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## Language Teaching and Character Building

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## Character Building through Speaking Drills

Th. Cicik Sophia Budiman, IKIP PGRI Semarang

### **ABSTRACT**

*The objectives of this research are to know the strategies used in Basic Speaking Drills and to know whether or not those strategies can build students' character. This research is descriptive qualitative. The subject of this research is students of Speaking Class in general. The findings from the problems show that there are seven strategies in speaking drills and those strategies can build students' character into attentive, active, creative, innovative, discipline, and responsible. Thus the strategies of Speaking could build students' character.*

*Key words: speaking drills, character building, strategies.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information (Brown, 1994). Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking. It is often spontaneous, open-ended, and evolving.

In English Speaking lessons, can follow the usual pattern of preparation, presentation, practice, evaluation, and extension. In each pattern, teacher has some techniques to increase students' ability in speaking.

One technique of it is using drills. The general aim with drill patterns (if they are going to be used) should be to facilitate spoken fluency and expand the potential content that can be accurately used within set ranges of key sentences.

Students can also improve their character by using speaking drills. They can do the practices in speaking drills. From this point of view, I become interested to analyze a topic that is related to character building through speaking drills. I am

interested to this topic because I want to know to build someone's character can be seen from the expression used in his/her speaking. Then it will be formulated in the statement of the problem, how the strategies are used in speaking drills? and can those strategies build students' character? The objectives of this research are to know the strategies used in speaking Drills and to know whether or not those strategies can build students' character.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In discussing about character building, there are definitions on it, namely; "engaging in morally relevant conduct or words, or refraining from certain conduct or words" (Wynne & Walberg, 1984); and "a complex set of relatively persistent qualities of the individual person, and generally has a positive connotation when used in discussions of moral education" (Pritchard, 1988).

In general, character, good or bad, is considered to be observable in one's conduct (Walberg & Wynne, 1989). Thus, character is different from values in that values are orientations or dispositions whereas character involves action or activation of knowledge and values. From this perspective, values are seen as one of the foundations for character. Values include both cognitive and affective components, but not necessarily conative or behavioral components. Character includes all four components.

Character building that is related to school education becomes the important aspect of schooling. There is a survey on goals of education showed that the following ranking of the goals of public schools are as follow:

1. develop skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening;
2. develop pride in work and feeling of self-worth; and

3. develop good character and self-respect.

In speaking activities in classrooms, a teacher can select activities from a variety of tasks. Brown (1994) lists six possible task categories:

1. "Imitative"-Drills in which the learner simply repeats a phrase or structure (e.g., "Excuse me." or "Can you help me?") for clarity and accuracy;
2. "Intensive"-Drills or repetitions focusing on specific phonological or grammatical points, such as minimal pairs or repetition of a series of imperative sentences;
3. "Responsive"-Short replies to teacher or learner questions or comments, such as a series of answers to yes/no questions;
4. "Transactional"-Dialogues conducted for the purpose of information exchange, such as information-gathering interviews, role plays, or debates;
5. "Interpersonal"-Dialogues to establish or maintain social relationships, such as personal interviews or casual conversation role plays; and
6. "Extensive"-Extended monologues such as short speeches, oral reports, or oral summaries.

From six categories, only two categories correlate to speaking drills, which are imitative drills and intensive drills.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this research, I use descriptive qualitative research. The subject of this research is students of Speaking Class in general. The data collection is taken from many sources, books and related articles.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**



## **A. Strategies in Basic Speaking Drills**

In discussing the first problem about strategies in Speaking Drills can be seen as follow:

### **1. Adaptive memory**

Following basic application of one of the drills (students listen and repeat, then change the sentences using the suggested input options), ask the students to cover the initial model with their hands or a piece of paper. This will allow them to see the suggested changes but not the model sentence. Their challenge now is to say the sentence from memory, but applying the new content.

## **2. Classic audiolingual-style drills**

Speaking drills can be applied in a way that is very similar to the classical audiolingual method.

In this technique, students are asked to close their books. The teacher then reads one of the drill sentences, and students repeat. The teacher then states the word (colored in blue or green in my own example at the start of this post) he/she wants them to insert into the sentence. The students then reproduce the sentence with the new word inserted into the correct place, replacing the colored word that was originally there.

For example:

Teacher: There aren't many **parks** around now.

Students: There aren't many **parks** around now.

Teacher: **hospitals**

Students: There aren't many **hospitals** around now.

This can also work (though it is significantly more challenging) with what are called

*progressive* and *multiple substitution* drills:

Teacher: A **theme park** will be popular with **many people**.

Students: A **theme park** will be popular with **many people**.

Teacher: **sports center**

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Students: A sports center will be popular with many people.

Teacher: children

Students: A sports center will be popular with children.

### **3. Roll around drills**

This is a simple application of the drills that allows them to be “shared” around the classroom or a larger group of students, creating variety for each student but also helping to maintain class attention to the practice.

Basically, the teacher goes around the class, with each student reading out a sentence in the order they appear (including variation options). Once the example has been set, the students can also be divided up into groups of 4-8 students and then the roll around drill applied within each group, for example:

1. This is where the gladiators used to fight, isn't it? live, stay
2. They didn't really fight with lions, did they? train in special schools

This drill set applied as a roll around drill in a group of 5 students would sound like this:

Student 1: This is where the gladiators used to fight, isn't it?

Student 2: This is where the gladiators used to live, isn't it?

Student 3: This is where the gladiators used to stay, isn't it?

Student 4: They didn't really fight with lions, did they?

Student 5: They didn't really train in special schools, did they?

Student 1: This is where the gladiators used to fight, isn't it?

Student 2: This is where the gladiators used to live, isn't it?

Student 3: This is where the gladiators used to stay, isn't it?

Student 4: They didn't really fight with lions, did they?

*Etc.*

The roll around drill can be repeated until each student comes back to the exact sentence they first started with, or it can be continued for an indefinite amount of time! It is certainly a great way to get a large class active with the drills, with the rhythm contrasting with the variety of both sentence models and content elements it ensures.

#### **4. Private Practice**

It can sometimes be a positive experience for students to practice on their own without any outside stress from partners, groups or the class as a whole. The format

of some drills allows students to practice the sentences and adaptations (provided and/or included by themselves) on an independent individual level. While it can make for a slightly noisy classroom if everyone is speaking to themselves at the same time, this is just the kind of environment some shyer students want in order to not “stand out” from other students. It also can give a teacher some time to move about the class and monitor or give assistance to students on a one-on-one basis.

### **5. Adapting the speaking model using adapted drill sentences**

This application assumes our drill patterns come directly from a model speaking dialogue. Ask students to get into pairs or small groups. Have them select (or create) an adapted version of each sentence presented in the speaking drill practice section. Their job now is to go back to the original speaking dialogue model from which the initial speaking drills have been drawn. They need to find the initial drill sentence/phrase in the dialogue and then adapt it using the version they selected from the drill sentences.

From there, students will need to think about what else needs to be changed in the dialogue or speech so that it now fits the new sentence variation they have inserted. They could be encouraged to write out the conversation or speech, including the sentence variation they have inserted, plus any other necessary changes to make the overall dialogue ‘work’ and make sense.

Students could then perform their new conversation model for the class, with the teacher giving feedback on how well they have managed to adapt the overall speaking model to fit well with the inserted sentence.

### **6. Mini dialogue creation**

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Ask students to get into pairs or small groups. Have them select an adapted version of two different sentences presented in the speaking drill practice section.

Their job now is to create a new mini dialogue between two people that at some point features the adapted sentences mentioned above. It does not need to be very long – something in the order of 2-4 exchanges between the two speakers should

suffice. However, it needs to make sense and have a logical situational basis that can be understood by listeners to the conversation. They can then perform their little dialogue/skit for the rest of the class.

This activity is good for helping the students to get a deeper understanding of the sentence models in real conversational use, and gives them more active role in their own speaking practice.

## **7. Sentence Scramble**

This activity requires a small amount of preparation by the teacher. Using the sentence drill models from the unit being studied, write the colored words and phrases (or the parts that are to be substituted or inserted into the sentence patterns) on individual cards.

After application of the drills based on the textbook, the teacher can write the sentence models out on the board with any variable words/phrases missing from the main sentences. The teacher then selects two students to come out and compete in a sentence scramble.

The prepared cards featuring the missing words/phrases are then distributed randomly to other students (not competing in this particular scramble). These students can look at the words on their cards, but they shouldn't reveal them to the students competing in the sentence scramble.

When the teacher says "go" the two competing students have to survey the sentence models and then dash about the classroom finding a word/phrase that can fit one of the sentences. To do this, they'll need to ask students which word/phrase they are holding. Once they have found one they believe will fit a sentence they can take it from the student, dash back to the board, place it over what they believe to be the



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appropriate gap and then state the sentence out loud. The first student to do this both accurately and with good spoken delivery is the winner for that round.

Two new students are selected to compete and the cards re-distributed amongst the other students (minus any cards that have already been found and correctly applied in previous rounds).

An activity like this gets students moving and potentially involves all or most of the class. It also adds an element of excitement to using the drill patterns.

## **B. The Strategies of Speaking Drills Can Build Students' Character**

From the previous discussion on strategies of Speaking Drills can build students' character into discipline, responsible, active, attentive, creative, and innovative.

From the first strategy that is adaptive memory, students' character building that should be emerged are discipline, attentive, and responsible. Then the second strategy which is classic audiolingual style drills, the character building that should be emerged are discipline, responsible, and attentive. Next, the third strategy is roll around drills, students should have the character building such as attentive, creative, and innovative. On the fourth strategy about private practice, students' character building should be responsible, attentive, creative, and responsible. Then the fifth strategy that is adapting the speaking model using adapted drill sentences, students' character building are expected to be creative, innovative, and responsible. Next, the sixth strategy is mini dialogue creation. Here students' character building should be creative, innovative, attentive, and active. The last strategy is sentence scramble. Students' character building should be active, creative, and innovative.

Hopefully from those seven strategies of Speaking Drills, students' character building can be developed.

## **CONCLUSION**

As a conclusion, students' character building through speaking drills can be seen from seven strategies, they are adaptive memory, classic audiolingual style drills, roll around drills, private practice, adapting the speaking model using adapted drill sentences, mini dialogue creation, and sentence scramble. The characters building

that should be developed by students are discipline, responsible, active, attentive, creative, and innovative.

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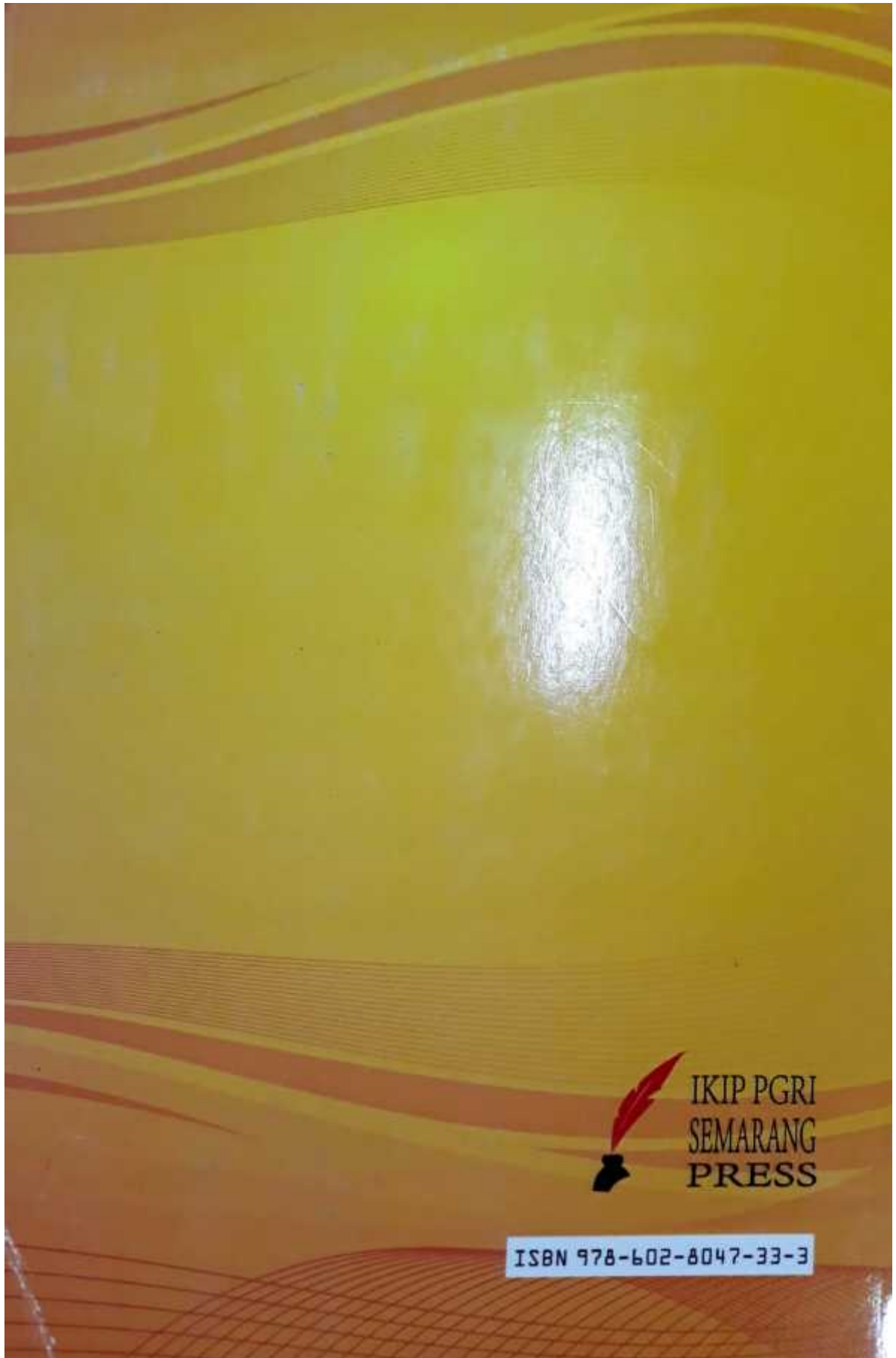
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