TEACHING SPEAKING DURING THE COVID-19 IN AN INDONESIAN RURAL SCHOOL: A TEACHER'S EXPERIENCES

Firman[1*], Isti Siti Saleha Gandana[2]

[12] Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia

*Firman.uze1927@upi.edu

ABSTRACT

The pandemic has significantly impacted many aspects of life, including in the education sector, where schools were forced to shift to online learning mode. Such a shift created new challenges for teachers, as many were not prepared for the change. Further, many rural schools in the country faced the challenge of providing adequate infrastructure and facilities for online learning. This qualitative case study inquired into ways in which an Indonesian rural teacher taught speaking to her students and deal with the challenges of online learning. It specifically examined the strategies used in teaching speaking skills. Data were gained mainly from in-depth interviews. The interviews revealed that the teacher used Google Meet and WhatsApp as the main online learning platforms, and she drew on a number of strategies to teach speaking, such as doing role play, drilling, and engaging students to ensure that they could understand materials better. The study sheds light on the challenges rural teachers faced during the pandemic and how they can be better attended to in providing meaningful learning.

Keywords: *covid-19, rural school, teaching speaking*

1.   INTRODUCTION

English is used in communication on a global scale as a second or foreign language. Indonesia is one of the nations that speak English as a second language. English has long been a requirement for admission to every school in Indonesia, from elementary to high school. The 2013 curriculum includes certain fundamental competencies for students, including behavior, knowledge, and learning process skills. (Kemendikbud, 2012). Students must become proficient in four skills: speaking, reading, and writing. English was a local topic in elementary school but the main subject in junior and senior high school. It's because communicating in English is necessary in this age of globalization if you want to compete with others. Speaking is a method of communication. Producing, receiving, and digesting information orally during speech is an interactive process that helps generate meaning (Brown, 2004).

Yet, some institutions continue to view the use of English learning to be subpar. Even though some of them have studied English for six years or longer, they are unable to communicate in English on a daily basis. This problem is largely caused by a lack of enthusiasm, boring instruction, or a lack of teaching strategies. According to some experience in teaching and learning English in school, teachers still frequently employ traditional teaching methods because they are unaware of more effective ways to impart knowledge to their charges (Hidayati, et.al., 2021). As a result, teachers play important roles in the learning process and must come up with effective methods for meeting both students' demands in terms of speaking and learning goals.

Depending on the context and the learner, teachers will apply their teaching strategies in a variety of ways. Several researchers have done some studies on the strategies for teaching speaking. Teaching speaking through cooperative learning suits introverted students (Hakim, 2019), A "time token strategy" can improve speaking ability (Mappa & Karmila, 2022), and the use of roleplay to develop speaking skills (Negara, 2021) are the studies performed by the researchers on the strategy of teaching speaking. The use of strategy will be difference between students who live in villages and those who do not, even in urban areas with adequate resources. Hence, the approaches will vary.

Everything has changed as a result of the epidemic, particularly in the field of education. yet, students who typically complete all of their coursework in person in the classroom are required to complete it remotely using either a laptop or a mobile device connected to the internet. Regarding preventing COVID-19 in the educational setting, the minister of education and culture released a circular letter 3 of 2020, which contains this policy.

Those who live in urban areas with good facilities will find it easy to survive, but it will be exceedingly challenging for those who live in rural areas without facilities. Using technology and internet networks for instructional purposes, namely online learning. The characteristics of online learning, according to G. Dogmen in the journal Jailani (2020), are the existence of a body that governs independent learning, the delivery of learning materials via media, and the lack of direction between teachers and students. Under the regulation, long-distance education is defined as an educational model where remote learning technology is used (distance learning). According to the definition given above, both are instructional strategies   teachers employ to help pupils learn throughout the pandemic. Of course, it can make use of applicable technology and the internet. Nevertheless, in this instance, due to the pandemic, not all students have access to appropriate technology. As a result, teachers need to develop some techniques to help students, particularly those who reside in rural regions, during the pandemic. Besides, not only stating strategies facility but also the methodology in teaching should be decided as well too in order to enhance the effectiveness of teaching for students. This study examined how English teachers teach speaking skills in rural schools during the pandemic. This research was conducted directly or indirectly on English teachers in a rural area in the Purwakarta area. This study aimed to: (1) find out the strategies used by an English teacher in teaching speaking during pandemics in rural schools and (2) find out the obstacles to the implementation of the strategies.

This study is expected to provide benefits for teachers in determining learning strategies, especially during this pandemic but do not demand the possibility that it can be applied to learning outside the pandemic if needed so that learning will be more on purpose and more interesting to follow, and the students can master English, especially in the aspect of speaking skills.

2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Teaching Strategies

Any processes and activities intended to transfer knowledge, skills, and understanding at all educational levels are referred to as teaching (Ayua, 2017). It indicates that teaching is a process in which instructors impart knowledge to students. The teachers have to develop a teaching strategy (Babba, 2020). A strategy is a plan created to accomplish a specific goal (Hornby, 2017). To attain a specific goal while teaching, a teacher must balance their strategies with the needs of their students. Various teaching methods translate into various approaches to support students' learning (Zulfian and Omolu, 2018). It implies that strategy cannot be disregarded in both teaching and learning.

2.2   The Nature of Speaking

The production, receiving, and processing of information all play a role in the interactive processes of meaning construction that is speaking (Brown, 2001). Speaking is defined as face-to-face engagement that is reciprocal and spatially placed (Carter & Nunan, 2001). Reciprocal means that speakers can contribute to the conversation at the same time and answer each contribution as soon as possible. Cameron (2001) mentioned that speaking is the active use of language to convey meanings so that others may understand you. Speaking in a foreign language to communicate with others effectively demands careful attention to exact terminology. Speaking is defined as a mutual in-person engagement that is physically present (Carter and Nunan, 2001). Speaking is the way by which information, ideas, or opinions are transferred from one person to another.

2.2.1   Micro and macro skills speaking

Speaking consists of micro-skills and macro-skills (Brown, 2004). The micro-skills refer to producing smaller chunks of language such as phonemes, morphemes, words, collocations, and phrasal units. Speaking with "macro abilities" means being able to focus on the most crucial details.

a.Macro skills
Using suitable styles, registers, implicatures, redundancies, pragmatic norms, conversation rules, floor-keeping, yielding, interrupting, and other sociolinguistic aspects in face-to-face discussions are all examples of how to use macro skills in communication. Provide connections and ties between events and communicative elements including central and auxiliary concepts, feelings and events, fresh information, generalization and exemplification, develop and use a battery of speaking techniques, such as emphasizing keywords, rephrasing, providing a context for interpreting the meaning of words, appealing for assistance, and accurately gauging how well your interlocutor is understanding you. You should also convey facial features, kinesics, body language, and other non-verbal cues along with verbal language.

b.   Micro skills
Creating disparities between English phonemes and allophonic variants, linguistic chunks of various durations, and English stress patterns are examples of micro-skills. Besides that, words in stressed and unstressed positions, rhythmic structure, and intonation contours, produce reduced forms of words and phrases, use a sufficient number of lexical units (words) to achieve pragmatic goals; produce fluent speech at different rates of delivery, monitor one's oral production and use various strategic devices, use grammatical word classes (nouns, verbs, etc.), systems (e.g., tense, agreement, pluralization), word order, patterns, rules, and elliptical forms, produce speech in natural constituents: inappropriate phrases, pause groups, breath groups, and sentence constituents, express a particular meaning in different grammatical forms, and use cohesive devices in spoken discourse. Those are more specifics component.

2.3   Teaching speaking

To achieve the goals of their instruction, teachers should use proper approaches and procedures when teaching speaking. According to Brown (2001), teaching methods should be step-by-step and provide a list of general class requirements. The technique is one of many exercises, activities, or tasks that are utilized in class to accomplish teaching and learning objectives.

Teaching speaking is expressing emotions, and communicative needs, interacting with other people in many conditions and influencing others. From the basics of teaching English, speaking is one of the English skills which must be taught to learners. Language is identical to the skill of communicating with others using the spoken form. So, teaching speaking one more become very important to be taught.

Speaking and listening go hand in hand. The dialogue or conversation demonstrates how these two skills interact. According to Nunan (2003), there are five guiding concepts for teaching speaking as follows:

1)   Recognize the distinction between a circumstance where you are learning a second language and one where you are learning a foreign language. Speaking is taught in both of these situations. As students in the FL environment have so little opportunity to use the target language outside of the classroom, learning speaking skills can be quite difficult.

2)   Encourage students to speak accurately and fluently. The degree to which students' utterances correspond to what speakers of the target language say is called accuracy. Fluency refers to how swiftly and confidently speakers utilize language, with little hesitation or forced pauses, false starts, word searches, etc.

3)   Encourage student conversation through pair of group work while limiting teacher talk: Activities such as pair work can help students speak the target language more often throughout the class.
    Create speaking exercises that involve clarifying understanding and confirming that someone has understood what you meant. By asking for clarification, repetition, or explanation during a conversation, students can get the people they are speaking to use language they can learn and understand.

4)   Provide classroom activities that give students direction and practice having the transactional and interactive conversation included in the transactional speech.

2.3.1 *Teaching Strategies for Speaking*

The process of learning a language involves speaking a lot. Teachers should explain certain tactics to achieve this goal. According to Brown (2001), there are seven guidelines to follow while creating speaking skills.

Employ methods that address the full range of learner demands, from language-based approaches that emphasize accuracy to message-based approaches that emphasize interaction, meaning, and fluency.
  a) Provide strategies that are organically motivating.
  b) Promote the use of real language in relevant settings.
  c) Provide pertinent criticism and feedback.
  d) Take use of the innate connection between speaking and listening.
  e) Provide students with chances to start off oral conversations.
  f) Promote the use of speaking techniques.

Teachers can educate kids on speaking skills in a variety of ways many tactics, including dialogues, role-play, simulations, information gaps, brainstorming, storytelling, interviews, story completion, reporting, playing cards, image narrating, picture describing, and identifying the difference, can be employed when speaking (Kayi, 2006). Many techniques or approaches that teachers employ to encourage students to respond, pay close attention while studying, and engage more actively (Saliha, 2017).

a.   Role Play

Students are instructed to pretend to be in a variety of social circumstances and social positions during role-play exercises (Harmer, 2001; Thornbury, 2005). In a role-play, students will have a conversation while assuming the identity of another person who is involved in a specific issue. students gained new knowledge in the particular context of communication as a result of this education. depending on the student's level, role-plays can be written using and consolidating knowledge learned from the instruction of discussion of the speech act and its variations prior to the role plays themselves, performed from prepared scripts, created from s set of prompts and expressions, or created from a set of prompts and expressions (Sayyidatthohirrin, 2016).

b.   Drilling

Thornbury (2005) made the case that practicing pronunciation by mimicking and repeating words, phrases, and even entire utterances is known as drilling. It helps students focus on new information and stress words, phrases, or utterances in their brains. It also helps students move new information from working memory to long-term memory and provides ways for them to develop articulatory control over language.

c.   Conversation or dialogues

It is not adequate to have students produce lots of languages, they must become more meta-linguistically aware of the many features of language to become competent speakers and interlocutors in English (Sayyidatthohirin, 2016). By poising questions to your companions, you can start conversations and dialogues. Rural areas According to Gardiner (2008), the terms "urban" and "rural" have a problematic history in South Africa, where apartheid declared that cities and towns belonged to white people. Townships close to cities were temporarily home to black workers.

Generalizations are tricky and worldwide comparisons of urbanization are challenging since urban and rural definitions differ so much from one country to the next (Tacoli, 1998). There are two different ways to define "urban" in Indonesia. The administrative definition gives local government units (*Kota*) the status of municipalities. The other is functional, in which each village or *desa*, the smallest administrative entity, is given a functional urban or rural status depending on its features (Firman, 2007). Although there have been debates over urban and rural definitions for a long time, in reality, urban and rural population data are based on conventional projections of urbanization trends using the government's definition, and administrative boundaries are still used in the development of national urban development policy (Mulyana, 2014). In this context, the rural region belongs to the villages (*Desa*), whereas the urban area belongs to the city (*Kota*).

3.   METHODS

Learning during a pandemic has many challenges for teachers in rural areas. This is due to various obstacles in its implementation. Therefore, this research uses a qualitative type of research. According to Merriam (2009), qualitative research is research with a systematic process by which we more know about something than we did before engaging in the process. Qualitative research is a method with various focus aspects that include an interpretive, constructive, and naturalistic approach to the subject (Trumbull & Watson, 2010). This means that qualitative research studies a natural point of view translates it, and sees phenomena in terms of meanings that humans understand. Qualitative research is used to explain an object under study by analyzing the perceptions and opinions of the subject under study. To support this qualitative study, a descriptive approach is used as a basis in the stages of obtaining and explaining research data.

This study was conducted in a junior high school located in Maniis, Purwakarta village, which is one of the rural areas in West Java province. The participant of in this research was an English teacher who teaches at the school. The data were obtained through direct interviews. Then, the researcher analyzed them through several stages: reducing or simplifying the data, describing them in detail, and briefly relating them to the teacher's strategies in teaching English speaking in a rural area during the pandemic.

4.   RESULTS & DISCUSSION

In the interview with the participant the writer did with the questions; (Q1) regarding the teachers' identity. The teacher who comes from a rural school said that has been for thirteen years teaching in the school and she had not been a civil worker (Honorer). Furthermore, in (Q2) regarding the background of the study, she is from linearity education and qualified as an English teacher. Then (Q3) is about the ways or strategies in the learning process. The participant answered there are many challenges and obstacles faced by teachers in serving students. The first obstacle comes from the student's parent's background which is not supported by the online learning process due to low economic aspects so many students have no communication appliance. Even if those who have a communication appliance find some problem with the connection, data cellular, and lack of knowledge of technology. The second one comes from the teacher itself. Where the teacher should find some strategies which can organize learning for the learners. This answer is lined with the research questions of the study. The (Q4) is about the online application used by the

teacher to serve students during the pandemic in rural schools. The teachers ever used google meet at the beginning of the pandemic. The teacher almost five times used it, but no more participants joined caused of no devices, bad connection, and no data available. The problems faced should not give up, those make teacher thinks deeply to find more solutions. WhatsApp is the next strategy to provide online learning. Making video learning, PPT documents, and other facilities on WhatsApp that can be used for serving learning such as pictures, and voice notes. Alshammari et al., (2017) stated that WhatsApp allows teachers to take on the role of facilitators in teaching.

WhatsApp is more useful because the application uses low data and almost all smartphones can install it. To learn speaking, which is the aim of this study, the participants were informed voice note feature on WhatsApp can be used in teaching speaking.

Although this strategy is better than before, problems still exists. The problems are; that not all the students are present, and cheating through the task is higher. Thus, finding the next strategy is a must. The government issued a policy about the learning process especially saying that every school in the green area is permitted to hold face-to-face learning in small groups in their environment. So, moved to offline learning around students' environments. Although this learning process was not attended in the school area, it is more interesting than online learning. While offline learning especially with face-to-face interaction can make them free to ask about something confused from the learning, and the students who attended the class are more crowded than online learning due to limitations.

The next question (Q5) is about the strategies for teaching speaking skills to students during pandemics. The participant answered to teach speaking skills she always uses some strategies. While in online learning, the teacher used WhatsApp voice notes, and for offline learning role-play, drilling, conversations, and dialogues are used to provide a learning process. Role-plays are activities where students are asked to pretend to be in various social contexts and various social roles (Harmer, 2001; Thronbury, 2005; Solcova, 2001) but if it feels boring to them it will be changed the other way by asking a question. It is such as making a short dialog or conversation. The questions are simply regarding their activity or surrounding them. When they are asked questions, they are forced to answer them. The questions should come from teachers or students themselves. This is in line with the opinion expressed by Ur (1996) which describes the characteristics of success in teaching and aspects of speaking skills, including; learners talking a lot, participation even, motivation high, and language being of an acceptable level. In addition, drilling is used to improve students' speaking abilities. This regards vocabulary mastery and the materials that were studied before. The (Q6) question is about the reason to use the strategies. She believes that strategies can motivate them to learn English, especially speaking skills. The strategies are always done in every learning process, so the students have prepared questions in their house before the learning process although in long-distance learning. This is in line with *macro skills* which convey the appropriate accomplish the dialogue by showing gestures, and conversation. Then (Q7) about the student's attendance during the pandemic. The teacher replied that more students attend the learning process using *offline learning or by luring* than *online learning*. About eighty percent of students attended through offline learning.

Next, (Q8) is about the advantages of the strategies in teaching speaking skills during pandemics. The participant said that the strategies can help her learning process by teaching their speaking skills. Because step by step the students are forced to speak, enlarging their vocabulary, and their motivation is developed. That strategy also can save time, and all the students can be involved in the learning process. Finally, (Q9) is about the obstacles to that strategy. This question is in line with the next research question in this study. The participant told that the basic obstacle for whole strategies is mastery of vocabulary. No more vocabulary mastery by students makes them think aloud or combine *Bahasa Indonesia* and English. To solve it, the teacher allowed them to ask their partner and teacher, or to open the dictionary. In addition, low confidence in themselves makes those strategies hard to do in the first round. Encouraging them to be confident by praising or leading them to tell bravery is the way to solve it. The last one is low motivation. Students in rural areas think that foreign language is hard to learn, and they will not use them in their daily conversation due to their rural is impossible to visit by foreign people. To overcome this issue, the teacher told them about the relevant story of the development of technology and science, the use of smartphones by almost people in the world, perhaps use by ourselves, and the devices that facilitated us are the use of English.

5.   CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the strategies used in the learning process in the pandemic era at rural schools were using social platforms such as Google Meet and WhatsApp. To be able to use Google Meet to the learning process, the teacher should provide a good connection, suitable devices, and places which is supported by a good connection and data due to several factors. These lack supporting facilities, inadequate infrastructure, and family economic factors, so online learning is very difficult to apply. In the journey to teach English in this pandemic period, many students are not able to follow online learning well so they do not get an education and teaching as a whole. For teaching speaking skills during a pandemic, a voice notes menu from WhatsApp was conducted to gain the learning process.

According to the government policy in Purwakarta regency, every green area is permitted to make a learning process face-to-face due to pandemic rules. The strategies used include conducting direct learning at the home of the teacher concerned with the division of groups aligned with the Covid-19 countermeasures regulation. In teaching aspects of speaking skills, teachers use role-play, conversation or dialogues, and drilling.

The obstacles or challenges were there in every strategy. There were three main basic problems in doing the strategies. The first one was mastery of vocabulary, the second was low confidence, and the last was motivation to learn English. To overcome these, teachers permitted the students to ask their friends about the vocabulary or might be opening their dictionaries. On the other hand, to push their motivation to learn, the teacher told the story of the importance of English in daily life.

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to say thank you to all the participations who have supported this study. I realize this study is not yet perfect, but I hope it can contribute to the development of education.

7. REFERENCES

Alshammari, R., Parkes, M., & Adlington, R. (2017). Using WhatsApp in EFL Instruction with Saudi Arabian University Students. *Arab World English Journal,* (8(4), 68-64.

Ayua, G. A. (2017). Workshop Paper, 7. *Orientation and Refresher Workshop*, 2 (234147.09765), 1-9.

Babba, A. (2020). *Teacher's Strategies In Teaching Speaking Skills Of Eighth-Grade Students At Smpn 8 Palopo*.

Brown, H.D. (2001). *Teaching by Principles and Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy (2nd ed).* San Fransisco: Longman.

Brown, H.D. (2004). *Language Assessment Principles and Classroom Practices.* New York: Pearson Education, Inc.

Brown, H.D. (2004). *Language Assessment.* San Francisco: Longman.

Cameron, L. (2001). *Teaching Language to Young Learners.* New York: Cambridge University.

Carter, R., & Nunan, D. (2001). Introduction. *The Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*, 1-6. https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511667206.001

Fanshuri, H. (2019). THE TEACHERS' STRATEGIES IN TEACHING SPEAKING AT MTS ANNUR TANGKIT. *Islamic University Uthan Thaha Saifuddin*

Firman, T. (2007). The Patterns of Indonesia's Urbanization, 1980-2007, unpublished paper, Bandung

Gardiner, M. (2008). Education in rural areas. *Issues in education policy* 4. 1-34.

Hakim, M. A. (2019). Strategi Pengajaran speaking Bagi para Pembelajar Bahasa Inggris Berkarakteristik introvert. *Jurnal Pendidikan (Teori dan Praktik)*, *4*(1), 49. https://doi.org/10.26740/jp.v4n1.p49-58

Harmer, J. (2001). *How to Teach English, Seventh Impression.* Malaysia: Longman.

Hidayati, I. S., Amin, M., & Lestari, Y. B. (2021). A study on teacher strategies in teaching speaking and reading comprehension skills: A case study at SMAN 8 Mataram. *Proceedings of the 2nd Annual Conference on Education and Social Science (ACCESS 2020).*

Hornby, F. (2017). *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.* https://doi.org/10.1093/odnb/9780192683120.013.37567

Jailani, M. S., Sutrisno, S., & Siddik, M. M. (2020). The impact of online learning policy during the COVID-19 pandemic: An analysis of Islamic education. *INNOVATIO: Journal for Religious Innovation Studies*, *20*(2), 151-166. https://doi.org/10.30631/innovatio.v20i2.114

Kayi, H. (2006). "Teaching Speaking: Activities to promote speaking in a second language." *The Internet TESL Journal* 12.11 (2006): 1-6.

Kemendikbud. (2012). *Kurikulum 2013*. https://kurikulum.kemdikbud.go.id/kurikulum-2013

Mappa, A. A., & Karmila, L. (2022). The use of time token method in improving students' speaking skill at the second grade of Islamic senior high school man bantaeng. *Jurnal Eduscience*, *9*(2), 577-582. https://doi.org/10.36987/jes.v9i2.3060

Merriam, B. S. (2009). "Qualitative research: A Guide to Design and Implementation". JOSSEY-BASS.

Mulyana, W. (2014). "Rural-urban linkages: Indonesia case study." *Urban and Regional Development Institute (URDI) J, Indonesia, editor. Santiago, Chile: RIMISP*.

Negara, I. M. (2021). Literature review: Why using roleplay method in teaching speaking? *Jurnal Ilmiah Spectral*, *7*(1), 001-010. https://doi.org/10.47255/spectral.v7i1.68

Nunan, D. (2003). "Practical English". Language Teaching. New York: MC Graw Hill. 2003.

Saliha, T. (2017). TEACHER'S STRATEGIES IN TEACHING SPEAKING AT THE DAFFODILS (Case Study Research at Kampoeng Inggris-Pare). *Simki-Pedagogia Vol. 01 No.09 Tahun 2017*

Sayyidatthohirin, M. (2016). STRATEGY OF TEACHING SPEAKING EFFECTIVELY. *UIN Walisongo: Semarang*

Solcova, P. (2001). *Teaching Speaking Skills.* Thesis of Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University: Unpublished.

Tacoli, C. (1998). Rural-urban interactions: a guide to the literature, environment, and urbanization. ESCAPE. Bangkok

Thornbury, S. (2005). *How to Teach Speaking.* England: Pearson Educational Limited.

Trumbull, Mm. & Watson, Kk. (2010). *Qualitative research method.* Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Methods in Research, 3rd Ed.pp.62-78., USA. University Press of America, Inc.

Ur, P. (1996). *A Course in Language Teaching (Practice and Theory).* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zulfian, S. & Omolu, F. A. (2018). Teaching Strategies in Freedom Writers Movie. *Journal of Foreign Language and Educational Research,* *1*(2), 25-38. https://jurnal.unismuhpalu.ace.id/index.php/JOFLER/article/view/601