THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN DETERMINING SUCCESS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

Success in language teaching is affected by a number of factors, namely the method and material, teacher, instruction, sociocultural environment, and learner factors (Stern, 1983: 40). Among these factors, teacher is considered as the most important one as what the teacher does determines the degree of success contributed by other factors. This paper highlights the important role of teacher in determining the success of English language teaching (ELT). More specifically, it will discuss the role of the teacher in (1) optimizing input for the students, (2) solving instructional problems, and (3) searching ways for professional development. In this paper, some ways are discussed for these three endeavors. In order to optimize input for the students, English teachers are suggested to use classroom language as a means to manage instruction and to use English language for genuine communication and interaction. In order to solve instructional problems in English classroom, English teachers are suggested to carry out action research focusing on the problems that students have in understanding learning materials or in improving their English acquisition. In order to develop professionally, English teachers are suggested to take options for their professional development. The implementation of any or all of these three endeavors by secondary school English teachers will contribute to the success of ELT in Indonesia. Thus, it is expected that the important role of teacher as highlighted in this paper will suggest a direction to where reformulation of ELT in Indonesia should go.

Keywords: *input optimization, instructional problems, action research, professional development*

A. INTRODUCTION

Long before this *Seminar on English Language and Teaching* (SELT) is held, and announced in the form of a brochure, I had been contacted by the member of the steering committee and requested to be one of the keynote speakers. I was delighted to accept the offer as the plan to hold this seminar indicates the growing interest in the academic forum on English Language Teaching (ELT) in the region of West Sumatra. When I got the complete information throught the e-brochure, what I would like to know in particular was the theme of the Seminar as this could help me determine a topic for this speech. Then, I found that the theme "Reformulating Teaching English as Foreign Language at Secondary and Higher Education in Indonesia" appealing and thought provoking.

The word "reformulating" suggests a change from "something that has been practiced" into "something that should be practiced." Thus, the need of a change entails a reason or a direction. In this case, I would like to leave the former and focus on the latter, that is the direction to where the reformulation should go. In my opinion, Teaching English as Foreign Language at Secondary and Higher Education in this country should be directed to a more successful achievement. Success in language teaching, in fact, is affected by a number of factors, namely the method and material, teacher, instruction, sociocultural

environment, and learner factors (Stern, 1983: 40). Among these factors, teacher is considered as the most important one as what the teacher does determines the degree of success contributed by other factors.

Therefore, on this occasion, I would like to highlight the important role of teachers in determining success of ELT. More specifically, I will discuss the role of teachers in (1) optimizing input for the students, (2) solving instructional problems, and (3) searching ways for professional development. To discuss these issues, I will present the theoretical bases first and then provide support from my personal research and practices in relation to these issues.

B. DISCUSSION
Role of teachers in optimizing input for the students

In my understanding, input refers to the material that composes something. Thus, language input is the language material that composes learners' language repertoire. Language input eventually can be used by the language learners to interact and communicate, either orally or in a written form. Ellis (1986) mentioned that "linguistic input" is one of five factors that enable learners to master a second language. The other four factors are situational (sociocultural) factors, learner differences (personality factors), learner processes, and linguistic output.

Teachers should be aware that the development of the students' language learning depends pretty much on the input they they provide. In this case, teachers can provide comprehensible input, namely input that will encourage language acquisition. This is because, according to Krashen (1982), language classroom has limitations for language acquisition compared to natural situation, especially with regard to time and variety of input. It should be noted that providing comprehensible input only is not enough. In order to be optimal, as Krashen stated, input should be comprehensible, interesting and/or relevant, not grammatically sequenced, and sufficient in quantity.

In my experience, I have experimented the provision of input which is comprehensible, interesting and/or relevant, and sufficient to develop a young language learner's English language. The experiment involved my daughter, Sindy, and tried to measure her English development from the time when she was four year old to when she was five. In the experiment, I always talked to her in English during play time. After one year, I found that she could speak English fluently and she developed a lot of English vocabulary (see Cahyono, 2011). A video transcript of a play time with Sindy taken after the research period was over is shown in **Appendix 1**. This video is to show the result of the successful input optimization of a young learner's English acquisition in Indonesian (EFL) context.

To apply the success of the experiment into the formal classroom context, teachers should also provide comprehensible, interesting and/or relevant, and sufficient input through intensive interaction. One of the features of clasroom interaction is the expressions that are frequently (or repetitively) used by the teachers to handle teaching and learning activities. Because of the importance of *classroom languages*, English teachers need to master these languages and they should be able to use them spontaneously as demanded by the situation in the classroom. Examples of classroom language for various functions in the classroom are as follows:

Greetings/Partings
Good morning everybody.
Good afternoon everyone.
How are you today?

See you tomorrow/ Friday/next week.

Teacher to students
What's the problem?
Are you ready?
Excellent.
Now let's go/move on to...

General clarity questions
Are you saying " ..."?
Could you explain it once more, please?
What is the meaning of "..."?
Can you speak more slowly.

(from "Classroom Language –Essential Phrases," n.d.)

If teachers can use classroom languages for various functions intensively in daily interaction in the classroom, the students will be able to develop an understanding that using English in the classroom is a common practice. Eventually, they will be able to use the classroom language that they often hear in the classroom automatically. However, after the successful use of classroom language, the teachers need to use various other expressions for genuine communication or meaning negotation.

Role of teachers in solving instructional problems
In implementing their duties, teachers often face problems such as lack of students' motivation and their difficulties in understanding some materials. These problems may affect the result of the teaching and learning process in a negative way. In order to solve such problems, teachers are suggested to carry out action research (Burns, 1999). Conducting action research is a really challenging endeavor for teachers bearing on the conviction that teachers usually deal with practical knowledge, not theoretical knowledge (Ellis, 1998).

Experts say that English teachers can be empowered by conducting action research, meaning that they can understand more about what happen in their own teaching and in the English classroom. For example, Widiati (2011: 479) argues that action research can be used to develop reflective teaching practice. As she states, "there is a greater opportunity for teachers engaging in action research to develop their [English teachers'] reflective teaching practice." Burns (1999: 17) states that teachers can get a lot of benefits from action research. In her own words,

> Action research offers a valuable opportunity for teachers to be involved in research which is felt to be relevant, as it is grounded in the social context of the classroom and the teaching institution, and focuses directly on issues and concerns which are significant in daily teaching practice.

Action research is conducted through cycles. Each of the cycles is proceeded by conducting four stages, namely planning the action, implementing the action, observing the action, and reflecting on the action. However, before a cycle begins, teachers have to determine the problem that should be examined. Finding out the problems for action research can be done by reflecting upon the practices that teachers have conducted in the classroom.

I have an experience of working with a group of secondary and tertiary English teachers who were studying in the doctorate program in ELT at State University of Malang.

These teachers took a course entitled, "Research in Second Language Writing" that I taught. In this course, they were given a task to carry out an individual research project and asked to make reports in the form of full paper and video presentation (Cahyono, 2013). Many of these teachers took action research for their research project. After they finished conducting the research project and making the video presentation, they were given a questionnaire asking their opinions on the project. Many of the teachers expressed their positive opinions about the project and they saw it as something beneficial for their profession. A video transcript of the action research report of one of the teachers can be seen in **Appendix 2**. This video shows the successful solution of instructional problems by using action research.

Role of teachers in searching ways for professional development

English teachers should develop their prefessional competence in order to be able to help students to be competent users of English. In order to develop professionally, English teachers are suggested to take options for their professional development.

In my previous report (see Cahyono, 2010), I discussed about the options that English teachers can take for professional development. These options include the following: (1) continuing education in a graduate program in ELT, (2) joining in-service teachers' certification, (3) attending an education and training program, and (4) building personal awareness of continuous professional development.

An important point of the report is that regardless of the professional development options that teachers have participated, the options gave teachers theoretical knowledge important for the teaching of English in their classrooms. The theoretical knowledge contributed not only in the areas of improvement of knowledge in the teachers' disciplinary study but also in the areas of curricular aspects such as preparation of lesson plans and teaching methodologies such as how teach English communicatively and to use instructional media. The report also showed that all the teachers have improved themselves compared to they used to be before they undertook the options for professional development.

As an illustration, I have been invited to be a presenter in an inservice training program for teachers on "Development of English Teaching Methodology and Assessment". At the end of the training program I asked two of the teachers about their impression as shown in the following quotation:

The trainer (I):	*Ibu*, what's your opinion about this program?
Teacher A:	It's very nice and I enjoyed it.
The trainer:	Do you like it?
Teacher A:	Yes, I like it.
The trainer:	Okay, now ibu Mila, ...
Teacher B:	It's very great, I think. It gives us a lot of benefits for our improvement for the next .... generation.
The trainer:	Allright, thank you for the nice comments.

The most important point is that the various options available for professional development disregard factors such as finance as well as long teaching experience. This implies that any English teachers can improve their professionalism even though they cannot afford continuing their study in graduate program or they do not have long teaching experiences. As long as English teachers have great intention or motivation to improve themselves toward the development of their theoretical knowledge which is useful for language teaching, they will be more aware of the good and effective way to teach English. This can be done through teachers' participation in various academic forums.

If English teachers can search ways for their own professional development, they will be able work more professionally. This means that they are able not only to teach English, but to teach English a with sound theoretical basis, and solve their instructional problems with an empirical basis through action research.

C. CONCLUSION

This paper has discussed the role of teachers in enabling the students to be successful in learning English. There three important points that teachers need to do to make sure that students will be able to learn from what teachers teach: optimizing input, conducting action research, and searching ways for professional development. In order to optimize input for the students, English teachers are suggested to use *classroom language* as a means to manage instruction and to use English language for genuine communication and interaction. In order to solve instructional problems in English classroom, English teachers are suggested to carry out action research focusing on the problems that students have in understanding learning materials or in improving their English acquisition. In order to develop professionally, English teachers are suggested to take options for their professional development. The implementation of any or all of these three endeavors by secondary school English teachers will contribute to the success of ELT in Indonesia. Thus, it is expected that the important role of teacher highlighted in this paper will suggest a direction to where reformulation of ELT in Indonesia should go.

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APPENDIX 1.
Transcript of video showing the result of the successful input optimization of a young learner's English acquisition in Indonesian (EFL) context.

SINDY WASHING HER DOLLS

Note: Sindy acted as Sindy, while Daddy acted as Ulil, the catterpillar. Sindy was about 5.5 years old when the video was recorded.

Ulil: Hello, Sindy,
Sindy: Hello Ulil.
Ulil: What are you doing?
Sindy: I'm washing Embily with Ducky and with Dolphin.
Ulil: Why do you wash them?
Sindy: Bacause he and he is dusty.
Ulil: Oh dusty, are they dirty too?
Sindy: Yes.
Ulil: Where are they now?
Sindy: Look at this.
Ulil: Oh, yes, Dolphin, Embily and White Duck
Sindy: Yes.
Ulil: And, how do you wash them?
Sindy: Like this. The example is like that (scrubing the doll)
Ulil: Wow, that's great.
Sindy: Like that.
Ulil: What is the white thing over there?
Sindy: This, this is soap.
Ulil: Oh soap, wow, why do you need soap?
Sindy: For cleaning, look at this, cleaning.
Ulil: Oh, wow
Sindy: Look at this, white.
Ulil: Very good.
         (After break for a while)
Ulil: Okay Sindy, now, what are you doing?
Sindy: I am going to cleaning.
Ulil: How will you clean them?
Sindy: Like this, look at this, okay. (moving the dolls around in water)
Ulil: Okay, and what are you going to do with that water?
Sindy: This (pointing), cleaning.
Ulil: Cleaning?
Sindy: Yes, this is cleaning too
Ulil: Why do they have to go around like that?
Sindy: And the water with the soap inside the three children, they can go out.
Ulil: Okay. What are you going to do after that?
Sindy: This is the water.
Ulil: Sindy, may I turn off the water tap?

Sindy: Yes, you may.
Ulil: Wow,
Sindy: Very good catterpillar.
Ulil: Yes, are they allright, I will watch you. Okay
Sindy: Okay
Ulil: See you again soon.
  (After break for a while)
Ulil: Sindy, now. What's next?
Sindy: (squizzing the dolls to dry it, and put them in clean water)
Ulil: Now is it time for you to put them in the clean water like that?
Sindy: Yes,
Ulil: Allright.
Sindy: Let me throw it. Daddy, throw it.
Ulil: Are you strong enough?
Sindy: Yes ..and
Ulil: What's next Sindy?
Sindy: Yes, ...Daddy
Ulil: Ohhh
Sindy: Yes, like this (dipping the dolls under water). This is very clean water.
Ulil: Is that for the last cleaning?
Sindy: No.
Ulil: Are you going to get some more clean water?
Sindy: Yes,
Ulil: Okay then.
Sindy: This is very clean water, Daddy.
Ulil: Allright, I'll come back to you again soon.
Sindy: Yes
Ulil: Okay.
  (After break for a while)
Ulil: Hello, Sindy, are you finished?
Sindy: Ooo, I just putting in the water. Look at Duck, look at this.
Ulil: What happen with Duck?
Sindy: There is water inside it.
Ulil: Is it heavy?
Sindy: Little bit.
Ulil: Ooo, it's like when pee-ing.
Sindy: Yes (gigling)
Ulil: Yes, is it the time for you to dry them?
Sindy: Yes, Ducky first.
Ulil: Wait ..wait
Sindy: Where should we dry their?
Ulil: Oh, put them on top of this.
Sindy: Now, time for Dolphin.Look at this Ulil.
Ulil: Yes, I am looking at Dolphin. Okay, put it on the drying place.
Sindy: (Squizing Dolphin)
Ulil: Oh, you squizzed it. Allright, that's so neat.
Sindy: Now, Embily.
Ulil: Yes, last one?
Sindy: Yes, Embily is the last.
Ulil: Okay, hmm, allright.

Sindy: Now, let's throw water.
Ulil: Yes, after this. I would like to dry myself under the sun first.
Sindy: Yes, look at me and Daddy (pouring water out of the container)
Ulil: So, washing the three children done. Is that right, Sindy?
Sindy: Yes,
Ulil: Okay, let's say good bye.
Sindy: Goodbye everbody,
Ulil: Goodbye, till see you again.
Sindy: Look at this, there is bee.
Ulil: Okay,
Sindy: Insect.
Ulil: Ooo yes, bye-bye everyone.
Sindy: Now, let's go.

APPENDIX 2.

Transcript of video showing the successful solution of instructional problems by using action research.

IMPROVING EFL JUNIOR SCHOOL STUDENTS' ABILITY IN WRITING PROCEDURE TEXT BY USING VIDEO RECIPEE

By Jupri

Opening:

Hi, my name is Jupri, a student of a doctorate degree in English Language Teaching, State University of Malang, Indonesia. In my EFL classrom in SMPN 1 Batu, the students find it difficult to write procedure text. This video will show you how I implement a technique of teaching writing procedure text using video recipee to improve the junior school students' ability in writing procedure text.

According to Anderson, 2003, a procedure text is a piece of text that tells the reader or listener how to do something. The purpose is to provide instruction for making something, doing something, and getting somewhere. In this video, I will show the result of my research on improving the students' ability in writing procedure text.

Ladies and gentlemen, curious to see the finding? Let's have a look.

The Report:

This study used classroom action research which was conducted through one cycle only. It was conducted in the 7th grade of SMPN 1 Batu, East Java. Twenty six students were involved in this study. A preliminary study was conducted and the results show that the students gained score lower than 80. The research was conducted through four phases: planning the action, implementing the action, observing and coding the action, analyzing the data and reflecting.

The criterion of success set in this study was "80% of the students could reach the score greater or equal to 81." The steps of the instruction were: Warming up the students; asking them to identify the names of the foods and drinks; having them to watch the recipee videos; asking them to identify the titles, materials, and the steps of making the

foods; asking them to identify the imperative verbs; and asking them to choose one favorite food and make the recipee of the food.

Finally, the students were tested to write procedure texts. The first test revealed that 85% of the students reached the criterion of success. The second test revealed that 89% of the students have reached the criterion of success. The interview revealed that all of them were active, happy and motivated. The observation checklists revealed that the students had interest, pleasure, enthusiasm, and curiosity. It was concluded that the utilization of video recepee can improve the junior high school students' ability in writing procedure text.

Closing:

Well, ladies and gentlemen, that was the result of the research. I hope the result of this research can contribute to the teaching of writing in the level of junior high school, particularly in the teaching of writing procedure text. Thank you.