

THE COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING TECHNIQUE TO MASTER SPEAKING SKILL FOR THE STUDENTS AT SMA NEGERI 3 PALEMBANG

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Abstract

Speaking is classified as a productive skill which takes an important role in mastering English. As productive skill, speaking becomes a measurement whether learners have mastered English or not. In this case, learners will think whether they have mastered the language or not by measuring their spoken ability in using the language itself. In addition, speaking is considered as a crucial part of second language teaching and learning because English learners need to master it in order to be able to communicate in real life. Communicative Language Teaching is the innovation of the foreign language teaching. Not only does it improve students' communicative competence effectively, but also carries out the quality education in foreign language teaching. Furthermore, this paper is intended to discuss problems in testing oral proficiency, some elicitation techniques in testing oral proficiency and students' low competence in using English for communication. Consequently, CLT is promoted students have many abilities to speak and understand English. The CLT technique to master speaking skill for the students at SMA Negeri 3 Palembang. It tries to improve speaking skill and make the students more active in the class because it contains some activities that encourage the students to speak up in the class.

Key words: *Speaking, Testing Oral Proficiency, Communicative Language Teaching,*

INTRODUCTION

Most of English teachers at SMA Negeri 3 Palembang are using the grammar teaching methodology to teach English. This kind of teacher method emphasize on the grammar. Therefore, this current teaching situation leads the students pay less attention to the speaking. The result of this situation is that the students can not do communication with a native speaker or someone who speaking English, even though they have already learned English nine years or more years. We know that communication is a very important part in our daily life, so we should change the teaching methodology. One of the English language teaching methodology is called Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). In CLT method, the teacher is the expert and carries the responsibility for students learning, so the teacher is the most important role in the learning. Most of the students at SMA Negeri 3 Palembang only need to listen and write when they studied

Some serious problems may arise oral in assessing proficiency, some

elicitation techniques in testing oral proficiency and students' low competence in using English for communication. In some way there is a tendency that the communicative language teaching is dragged into the teaching what is likely to be tested on the examination. Ironically, there is general agreement among the language practitioners that testing students' oral proficiency is one of the most important aspects of an overall evaluation (see for example Morrow, 1982). Consequently, CLT is promoted students have many abilities to speak and understand English. One of the ultimate goal of Communicative Language Teaching is to train the ability of students can use English to communicate, that is oral communication or written language ability (Swain, 1985: 7). Since CLT plays an important role in English language teaching, this paper is intended to discuss the CLT technique to master speaking skill for the students at SMA Negeri 3 Palembang. It tries to improve speaking skill and make the students more active in the class because it contains some

activities that encourage the students to speak up in the class.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Activities to Promote Speaking Skill in the CLT

According to Chaney (1998), speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving, and processing information. The purpose for speaking, it is often spontaneous, open-ended and evolving. English lesson. They have no time to practice their speaking ability in the classroom activities or their daily activities. Weir (1990) define the CLT is an approach to the teaching of second and foreign language that emphasizes interaction and the ultimate goal learning a language or simply the communicate approach. The CLT also places great emphasis on helping students use the target language in authentic of contexts and places great emphasis on learning language functions. In brief, ESL teachers at SMA Negeri 3 Palembang should create a classroom environment where students have real-life communication, authentic activities, & meaningful tasks that promote oral language this can occur when students collaborate in groups to achieve a goal or to complete a task.

These are activities to promote speaking skill in the CLT :

a) Discussion

After a content based lesson, a discussion can be held for various reasons. The students may aim to arrive at a conclusion, share ideas or to find solutions in their discussion groups. Before the discussion, it is essential that the purpose of the discussion activity is set by the teacher. This activity fosters critical thinking & quick decision making & students learn how to express & justify themselves, in polite ways while disagreeing with others.

b) Role Play

Students pretend they are in various social context have a variety of social roles. In role play activities, the teacher gives information to the students such as who they are & what they think or feel. Thus the teacher can tell students that (Ben, 1982).

c) Simulations

In simulations, students can bring items to the class to create a realistic environment. For instance, if a student is acting as a singer & so on. Simulations and role play have many advantage. First, they are entertaining to motivate the students, second, as Ben (1982) suggests they increase the self-confidence of hesitate students.

d) Information gap

In this activity, students are supposed to be working in pairs. Information gap serves many purpose such as solving-problems or collecting information.

e) Brainstorming

On a given topic, students can produce ideas in a limited time. It is effective students generate ideas quickly & freely.

f) Story Telling

Students can briefly summarize a tale or story they heard from somebody beforehand, or they may create own stories to tell their classmates.

In Class Speaking Tasks

Dialogs and conversations are the most obvious and most often used specific activities from a variety of tasks. Brown (2000), lists six possible task categories:

a) Imitative

Drills in which the learner simply repeats a phrase or situation for clarity and accuracy.

b) Intensive

Drills or repetitions focusing on phonological or grammatical points.

c) Responsive

Short replies to teacher or student questions, and comments, yes/no question in transactional dialogue.

d) Interpersonal Dialogue

It establishes or maintain social relationship such as personal interview, or causal conversation role play.

e) Extensive Monologue

It is like short speeches, oral reports & oral summaries. These task are not sequential, they can be integrated and depending on student's needs.

f) Pictures Describing

Students just describe what it is in the picture and discuss their picture. This activity fosters creativity & imagination of the students as well as their public speaking skill.

DISCUSSION

This paper is attempt to explain & solve the problem of the oral in assessing proficiency, some elicitation techniques in testing oral proficiency and the students' low competence in using English for communication.

Problems in Testing Oral Proficiency

Due to the complexity of aspects involved in testing oral proficiency, many teachers tend to avoid assessing the speaking skill. Madsen (1983) points out that of all language exams testing speaking ability is the most challenging in terms of test preparation, administration and scoring. Some of the reasons why the speaking test seems so challenging are due to (1) the speaking ability; (2) the involvement of such other factors as listening ability, interpretation of tone, reasoning ability, etc.; (3) the difficulty in getting students to speak (techniques to elicit students to speak).

Speaking ability involves many aspects which can be analyzed into the elements of the speaking skills and the overall speaking proficiency (speaking for functional purposes). At the element level of speaking (primary level), the speaking might involve pronunciation, intonation, stress and other suprasegmental features. At this stage, the speaking also requires the correct use (structure), and the correct idiomatic use (vocabulary) of the target language (Vallette cited in Mukminatien, 1995). At the functional level, speaking involves the integration of the elements of the language and the function of using language either for transaction or for interaction. On the basis of its function language can be used for social relationship (interactional function) and for giving information (transactional function) (Brown & Yule cited in Mukminatien, 1995). In testing, the interactive speaking can be in the form of interview, role play, discussion and the like, while the transactive speaking may take the form of story telling, oral report, describing object/person/thing, addressing speech, and so on. difficulty in defining the nature of speaking skill; (2) the difficulty in choosing the criteria in testing The two levels of assessment in speaking test cause problems in choosing criteria in assessing students' ability. The problems relate to the decision to determine the aspects to be looked for: Do the examiners focus on the elements of speaking skills or the overall speaking proficiency (speaking for functional purposes).

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conducting tests, which can be derived from the objectives of language learning. From the purpose and objectives of the test, they can employ the appropriate types and approaches of testing procedures whether to employ discrete-point, integrative or pragmatic test. A discrete-point test refers to a test that attempts to assess a particular element of language at a time such as pronunciation, stress, intonation, structure, and vocabulary. An integrative test attempts to assess learners' ability to use many bits of their skills at a time. A pragmatic test refers to a procedure or task that requires learners' to process sequences of elements in a language that conforms to the normal contextual constraints of that language and to relate sequences of linguistic elements to extra linguistic contexts in a meaningful way (Hughes, 1993).

Other awareness to be kept in mind by the test designers is the fact that the success of communication much depends on such other factors as listening ability, ability to interpret tones and other suprasegmental features of expressions, initiative for asking for clarification, turn-taking, etc. It is not impossible that the failure in the speaking activity may be due to the weaknesses on these factors. In this case, the test designer has to anticipate the possibilities of those problems while assessing oral test.

In speaking test, it is not always easy to get students to speak. Sometimes the tasks we expect to be capable of motivating students to speak do not work as expected. To overcome this situation, in addition to the careful design of the speaking tasks to fulfill students' level and to meet speaking aspects to be assessed, the examiner can function himself as a partner in stimulating the students to speak.

In line to the opinion above, Morrow (1982) adds that there are some other reasons why it is difficult to assess speaking ability, which makes the test be

avoided in practice. Those reasons are (1) oral testing is very time-consuming. The neglect of the implementation of speaking test in Indonesian educational context is due to this reason. The average class size in SMA/SMK/SMP is 40-45 students in a class and a teacher should teach parallel classes of 4 or 5. How long do the teachers have to spend to conduct the test? As a result, a paper-pencil communicative test - - an indirect way of testing communication -- is used to replace the indirect way of testing oral proficiency/achievement; (2) It is difficult to get students to say anything interesting; although, as Morrow says, it does not mean to expect them to entertain the examiner with brilliant conversation or witty anecdote, but it, at least, fulfils one of such criteria as: (a) the student must have a chance to show that he can use the language for a variety of purposes (describing, narrating, apologizing, etc.); examiner of what is being looked for in a particular test. (b) He must have a chance to show that he can take a part in spontaneous conversation, responding appropriately to what is said to him and making relevant contribution; and (c) He must have a chance to show that he can perform linguistically in a variety of situations, adopting different roles and talking about different topics. (3) The other reason relates to the issue of assessing. What sort of criteria can we use to assess students' performance? Is there any standard guideline to be used in setting up the criteria?

To eliminate those problems, Morrow (1982) further suggests (1) the designing of tasks or activities which the students perform through using language. The tasks designed should be as close as the real world; (2) Setting group work. The group work can at least solve the problems related to the time consuming issue and give a chance to students to use the language spontaneously, involving a variety of functions; (3) Setting clear criteria. There must be clear idea for the

examiner of what is being looked for in a particular test.

According to Weir (1990), testing speaking ability should be designed for meeting the criteria of communicative testing such as (1) tasks developed should be purposive, interesting and motivating with a positive washback effect on teaching that precedes the test; (2) interaction should be a key feature; (3) there should be a degree of intersubjectivity among the participant; (4) the output should be to a certain extent unpredictable; (5) realistic context should be provided; and (6) processing should be done in real time.

Suggestions for Elicitation Techniques in Assessing Oral Proficiency

The selection of appropriate elicitation techniques in speaking tests will depend on the specifications of the speaking test (testee's level, objectives, language aspects to be assessed, time availability, etc.). There is a wide range of techniques can be used to elicit one's speaking ability. From a study on speaking tests currently in use, involving 121 respondents, Jones and Madsen (cited in Madsen, 1981) found that more than two dozens elicitation techniques currently used in oral proficiency tests. However, these techniques can be grouped into five broad categories, ranging from question types designed to generate communicative language to techniques to facilitate discrete measurement of specific subskills. Those categories are Communicative Discourse, Pseudo-Communicative Discourse, Connected Discourse, Controlled Response, and Linguistic Skills. The following is the discussion of the elicitation techniques used within the wide categories. The discussion will start from the very mechanical techniques to the most communicative elicitation techniques.

Linguistic Skills.

These oral tests attempt to measure specific linguistic skills such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Although the tests intend to measure the linguistic aspects, they can be designed from communicative to mechanical. (2) interaction should be a key feature; (3) there should be a degree of intersubjectivity among the participant; (4) the output should be to a certain extent unpredictable; (5) realistic context should be provided; and (6) processing should be done in real time.

These kinds of tests in today's oral tests are less common. Testing on individual sounds (or other discrete-point tests) was very popular in audio-lingual period, which emphasized on the learners' ability to produce native-like pronunciation. In communicative language era, in which the main purpose of learning English is to be able to communicate effectively, the language components are normally evaluated in conjunction with listening and speaking; therefore, the components tend to be incorporated with context and meaning. Madsen (1983) criticized that it is not productive to spend time evaluating small points that even native speakers pay little attention to.

At certain levels, the oral linguistic skill tests are still in use to measure certain points. For this purpose, there are some elicitation techniques that can be applied: (a) Sentence Completion (in which the testee repeats and complete a sentence orally, e.g. "I was born in _____ on _____"/"I was born in *Mataram* on *27 June 1975*"); (b) Grammatical Manipulation (the testee manipulates grammatical points by changing the given sentence into the needed response, e.g. Make a question out of this sentence: "She speaks English"/"Does she speak English?"); (c) Elicited Immitation (mimicry of spoken words, phrases, or sentences); (d) the variation of the elicited immitation can be in the form of Reading Aloud (the testee reads aloud the printed

sentence or passage); (e) Bipolar Response (the testee indicates the minimal pairs of oral utterances by simply saying that the words are the "same" or "difference"); (f) Directed translation (the testee translates the native words or a phrases, or a sentence into target language or vice-versa on the examiner's direction; e.g. "What is the English of "matahari"?"/"Sun"); (g) Picture-Cued Vocabulary (such items can range from individual sketches of an object or actual realia to a complex sketches such as building, streets, etc.); (h) Oral Cloze Production (it requires the testee to provide response to deleted words); (i) Synonym/Antonym Production (it requires the testee to provide synonym or antonym expression for stimulus words; another way of eliciting oral production is by requiring the testee to respond on listening task. The response can be in the forms of (i) Picture Identification; (ii) Total Physical Response (TPR); (iii) Printed Multiple Choice Response; (iv) Memory; and (v) Native Language response. The elicitation techniques on linguistic skill are more appropriate to testing language components involved in communication including grammar, grammar, and pronunciation to measure how well each component has been mastered individually. The application of these elicitation techniques should be adjusted with the purpose of the test, the testee's age and language ability, and the kind of skill or subskills being focused.

Controlled Discourse/Limited Response.

These testing techniques can be used for testees with limited speaking skills. There are few elicitation techniques can be applied to generate testee's oral production such as Visual Description Item, Directed Response, Reading Aloud, and so on.

(a) Visual + Description Item. From question point of view, it can consist of an extended description of the items or activities represented in the sketch or it might constitute a one-sentence

explanation of a simple line drawing, depending on the levels of the testees. At the advanced levels, the testee might be required to describe an object or technical drawings. It can take a visual + student items and a visual + examiner questions.

(b) Elicited Imitation. This involves the control of reading aloud, especially for beginning students. This kind of test can be one sentence read at the time or a group of sentences which are read by the teacher and the students repeat them.

(c) Directed Response. The teacher gives the students statement or situation and then asks the student to restate using other expressions. A rather simple form of this test is that the teacher states such simple sentences as "Tell me that you are a student; and the student responds "I am a student". For more advanced students, the teacher gives situations and the students rephrase into sentences; for example, the teacher says: "An urgent letter your secretary has typed is full of mistakes: without offending her, persuade her to do it again", the expected response is "There are one or two small errors in this letter, do you think you could perhaps do it again?"

Connected Discourse.

This testing technique is commonly used as guided oral communication test, but it is felt to typify real communication. It can take the forms of giving a talk, providing narration from pictures, or retelling reading passages, etc.

(a) Oral Presentation. It is approximate communication of real life; the students are asked to prepare a talk and present it in front of class or an examiner.

(b) Retell Story. This requires students to read a passage and retell what he/she has read. Several require the testee to retell a story presented to him/her orally. Another version of this test is that the testee retell the story from ideographs or multiple sketches. This can reduce the memory problems (Madsen, 1981).

(c) Explanation and Description. These connected discourse techniques require the testee to explain the situations or events and describe things.

The former can be such items as “Explain how Moslem in Lombok celebrate Idul Fitri”, Explain how teenage in Lombok celebrate Valentine’s Day.” The latter can involve such descriptions as “Describe a cow”, “Describe a durian.” The tasks in these techniques can vary in the degree of control and difficulty, but all require varying in amount of connected speech.

Pseudo-Communicative Discourse.

This kind of technique is used to provide somewhat more control over the use of language produced by the testee, but still maintain communicative forms (Madsen, 1981; Madsen, 1987).

(a) Role Play. This technique is widely used in testing oral communication. The testee plays the role based on situations given. It can take a variety of situations and the testee chooses one randomly. In a classroom context two or more students can take part at the same time, and the teacher is simply as observer or rater. On IELTS Speaking test, the rater at the same time becomes a partner in the role play.

(b) Directed Request. This technique requires the testee to reconstruct the situation given into other expressions. For example the testee will be given “Would you please ask the man if we could look at his telephone directory a moment? The expected answer is “Excuse me. Can we use your dictionary for a few minutes.”

(c) Interpreter Task. This technique requires the testee to report to the second party who pretends to speak only the language being tested. The testee is required to engage in two-way translation: Native Language to Foreign Language and Foreign Language to Native Language. This technique is used in FSI Oral Interview.

Communicative Discourse. The most frequently testing procedure in assessing oral proficiency is by using direct measure of speaking ability. The techniques can vary simple Questions and Answers to complex Oral Interview.

(a) Conversation.

Conversation techniques are very common in testing speaking. This techniques can vary from such simple questions as “What is your name?”, “Where were you born?”, “Where do you live?”, “Why are you learning English?” to ore free conversation on certain topics to promote genuine interactions. The most complex one is interview.

(b) Dyad Interaction. The testees exchange information with peer, in activities ranging from evaluating one topic to problem solving.

(c) Group Evaluation. A group of testees (4-6) is given a topic to be discussed. To provide topic, the tester can start by showing video or tape.

In this case, by applying the CLT technique is promoted where the students had little ability to speak & understand English. In the CLT classroom teacher plays multiple roles in communicative activities as an assessor, students become the center of the class in the CLT. All of them take part in activities. The effective way to make students active participate is by designing & organizing a rich variety of students -centered activities, such as pair work, group work, role play, story telling, information gap and so on.

As we know that the CLT is not taught grammar or oral teaching only. The CLT does not teach grammar, but rather than how to teach, to learn the necessary syntax. Firstly, the CLT advocates the use of language to communicate, communication is not limited to verbal communication. Communication is through written, verbal of the process of communication listening, speaking,

reading, & writing the role of always changing. Therefore, language learner should be fully grasp the four language skills. The CLT is as much as possible to encourage students to participate in various types of communication, not just oral communication.

Secondly, the CLT is the approach to organize different leads of teaching activities. These activities of each lesson only per activities group, discussion & role play, games, etc. Thirdly, the CLT is not to correct students' error exactly, teacher should help students to practice their dialogues, organize the group discussion and teacher need to help students correct the common mistake in the activity.

CONCLUSION

Teaching speaking is very important part of second language learning. Speaking is a key communication by considering what good speakers do, what speaking task can be used in class and what specific needs students report, By using the CLT technique in English language teaching, teacher can help students' low competence in using English for communication at SMA Negeri 3 Palembang. The CLT technique is able to improve students' competence in speaking ability and overall oral competency. The ability to communicate in a second language clearly and efficiently contributes to the success of the learner in school and success later in every phase of life. Therefore, it is essential that language teacher pay great attention to teaching speaking in the CLT rather than leading students to pure memorization, providing a rich environment where meaningful communication tasks place is desired. With this aim, various speaking activities can contribute a great deal to students in developing basic interactive skills necessary for life. These activities make the students more active in learning process and at the same time make their teaching more meaningful and fun for

them.

In communicative language teaching era, assessment of one's ability in using language in real communication becomes the main concern. However, the complexity of the aspects involved in speaking test makes the teachers tend to avoid using direct testing for testing oral proficiency, instead they use indirect or semi-direct testing, that is, testing oral ability using paper-pencil dialogue tests. Teachers can apply various elicitation techniques for speaking test depending on the objectives, time availability, students' levels, the ratio of raters and students, and some other considerations.

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