

ENGLISH CORNER” A SETTING TO SUPPORT CLT SUCCESS ENHANCING STUDENTS’ SPEAKING SKILL

Nur Muthmainnah
thelightnura@gmail.com

IAIN Salatiga

ABSTRACT

The lack of practice makes speaking difficult to be acquired by students. It is because students do not have any chance to practice speaking outside of class. Moreover, the limited time to learn English in the class only gives students very little time to practice their language. English Corner a designed place which is used to practice English is expected to enhance student’s English skill, especially speaking. It is not a class but a room which is designed very interesting and instagammable to make students willing to come and practice freely without any force and supervision. This concept was derived from Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) stating that language is communication. Thus, the goal of learning language is that students are able to communicate the language in written or oral form. This paper attempts to reveal how to make students practice their English outside their class. This discussion found that English corner can be a solving to break the problem of students who do not have any chance to practice their speaking outside of class. This setting is expected to be a center to learn more about English especially practicing their speaking.

Keywords: English Corner, CLT, Speaking Skill

ABSTRAK

Kurangnya praktik berbicara menyebabkan siswa susah menguasai kemampuan berbicara. Hal ini disebabkan oleh tidak adanya kesempatan berbicara menggunakan bahasa Inggris di luar kelas. Terlebih kurangnya jam pelajaran bahasa Inggris yang memberikan mereka kesempatan untuk belajar berbicara. “English Corner” (Pojok Bahasa Inggris) merupakan sebuah tempat yang didisain khusus bagi para siswa untuk praktik bahasa Inggris diharapkan mampu meningkatkan kemampuan bahasa Inggris siswa khususnya berbicara. Tempat ini bukanlah kelas tetapi satu ruang khusus yang didisain sangat menarik dan instagammable agar siswa mau datang dan mempraktekan kemampuan bahasa Inggris mereka tanpa ada paksaan dan pengawasan. Konsep ini merujuk pada metode Pembelajaran Bahasa Komunikatif (CLT) yang menyatakan bahwa bahasa adalah komunikasi. Sehingga tujuan dari belajar bahasa adalah siswa mampu mengkomunikasikan bahasa dalam bentuk tulisan maupun lisan. Makalah ini mencoba menemukan bagaimana cara agar siswa mampu mempraktikkan kemampuan bahasa Inggris mereka selain di kelas. Setelah dikaji, ditemukan bahwa “English Corner” (Pojok Bahasa Inggris) dapat menjadi pemecahan permasalahan bagi siswa yang tidak mempunyai kesempatan mempraktikkan kemampuan berbicara mereka di luar kelas. Ruangan ini diharapkan mampu menjadi pusat belajar Bahasa Inggris khususnya praktik bahasa Inggris.

Kata Kunci: Pojok Bahasa Inggris, CLT, Kemampuan Berbahasa

INTRODUCTION

English as the international language is taught at school level to prepare students to face global era starting from their learning stage. In Indonesia, students learn English starting from their 3 years of junior high school and three years of senior high school, even some elementary schools teach their students English as the additional subject. In the other hand, when the students graduated from their senior high school, almost of them still have some problems to practice their English ability in their daily life.

This fact happens to almost of senior high school alumni. When they meet foreigners or are asked to speak English they get difficulty to practice their English. It shows that the main goal of learning language has not met although it has been learned for more than six years. The goal that has been met in their study was only how students could be success doing the English national examination as one of the requirement for them to pass the national examination that is conducted in the end of each level of education.

This phenomenon happens because teachers only taught English structurally rather functionally. The main point to teach English is to pass the exam rather than making them to be able to communicate using English. That is why almost of senior high school alumni get difficulty to speak English although they have learned English for about six years. They learned to speak English at class only in few meetings for the sake of introduction. They were only asked to practice dialog and follow their teacher to pronounce them well rather than producing speaking purely.

Although many researchers criticize Karshen's input theory (1981), none would disagree with the idea that meaningful comprehensible about is an important source of language learning. From the statement about it can be said that, teacher should give any stimulus consciously or not to make students accustomed to practicing and learning language (Nation & Newton: 2009).

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a method to teach language that emphasizes on communication rather than its structure. Formerly, CLT is described as exclusively meaning-based with no attention to language form while the latter tend to characterize CLT as some combination of formal and functional aspects of language (Spada: 2007). It means that CLT emphasizes on communication rather than the structure. The main goal of language learning is to communicate with other using the language itself without seeing how their grammar and pronunciation are.

Teaching English using CLT is not enough to make students speak more fluently, it needs more time to practice English outside the class. In this case, as English teacher we should provide more chance to them to practice their English. Moreover, in Indonesia, English becomes international language and is not spoken in daily life. Teacher can make additional activity or design special room outside the class which is provided to practice the students' English ability. English corner is any corner (appropriate place) on a university campus for students to practice their oral English in their spare time. English corners began to be popular in the early 1980's in China because they provided an English-speaking environment to reinforce the oral skills learned in the class. Today, English corners exist in all universities in China, but with its function limited to only oral practice (Shankar: 2008). This article would like to explore how important designing an English corner to support CLT in increasing student's speaking ability.

Speaking is one of language skills that are learned by language learners. It is useful for them to master because learning to speak means they learn how to express their idea and feeling. People will know our brilliant idea about something that finally followed with new invention. According to Cotterhue (2008: 1), speaking is the most used skill in the real world (along with listening) which contains some effective activities which stretch the skill of the class. It is used most frequently in our

daily life because it is the most effective way to communicate to other people directly or indirectly. Speaking can more or less be divided into two categories: accuracy (focuses on the correct use of grammar, vocabulary, and other skills) and fluency (the ability to speak smoothly and clearly).

In addition, Thornburry in Nur Muthmainnah (2012: 10) defined speaking as interactive and requires the ability to co-operate in the management of speaking turns. It also typically takes place in real time, with little time for detailed planning. Certainly, this definition implies that speaking is created interactively among speakers. And surely the speakers must be able to manage the speaking turns. For example, they have to know when they could start to speak or stop.

Speaking is productive skill means that speaking is a skill that requires a process of producing a language in oral form. It is a productive skill that can be directly and empirically observed; those observations are invariably colored by accuracy and effectiveness of a test taker's listening skill, which necessarily compromises the reliability and validity of an oral production test (Brown, 2004: 140).

According to Brown and Yule in Richard (2008) speaking functions as talk and it has three forms of talks; talks as interaction, talk as transaction and talk as performance. Talk as interaction means talk is used to interact or to have conversation with others. When people meet, they exchange greetings, engage in small talk, recount recent experiences, and so on because they wish to be friendly and to establish a comfortable zone of interaction with others. The focus is more on the speakers and how they wish to present themselves to each other than on the message. It means that the important thing is that people want to speak up using English and convey a dialog or conversation with others although what they talk about is not meaningful enough.

From the explanation above it can be concluded that the main point that speaking is a skill where the subject of speaking produce a language orally and convey a conversation with others without considering the meaning or content of what they are talking about.

On the other hand, there are some problems that causes why students could not enhance their speaking ability although they have learned English for many years. According to Hersulastuti (2012) research result there are three factors that influence student's motivation in learning language:

1. Worthwhile goal and clear objectives; Appropriate goals and objectives can give direction and the willingness to work-in other words improve motivation. Some students state that the more they know the benefit of learning a certain topic lectured in class, the more meaningful the learning will be. It gives good impact on their learning. It also generates their motivation to explore more of the material.
2. Self-confidence; It is the most significant in language-learning. It provides learners with the motivation and energy to become positive about their own learning. It also creates the drive in them to acquire the targeted language, enjoy the learning process and experience real communication. A specific situation may cause them become lack of confident especially when they are assigned to have oral presentation. This is caused by their readiness to perform in front of class and their belief whether they can do it well or not.
3. Variety of Activities and Interaction; the most carefully planned activities will not always guarantee the success and enhance students' motivation to take participation in learning. It will motivate students only if they are related with the students' interest, needs, and aspirations.

Most of students explain that they basically, like to involve in various activities which generate them to do something or even make them move from one activity to others.

From the result of observation above it shows that one of items that motivate students in learning language is variety of activities and interaction. It is a must to teacher to choose class activities that can raise students' motivation in the class. A student centered activity will challenge them in learning language. They can explore their ability without any force from their teacher. Moreover, students will be more autonomous when they have chance to do more activities.

McCarthy in Richard (2001) the change of language learning goal has affected the change of language teaching method. In the 1970's we were just nearing the end of a period during which grammar had a controlling influence on language teaching. approaches to grammar teaching and the design of course books at that time reflected a view of language that saw the sentence and sentence grammar as forming the building blocks of language, language learning and language use The goal of language teaching was to understand how sentences are used to create different kinds of meaning, to master the underlying rules for forming sentences from lower-level grammatical units such as phrases and clauses, and to practice using them as the basis for written and spoken communication. Syllabuses were essentially grammar-based and grammar was a primary focus of teaching technique (Richard: 2001). Formerly, Audiolingual method was a popular method applied in language teaching. the theories of language which is used in audio-lingual method is structural theories which has characteristics as follows: (a) elements in a language were thought of as being linearly produced in a rule-governed (structured) way; (b) language samples could be exhaustively described at any structural level of description (phonetic, phonemic, morphological, etc.); (c) linguistics level were thought of as system within systems- that is as being pyramidal structured. In fact, there were some problems happened in the language teaching; (a) students could not practice the language naturally, (b) They were afraid of practicing the language because of grammar mistake or the lack of vocabulary, (c) Students were only taught about structural language than functional language. In that years, a reaction to traditional language teaching approaches began and soon spread around the world as older methods such as audiolingualism and situational language teaching fell out of fashion. The centrality of grammar in language teaching and learning was questioned, since it was argued that language ability involved much more than grammatical competence (Richard: 2006).

This case forced language scholars formed a new method that solved the problems happened to the language learners. The notion of communicative competence was developed within the discipline of linguistics (or more accurately, the sub-discipline of sociolinguistics) and appealed to many within the language teaching profession, who argued that communicative competence, and not simply grammatical competence, should be the goal of language teaching (Richard: 2006).in the 1970's ushered in an era of change and innovation in language teaching methodology. This was the decade during which communicative language teaching came to replace Audiolingualism and the Structural-Situational Approach (Richard: 2001). Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has different characteristics than the previous one they are; (a) English as a practical tool; (b) English is as a world commodity; (c) English learning is no necessarily linked to US or British cultural values; (d) Mother

tongue influenced accent acceptable as well as native-speaker accent; (e) comprehensibility is the target).

Since then, CLT has become worldwide and emerged some novel method such as TPR, Silent Way, Counseling learning. Finally, CLT has become an approach because it became the umbrella term of some new methods such as jigsaw, fishbowl, and so on.

Richard (2006) proposed that there are some principles which are elaborated in Communicative Language Teaching: the goal of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom.

1. In the language learning, grammatical competence is an important dimension of language learning, and not all grammatical involved in learning a language since one can master the rules of sentence formation in language and still not be very successful at being able to use the language for meaningful communication. The communicative competence includes some aspects of language knowledge ; knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and function; knowing how to vary our use of language based on the setting and the participant; knowing how to produce and understand different types of texts; knowing how to maintain communication despite having limitation in one's language knowledge.
2. There are some changes in the role of learning. In CLT, learners are the subject of learning not object of learning so they are active in the class. The class atmosphere when it uses CLT as method are: there is an interaction between learners and language user; learners make collaboration to create a task or meaning; learners produce language that needs meaningful interaction; it meets an understanding between learner and the interlocutor; there are some feedback when the learner use the language; learners learn to comprehend what other says and tries to incorporate them in the new form; they learn and have competence to express thing in some variation.
3. There are some interactive activities elaborated in CLT class such as pair work, role plays, group work, and project work and so on.
4. In CLT teacher becomes facilitator and monitor rather than being a model who correct the learner's speech or writing. Students should be active in the classroom activities that tend to be cooperative rather than individualistic. They also had to pay attention more listening to their peers in group work or pair work tasks. They had more responsibility in learning activities.

Richards (2005) stated 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 relay life.

Mainly there are three forms of activities in CLT; mechanical practice, meaningful activity, and communicative activity. According to Richard (2005) mechanical practice is a controlled practice activity which students can successfully carry out without necessarily understanding the language they are using. The example of activities that support this terms are repetition drills, substitution drills and so on. While meaningful practice is an activity where language control is still provided but where students are required to make meaningful choices when carrying out practice. This term can be practiced through an activity when students are given a map then they are asked to make a dialog based

on the map provided. Communicative practice is an activity 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. This term gives freedom to students to practice their own language for example they are asked to make a map by themselves then they are asked to practice dialog directly to their surroundings.

Gao (2009) states that English Corner refers to regular meetings that English learners voluntarily organize in public places to practice oral English. According to this definition, it can be inferred that language corner is not always a room but also can be a spot in a public area that is used to gather some people to practice English.

Nata (2003) defined English corner as a place that is used to identify with each other and to have a forum to practice their English speaking skills. It means that it is not always located in the corner of building or room that is used to gather among language learner to practice their English ability. As time passed, people started using English corner to make speeches and conduct other language activity not only speaking but also discussion. This place is not only used to practice speaking but also any skills of English (listening, reading, and writing). In China, all of the Foreign Experts and Chinese English teachers were required to spend one hour making themselves available for the students to engage in idle chitchat or whatever the students wanted to discuss, in English of course (Nata: 2003).

CLT AS A METHOD TO ACTIVATE STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILL

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) a method that brought a change in language teaching terms give freedom to students to practice their speaking. Students are forced to be active in the class without considering their grammar and vocabulary mastery. The main point in this method is that students want to speak up and share their idea in the class. They do not feel shy or be introvert in the class because of the lack of grammar or vocabulary mastery. Ridge (2000) stated that the teaching of grammar is not to be confused with a return to the arid terrain of formal grammar but rather aims to provide learners with a powerful resource so that they can achieve meaning in a purposeful way and interpret it as well.

CLT now has become a language teaching approach because it is the umbrella term of many methods emerged nowadays. The newest method corresponds to the basic theory of CLT that emphasize the language learning to the language production rather than grammar. CLT cannot now be defined in terms of precise characteristics but serves rather as an umbrella term for approaches that aim to develop communicative competence through personally meaningful learning experience (Littlewood: 2013).

The methods that derived from CLT approach can be used to activate students in the class especially in speaking. Harmer in Zardini & Barnabe (2013) stated that teaching speaking based on the communicative approach involves speaking activities that tend to follow the same basic patten: engage-study-activate (ESA); Engage session is used when the class seems to be bored. Teacher tries to attract students attention and involve them around theme proposed; Study session is when students tend to

investigate and understand the element composed in the grammatical features; Activate session is when the section provides students an opportunity to put practice everything that was previously learned.

DESIGNING ENGLISH CORNER TO SUPPORT CLT CONCEPT

CLT a method that can improve students' language ability should be maintained not only in the class but also outside of the class. Using this method outside of this class is not merely having a class outside of the time scheduled but teacher provides a place and media that corresponds to CLT outside of the class. So, English corner as the rendezvous for students to improve their ability should be provided.

Almuntawa and Kailani in Majid (2006) state that the communicative approach focuses on the use of language in everyday situations, or the functional aspects of language, and less on the formal structures. However, critics believe that there needs to be some sort of "bridge" between the two in order for effective language learning. It means that CLT not only focuses on formal language teaching which is well planned by teacher in the class. The additional activities outside the class can be the bridge to strengthen the activities done in the class. It will make students have more practices after learning the language in the class.

ENGLISH CORNER A PLACE TO DIG UP STUDENTS' AUTONOMY AND CONFIDENCE

According to Guo (2011), learner autonomy refers to a learner taking charge of his or her own learning. Out-of-class learning is one application of learner autonomy (Benson, 2007); that is to say, learner autonomy generally goes hand in hand with out-of-class learning (Balçikanli, 2010) and out-of-class learning serves as a platform in which students could fully develop their learner autonomy.

A more teacher-centered instructional mode is a traditional teaching method that is widely adopted in Chinese schools. The "traditional" approach involves teachers delivering and directing a formal class lesson according to an exam-oriented curriculum plan and textbook at school with parents supervising the students' homework at home. This mode is dominated by the teachers and as students are occupied with following the instructions of the teacher, they have few chances to develop learner autonomy (Yiwen: 2016).

It is not easy to change the paradigm from teacher centered to student centered language learning. Chow & Mok-Cheung (2004, p. 158) refer to the shift from a teacher-centred pedagogy to a student-centred CLT pedagogy as a 'quantum leap' in the transmission-oriented context of Hong Kong schools. It needs time to adapt the new paradigm until it finally can be applied smoothly in language class. Teacher has important role to make their students be more autonomous in the class.

In Socio-cultural terms, autonomy is the capacity to self confidence gained in achieving a degree of autonomy, however fleeting can be a powerful incentive for taking further risks in this direction. This is why classroom speaking activities that involve minimal assistance, and where learners can take risks and boost their confidence, provide an important launch pad for subsequent real world language use English corner can maximize speaking opportunities and increase the chance that learners will experience autonomous language use (Shankar: 2008).

DESIGNING ENGLISH CORNER CONCEPT

Designing room to activate students speaking outside the class will need creativity and make them be comfortable to stay longer in that room. Here are some tips that can be applied to interact student to come to that room and practice their language:

1. Setting: you have to decide a certain room which is reachable. You should arrange your room as comfortable as you can. You can put any chairs and sofa, small bar or canteen, and put an air conditioner to make it cooler. You can paint any motivating proverbs or pictures dealing with learning. Although it is not class you can provide any LCD, computer, white board and others to ease students if they want to discuss or explain something to others.
2. Media: provide any media to be used by students to practice at room such as magic card containing certain topic or theme that the student can pick one to be discussed with others. Provide also any new movie or music. They will be attracted to watch then they can conduct a discussion dealing with the movie or song.
3. Student and Teacher role: let students express their language freely without any evaluation or judgment. They can practice speaking with their friends without any burden. They also can do other language activities comfortably. Teacher only facilitates the activity if needed. He also provides or writes any vocabularies, topic, or questions on whiteboard so that students can practice it in English corner.

Speaking is crucial language skills that the students should master. In the other hand, this is not easy to most of students to master the skill although they have learned the language for many years. Practicing speaking not only conveying orally but also is able to creatively express idea naturally. CLT a method proposed in 1970's changed the previous paradigm about learning language is started by learning grammar and structure. It emphasizes language learning on how learner can communicate with others using the language. As time goes by, CLT has become approach as the umbrella term of any methods which are in line with CLT theoretical framework. On the other hand, CLT is limited to be practiced in the class. In addition, students should practice the language not only in the class but also outside the class if they would like to improve their language gradually. English Corner can be designed to support the classroom activities to enhance the students speaking skill. It is a place which is specially designed and prepared as the place for students to practice their language capability especially speaking. they can discuss, having chitchat or practice conversation, and doing some other activities that can improve their language ability. CLT activities can also be conducted at English Corner to make variation and avoid students bore in the class while having English class.

REFERENCES

- Balçikanlı, C. (2010). *Learner Autonomy in Language Learning: Student Teachers' Belief*. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*.
- Benson, P. (2007). *Autonomy in Language Teaching and Learning*. *Language Teaching*
- Brown, H. Douglas. 2004 *Principles of language learning and teaching*. Fifth edition. New York: Prentice Hall Regents. Englewood Cliffs.

- Cotterhue. (2008). *ESL: Speaking for Advanced Students*. Retrieved from <http://cotterhue.hubpages.com/hub/>
- Chow, A. & Mok-Cheung, A. (2004). *English language teaching in Hong Kong SAR: Tradition, transition and transformation*. In Ho & Wong (Eds.)
- Gao, X. (2009). *The English Corner as an Out of Class Learning Activity*. ELT Journal
- Guo, S.C. (2011). *Impact of an Out of Class Activity on Students' English Awareness, Vocabulary, and Autonomy*. Journal of Language Education in Asia
- Hersulastuti. (2012). *Exploring Factors Influencing Student's Motivation in English Learning*. Journal of Magistra No. 81 Th. XXIV September 2012
- Littlewood, William. 2013. *Developing a Context-Sensitive Pedagogy for Communication-Oriented Language Teaching*. Majid Al Humaidy. 2006. Communicative Language Teaching
- Nata. R. (2003) *Progress in Education*. New York: Nova Science Publishers
- Nation, I.S.P & Newton. J. (2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL: Listening and Speaking*. New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- Nur Muthmainnah. 2012. *The Effectiveness of Bingo Review to Teach Speaking*. Unpublished Thesis
- Richard, J.C. & Rodgers. T.S. (2001). *Approaches and Method in Language Teaching* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richard, J.C. (2005). *30 Years of TEFL*. Singapore:RELC
- _____. (2006). *Communicative Language Teaching Today*. Singapore: RELC
- _____. (2008). *Teaching Listening and Speaking: From Theory to Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ridge. Elaine. 2000. *Communicative Language Teaching: Some of the Challenges for Teacher Trainers in South Africa*. Retrieved from <http://perlinguam.journals.ac.za>
- Shankar, Prem. (2008). *Teaching of English*. New Delhi: A P H Publishing Corporation
- Spada, Nina. (2007). *Communicative Language Teaching: Current Status and Future Prospect International*. *Handbook of English Language Teaching* doi 10.1007/978-0-387-46301-8_20
- Zardini, Mariana Castaldi & Barnabe, Flavia Herker Lopes. (2013). *How to Improve the Speaking Skills Through the Communicative Approach*. Journal of Language Teaching. Volume.9 Number 2 July-december 2013