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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING IN TEACHING SPEAKING AT MAN LUBUK ALUNG

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to investigate the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in teaching speaking at MAN Lubuk Alung. The subject of the study was an English teacher of Islamic Senior High School Lubuk Alung who has teaching experience for 25 years and followed certification program. The activities done by the teacher during teaching speaking was observed and matched with CLT principles. The result of the research revealed that the process of teaching speaking at MAN Lubuk Alung did not appropriate with CLT principles. What was done by the English teacher was close to traditional teaching traditional teaching method characteristics.

Keywords: Communicative language teaching; teaching speaking; implementation.

Introduction

The ancient assumption in language teaching –the focus on the grammatical competence as the goal of language teaching which aims to produce the students who are able to make the correct sentences and utterances grammatically has been replaced by CLT (Communicative Language Teaching). At a glimpse, that ancient assumption which is employed in traditional teaching methods is teacher-centered. On the contrary, CLT is student-centered. The students are emphasized to involve in real and meaningful communication activities in order to develop the communicative competence. For all this, the teacher is as the facilitator and organizer in learning.

Dealing with the notion above, CLT is best to be implemented in English language teaching so that the students really have communicative competence for language. They will not use English limitedly because of a shallow reason, i.e. learning English as the compulsory subject so that they just use and practice English in the classroom. The expectation is more than that; they can communicate in English everywhere and every time for every purpose communicatively. Related to this, some previous mentioned the principles of CLT are also have been implemented in our high school's curriculum. Various purposeful genres and language functions such as stating, requesting, responding, greeting, and many more are the contents of English syllabus. In other words, they are designed to make the students have the ability to communicate well in English.

Methods in teaching English consist of two, i.e. traditional teaching methods and progressive teaching method (McCoy, 2006). The division is derived from the perspective of instructivists and constructivists about learning and language. Instructivists believe firmly in the value and efficacy of direct and explicit teaching, particularly for achieving certain goals in education. In learning language, grammatical competence is believed as the basis of language proficiency. Teaching grammar explicitly is the best way to make the students having language proficiency. This idea is employed into traditional teaching methods practice that centers on the teacher. The type of classroom activities are controlled activity such as memorization of dialogs, question and answer practice, substitution drills, and various forms of guided speaking and writing practices. Errors are avoided since it was assumed that error will be permanent (Richards, 2006).

On the other hand, constructivists believe that the very nature of human learning requires that each individual creates his or her own understanding of the world from firsthand experience, action, and reflection, not from having predigested information and skills presented by a teacher and textbook (Westwood, 2006). Similar with their point of view, language is seen as communication across individual (Brown, 2000). This belief is presented in progressive teaching methods that centers on students in which various activities in form of learning by doing or experiential learning are designed. In addition, a Russian psychologist and constructivist follower, Lev Vygotsky viewed that learning is greatly enhanced by collaborative social interaction and communication, in other words, discussion, feedback, and sharing of ideas are powerful influences on learning (Westwood, 2006). Pair work activities, role plays, group works activities and project work which are far from controlled activities are best suitable to be employed (Richards, 2006). All of those activities are enable the students to

conduct communicative activities. It is expected that through those activities the students can negotiate meaning and interact meaningfully in using language without getting much 'intervention' from the teachers. The main goal of these notions is to develop students' communicative competence in language. Hymes in Brown (2000) defines communicative competence as competence that enables one to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meaning interpersonally within specific contexts. The realization for all this is poured in CLT implementation.

The approach of CLT starts from a theory of language as communication. Hymes in Brown (2001) defined that knowing a language involves more than knowing a set of grammatical, lexical, and phonological rules in order to use language effectively learners need to develop communicative competence.

Richards & Rodgers (1994) state that some of characteristics of communicative view of language are (1) language is a system for expression of meaning, (2) the primary function of language is for interaction and communication, (3) the structure of language reflects its functional and communication uses, (4) the primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse.

Then, Brown (2001) proposes that communication is likely to occur in classroom when (1) a significant amount of pair work and group work is conducted, the students can share information, opinion, and also ideas with their friends, (2) authentic language input in real life context is provided. Students need to listen the language as native speakers use it in order to learn a language, (3) students are encouraged to produce language for genuine, meaningful communication to convey information, (4) classroom tasks are conducted to prepare students for actual; language use outside the classroom. The teacher prepares the students not only to be able to speak in the classroom but also outside the classroom.

In addition, Nunan (1991) describes five features of CLT as (1) an emphasis on learning to communicate through in the target language. The students collaborate to develop a work plan, thus they will use language in such ways and learn each other, (2) the introduction of authentic texts into the learning situations. In learning and teaching process, the teacher uses the text that relate to the students real life and experience, (3) the provision of opportunities for learner to focus, not only on language but also on the learning process itself, (4) an enhancement of the learner's own experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning, (5) an

attempt to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom. The teacher prepares their students to be able to speak in the classroom and outside the classroom.

Richards (2006) describes kind of activity in CLT as follow:

- 1) Task-completion activities: puzzle, games, map-reading and other kinds of classroom tasks in which the focus was on using one's language resources to complete a task.
- 2) Information gathering activities: students conducted survey, interview, and searches in which students were required to use their linguistic resources to collect information.
- 3) Opinion-sharing activities: activities where students compare values, opinions, beliefs, such as a ranking task in which students list six qualities in order of importance which they might consider in choosing a date or spouse.
- 4) Information-transfer activities: this requires learners to take information that is presented in one form, and represent it in a different form. For example they may read instructions on how to get from A to B, and then draw a map showing the sequence, or they may read information about a subject and then represent it as a graph.
- 5) Reasoning gap-activities: these involve deriving some information from given information through the process of inference, practical reasoning, etc. For example, working out a teacher's timetable on the basis of given class timetables.
- 6) Role-plays: activities in which students are assigned roles improvised a scene or exchange based on given information or clues.

As far as the previous explanation about CLT, the researcher infers some principles of CLT as below:

a. Communicative Competence

Communicative language teaching replaces the goal of language teaching from building grammatical competence to communicative competence. Grammatical competence refers to knowledge of building blocks of sentences (e.g. parts of speech, tenses, phrases, clauses, sentences patterns) and how sentences are formed. What needed by one in communication is not grammatical competence. The most important thing is when she or he is involved in communication, she or he are communicating meaningfully. What is uttered can be understood.

According to Nunan (1987) communicative competence constitutes grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Grammatical competence is the ability to recognize morphological, syntactic, and phonological features of language. Sociolinguistic competence is the ability to understand the appropriate

meaning in social and cultural context. Discourse competence is the ability to interpret communication of a series of sentences or utterances. Finally, strategic competence is the ability to use the strategies to compensate an imperfect communication such as doing repetition, avoidance, guessing, or shifts in register and style, in sustaining communication.

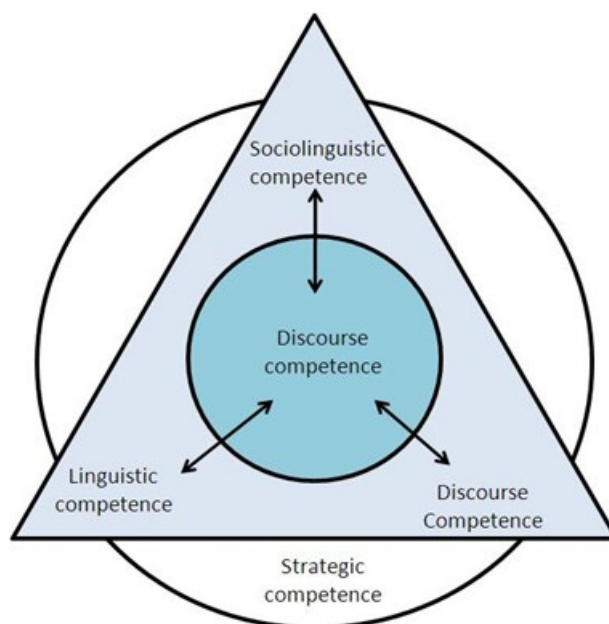


Figure 1. Four dimensions of communicative competence.

Furthermore, the communicative competence, as explained above, is dynamic, interpersonal, context specific, and relative. It depends on the negotiation meaning between the communicators. It applies to spoken, written, and other symbolic systems of languages. Therefore, the students' communicative competence must be developed.

When the students' performance of English is natural, their communicative competence for that performance is already developed. Developing their communicative competence of English is faster and better if they are exposed in maximum natural communication. Consequently, the teacher must speak and teach English communicatively and naturally.

Communicative competence includes the following aspects of language knowledge (Richards, 2006):

- 1) Knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions.
- 2) Knowing to vary our use of language according to the setting and participants (e.g. knowing when to use formal and informal speech or when to use language appropriately for written as opposed to spoken communication)
- 3) Knowing how to produce and understand different types text (e.g. narratives, reports, interviews, conversations)

- 4) Knowing how to maintain communication despite having limitations in one's language knowledge (e.g. through using different kinds of communications strategies)

b. Authentic and Meaningful Communication

Richards (2006) states that second language learning is facilitated when learners are engaged in interaction and meaningful communication. The students ultimately have to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts (Brown, 2000). It will help them to achieve the goal of language teaching itself, i.e. to have the communicative competence. Dealing with it, many classroom activities like task-completion activities, information gathering activities, opinion-sharing activities, information transfer activities, reasoning gap activities, role play, and others game are best to be employed in the classroom. All of them promote the students to be involved in communication activities.

Furthermore, the use of authentic materials also will support the students to communicate meaningfully for class activity. Authentic materials refer to the materials that close to the real life. Clarke and Silberstein in Richards (2006) argue that:

“Classroom activities should parallel the ‘real world’ as closely as possible. Since language is a tool of communication, methods and materials should concentrate on the message and not the medium. The purposes of reading should be the same in class as they are in real life.”

c. Student-centered

It has been discussed before that in communicative approach; the teacher plays the role as the facilitator. In this role, one of the teacher's major responsibilities is to establish situations likely to promote communication (Freeman, 2000). Contrastively, the students are given the greater chance to communicate and to use the target language during learning process through various designed activities by the teacher since the students are expected to have the ability to use the language in meaningfully and communicatively after passing the process. Hurley (2000) proposes the teacher must pay attention to these several things below in order to employ student-centered atmosphere in the classroom:

- 1) Students should be actively involved in the learning process and intrinsically motivated
- 2) Topic, issues, or subject matter should be interesting, relevant, and intrinsically motivating
- 3) Learning experiences should take place in real-life situations where the relevant knowledge and skills will really be needed and used

d. Integration of Language Skills

CLT emphasizes on teaching integrated skills since in real life the skills often occur together (Richards, 2006). The four skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) can be divided into two, they are written and oral. Since language is viewed as communication tool and to use the language communicatively whether in written or oral is the expectation for students, the classroom activities are designed to employ integrations skills.

e. Accuracy as well as fluency

Fluency practice can be contrasted with accuracy practice, which focuses on creating correct examples of language use. Differences between activities that focus on fluency and those that focus on accuracy can be summarized as follows:

Table 1. The comparison between fluency and accuracy activities.

NO	Activities Focusing on Fluency	Activities Focusing on Accuracy
1	Reflect natural use of language	Reflect classroom use of language
2	Focus on achieving communication	Focus on the formation of correct examples of language
3	Require meaningful use of language	Practice language out of context
4	Require the use of communication strategies	Practice small samples of language
5	Produce language that may not be predictable	Do not require meaningful communication
6	Seek to link language use to context	Choice of language is controlled

Teachers are recommended to use a balance of fluency activities and accuracy and to use accuracy activities to support fluency activities (Yang, 2014). Accuracy work could either come before or after fluency work. For example, based on students' performance on a fluency task, the teacher could assign accuracy work to deal grammatical or pronunciation problems the teacher observed while students were carrying out the task. The reason for this is the ultimate goal of learning is to be able to use the new language both accurately and fluently.

f. Meaningful Interaction in the Language

Meaningful interaction in language refers to communicative practice where practice in using language within a real communicative context is the focus, where real information is exchanged, and where the language used is not totally predictable. Specifically, the students have to be involved in opportunity of target language use (Astuti & Lammers, 2017).

The success of CLT had been proved by Zakaria and Royani. A research entitled *The Effect of CLT Method on Students' Speaking Skill at The Second of MTsN Kolaka* (2017) revealed that CLT had improved the students' speaking performance since it could catch the

students' attention, create a student-centered activity and motivate them to be more active. The similar research also was done by Saputra & Wargianto (2015). They proved that CLT had positive meaningful effect on improving students' speaking skill. Regarding these facts, the writer was interested to conduct a research in the same context, but it was different methodologically under the title The Implementation of Communicative Language Teaching in Teaching Speaking at MAN Lubuk Alung that aimed to investigate the implementation CLT itself.

Methods

The subject of the research was an English teacher who has spent her time for about 25 years in teaching. Besides having the longest time in educational world and the richest experience in teaching English among the other English teachers, she also has followed certification program. Therefore, it is not doubted that she knows well how to teach English. In other words, she also knows that CLT is best approach in teaching English today. To get the data dealing with the research purpose, observation in a few days was done by matching practice of teaching English, focused on teaching speaking with six principles of CLT as described before, namely communicative competence, authentic and meaningful communication, student-centered, integration language skills, accuracy as well as fluency, and meaningful interaction in the language. Observation is a method of data collection in which the situation of interest is watched and the relevant facts, actions, and behaviors are recorded. In an observational study, the current status of a phenomenon is determined not by asking but by observing (Gay, 2000).

Results and Discussion

The facts of teaching speaking as the goal of this research is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. The facts of teaching speaking based on the principles of clt at MAN Lubuk Alung.

No	Principle	Observation Result (Facts)
1.	Communicative competence	a. Grammar was taught explicitly through drill (grammatical competence oriented) b. The students memorized the dialogue in their printed worksheet for speaking activity
2.	Authentic and meaningful communication	The students were not let to create the language based on their experience and real life
3.	Students-centered	The students were controlled to create the language
4.	Integration language Skill	Listening, speaking, reading, and writing were combined

5.	Accuracy as well as fluency	a. Class activity was focused on accuracy since grammar was taught explicitly b. The students memorized the existed dialogue and at the end of class activity they practiced it.
6.	Meaningful interaction in language	The controlled material was used for class activity so that there was no meaningful interaction in using language

Based on the table above, what was found conforms to the goal of traditional language learning that focused on the mastery of grammatical competence wherein the English teacher allocated learning hours especially to teach grammar explicitly. Grammatical competence refers to knowledge of building blocks of sentences (e.g. parts of speech, tenses, phrases, clauses, sentences pattern) (Richards, 2006). This grammatical competence is just a part of communicative competence that should be built as the goal of CLT. One can master the rules of sentence formation in a language and still not very successful at being able to use the language for meaningful communication. Hence, the other aspects of communicative competence –discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence– should be employed. The manifestation of this notion is teachers and materials writers should treat language classroom as a locus of meaningful, authentic exchanges among users of a language (Brown, 2000). Therefore, to build students communicative competence, the teachers should carry out the activities that make the students communicate the language meaningfully on communication because grammatical system of language is not the real use of language on communication and speaking (Kapurani, 2016). In addition, grammar should not be taught explicitly; the teachers should let the students induce or discover grammar rules by themselves. All of this is derived from one of communicative views of language as the basic theory of CLT cited from Richards & Rodgers (1994), i.e. the primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse.

Moreover, what was done by the English teacher blocks the students' chance to develop their language competence since they just memorized the existed dialogue in students' printed work sheets. Dealing with this, Rouf & Sultana (2015) state that to create the communicative activity, the teacher should not dictate what specific language forms the student use since it can result poor learning outcomes. Some activities that can empower students' communicative competence like discussion, pair or small group, role play, simulation, jigsaw, and many more (Ahmad & Rao, 2013).

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the process of teaching speaking at MAN Lubuk Alung did not match with CLT approach yet. The English teacher knows what CLT is, but she did not apply CLT principles in her class appropriately. Overall, the process of teaching speaking was close to the traditional teaching method characteristics, namely Grammar Translation Method. The students study grammar deductively. Grammar drill and dialogue memorization were the activities in speaking. There was little students' initiation.

It is suggested that the English teacher should implement CLT approach in teaching speaking well. It is the teacher's obligation to improve students' skill in English, especially for speaking skill as the notion in this research. Not to implement the principles of CLT in teaching English means ignoring the goal of language teaching. Thus, CLT actually is the solution for the current problem faced by the teacher. Last but not least, as suggested by Manulallaili (2015), one of the ways to accommodate the implementation of CLT in the classroom is by using facilities like visual aids, video, and tape recording. These facilities are necessary to help teaching language communicatively.

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