

Analyzing the Communicativeness of Students' Speaking Skill Tasks

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Abstract—In some cases of speaking learning process, there are still many inappropriate tasks given by the teachers. The objective of this study is to analyze the communicativeness in students' speaking task. The participant of this study was an English teacher in one Senior high school in Lampung. A qualitative case study was used as the research design that employed three data collection techniques. The data collection techniques were class observations, interviews, and document analysis. The researcher used using seven checklists of communicative tasks proposed by Nunan as a guideline to analyze the students' speaking task. Through this study, the result revealed that the task in speaking skill used by teacher had the limitation occurring in some aspects included in the task, such as the goals and rationale, input, activities, roles and setting, implementation, grading and integration, and assessment. Based on these findings, it was concluded that there were still inappropriate speaking tasks given to the students. In designing the better speaking tasks, this study is expected to be one of the references for teacher to teach speaking skill.

Keywords—speaking task; appropriateness of assessment; speaking assessment

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Burning Issues

The existence of English is no longer being a brand new thing for everyone. It demands the need of English for everyone who get involved in global community, especially in education aspect. It leads English to become one of the important subjects at school. Students have to master the comprehension written and spoken form of English. The role of the international language mastery becomes a very important thing to pay attention more. The mastery has a strong goal in achieving a good communication in order to be ready in facing the globalization era that must have involved English as the bridge of the communication.

Since English has become the subject taught at school since elementary school, this brings a lot of advantages for students to get more exposure of using this language. The main purpose of having English as the school subject is to prepare the readiness of students of this international language and expect them to master it well. Among all the skills that English has, speaking becomes very crucial, since it is the main bridge to success the communication in this foreign language. The communication does need the mastery of speaking skill. Since

then, speaking is much needed for all the learners to master. Yet, the exposure of practicing English is quite low. Since in fact, English is a foreign language in our country, so that not all the learners are persisting enough to maintain a lot of exposure to practice. This thing is also not supported at school. Not all the speaking activity at school is taught properly and based on the way how it should be taught.

The success of speaking mastery in English still has a lot of issues in nowadays' teaching learning process. In the reality, there is still evidence that is shown by the incapability of students in speaking even though they have so many years learning English at school. This causes the worries for us of what they have been through at school and why this thing happens repeatedly. Tutyandari in Widiawati and Cahyono identifies many students keep silent during the speaking activities because of three factors [1]. Those are lack of self-confidence, lack of prior knowledge about topics, and poor teacher-learner relationship. These could be the factors that make students still have low speaking ability.

In an EFL classroom, not all students or teachers realize the importance of the use of the target language. Some of them also prefer to use Indonesian rather than use English. As a consequence, the students are not accustomed to the language learning classroom atmosphere. They do not have much exposure towards the use of the target language. Therefore, there is a phenomenon in which the students are shy to use English even though the teachers ask them to use it. A research conducted by Yulia shows that most of the teachers in Yogyakarta Province used Indonesian even Javanese during the classroom instructions [2]. It happens because of the low motivation between the teachers and the students towards the foreign language-learning context.

Due to these problems, the term communicative approach is relevant to the students' communicative language improvement. The aim of communicative language learning is to develop students' communicative competence by engaging them in a meaningful interaction [3]. In practice, some of the language tasks cannot measure the students' speaking skill. Some of the tasks fail to achieve the language learning objectives since the students are passive during the classroom activities. Moreover, as stated before, the students get limited chances to experience the target language. The students are not motivated to use English actively.

Crookes and Gass indicate that one of the approaches in communicative language learning is task-based language teaching approach [4]. Task-based approach is a teaching approach which employs tasks as its main pedagogical tools to structure language teaching [5]. It means that tasks are used as a means to know students' achievement in language learning. Tasks are used to improve students' language competence through an assessment process. In other words, communicative tasks are suitable devices for such an approach [5]. Through communicative tasks, the teachers are not only asked to design tasks which are relevant to the students' needs but also to construct an appropriate assessment which can measure the students' speaking competence.

In line with the elaboration above, this study aims to analyse the communicativeness of the tasks. The findings of the study are expected to be one of the references for the teachers in designing the communicative tasks for assessing students' speaking skill.

B. Previous Studies

Various studies concerning about the communicativeness of speaking task have been conducted in Indonesia and in other countries, especially those where English becomes a foreign language. There are several studies in line with the case of this study. The first one is from Asrida, the study she conducted is titled "Communicative Activities of Teaching Speaking for the Students" [6]. In her studies, it investigates the appropriate activities for students speaking class in order to reach the goal of communicativeness. The study also explains some of communicative activities which can be used by the teachers in teaching speaking.

The other study is coming from Aji, she conducted a research that focuses on the appropriateness of a speaking task for young learners [7]. She also investigated the communicativeness in the task given to the young learners. Through her study, she found that the analysis revealed that the tasks conducted during the speaking assessment and the speaking scoring criteria constructed by the teacher were lack of their ability to measure the students' communicative speaking skill.

C. Objectives of the Study

After knowing that speaking is much needed to be mastered well by the students, the teachers are required to provide the appropriate task in order to give the best result of their speaking performance. One of the things that the teachers need to pay attention about is the communicativeness of the task. Therefore the problem of the research is formulated as follows:

- How communicative are the students' speaking tasks?

D. Purpose of the Research

Based on the research question formulated previously, this study is intended to investigate about to analyse the communicativeness of students' speaking task.

E. A Brief Theoretical Foundation

In speaking class, teachers are required to create communicative and interactive activities by giving students a great deal of opportunities to practice the target language. Essentially, the class manifests student-centred backdrop rather than teacher-centred. Long and Porter observed that the lack of opportunity to practice the target language which is only thirty seconds of a fifty-minute lesson in a public secondary classroom leads to low achievement of second language learners [8].

Related to the research purpose which will investigate the appropriateness of communicative task that teacher gives to the students in speaking class activity, the researcher finds several theories in line with the task of speaking activity. Richards and Rogers identify tasks as classroom activities that offer problems to the students through real word communication [9]. Tasks are focused on language environment, goal oriented, and situated in specific settings [10]. The illustration of this definition is that when designing or giving the task, the teachers need to have some considerations, such as the performance of the task itself.

F. Significant of the Study

This result of this study is expected to overcome English teachers' problem in designing the appropriate communicative speaking task for students. Theoretically, this study will be very useful for the enrichment of teachers' knowledge about giving the communicative students speaking task. While practically, this study is expected to give a significant contribution both for the teachers and students. Hopefully this study might be one of the references for the teacher to design better speaking task in terms of the communicativeness.

G. The Scope of the Study

The focus of this study is on the communicativeness of students' speaking task during their speaking class assessment. This study only involves an English teacher and the students in the class.

H. Definition of Terms

There are some key terms which are related to the study.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Teaching Speaking

Speaking is defined as the activity where there is a transfer of the information delivered. Based on Harmer the aim of teaching speaking is to train students for communication [11]. In order to achieve the satisfying the result of speaking performance, the teacher is required to be able in developing the interesting activity that enables students to promote their language use in the real communication. Moreover, based on Wenxia declares that the teacher should think, when teaching, not only about presenting language in a certain situation, but also as a communicative act [12]. Involving students to the activities conducted in the class is one of the key to create the success of communication engagement.

Brown and Yule state that “speaking is depending on the complexity of the information to be communicated; however, the speaker sometimes finds it difficult to clarify what they want to say” [13]. Hornby defines speaking is making use of words in an ordinary voice [14]. And Widdowson adds that communication through speaking is performed face to face interaction and occurred as art of a dialogue or other form of verbal exchange [15]. Brown says that spoken language is easy to perform, but in some cases it is difficult [16]. In order that the students can carry out the successful speaking, they must have some characteristics of successful speaking activity such as:

- Learners talk a lot. As much as possible of the period of time allocated to activity is in fact occupied by learners talk. This may be obvious, but often most time is taken up with teacher talk or pauses.
- Motivation is high. Learners are eager to speak because they are interested in the topic and have something new to say about it, or they want to contribute to achieve a task objective.
- Language is an acceptable level. Learners express themselves in utterances that are relevant, easy comprehensible to teach other and acceptable level of language accuracy. From the statements above, it can be inferred that in communication people do not only speak but also try to understand the message which is said or delivered by the speaker.

Nunan suggests some principles in teaching speaking. (1) The teacher should be aware of the differences between second language and foreign language learning contexts. (2) Give students practice with both fluency and accuracy. (3) Provide opportunities for students to talk by using group work or pair work, and limiting teacher talk. (4) Plan speaking tasks that involve negotiation for meaning. (5) Design classroom activities that involve guidance and practice in both transactional and interactional speaking [17].

B. Some Activities to Teach Speaking

These are the activities that can be applied in the class for teaching speaking:

1) *Active debate*: Halvorsen says that debate forces students to think about the multiple sides of an issue and it also forces them to interact not just with the details of a given topic, but also with one another [18]. Debate is process of presenting idea or opinion which two opposing sides try to defend their idea or opinion. Krieger says that debate is an excellent activity for language learning because it engages students in a variety of cognitive and linguistic ways [19]. According to these opinion, it can be said that debating is a clash of issues that are argued.

2) *Pair tapping*: Pair tapping is one of the interesting activities that can be applied in the teaching learning process. According to Kluge and Taylor pair tapping is the same as partner tapping that need students to record conversations outside the class every week [20]. It emphasized students to develop greater fluency, gain hours of extra practice, maintain

a concrete record of their progress, and get sense of their responsibility for their learning. In other words, pair tapping is a technique of recording conversations in pairs.

3) *Information gap*: The technique offered in this activity helps students to meet the goals of learning. The activity of information gap is very effective for students in speaking class. It is able to encourage the students to be more active in using the target language in the class. Nunan says that in information gap one person has information and the other lacks [17]. They must use the target language to share the information.

4) *Group interaction*: The purpose of group interaction activity is to enactive the interest for students to get involved in the speaking activity, so that they can practice the target language. the students are required to use interactive strategies to help students build fluency when speaking spend time talking about favorite topics and practice as a group, so that the class feels more interesting.

C. Components of Speaking Skill

Speaking skills are the ability to perform the linguistic knowledge in actual communication. The ability functions to express our ideas, feelings, thoughts, and needs orally. Heaton classifies in general the elements of speaking skills into the accuracy, fluency and comprehensibility, vocabulary, and pronunciation [21].

Wenxia says that the teacher should think, when teaching, not only about presenting language in a certain situation, but also as a communicative act [12].

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design/Research Method

In line with the aim of the study, a descriptive qualitative study was chosen since it was suitable to give a complete description of the English teacher in using the tasks and constructing the scoring criteria for the speaking assessment. As stated by Cresswell, “descriptive qualitative study aims to investigate detail rendering of people, places, or events in a setting in qualitative approach” [22].

B. Data Collection

1) *Sample*: This study was conducted at one of the senior high school in Lampung. This research employed qualitative purposeful sampling in which the participants were selected intentionally to learn or to understand the central phenomenon. The participant of the study was an English teacher who has just been teaching in this school for 11 months. The selection of the participant was based on her teaching experience.

2) *Instrument*: To meet the purpose of the study, the researchers used some instruments. The instrument used to answer the research question in this study is observation.

The observation is aimed to obtain more comprehensive and general description about the task used in students speaking task. The researcher fully observed the class situation, took a note, and recorded the classroom activities. Classroom observation is the process of gathering open-ended, first-hand

information by observing people and places at a research site [22]. The observation sheet consisted of seven dimensions of communicative task checklist.

C. Data Collection Procedure

The researcher used some steps as the research procedures in order to collect the data and answer the research question from this study. The procedures are choosing the participant of this study, doing the observation in the class, transcribing the result of observation based on the situation of the class, analysing the result of the observation, checking the limitations of the observation result in the speaking class activity conducted by the teacher, and giving the conclusion based on the result of the observation. During the observation, the researcher recorded the whole activities in the class.

D. Data Analysis

In answering the research question based what it is previously mentioned before, the observation was conducted.

In the process of analysing the observation, the researcher recorded the whole activities done by the teacher and the students in the class. In the process of analysing the result of the observation, the researcher organized the data based on the instruments obtained.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Data Presentation to Answer the Research Question

The researcher conducted the observation to obtain the data. The observation was done during the class activity that involved the speaking task given by the teacher. The researcher analysed the communicativeness of the speaking task based on the checklist of communicative tasks. There were some limitations that of the speaking task in terms of its communicativeness. The limitations are described in the table below.

TABLE I. THE LIMITATIONS

No.	Checklist of Communicative Tasks	Problems
1.	Goals and rationale	The objectives of learning are not eventually achieved. The language learning goals are not delivered in the first place.
2.	Input	The learning sources are not maximally given by the teacher as the correction to the mistakes that students make.
3.	Activities	The activities conducted are too monotonous.
4.	Roles and setting	The teacher is pretty good at doing her roles by paying attention to most of the each student. In some cases, teacher is too busy with her material without realizing whether her students have understood the material or not.
5.	Implementation	There is a little interaction between teacher and students using English.
6.	Grading and Integration	The tasks are not focused to the learning goals. The tasks seem too easy for the students. The tasks are not challenging enough to the students.
7.	Assessment	Teacher doesn't explain about the scoring criteria before giving the task to the students.

According to the table shown above, it can be seen that there are some limitation of the communicativeness in the speaking skill task for the students. The limitations are coming from goals and rationale, input, activities, roles and settings, implementation, grading and integration, and assessment and evaluation. These all limitations are described clearly through these below explanations.

1) *Goals and rationale*: While the class activity was running, the researcher observed the whole situation in the class. The things that the researcher paid attention were the way how the teacher talked and also so the way how the students responded to her. During the teaching learning activity, the objectives of that day's class were not delivered to the students. The activities were not also emphasizing the objectives they were going to achieve. Even though some activities were conducted in the class, but it did not lead to the objectives they were going to achieve. The activities that were done by the teachers were by the games and other activities.

It has to be paid attention about the communicativeness of learning itself has to cover the clear purpose of the learning

goal. CLT has some principles and the first one is the function of language teaching and learning is to assist the learners to understand the purpose of learning and to enhance the communicative competence in communication [23], which is spelled out that language as a social tool in society. Secondly, the EFL teachers have responsibilities to conduct their EFL lessons towards to the authentic contexts, since Clarke and Silberstein argued the communicative tasks in class need to be close to the real conversations as fully as possible [24].

During the class, the use of the second language was very limited. The teacher tended to speak in the first language, even though in the case of learning the second language, the exposure is really needed. Based on Swain and Lapskin, the immersion students had little to no access to second 'kid-speak' in the school context; and this sort of 'talking the right talk' is central to the emerging image and identity of young adolescents [25]. Yang points out that the use of L1 in L2 class will deprive the learners of comprehensive input [26].

2) *Input*: Teachers can provide so many sources to run the class activities well. They need to be smart enough choosing the appropriate input that will be used as the material for

students. The materials can come from many sources, such as songs, games, or even movies as long as it contains the appropriate requirements for language learning materials. The teachers need to consider a lot of things related to the materials they prepare. Those considerations are subjects of materials, attractiveness of format, accuracy of language level and learning objectives in developing the learning materials [27].

Based on the observation conducted by the researcher, there was an issue where there was a lack of giving the input from the teacher to the students. The situation was described as in this following conversation transcription.

T: Well, Miss *sudah siapkan beberapa kertas beserta tulisan nama tempat yaa. Kalian coba jelaskan apa yang orang lakukan di tempat tersebut. Coba siapa yg mau coba?*
 S: Saya, Miss.
 T: Okay, sure, *iyaa coba gimana.*
 S: *pertama, restaurant, tempat makan.*
 T: Good. Who want to try again?
 S: I trying, miss. The barbershop, people cutting hair.
 T: Okay, very good.

Some of the lessons have specific language input (for example, expressions for describing different statistical patterns and trends), but in most lessons the main focus is on getting a communicative task done and then receiving feedback from the teacher; linguistic input tends therefore to be responsive rather than preventive.

According to the data in the box above, it is seen clearly that there are some mistakes that the students make, yet the teacher doesn't not make any correction. Some grammatical errors are there in the students' respond.

3) *Activities*: The way how the teacher delivered the material was quite good enough by giving some activities to the students. The activities were created to engage students' participation and develop their knowledge about the related materials. The teacher tried to build students' inquiry skill by asking them to recall their memory about the contextual meaning that is inserted in the materials. The students were expected to be able to gain the information by building up their previous knowledge. The activities done by teacher required students to mention the vocabularies, but unfortunately this activity lasted for such a quite long duration, so that it caused the students be bored with the activity. This situation can be seen from the conversation transcription below.

T: Tell me about your vocabularies about places. I'll write it down in the board.
 S: Okay, Miss.
 T: The first one is hospital.
 S: School, airport.
 T: Good, what else?
 S: Station.
 The students keep mentioning the vocabularies of places in English and mixing Bahasa.

The situation pictured in the table above, some students who have no vocabularies to share just remained silent. The rest of students who have already had so many vocabularies are lively engaged to the teacher and responded it enthusiastically. This situation might cause a monotonous activity for some students who have no idea what to share in the class.

Beside this activity, the teacher also assigned another activity. She required the students to draw a map consisting of places and the direction. For some students who are not interested in drawing, this might be monotonous for them. The teacher gave them time to think and prepare to draw maps as she asked them to do.

4) *Roles and setting*: The role of teaching is surely needed the most in the success of teaching learning process in the class. As the researcher observed, the teacher did a very good role. As what Harmer stated, the teacher did her roles well. The role of the teacher was not dominant [28]. She gave opportunity for the students to freely express the thought that they have during the class activities.

A good teacher has to be able managing her attention to the students. They need to make sure whether the students need their help and attention. In the class situation that the researcher observed, the teacher was good at giving the enough attention to the students. She could manage herself in communicating the class situation to the all students in the class.

On the other case, when the teacher was explaining the material to the students, she focused on it too much without realizing that some of the students were not paying attention to her explanation. The teacher was too busy delivering the material, even though the students seemed that they haven't understood the lesson.

5) *Implementation*: The teacher gave an activity that was intended to have the students speak in the class using vocabularies and also expressions of learning material that she already prepared. Since the material was about places and the expression to ask about directions, so that's where the teacher implemented the activity where it was expected to get the student be able to use the language focus.

The activity that given was the teacher asked the students to draw the maps consisting the name of places based on their preferences. After drawing the maps, then the students have to present it in front of the class, and explain about the places they added in the maps. The other students who paid attention had a job to ask about direction how to get to the places they chose, so the presenter must have known how to give the explanation about the direction. The learning focus for expression they learnt that was how to give direction. Sadly, during the activity, at the moment where the students were given time to finish the drawing, the students were busy using Bahasa in discussing their task. Besides that, the students who got into a presenter also sometimes used Bahasa, and the teacher did not give any correction or the translation to it. The implementation of English was quite low in this activity.

T: *Sekarang tugas kalian menggambar maps ya, nanti setelah selesai digambar, dipresentasikan di depan kelas. Tugas teman yang lain memperhatikan dan bertanya tentang maps yang digambar.*

S: *Bertanya tentang tempat-tempatnya ya, Miss?*

T: *Iya, nanti yang presentasi akan memberi arahan di mapsnya.*

S: *Contohnya gimana Miss?*

T: *Can you show me the way to the zoo? Lalu teman kalian harus memberikan arahnya dalam bahasa Inggris.*

6) *Grading and integration:* According to the task gradation, the tasks given were appropriate enough, but it didn't handle the students' behavior. They tend to be busy on their own preparation to present the work result. Since the task was assigned for individual students, so as the presenters showed their work in front of the class, the rest of the students were so busy with their own work. It didn't result into a conducive class situation. "Grading would affect the order in which words, word meanings, tenses, structures, topics, functions, skills, etc. are presented" [29].

S: *Yang tidak bisa gambar gimana, Miss?*

T: *Tidak apa-apa, sebisa kalian saja gambarnya apa.*

S: *Kemarin kan sudah gambar-gambar juga aktifitasnya, Miss.*

T: *It's okay, ini untuk mengasah keterampilan gambar kalian.*

7) *Assessment and evaluation:* Informing the students about the scoring criteria of their task is really needed. Unfortunately, in the case of this class situation that the researcher observed, the teacher did not explain anything about what the students would be scored about. The teacher actually knew what to score based on her scoring rubric, yet she didn't acknowledge it to the students. The students were also not curious about what was being scored. It can be said that as the students were given the tasks, they had no idea what to score about their performance in the activity of the task given. "Rubrics are designed to guide the students' learning, teachers' instruction, course development, and administrators' program observations" [30].

V. CONCLUSION

This research is intended to answer a research question that is to analyse the communicativeness in students' speaking task by using seven checklists of communicative tasks proposed by Nunan [29]. There were some limitations found in line with the use of the tasks. This study reveals the analysis of the task communicativeness in speaking assessment used by the teacher. According to the result, it is found that for the speaking tasks were not communicative enough for measuring the students' speaking skill. The tasks could not explore the students' speaking skill maximally. In the case of measure

students' speaking skill, the teacher should design compatible speaking assessment instruments.

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APPENDIX

In the beginning of the class, the teacher checked on the students' presence. She called the students' name one by one just to make sure who had been there in the class. Besides checking the presence or the attendance of the students, the teacher also started the class by asking about the previous material. It was purposed to check on students understanding and memory about yesterday's lesson. As it was taught before, the teacher talked about the vocabulary of places in a town. The material was about the vocabularies of places and some directions. The material that was delivered by the teacher that day was about how to give the direction, since it was the material needed to cover the previous material which was about the vocabularies of directions and also places. The teacher designed a lesson that about giving direction expression.

T: *Kemarin kita sudah belajar beberapa vocabularies tentang tempat atau places yaa.*

S: *Iya, Miss.*

T: Do you still remember?

S: Yes, *sedikit*.

T: Tell me about your vocabularies about places. I'll write it down in the board.

S: *Okay, Miss.*

T: The first one is hospital.

S: School, airport.

T: Good, what else?

S: Station.

The students were given some papers from the teacher to tell about what people do in those places.

T: Well, Miss *sudah siapkan beberapa kertas beserta tulisan nama tempat yaa. Kalian coba jelaskan apa yang orang lakukan di tempat tersebut. Coba siapa yg mau coba?*

S: *Saya, Miss.*

T: Okay, sure, *iyaa coba gimana.*

S: *pertama, restaurant, tempat makan.*

T: Good. Who want to try again?

S: I trying, miss. The barbershop, people cutting hair.

T: Okay, very good.

The students keep mentioning the vocabularies of places in English and mixing Bahasa. The next activity that the teacher gave to the students were doing a task where they needed to use their drawing skill. The teacher asked to draw a map using the drawing tools in the blank white paper for each person. Not only drawing the maps, but also the students had to insert some vocabularies of places. After finishing the drawing, then they had to present it to the class. While the other students were watching the presenter, they needed to give any question using the asking for direction expression. Each of the students had 3 students who asked. That was the rules of doing the task given by the teacher.

S: *Yang tidak bisa gambar gimana, Miss?*

T: *Tidak apa-apa, sebisa kalian saja gambarnya apa.*

S: *Kemarin kan sudah gambar-gambar juga aktifitasnya, Miss.*

T: It's okay, *ini untuk mengasah keterampilan gambar kalian.*