

The Effectiveness of Socio-Affective Strategies in Students' Speaking Proficiency

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Socio affective strategies

Speaking skills

Students' speaking proficiency

This research had the purpose to measure the effectiveness of Socio-affective strategies to enhance students' speaking proficiency. The method of quantitative was employed with pre-experimental approach. The experiment itself was held in the even semester of 2023/2024 academic year by involving 16 students of grade 9 of SMP Assa'adah, Radio Dalam, South Jakarta. These students were occupied in one class and selected through cluster random sampling. In collecting the data, speaking pre-test and post-test were used as the instruments. The data were analyzed statistically by using Wilcoxon test. The quantitative computation showed that the students performed better in speaking in the post-test in which they gained higher average score, that was 79.37 while in the pre-test the average score reached was only 46.87. Besides, the results of Wilcoxon test revealed that the value of Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) of 0.001 was lower than 0.05 ($0.001 < 0.05$). Based on these findings, this research work concluded that Socio affective strategies were effective to enhance students' speaking proficiency.



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Introduction

English has become one of the media in communication that bridges language and cultural differences in the international world (Mutiarani & Rahman, 2019). Therefore, in English learning, speaking is considered to be the cornerstone to acquire by the students (Rao, 2019), as it serves foundation for effective English communication. Besides, speaking proficiency is commonly used as a clear indicator of students' competence in a language learning. Through speaking, students can be understood easier in expressing their messages (Ur in Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). That is why, speaking class is aimed to equip the learners with the capability to use the language correctly and accurately (Davies & Pearse cited by Leong & Ahmadi, 2017).

According to Behtash, et.al. (2016), speaking or oral communication is an interactive activity involving two or more participants who are required to respond to each other at a high level. Each participant has a purpose ability to stand out from the rest or a goal that they aim to accomplish through the interaction. Gilakjani (2016) opined that speaking involves the act of expressing ideas and communicating messages verbally. However, for students who learn English as a foreign language such as in Indonesia, acquiring speaking is challenging. Tuan & Mai (2015) highlighted that students' speaking presentations are largely influenced by psychological factors like fear of making mistakes, peer pressure, anxiety, lack of confidence and others. Based on the researchers' observation in one of the school in Indonesia, several difficulties faced by secondary school students in Indonesia are including: a) being reluctant to speak English due to the concern of how others might react to their mistakes; b) lack of vocabulary; c) limited knowledge of sentences structure (syntax); d) less of confidence; e) lack of motivation to use English; and, f) teachers' ineffective methods/strategies/media in teaching speaking.

In order to minimize these problems, teacher needs an effective strategy to teach speaking skill to students. There are many speaking strategies that can be implemented and one of them is socio affective strategy. Socio-affective strategies involve activities that facilitate social interaction and engagement with others, as outlined by Zeynalli (2015). These strategies promote cooperation and seek clarification through actions like asking questions for verification, clarifying confusing points, seeking help with language tasks, interacting with native speakers in conversations and learning about cultural and social norms.

Dehini & Amiri (2022) said that Socio-affective strategies refer to non-academic methods that foster empathy between teachers and learners, influencing learning through emotional engagement and attitude. Socio-affective strategies relate to social-mediated activities and dealings with others (O'Malley, Chamot, in Zarei, Saeidi, & Ahangari:2022). Socio-affective strategies focus on understanding and addressing mental and behavioral differences among learners, aiming to enhance students' learning experiences (Ata, 2016, p.170). O'Malley and Chamot in Para (2010) defined Socio-affective strategies as methods that assist learners in managing and influencing their emotions, motivation, and attitudes towards learning. Tajzadeh, et.al (2013) explained that using Socio-affective strategies offers several benefits such as reducing anxiety through mental techniques and resolving issues through interactions between teachers and students or among peers. Additionally, these strategies can enhance speaking abilities, leading to improved performance. Ata (2016) concluded that Social affective strategies provide benefits in educational activities.

There are three steps of activities involved in Socio affective strategies as proposed by Vickova, et.al., 2013 as follows: *One*, Questioning; where the students ask teacher or peer to clarify or explain, rephrase, or give examples. Sometimes, they will also ask their own peer when they do not understand, and if they peer's answer does not satisfy them, they will their teacher. *Two*, Cooperation; in this activity, students collaborate among them, working together with peers to gather feedback, share information, or be model language activities. *Three*, Self-talk; this activity refers to using mental strategies to enhance one's confidence and reduce anxiety while completing tasks. Through self-talk, students will not be stressed and feeling down when they make a mistake since they will try to correct or try in another way to express their speech.

In implementing Socio affective strategies, Bakar (2014) proposed several things that teacher should know as follows: 1) generating students' interest in new learning environment before the class begins; 2) developing a positive emotional connection and not just delivering the content but also emphasizing its values to students; 3) encouraging students to interact with each other and collaborate to solve problems, such as preparing together before presenting their performance to the class; 4) normalizing unfamiliar things to reduce students' anxiety about them; 5) building students' self-belief and enhance their self-confidence when they need to speak in front of the class and or present their speaking performance.

In terms of speaking practice, Bakar (2014) also proposed several procedures that teacher should take in employing Socio affective strategies, i.e., 1) making the atmosphere of the class such as do an ice breaking or something else before starting the lesson; 2) giving students advice and information on what they can do in the future if they are proficient in English; 3) giving the students materials to study and let them interact with others or cooperate to solve problems during the learning; 4) students begin to learn and practice what they have learned with their friends; 5) appreciating and encouraging them to be confident even if they make mistake; 6) evaluating students' understanding and progress.

There were several studies that applied Socio affective strategies in speaking class. A study of Galti 2016) who researched students of Kashim College of Education in Maiduguri, Nigeria in 2016 reported that Socio affective strategies was proven to enhance students' speaking skills and decreased their speaking anxiety levels. Another study done Jamaledin (2015) in Shiraz Azad University Iran, reported that 50 students who learned speaking by using Socio affective strategies made improvement in their WTC (willing to communicate). Besides, the students' anxiety, fear, and apprehension that hindered their speaking participation also decreased after the researchers employed Socio affective strategies.

The plethora of prior studies which investigated the employment of socio affective strategies in speaking skill were still limited, particularly in secondary school in Indonesia. Therefore, referring to the background above and due to the scarcity of Socio affective strategies research on speaking proficiency, this research work was proposed to fill this gap through the research question formulated as follows: "Do Socio affective strategies impact students' speaking proficiency?". The researchers believe that this research gives valuable contribution to TEFL both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the findings of this study enriched literature in TEFL especially in terms of speaking strategies and speaking skill. Meanwhile, in practice, this research gave insights and knowledge both to EFL teachers and students.

Method

This research was conducted in the even semester of academic year 2023/2024 at Junior High School Assa'adah, Radio Dalam, South Jakarta. This school is an Islamic boarding school. There were 16 students of grade 9 occupied in one class participated as sample in this study. This class was selected through cluster random sampling out of 5 classes of grade 9.

The method used was quantitative with pre-experimental approach. Creswell (2018) explained that quantitative research involves testing objective theories by analyzing the relationships between variables. Apuke (2017:40) stated that quantitative study deals with quantifying, observing, and collecting data or

variables to get results and make conclusion about the data. Additionally, Creswell (2018) added that a pre-experimental design involves using a single group and implementing an intervention during the experiment, without including a control group for comparison with the experimental group.

In data collection, speaking pre-test and post-test were used as the tools. The researcher administered speaking pre-test at the first meeting of their experimental meeting series, whereas speaking post-test was held after 6 meetings of the treatment, i.e., teaching speaking practice to students by using Socio affective strategies. In both tests, the students were given instructions on how to build small group dialogue with several topics' selection. They worked in a group with 4 members. Each of group was given around 5-6 minutes to perform their dialogue. Even though it was group task, speaking performance was assessed on personal basis.

All data gathered from these two tests were analyzed statistically by using Wilcoxon test. There were several steps taken by the researchers to analyze the data, namely: 1) assessing each student's speaking performance in the pre-test and pos-test by referring to speaking assessment rubric of Meena (2020) as on Table 1; 2) computing total score and average score gained by the students in the two tests; 3) doing validity and normality test; 4) doing Wilcoxon test. The results of these quantitative tests were reported descriptively to make them clearly understood.

Table 1. Speaking Assessment Rubric

Score	Fluency	Pronunciation	Accuracy	Confidence	Vocabulary
1 - 5	Frequent hesitation during speech often disrupts communication	Frequent problems with pronunciation and intonation	Using basic structures and making frequent errors	Speaking with a poor amount of confidence	Using only basic vocabulary and expressions
6 - 10	Occasional hesitation which can sometimes disrupt communication	Pronunciation and intonation are sometimes not clear or inaccurate	Using a variety of structures with frequent errors or using basic structures occasionally	Speaking and showing some amounts of confidence	Using limited vocabulary and expressions
11 - 15	Some hesitation which seldom interferes the communication	Pronunciation and intonation are clear and accurate	Using a variety of grammatical structures but making some errors	Speaking with good amounts of confidence	Using a variety of vocabulary and expressions but making some errors in the word choice
16 - 20	Speaking fluently with minimal hesitation which does not hinder communication	Pronunciation and intonation are almost clear or accurate	Using a variety of structures with only occasionally errors	Speaking with an excellent amount of confidence	Using a variety of vocabs and expressions and almost never make some errors in the word choice

Adopted from Meena (2020)

Results and Discussions

The following Table 2 displays students' pre-test and post-test results of speaking achievement:

Table 2. Students' Speaking Pre-test and Post-test

NO	Name	Pre-test	Post-test
1	MFA	50	90
2	D	50	80
3	Vs	50	80
4	Y	40	80
5	MFA	50	80
6	MF	50	70
7	AF	40	70
8	MF	50	80
9	SAF	40	80
10	MZR	50	70
11	AAW	40	90
12	MLS	60	80
13	PYA	40	80
14	MAT	50	80
15	MPS	50	80
16	YA	40	80
TOTAL SCORE		750	1.270
AVERAGE SCORE		46.87	79.37

From Table 2 above, it can be clearly seen that total obtained score of students' speaking pre-test was 750 with the average score of 46.87, whereas in the post-test, total obtained score was 1.270 with the average score of 79.37. These numbers revealed that students performed better in the post-test in which they made progress up to 32.5 points. In other words, it was assumed that the students reached different achievement before and after the treatment or after they studied speaking through the implementation of Socio affective strategies. The highest score hit by the students in the pre-test was 60 and the lowest one was 40. In the post-test, the highest score reached by them was 90 and the lowest one was 70. To be put into graphic, these results are displayed on below Figure 1:

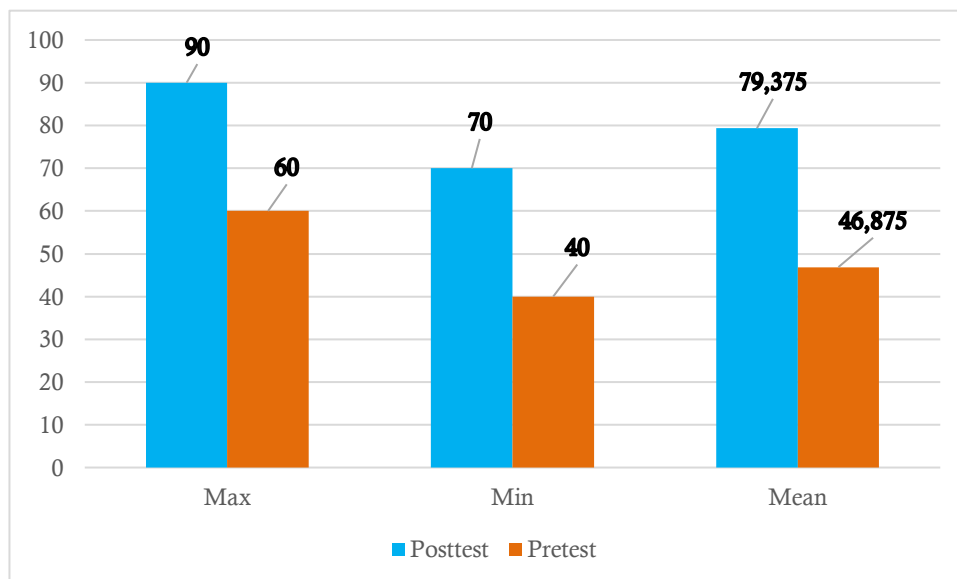


Figure 1. Students' Speaking Achievement in the Pre-test and Post-test

In order to proceed to analyze the data statistically by using Paired sample t-test, validity and normality tests should be taken. The researchers used Shapiro Wilk test. According to Santoso (2014), data are categorized as normally distributed if the test results have Sig. value more than 0.05. The following Table 3 presents the computation results of normality test processed by using Shapiro Wilk test:

Table 3. Normality Test Results of the Data

Test	Statistic	Shapiro-Wilk	
		Df	Sig.
Score Pretest	.759	16	<.001
Posttest	.748	16	<.001

Based on calculation output, the value of Sig. of the pretest was <.001 and of the posttest was <.001. Based on basic decision of Shapiro Wilk, both of tests' results indicated Sig. value < 0.05, hence it showed that all data in the pretest and posttest were not normally distributed. Therefore, paired sample t-test could not be applied for the next step. As the solution, Wilcoxon test was taken. The following Table 4 presents the results of Wilcoxon test analysis:

Table 4. Wilcoxon Test Ranks and Test Statistics

Posttest - Pretest	Ranks		
	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Negative Ranks	0 ^a	.00	.00
Positive Ranks	16 ^b	8.50	136.00
Ties	0 ^c		
Total	16		

Negative Ranks between pretest and posttest was 0 in N, Mean of Rank and Sum of Ranks. Zero value showed that there was no subtraction from pretest score into posttest score. Positive Ranks had the value of 16 in N, 8.5 in Mean Rank and 136 in Sum of Ranks. There were 16 positive data which explained that all 16 students made improvement in their speaking proficiency with the average increasing score of 8.5 and total of positive ranks was 136. Ties was similar in pre-test and post-test scores which gained 0 value hence it was said that there were no equal values between pre-test and post-test.

For hypothesis testing, output Test Statistics was used. Before analyzing the output, basic decision made in Wilcoxon test were as follows:

- a. If value of Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) < 0.05, H_a is accepted
- b. If value of Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) > 0.05, H_a is rejected

Based on the statistics test results above, it was seen that Asymp. Sig (2-tailed) value was < 0.001 or lower than 0.05, thus, it was deduced that H_a was accepted. This also confirmed that Socio affective strategies affected students' speaking achievement.

The research highlighted how Socio affective strategies significantly improved students' speaking skills, focusing notably on vocabulary enrichment and pronunciation enhancement. The progression from pre-test to post-test results as shown on Tables above showed significant improvement on students' scores. This suggested that the interventions were successful in boosting students' linguistic competencies. The results also aligned with educational objective of improving spoken language skills through targeted teaching methodologies.

Detailed analysis of students' progress offered insight into the incremental learning gains achieved through the process of speaking practices. This showed continuous and focused interventions which were able to lead to substantial enhancements in specific linguistic areas, reinforcing the potential of structured and repetitive practice in language learning settings. This statistical validation was crucial for recommending Socio affective strategies as a viable method for language teaching, particularly in terms of speaking proficiency.

The findings had significant implications for foreign language learning. Socio affective strategies which included personalized attention and encouragement, could effectively enhance students' oral language proficiency. This also informed educators and curriculum developers in designing and structuring more effective language learning. The findings of this research is in line with a theory from O'Malley and Chamot in Para (2010) that mentioned Socio affective strategy is effective to shift the learners' emotion, motivation and attitude towards learning. Moreover, many previous related studies also strengthen the result of this research such as from Zeynalli (2015), Dehini & Amiri (2022), Zarei, Saeidi, & Ahangari (2022), Ata (2016), Tajzadeh, et.al (2013), Galti (2016) and Jamaledin (2015) which all agreed that Socio affective strategy is found effective to improve students' speaking proficiency. By showing so, it means that the result of this research is in line to strengthen the theory and the previous studies.

Conclusions

The investigation of Socio affective strategies was proven by quantitative analysis in which the students' speaking achievement in the post-test outperformed the pre-test. On the average, the students made progress up to 32.5 points from the pre-test to post-test. Furthermore, statistical analysis of Wilcoxon test showed that Asymp. Sig (2-tailed) value was < 0.001 or lower than 0.05, thus, it was deduced that H_a was accepted. This also confirmed that Socio affective strategies affected students' speaking achievement.

The effectiveness of Socio affective strategies in controlled language learning setting suggests future studies to explore the applicability of these approaches across different linguistic and cultural contexts. Additionally, expanding this research to include other aspects of language learning and different age groups, grades, with more students as the sample could provide deeper insights into the universal applicability and scalability of these strategies.

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