Wahana AKADEMIK

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JURNAL INI DITERBITKAN SEKALI DALAM SETAHUN

Objektif utama jurnal ini diterbitkan ialah untuk menggalakkan kakitangan akademik menerbitkan penulisan ilmiah bagi menambah bahan bacaan yang meliputi ilmu dari pelbagai bidang. Selain itu, usaha ini dibuat agar budaya penulisan dapat dipupuk di kalangan kakitangan akademik sesuai dengan tarafnya sebagai sebuah universiti.

KANDUNGAN

DARIPADA KETUA PENYUNTING

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

Y.A.B. Dato' Seri Setia Di Raja Dato' Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain, Menteri Besar Kedah telah melakukan lawatan rasmi ke UiTM Cawangan Kedah pada 3 Julai 2003 yang lalu. Sempena lawatan beliau, Pengarah Kampus telah memberi taklimat mengenai kemajuan dan sumbangan UiTM Cawangan Kedah melalui penyelidikan dan perundingan terhadap negara khususnya negeri Kedah. Kata alu-aluan Y. Bhg. Dato' Naib Canselor UiTM dalam buku "UiTM Kedah Sepintas Lalu" sempena lawatan Menteri Besar Kedah telah menekankan peranan UiTM terhadap negara terutamanya dalam bidang penyelidikan dan perundingan untuk membantu kerajaan negeri bagi memajukan negeri masing-masing. Oleh itu, satu saluran perlu diwujudkan bagi mendokumentasikan hasil penyelidikan dan perundingan supaya ianya boleh dijadikan sumber rujukan oleh semua pihak yang berminat.

Justeru itu, UiTM Kedah telah menerbitkan jurnal akademik bertajuk 'Wahana Akademik' untuk menampung keperluan penerbitan tersebut. Untuk itu, Jawatankuasa Jurnal Akademik, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Kedah amat mengalu-alukan hasil penulisan akademik samaada hasil penyelidikan dan perundingan ataupun analisa *literature* untuk dimuatkan dalam penerbitannya.

Wan Faizah Wan Abdullah

FOCUSSING ON TEACHER TALK IN MOTIVATING STUDENTS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM AT UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA (UiTM)

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ABSTRACT

This paper looks at the various aspects of teacher talk in the English Language classroom. This is based on classroom observations and unpublished classroom research done over a period of ten years. Teacher talk is dealt in three aspects: amount, quality and timing of teacher talk. A more detailed discussion is done on the timing of the teacher talk. Finally suggestions are made to help teachers use teacher use his/her talk to benefit everybody in class.

Key words : *Integrative Motivation, Instrumental Motivation, Amount of Teacher Talk, Quality of Teacher Talk, Timing of Teacher Talk, Fossilization*

INTRODUCTION

Considerable research has been done to prove that **motivation** is one of the most important factors in second or foreign language learning. (Gardner and Lambert, 1959). Considerable research has also been done on **teacher talk** (TT) in the classroom (Holley and King, 1971; Chaudron, 1988; Long and Sato, 1983). However, not much research has been done on the relationship between TT and the effects they have on students' motivation. It is this issue that I would like to address here. We shall see how the teacher can utilise research findings and his/her classroom experience to motivate students in class by carefully and purposefully controlling the amount, quality and timing of TT in the language classroom. Finally, we shall see how evaluation can be done on TT in motivating the students in the English language classroom.

BACKGROUND

UiTM is a public university which offers seventy percent (70%) diploma programmes in pure sciences, applied sciences, business, accountancy, law, art and design, hotel and tourism, education and the latest, medicine. It also offers bachelor, masters and PhD programmes.

Students are mainly Malays, aged above eighteen (18) and whose mother tongue is Bahasa Melayu (BM). More than fifty percent (50%) of them are from the rural areas and come from the low-income group. They have spent eleven (11) years

learning English as a compulsory subject in school before entering UiTM. They will undergo at least three (3) semesters of compulsory English courses, namely, Preparatory English (BEL 100), Mainstream English I (BEL 200) and Mainstream English II (BEL 250). Some programmes offer English courses until they are in semester five (5).

Lecturers are mainly Malays and all courses must be taught in English except Islamic Studies and the other languages offered or taught, for example, Mandarin and Arabic as most of the reference books are in English.

Except for the main campus in Shah Alam, the other branch campuses are located in rural areas of the country.

PROBLEMS
These facts present considerable problems to the English teachers. The students do not see the immediate need to use English, especially for verbal communication, as the environment is totally dominated by Bahasa Melayu (BM) and the Malays. The standard of English is low due to the background of the students who come from poor families and live in the rural areas. In addition to this, the location of UiTM branch campuses does little to motivate them to use English. This is because in these areas, BM is widely used for both social and business purposes compared to the urban areas.

Most students have low morale, low self-esteem and low self-confidence due to their family background. Although lectures are supposed to be in English, some lecturers do resort to BM as they find it easier to explain in BM. This is because if they use English, they then have to translate their own lectures into BM.

To make matters worse, students face peer group pressure not to use English. This is accompanied by attitudes towards the English speaking countries like the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and Australia which represent the evil, powerful West which bully, manipulate and discriminate against Muslims and Islamic countries as a whole.

RESPONSE
We shall first look at the theoretical aspects of motivation and try to identify the types of motivation that exist within this group of learners. Then, we will see how the teacher, through TT, can create and maintain the students' motivation throughout the process of learning.

MOTIVATION
Research on motivation gives the following insight:

Gardner and Lambert (1959) made the first distinction between two (2) types of motivation:
1. Integrative motivation
2. Instrumental motivation

Integrative motivation is identified with the positive attitudes towards the target language group and the potential for integrating into that group, or at the very least an interest in meeting and interacting with members of the target language group.

Instrumental motivation refers to more functional reasons for learning a language: to get a better job or a promotion, or to pass a required examination (Crookes and Schmidt,1991).

Another view of motivation is based on a construct by Edward Deci (1975). A person may be motivated intrinsically or extrinsically to succeed in a task. According to Deci (1975: 23), intrinsically motivated activities are ones for which there is no apparent reward except the activity itself. People seem to engage in the activities for their own sake and not because they lead to extrinsic reward...Intrinsically motivated behaviours are aimed at bringing about certain internally rewarding consequences, namely, feelings of competence and self determination (in Brown, 1994:155-156).

Extrinsically motivated behaviours, on the other hand, are carried out in anticipation of a reward from outside and beyond the self. Typically extrinsic rewards are money, prizes, grades, and even certain types of positive feed back (Deci (1975: 23) in Brown 1994: 156).

Most research strongly favours intrinsic orientations, especially for long term retention (Crooks and Schmidt, 1991; and Brown,1990).

It is this motivation which makes students *tick*. It is this motivation which makes them want to come to class, to study, to succeed and to continue the learning process. This presents the teacher with an enormous task. He/she has to deal with not one but on average of about fifty (50) students in a class and on average an English lecturer at UiTM has three (3) classes per semester. So, he/she has to deal with about one hundred and fifty (150) students.

As stated by **Mc Connel** (in Mouly, 1970:333), there can be no more important problem in teaching ...than that of motivation

However, these students come to class with different motives.The teacher need not worry about creating motives in the children. His/her task is to capitalise on the many motives already present in sufficient abundance in any child and to harness them toward the attainment of desirable objectives (Mc Connel in Mouly, 1970:333).

The teacher may choose to utilise the enormous power that he/she exerts in classroom discourse (Long and Sato, 1983). Other than giving positive feedback to students, TT can be motivating in many other ways. We shall deal with them as follows:

- AMOUNT OF TT
- QUALITY OF TT
- TIMING OF TT

AMOUNT OF TT

The problem with most language classes is there is too much TT. Research shows that teachers, when taped, are themselves surprised by the amount of talk they do in class. Legoretta (in Chaudron, 1988:51) found that the students accounted for only eleven percent (11%) to thirty percent (30%) of the class talk, while teachers accounted for seventy (70%) to eighty percent (80%). Other research also supports this claim with an average of seventy percent (70%) TT (Ramirez, 1986; Bailystok and Frohlich, 1978).

A research done on Kedah campus revealed that for teaching the speaking skill, fifty percent (50%) of the class time is TT. For reading and writing classes, about seventy percent (70%) is TT. For listening, there is about fifty percent (50%) TT where the students have to listen to a voice recording after that. It is interesting to note that in the listening class, student talk accounted for only five percent (5%) of class time.

This is also true in the first language classes where about two-thirds (2/3) of classroom speech is attributable to the teacher (Chaudron, 1988).

We learn to speak through speaking just as we learn to read by reading (Swain,1985). Other research in first or second language also supported the notion that students learn through practice. By dominating the class with TT, students are then being deprived of this learning opportunity.

In class, when the teacher is focussing on the speaking skill, the student will not have the opportunity to practise this skill, if the teacher were to speak most of the time. Swain (1985) argued that learners must try to make themselves understood if they are to gain grammatical mastery of the target language (in Allwright and Bailey 1991:144).

The amount of TT does vary from class to class and from lesson to lesson. If the teacher is teaching a listening skill, and an appropriate tape is not available or the laboratory cannot be used, then obviously he/she has to talk quite a lot in that class as he/she has to be a model speaker (especially where the group of students are low- level students). Sometimes, the teacher tends to talk more in a quiet class. Schumann (1977:247) stated that he prefers eavesdropping rather than speaking as a learning strategy (in Allwright and Bailey 1991:144).

This proves that learners do have varied learning strategies. However, in most instances, students wished they were given more time to talk in language classes (Chaudron, 1988).

QUALITY OF TT

We shall look at the following:
- Type of TT
- Speed of TT

Research findings in this area present the teacher with this question:

- What type of language must the teacher use?

  The answer varies. Some research suggests the use of i (students' current level of comprehension in L2), while other research suggests the use of i+1 (Krashen,1981 and 1982; and Nunan,1991) which is a level just a little higher than his current level of comprehension in L2. Other research suggests the use of i -1 (a level lower than his current level of comprehension in L2) or the use of mother tongue, especially in metalanguage, that is, TT for purposes other than delivering the lesson. These are contrasting views (Nunan, 1991: 189-191)

  For UiTM students, the approach taken by most lecturers is to use i as much as possible and i-1 where necessary. Some lecturers do resort to this when dealing with very weak students. For the more mature students, some research suggests the use of i+1 as the challenge to understand becomes a motivating factor. However, some lecturers feel this can sometimes become a demotivating factor. Students when asked said that they had difficulties coping with i. Therefore, using i +1 in TT would have negative effects on them. The problem faced by the teacher is deciding on i. If students have problems coping with it, then it is not i but i + 1.

SPEED OF TT

Some research has been done on the speed of TT in second or foreign language classes. However, they are done on classes where the teacher is a native speaker. At UiTM, where most teachers are non-native speakers, they are faced with this problem:

- Is the speed of TT at the level comprehensible by the learners?

  For teachers, a simple test can be conducted. Students are asked to write down the teacher's speech. If the students find it difficult to do so because it is too fast, adjust to the desired speed. It is undoubtedly difficult to adjust to suit the whole class of students. Unfortunately, the compromise will have to be made by the better students.

Observations show that teachers do tend to go back to their original speed. It is recommended that this speed check be done at least twice a semester.

TIMING OF TT

It is crucial that TT happens at the right time. If the timing is wrong, TT may fail to motivate the students. It may become a demotivating factor. The teacher is faced with these questions in deciding the right timing of TT.

- When must the teacher talk?
- When must the teacher not talk?
- How much time should be given for students to respond?

TT happens when:
1. Delivering the lesson
2. Explaining the lesson in response to students' questions
3. Answering students' questions

4. Questioning students to check their comprehension, knowledge or for various other reasons
5. Monitoring class activities
6. Correcting students' non-linguistic behaviour (negative feedback)
7. Correcting students' linguistic behaviour
8. Giving positive feedback on students' non-linguistic and linguistic behaviour

In delivering the lesson, the teacher may for some lessons in class, let the students conduct peer group teaching. Many studies done on peer group teaching support the notion that peer teaching does result in peer learning. Assinder (1991) who studied twelve (12) adults, of mixed nationalities, on a full-time 'English for Further Studies' course in Australia, found that the students who were involved in peer teaching increased in their self-esteem and responsibility for the group, became more confident as the preparation made them experts on the subject and the genuine feeling of progress led to increased motivation. Some students want student autonomy. However, this should not be done all the time for the fear of as being thought of being lazy or not worth the money paid for the course.

In explaining the lesson in response to students' questions and in answering students' questions, the teacher can open the question to be answered and discussed in class. This can lead to two (2) positive effects:
1. The students who know the answer can help their classmates
2. Reduce TT

There is intrinsic motivation as the reward is getting satisfaction for giving the required answer or explanation.

In questioning students to check their comprehension, knowledge or for other reasons, TT is inevitable though it can be minimised so that it is not too demanding on the students. On the other hand, too little TT can be demotivating as students feel that they are not being challenged, therefore, they are not motivated to be actively involved in the learning process. This balance between not too much or not too little TT is a decision which the teacher makes all the time based on his/her experience and the nature and level of the learners. Discussions with colleagues over the years show that the teacher tend to favour better to weaker students in asking questions. It is also interesting to note that teachers do not ask more challenging questions. These can be demotivating to the students. The weaker ones need to be asked more often while the better ones need to be challenged so as not to make them bored. Therefore, the teacher needs to think about distributing questions fairly among students and also increasing their level of difficulty for better students (Nunan, 1991).

The amount of gap or wait-time given to students to respond to the teacher is very important. Students are normally given less than two (2) seconds to answer questions before the teacher rephrases the question, poses it to other students or asks other questions (Rowe, 1974).

Research also shows that given more time, students are not only able to provide the answer as they have a better opportunity to construct their responses but the

quality of the answer is better. This may also fit better with their cultural norm of interaction (Holley and King, 1971).

White and Lightbrown (1984) and Long et. al. (1984) who also argued for greater wait-time, suggest that the teacher can be trained to provide students with greater wait-time.

In monitoring class activities, TT may or may not be welcomed. This depends on the teacher and the activity involved. TT is least welcomed in most group tasks/ activities. The teacher should talk only when requested by the students or when he/she wants to make sure that the students are actually engaged in the set activities and not doing something else. Most teachers seem to interfere in the group discussion by giving their ideas before giving students the opportunity to present the ideas from the group. Observations on UiTM students show that whenever the teacher is present, students, usually the weaker ones, tend to keep quiet and listen to the teacher. However, when given the opportunity to complete an activity in groups and then present them to the class, they managed to complete the set task/activity.

In correcting students' non-linguistic behaviour, the teacher has to decide on the following:

* Must the behaviour be corrected?

* If yes, when and where must it be made?

* How must the student be corrected?

These questions are not easy to answer. As mentioned, every student is different. They have different experiences and expectations in class. Unacceptable behaviour, on the other hand, is a personal matter. Absenteeism may be serious for some teachers but not for others. So are late comers and students who interfere in TT time especially in delivering the lesson. The teacher may choose not to correct the student. If he/she decides to correct, it may be done the moment the student commits this unacceptable behaviour. He/she may choose to correct them publicly /privately in class or privately after class in his/her office. Most male students at UiTM do take public classroom correction quite well. Their behaviours do change for the better after the correction. On the other hand, experience with female students tend to favour more private, outside class type of correction. For classroom, on-the-spot correction, the teacher may opt for non-linguistic rather than linguistic correction. This may be better for some students. Again, the teacher has to keep the balance of correcting the unacceptable behaviour without demotivating the student for the rest of the lesson or the rest of the semester. This is especially true for the Malay students who are known to be very sensitive people. This is because of the face-saving effect (Scheloff et. al.,1977 and Gaskill, 1980).

In correcting students' linguistic behaviour, there has been some interesting research discoveries. Lightbown (1985) maintained that correcting students' behaviour does little to correct their errors. The immediate effect is that the error is

corrected but students tend to repeat the same mistake later. In order to correct students' linguistic behaviour or errors, they must be involved in some kind of task/ activity as this experience will have a longer lasting effect in correcting their linguistic behaviour.

For example, in teaching pronunciation, when students pronounce incorrectly, correcting them will result in the correct pronunciation during that lesson only. They will resort to the wrong pronunciation in the next lesson. To solve this problem, it is suggested that they go through the pronunciation symbol in the dictionary and practise the sound so that they achieve the correct pronunciation. Feedback from the students indicates that they will not forget the correct pronunciation later. The activity of opening a dictionary and using the phonetic symbol makes learning more effective and longer lasting.

Studies on interlanguage by Selinker (1972) and others show that errors are necessary in the language learning process. They are seen as stages in language development to get to the level of correctness of the target language. Therefore, if these errors are corrected, the development process is disturbed.

However, a conflicting view, which is worth considering, is that of fossilization (Brown,1994; Vigil and Oller, 1976). Studies show that if errors are not corrected, they tend to fossilise and further development does not take place and the student will end up with an impaired linguistic ability.

Again, the teacher is in a dilemma of whether or not to correct the students. Students in most second and foreign language classes expressed preference for correction by the teacher. In fact, error correction by the teacher is one of the most highly valued and desired classroom activities (Willing, 1988 in Nunan, 1991:198).

However, these studies do not show when the errors should be corrected or how. It depends. The teacher must find the balance.

Vigil and Oller (1976) suggest that to prevent fossilization of erroneous forms, clear cognitive information about the problem treatments in the learners' output should be provided. But to ensure continued improvement, such information must be accompanied by positive feedback, otherwise...they will stop their efforts to interact in the target language but not too encouraging that the learners see no reason to change (in Allwright and Bailey, 1991:94).

The decision also depends on when the error is made. If students are involved in a speaking activity, correcting them may impair their self-confidence and therefore demotivate them to carry on the activity. This is especially true for UiTM students. When asked, they would say they do not want to speak unless solicited, for fear of making mistakes, as these mistakes will be corrected for the whole class to hear. The teacher's intention of making the whole class aware of the mistake is not taken as such by the students. This is a common case where the teacher's teaching strategies are not the same as the learners' learning strategies, in fact, they are sometimes at odds with each other (Allwright and Bailey, 1991).

Instead of TT, the teacher may opt for peer group correction to get the students actively involved in the learning process.

No matter what decision is made by the teacher on:
*   whether to correct
*   whether not to correct
*   when to correct
*   who corrects

he/she has to be aware that errors are part of the learning process and that some errors can fossilise in the students. Allwright (1975: 98-99) points out that teachers have a duty, perhaps to be inconsistent, in the sense that they must adjust their treatment of any error to the needs of the moment.

In giving positive feedback on students' non-linguistic behaviour and linguistic behaviour, the teacher is again faced with the dilemma of:
*   whether to give feedback
*   when to give feedback
*   what type of feedback to give

Studies on motivation show that intrinsic motivation has more positive and long-term effect on students (Crooks and Schmidt, 1991: Brown, 1990). Students, who are driven by their own desire to succeed, will do so without external or extrinsic rewards. The teacher need not worry about providing motivation. His/her task is to capitalise on the different motives that the students have. Once the students have their own motives realised, the learning process can be facilitated if not promoted. The students need to find the satisfaction and be motivated by the task itself, not by the reward of doing the task successfully. This kind of motivation is what drives them inside as well as outside classroom.Therefore, motivation is not only created but also fostered and maintained.

However, there are students who seem to be motivated only when positive feedback is given. They are usually the new students who still lack self-confidence. They are driven by the need for reward. Rewards should be given to such students to initiate the process of learning. Through time, the teacher can slowly remove the extrinsic reward to motivate students so that students' intrinsic motivation can be developed.

Positive feedback can come in various forms, to make students speak English at UiTM. The students are sometimes rewarded with praise, or even marks. This is practised with the lower level English classes. When they have gained confidence, they will want to use English even without the reward, as speakers of English are looked-up to in the Malaysian society. Despite the peer-group pressure mentioned before, students whose English is good, do tend to use it, and although they are not favoured by their peers, they are nonetheless respected and even envied for their linguistic ability.

EVALUATION
Many decisions must be made by the teacher so that students can be motivated

through TT in English classes. The right balance between amount, quality and timing is not easy to achieve. The teacher, however, can adopt some of these suggestions for evaluating his/her talk. The teacher can record his/her classroom talk. In this way, he/she can be aware of whether there is too much or too little TT in class. Students can be asked to provide feedback on the amount and quality of TT. Students can also be asked to answer questionnaires or provide verbal remarks during or after class. The teacher can make prior arrangements with his/her class for this purpose. For UiTM, anonymous written comments may be a better alternative, as Malay students will find it rude to comment on others, especially their teachers, in public. The teacher can also check on whether the students have the desired intrinsic motivation as opposed to having extrinsic motivation by removing the extrinsic rewards when the students are ready. The teacher can also devise other methods to test whether the students have got the right balance between amount, quality and timing of TT. As mentioned, the dictation method can be used to check on the speed of TT. The teacher can also ask for comments from his/her colleagues and consequently modify his/her talk. Other written and spoken tests can also be used on the students to check on TT. For example, when students were questioned, they might have failed to answer because they did not understand the question (at $i + 1$ level), it was too fast or they were not given enough time to answer.

CONCLUSION
We have looked at how TT, especially the timing of TT, can motivate students in class. The teacher has to make many ad-hoc decisions in class. The teacher must use research findings with caution as most of the research is done outside Asian countries. The teacher must rely heavily on his/her experience to arrive at the right decision. On the other hand, the teacher can conduct his/her own research. The classroom is an ocean waiting to be discovered. There are many useful and wonderful things, which he/she can learn from there. As there is no one best method, the teacher's classroom research should be an on-going developmental project, which will benefit both the teacher and the students.

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