

IMPROVING STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY THROUGH COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING OF THE SECOND LEVEL STUDENTS AT 'MEC' MEGALIA ENGLISH COURSE.

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ABSTRACT

This study is a collaborative action research investigation to improve the speaking ability of the students at Megalia English course especially class X-B. Opportunities to teach English are provided in many different ways and it is based on each teacher who teaches. One of the teaching methods is Communicative Language Teaching that would provide more opportunities for children to develop their speaking skill in English because the classroom procedure in CLT gives students more activity in class. The subject of this research was taken from class X-B of second level students at Megalia English Course. This class consisted of 15 students. The researcher concluded this research during February-March 2015. The improvement of students' speaking ability could happen by using the Communicative Language Teaching type of activities as follow: (a) Presentation of a brief dialog or several mini dialogs, roles setting topic and the informality or formality of the language with the function and the situation demand. (b) Questions and answers based on the dialog. (c) Questions and answers related to students personal experience but centered on the dialog theme. (d) Individual work. (e) Pair works. (f) Evaluation of learning. (g) Sampling of the written homework assignment. (h) Games related to the topic. (i) Oral practice. Based on the conclusion, it is recommended that: (1) The English teachers have to be sure that the method of teaching is effective to improve the students' skill or not. Communicative Language teaching method is recommended to apply to increase the students speaking ability. (2) A well-prepared planning is also important to the teacher before teaching so the class will be running well without wasting time to the unimportant things. (3) The English teachers have to be able to make a creative class so the students will not be bored in the class.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching, Speaking Ability, Second Level Students of Megalia English Course.

INTRODUCTION

The ever-growing need for good communication skills in English has created a huge demand for English teaching around the world. Millions of people today want to improve their command of English or to ensure that their children achieve a good command of English.

“Language is a system of arbitrary, vocal symbol which permit all people in a given culture, or other people who have learned the system of that culture, to communicate or to interact“ (Widdowson, 1987, p.3). People use language to express inner thoughts and emotions, to make sense of complex and abstract thought, to learn to communicate with other to fulfill our wants or needs, as well as to establish rules and maintain our culture. So, language is the most important aspect in the life of all human beings. As an International language English is important to be learned by people in the world. Being able to speak English allows people to communicate effectively in numerous countries. Almost all international conferences use English to communicate with each. .

Due to the rapid development of the modern era with modern pedagogical method that come to existence, the KTSP (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan) curriculum may have been judged to be less practical especially that it includes too many school subjects for the students. Therefore primary school curriculum has been set for ‘dropping’ English in the reason that students in primary school have not learned to understand the Indonesian language yet.

To face this situation many parents decided to have their children take an English courses outside school to ensure that their children achieve a good command of English. MEC ‘Megalia English Course’ that has started its operation since the 25th of July in 2014 is one of many institutions in Manado that offers English learning to improve the English skill of everyone who needs English for their necessity. This English course is chosen because the researcher is one of the instructors there and she has observed that all students do not have an English class at school. Such condition may be the reason why the students are not familiar with English so it makes them hard to speak. When students entered the English Course at Megalia English Course the researcher found that at the same time their span of attention or concentration was less than an adult because children will usually not sit and listen especially when they get boring then they will start speaking with their friends or drawing something on their book.

“Children are curious, and this in itself is motivating” (Harmer, 1991). It has already established that children who learn a language when they are very young have much better chance of not having a foreign accent when speaking another language. It is harder to pick up additional languages with native-like pronunciation. Thus one very compelling reason to start children off with another language at young age is to give them a gift of a native

accent. The wonderful thing about young children is that they will give things a try without necessarily worrying.

Opportunities to teach English are provided in many different ways and it is based on each teacher who teaches. One of the teaching methods is Communicative Language Teaching that would provide more opportunities for children to develop their speaking skill in English because the classroom procedure in CLT gives students more activity in class so the researcher carried out a Classroom Action Research entitled “Improving Students Speaking Ability through Communicative Language Teaching of the Second Level Students at Megalia English Course” in order to develop the English skill of the students especially children.

METHODOLOGY

A classroom action research was used in doing this research as the method. According to Harmer (1991), action research is the name given to a series of procedures teachers can engage in, either because they wish to improve aspects of their teaching, or because they wish to evaluate the success and or appropriacy of certain activities and procedures.

Kemmis and Mc. Taggart (1988) explain that action research is a group of activity and a piece of descriptive research carried out by the teacher in his or her own classroom, without the involvement of others, which is aimed at interesting our understanding rather than changing the phenomenon under the investigation that would not be considered by these commentators to be ‘action research’, the essential impetus for carrying out action research is to change the system. Action research is regularly done to improve a learning process. With this research, the teacher will know his or her weakness in teaching their students. They will know the effective methods in teaching speaking. There are three defining characteristic of action research, they are: a. It is carried out by practitioners rather than outside researchers, b. It is collaborative, c. It is aimed at changing things (Kemmis and Mc. Taggart, 1988).

Based on the definitions above the researcher concludes that classroom action research is a classroom action in a research, which can be carried out by teacher, researcher, and teacher with his or her colleague with involves a group of students to improve teaching and learning process or to enhance the understanding of the students to the lesson.

The research was conducted by the researcher at Megalia English course at Malendeng Welong Abadi Residence and Tomohon Talete 1. This English Course institution was established on 25th July 2014 by Emelia J.C Panambunan, S.S and has been running consistently until now.

A collaborator in this classroom action research was the person who helped the researcher. She took the part as the observer to collect the data. The collaborator was one of Megalia English Course's instructors, Collin Coraag, SS.

Population and Sample.

Population

The population of this research was the English students of Megalia English Course. There were eleven classes of MEC at Tomohon and the total number of students at Megalia English Course is 141 students which are taught by three instructors that came from the graduated of STIBA, UNIMA and UKIT. Two classes of MEC Tomohon came from SD Gmim 5 Tomohon class X-A consist of 3rd and 4th grade students and X-B consist of 5th and 6th grade students and the proses of teaching and learning are conducted at that school and nine classes at MEC Tomohon Talete 1 that came from various schools around Tomohon.

Sample

In this study the researcher was using the total sampling. Class X-B was taken as the sample and the class consist of 5th and 6th grade students which came from SD GMIM 5 Tomohon and were 15 students in the class consist of 13 females and 2 males. The researcher chose class X-B of Megalia English Course Tomohon because MEC was first opened at SD GMIM 5 Tomohon and the number of students at class X-B was larger than the other classes at that time so that was why the researcher chose class X-B MEC Tomohon as the subject of this research.

Data Collection

Instrument

Research instrument is a device used by researcher while collecting data to make the work becomes easier and to get better result, complete, and systematic in order to make the data easy to be processed (Arikunto, 2003). The researcher was carried out some actions on English teaching process at Megalia English course in collecting the data. Techniques of data collection in this research include;

- Pre-test, in this case the researcher was using an oral test which is given toward students before implementing the classroom action research in order to diagnose the students ability in speaking because at first cycle in doing the classroom action research is planning. Planning was effective after doing the pre-test. The researcher was prepared questions to be asked, to make the pre-test valid and reliable the reseacher recorded the pre-test activity by using the video recording.
- Observation checklist, The researcher noted the obtained data based on the activity during the English teaching process. How the researcher help the students to make

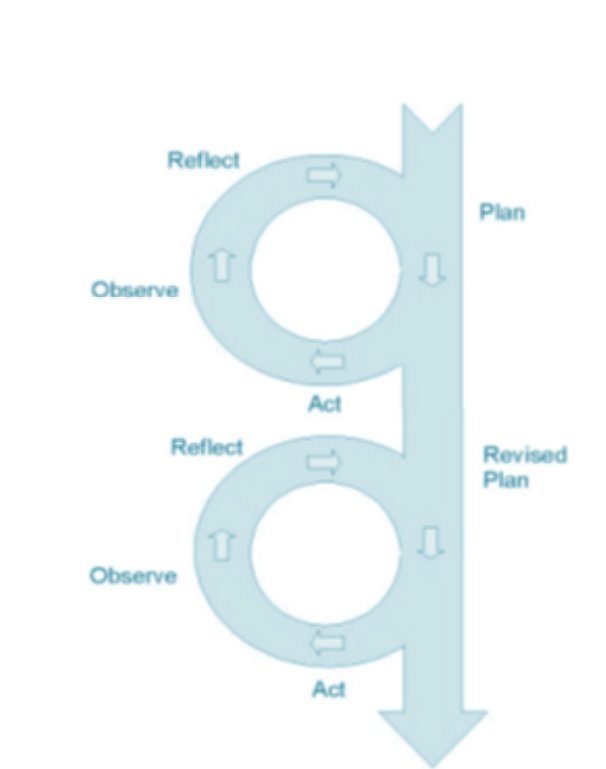
them understand the lesson, how the researcher lead them to communicate each other and how the researcher solve the problems during English teaching process in the class through Communicative Language Teaching.

- Post-test, In this case the researcher used an oral test to measure the improvement of students' speaking skill and the researcher also used the video recording to make the post-test valid and reliable.

The technique of Communicative Language Teaching is the focus that was applied in the process of English Teaching in this study.

Classroom Action Research Design Procedure

The researcher organized her teaching and learning condition from her own experience. The researcher tried an idea as reparation in their teaching learning process and look the real effect of those efforts. There are four components in one cycle for doing classroom action research. It consists of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. This classroom action research was arranged into two cycles. The activities that were be done in each cycle is as follows:



(Kemmis, S., and McTaggart, 1988)

a. Planning

The plan was arranged based on the pre observation by the researcher. At first the students was given several questions about daily activities that must be answered orally as their pre-test as bellow;

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What do you usually do in morning?
3. What do you usually do after school?
4. What do you usually do in evening?
5. How do you spend your weekend?

The researcher planned the action based on the problem and the material to apply at the class by using the Communicative Language Teaching. After determining the material the researcher prepared a lesson plan in order to guide the researcher in implementing the strategy. The researcher also provided the other preparation such as an instrument to be used in class. In this case students are supposed to be able to build their confidence to practice and to express their thought. Observation sheet was also be prepared by the teacher to be filled by the collaborator.

b. Acting

After planning the actions, in this stage the researcher implemented the strategy by using those preparations and the lesson plan as the guidance.

For instance the teacher applied the procedure and the method of Communicative Language Teaching in explaining the material to students by using the own material of Megalia English Course.

c. Observing

In this case the researcher needed a collaborator to help the researcher in doing the observation because the next step to monitor and to watch closely the teaching learning process and to collect the data from the result of action.

The researcher prepared the observation sheet to collect the data based on the situation of the class and the observation was be done by the collaborator by noted the all things which are needed during the teaching-learning process.

d. Reflecting

Reflecting means to analyze the result based on the data that have been collected to determine the next action in the next cycle. The teacher analyzed the whole action that has been done based on the data that was be collected by the collaborator and the researcher.

In this case, the researcher observed the activity that results any process, the progress happened, and also about the positives and negatives sides during the teaching and learning process.

Data Analysis

In this step, the researcher analyzed the data through reflecting stage and the observation checklist of the Classroom Action Research in the teaching learning process. The researcher also analyzed the data by using a simple statistic by collating the data from the pre-test and the post test. This means that the researcher used qualitative and quantitative technique in analyzing the data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Pre-Test

The researcher used an oral test which was given toward students before implementing the classroom action research in order to diagnose the students' ability in speaking before using the Communicative Language Teaching method. It was the result of pre-test became the source of planning further action. Its results were also taken to compare with the result after the cycle.

First Cycle

First Meeting

The class was very noisy when the teacher entered the class but one student as the chairman of the class asked her friends to be silent. Based on the result of the pre-test, there were just several students in the class who did not know how to introduce their self so the teacher moved the seat of the students and paired the more proficient students with the less proficient students.

This meeting students were expected to know how to tell their activities in English and to make a conversation about their daily activities. The teacher used Communicative Language Teaching types of activities such as, an oral practice, a brief dialog, using pictures and game related to the topic. First, the teacher asked the daily activities of students by using Indonesian and they could answered the question well but when the teacher asked them in English, they just answered the questions with some simple activities such as "Go to school, lunch, dinner and sleep". So, the teacher presented some kinds of daily activities by using picture to the students that was prepared by the teacher in the lesson plan (see appendix 3) and discussed it together with questions and answers about the pictures and connected the picture with students' own experience.

After that the teacher asked students to write down their own daily activities so the teacher could know that students understood the lesson or not. The teacher also asked students to read the dialog in pair in front of the class to improve the students' confidence in speaking and also it can provide opportunities for learners to experiment and try out what they know.

The teacher paired the more proficient students with the less proficient students so the more proficient students could help the teacher easier to reach the less proficient one.

Next, the students were asked by the teacher about their daily activities they were very excited and answered it louder. Next, the teacher gave them a game that related to the topic 'BINGO', the teacher distributed pictures of BINGO (See appendix 3) about daily activities and the students have to decide which one of the activities that must come first, second, etc. By the end of the meeting, the students were given a review about the subject they have learned during 90 minutes and the teacher also asked students to make a descriptive text about their daily activities at home.

Second meeting

The class began as usual at 15.00 pm and the teacher planned to continue the using of Communicative Language Teaching Method in the second meeting. In this meeting the teacher distributed a brief dialog about daily activities and she read the dialog and asked students to imitate her. Next, the teacher asked students the difficult words that the students did not know. When the dialog was clear the teacher asked students to read the dialog after her and they were doing the same things about four times. Next the teacher asked to read in pair a dialog in front of class.

Reflecting

In this step the teacher analyzed the whole action that has been done in the first meeting and the second meeting based on the data that was collected by the collaborator and the teacher. In this case, the teacher observed the activity that results any process, the progress happened, and also about the positives and negatives sides during the teaching and learning process. Based on the reflection, the students met a difficulty in answering the pre-test because they did not know anything about the questions except the question number one so they did not know how to answer it. In the classroom the students gave their attention to the lesson not more than fifteen minutes so they often need changes of focus to keep their interested in the English class after fifteen minutes. A brief dialog, oral practice and games related to the lesson could help the teacher to keep their attention in learning English to meet the goal.

When the teacher asked the students to come in front to read their work in pair, they still felt afraid but the method was good enough because the students were active in speaking during the English learning process in the class. When the teacher saw that the students were getting bored, she gave them a song to sing and she gave them a game related to the lesson and also related with the method to take the students attention. There were two students that needed a special technique because they need more time to understand the lesson, they were active but they made mistakes many times so the teacher asked them more often to make

them understand well so they could adjust with the other students.

The method of Communicative Language Teaching was effective to the students. Based on the result of the post-test in the first cycle, some students could pass the test very well but there were still several students could not pass the test so the teacher carried the second cycle on the research.

Second Cycle

First Meeting

At first, the teacher gave a table of daily activities and explained how to fill the table that they have to interview their friends by asking the questions above. The students looked very enthusiastic to fulfil the table by asking the other students' daily activities even were very clumsy to speak but they tried so hard because the teacher promised to give them a high score for those who could fulfil the table.

Next, the teacher let the students to play games that related to the topic which called "The wind is blowing". At first the teacher arranged the seat of the students so when the teacher said "The wind is blowing" the students should respond the statement with "where is the wind blowing" and the teacher for example will answer "The wind is blowing to the students who get up at 5 o'clock in the morning". So the students who usually get up at 5 o'clock in the morning should stand up and find another seat to be sat but they just allowed to choose the seats of their friend who want to move to another seat. The student who did not find a seat must stand up and say "the wind is blowing". His friend must respond him with "where is the wind blowing" and the student who stand has to answer with the statement related to the daily activity. In this game the students were expected to practice their speaking skill so the students were not allowed to use Indonesian.

After playing games the students were given a review about the subject and next the teacher gave them an assignment to make a dialog of daily activities at home.

Second Meeting

In the second meeting at the second cycle the teacher gave the students several attractive games which called "What am I doing?" and "Lying Game". The teacher divided the students into 9 groups so each group consisted of two students. One students said "what am I doing" and the other students guess by saying "you are...(Eating, sleeping, going to school etc). After doing ten activities the teacher asked the students to exchange the position.

For the second activity the teacher was still using game that related to the topic to help the students practice their speaking skill "Lying Game". At first the teacher asked students to write their own daily activities on a sheet of paper based on the five questions that have been written by the teacher. 10 minutes later the teacher collected the paper and divided the

students in two groups after that shared the paper and she had to be sure that the students did not get their own paper. The teacher asked one student "what time do you usually get up in the morning?" and the students answered "I usually get up at 5 o'clock" and another student who got the paper should check if the first student told the truth or not and if the first student was lying so the students that got the paper should tell "You are lying, you said that you usually get up at 5 o'clock but actually you usually get up at 6 o'clock". After playing this game the teacher review all of the material by asking the students about their activities in English and almost all students could answered it well.

Reflecting

Finally, the researcher as the teacher evaluated that there were improvements at the class X-B after implementing the Communicative Language Teaching types of activities in the class. The level of students' concentration increased so the students could understand the lesson well. Most of them could minimize their fears and shy to speak so they could speak without any worries although sometimes they made mistakes. The use of Communicative Language Teaching types of activities also makes the process of the teaching and learning activities enjoyable and interesting so the students could pass the standard average score (70) that have been decided by the researcher as the teacher .

Conclusion

Based on what has been collected and analyzed by the researcher in teaching English at the first level students of Megalia English Course the researcher concluded that Students work more cooperatively from the first steep till the last steep in the cycles and it could be seen from the result of the test. There were improvements of the students' score in the first cycle to the second cycle because of the implementing of Communicative Language Teaching type of activities as follow: (a) Presentation of a brief dialog or several mini dialogs and a discussion of the function and situation-people, roles setting topic (b) Questions and answers based on the dialog. (c) Questions and answers related to students personal experience but centered on the dialog theme. (d) Individual work. (e) Pair works. (f) Evaluation of learning. (g) Sampling of the written homework assignment. (h) Games related to the topic. (g) Oral pratice.

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