

## TEACHER'S ROLES IN APPLYING PROBLEM SOLVING ACTIVITY TO TEACH SPEAKING

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### Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini yaitu untuk mengetahui peran guru dalam menerapkan aktivitas pemecahan masalah untuk mengajar berbicara. Penelitian ini dilakukan pada 1 guru bahasa Inggris dan 1 kelompok yang terdiri dari 36 siswa. Peserta adalah siswa kelas X SMKN 1 Jombang. Observasi dilakukan untuk mengetahui pengetahuan guru tentang perannya dalam menerapkan aktivitas pemecahan masalah dalam mengajar berbicara. Wawancara juga dilakukan kepada guru untuk mengetahui peran dalam menerapkan aktivitas pemecahan masalah dalam mengajar berbicara. Para peserta juga didemonstrasikan kuesioner untuk memperoleh pendapat mereka tentang efektivitas penerapan aktivitas ini. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan siswa kelas X memiliki respon positif terhadap penerapan aktivitas pemecahan masalah dalam pengajaran berbicara.

**Kata Kunci:** aktivitas pemecahan, masalah, berbicara

### Abstract

The goal of this research is to find out the teacher's roles in applying problem solving activity to teach speaking. This research was carried out on 1 English teacher and 1 group of 36 students. The participants were the tenth graders of SMKN 1 Jombang. Observation was done to find out the teacher's knowledge about her roles in applying problem solving activity to teach speaking. Interview also was done to the teacher to know the roles in applying problem solving activity to teach speaking. The participants also demonstrated from the questionnaire to elicit their opinion about the effectiveness of applying problem solving activity to teach speaking. The result showed the tenth graders have a positive response towards the applying problem solving activity to teach speaking.

**Keywords:** problem solving activity, speaking

## INTRODUCTION

In learning English, there are four skills which learner have to know. There are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. From those four skills, speaking plays the most essential part in communication because it is an important part of the curriculum in language teaching. In fact, the students in Indonesia realize the necessity as well as importance of enhancing language skills in order to meet future job need and communicate in social conversations. However, it is hard for most of them to use English in the real situations. In the real context of school in Indonesia, teacher-centered method is still applied at present although there have been a large number of changes about teaching materials. Students do not feel enthusiastic when participating in speaking lessons because the lack of confidence as well as uninteresting speaking activities leads to demotivate them to join in. In addition, other problems such as a lack of vocabulary, involvement or enjoyment have great impacts on their participation in speaking lessons. To solve these problems, more effective

speaking activities need to be exploited to enhance learners' communicative competence and help them get more involved in speaking lesson, so that the teachers need to be active persuade their students in speaking activities that are enjoyable and are based on a more communicative approach.

According to Jurkovic (2005), Problem Based Learning says that it is a learning method based on solving problem. Problem Based Learning belongs to a modern method and it can give innovation for language teaching. Besides, this method is based on the constructivist approach to learning. Constructivism is a philosophy based on the basic opinion that knowledge cannot exist outside our minds. One mind cannot give knowledge to another because the new knowledge is built or created from some experiences. Therefore, it is important for teachers to know and understand this new philosophy and prepare the students with chance for the creation of new knowledge. During the learning process, Problem Based

Learning has at least to some extent change the role as a language teacher. The teacher should not forget that Problem Based Learning is a problem-solving activity when they are designing the problem for students. So, that is why in teaching and learning process, it is also called Problem Solving Activity. Problem solving is the best learning when it is combined with learning in a domain (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989).

Pedagogies is needed by teachers to teach their students problem solving skills. Problem Solving Activities involves students in solving large complex. It is important for the teachers to understand the kind of roles involved in Problem Solving Activity method. One of teacher in Indonesia has implemented this method to teach speaking to his students. She has implemented this method for teaching speaking successfully. When they use this method, the students face a problem and try to solve it with the information they already have enabling them to appreciate what they already know. They also identify what they need to learn to better understand and the problem and how to solve it. The researcher here will concern to know more about how deep the teacher knows their roles by applying this method and how they play successful using this method to improve students' speaking ability.

A problem can be determined as any situation where some information is known and other information is needed. A problem can be something that gives rise to doubt or uncertainty, or something that is difficult to understand, or a difficult task or question, or an investigation that start from certain condition to investigate facts or principles. Meanwhile, problem solving can be considered as the process of applying existing knowledge to a new or unfamiliar situation to gain new knowledge.

According to Ormond (2006:111) (as cited in Doghondaze & Gorgiladze, 2008), problem solving is an activity that uses existing knowledge and skills to answer an unanswered question or troubling situation. Thus, problems solving is a form of inquiry learning. When used as a deliberate teaching strategy, problem solving can help students to let go that the knowledge they have acquired can be applied to a new situation, and that this process can lead them to acquire new knowledge. In addition, problem solving is a popular way to stimulate students' interest and motivation. Students work in pairs or groups to share their opinions and feelings about a specific problem. They work together to discuss, analyze and evaluate the problem, then reach proper solutions. A problem is a situation experienced by an agent that is different from the ideal situation that agent wants. According to Heylighen (1998), a problem is solved by sequence of actions that reduce the difference between the initial and the goal situations. In

Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (Richards, J. C., Platt, J., & Platt, H. 1997), problem solving activities are defined as simple tasks, often involving simple or picture puzzles, used to stimulate pair work and oral discussion among small groups of second language learners.

In Problem Solving Activity classrooms environment, the roles and responsibilities of teachers and learners are different from more traditional types of school-based learning. Generally, in problem solving activities, the teacher acts as a trainer or facilitator of activities carried out by students themselves. The teacher does not simply present information or directly control the progress of work. Instead, the teacher presents the students with suitable problems to work on, assists later in identifying and accessing the materials and tools needed to solve the problem. necessary to solve the problem, provides the necessary feedback and support during the problem-solving process, and evaluates students' participation and products, with the aim of helping them expand their problem solving as well as their language and literacy skills.

In the classroom, teacher plays many important roles. In the desired student-centered learning environment for Problem Solving Activities, the students become the central figure of the teaching-learning process. Since it is a learner-centered activity, the teacher acts as a facilitator rather than a teacher. She introduces the problem and guides the discussion process while the students are involved in the learning process. She should create friendly and relaxed teaching-learning atmosphere where students will not be embarrassed.

According to Jurkovic (2005), some or all of the following roles can be played by the teacher. The first role is as a problem designer. Teacher designs the problems together with the subject teacher and asks them for ideas or approval. The second role is as a advisor, where teacher advises the students to turn to the subject teacher to be active regarding the use of bibliography and teacher must ensure that students can contract it when needed. The third is as an assessor where teacher can assess the language aspect of oral presentation and the content of the presentation.

Based on the research background and the statements stated above, the following research questions are formulated:

1. How does the teacher perceive her/his roles in applying Problem Solving Activity to teach speaking?
2. How does she/he play successfully the roles that can support students' speaking ability?
3. How do the students perceive teacher's roles to support students' speaking ability?

## **METHOD**

The researcher chooses descriptive qualitative research in designing her research. This due to the focus of this study which want to observe the teacher activities during the implementation of Problem-Solving Activity in the teaching of speaking. According to Best (1970), qualitative research is concerned with existing conditions or relationships; applicable practices; beliefs, viewpoints, or attitudes held; ongoing process; the effects being felt; or a growing trend. The role of the researcher here is to access the thoughts and feelings of study participants.

The first research question aims to determine the teacher's knowledge about her roles in applying Problem Solving Activity. The researcher will use observation by writing kind of notes (field notes) or recording the activities in classroom to obtain accurate factual data of documents (date and time) and the settings, actions, behaviors, and conversations.

The second research question purpose is to know what the roles of teacher in applying this method. Thus, structured interview which contain and procedures are organized in advance. of open-ended questions here is needed. In order to know the result, the researcher will use tape-record interview and transcript these tapes for analysis.

The third research question is to know how far the teacher can play the roles successfully using this method. The researcher uses questionnaire which is multiple choice question (close ended) for the students. They are allowed to choose one of a pre-existing set of dichotomous answers, such as yes/no, true/false, or multiple choice.

Referring to the research questions, the subjects of the study were English teacher and first grade classes in SMKN 1 Jombang. The students of first grade classes of vocational school generally already have background of English in their Junior High School. Thus, in this school, the learners should be able to deliver what they have in mind in oral form.

In this study, to conduct the data of the study, the researcher also used some other instruments which are field notes observation, transcription, and. Questionnaire. The data of the study contains the results of the used of instruments in analyzing teacher's activities when using Problem Solving Activity in teaching speaking.

The result of the teacher's actions which consist activities that she is doing in teaching and learning process. It will be used to answer the first research question that is to find out teacher's knowledge about her roles in applying Problem Solving Activity.

The result of the teacher's answer which consist of the description or explanation related to the the interviewer's questions. It will be used to answer second research

question that is to know what the roles of teacher in applying this method.

The result of questionnaire will be used to answer the third research question which is to describe how the students' response towards the use of journalist question in writing recount text.

The result of the teacher's actions which consist activities that she/he is doing in teaching and learning process. It will be used to answer the first research question that is to find out teacher's knowledge about her roles in applying Problem Solving Activity.

In this study, the researcher collected the data through observation since this study is categorized as a qualitative research. Observation is the process of collecting first-hand information openly by observing people and places to record information as it occurs and to study actual behavior at the research site (Creswell, 2010). The researcher used field note observation. The researcher wrote all information about everything that happen during the teaching-learning process in the form of long note. The researcher also combined the observation method with the interview to the teacher to avoid bias and subjectivity in collecting the data. Then, giving questionnaires to the students to know their responses related to teacher's teaching process.

The result of the data was analyzed descriptively. The researcher tends to write down all information she saw and heard.

Moyles (2002: 181) (as cited in Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007) suggests that researchers need to note the physical and contextual setting of the observation, the participants (e.g. number, who they are, who comes and goes, what they do and what are their roles), the time of day of the observation, the layout of the setting (e.g.s eating arrangements, arrangement of desks), the chronological events observed, and critical events that occurred.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

These presented data are aimed to answer the research questions related to the applying of Problem-Solving Activity to teach speaking.

### **How the teacher perceives her roles in applying problem solving activity to teach speaking**

In order to answer the first research question, the researcher used observation to know the teacher's knowledge in applying Problem Solving Activity to teach speaking. The result shows that the teacher has a good knowledge about problem solving activity in teaching speaking. This because at first, she started the class by an issue to be analyzed by the students. The teacher also

guided the students to have the steps of problem-solving activity according to Dewey (in Trianto, 2007:17).

The first step used in the speaking class was students identified the problem. After that, students analyzed the issue given by the teacher. Then, the students connected the analysis and the possibilities to solve such problems. Then students considered the possibility of an answer or a hypothesis with each consequence. At last, the students tried to practice the that they considered could be the best possible solutions. The following are the results of my observations in classroom where students are asked to learn to solve a problem:

The teacher asked the students to read a text which explained about a problem that happened near them. The problem was someone who have younger brother with no parents at home because their parents went outside. She was confused because her younger brother was hungry and asked her to cook meal for him. So, she looked for an easy and simple recipe. The students worked in a group of six to make the recipe to help her solving the problem. Then, the students discussed for generating their ideas that could be used for solving the problem.

#### **How the teacher plays the roles successfully**

In order to answer the second research question, the researcher used integrated interview to know the teacher's role in applying Problem Based Learning to teach speaking. From the interview, the teacher said that because it was problem solving activity, so the central figure was the student. She acted as a facilitator rather than a teacher. She introduced the problem and guided the process of discussion. Her roles were as the problem designer. She designed the problem. She also became an advisor. She made sure the students could contact her when necessary. She also became the assessor. She assessed the language aspect of oral presentation and the content of presentation. This is relevant to Jurkovic (2005). He said that the teacher's roles are problem designer, advisor and assessor. Based on the observation, when the students worked in a group and discussed for generating their ideas that could be used for solving the problem, the teacher went around the class to observe the students' work and created friendly and relaxed teaching-learning atmosphere. And in the end of presentation of the students, the teacher gave conclusion and general feedback for all groups.

#### **The students' perception of teacher's roles in applying problem solving activity to teach speaking**

In order to answer the last research question, the researcher gave questionnaire to 36 students. There were 5 questions on the questionnaire with five possible scales.

Table 1. Students' Perception

No	Topic	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Total (%)
1	Problem solving activity can develop idea easier in speaking	0	0	0	44.4	55.6	100
2	Problem solving activity makes students speak more fluently	0	0	13.9	44.4	41.7	100
3	Problem solving activity makes the students understand deeper the content of the speech	0	0	0	30.6	69.4	100
4	Problem solving activity builds critical thinking to solve the problem	0	0	0	22.2	77.8	100
5	Problem solving activity can enrich the vocabulary	0	0	27.8	50	22.2	100

Note:

SD = Strongly Disagree

D = Disagree

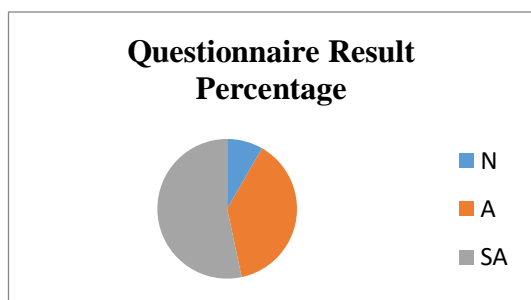
N = Neutral

A = Agree

SA = Strongly Agree

The first question was problem solving activity can develop idea easier in speaking. 16 participants answered agree, 20 participants answered strongly agree. The second question was problem solving activity makes students speak more fluently. 5 participants answered neither agree nor disagree, 16 participants answered agree and 15 participants answered strongly agree. The third question was problem solving activity makes the students understand deeper the content of the speech. 11 participants answered agree and 25 participants answered

strongly agree. The fourth question was problem solving activity builds critical thinking to solve the problem. 8 participants answered agree and 28 participants answered strongly agree. The fifth question was problem solving activity can enrich the vocabulary. 10 participants answered neither agree nor disagree, 18 participants answered agree and 8 participants answered agree.



Picture 1. Questionnaire Result Percentage

Note:

N = Netral

A = Agree

SA = Strongly Agree

Based on the pie diagram, the researcher concluded that most of the students strongly agree with the use of problem-solving activity to teach speaking. This because the result shows that 8.4% (15) neither agree nor disagree, 38.3% (69) agree and 53.3% (96) strongly agree calculated data of 36 participants. Therefore, there was no participant who disagree with problem solving activity to teach speaking. The students felt happy with the use of this method because they could develop idea easier, spoke more fluently, and built critical thinking to solve the problem that happened around them.

## CONCLUSION

The study was conducted to investigate teacher's roles in applying problem solving activity to teach speaking. The result showed that the teacher used some steps in applying problem solving activity. The steps were identifying the problem, analyzing the issues, considering the possibility answer and consequences, and practicing the best possible solutions (performing).

In response to the second research questions, interview was done to know the teacher's role. According to the result, the teacher's roles in applying problem solving activity to teach speaking were the managerial and the instructional.

In response to the third research question, a questionnaire was administrated in order to examine students' view on problem solving activity to teach speaking. According to the result, 8.4% (15) neither agree

nor disagree, 38.3% (69) agree and 53.3% (96) strongly agree with problem solving activity to teach speaking.

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