COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT) FOR TEACHING SPEAKING

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ABSTRACT

This research was done to investigate whether the lesson plans designed by the teacher matched the principles and methods of the CLT approach, how the teacher implemented the CLT approach for teaching speaking skills and what learning performances resulted from using CLT. The participants were senior high school students from classes X IPA, X MAK, XI IPA, XI MAK, and XII MAK plus the English teacher from Insan Qurani boarding school. The instruments used were observation sheets and documentation consisting of the teacher’s lesson plan and the students’ test results. The results from this study showed that there were several main procedures of the techniques suggested by the experts which were not completely written into the lesson plan. There were also several activities written into the lesson plans that were not performed well in the classroom. Furthermore, from the speaking performances produced by the students many of them did not reach the minimum passing criteria (KKM) of 70, although they had been treated with the CLT approach with role play, jigsaw, group discussions, picture series, and storytelling technique in their speaking classes. This leads to the conclusion that the students’ failure was because the procedures suggested by the experts were not entirely and effectively implemented by the teacher in her teaching.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching, Speaking Skills, Teaching Techniques.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the reasons students learn English is to be able to use it to communicate with their peers or other speakers of English. McKay (2006, p. 125) has mentioned that the foundations of language learning are in the form of oral language consisting of listening and speaking. Thus, a language learner will not be able to convey or interpret messages spoken or written with other people without mastering some basic communicative aspects such as linguistic aspects including phonology, grammar, and vocabulary, some collocations plus pragmatic aspects which are functions, variations, interactional skills, and some cultural framework. In other words, a successful speaker is one who is able to convey, interpret, and negotiate meaning.

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 160), there are some types of problems that learners face in learning ESL speaking skills. One of the problems is that students speak slowly and it takes too long to compose utterances. They are also unable to participate actively in conversations due to lack of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation knowledge. In order to solve these speaking problems, Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 158) have suggested that the use of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach may help improve the ability of students in speaking. Furthermore, CLT gives the students opportunities to participate actively in activities as it’s often accompanied by scenes or simulated scenarios, so that it is more close to life. In such activities, the students become the main characters, thus they can become naturally interested in the English language and learn English for fun. The class becomes more student-centered as the students accomplish their tasks with other students, while the teacher plays more of an observer role. Moreover, Canale and Swain (1980, p. 56) have said that CLT can improve communicative competence which includes grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence.

A preliminary study done at MAS Insan Qurani Boarding School, Aceh Besar on April 25-26, 2015 revealed that the teacher has often used the CLT approach in teaching speaking skills. Although some techniques such as role play, storytelling, describing pictures, conducting an interview and group discussions have been tried at the school, in reality, based on the students’ test results, their ability in speaking is still very low with an average score of 45 out of 100. It is also important to note that in the Insan Qurani school, students are
required to use both English and Arabic in their daily communications. This is indeed contrary to the expectations of Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 158) who have said that the use of the CLT approach in teaching-learning speaking skills can improve students’ speaking ability in cognitive as well as behavioral aspects. The contradiction between the expectations and the reality constituted a significant gap that needed to be examined and evaluated.

Research Questions
1. Does the lesson plan designed by the teacher coincide with the principles and methods of the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT)?
2. How does the teacher implement the CLT approach (CLT) in teaching speaking?
3. What is the performance that has resulted from the implementation of the teacher’s model of CLT?

Research Objectives
1. If the lesson plans designed by the teacher matched with the principles and methods of the CLT approach.
2. How the teacher implemented the CLT approach for teaching speaking.
3. What improvements in speaking performance are resulted from the implementation of the teacher’s model of CLT.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Communicative Language Teaching
Richards (2006, p. 2) has explained that the goal of CLT is achieving communicative competence as proposed by Dell Hymes (1972) in Pride and Holmes (1972), who has stated that a speaker needs to know how to speak in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community. According to Hymes (ibid, p. 281), a person who has already acquired communicative competence will acquire both knowledge and ability for language use with respect to whether something is maybe formal, easily done with the available means, appropriate in context, and well performed. Richards (2006, p. 3) further states that communicative competence includes competence in three areas of language learning, viz: grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competence. Grammatical competence refers to the ability to
produce sentences which includes correct parts of speech, tenses, phrases, clauses, and formed sentences. Then, socio-linguistic competence is the ability to understand the functional aspects of communication which includes role relationships, personal factors plus the social and cultural context. Lastly, strategic competence aims at being able to express oneself successfully in a conversation and solving any difficulties or challenges that may occur which may lead to misunderstandings.

Therefore, as language is acquired through communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 67-68), there are many positive impacts that are believed to be obtained by using CLT in teaching-learning speaking compared to other approaches. They further state that through this approach, a teacher helps to motivate her learners to work with the language through trial and error. They are expected to interact with each other, individually or in pairs or in group work.

**Techniques and Activities Used in the CLT Classroom**

Applying proper techniques in a language teaching-learning session is very important in order to get good outcomes: In order to improve the ability of students using the CLT approach, there are some techniques and activities that need to be applied especially for teaching speaking. According to Richards (2006, p. 14), one of the goals of CLT is to develop fluency and accuracy, so teachers using it should use a balance of activities to develop fluency and accuracy.

Richards (2006, p. 18) has also suggested some activities that can be applied in a CLT classroom. The activities include the following:

1. **Information gap activities.** This refers to activities where the students use, seek or find missing vocabulary, grammar, and/or communications to complete a task.

2. **Jigsaw activities.** In these activities, the class is divided into groups and each group or person has part of the information needed to complete an activity. When doing so, they must use their own words to communicate meaningfully and to take part in meaningful communications practice.

3. **Picture Series.** These are activities where a student or a group of students tell a story based on a sequential series of pictures; the pictures may need to be sorted into order first.

4. **Story telling, which is the art of sharing aloud mythology, legends, fables, folk or fairy tales, and original stories orally.**
5. Information-transfer activities are activities where the students are required to take information that is presented in one form, and present it in a different form.

6. Debates and group discussions are activities involving deriving new information from given information through the process of inference, practical reasoning, etc. In this activity, the students can give their opinions to others and compare their or others values, opinions, or beliefs (Richards, 2006, p. 18).

7. Role plays or mini-dramas are activities in which students are assigned roles and improvise a scene based on given information or clues.

Principles Underlying the Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT)

Jin (2008, p. 45) has proposed eight points as principles of the CLT Approach. Doughty and Long (2003, p. 89), have also set down the following list of eight principles which can serve as guidelines for implementing CLT practices.

Use Tasks as an Organizing Principle

It is believed that the best way to learn a language is through tasks, as it is said that practice makes perfect. Tasks refer to a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward. Examples of tasks include filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, making an airline reservation and borrowing or reading a library book.

Learning by Doing

According to Reese (1999, p. 1), learning by doing means learning from experience which results directly from one’s own actions. It is contrasted with learning from watching performances by others and listening to instructions or descriptions or lectures by others. These kinds of activity are not referred to as learning by doing because they do not result in direct experience like when the learner actually demonstrates something or describes something or performs some actions.

Input Needs to be Rich

Doughty and Long (2003, p. 61) have stated that rich input involves realistic samples of communication use surrounding native speakers and non-native speakers accomplishing targeted tasks. It is
essential in teaching a foreign language that the students become familiar with the language. They must get to hear the language either from their teacher, from multimedia resources such as DVDs, videos and/or audio tapes and/or TV or radio or internet online news and shows. Another way to create rich input in the language classroom is by using the target language as the means of instruction.

**Input Needs to be Meaningful, Comprehensible, and Elaborated**

A fundamental requirement for learning to occur is that the information learners process must be meaningful. This means that the information being presented must be clearly relevant to existing knowledge that they already possess. Furthermore, comprehensible means that the students are able to understand the essence of what is being said or presented to them (Lee & van Patten, 1995, p. 38). Other than that, elaborated input refers to new information which is unfamiliar should be paraphrased and simplified explicitly to make it easy to understand (Le, 2011).

**Promote Co-operative and Collaborative Learning**

In general, co-operative and collaborative learning has long been recognized as a strong facilitator of learning. In these activities, classrooms are organized as effectively as possible so that students can work together in small co-operative teams, such as groups or pairs, to complete activities. For example in using Role Play technique, students are encouraged to collaboratively do some actions in groups as assigned to each of the members of the groups (Wahyuni, Rosdiana & Fitriani, 2016).

**Focus on Form**

Focus on form is an approach to language education in which the learners are made aware of the grammatical form of language features that they are already able to use communicatively and emphasizes a form-meaning connection (Doughty & Long, 2003, p. 64). For example, in this case, a teacher teaches grammar within contexts and through communicative tasks so that the students are required to communicate in English fluently and correctly. This is to avoid the traditional approach to teaching grammar where students spend much of their time working with isolated linguistic structures from a sequence of textbook materials.
**Provide Corrective Error Feedback**

Feedback refers to strengthening the students with the process of sharing and receiving their ideas. As learners produce language, feedback can be useful in facilitating the progression of their skills. In giving feedback, the teachers need to consider both content and form. In this respect, content refers to comments on organization, ideas and details, while form involves comments on errors in grammar and mechanics (Fathman & Whalley, 1990, p. 29 in Kroll, 1990).

**Recognize and Respect Affective Factors of Learning**

Affective factors are emotional factors which influence learning. Affective factors are very important factors in language acquisition and English teaching. These factors include emotions, feelings, mood, manner, attitude and so on. All these factors, especially, motivation, self-confidence and anxiety, determine the input and the output of language (Brown 2001, p. 34).

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design**

This study was conducted based on a qualitative approach which was organized to explicate the factors affecting the success or failure of applying CLT for teaching speaking skills. In getting the data, the instruments used by the researchers were observation sheets plus documentation which included the teacher’s lesson plans and the students’ test results.

**Data Collection Technique**

In collecting the data, the researchers conducted classroom observations and document analysis. In doing the observations, the field researcher became a non-participant observer by positioning herself in a back-corners of the classroom to observe the classroom activities. In this study, the field researcher limited the area of her observations by preparing structured guidelines. To do this, she made a checklist system which was used by making signs in a column of an observation sheet. The sheets were prepared with several statements related to the activities and procedures in the CLT approach where she made signs only if it matched the statements on the sheet.

The field researcher also gathered information through documents, particularly the lesson plans. As stated before, this research focuses on
figuring out the teaching activities used by the teacher in applying the CLT approach techniques. To do this, the researcher analyzed the teachers’ lesson plans to match with the implementation of the teaching-learning processes in the classroom. Another document used was the speaking scores of the students. The results included the speaking performances of the students after being treated with the CLT approach.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results of Lesson Plan Analysis
Based on the analysis of the teacher’s lesson plans, it was found that there were proper procedures for CLT techniques that were written in the teacher’s lesson plans and others that were not.

Role Play
In applying the role play model/technique, the students are put into a totally or partially imaginary situation for the purpose of engaging in a particular activity (Chitravelu et al., 2005, p. 298). In other words, the activities encourage the students to be someone else, to play-act in a particular situation. The students have to adopt someone else’s views, experiences, attitudes, etc.

Based on the findings, referring to the teacher’s Lesson Plan, the teacher did not clearly explain how the activity should be performed. The teacher gave the students some preparation material, viz: a flash card with fake information but she did not clearly explicate the roles that each student had to play. The students were asked only to have a conversation with their partners. It seems that the teacher did not clearly clarify the roles that would be played by the students. This is contrary to what Chitravelu et al. (2005, p. 300) have stated that in conducting role play activities, each activity should be a variation of the original situation with the aim of developing and enhancing language skills. Our study found that the procedures written in the teacher’s lesson plan were not entirely followed by the techniques in the role play.

Jigsaw
Following her lesson plan, the teacher started this activity by forming the students into groups as one of the foundations for the jigsaw activity. However, the teacher did not specify whether she chose
the group members heterogeneously or not as Aronson et al. (1978, p. 124) has stated that - for jigsaw activity, the students are divided into 5-6 person groups that are diverse in terms of gender, ethnicity, race and in particular, ability. The teacher also did not appoint a leader in each group and did not use any segments of the text to read as the focus material. She did not form expert groups where the students could discuss similar topics or segments. The activities that were done were to ask the students in each team to exchange information with another team and then combine the information and present it to their own team and finally to the whole class.

It can be seen that, the jigsaw activities was not completely specified in the teacher’s lesson plan. Even though the activities conducted by the teacher were similar to jigsaw they did not accurately represent the special characteristics of the jigsaw technique because some procedures were missing.

**Group Discussions**

In conducting the group discussion activity there were also some points which were not included in the teacher’s lesson plan. Firstly, the teacher did not assign the members to groups heterogeneously but randomly. According to Brown (2001, p. 47), there are some things which need to be considered when assigning students to work in a group. They are language background, proficiency levels, age or gender differences, culture or subcultural group, personality types, cognitive style preferences, interests, prior learning experience, and target language goals. In other words, in forming a group, the teacher should ensure heterogeneity whilst still appointing members randomly. Then, the teacher also did not emphasize to the students the group processing skills which include the rules of members’ attitudes in group discussion such as respecting other’s ideas, be active in participating and sharing ideas, always use the L2 and do not have conversations that are unrelated to the task. Furthermore, the teacher did not monitor the participation of the members in sharing opinions and did not encourage the use of the target language in the discussions. However, the teacher did brainstorm the topic at the beginning by asking some questions related to the topic. She also encouraged the students to present their group discussions and gave feedback at the end of the performance.

The procedures written on the teacher’s lesson plans were incomplete because she did not include all the elements which were needed for conducting the group discussion activity in her lesson plan.
**Picture Series**

Based on the lesson plan for applying the picture series technique, it did not seem that the teacher started the class by giving clear objectives for the activity that would be conducted. Although the activity was done in pairs, the teacher did not make it focus on describing the pictures which meant that the main focus was not the pictures. The teacher asked the students only to match the pictures with the correct hobby and did not direct them to dig out more information from the pictures that they held. At the end the students did not present their picture narrating or describe it in front of the class and the teacher did not seem to give any feedback.

Harmer (1991) has pointed out that in teaching speaking by using pictures, the teacher can stimulate the students to produce oral compositions by showing them a series of pictures, miming a story, or playing them a tape with a series of sounds. Moreover, Bowen (1991) adds that a sequence of pictures is a series of pictures that reveal a story or a theme. The pictures give the learners something to talk about, something to focus their speech on rather than their own uncertainty with the new language.

It can be concluded that based on the teacher’s lesson plan, when she ran the picture series technique, there were several points which were missing. The main concern was that the teacher did not really stimulate and encourage the students to talk about the pictures.

**Story Telling**

It can be seen from the teacher’s lesson plan that when starting the activity using the story telling technique, the teacher did not give her students clear directions on how to do it. The activity was started by giving a narrative text to the students to be discussed with their peers. They were asked to ask and answer questions related to the text in order to fully understand it. The students were also asked to tell a story they made up in front of the class. In this, the teacher asked them, in their groups, to retell the story in the form of a continuous narrative. Ur (1996, p. 120) states that in storytelling, the teacher should ensure that as much as possible of the class time should be activities where the students are talking. The teacher should also encourage communicative and meaningful tasks by stimulating the students to discuss any problems found either within their own group or with the other groups. However, at the end of the performances, it did not seem that the other
students respond to the stories by their peers and no feedback was given as an evaluation of the activity.

**Results from the Classroom Observations**

**Role Play**

From the observation checklist, the researcher found that the teacher did not complete all the steps for the opening activities of *Role Play*. The teacher did greetings and checked the attendance but did not do apperception or self-reflection, which was written in her lesson plans. However the teacher clearly explained and stated the goal and the objectives of the topic although these points were not in her lesson plan.

In the main activity, the teacher distributed flash cards to write down information in preparation to start the role playing and she asked the students to perform their roles in pairs which were synchronized with what was written in her lesson plan. However, the teacher did not encourage the use of any target language vocabulary; as a consequence, many students used their L1, mother tongue, during the conversations. At the end of the performance, the teacher gave feedback and asked the students to comment on the performances of their friends. Nevertheless, she did not focus on reviewing and evaluating including correcting errors and providing motivation.

**Jigsaw**

In the pre-activities, the teacher followed all the opening activity steps in her lesson plan. She started the class with greetings, then checked the attendance, introduced and explained the topic and the objective of the activity so that the students could appercept it.

In the core portion of the jigsaw activities, there were several points which were not done by the teacher, such as getting each group to choose a leader, giving each student a different segment to read, and forming expert groups where the students with similar segments gathered and shared information about their segments. However, the students were asked to gather information from the other groups and bring back the information to their own group. At the end of the activity, the students were asked to present their group information to the whole class but the teacher did not give them any feedback due to lack of time.

Most of the procedures in her lesson plan were implemented in her teaching. The activities were also similar to those done by experts.
Nevertheless, the activities cannot be regarded as true jigsaw since the entire procedures were not completely implemented.

**Group Discussions**

Nunan (1991, p. 279) says that in applying CLT, there are some characteristics which the teacher needs to be concerned with. First, all communications should use the target language. Second, authentic texts should be used for the learning situations. Third, the learners should get the chance to focus not only on the language but also on the learning process. Fourth, the learners should be concerned with enhancement of their own personal experiences. Finally, the language used in the classroom should be linked to that used outside the classroom.

Based on the observation checklist, the teacher followed all her lesson plans. First, she greeted the students then checked the attendance. After that she introduced, explained and stated the objectives of the topic. Then the teacher started the class by dividing it into groups of four or five, however she did not form heterogeneous groups but they were random ones. As a consequence, some groups were mainly low ability students. This should be a matter of concern as Brown (2001, p. 47) has stated that when learners engage with more capable others, the latter can provide guidance and assistance. Next, the teacher brainstormed the topic by giving an analogy from real life and introduced the topic to be discussed by each group. However, before starting the discussions, the teacher did not give a brief explanation on the ground rules for the group discussions such as respecting each other’s ideas, participating in the discussions, and using the task given as the focus for the discussions. She also did not encourage the students to use the target, L2, language, so that there were many students using their L1, mother tongue, during the discussions.

In the closing activities, the students were asked to present the results of their discussions and were given feedback on their performances. The teacher also responded to the students’ questions clearly.

**Picture Series**

Based on the observation, in the pre-activities, the teacher implemented all the activities written in her lesson plan. She started the class with greetings, checked the attendance, introduced and explained the topic and the goal of the exercise.
However, there were several main procedures which were not included in the lesson plan and were not done in the classroom. The important thing to be pointed out is that the teacher did not seem to use pictures as the focal material in conducting the picture series technique as Bowen (1991) has stated that a sequence of pictures are a series of pictures that reveal a story or theme. They give the learners something to talk about, something to focus on rather than their own uncertainty with the new, L2, language. In the post-activities, the teacher gave constructive feedback by making error corrections and reviewing the lessons that they had learned.

In sum, it can be said that the procedures for the picture series suggested by Harmer (1991) and Bowen (1991) were not completely followed in the teacher’s lesson plan and were not entirely implemented in the classroom.

**Story Telling**

The teacher followed the pre-activities written in her lesson plan. She started with greetings, checked attendance and explained the topic. However, she did not introduce or refresh prior material as written in her lesson plan.

In the main activities, the teacher followed almost all the procedures set down for story telling. Only, she did not explain clearly how the activity should be conducted. There were also some activities done by the teacher which were not written in her lesson plan such as encouraging other students to respond to their friend’s story and giving feedback.

**Results from Test of Students**

Based on the results from the tests of the students’ speaking performance, it can be concluded that the application of the CLT approach did not successfully improve the students’ speaking ability. This was proven by the fact that many students still did not reach the minimum standard for passing set by the teacher. This study assumes that there were many procedures suggested by the experts that were not implemented effectively by the teacher. There were also many activities which were written in the teacher’s lesson plans that were not fully applied in the classroom. Therefore, it can be concluded that the implementation of the CLT approach did not improve the students’ speaking skills enough to meet the passing standard due to the
incomplete procedures for each technique applied by the teacher when teaching in the classroom.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

This study shows that based on the analysis of the teacher’s lesson plans, it was found that there were several main procedures of the techniques suggested by the experts which were not completely written into the teacher’s lesson plans. Besides, there were several activities written on the teacher’s lesson plan that were not fully implemented in the classroom. In other words, the lesson plans did not perfectly match their implementation in the classroom. Furthermore, the results of the students’ speaking performance, showed that many students still got scores below 70 which means that many of them did not reach the minimum standard of passing criteria (KKM) although they had been treated using the CLT approach, participating in various activities such as role play, jigsaw, group discussions, picture series and storytelling in their speaking class. This leads to the assumption that the failure was because the procedures suggested by the experts were not entirely and effectively implemented by the teacher in her teaching.

Suggestions

To make this study more useful for teachers and future researchers for better improvement of teaching speaking using the CLT approach in the future, here are some recommendations. First, it is important for the teacher to plan the lessons carefully before applying them in the class. It is important to consider the proper procedures/steps for each technique by referring to the theory from the experts. Second, as the lesson plan is the guidance for the teacher in applying activities in the classroom, it is best for the teacher to synchronize the procedures in her lesson plan with the implementation in the classroom. Third, in teaching English using the CLT approach, the teacher should consider and demand the use of target language in every activity conducted in the classroom so that the students are motivated to use English as their means of communication. Lastly, based on several limitations of this research, further research is suggested to conduct experimental studies regarding the best practice for CLT to improve the speaking of senior high school students.
REFERENCES


