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Mahardhika Zifana

THE ANALYSIS OF TEACHER'S TALK IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO CHILDREN AT INDONESIAN KINDERGARTEN

Winti Ananthia, Charlotte A. Harun, Endah Silawati
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia Kampus Cibiru
winti@upi.edu

Abstract

This paper describes the analysis of Teacher's Talk used by teacher in teaching English to children at Indonesian kindergarten. The focus of the study is the quality of teacher's talk which covers segmental and suprasegmental elements. The segmental elements being discussed in this paper are 1) sentence structure, 2) the variety of speech form, and 3) diction which includes morpheme and phoneme. While the suprasegmental elements are 1) fluency, 2) articulation, 3) intonation, and 4) efficient pace given to children to respond the teacher's talk. Descriptive qualitative is employed as the research method. The subjects of the study are three PGPAUD students of UPI Kampus Cibiru who are conducting research regarding teaching English in Kindergarten for their skripsi. They took the position as teachers of the class. Those students were selected using purposive sampling technique. The data collection techniques that are used in this study are the teacher's talk design prepared by the PGPAUD students, video recording transcript, and in depth interview. The result of the study shows that the students have the ability in designing good quality of teacher's talk. But there are some lacks of suprasegmental elements in the implementation.
Keywords: English for Young Learner, Teacher's talk, Indonesian kindergarten

INTRODUCTION

English is considered important in a more globalised era as an one of the indicators of personal and professional development. In Indonesia, where English is considered as a foreign language, the teaching of English have started in the preschool level. English is taught at kindergarten level to fulfil the demand from parents who realise the importance of English for their children's future professional development. Besides that reason, some of the kindergartens in Bandung teach English to children simply because they implement a programme launched by Bandung government which called *"Kamis Inggris"*. This programme recommends every element of Bandung citizen – from the goverment officers to students and teachers in school context to speak in English on Thursday.

Unfortunately, more often than not, the teaching of English in kindergarten level was delivered in a not-meaningful way. The learning process mostly evolved around rote drill and memorisation, where children were asked to memorise sets of English vocabulary with the Indonesian translation. The unmeaningful English lesson at kindergarten happened because of many reasons. One of the reasons could be the low ability of teacher in mastering English lesson to be taught to kindergarten children.

The teachers teaching English at kindergarten mostly graduated from early childhood education programme (called PGPAUD), not from department of English education. Therefore, it is a big challenge for them to teach English to kindergarten children, since they may have limited English or insufficient fluency in the target language. In addition, the feedback from some institutions who employ PGPAUD UPI *Kampus* Cibiru graduates shows the employers did not satisfy with the graduates' English skill and ability.

Therefore, there is a need to improve the quality of English teaching conducted by PGPAUD UPI *Kampus* Cibiru graduates by identifying the challenges and difficulties faced by teachers teaching English at kindergarten level. Besides, it is also important to analyse the teachers' skill in teaching English to children. Improving the quality of teacher's talk is one of the ways to improve the quality of English teaching since it is one of the most important elements in supporting children input of the target language (Brewster, Ellis & Girard, 2002; Moon, 2000; Halliwell, 1992).

This paper aims to describe the analysis of teacher's talk used by teachers in teaching English to children at Indonesian kindergarten. It is hoped that the analysis of the teacher's talk can depict the strengths and weaknesses of the PGPAUD UPI *Kampus* Cibiru students in teaching English to kindergarten students so that the strengths can be further developed, while the weaknesses can be eliminated. It is also hoped that the teacher's talk analysis can improve the kindergarten teachers' skill and ability in teaching English to children in a more meaningful way.

THEORY & METHODOLOGY

Young child is believed could learn a language easily in a relatively short time. Although sometimes it is considered as an artificial language ability (Pinter, 2006), the opinion is based on the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) theory proposed by Lenneberg (Brewster, Ellis & Girard, 2002). In spite of the fact that Lenneberg's CPH focuses on how a child acquired the first language, the theory is also applied on how a child learn a second language (L2) or foreign language (FL) (Brewster, Ellis & Girard, 2002; Phillips, 1993). According to the theory, every child has a golden phase of life, when the child is exposed to a particular language, the language would be acquired/learnt successfully. Based on the argument, there is a presumption of "the younger the better" which becomes the keystone of the teaching of English at kindergarten in Indonesia.

However, the decision to introduce English at the early childhood education was not followed by the readiness of the human resources, in other words, the teachers teaching English at kindergarten. Teacher is a central element of the quality of learning. Notwithstanding, teacher's talk is one of the most important key elements of the quality of foreign language learning, since it is the main source of input for the students' target language development (Scott & Ytreberg, 2003; Brewster, Ellis & Girard, 2002; Cameron, 2001; Moon, 2000, Halliwell, 1992).

Previous researches had been conducted to depict the ability of UPI *Kampus* Cibiru students in teaching English during their teaching practice program (called PPL). The research of Yuliariatiningsih, Yanthi, dan Ananthia (2008) showed that the most difficult challeges faced by the PGSD students are the aspects of vocabulary, pronunciation, and diction. Before the teaching and learning process, the teacher designed the procedure in Bahasa Indonesia, which then translated into English. Therefore the classroom language produced by the teacher was not natural English.

In addition, the research of Yanthi, Yuliariatiningsih dan Setyaningsih (2010) showed that the teacher faced some difficulties in giving the classroom language during the teaching and learning process. As the result, the teacher experienced difficulties in managing the class. While Harun and Ananthia (2013) also unveiled the fact that, again, classroom language has become the most challenging issue for non-English department graduand teachers. The insufficient ability of giving proper classroom language during the process of teaching and learning have resulted to the failure of classroom management, which at the end affects the quality of English language teaching for the children. Specifically, the research showed that the graduand teachers experienced the difficulties in giving effective instructions, modelling correct pronunciation, and managing the class (Harun & Ananthia, 2013). One of the solutions to overcome the problems is by leveraging the quality of teacher's talk in the process of teaching and learning.

The study employed the descriptive qualitative method. This method is selected to obtain the picture of the design and implementation of teacher's talk in teaching English to children at Indonesian kindergarten. The analysis focused on segmental and suprasegmental elements of teacher's talk. Purposive sampling technique is used in selecting the subjects of the study; they are three PGPAUD UPI *Kampus* Cibiru students. They were conducting research regarding teaching English in Kindergarten for their *skripsi*. They took the position as English teachers in one of kindergartens in Kecamatan Gedebage, Bandung. The kindergarten was chosen as the place of the study because those PGPAUD students have completed the teaching practice there for three months before they conducted the research. Therefore, it is assumed that the children in the kindergarten were familiar with PGPAUD students as the teachers. Thus, the issue of unfriendly teacher-children relationship could be minimalised.

The techniques used in collecting the data are document analysis, observation and interview. The documents used as the data of this study are teacher's talks designed by the students for each meeting. While, observation is held in finding out the implementation of teacher's talk design. In Addition, the PGPAUD students as the model teachers were also interviewed in order to obtain information whether or not there are problems in designing and implementing the teacher's talk.

FINDING & DISCUSSION
The Profile of the Research Participants

The first participant is Desi. She is a PGPAUD student in her 8th semester. She taught English to B2 class (5-6 year-old children) with the topic of tree. There were five target vocabularies; namely, tree, flower, leaf, trunk and root. Desi integrated her teaching with a modified traditional Sundanese play, called *tetemute*. She also modified a *tetemute* song by changing the lyric of the original song with the target vocabularies. She tried to use only English for the whole of her teaching process. Although the students quite struggled in understanding her English classroom language, she kept on talking in English. It can be

said that she delivered her teacher's talk almost fully in English; except for one word, when she asked her students to touch the leaf as one of the parts of the tree by saying "Pick the leaf! Pick! *Tunjuk!*". Generally, Desi had the ability to paraphrase her instruction when she found her students puzzled with her previous instruction. She equipped herself with colourful of visual media in the form of some colourful big trees that were sticked on the wall of the class.

The second participant of the research is Mirza. She is also a PGPAUD student in her 8th semester. She taught English in B1 class (5-6 year-old children) by applying Total Physical Response (TPR) method. The target vocabularies were colours, namely, brown, purple, grey, light blue and dark blue. Besides the main target vocabularies, the children were also expected to be familiar with the words of chef and cake, since the topic of Mirza's lesson is talking about the colour of cupcakes. In delivering her lesson, Mirza kept providing the Indonesian translation right after giving the instruction in English. She also applied 'Simon says' game in implementing the TPR method. Explaining the rules of the game was considered as one of the big challenges for her. It seemed that she was not confident enough that the children would understand her English instruction. Therefore sometimes she translated the instruction into Bahasa Indonesia by saying, for example, "Who wants to play a game? *Ada yang mau main game?*", or simply just instructed the children in Bahasa Indonesia, for example by saying, "*Kalau Miss tidak bilang Simon say, maka teman-teman tidak usah menunjuk cakenya*". However, she was very consistent in always saying the target vocabularies in English.

The third participant of this study is Dwiyanti who is also a PGPAUD student in her 8th semester. She taught English in A1 class (4-5 year-old children) by integrating the origami activity. However, she did not set clear aims in her lesson, whether the target vocabularies were colours, verbs used in the process of making the origami, or the shape of the origami paper after the process of folding the papers, namely frog, cat, and fish. Despite the unclear of teaching objectives, she was quite consistent in using only English in the whole process of her teaching. Most of the time, she delivered her teacher's talk in English, from greeting to grouping the children, not to mention in presenting the target vocabularies. She also integrated her teaching with a storytelling about a frog, a cat and a fish. She mostly used direct vocabulary instruction, especially in the process of making the origami. The children can easily follow her instruction, since she also demonstrated how to make the origami during the process. However, she sometimes made mistakes in saying the imperative instruction. Instead of saying "stand up, please", she said "standing up, please".

The Analysis of Segmental Element of Teacher's Talk

The analysis of segmental element focuses on the teacher's talk design which is one of the teaching preparation process. This process is crucial in teaching English to children since children at kindergarten level is in the imitation process of learning. Every word said by the teachers will be fully aquired by the students, whether it is right or wrong. That is why ideally, teachers should be prepared and practice the intonation and pronunciation correctly in giving the classroom language in the form of teacher's talk, otherwise they may give children incorrect models (Moon, 2000).

Before teaching in the class, the three research participants were asked to design lesson plans. They had to include the teacher's talk in the lesson plans. The teacher's talk design prepared consisted of three steps of learning, which were opening, main activity and closing. The analysis of segmental area covers some elements, namely: 1) sentence structure, 2) the variety of speech form, and 3) diction. The analysis summary is presented below.

The first element of the analysis is sentence structure. Sentences are composed of discrete elements combined by rules which explain how speakers can store infinite knowledge in a finite space-brain. The analysis focuses on syntax and grammar since the rules of Indonesian syntax and grammar are different from English. From the context of syntax, the three participants had designed simple and unambiguous teachers' talk. Their teachers' talk design had not had any potential of having more than one meaning. However, the teachers mostly made mistakes in the sentence structure, especially in composing verbal or nominal sentence. They had difficulties in deciding whether they have to say "are you ready?" or "do you ready?". The same thing happened when they have to choose between "are you understand?" or "do you understand?". In examining their teacher's talk design, it was probed that they also had difficulties in using the English articles of 'a/an' and 'the'.

In the term of variety of speech form, most of the teachers use the direct instruction vocabularies in the form of imperative sentences. As it is said earlier that one of the participants also did a storytelling in one of the teaching activities. This kind of embedded vocabulary instruction has number of benefits

since it provides the children with definitions of the target vocabularies in meaningful and supportive context (Coyne, McCoach, Loftus, Zipoli Jr., & Kapp, 2009). However, in the term of giving effective instruction, most of the teachers had designed long instruction, which is not recommended in teaching English to children (Bradshaw, 2005). Bradshaw suggests in giving effective instruction, teachers should consider the aspect of clarity, conciseness, and completeness. Teacher should also check whether or not the students understand the instruction. Therefore, it is highly recommended for teachers to only include essential information that the children need to carry out the activity (Bradshaw, 2005). Consequently, instead of saying, "Ok children, I have a game that we can play together...", it is better for teachers to say "Ok children, it's game time!".

Generaly, from the diction element, there is no significant problem faced by the teachers. However, there were few words that were used not in a proper way, such as when one of the teachers said, "pick the leaf!", while she meant to ask her students to touch the leaf. Another minor problem in deciding the diction is regarding the using of 'cat' word to refer to someone who should be the seeker in the game. This word was chosen from the Indonesian word '*kucing*'. However, although it is not the right word to be used in English, it made the children easier to grasp the meaning since they were familiar with the word '*kucing*' with the English translation 'cat' in the context of playing a game.

The Analysis of Supra Segmental Element's of Teacher's Talk
The suprasegmental elements analysis is focused on the implementation of the teacher's talk which had been designed beforehand. The analysis of suprasegmental covers the fluency, articulation, and intonation, as well as efficient pace given to children to respond to the teacher's talk. From the fluency aspect, all of the three participants did not face any significant difficulties. All of them could deliver the lesson well, despite that one of the teachers kept doing the code switching and translating her English instruction into bahasa Indonesia. In addition, there is also another finding that in using English during the teachers' talk, sometimes it was hard for the teachers to avoid the Indonesian filler '*nah*'. The teachers had also shown their ability in doing good articulation and intonation during the teacher's talk. Their articulation and intonation were clear, and they also spoke in normal speed. Finally, they also gave efficient pace to children in responding to the teachers' talk. As it is suggested by Bradshaw (2005) that it is important for the teachers to create silent pauses to see how the children are doing, and if the silent pauses is too long, it means it is time for the teachers to repeat and/or rephrase the instruction, which had already well done by the three teachers.

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION
The conclusion of the study shows that the PGPAUD students have the ability in designing good quality of teacher's talk. However, there are some lacks of suprasegmental elements in the implementation, especially in the term of giving instruction. The PGPAUD students tend to use longer sentence in giving instruction, while the concise instruction is preferable in teaching English to children.

The study has come with a suggestion to conduct an intensive supervision toward PGPAUD students who decide to conduct the English Language Teaching (ELT) to kindergarten children. One of the supervision method that can be implemented is the clinical supervision during their PPL (teaching practice) time. By implementing the clinical supervision, it is hoped that student teachers could be given some feedback on their teaching performance, where they could improve their performance in the future.

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RIWAYAT HIDUP/CURRICULUM VITAE

1. Nama/Complete Name : Winti Ananthia
   Institusi/Institution : UPI Kampus Cibiru
   Pendidikan/Education :
   * Sarjana Pendidikan, Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FPBS UPI (2002)
   * Master of Education, Specialised in TESOL-International, Monash University, Australia (2010)

   Minat Penelitian/Research Interests :
   * Teaching English to Young Learner (TEYL)
   * Teaching English through storytelling
   * Promoting International understanding values through education

2. Nama/Complete Name : Charlotte Ambat Harun
   Institusi/Institution : UPI Kampus Cibiru
   Pendidikan/Education :
   * Sarjana Pendidikan, Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FPBS IKIP Bandung (1985)
   * Master Pendidikan, Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, UPI (2005)

   Minat Penelitian/Research Interests :
   * Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris
   * Pembelajaran Bahasa dan Kearifan Lokal
   * Curriculum Development for English Language Teaching

3. Nama/Complete Name : Endah Silawati
   Institusi/Institution : UPI Kampus Cibiru
   Pendidikan/Education :
   * Sarjana Pendidikan, Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FPBS UPI (2005)
   * Master Pendidikan, Pendidikan Dasar, Kons.PAUD (2010)

   Minat Penelitian/Research Interests :
   * Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini
   * Literasi dini
   * Permainan tradisional