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## THE USE OF COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH IN TEACHING SPEAKING COMPETENCE

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to inquire into the use of communicative approach in teaching speaking competence for young learners. The researcher found that the speaking skills or competence was the important skills that learners needed to grasp for improving their language competence. Young learners need to learn English as their foreign or second language as fun as possible. Speaking competence will teach English beyond grammar, words function, so that they feel free to express their opinion. By feeling comfortable to express themselves, they have good self-esteem to learn new knowledge and language. That is the reason why communicative approach, especially speaking competence can be taught well to the young learners.

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### INTRODUCTION

The new education minister said that English must be taught since primary level especially in communication, teacher needs to teach English to the primary students especially in speaking. Under the policy of Educations Minister, some schools can have *SPK (Satuan Pendidikan Kerjasama)* curriculum. It allows those schools to have the combination of national curriculum and international curriculum. *SPK* schools must have *Bahasa Indonesia* and *PKN* in their curriculum as they are the characteristics of Indonesia and teach those subjects in Bahasa Indonesia. Then, those schools allow to deliver Mathematics, Science in English while at the same time the students also learn English as one of the subjects. Therefore, it is time for early young learners to learn English without despising their identity as Indonesia citizen and maintaining Indonesian value as well.

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According to Setyastuti in her thesis about using Big book as a media to teach speaking, she mentioned that using the Big book helps students to improve their ability in speaking. Big Book helps students to have the description about a certain story and the improve their vocabulary. It makes them having some ideas to re-tell the story step by step through some activities given by teacher, such as arranging the story in sequence. Finally, they make a book of story from big book and then present in front of the class. (2019 : 80-86)

Bland also thinks that storytelling followed by picture book is the good way to teach young learners for speaking. From the story telling given, the learners can finally learn to express their ideas and opinion about the story given. At the end, Bland uses drama for improving the learners' critical thinking since in drama, many aspects such as culture, values, conflicts will be appeared more complicated. (2015 : 8-9)

From the previous explanation above, it can assume that speaking is helping young learners to improve their ability to grasp new language, especially English. English as one of international language is having great roles to spread the information about all aspects in this world. Many countries which use English as their first or second language have developed in all aspects of life. Those aspects give a great influence in the development of this world, especially the invention for human being. So that, it cannot be denied that English has significant roles as the language to deliver knowledge. As being a part of this world, English must be learned since early years. Therefore, English needs to be learnt since in primary grade level.

In learning English, students should develop listening, reading, speaking, and writing as well. Every skill has its own role to build up student's competency in English and it support each other. So that, they can not be separated.

As the new education minister said that English must be taught since primary level especially in communication, teacher needs to teach English to the primary students especially in speaking. Under the policy of Educations Minister, some schools can have *SPK (Satuan Pendidikan Kerjasama)* curriculum. It allows those schools to have the combination of national curriculum and international curriculum. *SPK* schools must have *Bahasa Indonesia* and *PKN* in their curriculum as they are the characteristics of Indonesia and teach those subjects in Bahasa Indonesia. Then, those schools allow to deliver Mathematics, Science in English while at the same time the students also learn English as one of the subjects. Therefore, it is time for early young learners to learn English without despising their identity as Indonesia citizen and maintaining Indonesian value as well.

My Little Island Primary School is one of the *SPK* school in Malang. Since Kindergarten, students have learnt English in the classroom and English as the main language to use in learning process. In primary, Mathematics, English, Science, and Social Study are delivered in English while Bahasa Indonesia and PKN are delivered in Bahasa Indonesia.

However, not all primary students are from MLI kindergarten. Some of them are from kindergarten that is not used English as the main language at school. On the other hand, the students from MLI also have lack of confident to speak in English. So that, teacher needs to find the best method to accommodate all the students especially in the first grade.

In the Cambridge curriculum, it uses the holistic method to teach English. It uses theme for teaching 4 skills in English. However, the books that are used for references are for teaching English as a second language. It is rather difficult for students who never learn English before and their parents has no idea to teach English at home. So

that, they only catch up a little information during learning process. Besides that, some students from MLI also has no confident to speak so that they have low motivation to try since their kindergarten teachers teach English with limited in speaking English. Here, the researcher tries to use the communicative language teaching in the classroom for improving their speaking skills so that they are more confident in learning and using English in daily life.

From the problem identification above, the researcher formulated the research questions as follows. Firstly, how to teach speaking to the first primary graders. Secondly, how the cognitive and mental development of the first grader primary students is occurred. Then, what kind of communicative approach is appropriated. Lastly, how the use of communicative approach in teaching speaking competence toward young learners, especially the first grader.

Through this research, hopefully it can develop researchers' competence in developing attractive learning to build up young learners' confidence in speaking and help students to develop their ability to speak and to build up their confidence to participate actively in the classroom as well.

### **Teaching speaking competence**

Some aspects need to be considered for teaching speaking competence for young learners as they are still in the beginning stages.

#### ***Principles for Designing Speaking Techniques***

1. Teachers of young learners need to open chances and more time for the learners to practice pronouncing and speaking English, both in and outside the classroom. As young learners are like sponges, absorb everything, teacher needs to be more careful in pronouncing every words, phrases and sentences since it's rather difficult to change it when there is a mistake in pronouncing.
2. Teacher of young learners need to present some vocabulary with a support pictures, drawing, puppet, video, or gesture. Children needs to acquire necessary vocabulary and structure before they are presenting their story, ideas or experiences. (Arifin, 2018 : 3-5)

#### ***Speaking Activities for Primary Students***

There are some teacher aid to equip young learners, especially the first grader of primary students :

1. Using a tape or a CD  
Using a short story from tape or CD will have great benefit to help the learners have whole description about the tone, the pronunciation for each word. Rather than ask the whole class repeat the short sentences, it is better to divide the students into some group based on the characters in the story and they repeat every time it's the part of the certain character speaks. Then they come in front to perform after being repeated for several times.
2. Songs, poem, rhymes and chants.  
It is one of the best method to make the learners unconsciously sing and talk directly and learn about the use of language, words, pronunciation as well by providing Total Physical Response (TPR) so they can memorize better and feel fun to do it. The most important thing is that they should have many opportunities to speak and teacher needs to speak slowly but steadily rise so that it can prepare the learners in various communicative situation.
3. Games

Games is very appropriate teaching technique for young learners. Many games can be created, such as role play, memory and guess game.

4. Talking and Writing Box

Students or teacher can put some pictures or topics in the box. Then students choose the one that is interest to them and let them to describe about the pictures. The funnier the picture provide, the better for the students as they need to have some words to describe it and it feels fun for them as well. However, teacher needs to give example before asking students to do the activity.

5. Tongue Twisters

It can be used to teach pronunciations in fun way. Learners may have trouble to pronounce some certain English sound and it helps them to practice it. They feel fun to pronounce it without realizing that they practice their pronunciations.

(Arifin, 2018 : 6-7)

## **Primary Students**

### ***The Characteristics of Primary Students***

Based on the psychology, the golden age for the children to learn language is 3 up to 7 years old, with the peak age is at 5 years old. So that, it is very good to teach English during this age. However, learning English as the second language for young learners has some problem especially when their ability to master their mother tongue is not to good.

The development period of 3 up to 7 years old is included in the beginning and the end of childhood period development. 3-6 years old child is the beginning of the childhood whereas 7 years old included in the end of childhood period. (Santrock, 2012 : 18). The interesting part here is that 3-7 years old passes through 2 childhood period, especially for 6 and 7 years old child. It is the starting point for every child to go the next developmental period. There is the significant changing on these years in language. During these years, there are the changing process of arranging words. For instance, in the beginning period children will associate the word “dog” to “bark” but when they come to the end period of childhood, they can associate the word “dog” to the other animals that have the same category with “dog”. They can associate “dog” to “cat, horse”. In this period, their language skills keep developing. They can think about the language they learn, the meaning the words and even can explain the words that they produce. It encounters them to keep developing in reading and writing skill. Finally, it helps them much to learn English, their second or foreign language, since their first language is more powerful than they are still in the first period of their childhood. (Santrock, 2012 : 317-347)

Related to the development above, it is possible for them to learn the second language. They have been a capability to learn other language than their mother tongue. So, it considers to think about the appropriate method for the young learners to study language, especially English without any burden.

Some of young learners’ characteristics are loving to play game, cheerful, and dare to try new things. They also have confidence to perform their ability as long as they feel comfortable with the situation. It stimulates the researcher to find the best method that can accommodate all the characteristics mentioned. As Bisri stated, young learners have characteristics to have excitement and to try to overcome their lower self-esteem at the same time. When they have lower self-esteem, they will never love to learn or to

do any knowledge activities. The worst is that they don't believe that they have capability to overcome their own problem. (2016: 7)

As long as researcher's experience in SPK school, young learners are brave to express themselves in a target language when they feel fun during learning process. The more fun they feel during the learning process, the faster they grasp the subjects delivered to them since their affective filter is shutting down. (Dulay, 1982 : 46)

From the four skills in English (listening, speaking, writing, and reading), speaking is more interesting for young learners when it is delivered in a fun way such as through song, rhyme, chants with the repetition lyrics. They feel that it is such a game and there is not grammatical force during the process even though they learn grammar in it.

Besides, the chosen words and dialect is having great influence toward the young learners. As it is mentioned by Beneke-Cheatham in their article "*Speaking Up For African American*". They said that students needs the creativity and the understanding from their teacher about their social background during learning process at school so that they can understand the standard English better. A teacher needs to implement *spoken language* that the students have known from their surrounding and connect it to the standard English. (Beneke-Cheatham, 2015 : 131). From this statements, it can be concluded that learning English is more interesting when teacher uses the language that is almost similar with the language they usually find it at home, in the movies, or from youtube.

Dissaya Supharatyphtin also supports the statement above in his article He mentions that communicative approach is also used in learning English for British accent. During the learning process, the linguist mentions that learning English is focusing on the communication skills rather than on the grammar (2014 : 142). Here it is also mentioned that speaking is more helpful for young learners in learning English, especially it is not their first language. Communicative approach helps them to understand English as a whole and not only limited by the grammar itself.

In his book, Bos and Vaughn mentioned that it is important thing to consider the cultural background and the mother tongue in teaching English as the second language. There are 2 types in teaching English as the second language to the children that teacher needs to consider. First type is *Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills / BICS*. It focusses on the daily language. For instance, during play time children will talk about the games they play, rule of the games, and they will use some body language in communication too. Here, *BICS* is the beginning step for the children to communicate for them to learn English as their second language, and it usually needs 2 years for them to acquire English.

The second type is *Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency* or *CALP*. It refers to the children ability in connecting the language they find at school with the their daily language or with their environment. This is the reason why *CALP* development tends slower than *BICS*, and it needs for about 4 up to 7 years to acquire this ability. ( 1993 : 93)

The characteristics of primary students can also be seen through their motoric skills. They are confidence to show up their ability in writing, drawing, and physical exercise. They also love to compare themselves with their peers and it can make them unconfident when knowing their ability is lower than their peers. They also learn through real things, such as their life, the objects that are often seen in their daily life. Primary students who are in the middle period of childhood are in the period when they gain the self-confident and their ego through the difficult tasks they are accomplished.

Teacher in this stage needs to understand their students' condition since they need great appraisal and encouragement from the teacher to feel secure and confident when they are not good in completing the tasks.

In cognitive development, primary students are categorized in concrete operational thinking. Even though it is higher than pre-concrete operational thinking, they still need concrete objects to understand the concepts. Children in this development stage also have ability to understand :

1. One to one correspondence. For instance, they can understand the concept in addition through giving one pencil to group 1 and one pencil to group 2.
2. Classification of objects, time and events.
3. Classification objects by two similar characteristics. For instance, classification objects by color and shape.

In moral values, primary students, especially the first and second graders, are really influenced by adult people to view the right and wrong deeds. They learn the good deeds through punishment and appraisal from adult. They learn obedience by responding the physical consequences of their actions. ( Morrison, 2012 : 287-292)

### **The Roles of Teacher**

Teacher has great roles in conducting learning process in the classroom. Teacher is the role model for the students to grasp the learning sources. Moreover in CLT, the teacher needs to pay attention to their role in teaching. Harmer (2007:108-110) mentions that teacher is a facilitator. There are some classification for the teacher, as follows.

#### 1) Controller

Teacher tells about the procedure in the classroom during the learning process, read a loud and also transfer the knowledge.

#### 2) Prompter

Teacher tries to encourage students to speak up their opinion by giving a clue and persuades them to use English rather than their mother tongue during learning process.

#### 3) Participant

In some opportunities, teacher needs to join students' activities as a person who give encouragement inside the learning process. It is more fun for the students when teacher gets involved in learning process especially when they prepare their group work.

#### 4) Source

Sometimes students need information during learning process. It's the time for the teacher as the resource. Teacher needs to encourage the independent learning of the students by letting other students to give the answer or asking them to check in a dictionary or other resources such as internet. No teacher knows everything.

#### 5) Tutor

Teacher can ask and point some students to participate in their projects or activities. So that, students can take turn.

### ***SPK (Satuan Pendidikan Kerjasama) Curriculum for Primary Students.***

According to *Permendiknas no. 105 tahun 2014*, it is stated that the government starts to make regulation how the *SPK* curriculum is designed. It is mentioned that there are 3 terms found in *SPK* Curriculum, which are Primary school, Indonesian Educational

Institution (*Lembaga Pendidikan Indonesia or LPI*), and Non-Indonesian Education Institution (*Lembaga Pendidikan Asing or LPA*):

1. Primary School is one of formal grade level education that is given for 7-12 years old children.

2. *Lembaga Pendidikan Indonesia* is an institution in Indonesia that formulates the Indonesian Education. It can be the government and/or the institutions that legally work in education.

3. *Lembaga Pendidikan Asing* is an institution that formulates education in another country. There are some educational institutions that are internationally acceptable. They are International Baccalaureate (IB), Cambridge International Examinations (CIE), ABEKA, ACE. Western Association Schools and Colleges (WASC).

There are some regulations to build *SPK* in a school. Here, the researcher only mentions the regulations in relation in teaching learning for primary students :

1. Primary students must receive *PKN* (character building) and *Bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian language)
2. The exchange students are only followed by fourth, fifth, and sixth grader
3. The students who join exchange must have English ability, passive English minimum.

### **Communicative Approach**

In learning language there are some learning methods used in teaching the second and foreign language to the students. They are grammar-translation method, direct method, and audio lingual method. The last method is communicative approach. (Sadoughvanini & Shamsudin : 31)

Communicative approach focusses on the ability of the learners to use the target language in their daily life. Hopefully, the learners can communicate with other people in any kind of circumstances. In the learning process, this approach does not focus on the grammatical order of the sentence and language, but on the usage of the language itself in communicating ( Sadoughvanini & Shamsudin : 32)

There are some functions of communicative approach we need to consider. Firstly, people need to know how to use language in a different purpose and functions, to produce and understand different types of texts, and to maintain communication with others . Then, they also know when using the formal and informal speech with the other persons. (Richards, 2006 : 3)

According to Brown & Lee, they state the communicative approach as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). It is foundation stones of Second Language Acquisition as it teaches English through the social, cultural and pragmatic features. So that, it can concluded some characteristics as follows:

1. Overall goals.  
CLT suggests to focus on all of the components of speaking competence (grammar, discourse, sociolinguistics and strategy). So that, it combines all the components into one goal.
2. Relationship of form and function.  
It doesn't focus on the form but how the components can help the learner to accomplish the purposes.
3. Fluency and accuracy  
It focuses on the fluency of the learners to deliver ideas and encourages learners at other time to attend the correctness. Teacher has responsibility to give feedback on learners' errors on this part.
4. Focus on real-world contexts.

The learners should use the language in their daily life (outside the classroom). That's why the classroom should provide the important skills of speaking outside the classroom.

5. Autonomy and strategic involvement

Students or learners should have opportunity to focus on their own learning process through raising the awareness of their own strength, weaknesses, preferences of learning and through developing the appropriate strategies for production and comprehension. It will help them to learn autonomous in language beyond the classroom.

6. Teacher roles

Teacher becomes the facilitator and not become the all-knowing the knowledge. Students need to be encouraged to construct meaning of the language through interaction with other students and teacher.

7. Student roles.

Students are actively in learning process such as students-centered, cooperative, and collaborative learning activities. (2015 : 31-32)

### **Communicative Language Teaching Activities**

In this research, the main activity is to review their accuracy and give some feed back for errors, since most of the students have learnt English since they were 3 years old. It has a goal to improve their fluency, pronunciation and the voice volume so they can do presentation clearly. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) can accommodate the goals above.

There are some strategies in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), according to Rachmajanti, in order to support the activities in classroom, such as *Listen and Draw*, *Same and Different*, *Brainstorming*, *Ranking Activity*, *Information Gap*, *Mind Mapping*, *Know-What-Want to Know-Learned (K-W-L)*, *Interactive Crossword Puzzle*, *Running Dictation*, and *Find Someone Who*. However, there are only two strategies are used as details follows:

#### ***Pre-Communicative Activities***

This activity is done before doing communicative activities. It has purpose to prepare students to be ready to do communicative activities. As Rachmajanti said that brainstorming is an activity to prepare the students to the topic discussed, the researcher has purpose to use this strategy to prepare the learners for the topic discussion. First, the learners will get a certain topic and let them to mention any ideas (in words or sentences) related to the topic. It will stimulate them to speak up about the topic discussion. (2017 : 22)

#### ***Communicative Activities***

This activity is done after the learners and the teacher find out the ideas relevant to the topic. Here, the next strategy that will be used is Find Someone Who. The learners will work in pairs to collect information about someone who has relation with the topic discussion. They will be persuaded to interview other group to get the data. Their speaking skills will be needed to do this activity. By trying to speak English, surely their speaking skills will be improved. (Rachmajanti, 2017: 27)

#### ***Post- Communicative Activities***

At the end of the activity, the learners still use Find Someone Who strategy. They will present the result of their interview. It means that they need to speak in front of the class. This activity still needs them to speak. The opportunity to speak in each activity will help them to enhance their skills. By limiting the pressure, each activity will be done

in pairs as they are young learners who need to feel happy and comfortable to do it so that their affective filter will decrease.

## CONCLUSION

Teaching speaking competence toward young learners, especially to the first primary graders, are different from adult. Fun activities are required to engage them in learning process. Games, writing box, using tape/CD, using chants/rhyme, and tongue twister are the best method to motivate them in speaking. It also needs to consider the characteristics of the primary students itself. The primary students, especially the first graders, are the age when their language develops much in understanding some words and their meaning. This is the time when they love to explore their language if the surrounding makes them feel comfort and the language has closed relationship with their local culture. On the other hand, they have familiar with their mother tongue so that they are ready to learn new language, English.

SPK as the alternative curriculum can support this learning process. SPK schools have authority to design their own curriculum as long as they still put PKn (character buildings), religion, and Bahasa Indonesia as their primary subjects. Here, SPK schools have opportunity to teach English and become the primary language for other subjects.

However, the first grader needs to feel secure in learning English. Communicative approach helps them much to raise their confidence during learning process. By using *brainstorming* strategy in the pre communicative activity and *Find Someone Who*. Strategy in the main and post communicative activity, the first primary graders can improve their English through speaking. Their characteristic of being brave to express themselves in a secure and comfortable situation is the great aspects in requiring English as the foreign language.

In this disruptive era, schools in Indonesia needs to put English as one of the subjects taught to students. The younger they learn English, the easier they improve their ability to express themselves in English and to read some knowledge in English. The prime minister of education also thinks that English should teach since primary level. However, the main purpose in teaching English for primary is communicative activities. Teaching vocab, grammar and skills in English should be started by having some communication. Teacher as the role model must be able to speak English correctly and fluently when teaching English for young learners, especially primary students.

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