STUDENT CENTERED LEARNING: AN APPROACH TO DEVELOP SPEAKING SKILL IN EFL CLASSROOM

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Abstract

This paper brings to light, the importance of an approach in learning speaking; a student centered learning approach. The researcher pays so much attention on this approach caused the necessity of students in globalization era that required them to master the English especially in terms of communication. A key issue here is whether what happens in a speaking classroom is concerned with "teaching speaking". Student-centered learning is focused on the student's needs, abilities, interests, and learning styles with the teacher as a facilitator of learning. This classroom teaching method acknowledges student voice as central to the learning experience for every learner. The relationship between student-centered approach and the speaking skill is relevant. This approach creates learning by doing situation. The students can develop their speaking skill through the realization of tasks, which are devised along with the students and taking into consideration their needs and characteristics.

Keywords: students-centered approach, teaching speaking, EFL classroom.

Introduction

In the age of "globalism" we live nowadays, the interdependence of nations and countries creates a need for a global language and no language qualifies for this better than English (Abousenna, 1995). Over the last decades, English has become the most important foreign language in the word. As a tool of international communication, English is used in some aspects of life; science, commerce, advertising, diplomacy and transmitting advanced technology. The status of English on the international level is a major factor that contributes to the increase in the importance of English in Indonesia. As a matter of fact, English has become an important asset for anyone seeking employment in business, industry or technology in Indonesia.

Taking into account the importance of developing EFL speaking skills, it is vital to determine that the learners have to acquire in order to converse with native language speakers. Furthermore, Khamkhien (2010) clarified that teaching and learning English is crucial for communicative purposes to meet the demands of globalization and to deal with the growing local, national and international demands for English skills.

However, there was debate that majority of high school graduates cannot speak English properly (Alonzo, 2014). Then, it was a need of an approach to establish a comfortable and low low-threat learning environment for the purpose of second language acquisition. Nunan (1991) wrote that success (in speaking) is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the (target) language. Hence, in order to enable learners to speak English fluently, a teaching approach is needed. Student centered learning. Collins and O'Brien (2003) clarified it as an instructional approach in which students influence the content, activities, material, an pace of learning. This learning model places the students as the center of learning process. The teacher provides students the opportunities to learn independently and from one another coaches them in the skills they need to do effectively.

More it was stated that SCL approach includes such techniques as substituting active learning experiences for lectures, assigning open-ended problems and problems requiring critical or creative thinking that cannot be solved by following text examples, involving students in simulations and role plays, and using self-paced and/or cooperative (team based) learning.

1. Student Centered Learning

Student-centered learning is an` approach to education focusing on the needs of the students, rather than those of others involved in the educational process, such as teachers and administrators. Bowers and Flinders (1990) identified teacher-centered model as an industrial production in which student is a product and behaviors of "exit skills" or "out comes". Also, the learner-centered approach means self and life-long education when teachers should change their traditional roles from teller to coordinator and from material users to teaching material providers (Baldauf & Moni, 2006).

Student-centered learning is focused on the student's needs, abilities, interests, and learning styles with the teacher as a facilitator of learning. This classroom teaching method acknowledges student voice as central to the learning experience for every learner.

There are two specific approaches to students-centered learning. The first one was derived from the research on child development and involves experimentation and play as valuable forms of learning and interaction. Play involves the novel combinations of ideas, and the hypothetical outcomes of imagined events and situations. It represents the form of mental exploration, where children learn to create, work out and reflect their understanding. Another approach, where teachers uses the actual experimentation, testing and manipulation of ideas in reality, allows children to have concrete, direct feedback on the precision their ideas as they proceed in working them out. Both exploration and play are self-motivated and self-structured processes of learning that encourage children to interact and reflect on their ideas in the process of learning and acquiring new knowledge (Altan & Trombly, 2001). Here, the process of playing and doing experiment done by the students becomes the powerful way to develop individual thinking and creativity.

2. Student Centered Learning Approach in Teaching Speaking

Speaking is the most fundamental for language skill. Poonpon (2017) studying English does not only mean focusing on syntactic accuracy or grammar. Instead, it means giving opportunities to learners to use English in real life contexts. Furthermore, Brown (2007) defined speaking as a process that implies meaning, interaction and therefore communication. The context takes an important role in the interchange since it helps the participants understand the message by paying attention to the physical environment, the purpose and the experiences that people possess.

Hasan (2014) found that student had perception that learning speaking was hard because the process was presented in an old way. Hence, the teachers used traditional approach that focused on grammar, vocabulary rather than communication. In other words, students were not involved in authentic communicative tasks.

In order to solve this problem, SCL was the best approach to be used from the need of establishing and low threat environment, essential for mastering the full range of discourse needed for spontaneous communication.

Also this study establishes that there was a need to bridge up the gap between teachers and learners to help achieve. Learner-centered learning environments recognize that the prior knowledge of learners powerfully influences future learning and thus attempt to build on prior knowledge. Assessment-centered learning environments provide opportunities for feedback and improvement throughout the learning process leading to evaluation and judgment at the end of assessment for feedback and improvement is referred to as formative assessment while assessment for conclusive evaluation and judgment is referred to as summative assessment. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) indicate that formative assessment can promote the development of capacities and attitudes used in lifelong learning. Assessment-centered learning environments also emphasize congruence between learning goals and what is assessed (National Research Council, 1999). Finally, community-centered environments recognize that individual learners take many cues and insights from learners around them, so that community-centered learning environments facilitate purposeful interactions among learners to promote and sustain learning. For the purposes of this essay, learning environments are student-centered to the degree to which they are concurrently knowledge-centered, learner-centered, assessment-centered, and community-centered.

Parthibah (2015) introduced some activities could be used to develop speaking skill

a. *Role Play*

Students should be chosen to play some roles, may be between two or three. Familiar roles should be chosen to practice oral skill. It is because while concentrating on developing the language skill, they should not hunt for ideas. The roles may be, a police and a thief, a passenger and a conductor, a doctor and a patient, etc. The teacher should necessarily give the situation on which they will have to play their roles. For example, if the students have to play the role of a doctor and a patient, then the teacher has to give the problem of the patient. Suppose, the patient is, scared of undergoing a surgery, then the role play should focus on this aspect where the doctor has to advice the patient with the zero risk involved in a. surgery with much sophisticated machines used for surgery

b. *Debate*

Debate is one of the exercises that involves all the students in the class and it is the main means of developing oral skill.

c. *Seminar*

Seminar is the other means through which oral proficiency can be attained. The topic of the Seminar may be the choice of the presenter. If teacher gives, the topic should be given in line with the level of the students. A creative teacher does not encourage his students to just read out a write up. Seminars should be interesting. The presenter should carry out this activity in interactive mode.

d. *Group Discussion*

Participating in a group discussion is the need of the hour for the job seekers. This necessity of the students can be effectively exploited as a motivator to develop oral skill. Group Discussion requires a quick perception on the topic. The other pre-requisites of group discussion are language fluency and rationally unyielding to the arguments of others. Cooperative Learning is getting momentum now-a-days. Group Discussion may be a tool for cooperative learning.

e. *Pair Work*

Pair work is another technique that develops oral skill. The students‟

will be set in pairs. A task is given to them. They have to discuss and complete the task in pairs. The English teacher can even request the class teacher to make seating arrange that will facilitate pair work.

f. *Narrating Stories*

Students may be asked to tell some stories to develop oral skill. Story telling is an interesting enterprise for the students. Without much conscious effort, the students will develop their oral skill.

g. *Language Games*

Language Games motivate the learners to learn English. Games can be used to develop all the four skills, the main being speech skill. The teachers should have exposure to conduct games to improve the language of his students. They have to create a right kind of atmosphere to carry out the language games activities.

h. *Narrating Incidents*

Students can be asked to narrate some incidents that they witnessed. As the incident is very much alive in their memory, while narrating incidents they enhance their ability in speech skill in English. The teacher has to supply the word if the student requires any. Moreover, the teacher has to correct the student if he uses any wrong word or expression. But he has to ensure that he does not interrupt quite often which will make the student to lose interest and may pay a disheveled approach towards narrating incidents.

i. *Interpreting Data*

Data on the growth of import of wheat or any other item can be given for a certain period. Students have to analyze and interpret the rise and fall of the import of the chosen item.

j. *Describing and interpreting Features*

Students are given some pictures. They have to describe the picture quite vividly. The teacher can ask even sonic comprehension questions from the pictures.

k. *Interview*

Students can be trained to acquaint with the aspects of interviewing. The teacher can appoint one student as a celebrity, like Sachin Tendulkar and another student for interviewing him. This would be quite interesting and the students can develop their speech skill very easily.

l. *Extempore Speeches*

Extempore speeches are the speeches that are made on the spot without any predetermination. Students are expected to have at least a little knowledge on familiar topics. The teacher should not prefer to give the topic that his students are not familiar with. (p.22).

Conclusion

The relationship between student-centered approach and the speaking skill is relevant. This approach creates learning by doing situation. The students can develop their speaking skill through the realization of tasks, which are devised along with the students and taking into consideration their needs and characteristics.

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