

THE USE OF QUALITY PEDAGOGIC LANGUAGE IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN INDONESIAN SETTING

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ABSTRACT: *The implementation of new curriculum into the teaching of English in Indonesia requires new ways of doing classroom practices. This article is intended to present the result of a research conducted by a team of researchers (Suherdi, Yusuf & Muslim, 2007) in an SMA (Sekolah Menengah Atas or Senior High School) in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia to ascertain the effectiveness of the use of quality pedagogic language in improving students' achievement in English. For that purpose, an experiment has been done in a first grade class. Using a quasi-experimental design, the class has been taught using the language thus far used by the teacher in the first six meetings, and using the quality pedagogic language in the following six meetings. Prior to the first meetings, a pre-test was conducted to ascertain students' learning achievement before the treatment. Then, a post-test was conducted at the end of the experiment. The result of the data analysis showed that there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test means in the English competence, and no difference in those of their effective factors. Possible explanations to these unlinear patterns of findings have been presented and relevant recommendations have been given both for theoretical and practical aspects of English teaching, especially in schooling system.*

KEY WORDS: *Pedagogic language, teachers' questions, feedback, pauses, discourse analysis, affective factors, and teaching of English.*

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of new curriculum into the teaching of English in Indonesia requires new ways of doing classroom practices. Its emphasis on the mastery of communicative competence has put more burdens for the teachers, especially in meeting higher demands of the competence-based nature of the curriculum. Responding to this innovation, teachers give various reactions, ranging from giving a warm welcome to active resistance. However, in terms of its percentage, the numbers are far from balanced: those with a warm welcome are far below those with resistance.

This kind of reaction is not surprising. The new philosophy underlying the new curriculum is naturally new to the teachers. Furthermore, the high demands of communicative competence in the parts of the teacher are not readily answerable.

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They were not prepared for this kind of situations. They were taught in grammar-based English teaching. To make it worse, efforts for introducing new ways of teaching to the teachers have not been sufficiently done by those responsible for the implementation of the curriculum. This gap has brought about serious problems in the English teaching settings. The most striking one is the gap between the teaching at schools and the national exam. While in the plan of teaching practice, some teachers keep going with grammar-oriented teachings, the national examination is beginning to take competence-based forms.

This gap will be increasingly wider unless some efforts to cover it done in a proper way. For that purpose, an alternative has been selected and research to ascertain the effectiveness has been conducted. The alternative taken in this case is improvement of the language used in the teaching-learning processes. In other word, some better-prepared and better-chosen medium of instruction has been developed and implemented in the teaching of English. This alternative has been taken based on the belief that education is basically a dialog between teacher and students.

This research is intended to be a continuation of a long series of research projects that has been the focus of the writer's interest for these 13 years. All these began with the writer's Master thesis in the University of Melbourne, Australia, exploring the language used by a teacher and a number of students in an ESL (English as Second Language) class; followed by similar projects in foreign language contexts (Suherdi, 2006); and a comparative analysis between the characteristics of EFL (English as Foreign Language) and ESL discourse (Suherdi, 1999). Similar studies have also been conducted in the teaching of *Bahasa* Indonesia (Suherdi, 2000; and Suherdi, 2005); and based on the same data, teachers' contribution has been identified and classified (Suherdi, 2007).

As shown in the figure, the study reported in this article has a very long history under the umbrella of discourse analysis study. The use of the term "pedagogic language" is not yet popular in the literature, except in Theodor D. Sterling and Seymour V. Pollack (1974), in a more restricted scope than what is being meant in this research, i.e. in computer programming language. In this research, "pedagogic language" has been used to refer to the language used by the teacher and the students in the teaching-learning processes in the effort of achieving the expected learning goals. This excludes any dialog between teachers and students beyond the effort of achieving the expected learning goals.

The influence of quality pedagogic language on students' achievement has been studied by many researchers since the beginning of the 20th century. As stated by Donald C. Orlich *et al.* (1985) that in 1912, Rommiet Stevens observed the life and language of a class and reported that the teacher used a large amount of questions reaching the average of 395 a day. Two-third of this large number requires low intellectual level thinking. Donald C. Orlich *et al.* (1985) also reported another research with relatively similar result, i.e. that of Clegg. The tendency of using low intellectual level questions is also reported by Davis and Hunkins (as

cited by Orlich *et al.*, 1985). Analyzing three textbooks, they found that 87% of the questions contained in the books belong to recalling, 9% to comprehension, and 4% to application. None of them addresses analysis, synthesis, and evaluation ability. These imbalances may be considered to be the main causes of less developed capacity of students' critical thinking.

The second category of important pedagogic language element is teacher's feedback and pauses. Feedbacks and pauses are very important in ascertaining students' success. In this relation, Thomas L. Good and Jere E. Brophy (2000) reported the result of Mary Budd Rowe's research on the use of two kinds of pauses. In her research, pauses are categorized into Pause 1 and Pause 2. Pause 1 happens after teachers' questions, and before students' answers or teacher's further comments; whereas Pause 2 happens after students' answers and before teachers' reactions. Mary Budd Rowe reported that the two kinds of pauses last only one second. In the mean time, it is believed that pauses that last three to five seconds will invite better and more accurate answers as well as more active participation.

Previous research shows that the majority of questions posed by teachers are display questions (Ellis, 1994); and most of the questions posed require low order thinking (Orlich *et al.*, 1985). In the mean time, many educators believe that referential questions encourage students to think harder and more critical (Nunan, 1989; and Thornbury, 1996). According to S. Thornbury (1996), referential questions can reach those areas that cannot be reached by other kinds of questions. Last, but not least, my research on the questions used in less effective classes found that out of the whole number of questions posed by the teacher 75% are display and checking, and only 22% are referential (Suherdi, 2007).

However, less developed pedagogic language, may it be referential, display, checking, or other, is very likely to lead the teaching-learning processes to less developed students' learning. On the contrary, well-developed pedagogic language will lead to well-developed learning. Hence, investigating the effect of well-developed pedagogic language on students' achievement is not only relevant but also theoretically motivating.

Through the investigation, some relevant questions may be answered, i.e. (1) Whether or not that kind of instructional language can be developed in the context of the current research?; (2) What makes it effective or otherwise ineffective?; and (3) Are there any distinctive features of effective pedagogic language?

Answering all those questions is beyond the capacity of a research project. For that reason, this research will take effectiveness of well-developed pedagogic language in improving students' learning achievement as well as their affective factors as the focus.

METHODOLOGY: SAMPLE AND DESIGN

To ascertain the effectiveness of well-developed pedagogic language in improving students' learning achievement, as well as their affective factors, a quasi experiment

has been carried out in time series design in a Grade 10 class in a University Laboratory Senior High School. In the experiment, teaching-learning processes were carried out in two different levels of pedagogic language quality. The language thus far used by the teacher (then referred to as conventional level of pedagogic language or conventional language) was used in the first six meetings, and better-developed pedagogic language (then referred to as well-developed language) was used in the next six meetings. To get a clear idea of the design, a diagrammatic representation is presented in figure 1 as follows:

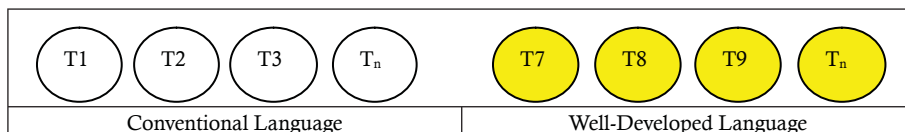


Figure 1:
 A Time Series Design in the Use of Pedagogic Language in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in an Indonesian Context

Tests and questionnaire administration were conducted to obtain the data of students' achievement in the first and second half. The data in the first half was used to indicate students' achievement in the teaching-learning processes using conventional language and those in the second to indicate their achievement in the processes in which well-developed language was used.

In terms of the background, the majority of students come from less supportive environment as far as learning English is concerned. Out of 35 students in the class, only six come from fairly good environment, the rest come from less supportive, four of them even from the least supportive environment. In percentage, the whole number may be presented in figure 2 as follows:

**Persentase Sebaran Skor
 Kualitas Dukungan Lingkungan
 terhadap Siswa dalam Belajar
 Bahasa Inggris**

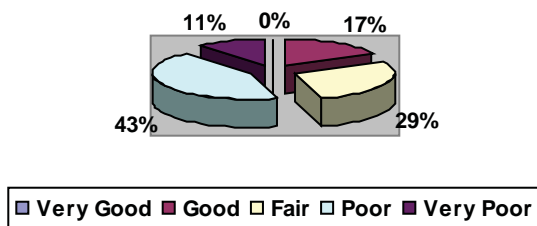


Figure 2:
 Percentage of Students' Environment Supportiveness to English Learning

The figure shows that only 17% of the students get good support from the environment; 29% get fair support; 43% or the majority get less supportive; and 11% get the least supportive environment, as far as English learning is concerned.

ON THE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESSES

The main difference in the use of pedagogic languages in the two settings involved may be illustrated by the following segments of classroom verbal interactions.

- T: "Ok. Yes. Can you give me an example?"
Ss: "Between, next to, beside, behind, under, above, in the corner of, on the left side" (teacher writes *between, beside, behind, above, under* on the whiteboard).
T: "One by one. One by one".
Ss: "Across".
T: "Across, ok" (teacher writes *Across*).
Ss: "On the left side, on the right side" (unclear).
T: "Across. What else?"
Ss: "On the left side, on the right side, in front of".
T: (Write *in the corner, on the left side, on the right side*). "What else?"
Ss: "In front of, in the corner of, in the middle of".
T: (Write *In front of*). "What else?"
Ss: "Beside, next to".

This segment is taken from one of the pedagogic conversations taking place in the first half of the experiment. The teaching-learning processes in this half were dominated by questions and answers, i.e. teacher's questions followed by students' answers. The majority of the questions required one-word answers, or a group of discrete concepts. In the mean time, the processes in the second half were dominated by examples of some communicative activities, practices, and students' performing communicative activities. To illustrate, a segment of the classroom verbal interaction has been chosen and presented below. Instead of asking the students to make 10 sentences using the previously taught prepositions, the teacher asked them to tell their friends to describe their school. For that purposes, the teacher gave some models prior to the tasks assignmet.

- T: "Today, we'll try to explain to your friend about our school map. Our school map".
T: "There are some places here. There are so many classes. What is it? This is field, teachers room unfinished building" (pointing to the map).
T: "Now, *ssh* ... What you have to do?"
S: "Yes, it is".
T: "Is to explain about the map".
T: "Now, I will give you an example how to (cough) explain it to your friend. You just explain five places that's around our, (coughing) I'm sorry, our school. For example, listen to me carefully. The first thing what you have to say is I am standing on the field or whatever place just choose *eee* ... whatever you want you can stand on field, in front of the class choose whatever you want, I will give you an example I am standing on the field. On the right side of me is the teacher's room. On the left side of me is the unfinished building. Behind me is the toilet and across the field is the classes".

As is clear in the segment above, there is a modeling phase done by the teacher in his effort to give a clear idea of the text being taught. Some group works then followed, and finally he asked the students to describe their school to their friends. Here is one of the instances in which students perform their communicative activities.

- T: "I wonder why you are so noisy when he come forward. Something wrong with him? Ok, listen (unclear). Go ahead".
S6: "I'm standing in the front of, in front of teacher room".
T: "The teacher's room. Ok, go on".
S6: "And beside me *Konseling* room, *ya pa ya?*"
T: "Counseling room".
S6: "And ... counselling room, and on beside ...".
T: "On ...?"
S6: "On the right side me class ten, a ten e, and in corner me".
T: "Ok, in the corner".
S6: "The canteen".
T: "Is canteen".
S6: "Is canteen (laugh) and the corner ... (laugh unclear) and on ... it's ... the corner ... the corner file".

Though interrupted by clues and helps given by the teacher, the student's text is more intact and natural than making 10 discrete sentences using the prepositions given. The illustration is intended to show the difference of the pedagogic language quality in the two halves of the experiment.

RESULT

On the English Test Scores. The scores resulted from the tests have been summarized and presented in this section. The scores from the first half are presented in table 1 and the scores from the second half in table 2 as follows:

Table 1:
Summary of Scores from the Tests in the First Half

Scores	Frequency	Percentage	Percentile
22-26	3	8.8%	8.8%
17-21	8	23.53%	32.33%
12-16	15	44.12%	67.45%
7-11	8	23.53%	100%

In table 1, it is indicated that out of 34 students, 3 or 8.8% get scores between 22 and 26; 8 or 23.53% get scores between 17 and 21; 15 or the majority get between 12 and 16; and 8 get between 7 and 11. In the mean time, the scores from tests in the second half are as follows:

Table 2:
 Summary of Scores from the Tests in the Second Half

Scores	Frequency	Percentage	Percentile
22-26	4	11.1%	11.1%
17-21	19	52.7%	63.8%
12-16	13	36.1%	100%

As indicated in the table, out of 36 students, 4 or 11.1% get scores between 22 and 26; 19 or 52.7% get scores between 17 and 21; 13 or 36.1% get between 12 and 16; and none of them get between 7 and 11.

On the Affective Factors Questionnaire Scores. The scores resulted from the questionnaire have been converted, summarized, and presented in this section. The scores from the first half are presented in the following tables. The whole data resulted from the questionnaire are grouped into three, i.e. attitude, self-efficacy, and motivation.

First, Attitude towards Learning English. The data of students' attitude towards learning English in the first half are presented in table 3, while those in the second half in table 4. As indicated in the table, out of 35 students, none belong to the group with very positive attitude (Very Good); only 3 or 9% belong to group with positive (Good) attitude; 7 or 20% belong to the group with fairly positive (Fair) attitude; 15 or the majority of the students belong to less positive (Poor); and 10 belong to the least positive (Very Poor) attitude.

Table 3:
 Data Distribution of Students' Attitude towards Learning English in the First Half

Scores	Frequency	Percentage	Percentile
Very Good	0	0	0
Good	3	9%	9%
Fair	7	20%	29%
Poor	15	43%	72%
Very Poor	10	29%	100%

Table 4:
 Data Distribution of Students' Attitude towards Learning English in the Second Half

Scores	Frequency	Percentage	Percentile
Very Good	0	0	0
Good	12	33%	33%
Fair	6	17%	50%
Poor	6	17%	67%
Very Poor	12	33%	100%

In the mean time, the data from the second half, as shown in table 4, are as follows: out of 36 students, none belong to the group with very positive attitude (Very Good); six students or 17% belong to each of the groups with positive and fairly positive (Good and Fair) attitude; and 12 or 33% belong to the least positive (Very Poor) attitude.

Second, Students' Self-Efficacy in Learning English. The data of students' self-efficacy in learning English in the first half are presented in table 5, while those in the second half in table 6. As indicated in table 5, out of 35 students, none belong to the group with very high self-efficacy; only 2 or 6% belong to group with high self-efficacy; 7 or 20% belong to the group with fairly high self-efficacy; 17 or the majority of the students belong to low (Low); and 9 belong to very low (Very Low) self-efficacy.

Table 5:
Data Distribution of Students' Attitude towards Learning English in the First Half

Scores	Frequency	Percentage	Percentile
Very High	0	0	0
High	2	6%	6%
Fair	7	20%	26%
Low	17	48%	74%
Very Low	9	26%	100%

In the mean time, the data from the second half, as shown in table 6, are as follows: out of 36 students, none belong to both groups with very high and high self-efficacy; twelve students or 33% belong to the group fairly high self-efficacy; 8 or 22% belong to low self-efficacy; and 16 or 45% belong to very low self-efficacy.

Table 6:
Data Distribution of Students' Attitude towards Learning English in the Second Half

Scores	Frequency	Percentage	Percentile
Very High	0	0	0
High	0	0	0
Fair	12	33%	33%
Low	8	22%	55%
Very Low	16	45%	100%

Third, Students' Motivation in Learning English. The data of students' motivation in learning English in the first half are presented in table 7, while those in the second half in table 8. As indicated in the table, out of 35 students, none belong to the group with very high motivation; only 2 or 6% belong to group with high motivation; 6 or 17% belong to each of the groups with fairly high and low motivation; and 21 or the majority of the students belong to very low motivation.

Table 7:
Data Distribution of Students' Attitude towards Learning English in the First Half

Scores	Frequency	Percentage	Percentile
Very High	0	0	0
High	2	6%	6%
Fair	6	17%	23%
Low	6	17%	40%
Very Low	21	60%	100%

Table 8:
Data Distribution of Students' Attitude towards Learning English in the Second Half

Scores	Frequency	Percentage	Percentile
Very High	0	0	0
High	0	0	0
Fair	4	11%	11%
Low	7	19%	30%
Very Low	25	70%	100%

In the mean time, the data from the second half are as follows: out of 36 students, none belong to both groups with very high and high motivation; four students or 11% belong to the group fairly high motivation; 7 or 19% belong to low motivation; and 25 or 70% belong to very low motivation.

ANALYSIS

The test scores presented in section above have been analyzed using some statistical tests; and to test the difference of the the means of the two distributions, a Student's t-test has been administered and resulted in the following scores:

English Competence	t =	-2.9509
Attitude	t =	-1.6514
Self-Efficacy	t =	1.1398
Motivation	t =	1.7629

The test result shows that the difference between the mean of the scores of students' English in the first half data distribution and that of the second half is significant at the level of significance of .05. This is indicated by the fact that the observed t-score (-2.9509) is larger than the tabled-t (1.658). This means that hypothesis on the effectiveness of high quality pedagogic language in improving students' English competence is accepted.

In the mean time, the test also shows that the difference between the mean of students's attitude towards learning English the first half data distribution and

that of the second half is not significant at the level of significance of .05. This is indicated by the fact that the observed t-score (-1.6514) is slightly smaller than the tabled-t (1.658). Thus, contrary to the result of the t-test for English competence, this result shows that the hypothesis on the effectiveness of quality pedagogic language in improving students' attitude towards learning English is rejected.

The same result applies to the test of the difference between the means of the scores of self-efficacy. The result shows that the difference between the mean of the first half data distribution and that of the second half is not significant at the level of significance of .05. This is indicated by the fact that the observed t-score (1.1398) is smaller than the tabled-t (1.658). Again, this means that the hypothesis on the effectiveness of quality pedagogic language in improving students' self-efficacy in learning English is rejected.

Surprisingly, an unexpected significant difference was found in the test for the difference of the means of students' motivation in learning English. The calculation shows that the mean of the first half data distribution is larger than that of the second half, and the difference is significant at the level of significance of .05. This is indicated by the fact that the observed t-score (1.7629) is larger than the tabled-t (1.658). This means that the hypothesis on the effectiveness of quality pedagogic language in improving students' motivation in learning English cannot be accepted. Instead of improving students' motivation, it made their motivation worsened.

DISCUSSION

The result of the analysis shows very interesting findings, especially the unlinear patterns of the effectiveness of quality pedagogic language in improving students' English competence and their affective factors. As has been shown in the previous sections, students' English competence in the second half is better than their competence in the first half. This may indicate that there is a significant improvement in their English competence after they were taught using quality pedagogic language. However, this is not the case for the improvement of their affective factors. Improvement in students' attitude is not significant, and, surprisingly, there is a worsening tendency in students' self-efficacy. The worst fact is that there is a significant decrease in their motivation.

These findings clearly need deeper analyses. Seeing the dynamics of the development of the students from different levels of attainment, the patterns are not only interesting but also enlightening as far as the intricacy of students' sophisticated nature of learning is concerned. For that purpose, students' levels of attainment will be used as the basis of analysis.

The first level, i.e. students with very good and good achievement, has the following patterns. In this level, a very large increase in number takes place. The increase coincides with the increase in number of students who belong to the group with positive attitude. This increase, however, is not accompanied by the increase in the number of students with high self-efficacy and high motivation.

In the second level, i.e. students with fair achievement, the patterns are as follows: the increase of the number of students with fair achievement is large, accompanied by a large increase in the number of students with fairly high self-efficacy. However, it is accompanied by a slight decrease in the number of students with corresponding levels of attitude and motivation.

In the lower levels, i.e. students with poor and very poor achievement, there is a significant decrease in the number of students with less positive attitude, low self-efficacy, and low motivation, which might mean good news. However, seeing that the decrease in the number of the students in English competence is accompanied by increases in the number of students with these lower levels of attainment in the development of attitude and self-efficacy, and significant increase in terms of motivation, this is very likely a bad news. It may mean that in the lower level, the development tendency is towards worsening levels.

To sum up, the data show that there is a significant improvement in students' English competence, an insignificant improvement in students' attitude towards learning English, an insignificant drawback in students' self-efficacy, and a significant drawback in students' motivation in learning English.

Possible explanation of these unlinear patterns is clearly needed. The first possible explanation is that the development of English competence may be very well influenced by the increased quality of pedagogic language which provides balanced and more firm scaffolding for them to develop better learning, while the development of students' attitude is caused by their excitement of being exposed to new learning patterns, especially for those in the upper levels.

However, the higher demands posed by the competence-oriented models of teaching caused them to feel still very far away from the learning target. This feeling, for some students to a significant extent, leads to discouragement which, in turn, may be the causes of low motivation, especially for those in the lower levels of achievement.

Other possible explanation is that because, for some reasons, the experiment time is relatively too short, the development of students' attitude which is still underway has not come to its full attainment. In the mean time, the decrease of students' self-efficacy and motivation may be exemplified by an analogy of an operation procedure applied to a patient with dangerous tumor. The best probability for the patient is totally cured and lives more healthy life.

However, this probability is weakening when the operation has to be ceased on the way. In other words, the cutting of time span due to prolonged holiday around *Iedul Fitri* may have rendered the development immature. Providing that the time is sufficient, better development will be in effect.

CONCLUSION

This article has succeeded in presenting the result of a research projects focusing on the effectiveness of quality pedagogic language in improving students' achievement,

both in English competence and in affective factors development. While the first dependent variable, i.e. English competence, was significantly improved, the second was not. Alternatives of possible explanations have been presented to help clarify these unlinear patterns of development.

Based on those findings, it is suggested that experiment with sufficient time allocation needs to be conducted. In addition, research on time needed to reach significant development of affective factors in learning new and more challenging or demanding ways of learning as well as on conducive patterns of pedagogic language is also urgent.

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