

TEACHING SPEAKING THROUGH THE MEANING-FOCUSED METHOD

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Abstract

This paper aims to provide an explanation of teaching speaking through the meaning-focused method especially for junior high school students. English is an international language, and included into the educational curriculum. Learning to speak by using the method focused is very important because with this method the student easily grasp and understand the English language learning, even students with ease pull out their ideas in the learning process. There are five activities in teaching speaking by using meaning focused method. Like discussions, role play, simulations, storytelling, and picture describing. This activity can help students in the learning process focused, and keep students interested in learning even they can issue, conclude their ideas in a group and display it in front of the class. Teaching speaking through the meaning focused method uses three procedures consisted of pre-teaching activities, the activity done before teaching process, in whilst-teaching activities the teacher instructs and asks the students to do some activities, and post teaching activities, that is necessary as the follow up phase on what the students have studied.

Keywords: *Teaching speaking, the meaning-focused method.*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

English is the most popular international language and it is spoken all over the world. Every country that does not want to be isolated in international

communication put English in curriculum of their education program. There are four language skills that should be mastered by language learner. They are speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Speaking is one of the four important skills that must be mastered by people. We need exercise and continuous practice in speaking skill. There are some factors that make the students difficult to speak English in daily life or classroom, for instance feeling shy, lack of confident, and the technique used by the teacher, etc. They do not know well how to pronounce the word, how to use grammar and how to choose an appropriate vocabulary because they do not have enough vocabulary. Besides that they do not have enough opportunities to practice speaking.

The purpose of teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia is to enable students to communicate. Due to the limited time, the students do not get many opportunities for practicing English in the classroom. The teacher spent much time to explain the material rather than giving them chance to practice. English teacher has responsibility in motivating students to increase their speaking ability.

The teacher should help the students to speak English whether in classroom or outside the classroom. It is because of the

students need the easy ways in learning English. There are some methods to motivate the students in speaking English. Teaching speaking through song, role plays, poetry, meaning focused method, and etc.

Based on the explanation above, the writer want to describe teaching speaking through meaning focused method, as it is believed to be effective for the students to master English.

1.2 PurposeS of writers Paper

- To give a complete explanation about teaching speaking through the meaning focused method especially for junior high school students.
- To complete the writer's study at English Department of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Bung Hatta University.

1.3 Organization of the Paper

This paper consists of four chapters. Chapter one is an introduction that includes the background of the problem, the purposes of the paper and the organization of the paper. In chapter two writers review some opinions about speaking, definition of speaking, teaching speaking, function of speaking, components of speaking, and also will discuss the meaning of focused method, definition of the meaning focused method, speaking activities by using the meaning

focused method, and then the advantages of the meaning focused method in learning process. Chapter three discusses procedure of teaching speaking through meaning focused method. And chapter four consists of conclusion and suggestions.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

There are four skills that should be acquired by the students to master English as a foreign language. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The writer will discuss the second skill, that is speaking.

2.1.1 Definition of Speaking

Speaking is one of the important skills to communicate in any languages. There are some definitions of speaking. It describes someone's ability to convey the ideas or notion to others by using spoken language. According to Widdowson (1984:56) speaking is the active or productive skill.

Speaking is also a tool of communication in teaching language as well. It gives many advantages to both teachers and students. Mastering this skill as basic skill can help to master the other skill. Brown (1980) says that communication can be defined as a series of communication or speech acts that are applied to complete the specific purpose.

And speaking ability can be defined as the ability to use words in essential normal communication situation and the signal system of pronunciation, stress, intonation, grammatical, and vocabulary of foreign language at normal rate of delivery for native speaker of the language.

Based on the explanation above, the writer can conclude that speaking is a complex active and productive skill that is used to convey someone ideas by using spoken language.

2.1.2 Teaching Speaking

In teaching speaking, the teacher should give the students chance to speak about everything that they want to say to another people so that it can make good communication with each other, then the students can improve their idea well. According to Brown (1945) teaching speaking or oral communication is providing oral communication skill fluency, accuracy, and interaction. It means that, in teaching speaking the teacher does not only consider about grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation but also think about the use of sentences in communication.

Beside that, if the teacher can make the students interest on speaking, the teacher must have the stage for that. Harmer (2006) defines that there are three

major stages in teaching speaking, namely introducing new language, practicing and having communicative activities. It means that, the teacher should introduce the new language first to the students. And then, the teacher should introduce the word and sentence, and finally guide them to do activities that support to communicate, for example practice the conversation about their daily activities with each other.

Then, Nunan (2003) says that teaching speaking is providing students with the components of the language. They would eventually put them all together and express the idea. So that, the students might spend a long time repeating or practicing after the teacher, studying grammar rules, reciting dialogues and enriching vocabularies.

From the explanation above, the writer can conclude that teaching speaking is very important in the process of learning, because students can get motivation to do anything they want to speak with each other and can improve their ideas so that they can understand about speaking English.

2.1.3 Functions of Speaking

Speaking activity happens when two people or more interact. It aims at maintaining social relationship between them. Brown and Yule (1999) state that the

function of speaking language is to maintain social relationship, and most people spend a great of their live in “ chat “. The main purpose of the speaker in this function is to transfer the message, to understand the message generally before narrowing it down into a specific area of the message. Brown and Yule identify transactional function as the primary reason for the speaker to speak and the language send to be clearer and specific.

In addition Halliday (1995:22) states that there are two functions of speaking. They are as follows:

- 1) The interpersonal function is reflected in the kind of social talk that we participate the throughout the day in conversational exchanges with family, friend, colleagues’, etc. This kind of relaxed verbal interaction in the use of language to establish and maintain social relations.
- 2) The ideational function. This function is quite different from interpersonal function. This is the use of language to express content and to communicate information.

Based on the explanation above, the writer can conclude that functions of speaking an activity that do speak more than one person.

2.1.4 Components of Speaking

There are five components of language that influence speaking ability. They are as follow:

a. Pronunciation

Pronunciation is one of important than that should be mastered by the students, because it will influence the meaning of words. Besides that, Indonesian sounds are very different with English sounds.

Furthermore, Nunas (1980:58) states that the goal of learning English is how to speak and understand the sentences, so we must know how to pronounce that language. So, the listeners will understand what is the aims of the speaker.

b. Grammar

Harris (1989:81) says that mastering grammar knowledge will help one in speaking English, because writer will know how to arrange words in a sentence, what tense will be used, how to use appropriate utterances. In other word, by mastering grammar one can master speaking of language.

c. Vocabulary

Nunan in Andesta (2003:2) states that in the learning English, the students should master all the word. If the students have

many vocabularies, they can combine words into good sentence.

d. Fluency

Harris (1989:81) states that fluency is ease and speed. Therefore, it exerts a significant influence of communication between the speaker and listener. If the speaker speaks with great difficulty, it is likely that listener will neither understand nor response relevantly to what speaker says. Hence, the speaker should speak rather easily and in convenient speed in the order the listeners are able to response.

e. Comprehension

Harris (1989:82) says that comprehension is also one of the components that involves in speaking skill. When one speaks to interlocutor, he should pay attention to it. Because if the interlocutor does not comprehend what the speaker said that, there will be misunderstanding between them and the communication can not run well.

From the explanation above, the writer can concludethat there are some components of speaking, such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension that are very important in speaking.

2.2.1 Methods in teaching Speaking

The following paragraph will talk about definition of the meaning focused method, speaking activities by using

meaning focused method and advantages of the meaning focused method.

2.2.2 Definition of the Meaning Focused Method

When students first begin to speaking in another language, the student will need to be based on some focused learning. An effective way to begin is to base speaking on some useful, simple memorized phrases and sentence. These may be greetings, simple personal descriptions, and simple questions and answers.

Related to the explanation above there are many experts state about the definition of the meaning focused method. Brown and Nation (1997) state that “a meaning focused speaking means both the speaker’s and listeners’ attentions are on the message being communicated”. And the meaning focused speaking is the method to language teaching which aims to help listeners and speakers focus their mind to the topic that they talk.

Furthermore, Johnson (1995) says that in the meaning focused method is found that all learners had equal access to the same information resulted in more negotiation of word meaning and each learner had same information, and the learners discussed the meanings of words

from one topic, it is called as the meaning focused method.

In teaching speaking through meaning –focused method, the teacher should check students’ speaking whether they know the language needed to negotiate the meaning of word that they do not know or others might not know. This involves seeking clarification and confirmation, requesting repetition, and explaining the meaning or spelling of a word. With a little practice teachers can quickly design activities that encourage speaking ability (Nation and Hamilton-Jenkins in Brown and Nation, 2000).

Brown and Nation (2000) say that in the teaching speaking through meaning focused method, the students must produce and listen to meaningful oral communication. An example of meaning focused activity for beginning students is speaking by numbers. Each student is given a number and a topic. The topics could include family, money, coming to school, a color, future goals, etc. The students can think about their topics for a minute or two and then the teacher calls a number. The students with the number called then say two or three sentences about his or her topic. The student who speaks then calls any number and the student that has that number has to ask the student who speaks with some question

related to the topic just spoken about. When the question is answered, the questions call a number and the student with that number asks another question. This activity will be continued until all the students speak their topic.

2.2.3 Speaking activities by using Meaning-Focused Method

There are several speaking activities by using meaning focused method according to Kayi (2006). They are as follows:

a. Discussions

A discussion can be held for various reasons. The students may aim to arrive at a conclusion, share ideas about an event, or find solutions in their discussion groups. In this way, the discussion points are relevant to this purpose, so that students do not spend their time chatting with each other about irrelevant things. This activity fosters critical thinking and quick decision making, and students learn how to express and justify themselves in polite ways while disagreeing with the others.

b. Role Play

Students create situations in the classroom to practice what they would do or say in similar situations on the real world. Role playing helps students connect the language with real situations in their lives, so words and phrases are easier to remember.

c. Simulations

Role plays and simulations have many advantages, since they are entertaining, they motivate the students, they increase the self-confidence of hesitant students, because in role play and simulation activities, they will have a different role and do not have to speak for themselves, which means they do not have to take the same responsibility.

d. Storytelling

Students can briefly summarize the story or stories they heard from somebody beforehand, or they may create their own story to tell their classmates, it fosters creative thinking, and also helps students to express their ideas.

e. Picture Describing

The teacher gives the students a picture and students to explain what is in the picture. For this activity students can form groups and each group is given a different picture. Students discuss the picture with their groups, then a spokesperson for each group describes the picture to the whole class.

From the explanation above, the writer can conclude that many activities students that interested in teaching speaking.

2.2.4 Advantages of the Meaning Focused Method

There are several advantages of teaching speaking using meaning focused method according to Nation and Brown (1997). They are as follows:

1. The teacher presents some new vocabulary, provides training to students, and then use a meaning-focused activities to help learners use and remember these items.
2. Students work in groups to discuss topic that has been determined, giving learners the opportunity to learn new things from each other.
3. Each student must choose a short article that is interesting, and convey the points of the article in front of the class, and then the class asks questions to the students.
4. Many speaking activities in the meaning-focused speaking involve some kind of writer or picture input in the form of a worksheet. The worksheet contains written data about the situation, what to do, and possible choices. The worksheets contain vocabulary and phrases that may be new to the students and which will be necessary or useful in the speaking activity.
5. Some speaking activities encourage learners to ask each other about the meaning of unfamiliar words so construction. Each learner and his group have different types of activities. The types of activities are given many different

names including jigsaw task, the task of two-way, information gaps, and etc.

6. Develop speaking fluency. Fluency in speaking is the aim of many language students. Teaching speaking using meaning focused method is useful for developing fluency and includes the features that are needed in fluency development activities.

Based on the explanation above, the writer concludes that there are some advantages of the meaning focused method, such as providing new vocabulary and discussion new things by using group and conversations with other people.

PROCEDURE OF TEACHING THROUGH THE MEANING FOCUSED METHOD

In this chapter, the writer discusses the procedures of teaching speaking through the meaning focused method. The procedures can be classified into three activities: pre-teaching activities, whilst-teaching activities, post-teaching activities.

3.1 Pre-Teaching Activities

The purpose of pre-teaching is to help the students to focus their mind on the topic. Marlina (2012) says that to stimulate the students' background knowledge,

teacher should do pre-teaching activities. The procedures of pre-teaching activities are greeting and brainstorming.

- The teacher comes into the classroom and greets the whole class.
- The teacher checks the attendance list.
- After that the teacher motivates the students to do brainstorming by using picture.

3.2 Whilst-Teaching Activities

In whilst-teaching activities. The teacher elaborates the material to the students. Sari (2013) says that the processes in whilst teaching activity as follow:

1. The teacher puts a picture on the board and make a list of word that relates to the picture
2. The teacher writes on the board "what do you think about this picture"?
3. The teacher explains the meaning of words one by one
4. The teacher divides students into groups of 3, each group interprets different images. And teacher asks the students present the results of their discussion to the class.
5. The teacher asks the students to show the result of discussion for 5 minutes in front of the class.

6. The teacher gives a point to the students' performance if the word is correct and still another point if the sentence is pronounced loudly and clearly. Other students can also get a point if they do some to students performance.
7. The teacher gives some comment and suggestion

3.3 Post-Teaching Activities

Post teaching is intended to review the material students have got in whilst teaching. Monalisa (2012) says that the teacher leads the students to conclude about the topic. In this activity, the teacher can test the students by giving some questions and then students make conclusion, based on the questions.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

4.1 Conclusions

Speaking is defined as the ability to use words in communication situation. Speaking has the following components, they are pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension. And then, the activities speaking by using meaning focused are, discussions, role play, simulations, storytelling and describing picture, etc. And for speaking is

a complex skill that makes students often shy to appear in front of the class.

Therefore, teachers should be able to find effective method to improve learners' speaking ability. This paper has discussed the meaning focused method as a method for teaching speaking. With the meaning-focused method for teaching speaking, learners use their previous knowledge to speak about the topic. And activate their linguistic knowledge to recognize linguistic elements-vowels, consonants, words, and sentences to do the construction of meaning. With this, it is clear that the meaning-focused method relates the learners' background knowledge and experience with what they are going to speak. On the other hand, they pay attention to the words and sentence structure when speaking.

4.2 Suggestions

- a. Teachers should find plenty to talk before coming to class, such as discussion, role play, storytelling and many other activities that make students interested in learning to talk.
- b. Teachers must be able to measure the knowledge and experience of the students with optimum background.

- c. Teachers should not be too stingy in giving values for testing students' speaking ability.

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