



ENHANCING STUDENTS' COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE THROUGH DAILY LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES

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ABSTRACT

There are two main competences that should be developed during the language learning process, Grammatical Competence and Communicative Competence. The former deals with the ability to generate and construct some types of grammatical sentences, while the latter is the actual use of language in a real situation, and in various kinds of language use in different context. Once the students can master the rules of sentence structure, but they are not successful at being able to use the language in meaningful communication. For those reasons, the language teacher should design the learning process that encourage their student to speak and communicate actively. Daily language activities is one way which is hoped that both competences, especially the communicative competence can be reached in foreign language learning. The students, then, understand how to vary the language use according to the setting and their purpose to speak. This qualitative research aimed to describe the language teaching model through daily language activities implemented in Pesantren, in order to help the students master the communicative competence well. In collecting the data the researcher used observation and indepth interview to know the real condition of the teaching method and strategies used by Pesantren in teaching the foreign language, and some factors affecting the success of language teaching. Finally, the findings showed that the daily language activities can improve the students' communicative competence.

Keywords: enhancing students', communicative competence, language activities



Introduction

Language is a tool for self expression, giving opinion, solving the problem, and it is really important in communication, both in verbal and non-verbal ways. That is why in this globalization era English is one language that has spread widely and becomes a major language among the other language in the international relationship.

For those, some educational institutions has made English as a major part of its curriculum, so English has been taught since the elementary to the university. It aims to give ability and competence to use the language actively both in oral and written form which is named the language competence. Unfortunately, to reach this language competence, including the communicative and grammatical competence, is not an easy thing, teacher always concentrates to develop the grammatical competence in teaching the language to the students, the ability to construct the sentences which grammatically correct, becomes the most important for the language learning focus, making errors is omitted so the students are afraid to make mistake during speaking and writing. As a result, it makes them seldom to speak, they prefer no to use the language than make grammatical errors. They, then, will not be able to use the language in active conversation and suit the language with its context, where the language used.

Consequently, the main purpose of language learning should be the communicative competence including: knowledge about how the language used to convey the different function and purpose, knowledge about how to vary the language based on its setting, formal and informal, knowledge about the communication strategy with people from different countries, etc.

In order to reach the language competence above, some daily activities has been designed by Pesantren to promote their students master the foreign language well, to give more opportunity to the students to practice and interact with the target language, and habituate them to live in the target language environments.

Communicative competence is a language skill including: knowledge about how the language used to convey the different function and purpose, knowledge about how to vary the language based on its setting, formal and informal, knowledge about how to create and understand many kinds of text, knowledge about the communication strategy with people from different countries, etc. Chomsky (1965) made a distinction between 'grammatical competence' and 'performance.' The former is the linguistic knowledge of the idealized native speaker, an innate biological function of the mind that

allows individuals to generate the infinite set of grammatical sentences that constitutes their language, and the latter is the actual use of language in concrete situations.

So the purpose of language learning is to promote the students make the various language based on the situation and condition where the language is used. The language used in real life such as the student live in the environment where the target language commonly used. They will learn how to interpret and understand the language heard from the speaker, then respond it with the most appropriate response. Canale dan Swain (1980: 20) said Communicative competence is a synthesis of knowledge of basic grammatical principles, knowledge of how language is used in social settings to perform communicative functions, and knowledge of how utterances and communicative functions can be combined according to the principles of discourse.

From the statement above, it is clear when someone has learned the language he should have the knowledge of language structure and be able to use that language to communicate with others based on the language context. That is why the process of language learning should cover the following process, such as: the process of living up the target language environment where the language mostly spoken, the process of interacting between students in the target language, and the process of communication between the students and the language user in real language interaction. Those process will lead the students to the language competence better.

There are some important factors influence the language learning, Wilkins (1976) said, they are including: educational context, social context, pupil, and teacher. Educational context is including the time which is designed or provided to reach the certain level or skill as the purpose of teaching and learning process, and also the intensity or the learning frequence to interact with the target language. The more intensive the students interact with the language, the more fluent and mastered they will be. In addition, the student number in a class, the method and technique, and the book used in teaching learning process are also important.

While the social context is including the place and the language learning environment which enable the students to have more interaction to the target language, and also the attitude and behavior of the people around towards the target language. Meanwhile, the students' factor is related to their interest, motivation, and attitude towards the language. The teacher factor is related to his/ her skill, knowledge, and mastery in the target language.

From the above discussion, there are some principles of foreign language learning, are as follows: (1) the learning purpose should be

determined clearly; (2) The language learning activity should be representative and appropriate with the determined purpose; (3) Learner or student should be provided by the good example of the target language use; and (4) It is important to learn the meaning including the meaning of grammatical forms, the communicative function of spoken words, or the meaning of each lexical element. Language learning and language use. It is to compare all language process with the language learning activity, so that when the students use the target language they are also in process of learning that language.

Research Methods

This is a field research by using a phenomenology approach, where the researcher needs to study the real condition of the foreign language developing pattern in the Pesantren through Daily Language Activities. The results of this research will be explained in qualitative descriptive way, so it will be very clear in describing the implementation of Daily Language Activities in supporting the development of the students' communicative competence.

This research done in Pesantren Putri Ummul Quro Al-Islami Leuwiliang, Bogor, West Java Indonesia. This place is taken with some reasons, such as: this pesantren is one of the Modern Boarding School in Indonesia, which has implemented Daily Language Activities in the process of foreign language learning, supported by language discipline and curriculum which enable the students to learn the foreign language easily.

In collecting the demanded data, the researcher used some instruments, are: indepth interview and observation. The interview is used to get the data from the students there about their response towards the implementation of Daily Language Activities. It used unstructured interview to get the complete and real description. While the observation is used to see and observe the process of Daily Language Activities implementation in Pesantren. The process is including take a look to the Daily Language Activities done by the students, the curriculum, regulation or language discipline made by the teacher, and how to build the awareness on using the target language. The data gotten from the interview and observation are analyzed by intersectionist phases as follows: that is the interview data will be reduced by clustering it, then choosing the most important one. While the observation data is used to record and explain the data descriptively. Finally, those analysis is used to calarify the data in order to get the clear and complete data about the implementation of daily language activities in enhancing the students' communicative competence.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Establishing the Language Environment

Some theory of language learning has mentioned that the main goal of language learning is communicative competence. It can be reached through continuous practice in the real process of communication or interaction, and this real process can only be done in the target language environment. It means when the language learners live in the target language environment, it gives them more opportunity to interact with others using the target language, because listening and practicing it everyday makes them fluent and master the target language well.

This, the language teacher should create the conducive language environment to make their students practice the target language as often as possible. Creating such environment has benefit as follows: (1) to habituate the students on the target language; (2) to give more practice to the students; (3) to provide a real setting of language use; (4) to train the students to respond to different expressions; and (5) to develop the students' communicative competence; (6) to make a perfect language fluency.

Based on those statement, Pesantren is one conducive place to live up the target language environment which enable their students to use the target language all the time. Living together in a dormitory ease the teacher to make a language rules which obligate all students to speak and communicate in target language everytime and everywhere.

In promoting the establishing of language environment, Pesantren has designed the curriculum which promote the development of the students' language competence. Almost 70% lessons delivered in foreign language, Arabic and English. The material is including: the four language skills, Arabic and English grammar, conversation, story telling, viseverse memorizing, vocabulary, etc. With those structure of curriculum will help the students to interact with the target language so often. Therefore, the students' language competence develops well during their study in Pesantren environment, because they can have a real situation and setting to convey every words based on its context. They communicate with the target language as if they live in that language derived. It means the language environment has functioned properly in promoting the development of the students' communicative competence.

Daily Language Activities in Pesantren

In the previous discussion has been mentioned, that Pesantren has many ways to increase the students' language mastery, one of them is by establishing the target language environment, as discussed above. Furthermore, Pesantren also designs some daily activities which can also give more opportunity for the students to have direct interaction with the target language. The activities are as follows:

Dawn vocabulary giving

It is a program which aims to give new vocabulary to the students after they have done dawn prayer. This activity is done in their own room with the defined theme and led by the manager of room. The vocabulary is arranged by part of OSIS (Student Organization) that is CLI (Central Language Improvement) then they deliver it to the manager of room.

Afternoon Conversation Program

In order to practice the vocabulary gotten from dawn vocabulary giving program, in the afternoon, the students will have the conversation program with their roommate, here they use new vocabulary during the conversation, and try to make different expression with these vocabulary.

Daily language use

In everyday life, the students of Pesantren is obligated to use the foreign language, Arabic and English, to interact and communicate whether with their friend, teacher, and every people there. Both in formal and non-formal activities, both inside and outside the classroom. It is the way to live up the target language environment, so they feel as if they live in that language country. They will not get service without using the language.

Night vocabulary memorizing

This program aims to give the strength memory towards the given vocabulary of that day, that is why it is done before the students go to bed, to make the brain remember well every words memorized.

Language intensive course for new students

To support the language activities above, Pesantren also provide an intensive language course for new students. The new students will not get difficulties in following the language rules regulated by Pesantren, and they can adjust the old students to join the language activities.

How to Run the Daily Language Activities Well?

Implementing all daily language activities above is not an easy thing, Pesantren should keep the consistence of those programs to be done by all the students. To succeed the programs Pesantren do several ways, such as:

Determining the language rules for all students.

Pesantren determines the language rules that is to use the language everytime and everywhere the students are. The rules then called language discipline, it is the rules to discipline the students to use the language in everyday

communication, when they break the rules they should have punishment so they will not repeat breaking the language rules

Assigning some students of OSIS to be Central Language Improvement (CLI) manager.

CLI manager have the responsibility to run the language rules (language discipline) above. Besides, they also have the obligation to improve the students' language mastery through daily, weekly, or annual language activities such as speech training, language fair and drama, and language reformation.

Leading the implementation of the daily language activities.

Teacher and CLI manager cooperate to manage and maintain the implementation of daily language activities. Supervising the program and controlling the quality of students language is done through language repairing to the students' common mistake and errors. Up-grading for the CLI manager is also conducted continually to strengthen their capacity in leading the language learning process.

Using Arabic and English language reference book in teaching and learning. In succeeding the language learning Pesantren also proposed some foreign language reference book for their material in formal teaching and learning. It aims to habituate the students to read the foreign language book.

Growing up the students' awareness to use the language

Above all, the students' motivation to learn the language and their interest towards the foreign language hold the most important factor in teaching learning process. That is why Pesantren always motivate the students to learn the language, show them the use of foreign language in this global era, to build their awareness towards the importance of that language, and then, when they are aware, their interest and motivation to learn the foreign language will also raise.

The Improvement of Students' Communicative Competence

After all, daily language activities in pesantren has great function in improving the students' communicative competence. The improvement is including:

The students' ability to communicate actively with the foreign language, both arabic and English.

The students' ability in the target language including the four language skill: reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

The students ability to review, translate or interpret the foreign language book.

The students readiness to face the global world challenge.

For those, because the daily language activities has really big impact towards the improvement of students' communicative competence, other education institution should also designed such activities to promote the language learning process.

CONCLUSION

Pesantren has applied the daily language activities to promote the developing of students' communicative competence. The daily language activities is including: dawn vocabulary giving, afternoon conversation program, daily language use, night vocabulary memorizing, and language intensive course for new students. The daily language activities helps Pesantren in enhancing the students' communicative competence, it is proved by the students' ability and mastery towards the foreign language. For those, the daily language activities indeed has a big effect on developing the students' mastery on the foreign language, especially on their communicative competence.

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