

THE USE OF PICTURE TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILL

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Abstract. This qualitative study aims to investigate the use of pictures to teach English speaking or conversation interestingly and more efficiently. Data from observation and library research show that using picture is one of an excellent way to create an exciting learning process, so the students can understand the lesson more efficiently and can be more enthusiastic to speak English to others. Also, the use of pictures has enabled students to practice speaking English regularly even outside the class, to memorize the material better and to improve their English speaking skills.

Keywords: Teaching Conversation, Communicative Approach, and Picture.

INTRODUCTION

Language is as an ability to obtain as well as use complex systems of communication. The language also becomes a central role in the development of intellectual, social, and emotional learners. Nowadays, as an international language, English has been taught in all levels of formal schools in Indonesia. Although English is only as a second language in Indonesia, it becomes an essential means of communication in some Indonesian's occasions, for example, job vacancy opportunities, education, trade transactions, social-cultures, and many others.

Principally, teaching speaking is not far different from teaching English for other skills such as writing, grammar, vocabulary, listening, and many others. Based on Balitbang Depdiknas (2002:42), it is explained that the goal of teaching and learning English is improving the four English skills consisting of the mastery of the receptive skills (reading and listening) and the knowledge of the productive skills (speaking and writing), within a specified word level and relevant grammatical structure. Thus, before teaching in the classroom, it is suggested that the teacher has to know about what the materials needed are and how the condition required for teaching in the class. Furthermore, teaching English by using syllabus and lesson plan is the essential and alternative way in teaching because it contains pre-teaching, process-teaching, and post-teaching which can help the learning process run effectively. A teacher also has to know about what the appropriate approach method like is to identify the students' characteristics in

daily activities. Therefore, a teacher can then decide the proper way and use learning media which can help to teach English especially speaking skills successfully in the classroom.

However, there are some problems with students when they practice speaking English in the classroom. They have less self-confident, feel bored or reluctant to practice communication with other students or even people in daily life. To solve this problem, the teachers use a method to teach English speaking. The communicative approach is an appropriate method for teaching English conversation to make students feel better and more confident to communicate by using media. The proper media to explain conversation is through the picture. According to Raimes (1983:27) in Mahfud Effendi, the use of the picture in the classroom provides a stimulating focus for students' attention." The picture can commonly interest the students to keep the spirit in learning English because the picture has much arts value which makes them more interested. By using a picture, a teacher can make any creativity that are appropriate with the students' needs. The students will feel excited as well as a teacher can keep following lesson planning that they made. In short, using picture media has benefits for EFL students to improve English speaking skill.

There are some researches on the use of a picture to improve speaking skill, but there are a few studies about the use of pictures on conversation activities in the Indonesian context. Most studies have conducted the test for an impromptu speech. Filled the gab, this study is therefore interested in exploring the topic qualitatively, and it poses the following research questions: (1) How does the teacher teach conversation through pictures? (2) What problems do the students face in learning conversation? (3) What are the benefits of learning speaking skill using pictures?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Teaching English speaking

Teaching speaking is difficult. Some factors are underlying this, for example, most students do not have the confidence to speak up possibly because they have less vocabulary and are influenced by their visible mother tongue. Additionally, they naturally have less motivation to improve their English, so their speaking ability is never improved. The other factor from teaching method and can also be the cause, for instance, the teaching method is not appropriate with the condition classroom, teaching material is not suitable with the students' needs, student's ability to receive and understand English subject that is various and the environment is not right to teach English.

Occasionally, the dominant or smart students are grouped into the same group. Meanwhile, the students who are a poor reader or low thinker will often get difficulties in the group at the same level. It becomes a complicated problem if it goes on. It is important for a teacher to understand and to solve this problem in other that there is not social discrepancy among one student to the others. Besides, before the teachers teach in the class, they should take into consideration these following elements, based on Shavelson and Stern (1981:478) such as content, the material is the thing that learners can observe, activities, goal, students' learning styles, and social community.

Getting a good conversation, a teacher needs a characteristic feature and teaching procedure. The unique features of conversation include greater spontaneity and freedom, and greater equality among the students than other discourse types. All these features are at odds with

the nature of the classroom. Where language is directed toward as a specific purpose, and where a teacher is traditionally charge of the students. Teaching conversation has a procedure which is flexible. The conversation focuses on developing student's speaking and interaction skills while raising their awareness.

Communicative Approach

Conversation is based on the principles of a learner-centered curriculum and communicative language learning. A teacher needs a unique approach to teach. An approach to conversation development is the communicative approach. This method is considered to be able to take charge of the students in the classroom. Based on the Richards and Rodgers (1986:15) said that there are three levels of conceptual and organization which called approach, method, and technique. The arrangement is hierarchical. The organizational key is that procedures carry out a way which is consistent with an approach. "...An approach is a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning. An approach is axiomatic. It describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught...."

The communicative method is used in teaching English as a foreign language with direct communication. This approach appears because the language's expert realized that there is a mistake on the last 1960s. This changing is caused by teaching English with an old fashion that is a situational English teaching. Communicative is taught with practice the activities based on the meaning situation. Moreover, this method is recognized that they are not faced with an oral situation when they are faced with the free class situation. The communicative approach in language teaching starts from a theory of language as communication. At the level of language theory, there are some of the characteristics of this open view of language. The primary function of language is to allow interaction and communication, the structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses, the fundamental units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of technical and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse.

Although the communicative approach is one of the best ways of teaching English conversation, it does not guarantee for the students to communicate to the target language well. But rather ineffective if a teacher does not also support the students. In this case, giving motivation is also an important thing to encourage being better in conversation.

Conversation Using Picture

In the process of teaching and learning English, a teacher should be creative to find out the technique of education, so that the students can easily understand the material of the subject that they teach. One of the methods is using a picture which is used as the learning media. Based on Competence-Based Curriculum and KTSP, picture media have proved to be effective and encourage the students in the learning process that are purposed to improve their skills of English subject, especially in conversation. Pictures can be employed for very creative use in communicative language teaching. Using picture is intended to be the technique of teaching aid and constitute the material of which language can be generated. The students can be divided into a group or in pairs.

The Use of Picture

Based on Brown (2001) state that group work helps to solve class's problem. A group or in pairs can be asked to produce communicative sentence and giving expression from the picture. Occasionally, in this case, is needed to guess and giving a concluding. The picture used has to have the real form. For that reason, the students can imagine it explicitly. By doing this, their imagination can be exerted. The activity of each group can work on a different picture, and attempt some kinds of a description which should involve question and answers related to the matter on the picture.

The Procedure of Using Picture in Teaching Speaking

Commonly, a picture is more interesting than written. Sometimes a cartoon is more unique for teaching English conversation. A cartoon is delineations in painting form or caricature about a person, idea, or situation which is designed to influence society opinion. A cartoon is intended to amuse the reader. Thus, it is made as beautiful as possible. Before a teacher begins to learn in the classroom, a teacher should prepare some procedures. It is intended to keep the learning process smoothly. In teaching procedure, the writer will use three-step techniques which are including pre-conversation, process-conversation, and post-conversation. In pre-conversation, the teacher brings some picture and sticks on the whiteboard. Then, students are divided into some groups, each of the group consist of two to five students. In process-conversation, ask the students to analyze the picture for 5 minutes and ask them to discuss each group or in pairs. After that, the students make one sentence or more using WH-word followed by asking them in pairs to practice speaking up or telling what the picture is about. There is sometimes question from other groups, so they try to answer it. In post-conversation, assure all of the students to understand with the picture about and sometimes it can be helped by the teacher. Then, ask one or pairs of each group to speak up the concluding or summarizing in front of the class. The last is the discussion which will be led by the teachers, giving some comments, giving a concluding, and also closing the lesson.

While the students practice the dialogue, it is advisable that the model conversation is recorded. So, the students can hear their interaction nature. The students may use this model to repeat and compare their conversation with other students. By doing this, it is hoped that the students can assign their own mistake. Consequently, they will get good motivation and self-confidence to speak up the next day. Pragmatically, conversation lessons and exercises are intended to improve conversational skills. For this reason, a teacher is helpful to firstly focus on building skills by eliminating some of the barriers that might be on the way of production.

The last section of this procedure is an assessment. Assessment is intended to measure the speaking ability of every student. Many techniques would be appropriate to assess the students, depending on their background and levels ability in English. In this case, the writer thinks that to assess has to be flexible. Flexibility is there must be consistent evidence of the ability to turn-taking in a conversation and to adapt to new topics or changes of direction (Arthur, 1989). There are six assessments which can be used by the teacher in conversation among them; self-confidence in that the students have to take upon to speak up about anything whether using incorrect structure or correct and they do not think about it in advance, fluency which means that they are asked to conversation fluently, accuracy which means that how the students are using and word selection that is considered to be proper sentences, thereby they can

be a critical thinking and communicative skill, complexity which means that whether the students give a concluding and giving argument or not during their conversation or speak up.

The Benefits of Using Picture

As a good teacher, they should know what the condition and needs of the students are. There are some reasons to teach conversation by using the picture. The first and foremost, it is remarkably interesting for students because using picture can generate creativity that kills boredom. More importantly, using picture encourages spontaneous speaking with pairs. It can be done by giving a picture, then one of them describe it with directly practicing or speaking up. The students have to work in pairs or together to get the primary goal of this learning. They cannot succeed unless they work well together in pairs. This cooperation is made by designing interaction among all of the students in the classroom.

Moreover, pictures are media which are often used to explain an event clearer. Sometimes news is considered less describable if there is no picture following it. Through pictures, the reader will know and imagine, although it is not entirely. Based on Latuheru (1988) in Mahfud Effendi stated that “picture can translate abstract ideas into a more realistic form, can be easily obtained, can be used in different academic levels, can save teachers’ time and energy, and can attract students’ interest.” Lastly, the reader also may have different views about the same picture. Thus, it will arouse the learners to speak up.

RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher used the descriptive qualitative method, and the data were collected through observation and library research. The research took place at a state senior high school at Jakarta for the second grade of social class. For the procedure of the research, the researcher firstly found out theories used to support answering the research questions. Secondly, it used observation in the classroom when the teacher was teaching conversation. Next, the researcher analyzed the data to be proven with the theory explained before.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the result of observation, most teachers did not teach English by using a media or even a picture. They only delivered and explained a lesson verbally by using the whiteboard as well as a handbook and then followed by doing exercise from the book. They did not get something new or exciting activity that can trigger students’ motivation to learn and speak English. Every meeting, they always got the same learning activity from the teacher. The result was students felt bored and didn’t have improvement in learning English especially to speak English even to their friends in the classroom. The next day, the teacher tried to teach speaking English by using a picture, the students looked more enthusiastic than before. They also felt motivated to speak because they had many ideas to speak up from the picture they saw.

CONCLUSION

This study found that teaching English speaking or conversation for students using picture media is an excellent way to improve their ability in speaking English as well as to trigger the students' motivation. Students do not feel bored and enjoy as long as learning English in the classroom. This situation is different when a teacher does not use any media for teaching. Therefore, it is essential that language teachers provide a rich environment where meaningful communication takes place, rather than leading students to pure memorization. By using various or useful speaking activities such as using pictures can contribute a great deal to students in developing basic interactive skills that are necessary for life and at the same time can make their learning more meaningful and fun for them.

Finally, the researcher hopes this study could give inspiration and be useful for the readers, students and English teachers. Additionally, for the next researchers, hopefully, this can be used as references to develop research dealing with the method enhancement for teaching speaking skills to analyze the theory deeper and further.

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