to try
9 make... one sentence about... you bedroom?”
10 L4: (L4 raising hand) “me...”

During the teaching activity as the presented above, the teacher used referential question. However, beside referential question, the teacher also used display question to the students. In this type of question, the teacher asked questions to which teacher knows the answer.

Extract 11

1 T: “you are right... and here (T points to a picture) wow, look at these, what are these?”
2 L9: “lots of comic”
3 L10: “yes, comics”
4 T: “right, many comics... good”

On the extract above (in line 1-2), the teacher asked display question just to elicit the students’ response since the teacher already knew the answer.

Teacher Talk Effect on the Students’ Learning Process

In the teaching of speaking, as Arsham (as cited in Rana, 2007: 143) stated, one main point that the teacher must recognize is the function of communication includes transaction and interaction. It means the teacher must provide opportunity for students’ to talk since interaction is the collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings or ideas, between two or more people (Dagarin, 2004: 128).

Apparently from the result of the observation checklist, the teacher had put concerned in the teaching material and technique used in the teaching process. Since the material taught was descriptive monologue, teacher tried provide interaction through some features of teacher talk to elicit the students’ response. As monologue did not need interaction in its production, teacher had conducted the students’ activity in the form of giving evaluation feedback to make the teacher able to exchange thought and opinion.

One goal of teaching descriptive text is developing students’ communicative competence both in writing and speaking descriptive text form to reach the functional level (Standard of Competence, 2006). On the functional level, students were expected to able to use language in accomplishing their daily needs. Here, the teacher had provided the teaching material of descriptive monologue with the familiar topic to the students’ daily life. Moreover, the teacher had applied extended wait-time as one feature of teacher talk to provide learners time to think, formulated and gave a response. By giving students time to formulate response, teacher had tried to maintain the students centered learning to help achieving the speaking ability in functional level.

Besides pausing to provide students time to think their response, the teacher also gave students opportunity to complete a turn and make a full and elaborated response (extended learner-turn). Teacher also did not interrupt students’ task activity. By giving chance for students to practice descriptive monologue without teacher interruption, the teacher tried to maintain the students’ centered class. It also provided larger opportunity for students to improve their personal ability about the material they learnt.

However, in the teaching process the extended teacher-turn could not be avoided. The teacher need to explain and gave appropriate explanation related to the descriptive monologue. Therefore, the teacher had to perform extended teacher-turn. Although the extended time was particularly long in terms of the interaction with the students, but it was necessary to spend sufficient time on clarifying the new knowledge before the learners took turns to practice it.

During the teaching of descriptive monologue, another feature of teacher talk performed by the teacher was giving referential question. Nunan (1987: 88) stated that questions from the teacher such as referential questions to which the teacher does not know the answer is one of characteristics of the genuine communication. Moreover as Matsumoto (2010: 57) said, referential questions have a strong correlation with students’ creative responses, which often lead to further teacher-student interactions.

Teacher gave referential question to the students mostly during the beginning activity of the learning process. For example while the brainstorming activity, teacher asked some referential questions to attract the students’ attention. Although the teacher-students interaction in this stage was likely in informal situation, this was effective to motivate students to respond the teacher talk.

 Beside referential question, the teacher also gave display questions to the learner. This type of questions mostly took place when the teacher tried to elicit the students’ response regarding with their understanding about the descriptive monologue material they learnt. Display question often asked for increasing the students’ personal response. Although by focusing on personal response meant not all students’ could respond to the
teacher display question, it was success to elicit students’ contribution.

Related with students’ contribution or students’ talk during the learning process, whether by mean or not, the teacher sometimes interrupted the students’ contribution. Nonetheless, in this case the teacher’s interruption was put into the motivating interruption. When a student seemed stuttered in his talk, the teacher interrupted using encouraging words, such as “continue.” Here, the teacher tried to support the students to response and did not mean to take students’ turn.

Furthermore, in the teaching of descriptive monologue, the teacher also used scaffolding where the teacher reformulated or rephrased a learner’s contribution. By completing the student’s answer, the teacher was indicating that complete sentences were expected from their contributions. Consequently, it seemed that the interaction around the talk about the delivering of descriptive monologue material was well-controlled and the pre-determined responses were expected.

There are times when students’ contribution missed the teacher expectation. In this case, the teacher corrected the students’ error quickly and directly. This attitude was labeled as direct repair (Walsh, 2006: 66). Besides, for some occasions, the teacher was trying to negotiate the answer she wanted with the student instead of correcting them immediately. However, what the researcher conclude was both correcting directly and negotiating the expected students’ contribution had helped the students to practice the better English related with the material they learnt.

The researcher also found evidence of content feedback teacher talk. It happened where the teacher as stated by Walsh (2006) was giving feedback to the students’ contribution message rather than the words used. Here, the teacher offered no evaluation or repair of learner contributions, as would be the ‘norm’ in many classroom contexts. Instead, the teacher assumed an almost symmetrical feedback in the discourse.

In the teaching descriptive monologue class, other features of teacher talk used by teacher was seeking clarification and confirmation checks. In seeking clarification, the teacher asked a student to clarify something the student has said. However in confirmation checks, the teacher tried to make sure that she had correctly understood the learner’s contribution. Those features of teacher talk had been used to avoid misunderstanding between the teacher and students. Furthermore, with stating the same intention of contribution, the teacher could help the students to develop their speaking ability.

Echoing was also found during the teaching descriptive monologue. The teacher echo which Walsh (2006: 66) said as repeating a learner’s contribution or previous utterance was used in just little opportunity of the teaching. Here, the teacher echo occurred when the teacher repeated a student contribution to the end without using the rising intonation of yes/no questions. In this case, the teacher had provided learners with more of the sort of repetition needed for “reinforcement of language” as what Lindstormberg (1988: 4) said as one of points in favor of teacher echo.

As an element of classroom interaction, as Littlewood (as cited in Dagarin, 2004: 130) stated, one of teacher’s role is as general overseer of learning, who coordinates the activities so that they form a coherent progression from lesser to greater communicative ability. Related with that statement, the teacher had used some features of teacher talk to make coherent progression of students’ speaking ability. Although the material learnt was in the form of monologue, the teacher had used technique in which the students’ could achieve both learning objectives and communicative ability.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

From the thorough elaboration and discussion upon the data on the fourth chapter, it can be concluded that the features of teacher talk used by the teacher in the teaching of speaking descriptive to the eleventh grader in SMPN 1 Sidoarjo were scaffolding, direct repair, content feedback, extended wait-time, referential question, seeking clarification, confirmation checks, extended learner turn, teacher echo, teacher interruption, extended teacher turn, and display question. Additionally, those features of teacher talk had been used to elicit students’ contribution and assist the students’ descriptive monologue skill development in the speaking descriptive learning process.

Suggestions

This study focused on the teacher talk role in the teaching of descriptive monologue class. Thus, the researcher suggests the English teachers who teach especially speaking skill to more consider about the students’ contribution in spoken form. The teacher also must consider and understand what features of teacher talk that can be used to encourage students’ and elicit the students’ contribution during the learning process. As an addition, teacher also must be careful not to dominate the students’ turn and contribution. Moreover for the next researcher, the further research maybe on both the teacher talk and the students talk in the classroom interaction.
REFERENCES


