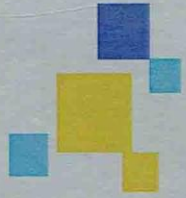




Faculty of Tarbiya and Teachers Training
Fakultas Ilmu Tarbiyah dan Keguruan
UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION IN MUSLIM SOCIETY (ICEMS)

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THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING FOR COMMUNICATION IN THE GLOBALIZATION ERA

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ABSTRACT

The life of human being wherever and whenever they live, they must absolutely do with communication. They can not live without communication. They need to communicate with each other in order to fulfill their needs. Certainly, communication needs a tool. The only tool that is used for communication is language. By language, one of the most important achievements of human being in their historical civilization. It is through the language that they can communicate and interact one another and even disseminate their achievements and advancements in science, technology, economy, religion and culture as well to much wider world.

In todays world, English becomes an important language as it is used globally. The role of English is for global communication tool due to the globalization era. English is used by people in the world and called as international language. English is the language of pop culture, of tourism, of markets, of the internet and trade. Over half of various forms of personal communication written in letters, short message service and email are also written in English. Due the importance of English language learning and mastering of English language for communication and interaction in the globalization era are not doubted.

Introduction

English is as a means of communication orally and in writing. English also as a means to convey messages in communication. Communicating here is to understand and to express information, feelings, thoughts, and to develop science, technology, and culture. Ability to communicate in the science of an intact is the ability to understand or to produce spoken form or written form to be realized in the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. The first two skills, listening and reading, belong to receptive skills, while speaking and writing belong to productive skills. Basically the four language skills are used to respond or to create a discourse in public life.

English is as an international language which is very useful in the globalization era. The era, many people want to master English because of Global demands. In this era, every body demanded to master English well for communication between each others. English is the language of pop culture, of tourism, of markets, of the internet and trade (Nehemiah:2009). However, Teaching English in Indonesian has started from elementary school level until university level. Various curriculum and methods have been developed to enhance students ability in mastery English. Nevertheless the result is still not felt the maximum in making students can communicate well through language.

One way should be emphasized by teachers to improve students skill in English language is to teach English by emphasizing on communication and interaction. Relation to this, according to the competency based curriculum which was issued by the National Education Minister reflects that the objective of teaching and learning English in Indonesia is to develop communicative competence and to enable the students to be able to communicate in English orally and in writing (BSNP:2006). Thus, it can generally be understood that the goal of teaching and learning English is to enable the students to be able to communicate and interact with other people in the global society.

Discussion

The Nature of Language

The possession of language, perhaps more than any other attributes, distinguishes human beings from animals. To understand our humanity, we must understand the nature of language that makes us human. According to the philosophy expressed in the myths and religions of many people, it is language that is the source of human life and power (Fromkin, 1999). By knowing language, we can speak and can be understood by others who know that language. This means, we have the capacity to produce sounds that signify certain meanings, and to understand of interpreting the sounds produced by others. What ever else people do when they come together, whether they play, flight, make love, or make dishwashers they talk, basically all of activities of human life through language.

Language is purely human and non instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotion and desires by a means of a voluntary produced (sound), symbols, (Sapir, 1921:8 in Djunaidi, 1987:2). While Block and Trager give the meaning of language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group cooperates (Block and Trager, 1942 : 5 in Fromkin, 1999 : 389). According to Anthony's concept about the theories of the nature of language and language learning in Richards and Rodgers (1986:17), there are at least three different theoretical views of language and the nature of language. The first, is the structural view that language is a system of structurally related elements for the coding of meaning. The second, is the functional view that language is a vehicle for the expression of functional meaning. The third, is the interactional view that language is a vehicle for the realization of interpersonal relations and for the performance of social transactions between individual. From the meaning of language above, it can generally be concluded that language is a system of arbitrary and has function as means of expressing ideas, thoughts, and feelings to the others. Language also has function as symbolic, emotive and affective function.

Knowledge of Language Learning

The language learning theory has been influenced by two theories, i.e. behaviorist theory and cognitive theory. The first, theory of Stimulus-Response from behaviorist theory by Skinner (BF. Skinner, 1959:81), all behavior is viewed as a response to stimulate, whether the behavior is overt (explicit) or covert (implicit) or happens in causal, associative chains all learning is thus characterized as associative learning, or habit formation, brought by the repeated association of a stimulus with a response (Hadley, 1993:45). According to the theory, language is manifestation of human behavior that becomes habit. Learning a foreign language is new habit formation process. (Hadley, 1993:45) there are two main elements of theory of language learning, i.e., habit and error (James, 1980:20).

Behaviorist theory concluded that all learning consisted of some form of conditioning. The organism was conditioned to respond in specific way to a selected stimulus. (Hadley, 1993:46). Complex activities were nothing more than a complex collection of conditioned response, since all learning is conditioned and since human learning is similar to learning in animals the next step was to conclude that human learning could be, and is, conditioned in the same way. The belief was that humans are reinforced by their environment in much the same way as the rat in a maze (Hadley, 1993:46). Behaviorist theory views that learning is a process of habit formation by giving reinforcement with stimulus response. This theory has supported to the application of audio lingual method that developed in the 1950's and enhanced by the arrival of the language laboratory in the 1960's (Brown, 2007:51). Audio lingual method emphasizes on grammatical patterns with behaviorist theories of learning. These theories suggested that much learning is the result of habit formation, where performing the correct response to a stimulus means that a reward is given. Constant repetition of this reward makes the response automatic. This procedure is referred to as conditioning (Harmer, 2007:49). By rewarding correct production during these repetition phases, students could be conditioned into learning the language. Audio-lingual theory views that drilling is still considered a useful technique.

The second, cognitive theory is based on cognitive psychology and grammar transformation by Chomsky (Gleason, 1998:383). Cognitive theory

believes that language is a subordinate point of cognitive development, dependent on the attainment of various concept (Gleason, 1998:383). According to this view that process of language learning is process of rule formation, because children were born with an innate capacity for language development (Cristal, 2000:234). The human brain is ready for language, in the sense that when children are exposed to speech. Certain general principles for discovering or structuring language automatically begin to operate. These principles constitute a child's language acquisition device (LAD) (Crystal, 2000:234). Chomsky had concluded that children born with the same kind of special language processing ability and had proposed the existence of a language acquisition device (LAD) (Hadley, 1993:48). In this case, Brown in Hadley added that children were born have ability to do anything as follows (1) the ability to distinguish speech sounds from other sounds, (2) the ability to organize language into a system of structures, (3) the knowledge of what was possible and What was not possible in any linguistic system; and (4) the ability to construct the simplest possible system based on the linguistic data to which one was exposed (Hadley, 1993:48).

Acquisition versus Learning

Acquisition and learning are two concepts which have different meaning. The term of language acquisition refers to the capability development in one language naturally in communicative situation. Language acquisition seems to be easy for children. They needn't be taught the complex rules of language. But it is far from easy for a student of linguistics trying to solve a syntax problem in another language, so it can't be that the task itself is an easy one. While the concept of learning is influenced by the psychology study of the learning process. The psychological concept of learning goes far beyond learning directly from a teacher or learning through study or practice. It includes not only the learning of skills (for example, swimming or sewing) or the acquisition of knowledge. It refers also to learning to learn and learning to think; the modification of attitudes; the acquisition of interests, social values, or social roles; and even changes in personality. Language learning determines process of knowledge accumulation about vocabularies and language rules consciously (Subyakto-Nababan, 1992:720. Activities which have correlation with language learning in

general are used in Language teaching at school and produce knowledge about language that learnt. While activities which have correlation with language acquisition is someone's knowledge about language in long time through interaction with society in the environment.

Acquisition is the process by which children unconsciously acquire their native language. While learning is as conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being to talk about them (Stephen D. Krashen and Terrell, 1983:175).

Learning has the same characteristics with acquisition of native language learner, while learning is formal knowledge. In acquisition, learner is like to pick foreign language up and know that language, while in learning, learner learns foreign language and knows that language. Acquisition process is subconscious process while learning process is conscious process. In acquisition, knowledge is implicit, while in learning, knowledge is explicit. In acquisition, teaching formally doesn't help child capability, while in learning formally can help the increase of child capability.

The Importance of English Learning for Communication in the Globalization Era

English learning is used for communicative purposes. In the globalization era, every one demanded to understand and to master English for communication. There fore, English learning emphasizes on communicative competence. The communicative competence is necessary in building students ability in having effective communication. In teaching and learning English as a foreign language for communication uses the approach of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The approach appeared as a response to the belief that learning grammatical structures of English will lead to the competence in using the language. According to Kayi (2006) that learning English should adopt both communicative language teaching and collaborative learning method. In communicative language teaching, students get more practice because this method supports students to be able to communicate in real life situation. So, they will have the opportunity to interact each other in English. While in the collaborative learning, students enjoy the activities both in pair and in group. In teaching English with using communicative language teaching

approach offers four major principles (Brown, 2007) are as follows.

Language learning means to develop communicative competence which includes grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, and strategic competence (Brown:2007). Those are involved in human interaction. All aspects must work together for successful communication to take place.

Language is used in the social context and it should be suitable with the settings topics, and participants.

Learners need to be given opportunities to negotiate meaning.

Learners are required to use English language productively and receptively in a context that has not been known previously.

Based on the explanation above about four major principles, teachers need to help learners use English for communication and interaction. There are some ways in providing opportunities for communication, interaction and negotiation of meaning or to get an idea out of one person's head into the head of another person and vice versa.

Firstly, through questioning strategies. In teaching and learning English as a foreign language in the communicative classroom, where learners often do not have a great number of tools for initiating and maintaining language, questioning strategies provide necessary stepping stones to communication (Brown, 2007:2,8). Appropriate questioning in a communicative classroom can fulfill a number of different functions are as follows: Teachers questions give learners the opportunity to produce language comfortably without having to risk initiating language themselves; teacher questions can serve to initiate a chain relation of students interaction among themselves; teachers questions provide students with opportunities to find out what they think by hearing what they say; and teacher questions give the teachers immediate feedback about students comprehension.

Secondly, through the establishment of information gap activities. This is based on what happens in the real life. Information gap is exchanging information when one person knows the information which other person does not. Harmer, (1991) stated that information gap is when two people

communicate naturally, each would like to know something that has not been known from the other. The student informs the other student something new. If the student asks a question, she/he really wants to know the information. As a matter of fact, in natural communication, people talk to each other because there is an information gap. In addition, in natural communication, people not only want to convey messages to other people, but they also want to interact with other people. There are some types of information gap activities that become one of the principles of the CLT. (1) Information gap between two learners. It is a pair work activity; (2) Information gap between two or more groups, the teacher gives different information to each group, then each group should share information to complete the task. For example : problem solving, discussion, role play, or drama; (3) Information gap between one learner and all other learners. It is the activity when a learner knows the information and the rest of learner should communicate to get the information. Commonly, guessing game is used in this activity; (4) Information gap among all learners. This is the activity where each learner has different information, and the information must be exchanged with all numbers of the class. It is also called as the whole class activity.

The application of the information gap principles will enable learners to inform something new to other learners or they can ask about something that they do not know to other learners. Teachers need to use various means and resources of the learner's need in order to provide information gap activities. Relation to this, Deporter, 2000:81) stated that classrooms use the information gap activity should be dynamic and should be like orchestra. Every body in the classroom should be able to communicate and interact with each other. Teacher role in information gap activity is like a director of a movie. It means that teacher designs the structure of the class, makes out the content of the interaction, and keeps the learning process flowing smoothly and efficiently.(Brown,2001:167).

Thirdly, interactive learning. Interaction is an important word for language learning, especially for language teachers, in the era of communicative language teaching, interaction is the heart of communication. Interaction is the collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings, or ideas between two or more people, resulting in reciprocal effect on each other (Brown,

2007 : 212). According to the interactional view that language as a tool for the realization of interpersonal relations and for the performance of social transactions between individuals (Richards and Rodgers, 1986:17). Language is seen as a tool for creation and maintenance of social relations. Areas of inquiry being drawn on the development of interactional approaches to language teaching include interaction analysis, and conversation analysis. Interactional theories focus on the patterns of moves, acts, negotiation and interaction found in conversational exchanges. Language teaching content according to this view, may be specified and organized by patterns of exchange and interaction or may be left unspecified, to be shaped by the inclinations of learners as instructors. Theories of communicative competence emphasize on the importance of interaction as human beings use language in various context to negotiate meaning or get an idea out of one person's head and into the head of another person.

The principle of interaction implies that the initiative in the theory development does not flow only from the disciplines upwards but may come from any of the positions indicated. (Stern, 1983:47). The teacher is not viewed as a passive recipient in the development of theory. The practice of language teaching and learning, a teacher's or learner's institutions and experiences can contribute ideas, information, problems, and questions to theory development of language pedagogy and to the basic discipline (Stern, 1983:47). Thus, the communicative purpose of language compels us to create opportunities for genuine interaction in the classroom. Interactive classes (Brown, 2007:54) will be explained as follows:

doing a significant amount of pair work and group work;

receiving authentic language input in real world contexts;

producing language for genuine, meaningful communication;

performing classroom tasks that prepare them for actual language use "out there";

practicing oral communication through the give and take and spontaneity of actual conversations;

Writing to and for real audiences, not contrived ones.

From the explanation above, it can generally be understood that classrooms are from the beginning of language study. The classrooms should be interactive and conducive. Through interaction, students can increase the language store as they listen to or read authentic linguistic material, or even the out put of their fellow students in discussion, skits, joint problem solving or tasks. Basically, in interaction students can use all they possess of the language, all they have learned in real life exchanges.

The last, is cooperative learning. In cooperative learning focuses on learner centered. As students work together in pairs and groups, they share information and come to each other's aid. They are a "team" whose players must work together in order to achieve goals successfully (Brown, 2007:53). In cooperative classroom the students and teachers work together to pursue goals and objectives. In cooperative learning is directive to students about how to work together in groups (Brown, 2007:53). In cooperative learning, a group learning activity is depend on the socially structured exchange of information between learners. The advantage of cooperative learning (as apposed to individual learning) such as promoting intrinsic motivation, increasing self esteem, creating caring and altruistic relationships, and lowering anxiety and prejudice. Some of the advantages of cooperative learning are accounting for varied cultural expectations, individual learning styles and personality differences and an overreliance on the first language. (Crandall in Brown, 2007:53).

Conclusion

Based on the explanation about the importance of English learning for communication in the Globalization Era, it can generally be concluded that learning English for communication will be better, if in teaching and learning English, teacher uses the approach of community language teaching and focuses on communicative purposes. In teaching and learning English that emphasizes on communicative competence, teacher will be better if he / she uses the strategy of questioning, information gap, interactive learning and cooperative learning. The strategies give opportunities for the students to produce the language comfortably without having to risk through initiating language, through information

gap, the students can give information and talk with each others, through interactive and cooperative learning, students can work together and relate something to each other.

If the strategies can be carried out by the teachers in the classroom, the students not only can increase their language, but also they have learned in real life exchanges. They also be able to promote intrinsic motivation, increasing self esteem, creating caring and altruistic relationships and lowering anxiety and prejudice.

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