The influence of classroom based assessment and communicative approach in teaching-learning English for Indonesian learners

Idaryani, S.S., M. Tesol.
Malikussaleh University
poecut_ida@yahoo.com
Cell.Phone: 085261162604

Abstract

Indonesia is archipelago country and consists of hundreds different ethnic groups who speak more than seven hundred vernacular languages. Generally, Indonesian people are bilingual. They speak vernacular languages as their mother tongues and Bahasa Indonesia as means of communication among different ethnic groups. English is spoken as additional or foreign language. Since English is not means of communication for learners in their daily life, it will be very challenging for them in learning process moreover English is only learnt as prerequisite subject in many schools. It is believed that the implementation of Classroom Based Assessment (CBA) methods and communicative language teaching (CLT) in teaching-learning will encourage students in learning English. It is also expected that the method will enable the students to be more engaged during classroom activities. Since the assessment methods will evaluate and assess all learners' performances. The implementation of CBA and communicative approach of teaching is also expected to make learning English more interesting for learner so the learner will be aware that learning English can be as a fun activities. Communicative approach will enable students to be more active and enable them to do more interesting activities through speaking rather than sitting and listening to the teachers. The activities such as presentation, role play, and storytelling about attractive topics are expected to be more interested for students in teaching-learning process.

Keywords: communicative approach, teaching-learning, assessment, classroom activities

Introduction

According to Kachru (as cited in Harmer, 2007) the world of English is divided into 3 circles; inner circle countries which English is primary language such as in Britain, United Stated of America, and Australia; The outer circle consists of countries which English has become the official language and has been widely used as second language for instance India, Singapore, or Nigeria; The last one is expanding circle that consists of countries which English is learnt and taught as foreign language such as Hungary, Mexico, and Indonesia. Since English is now used as lingua franca widely by non native speaker, we should admit the world of English. Rajagopalan (as cited in Harmer, 2007) mentions that the language has belonged to everyone and is spoken by different situation and language background but no body may consider as the mother tongue.

Furthermore in Indonesian context, Bahasa Indonesia has become official and national language which is used for official purposes such as in schools, governmental offices and in any other formal occasion. It also becomes the symbol and identity of Indonesia while vernacular languages are generally spoken in daily activities among the member of ethic groups. Indonesia is in one of expanding circle countries where English is learnt and taught as a third language besides Arabic and other foreign languages and it is used in very limited contexts. English is spoken and used only by some people in some special occasions such as in International seminar or in an international air port. It is only used merely in particular domain and by particular social class. I agree with Baker (2007) that English does not have official status in many expanding circle countries such as Indonesia where English is not spoken with majority of

Indonesia population. Majority of people cannot speak English and have less opportunities to use or practice it.

Educational system

Educational system in Indonesia applies English as compulsory subject to learn from primary to tertiary level or become prerequisite unit for all field of studies except for the Universities whose English language program is offered. The famous teaching method applied by educational body or schools in learning English focus much more on traditional grammatical approach in order to emphasize the memorization of grammatical features such as simple present and past tense. "Traditional grammar is known for prescriptivism" (Kamyab & Goleobiowski, 2010). It concerns the using of correct rule of grammar and the avoiding structure that violates grammatical rules such as the using of word 'me' as the subject of sentence. It more focuses on grammatical competence rather than communicative competence which teacher becomes the centredness in learning process. It is believed that the method has less attention to speaking skill while learning a language such as English means to be able to apply all symbol and rules of target language. It means that the learners have to be able to communicate in the target language orally.

The influence of CBA and communicative approach toward English learner

According to environmental theory in language acquisition, learning a foreign language involves environmental factors. The environmental factors are influenced by sufficient time and attention in SLA and high motivation, interaction, supportive and informative L2 environment (Dornye, 2000). The condtion of environmental and social context of Indonesian learner can impede and contribute negative impact in learning English. According to Dornyei, motivation shapes the beliefs of the learners that will influence their attitude to learning language. Attitude and motivation are related to each other and are important to second language acquisition. Moreover, microcontext factors like parents, teachers and schools also influence students' motivation to be successful in learning language. Although the students realize how important is to be able to speak English, they are still reluctant to study English because the environment does not motivate them to improve their English ability. The students will be motivated in practicing English if they need it in their lives (Nunan & Lamb, 2001). Environmental support is a significant factor to learning English as a foreign language particularly outside the classroom since students do not have many chances to hear and speak English outside the class. They are not exposed to the natural situations. The students only rely on the time in classroom in learning. This condition leads to students only focus on linguistic competence in their learning in the classroom context and lack of communicative skills. "There has been a little emphasis in language classrooms on speaking skills and this has led to millions of EFL students with high degree of linguistic competence but lacking communication skills in English" (Block, 2003). It is considered that English is considered as a difficult lesson to figure out by the students since many of them have not learnt any kind grammatical features of additional language in their life. Thus the teacher and other stakeholder need to consider the environmental and social context in terms of learning English. The teacher also has to know how to encourage the students in learning. If the the teacher is able to motivate the student in learning, the process of learning will be easier and other environmental and social factors such as status, attitude, and interaction may no longer hinder the students on language acquisition. It is believed that learning a language involve supportive context and the motivation of learners. So, it is expected that in learning English, teaching methodology and the aim of learning should be improved from only grammatical competence to communicative competence.

Communicative Learning Teaching

Communicative Learning Teaching (CLT) concerns about the language as communication. The target of learning language is to develop the learners to be able to have communicative competence. According to Nunan & Lamb (2001) CLT mehod concerns on activities that encourage the learners in communication, involve processes such as NOM and

interaction and information. The syllabus of CLT will also include structures, functions, notions, themes, and tasks which is adjusted based on students' need. In additional Knight (2000) mentions that CLT is the idea of how language can be developed and to be used as communicative tool because language will be able to be acquired through communication. It is expected that CLT will encourage the learner to be more engaged and active in practicing their speaking ability as much as possible. The more learners improve their speaking, the more grammatical rules they will apply in their conversation.

Thus in CLT methods discussion and presentation or storytelling about the issues of the certain topic relating to students social contexts are considered more affective to stimulate the students during learning session and to be more engaged in teaching-learning process. Discussion is considered as an important session for the students to discuss the use of grammar when they write or doing their other learning activities. It also helps the students to memorize the vocabularies regarding to the topic. Play role is significant communicative teaching approach to keep students being active and encourage the learner in learning. Presentation and storytelling are useful teaching methods for the students to develop their communicative skill and allow them to interact with their peers. The interaction will help them to use the vocabulary and grammar in sentence form when they communicate among their peers. The presentation can be done by using power point program, pictures or video recorder and some other things as the media to support their activities. According to Mcpherson and Murray (2003), by using technology such as video recorder or handy cam, it can help the teachers to facilitate and provide their students to engage among their peers. Role play is considered appropriate for the students to perform their actions regarding to issues that are associated with daily basis. Besides the activity is interesting, it will support students in understanding the meaning of conversation. Van Lier (2000) mentions that interactive role such as role play is very important in second language learning. By interaction, the negotiation for meaning (NOM) can be achieved from incomprehensible to comprehensible result toward target language acquisition. Furthermore Ko et al (2003) also describes that the activity of learning in group such as role play can develop the communicative competence of the students. Role play task can encourage the students to practice their speaking by asking and answering the question in the conversation particularly if the learners have lack interactional skill. It is assumed that the method is benefit to cope the interaction issues that often lead to misunderstanding during the interaction in target language. Thus, the performance of role play activities which is acted by the students will improve their speaking. It will also encourage the students to memorize the vocabularies and grammatical use that is associated with their life contexts directly. It is believed that role play will support the learner to keep practicing speaking with their peers outside classroom since good role play performance demands adequate rehearsal. So, the learner will have opportunity to practice their speaking outside the classroom.

Classroom Based Assessment

Classroom based assessment (CBA) aims to assess the qualities and students' development in teaching learning process. The purpose of classroom-based assessment is also to obtain the information based on the teaching learning activities in order to find out the need both of learners and teachers, or other external authorized parties such as governmental standardized curriculum or standardized certification. The information is also used to support teachers or school in evaluating their future lesson plan and the pedagogical approach based on learners' need. Gipps (as cited in Leung, 2005) mentions that CBA can be used as the feedback to measure the students' performance based on classroom learning progress. Hill and Mcnamara (2001) propose the definition CBA which incorporate with summative and formative assessment is as any reflection done by teachers or learners concerning of the qualities of learners or group of learners work and the use of that information by teachers for teaching, feedback or learning, reporting, management, or social purpose. The uses of assessment as the information for teaching and learning feedback is called formative assessment and the aims of assessment and the information used as reporting or to meet curriculum based need is called

summative assessment. Furthermore, Rea-Dickins (as cited in Hill & Mcnamara, 2001) offers the notion of the 'assessment opportunity' to include any actions, and interaction either planned or unplanned, conscious or unconscious explicit or embedded regarding to classroom activities as long as there are possibility to provide information on the qualities of a learner or group of learners' performance. Therefore, Hill and Mcnamara (2001) broaden the notion "assessment opportunity" as any actions or interactions whether planned or unplanned, deliberate or unconscious, explicit or embedded have the potential to elicit the information on the qualities of learners or group or learners' performance in learning. The meaning is expected to be able to deal with all natural issues in terms of affordance or evidence that is available from the assessment during teaching and learning activities in classroom based.

In my teaching contexts for instance, CBA process conducted for formative test is divided into Quiz test, tasks, mid-semester test, and final test. First, the score of the quiz and task are based on classroom assessment which is included all students performance during classroom activities and based of assignments given to them during weekly session of study. Second, for mid-test, the students are expected to do individually story telling/presentation regarding to their previous experience in particular occasions or interesting or special things they have. The last one is Final test which will be divided into 2 sections: first section is that they have to sit on the examination test to answer 20 questions regarding to the lesson material from whole of the weeks. Second, the students are expected to do role play in group of 3 about the topic decided either by students themselves or teachers. During the tests all the students should participate and the students as the audience individually should responds their peers performance to get extra mark in order to improve their test scores. The score of these test activities relies on individual performance even the some of tests are conducted in group.

It is considered that CBA should be adopted to constituent all interaction and actions during learning activities in order to examine the class and all dimensions of learners' performance and provide the adequate feedback for formative purpose. It is assumed that informal assessment is central for my students to be more engaged and encourage in learning activities. Beside it will enable the learners to improve their communicative ability as much as possible, it will also improve their performance based on daily classroom activities since the learners realize that all their activities and attitude during learning process will be assessed and impact on their final grades. As Rea- Dickins (2001) suggests that besides implementing formal tests as part of formal review procedures at regular period in school year as one of dimension of assessment, it is also important to conduct informal assessment opportunity based on any action and interaction regarding to classroom teaching and learning activity. Thus it allows teachers to make decisions of their learners such as how much a learner knows, and how much progress a learner has made which may impact on determining what is taught next time and how that material is taught. Rea-Dickins (as cited in Leung, 2005) points out that more formal assessments would include preplanned stand-alone assessment activities carried out for reporting or summative purposes, will not enable the teacher to assist the students and doing "intervention" during the assessment activities by questioning, seeking clarification and pushing some learners forward in their understanding and language learning for the students as what happen in informal assessments.

Furthermore CBA also enable the teachers or other stakeholders to implement planned and incidental assessment opportunity in order to judge any action and interaction of learners' performance. Rea-Dickins (2001) suggests that the teachers and their learners should spend more time on informal instruction-embedded assessment activities rather than on formal pencil-and paper test. She considers that assessment strategies associated with informal assessment opportunities include any action or interaction which is usually embedded within good classroom practice including teacher questioning, exploration, small group interaction between learners and their teacher, interaction between an individual learner and teacher, effective collaboration amongst learners themselves whilst being observed by their teacher. Thus the qualities as well as feedback obtained as the information either for formative or summative purpose will be constituent with the qualities of learners' performances. These classroom

strategies also enable to develop the learner's awareness including the language content and learning goals of a given lesson, and to stimulate reflection on what is being taught besides informing the teacher about learners' achievement.

Conclusion

It is believed that the influence of integrated methods of CBA and CLT will give more opportunity for Indonesian learners to improve their communicative ability during classroom activities. The CBA model will encourage the learners to improve their speaking ability as much as possible since they realize that all their atitudes and performance during learning sessions will be assessed. Thus it allows teachers to make decisions of their learners such as how much a learner knows, and how much progress a learner has made which may impact on determining what is taught next time and how that material is taught. Classroom based-assessment has crucial role to provide the information both of summative and formative purpose regarding to the feedback and the result of the qualities of learner made in classroom activities. CBA tasks can be used as the measurement of learners' performance that becomes indicator for teacher and other stakeholders to evaluate and improve next lesson plan and their pedagogical approach. CBA contributes huge impacts on teaching and learning that will determine the decision making since it is believed that CBA process enable to represent and observe all aspect of interaction and learning activities in natural and real classroom contexts. In addition, CLT method will enable the teacher to implement pedagogical approach which is expected the students more active and engage during classroom activities. It is believed that both of methods are integrated each other to encourage the students to improve their speaking. However, the further research is suggested to be conducted relating to the possibility clash or issues with indonesian cultures and its curriculum when the CLT approch is adopt including the difficulty of student with low English proficiency such as vocabulary and limited knowledge of English structures or the lack capacity of teacher speak English.

References

Baker, C. (2001). *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism* (5th edn), chap. 1. Bristol, UK: Multilingual matters.

Leung, C. (2005). Classroom teacher assessment of second language development: Construct as practice. In E. Hinkle (ed), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 869-888). Marwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Association.

Knight, P 2001, 'The development of EFL methodology, 'in Candlin, N.C & Mercer, N (ed), '*English language teaching in its social contexts: A reader*, Routledge, London, chp 8.

Harmer, J 2007, 'Teaching language skills,' The practice of English language teaching, 4th edn, Pearson Education, Harlow.

McPherson, P & Murray, DE 2003, 'Introduction' Communication *on the net, NCELTR*,' Syndey, pp. 1-5. In Pedagogy in the globalised language classroom, Readings, Deakin University, Victoria.

Van Lier, L 2000, 'From input to affordance: social –interactive learning from an ecological perspective', in JP lantolf (ed), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning*, Oxford University Press, pp. 245-59. In pedagogy in the globalised language classroom, Readings, Deakin University, Victoria.

Ko, J, Schallert, D & Walters, K, 2003,'Rethinking scaffolding; examining negotiation of meaning in an ESL storytelling task', *TESOL Quarterly*, vol. 37, (2), pp. 303-24. In pedagogy in the globalised language classroom, Readings, Deakin University, Victoria.

Rea-Dickins, P. (2001). Mirror mirror on the wall: identifying processes of classroom assessment. *Language testing,* 18 (4), pp. 429-462. Retrieved August 24, 2010, from the Sage Premier database.

Hill, K., & Mcnamara, T. (2001). Developing a comprehensive, Empirically based Research framework for Classroom-based assessment. *Language Testing,* 29 (3) pp. 395–420. Sage, DOI: 10.1177/0265532211428317.

Dornyei, Z. (2000). L2 motivation and the social context. Teaching and researching motivation (pp. 65-100). New York: Longman. *In Learning an additional language*, Study Guide and Readings. Victoria: Deakin University.

Kamyab, G., & Goleobiowski, Z. (2010). What should language teachers know about language. Topic 1.Linguistic for language teaching, *Study Guide and Readings*. Victoria: Deakin University.

Nunan, D., & Lamb., C. (2001). Managing the learning process. In Hall. D,.R. & Hewings, N (Eds.), *Innovation in English language teaching* chap. Chap. 2, p. 28-33, Chap.13, p. 160. London and New York in associated with Mcquarie university and the open university: Routledge.

Block, D. (2003). *The social turn in second language acquisition.* Washington, DC: Goergetown University Press. pp. 26-37.