THE TEACHING OF LANGUAGE

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Abstract

In general, language teaching shifted from old method to modern one. The old method tended to place more emphasis on the mastery of the rules of language or grammar rather than to the function of language as the primary means of communication for mankind. The implications of the method and/or the old approach was the birth of a second language learner or a foreign language that is very capable in using the rules of the language but lacking even incompetent in terms of communicating using the language. This reality motivated language teaching experts to switch to a more functional approach thus was born the so-called communicative approach, the approach in language teaching that requires students to use the language to the maximum during the learning process, although the rules of the language tend to 'negligible'. Real form of the communicative approach is the interaction established during the learning process by using the language being studied. The interaction was not only between teachers and students (two way communication) but also between teachers and students and among students (multi-directional). Only the implementation of this approach is not without drawbacks, namely the birth of language learners who are able to communicate verbally very eloquent invitation but is hampered when dealing with tasks that require them created especially writing scholarly writings. Both of the above realities spawned the emergence approach called integrated approach, namely the teaching of grammar rules of a language by using the language communicatively interactive during the learning process. Although this approach is also not free from the possibility of the birth of various constraints, such as the design of instructional materials that require special expertise and impeccable, setting and classroom management is also one of the considerations that can not be ruled out.

Key words: Teaching English, communicative interactions.

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In general, the teaching of language especially in terms of approaches, methods, as well techniques of teaching as implemented during the face to face interaction in the classroom, whether between teacher and students or among students themselves, most are discussed in English and the references of most language teachings are the teaching of English whether American or British English especially in relation to the fact that English has being regarded world language by most people in the reality of the cosmos. Due to this reality, the discussion of this writing will also much be influenced by the teaching of English whether as a second or foreign language. This is because, books, papers, and other references available are mostly written in the language.

In the past, foreign language teaching techniques tend to recognize the element of habit formation at the earlier stages of language learning, but make only very limited use of mere stimulus-response situations. According to Wallwork (1980; 149) such teaching techniques are based on the belief that foreign languages are best taught through active speech, taught in a carefully selected and graded progression of structures, but always set in as realistic situation as possible. Such a method is a combination of the oral, structural, and

situational approaches which is popularly known as the grammar-translation method.

Childern taught through grammar translation method (GTM) usually learn the rules of the grammar, including numbers of paradigms, and have to translate into and from written forms of the foreign language. Through GTM, oral work may play a minor role, being allotted say, 10 or 15 percent or less marks in some terminal examination, and attention paid to it will reflect this proportion. Materials for translation usually came from a very limited range of registers, the bulk of it most probably being of a literary nature. In modern teaching of language, such translation is likely to come at some point much nearer the end of the course, and instruction in translaltion is likely to be regarded as a separate activity from that of learning to use the language creatively.

By oral approach (aural-oral approach) is meant that these skills are taught first; listening then speaking. Reading and writing in the foreign language come later, even considerably later. To this extent, speech is a more complete expression of language than writing. That is to say, anyone who can speak a language fluently will have less trouble, it is believed, in learning to read and write it, than will a person who has to learn to speak a language which he has first mastered in print or written only. It also accords with the way in which the mother tongue or native language is learnt, where speech certainly comes before writing. Due to this notion, many people will say that the nearer foreign language teaching can approach to the way in which the mother tongue is acquired, the more effective it is likely to be.

By the structural approach is meant that the patterns of the language being taught are carefully analysed, selected and graded, and are then taught methodically. To some extent, of course, this is a counsel of perfection if not impossility. To analyse, select and grade the structures of a language presupposes an adequate description of that language. Unfortunately, as stated by Wallwork (1980: 150) that it is not yet available in full measure for any language. Nevertheless, it is not necessary to await such full description. Inventories, for example, English sentence patterns for the purpose of teaching English abroad were made as early as 1934 by Palmer, and more recently by Fries and Hornby.

Most of modern language courses now produced, including audio-visual or audio-lingual courses, claim to use 'graded structure', although the principles on which the grading is done may be very different from one course to another. But they have in common the approach which selects a particular gramatical pattern - which is then presented, and drilled, until the learner is thought to have absorbed the pattern.

Special to Indonesia, the teaching of English and other foreign languages in general which are also taught whether optionally or convulsarily, including at the university level, these four language skills cannot be gained simultaneously, depend and determined by certain factors such as learning habits, experiences, and teaching techniques implemented by teachers in the classroom. Techniques of teaching English suggested Indonesian English teachers as indicated in the Curriculum Based Competence (CBC) to deliver learning materials all in English, except on some items that cannot be grasped by students without explaining them in their native language. Wehantouw (1988: 3) outlines that at the Senior High Schools as well as at the Institutes of Higher Learning, the language of instruction in the teaching of English is recommended English in conformity with the principle "one learn to use/speak a foreign language by using/speaking it". As a matter of fact as stated by Wehantouw (1988: 1) in the teaching of English as a foreign language, teachers often resort to using Bahasa Indonesia to facilitate its teaching and learning. Consequently, the objectives to

achieve as assigned by the CBC are mostly result in failure rather than in the opposite.

Another phenomenon related to the teaching of English in Indonesia as a foreign language is the mastery imbalance between one skill and another, mainly between the mastery of grammatical rules of English at one side and the speaking proficiency at another. There are students who are able to comprehend and implement the grammatical rules of the English language but are not adequately smart in speaking. Some are completely fluent in speaking but drop deeply when asked to create writing especially scientific ones. Some others, even though not great in number are lack on the two aspects mentioned previously. This notion seems to be closely related to the English teaching approaches, methods, as well as teaching techniques implemented in the past.

It has been generally known that in the past as outlined above, the teaching of English as well as other foreign languages tended to be of grammar oriented through which learners learned rules much more than the function of the English language. Consequently, the learners became smart in the grammatical rules of the English but less of fluency in speaking. In other words, learners learned much about English, not the English language itself functionally. Lado (1988: 102) states that native speakers use functional grammar whether or not they can state the rules or describe the patterns they use, and many second language students can explain the grammar of the second language even though they are not able to use it functionally. This fact is the basis of the linguistic approach dictum to "teach the language, not about the language," meaning to teach functional rather than reflective grammar.

It was just later on, the orientation of teaching English departed from the old approaches focusing on the teaching of grammar to new approaches stressing on the communicative function. These phenomena can be proved through the teaching approaches as well as teaching methods emerged in the past compared with those of today which are mostly communicative oriented. Grammar Translation Method, is one of the teaching approach stressing on grammar mastery. Lado (1998: 12) asserts that an activity characteristic of the T-G approach is the translation of sentences into the foreign language. The objective of the activity is not to produce good translation or develop translation skills as practiced by professionals, but to learn grammar. The Pragmatic and Communicative approaches such Communicative Language Teaching and Interactive Teaching, on the other hand tend to be functional oriented through which students are required to actively communicate using the language being learned during the process of learning.

Els (1984: 146-156) describes the development of methods implemented in teaching English as a foreign language, namely (a) formal vs functional methods, (b) formalists vs activists, (c) integrated methods, (d) analytic vs synthetic, (e) direct vs indirect, (f) mechanistic vs mentalistic,(g) inductive vs deductive, (h) empiricist vs rationalist. Other methods coming later are (the grammar translation method, (b) the direct method, (c) the reform method, (d) the audiolingual method, (e) the audiovisual method, and (f) the structure global audiovisual method.

These phenomena have actually been realized by Indonesian experts on teaching foreign as well as second languages, but as previously stated the realization of the consciousness is still far from the expectation of many Indonesian people. According to Manurung (2006: 193) the most popular issues related to the teaching of English in Indonesian universities is the low competency of the gradation in the four skills of English language. Grow in Noni (2003) theorizes that is basically initiated by the failure of teaching at the Senior High School focusing more deeply on the grammatical and

reading comprehension aspects than on the communicative function of the language. Zain (2006) in one of his research found that in general university students find difficulties in terms of applying interrogatives expressions both in and outside the classroom.

Much foreign language teaching has in the past been concerned only with the language of literature. Wallwork (1980: 151) states that there are many reasons why this should be changing, among others are (1) the war in many parts of the world that has given a great impetus to the learning of other languages for practical purposes; (2) people travel more freely and feel the need for a mastery of language in registers other than the literary; (3) businessmen are increasingly conscious of the need for what might be called 'day-to-day' language. The tremendeus growth that has taken place in the teaching of English in many parts of the world, where the status of English as a worl language has stimulated demand for the teaching of English for a variety of purposes, has also been very influential in its effects on language teaching in Indonesia, especially English as the first foreign language.

In line with teachers' role in the teaching of any language, Christopher N. Candlin and Neil Mercer in (E-Book) state that where ever they are and whatever they are teaching, teachers in schools and other educational institutions are likely to face some similar practical tasks. They have to organize activities to occupy classes of disparate individuals, learners who may vary considerably in their aims, abilities and motivations. They have to control unruly behaviour. They are expected to teach a specific curriculum, a body of knowledge and skills which their students would not normally encounter in their out-of-school lives And they have to monitor and assess the educational progress the students make. All these aspects of teachers' responsibilities are reflected in their use of language as the principal tool of their responsibilities.

A teacher as stated by Amin (2005: 8) is person charged with the responsibilities of helping others to team and to behave in new and different ways. In line with Amin's definition, a teacher as stated by Anderson and Burns (1989: 1) is (a) a person employed in an official capacity for the purposes of guiding and directing the learning experiences of pupils or students in an educational institution, whether public or private, (b) a person who because of rich or unusual experience or education or in a given field is able to contribute to the growth and development of other persons who come in contact with him, (c) a person who has completed a professional curriculum in a teacher education institution and whose training has been recognized by the award of an appropriate teaching certificate, and (d) a person who instruct others. Ideally, the teacher should possess adequate competence in delivering his/her teaching. In this sense, he/she should be able to offer and perform various modes of teaching delivery that can encourage students to practice and use the target language they are learning. In other words, the modes of deliveries should correspond the learners' preferences on the teaching.

However, many teachers are not fully aware if their students do not prefer their teaching modes. The primary roles of teachers are instructional and managerial. Learners, too, have reciprocal managerial and learning roles (Wright, 1988: 125). In conjunction with this notion, Underwood (1989: 22) asserts that success breeds success, and students who feel they are succeeding will be encouraged to go on trying. Teachers' igh in this is to provide experiences and activities in which students can be successful. Wright (1990: 2) asserts that it is not enough for students to have a competent ability in a language if they cannot develop a conversation or discussion. In this sense, language teachers

have a role as communication teachers and, indeed, as teachers in the broadest sense. Hamachek in al-Adabi (volume 5, 2010: 182) outlines four dimensions of teachers' effectivenees in teaching, namely; (1) effective teachers have a sense of humor, fair, empathetic, democratic, and able to relate easily and naturally to students on either a one-to-one or a group basis, (2) effective teachers have knowledge of subject matter and related areas, (3) effective teachers see themselves as identified with others, and (4) effective teachers have positive views of others students, colleagues, and administrators.

Jester and Miller in Noni (2003) Jester and Miller in Noni (2003) state that it is of important factor that teachers be aware of the nature of their students' learning style. Once the teachers know their students' learning style, they could match it with the instructional environment of the class. It is then expected that the teachers find ways to adapt their teaching with the style to ensure their students' success in the class. Teachers should know their students' interaction mode preferences. It should be well known that some students prefer to learn individually, some others prefer to work with a partner or in a small group. Any of the interaction modes can best facilitate the students to achieve the learning objectives if the learning environment suits the students' preferences. Above all, teachers should devote their attention to organize their class in such a way so as to promote better development of the students' target language. In other words, teachers should vary their teaching delivery so as to accommodate their students' learning style.

As a result, the learning environment can be in all students' favor, even though they have different styles. In line with the above notions, Anderson and Burns (1989: 8) assert that it is the teaching, not the teacher, that is the key to the learning of students. That is, it is not what teachers are like but what they do in

interacting with their students that determines what shadents learn and how they feel about the leaning and about themselves.

In relation to the teaching of English in Indonesia, it has been generally known that there are two main problems which are now still being debatol, that is, the leaching English or any language and the teaching about English or about any language. The first refers to the teaching of language as a medium of communication or language function, whereas the second refers to the niles of language. But the problem of teaching English grammar pres beyond toschers' confidence in their own knowledge about language as a source Many teachers, as stated by Macken-Horarik (Australian Journal of Language and Literacy, Feb 12) unsure about the role of grammar in English teaching itself. Some argue that while grammar has always bem part of core business in English, it should be tought at the point of need rather than systematically. Others claim the opposite that the absence of the systematic approach to teaching about language has to continued disadvantage for already linguistically marginalized groups of students. However, the teaching of this subject is still dominated by the Teacher Centered. Approach. Therefore, the teaching of English grammar is still being debated among linguists up to these recent days. Some experts such as Terry (1988: 42) and Wu (2007: 6) consider the need for teaching grammar explicitly. On the other hand, Krashen (1983: 74) states that communicative ability is the ultimate goal of learning any language, Krashen makes the function of the language as the initial focus which emphasizes fluency as being than accuracy, Littlewood (1983) pays attention to the functional aspects as well as the structural aspects of language which become the purpose of communication. He starts by understanding the structure in the context that begins with controlled

exercises until it reaches natural communication activities.

These two diverse points of view can be bridged by promoting learning English grammar communicatively in order to achieve the goal of language learning by the learners with fluency and accuracy on the one hand, and having English grammatical knowledge on the other. In addition to this notion, it is perceived that teaching through Teacher-Centered Approach may provide learners with good English grammar knowledge but contributes little communication skill to the learners. In contrast to this notion, Sturn and Bogner (International Journal of Science Education, 2008: 941) states that student-centered teaching at school is very often given priority by teachers in contrast to more teacher-centered lessons. McCombs and Whisler (1997: 4) state that child or student centered refers to the use of schooling and learning practices that apply to learners from the age of two to twenty one or twenty five. learners in preschool through secondary or post secondary school. Iwon (1992 in Sturn and Bogner (International Journal of Science Education, 2008: 942) found higher achievement scores for students in learner-centered lessons compared with teacher centered lessons. Beside cognitive effects, many studies also demonstrate affective outcomes of student-oriented learning environment. Additionally, social skills and social competences were more easily trained in student-oriented lessons than cooperative learning environment. Student-oriented approaches give learners a central focus and thus are the acting force. Nevertheless, many comparison studies of teacher-centered versus student-oriented learning environments have produced controversial results with no consistency in the explanation of effects of different learning environments with regard to achievement and motivation scores.

The theoretical foundation interactive learning as stated by Brown (2001: 48) lies in what Long (1988, 1993) describes as the interaction hypothesis of second language acquisition, going beyond Krashen's concept of comprehensible input. Long and others point out the importance of input and output or receptive and productive skills in the development of language. As learners interact with other through oral and written discourse, their communication abilities are enhanced Vygotsky (1978) perceives that social interaction, mainly in terms of language learning, is the primary source of developing cognition and behavior.

In conjunction with the objectives of teaching English in Indonesia both for academic and general purposes that we designed to strengthen the fost major skills te, listening, speaking, reading, and writing an integrated technique seems to be the best option. This is in line with Rasyid's notion (1992: 19) that integrating skills in English language teaching (ELT) is a must, that is, if the purpose of the ELT is to enable students to use the language in real life communication where more than one skill in involved at a time. Integrated manner of teaching is believed to be an activity which may provide class with various interactions, not only one way (from teacher to students) or two way interaction (from teacher to students and vice versa) but multiple ways as well, that is, interaction among students in the class.

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