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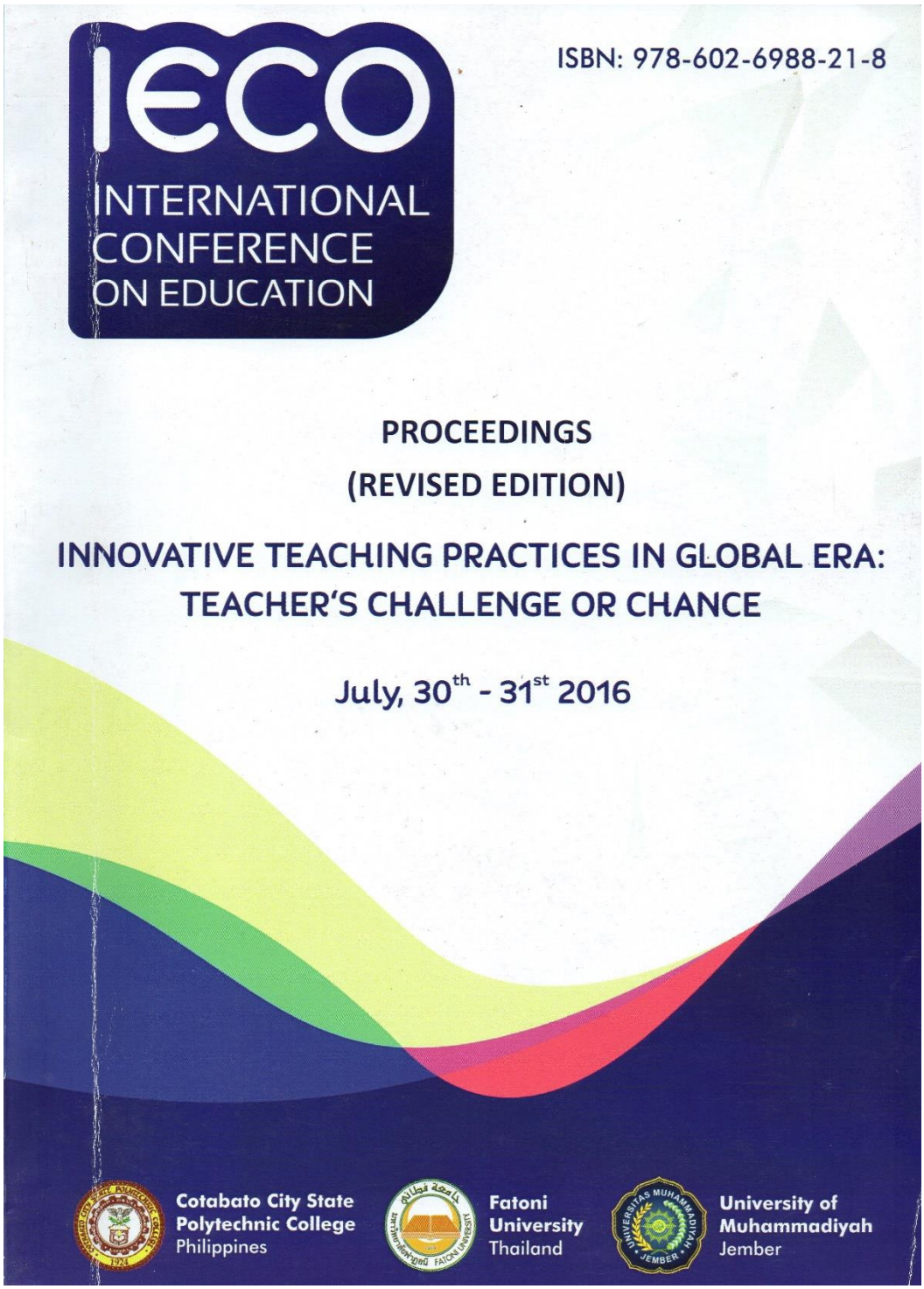

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"INNOVATIVE TEACHING PRACTICES IN GLOBAL ERA: TEACHER'S CHALLENGE OR CHANCE"

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EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUES TO SOLVE THE TEACHING PROBLEMS IN EFL CLASSES

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Abstract

Teaching a language especially teaching English as Foreign Language cannot be separated from occurring the problems. An English teacher should be wise to overcome problems in teaching English since it involves some aspects that need to be handled carefully for the sake of the success of teaching learning process. Effective techniques are really needed and even they are "more important" than the material itself. The present study investigates the techniques the teacher uses (1) to negotiate meaning with the students, and (2) to cope with the learners' errors. The study is descriptive study. It is held in Senior High School. It involves regular teaching learning process in English class in eight meetings. The data were collected through observations and interviews. The result shows that there are some techniques dominantly used and categorized effective among the techniques implemented by the teacher. Further discussions on findings are elaborated and suggestion will also be recommended.

Keywords: *Teaching technique, communication, negotiate meaning, learners' errors*

I. Introduction

Teaching learning process in English governed by the teacher in general provides a basic step in the study of communication in EFL classrooms. The actual messages being transmitted in the classroom should be properly understood by the students. To make a communication run well, some techniques are really important to be mastered by a teacher. These phenomena make the writer interested in studying classroom interaction in Senior High School EFL classes by the teacher whether it is effective for students' understanding about the material given as well as its function to help the teacher manages the class.

To improve the students' ability in using English it is necessary to facilitate using English as communication tool. For real communication to take place, students need to interact with someone else, whether this is with the teacher or with other students in the classroom. How the real communication happens, depends very much on the type of activities which the students are asked to perform (Lucantoni, 2002). To improve the students' skills in using English, the role of teacher is very important in teaching learning process. Of course, an English teacher

must master everything related to the material he will give to the students to make the teaching learning process runs well.

Teaching English as foreign language often encounter some problems the teacher must understand well. Some problems often happen are about how to communicate the messages to the students effectively, to solve the problems of ineffective communication, students' misunderstanding and students' errors (Gebhard, 2000; Chaudron, 1988).

In line with some factors influencing the teaching English as foreign language, there are some factors the teachers have that block them from the teaching English as interaction among people. In general, the teachers' problems, as stated by Gebhard (2000, p. 60) are the "bandwagon" problem, the "overly anxious" problem, and the "engagement" problem.

Teaching English as foreign language in this research means teaching English as a language studied by people who live in Indonesia where English is not the first language. Teaching English as foreign language is usually different from teaching English as second language in which the English is studied by people who speak other languages as their first language such as Spanish, Arabic, or Chinese—and those who speak English as the first language such as in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United Kingdom. (Gebhard, 2000). Teaching English as foreign language involves communicative interaction between a teacher and the students. Related to the way EFL teachers provide opportunities for students to interact in English, we still find some EFL classes which are taught in fairly teacher centered. Interaction is dominated by the teachers who, for example, give lengthy explanation and lectures, drills repetitively, asks the majority of the questions, and makes judgment about the students' answers. However, other EFL teachers see value in getting students involved in interaction in English. In this section, based on a framework provided by Littlewood (1981), the writer explains how to get students involved in interacting in English.

Some teachers who aim at having an interactive classroom begin lessons with "pre-communicative activities." The purpose of pre-communicative activities is for the teacher to isolate specific elements of knowledge or skill that comprise communicative ability and to give students opportunities to practice them without

having to fully engage in communicating meaning. There are two types of pre-communicative activities: structural and quasi-communicative. Structural activities focus on the grammar and lexicon (vocabulary) of English, while quasi-communicative activities focus on how the language is used to communicate meaning. Quasi-communicative activities are often in the form of dialogues or relatively simple activities in which students interact under highly controlled conditions. (Gebhard, 2000).

Related to minimizing the problems on communication during teaching learning process, Richards (2006) recommends teacher to use a balance of fluency activities and accuracy and to use accuracy activities to support fluency activities. Accuracy work could either come before or after fluency work. For example, based on students' performance on a fluency task, the teacher could assign accuracy work to deal with grammatical or pronunciation problems the teacher observed while students were carrying out the task. An issue that arises with fluency work, however, is whether it develops fluency at the expense of accuracy. In doing fluency tasks, the focus is on getting meanings across using any available communicative resources. This often involves a heavy dependence on vocabulary and communication strategies, and there is little motivation to use accurate grammar or pronunciation. Fluency work thus requires extra attention on the part of the teacher in terms of preparing students for a fluency task, or follow-up activities that provide feedback on language use.

Other important aspect of communication is the notion of information gap. This refers to the fact that in real communication, people normally communicate in order to get information they do not possess. This is known as an information gap. More authentic communication is likely to occur in the classroom if students go beyond practice of language forms for their own sake and use their linguistic and communicative resources in order to obtain information. In so doing, they will draw available vocabulary, grammar, and communication strategies to complete a task Richards (2006).

Related to communication in teaching learning process in class, it was argued that learners learn a language through the process of communicating in it, and that communication that is meaningful to the learner provides a better

opportunity for learning than through a grammar-based approach. The over-arching principles of communicative language teaching methodology at this time can be summarized as follows; make real communication the focus of language learning, provide opportunities for learners to experiment and try out what they know, be tolerant of learners' errors as they indicate that the learner is building up his or her communicative competence, provide opportunities for learners to develop both accuracy and fluency, link the different skills such as speaking, reading, and listening together, since they usually occur so in the real world, let students induce or discover grammar rules (Richards: 2006).

Based on the description on the problems usually happen in teaching learning process, the writer focuses this study on describing the teacher's techniques on (1) negotiating meaning with the students, and (2) overcoming problems of students' errors.

II. Method

The design of study used here is descriptive. The data is investigated qualitatively and are in the form of teacher's talk and students' talk during English teaching-learning process in Senior High School EFL classes in the Regency of Jember. The findings of the qualitative study must convince others, (i.e. practitioners and other researchers) who will use information from the study. Trustworthiness of the findings must be attempted by the researchers and can be traced from the procedures employed during collection of data, analysis of data, and interpretation of data. In this study, to maintain the trustworthiness of the data, the previous observation will be done several times in the EFL teaching-learning process to minimize the biases on the part of the teacher and the students being observed.

The procedures of data collection are as follows. Before the real research, the researcher conducts preliminary observations. It is conducted in the class to observe the EFL class activities that is the teacher's use of English in communicating her messages and the students' active participation in EFL classes to respond the teacher's messages. Based on the preliminary study, the researcher will be able to select the students that are chosen as the respondents based on their

activity in the class. The main data are the data generated by the teacher in her teacher talk in communicating her messages. The main data above will be accompanied with the data of the students' responses. To support the main data, the secondary data will also be used by having informal interviews with the teacher and the students. This step is done as soon as an EFL class ends in order to elicit supporting data.

III Result and Discussion

Techniques the Teacher Uses to Negotiate Meaning with the Students

In communication, it is almost impossible for someone's opinion to be always the same as the others'. It also often happens that someone cannot understand other's messages. One needs negotiation with others before making a judgment about something. Opportunities for students to negotiate meaning each other and with the teacher are very important for the students in understanding messages. The data of the research show that the teacher uses seven types of moves in negotiation with the students. This is in line with Met (1996), Swain (1985) in Lyster (2002) in which there are seven types of interactional features in negotiating meaning. Table 2 shows the frequency of the occurrence of the moves.

Table 1. Frequency of Verbal Behaviors Classified as Negotiating Meaning

No	Negotiating Meaning Moves	Frequency
1.	The use of body language	4
2.	The use of predictability	5
3.	The use of input modifications	3
4.	Clarification request	7
5.	Repetition	15
6.	Metalinguistic clues	8
7.	Elicitation	12

Related to the strategies in negotiating meaning with the students, there are seven techniques used by the teacher. They are the use of body language, the use of predictability, the use of input modifications, clarification request, repetition, metalinguistic clues and elicitation. They are elaborated as follows.

The use of body language. The use of body language is one of the alternatives that can be implemented by the teacher to negotiate meaning. The data

show the teacher used body language was in the form of leaning the body while asking or speaking, pointing to the students, and raising her hand to her ears.

The use of predictability. One of other ways in negotiating meaning as stated by Lyster (2002) is the use predictability. Data of this research show that in negotiating meaning with the students the teacher used predictability in the form of repetitions, paraphrases, examples, definition, and synonym.

The use of input modification. Another way to negotiate meaning teacher or student can use is the use of input modification. Input modification intended here is changing the form of expressed messages such as a slower rate of speech, emphasis of key words, simple vocabulary, and simple grammatical structures The data of the research shows that the teacher used input modification in negotiation with the student related to understanding the messages discussed in the classroom by saying the correct grammar to repair the student's incorrect sentence, slowing tempo of speaking.

Clarification request. During a teaching learning process, often the students answer a question correctly, incorrectly or insecurely. It reflects that they do not fully understand what they say. To overcome such kind of problem the teacher needs to negotiate meaning using clarification request. The purpose of doing clarification request is to make sure that the students really understand the messages being discussed. To do this, usually the teacher asks questions by using phrases such as ''Pardon me'', or ''I don't understand'', to indicate that that the message has not been understood or that the utterance is ill formed in some way, and that a repetition or a reformulation is required. The clarification request is done by calling others or asking display questions (Gebhard, 2000). The data of this research shows that in doing clarification request, the teacher made a repetition on the aspect discussed, and calling other student to check the answers.

Repetition. In a teaching learning process, repetition seems to be the most frequently used move. Repetition includes such factors as how much the teacher talks and what the teacher says; the teacher's questioning behaviors; and how the teacher gives instructions, and makes language comprehensible to the students (Gebhard, 2000).The data of the research show that among the moves done in negotiating meaning, repetition is the most frequently done by the teacher.

Metalinguistic clues. In negotiating meaning sometimes it is necessary to have some knowledge about the language. In this case words are to describe a language which is called meta-language or sometimes called metalinguistics. In negotiating meaning with the students the teacher can use metalinguistics clues to make the language more understandable. In using Metalinguistics clues, the teacher provides comments, information, or questions related to the wellformed-ness of the student's utterance, without explicitly providing the correct form (e.g ., ''Do we say 'goed' in English? ''Is it masculine?''). The data of this research shows that the teacher used metalinguistics clues in negotiating meaning.

Elicitation is one of the ways to negotiate meaning to avoid misunderstanding. The data of this research shows that the teacher used elicitation during the teaching learning process in which to make the students express the idea the teacher wanted, she directly asked the students such as "*What about going to refinery?*", "*So What is the answer?*"

Techniques the Teacher Uses to Cope with the Learners' Errors

Learning English as a second or foreign language cannot be separated from making errors. Error in the context of learning English is regarded as the responsibility of the teacher as well as the students. Brown (2002) stated that most learners and teachers feel that it is part of the teachers' responsibility to let learners know if they have made an error and to assist them not to make a similar error again. The data of this research shows that to respond the students' errors, the teacher did some moves as it can be seen on Table 2

Table 2. Frequency of Verbal Behaviors Classified as Coping with the Learner's Error

No	Coping with the Learner's Error	Frequency
1.	Modeling correct form	1
2.	Repeating faulty form	12
3.	Prompting correct form	5
4.	Explaining Correct Form	15
5.	(Re) stating question	8
6.	Telling students what to say	4

As shown in the table 3, there are six verbal techniques used by the teacher. They are modeling correct form, repeating faulty form, prompting correct form, explaining correct form, (re) stating question, and telling students what to say. They are elaborated as follows.

Modeling Correct Form. Modeling correct form is one of the ways to respond the students' errors. It is done by demonstrating the correct form. By doing so, it is hoped that the students compare what they did and what the teacher demonstrated. Then they can correct their errors automatically. The data of this research shows that the teacher also used modeling correct form as a way to respond the student errors. It seemed that this way is not the favorite one. The teacher only used it once during the teaching learning process.

Repeating Faulty Form. Repeating the faulty form is done by repeating the students' errors with special intonation and expression which show that they make errors. By doing so the teacher hopes that the students realize what they have done and try to say the matter correctly. The data of this research show that the teacher was fond of using this move. The teacher repeated the student's unintended answer, and then she asked a question that lead to the correct answer. The teacher also used other moves such as repeating question and code switching to make sure that the students really understood and could answer the question well. Besides, the uses of the verbal behaviors were also accompanied by using non-verbal signal such as pointing other students and wait time.

Prompting Correct Form. During interaction in class it often happens that the students have low motivation. Prompting correct form is one of the ways teacher uses to motivate student to be active and consequently it produces the correct results of learning. The data of this research show that the teacher used prompting correct form when the students answered or explained the comment or opinion incorrectly and the teacher wanted them to repair it. This move was done by asking question which leads the student to explain the intended answer. Sometimes the teacher added some explanation before she asked further questions to the students.

Explaining Correct Form. During classroom interaction in EFL class, often we find the students make errors or mistakes caused by misunderstanding, the

influence of mother tongue, tiredness, or because of the students' limited concept about the material they should master. Related to the latest cause the most appropriate response for their errors is explaining the correct form. By explaining the correct form, it is hoped that the students get more understanding about the concept discussed. Besides, it will reduce their stress caused by not mastering the concept discussed. The data of this research show that during the teaching learning process the teacher used "explaining correct forms" as an alternative to correct the students' error. She teacher used this verbal behavior by explaining the messages clearly. During the explanation sometimes the teacher also asked a question (especially probing question) to lead the student thought to the topic discussed.

(Re) Stating Question. Question is one of the most important things in human communication. In communication between two persons or more, it is very difficult to avoid the occurrence of question. Data in this research show that stating a question is often used by the teacher. Re –stating question in this research is usually done in discussion between student s and teacher.

Telling Students What to Say. Related to responding to the students' errors, perhaps the easiest one to do is telling students what to say. In this case the teacher just tells the students the correct one and asks them to follow the teacher. The data show that the use of this move is just 8.9 %. It can be an indicator that the teacher was not so happy in using this move. From the research finding related to the teacher's response to students' errors it is clear that among the six verbal behaviors, the favorite ones to use are repeating faulty form and explaining correct form.

IV. Conclusion

Based on research result and discussions, there are two conclusions can be drawn in the study.

First in negotiating meaning with the students, the teacher uses 7 types of moves. The moves used are the use of body language, use of predictability, use of input modifications, clarification request, repetition, metalinguistic clues, and elicitation. Among them, the most frequently used is repetition

Second, concerning with how to cope with the learners' errors, the results of the research show that to overcome the students' errors the teacher uses some strategies. The strategies are modeling correct form, repeating faulty form, prompting correct form, explaining correct form, (re) stating question/prompting, and telling students what to say. Among the six moves, the most favorable use is "explaining correct form".

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