The Use of Social and Affective Strategies to Improve the 7th Graders’ Speaking Participation and Performance

Penggunaan Strategi Sosial dan Afektif dalam Meningkatkan Partisipasi dan Performa Berbicara Siswa Kelas 7

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Abstract
The objective of this study is to improve the students’ speaking participation and performance with the use of social and affective strategies. The research design used in the study was Classroom Action Research (CAR). The stage of CAR was adapted from Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) which consists of planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting. The subjects of the research were 30 seventh graders of class VII-H at SMPN 9 Malang in the second semester of academic year 2019/2020. This study was conducted directly at SMPN 9 Malang in one cycle of CAR in three meetings. To collect the data, an interview guide, an observation checklist, a field note and a speaking rubric were used as instruments. The findings of study showed that the students’ speaking participation and performance successfully improved after implementing social and affective strategies. The criterion of success set by the researcher was 70. The mean speaking score for the preliminary test and the final test increased from 60.4 to 77.2. The use of social and affective strategies improved students’ interaction with other students as well as managed their attitude, emotion, and motivation in speaking.

Keywords: speaking skill, social strategy, affective strategy

1. Introduction
In Indonesia, English is a compulsory subject taught in junior and senior high school. The students are expected to master the four language skills, which are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. To be able to perform well in class using the four skills, it is necessary for students to understand the materials, whether they are spoken or written. Speaking is an essential communication skill, which means that the students are frequently expected to master
speaking skills. This is in line with Richards (1990), who states that one of the main characteristics of the approach in language teaching begins with spoken language. Speaking skill is important in many aspects, especially for students who are studying a language. Speaking skill is powerful for helping students express their ideas. It is important for interaction between teachers and students in the classroom to maintain a good relationship besides sharing information. However, when interacting with other students, they tend to stay quiet rather than expressing their ideas in speaking English. It can happen because of various reasons. One of the reasons is inappropriate teaching strategies. According to Reiser and Dick (1996) teachers can use different strategies of teaching to achieve teaching-learning goals and objectives. It is the teacher’s role to provide effective plans/strategies in accomplishing students’ educational needs, whose general purpose is to communicate using the language being learned (Cole, 2008).

Teaching speaking for foreign language learners can be challenging. Many strategies can be implemented during teaching and learning activities. The choices of strategies can be chosen based on students’ age, background knowledge, characteristics, interests, size of the class, and the number of students. According to Herminingsih (2010) teachers’ methods and strategies in teaching speaking are sometimes not appropriate to support the students’ speaking skill. Large class sizes make it difficult for teachers to focus on each of the students. Also, limited school hours are not used effectively to practice speaking. Other causes include less exposure to the use of English because it is treated as a foreign language in which they do not get any immersion outside schools, and students’ lack of linguistic knowledge, such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

To teach speaking, it is necessary for teachers to not only deliver theories but also provide practice for the students. Based on the preliminary study, the researcher found teachers who only taught theories with less practice. It was ineffective since students did not get the opportunity to explore and implement much of their ideas. They did not have enough opportunity to speak using the target language. In some cases, the teacher already gave students opportunities by giving speaking tasks. However, not many students participated well in the speaking activity. Most students were passive, especially when they were assigned to do some work that required them to speak in front of the class. They did not want to speak up and would rather stay quiet.

There have not been many studies analyzing how speaking participation and performance can be improved using social and affective strategies. However, there are several similar studies that investigate other English skills. One similar study that has been conducted to investigate the use of social and affective strategies to promote language skill was done by Zeynali, Zeylani and Motlagh (2016). Their study is entitled “The Effects of Socio-Affective Strategy in the Enhancement of Reading Comprehension among Iranian EFL Learners”. The aim of the study is to investigate if social and affective strategies gave any impacts to the reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners. The research design used in the study was a quasi-experimental design. The outcome of the study showed that using social and affective strategies were more helpful for learners to answer the reading comprehension questions. In other words, the experiment of using social-affective strategies in reading comprehension affected one another in positive ways.
Another similar study that used social and affective strategies to improve speaking skill was conducted by Rossiter (2003) with the title of “The Effects of Affective Strategy Training in the ESL Classroom”. His research was aimed to examine the effects of affective strategy instruction on measures of second language proficiency and of self-efficacy. The participants of this study were 31 adult intermediate-level ESL learners who were registered in a full-time ESL program in a post-secondary institution in Canada. The result of the study showed that the participants of the study perceived the affective strategy instruction to be most beneficial in classroom activities and for real life purposes. There is improvement in the participants’ performance of experimental tasks (narrative and object descriptions). It was mostly because the participants felt more comfortable with the interlocutor, the researcher, and the context.

Based on the previous two studies, the researcher summarizes that social and affective strategies are helpful to promote language skills of learners, especially in speaking skill. The reported study is quite different from the two previous studies. Some researchers conducted similar studies to improve reading skill or to investigate the relationship between the social-affective strategies with other language skills with experimental research. However, this study will investigate the implementation of social and affective strategies using Classroom Action Research that focuses on improving speaking participation and performance since there has been no studies conducted to investigate the same case before.

In the preliminary study, more than half of students in the class admitted that they were shy, afraid of making mistakes, and lacked confidence. Consequently, the teaching and learning activity in the classroom that required students to use their speaking skill was not interactive which led to unsatisfactory students’ scores. There were still many students' scores in speaking skill that did not reach the criteria of success (70). There were only 7 students who got 70 out of 30 students or in the percentage only 39.55% students reached the criteria of success. The rest of 23 students got ≤70 or in percentage there were 60.45% students who did not reach the criteria of success which indicates they are low in speaking participation and performance. The speaking aspects assessed by the researcher were students' willingness, courage, language contents, and coherence. Speaking is one of the language skills that must be mastered by language learners. However, the outcome of the speaking test in the preliminary study conducted by the researcher showed the opposite.

Based on the identified problems, it can be inferred that the students of SMPN 9 Malang need to have experiences with different teaching strategies that can promote social interaction among students and help students to increase their motivation and confidence as well as lower their anxiety. Thus, the most appropriate and effective strategy is by integrating social and affective strategies. The principle of this strategy is to help learners manage and control emotions, motivations, and attitudes towards learning, as well as help learners learn through contact and interaction with others.

Speaking is the main aspect of communication. Speaking is defined as the activity of people to express their ideas orally confidently and without anxiety of making mistakes. Teaching speaking skill has several principles according to Anuradha, Raman, and Hemamalini (2014). Teachers have to encourage students to speak right from the first day. Teachers also have to tolerate the students if some of them simply repeat what they say. If a student gives one word answer to any question, bear it for the time being. Let the learners speak actively with whatever English knowledge they have. Propose structures/phrases/words and let the
learners use it in different situations and drill as much as possible. Moreover, teachers can organize role play and pair-work as much as possible and supervise the learners to correct the active ones and activate the passive ones. Teachers have to be well prepared in advance in terms of lesson planning, activities and tasks. Let the learners commit errors and mistakes at the primary stage.

Habte-Gabr (2006) opines that social and affective strategies are non-academic approach which include stimulating learning in the level of empathy between teacher and the students. When implementing the strategies, teachers usually facilitate students with social mediating activities and let them communicate with their friends (Brown, Gerbarg, & Muench, 2013). Based on this study, social strategy focuses on the interaction among learners and teachers in which they have to use their speaking skill to communicate with others. In teaching speaking, teachers can use collaboration and cooperation kind of activities to gain the expected interaction among learners. There are plenty of interaction formats and resources available for implementing best practices. Teachers have to choose the interaction formats based on the basic competencies or the teaching materials. The key to successful interaction among learners and teachers is the right implementation approach. Chamot and O’Malley (1994) define social strategies as strategies that help learners learn through contact and interaction with others. The practices that were applied by Chamot and O’Malley (1994) to teach speaking are letting learners to ask questions, cooperate with others, and empathize with others in speaking class.

Affective strategy is a learning strategy that focuses on controlling learners’ emotions. According to Oxford (1990), affective strategy is classified into three main categories, which are attitudes, motivation, and emotions. In other words, affective strategy focuses on giving stimulus for the better management of learners’ attitudes, motivation, and emotions toward learning. However, in teaching speaking as a foreign language, the classroom problems are various. The appropriate affective strategies are necessary to overcome particular classroom problems. Chamot and O’Malley (1994) applied affective strategies in speaking class by helping the learners to lower their anxiety level, encourage them, and helped them to control their emotional temperature.

Teaching language for young learners can be quite challenging. The age range of young learners according to Ersoz (2007) is divided into three parts. She put young learners into categories of very young learners (age of 3 to 6), young learners (age of 7 to 9), and older/late young learners (age of 10 to 12). In Indonesia, 7th graders are categorized as the late young learners, since they are in the age of 12 years old. Late young language learners are very special in which they have their own characteristics that differentiate them from adults. Some differences are immediately obvious: They are often more enthusiastic and livelier as learners. It is the main reason why the researcher chose the 7th graders as the research subject.

2. Method

The study was conducted to improve the students’ speaking participation and performance by using social and affective strategies to the 7th graders in the academic year of 2019/2020 at SMPN 9 Malang. In order to collect the data, the researcher applied some instruments. The first instrument was an interview guide. The English teacher was interviewed to get some background information and to know the current classroom problems, especially the problems in speaking skill. The second instrument was questionnaire. The researcher
prepared a questionnaire that would be given at the last meeting to all students. The aim of the questionnaire was to see if there was any improvement by the end of the last meeting compared to the preliminary study. The researcher also provided observation sheets and field notes to record students' activities in the class during the implementation of the strategies. The last instrument was speaking scoring rubrics applied in the preliminary study, and it was used again in the last meeting to see if there is any improvement on their last performance.

The research design used in this research is Classroom Action Research (CAR), which focuses on the learning and teaching activities in the class, especially in teaching speaking. Classroom action research is conducted to study real situations in school using particular theories to improve the quality and the result of teaching activities. In this research, the strategy in the class is implemented by the researcher who acts as the teacher. The strategies used in this research are social and affective strategies.

According to Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), action research spirals from the first cycle to the next cycle which covers four integrated stages: planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting. Before entering the first cycle, a preliminary action is conducted to identify the problem carried out from the preliminary study. After identifying the problem that occurs in the class, classroom action research is conducted.

![Figure 1. Classroom Action Research adapted from Kemmis and McTaggart model (1988)](image)

In the preliminary study, the researcher was trying to confirm whether or not the use of social and affective strategies had been applied to improve speaking participation and performance of the 7th graders in SMPN 9 Malang. In the preliminary study, the researcher assigned students to inform their background, such as their names, ages, address, and hobbies. It was done to gain students' attention and made them feel more comfortable. After the
students introduced themselves, they were assigned to do a speaking presentation to know the students’ current speaking skill. The researcher gave scores based on the students’ performance. The researcher also interviewed the classroom teacher to know the background of the class and the way the classroom teacher teaches speaking.

Based on the basic competencies 3.7 and 4.7, the scope of the learning and teaching process was descriptive text. The students had the opportunity to learn to speak English by describing people, animals, and things. In this research, the teaching materials and media are taken from the real objects of the school environment and from many different sources on the internet.

There was only one cycle consisting of three meetings to implement the strategies. Two meetings were used to implement social and affective strategies, while the last meeting was used to conduct the final speaking test and distribute the questionnaires to the students.

The criteria of success were applied to see whether or not the implementation of social and affective strategies in the teaching-learning process reached the criteria of success, or whether it is necessary or not to continue another cycle of CAR. The minimum standard score at the school for English subjects is 75. However, for the purpose of this study, the researcher set two kinds of criteria of success that determine students’ speaking participation and students’ speaking performance. The criteria of success that was set for this study is if 75% of the students get at least 70 in their speaking test. The reason why the criteria of success is below the school’s minimum standard score is because the teacher rarely assigned students to practice speaking in the class.

In the implementing stage, the action will be conducted as planned in the lesson plan. During the activities, the researcher used pictures as the main media. The implementation of social-affective strategies would be conducted in three meetings with the time allocation 2x40 minutes in each meeting and one last meeting to do the final test. In this study, the researcher conducted the social-affective strategies by dividing students into groups that consisted of 4 students. The students were assigned to listen and watch some entertaining videos, play a game, and also given relaxing music as they do their work to improve their affective component. They were also assigned to do role play, pair work, and group work to improve their social component.

Observing aims at collecting data. The data in this study is collected by observing the class using observation sheets and field notes, distributing questionnaires, and giving the learners a preliminary speaking test and final speaking test. The class observation was used to see teaching-learning activity and the classroom atmosphere, the learners’ work from preliminary study was used to identify the classroom problems, and the work of the final test was used to find out whether social and affective strategies have worked effectively or not to solve the problem. In this case, social and affective strategies were expected to improve students’ speaking skill.

The data collected in the observation stage was conducted in three meetings. There are three steps to collect that data. First, the information from the observation sheet filled by the English teacher as the observer and the field notes were written by the researcher to collect the data related to the students’ participation during the learning and teaching process in the class. Second, a speaking test is used to gain data from the students’ speaking participation and
performance. The results are scored by the researcher using a speaking scoring rubric. Third, a questionnaire is distributed to know the students’ responses towards the implementation of social and affective strategies in learning speaking.

Reflection was done to reflect and analyze the data collected to determine whether the implementation of social and affective strategies was successful or not in solving the students’ problems. In this stage, the results of students’ speaking test that was done in both the preliminary study and final meeting were analyzed and compared with the criteria of success set by the researcher.

The data collected in this study were analyzed in the form of qualitative data and minor-quantification. The qualitative data were obtained from the fields note, observation sheet and the students’ questionnaires, which contained the explanation of students’ responses toward the implementation of social and affective strategies in speaking class. Furthermore, the minor-quantification data were acquired from students’ preliminary speaking scores and final speaking scores. To calculate the students’ speaking scores, the researcher sums up the four speaking variables (willingness, courage, language content, and coherence) then divided by 12 and multiplied by 100. Meanwhile, to calculate the average speaking score, the researcher summarizes all students’ speaking scores and divides them by the number of students in the class. The minor-quantification data were analyzed by comparing the average speaking scores of students in the class and the criteria of success.

3. Findings and Discussion

The implementation of social and affective strategies was done in one cycle that consisted of three meetings. The first meeting was conducted on March 9th, 2020. The second meeting was conducted on March 12th, 2020. The last meeting was conducted on March 16th, 2020.

Social strategy was implemented in different formats at each meeting. In the first meeting, the implementation of social strategy was in the form of pair work. Students were assigned to work with the students sitting next to them. While on the second meeting, the students were assigned to do a role play. The number of members for the role play consisted of four students in each group. On the third meeting, which was the final meeting, the students were assigned to work in groups. Each group consisted of four students. The activities in the group work involved group discussion and group presentation.

Affective strategy has various forms of implementation. However, some similar forms were applied repeatedly in every meeting. In the teaching and learning activities in the classroom, the researcher provided relaxing and calming music for students which aimed to control students’ attitude and emotion. The researcher also provided an entertaining game as an ice breaking in order to help students manage their attitude and emotion. The ice breaking is in the form of a fun game called Who am I? The game aims to help students describe someone using the appropriate adjectives. The game activity could prepare students to be more active for the next activities. It could also help to control their emotion and attitude. Moreover, to help students control their motivation, the researcher provided rewards in return for their good work. The rewards were in the forms of compliments such as "Good job." or "Excellent.". Giving the students compliments in the end was the implementation of affective strategy, which helped them to control their motivation. The researcher also provided rewards in the form of extra scores and goods.
In the last meeting, the researcher conducted a speaking test. The test was in the form of a group presentation. However, the speaking performance of each member in the groups was the one to be assessed. The students were divided into groups of four. The groups were assigned to find real objects around the school. After finding the objects, each member of the group had to make a description of the objects using the appropriate adjectives. Each member had to provide a different description regarding the objects. After that, they had to present the data orally and without looking at their notes. The aspects that were assessed included willingness, courage, language contents, and coherence. The result of the students’ speaking test in the preliminary study and last meeting is presented as follows.

Table 1. Students’ Speaking Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Preliminary Study</th>
<th>Final Meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Highest Score</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lowest Score</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Number of students passed criteria of success</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Number of students did not pass the criteria of success</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Average Score</td>
<td>60.45</td>
<td>77.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 presents the result of students’ speaking test based on the data. It was found that in the final meeting there were two students who got the perfect score which is 100, while the highest score reached in the preliminary study was only 83.3. Students’ lowest speaking score in the preliminary study was 42, but in the final meeting the lowest score was 50. Additionally, 20 out of 30 students reached and passed 70 in the final meeting. It means that more than 75% of students in the class reached the criteria of success. Students’ average score in the speaking test also improved. In the final meeting, students’ average score was 77.27. Although there were still many students who did not reach the criteria of success, the speaking test results had improved in the last meeting. The improvement was shown based on the mean score of the speaking aspects set by the researcher.

Figure 2. Students’ Speaking Scores

The figure shows that the speaking scores of students in the preliminary study are below the criteria of success. However, after implementing the strategies, the students’ speaking scores reached and even passed the criteria of success. In the preliminary study, the result showed that 39.55 % or only 7 students out of 30 passed the criteria of success, and the rest
60.45% or 23 students out of 30 were not able to achieve the criteria of success. However, in the last meeting, 20 out of 30 students or 77.27% achieved scores above 70 and 10 students out of 30 or 22.73% could not reach the criteria of success. Based on the result, the research conducted by the researcher was successful since 77.27% of students could pass the test or obtained speaking scores higher than 70.

The students of VII-H at SMPN 9 Malang were given questionnaires after doing the final test. The questionnaires were used to know the students’ responses toward the implementation of social and affective strategies to improve students’ speaking participation and performance. There were 20 questions proposed in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire results showed that the use of social and affective strategies made the students more enthusiastic in speaking activities. They participated actively and performed better. They were excited and interested to learn descriptive text using social and affective strategies. Most of the students agreed that social and affective strategies helped them to manage their attitude, emotion, and motivation as well as increased interaction among students.

In accordance with the research findings presented before, the researcher found that the implementation of social and affective strategies was successful in improving students’ speaking skill. It was proven from the comparison of students’ speaking scores in the preliminary study and the speaking scores in the final meeting. In addition, the implementation of social and affective strategies helped improve students’ speaking in three days of one cycle. Besides, the success of implementing these strategies in speaking could be seen from the teaching and learning process (Kabir, 2014).

Before implementing social and affective strategies, the students of VII-H at SMPN 9 Malang were given a preliminary test to know their prior knowledge in speaking. Based on the result of the preliminary test, it showed that the students had problems in speaking participation and performance. They were not interested and felt bored in learning English, especially speaking. The students did not want to speak up when they were assigned to. They preferred to be quiet. In this research, social and affective strategies were implemented to solve the students’ problems in learning English, especially in speaking English.

In conducting this research, the descriptive text materials as well as social and affective strategies were introduced to the students in the first meeting. An entertaining video was presented by the researcher as the implementation of affective strategy. The video was related to the main teaching material, which was descriptive text. After watching the video, students were assigned to work in pairs to discuss the adjectives used in the video. Working in pairs was one of the formats of social strategies.

On the second meeting, the students began the activity by having an ice breaking of a game called Who am I?. The game was another implementation of affective strategy in which could help controlling students’ attitude, emotion, and motivation. The next activity was role play. Each group consisted of four students. The students were assigned to do the role play based on the example video shown. Role play was another implementation of social strategy in which students had the opportunity to interact and work with other students.
In the last meeting, the activity was similar to preliminary study. Students were assigned to work in a group consisting of four members. Each group was assigned to find a real object around the school. The object was in the form of animals or plants. After choosing an object, each member of the group had to write a sentence regarding the description of the object using the appropriate adjectives. After that, all groups would take turns to present their work. Every member of the group had to describe the object without looking at the notes. Students were assessed based on their fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and coherence.

The comparison of students’ speaking scores in the preliminary study and last meeting with the criteria of success showed that there was an improvement. However, the improvement of students’ speaking scores was not significant. The research was conducted in one cycle that consisted of three meetings. The result of the research could have been more significant if it was conducted in more than one cycle or more meetings.

The research was conducted with the help of 30 students as the research subject. All of the students participated well from preliminary study until the last meeting. In the preliminary study there were only seven students who passed the criteria of success set by the researcher. Meanwhile, the rest of 23 students failed to pass the criteria of success. The criteria of success set for this study was 70. It showed that the students’ participation in speaking was poor. Most students did not show enough willingness and courage to speak English. They prefer to be quiet rather than speak up their mind. However, after the implementation of social and affective strategies, there was an improvement in students’ speaking scores. There were 19 students that reached 70 and above in the final meeting. On the other hand, there were only 11 students who could not reach the criteria of success. From the observation of three days implementing social and affective strategies, most students showed more interest and participation to speak English in front of the class. They also performed better in speaking activities in the classroom. The finding is in line with the study conducted by (Hakim, 2019) which indicated that students show positive perception on using socio-affective strategies to enhance their motivation in speaking. Furthermore, it is supported with the results found in the students’ questionnaires, which represent students’ perception towards speaking (Bernhardt, 2007). Based on the questionnaires, students admitted both strategies were helpful in promoting not only their interaction with other students, but also their confidence and participation in speaking.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion of the study, the researcher can infer that the implementation of social and affective strategies in teaching speaking helped improve students’ participation and performance in speaking class which resulted in the improvement of their speaking test scores. The evidence can be seen in the findings which show students’ achievement that reached the criteria of success. The students’ scores improved and could reach the criteria of success set by the researcher. Furthermore, the implementation of the strategies indicated some positive improvement in students’ performance. Giving speaking activities that involve student interactions, such as group work and pair work, has been proven to make students become more active. The students participated more and performed better in speaking activities by showing their will and courage to speak in front of their classmates. Moreover, providing ice breaking, relaxing and calming music during teaching activities, and giving rewards for students in return for their work was proven to help students control their attitude, emotion, and motivation in speaking. Students’ speaking performance improved in which they tend to be more relaxed and confident when speaking in front of their classmates.
In addition, based on the questionnaire result, the students enjoyed the teaching and learning process using social and affective strategies. The students' questionnaire showed that more than half of the students in the class found the use of social and affective strategies for speaking was interesting and enjoyable. The researcher infers that the students accepted the implementation of social and affective strategies in the speaking class.

As seen in the students' score, the researcher found that 77.27% of the students reached the criteria of success. The improvement was revealed very clearly since only 39.55% of the students reached the standard score in the preliminary study. In the preliminary study, the students were mostly shy and lack of confidence that led to difficulty to construct the ideas. Moreover, they were asked to speak in limited time which caused lack of preparation to speak. However, after the implementation of the strategies, the students were given enough time to prepare and discuss the assignment with other members in the group, so they felt more confident in delivering their ideas.

There are some suggestions for the English teachers and further researchers who will conduct a similar study. Social and affective strategies can be choices for English teachers in teaching speaking. It has been proved that this strategy can improve students' speaking participation and performance. This research is also expected to be a reference for further researchers to conduct a similar study. Besides, further researchers can try to apply social and affective strategies as the alternative strategies to improve students’ speaking participation and performance in different types of texts or levels of students.

References


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