

THE PROBLEMS OF TEACHING SPEAKING WITH RESPECT TO THE TEACHING METHODOLOGY: TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract

The study deals with the problems of teaching and learning speaking, in particular those which are most relevant in the context of developing oral skills at the advanced level of foreign language proficiency. The complex nature of spoken language must be taken into account and reflected at each stage of the learning process. Thus, the study examines the difficulties connected with choosing the appropriate learning and teaching approach and discusses the relations of the learning approach into how it affects the teaching of speaking in the classroom. It also suggests some speaking activities which seem most suitable for advanced language learners in the light of the above learning approach proposed.

Keywords: Task-based language teaching, teaching methodology, teaching speaking

Abstrak

Tulisan ini mengkaji permasalahan yang terjadi dalam pembelajaran *speaking*, yang merupakan keterampilan yang paling relevan dikembangkan dalam menguasai bahasa asing. Kompleksitas bahasa lisan patut dipertimbangkan dalam setiap tahap pembelajaran bahasa. Peneliti mengkaji kesulitan yang terjadi dalam pemilihan pendekatan yang sesuai dan bagaimana hal tersebut mempengaruhi kegiatan belajar mengajar di dalam kelas. Hasil kajian ini juga merekomendasikan beberapa aktivitas yang sesuai dengan pembelajar bahasa asing berdasarkan pendekatan tersebut

Kata kunci: pengajaran bahasa berbasis tugas, metodologi pengajaran, pengajaran *speaking*

Introduction

In learning English there are some skills that must be mastered by the learners. Brown (2001:232), classified the skills at English namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Furthermore, he divided listening and reading as receptive skills otherwise speaking and writing as productive skills. Speaking as a productive skill is an important aspect in language learning. By speaking, we can

convey information and ideas, express opinion and feeling, share experiences, and maintain social relationship by communicating with others.

The theory of teaching speaking is sometimes neglected. The teaching approach used is still ignored, as Richard (2008:19) states that Oral skills have hardly been neglected in EFL/ESL courses (witness the huge number of conversation and other speaking course books in the market), though how best to approach the teaching of oral skills has long been the focus of methodological debate. In fact, many students learning speaking for quite long time, but they still cannot be able practice speaking in the process of speaking improvement. This condition gives more intention about how teaching speaking methodology will affect the teaching and learning speaking in the class.

Speaking learning materials also play important role to succeed students in learning speaking. Materials created in the class must concern the students' need to learn. With highly respects to the students' need, the students have to be able to use the materials in practicing whether using the real-world tasks or pedagogical task. Real-world tasks or target tasks are formulated to involve the students in to how the real situations bring in to the classroom. In addition, material used must be able to invite the students to speak through the pedagogical task to achieve the target task. Reviewing this situation, the teachers need to choose the appropriate teaching methodology to perform students to speak.

Material development should not become the obstacle to teach the students as there are a lot of ways used to design it. Developing students learning materials becomes the procedure of preparing teachers teaching in the classroom. One of the learning approaches proposed to help teachers design materials is Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). It suits the current issues of teaching and learning methodology of the day. The teachers are focusing on procedure or the series of pedagogical tasks to perform students to speak. Based on the research done by the writer using TBLT, it shows that the use of TBLT is effective in teaching speaking. From the three of the learning approaches applied, TBLT is the most effective one. Referring to the problems of teaching speaking, the writer means to propose TBLT as the solution to solve the problems.

Teaching Speaking

Speaking is one of the four skills in English. The three other skills are understanding speech (listening), reading and writing. Speaking and listening are said to relate to language expressed through the aural medium and reading and writing are related to language expressed through the visual medium. Another way of representing these skills is by reference not to the medium but to the activity of the language user. Thus, speaking and writing are productive skills whereas listening and reading are receptive skills (Widdowson, 1978: 57).

Clark and Clark (1977: 223), states that speaking is fundamental and instrumental act. Speakers talk in order to have some effects on their listeners. They assert things to change their state of knowledge. They ask them questions to get information. They request things to get them to do something for them. They also said that the nature of the speech act should play a central role in the process of speech production. Speakers begin with the intention of affecting their listeners in a particular way, and they select and utter a sentence they believe will bring about just this effect.

The goal of teaching speaking skills is communicative efficiency. Learners should be able to make themselves understood, using their current proficiency to the fullest. They should try to avoid confusion in the message due to faulty pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary, and to observe the social and cultural rules that apply in each communication situation. Speaking is so much a part of daily life that we take for granted. The average person tens of thousand words a day, although some people like politicians may produce even more than that.

In term of teaching speaking, the teachers of English have to understand that speaking a language is difficult for foreign language learner because effective oral communication requires the ability to use the language appropriately in social interaction. Diversity in interaction involves not only verbal communication but also paralinguistic elements of speech such us pitch, stress and intonation. In addition, nonlinguistic elements such us gestures and body language, facial expression, may accompany speech or convey message directly without any accompanying speech (Richard and Renandya, 2002:204).

Although there are many approaches in teaching speaking, the learning process still faces many failures. There are many problems which influence the failure that are Clustering, Redundancy, Reduced forms, Performance variables, Colloquial language, Rate of delivery, Stress, rhythm and Intonation, and then Interaction (Brown, 2001: 270-271).

All of the obstacles have to be observed in order to reach the success of teaching speaking. The observation result will help teachers in deciding the suitable method in teaching speaking. The result also can be a source in developing approaches or methods in EFL. Teaching speaking needs to know about obstacles that may be occur in the learning process. Some problems come from the internal of students and others come from outside students.

Internal Problem

There are several discussions about problems that come from body of the students themselves, include the way they produce the language. The problems are commonly become obstacles in teaching speaking. The problems are native language, age, exposure, innate phonetic ability, identity and language ego, motivation and concern for good speaking (Brown, 2001:284).

Native Language

The native language is the most influential factor affecting a learner's speaking.

Brown, (2001:284) states, "If you are familiar with the sound system of learner's native language, you will be better able to diagnose student difficulties. Many L1-L2 carryovers can be overcome through a focused awareness and effort on the learner's part."

By the statement, it concludes that mother language of students will be a problem in teaching speaking if the teacher cannot understand the fact and decided a way to solve the condition moreover if the linguistic aspect of the native language students have is really different with target language. In the condition, linguistically, the difference of L1 and L2 is the fundamental factor that determines success of a speaking class.

Age

Generally speaking, children under the age of puberty stand an excellent chance of "sounding like a native" if they have continued exposure in authentic contexts. Beyond the age of puberty, while adults will almost surely maintain a

“foreign accent”, there is no particular advantage attributed to age. A fifty-year-old can be as successful as an eighteen-year-old if all other factors are equal.

Learners are often described as children, young learners, adolescents, young adults or adults, (Harmer, 2007:14). The term children are generally used for learners between the ages of about 2 to about 14. Students are generally described as young learners between the ages of 5 to 9 and very young learner are usually between 2 and 5. Adult are generally thought to be between 16 and 20.

Actually children are often innovative in language forms but still have a great many inhibitions. They are extremely sensitive, especially to peers. Moreover, their egoism is still being shaped, and therefore the slights of communication can be negatively interpreted. Children are also focused on what this new language can actually be used for here and now. They are less to willing to put up with language that doesn't hold immediate that is neither authentic nor meaningful.

Brown, (2001:90) also says that adults usually have acquired a self-confidence not found in children. Unfortunately, adults have weakness that often brings a modicum of general self-confidence (global self-esteem) into classroom.

By the explanation above it can be concluded that teaching language is really related with the age of students that affect the characteristic of the students its self. In every age there is some uniqueness which can support the teaching processes on other hand the uniqueness can be hard obstacle in the teaching. It can be anticipated by make an observation about the age of students and find the formula in teaching each age.

Exposure

It is difficult to define exposure. One can actually live in a foreign country for some time but not take advantage of being “with the people.” Research seems to support the notion that the quality and intensity of exposure are more important than mere length of time. If class time spent focusing on speaking demands the full attention and interest of the students, then they stand a good chance of reaching their goals.

The statement shows that in terms of exposure the discussion will be very fuzzy. Some students may be more interest by quality and intensity of exposure the teacher gives in speaking class. Some of the students may have contradictive

condition; they prefer to get long time of exposure in reaching the speaking class goal. The relativity is an obstacle in teaching speaking so the teacher should know the condition of his or her students in order to be able to give suitable exposure.

Innate Phonetic ability

Often referred to as having an “ear” for language, some people manifests a phonetic coding ability that others do not. In many cases, if a person has had exposure to a foreign language as a child, this “knack” is present whether the early language is remembered or not. Others are simply more attuned to phonetic discriminations. Some people would have you believe that you either have such a knack, or you do not. Therefore, if speaking seems to be naturally difficult for some students, they should not despair; with some effort and concentration, they can improve their competence.

In other words, sometime speaking skill often placed as a talent from an individual. The perspective is not wrong because many researches, especially in education have proven that human has specific talent or inelegance. Here, speaking skill mastery includes verbal intelligence. So, the teacher should understand the fact by realizing that students have their own chance to be success in speaking class. It will a big problem if the teacher does not see his students in diverse talent.

Identity and Language Ego

Yet another influence is one’s attitude toward speakers of the target language and the extent to which the language ego identifies with those speakers. Learners need to be reminded of the importance of positive attitudes toward the people who speak the language, but more important, students need to become aware of - and not afraid of - the second identity that may be emerging within them.

The perspective shows that students’ attitude is very important in speaking class. Positive attitude will help the students to master speaking skill better. On the contrary, by bad attitude, the students will be more difficult to reach the speaking class goal. Good attitude is a power that helps the students to accept speaking material. It will be a huge trouble if the teacher does not know the importance of Identity and language ego of his students.

Motivation and Concern for Good Speaking

Some learners are not particularly concerned about their speaking, while others are. The extent to which learners' intrinsic motivation propels them toward improvement will be perhaps the strongest influence of all six of the factors in this list. Brown, (2001:285) says that that motivation and concern are high, and then the necessary effort will be expended in pursuit of goals. It means that motivation is very important in teaching speaking.

External Problem

The effectiveness of teaching speaking does not only come from internal aspects of the students but also influenced by external factors. The teacher should know the complete understanding of problem in teaching speaking. The factor is an institutional context that puts English as second or foreign language in a nation. The context in which the language is learnt is still considerable relevance to the kind of English that a nation will want and need to study, and the skills they will need to acquire.

Language teaching in what might broadly categorize as an EFL context is clearly a greater challenge for students and teachers. Often, intrinsic motivation is a big issue, since students may have difficulty in seeing the relevance of learning English, (Brown, 2001:118). Their immediate use of language may seem far from removed from their own circumstances, and classroom hours may be the only part of the day when they are exposed to English. Besides, the facilities of learning activities the teacher competences may influence the success of teaching speaking.

In addition, the learning methodology used by the teacher is also determine the success of teaching speaking, as Richard (2006:1) states that the demand for an appropriate teaching methodology is therefore as strong as the need of people learn a language.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

Notions of TBLT

Willis and Willis (2007: 1) state that Task-Based Language Teaching (Task-Based Teaching) is an approach of teaching applying tasks in a lesson. It aims at engaging learners in real language use in the classroom. This is done by designing

task, discussion, problems, games, and so on, which require learners to use language for themselves. This method of applying task in a lesson will be effective in serving the learners to learn a language. It gives insights into ways that tasks can be designed, adapted and implemented in a range of teaching contexts and will thus appeal to teachers with little or no previous experience of using tasks themselves. It also illustrates ways in which tasks and task-based learning can be investigated in order to make the whole experience richer and more rewarding. (Willis in Edwards and Willis, 2005: 1).

Estaire and Zanon (1998: 12) state that in a Task-Based Learning, the basic point of organization is 'task'. Class activity is arranged in a sequence of task, and it is task that generates the language to be used. Therefore, in Task-Based Learning, the teacher asks students to figure out a series of task, for which they will need to learn the specific items of language. The main focus is on the task arranged to highlight the instrumental value of language.

The detentions above help the writer propose the view of Task-Based Language Teaching that is seen as the process of teaching and learning activities in the classroom by organizing the sequence of tasks to be carried out by the learners. The focus of this approach is how the teacher understands what the mean of task. Task means as the instrumental value of language which is used by the teacher in organizing the classroom activities.

Defining Task

According to Van den Branden (2006: 4), task is an activity done by person in order to attain an objective, and which necessitates the use of language. This definition describes the activities focus on the use of language in order to understand language input and to produce language output by interacting with others in real live situations through the use of language. The tasks are arranged through the learning goals of curriculum/syllabus in order to describe the kind of language used in the tasks. In addition, in order to attain the necessities, the use of language, the task must contain the relevant qualifying features of a pedagogical task, i.e. activity, involvement, purpose and language use (Thomas and Reiders, 2010: 18).

Another term of task in language teaching is the activity where the target language is used by the learner for the communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome (Willis, 1996: 23). This definition describes that a good task must be provided by goal-oriented. In other words, the emphasis is on understanding and conveying meaning in order to complete the task successfully.

The use of the word 'task' is sometimes extended to include communicative tasks or exercises with a focus on language form, in which learners manipulate language or formulate generalizations about form. It involves the specification not of a sequence of language items, but of a sequence of communicative tasks to be carried out in the target language. Central to the notion of a communicative task is the exchange of meanings (Willis and Willis in Carter and Nunan, 2001: 173). This means that the tasks arranged in the lesson focus on the communicative tasks based on the real-world task in order to adapt learner in using the target language.

Nunan (2004: 1) categorize the tasks into real-world task or target task and pedagogical task. He defines that target task refers to uses of language in the world beyond the classroom. The term pedagogical task is a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right with a beginning, a middle and an end.

Task Components

The definition of a language learning task requires specification of four components that are the goals, the input (linguistic or otherwise), the activities/procedures derived from this input, and finally supported by the roles (implied for teacher and learners) and setting. Nunan (2004: 40-70) defines these components as follows.

a) Goals

'Goals' are the vague, general intentions behind any learning task. They provide a link between the task and the broader curriculum. The answer that a teacher might give to a question from a visitor to his or her class about why learners are

undertaking a particular task will often take the form of a goal statement, for example:

- 1) I want to develop their confidence in speaking.'
- 2) I want to develop their personal writing skills.'
- 3) I want to encourage them to negotiate information between each other to develop their interactional skills.'
- 4) I want to develop their study skills.

Goals may relate to a range of general outcomes (communicative, affective or cognitive) or may directly describe teacher or learner behavior. Another point worth noting is that goals may not always be explicitly stated, although they can usually be inferred from the task itself.

b) Input

'Input' refers to the spoken, written and visual data that learners work with in the course of completing a task. Data can be provided by a teacher, a textbook or some other source, for example, article from magazine or newspaper, news, short stories and so on. Alternatively, it can be generated by the learners themselves.

c) Activities/Procedures

'Procedures' specifies what learners will actually do with the input that forms the point of departure for the learning task. the task types in Task-Based Language Teaching are discussed below:

- 1) Information-gap activity, which involves a transfer of given information from one person to another or from one form to another, or from one place to another generally calling for the decoding or encoding of information from or into language. One example is pair work in which each member of the pair has a part of the total information (for example an incomplete picture) and attempts to convey it verbally to the other. Another example is completing a tabular representation with information available in a given piece of text. The activity often involves selection of relevant information as well, and learners may have to meet criteria of completeness and correctness in making the transfer.
- 2) Reasoning-gap activity, which involves deriving some new information from given information through processes of inference, deduction, practical reasoning, or a perception of relationships or patterns. One example is working

out a teacher's timetable on the basis of given class timetables. Another is deciding what course of action is best (for example cheapest or quickest) for a given purpose and within given constraints. The activity necessarily involves comprehending and conveying information, as an information-gap activity, but the information to be conveyed is not identical with that initially comprehended. There is a piece of reasoning which connects the two.

- 3) Opinion-gap activity, which involves identifying and articulating a personal preference, feeling, or attitude in response to a given situation. One example is story completion; another is taking part in the discussion of a social issue. The activity may involve using factual information and formulating arguments to justify one's opinion, but there is no objective procedure for demonstrating outcomes as right or wrong, and no reason to expect the same outcome from different individuals or on different occasions.

d) Teacher and learner roles

'Role' refers to the part that learners and teachers are expected to play in carrying out learning tasks as well as the social and interpersonal relationships between the participants. Teacher roles and learner roles are two sides of a coin. Giving the learners a more active role in the classroom requires the teacher to adapt a different role. The teacher facilitates the students through the series of tasks and the students have proactive role in responding the tasks.

e) Setting

'Settings' refers to the classroom arrangements specified or implied in the task. It also requires consideration of whether the task is to be carried out wholly or partly outside the classroom.

Teacher's Role in TBLT

There are some teacher's role in TBLT stated by Nunan (2004: 66):

- 1) Help learners to discover ways of learning that work best for them, for example how they best learn vocabulary items.
- 2) Develop ways for learners to organize about language what they have learned, through making notes and charts, grouping items and displaying them for easy reference.

- 3) Encourage learners to experiment with different ways of creating and using language.
- 4) Facilitate active learning by getting opportunities students to interact with fellow learners and with the teacher.
- 5) Help learners find quick ways of recalling what they have learned.

Steps of Designing Tasks

Nunan (2004: 31-33) proposes a six-step procedure in task-based instruction:

Step 1: Schema building

The first step is to develop a number of schema-building exercises that will serve to introduce the topic, set the context for the task, and introduce some of the key vocabulary and expressions that the students will need in order to complete the task.

Step 2: Controlled practice

The next step is to provide students with controlled practice in using the target language vocabulary, structures and functions. One way of doing this would be to present learners with a brief conversation between two people discussing accommodation options relating to one of the advertisements that they studied in step 1. They could be asked to listen to and read the conversation, and then practice it in pairs. In this way, early in the instructional cycle, they would get to see, hear and practice the target language for the unit of work.

Step 3: Authentic listening practice

The next step involves learners in intensive listening practice. The listening texts could involve a number of native speakers inquiring about accommodation options, and the task for the learner would be to match the conversations with the advertisements from step 1. This step would expose them to authentic or simulated conversation, which could incorporate but extend the language from the model conversation in step 2.

Step 4: Focus on linguistic elements

The students now get to take part in a sequence of exercises in which the focus is on one or more linguistic elements. They might listen again to the

conversations from step 3 and note the intonation contours for different question types.

Step 5: Provide freer practice

So far, students have been involved in what have been called ‘reproductive’ language work; in other words, they have been working within the constraints of language models provided by the teacher and the materials. At this point, it is time for the students to engage in freer practice, where they move beyond simple manipulation.

Step 6: Introduce the pedagogical task

The final step in the instruction sequence is the introduction of the pedagogical task itself (for example newspaper advertisement), in this case is a small group task in which the participants have to study a set of newspaper advertisements and decide on the most suitable place to rent.

The Role of TBLT in Teaching Speaking

The use of task development procedures of TBLT in teaching speaking can be described as follows.

- a) Schema building task; it is to develop a number of schema-building exercises that will serve to introduce the topic, set the context for the task, and introduce some of the key vocabulary and expressions that the students will need in order to complete the task. Here, the students were lead to the topic and prepare vocabularies to be used in completing the task.
- b) Control practice; it is to provide students with controlled practice in using the target language vocabulary, structures and functions through a brief conversation or dialogue and act it out with their partner.
- c) Authentic listening practice; involving learners in intensive listening practice. The listening practice help learners acknowledge the topic presented.
- d) Focus on linguistic elements; it is to develop the students’ accuracy in linguistic elements.
- e) Provide freer practice; it is intended to involve students in productive skill.
- f) Introduce the pedagogical task. Pedagogical task help students speaking using authentic materials and using it based on the target situation.

Conclusion

Problem in teaching speaking is not only related with the students' factor but also outside context. In the internal aspects, the problems occurred are related with native language, age, exposure, innate phonetic ability, identity and language ego, and motivation and concern for good speaking. The points of those problems are related with condition of the students.

In the external problems, teaching speaking has challenge to make suitable classroom hours, because usually in the junior or senior high school English lesson only four hour a week, so they do limited time and they do not maximize in their ability in English, they do not have the maximal time to practice speaking. Besides, the learning materials are sometimes irrelevant to the learner needs and learning needs, and then also the appropriate language teaching approach used in teaching speaking.

Based on the problems above, it is suggested to the teacher to choose the suitable learning model to carry out the problems that they found in their teaching. In this paper, the writer offers Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) as an appropriate approach in teaching speaking.

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