

THE TEACHERS' TEACHING APPROACHES TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STUDENTS' ENGLISH SKILLS IN BILINGUAL CLASSROOM

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Abstract

The study focuses on describing the teaching approaches that teacher uses in bilingual classroom, including Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approaches, Total Physical response (TPR), a combination of teaching approaches, and to investigate the impact of those approaches to the students' English language skills. The researcher employed qualitative method for the study. The data sources for the research were one English teacher and twenty nine students of bilingual class. The instruments for the research consisted of the researcher as the main instrument, field-note, recorder, and camera. In the process of collecting data, the researcher carried out an observation, interview, and fieldwork. In analyzing the data, the researcher employed Constant Comparative Method. The result showed that the teacher used Contextual Teaching and Learning and Total Physical response as the approaches in teaching English in bilingual class. The impact of the teacher's approaches was categorized into good for listening skill (gained 84), speaking (83) was categorized into good, reading (87) was categorized into good, and writing (90,5) was categorized into very good.

Key words: teaching approaches, impact, bilingual class

Introduction

English is one of the most important subjects in Indonesia. These days many countries have introduced English classes to elementary schools, and many adults study English even after graduating from universities (Lee, Kyoung and Rebecca Oxford, 2008). Language learning process is a very complex problem. No one knows exactly how people learn languages because it is an internal process. The internal learning process that is experienced by a student cannot be directly observed. Because of this, a teacher should pay attention to any indicator that reflects the learning process experienced by her or his students.

In English language teaching and learning situation, this internal process experienced by the students is often hampered by lack of supporting factors. One of the main factors influencing the success of students in language learning circumstance is the teachers' approaches.

The proliferation of approaches and methods is a prominent characteristic of contemporary second and foreign language teaching... invention of new classroom practices and approaches to designing language programs and materials reflect a commitment to finding more efficient and more effective ways of teaching languages (Richards, Rodgers, 1995).

"A recent trend in second language teaching is a movement away from "method" and other "external or "top down" views of teaching toward an approach that seeks to understand teaching in its own terms (Richards & Lockhart Charles, 2000)

In the Junior High School English taught is not as the contain course but as the skill course. Problems appear when globalization in any aspects of life take place where ability of adaptation is more and more needed and demand of professional increases. Recent changes in student demographics have prompted researchers and practitioners to examine how public schools can improve teaching, learning, and academic achievement for students in special populations (August & Hakuta, 1998).

Concerning the explanation above, the researcher is interested in investigating the case of "the teachers' teaching approaches to the improvement of the students' English skills in bilingual classroom" by focusing on what approaches does teacher use in his teaching and learning process in bilingual classroom? And what is the students' attitude to their teacher's approaches in the classroom?

Brief Review of Related Theories

Approaches to teaching English as a second language

The process oriented approach to teaching writing in the classroom is an idea that began three decades ago as the result of extensive research on literacy acquisition for majority language learners. Since that initial research, process oriented instruction has been used in many classrooms across the country with different types of learners, implemented by different types of interpretations and teaching styles (Reyes, 1991a).

The appropriateness of such instruction for learners from minority cultures and speakers of minority languages has been questioned by some researchers. This review examines the foundation of the process oriented approach and current theories of literacy acquisition. The efficacy of implementing this teaching approach with second language learners is examined through a review of the pertinent literature and an examination of recent case studies.

Kinds of teaching approaches

What is Contextual Teaching and Learning?

According to contextual learning theory, learning occurs only when students (learners) process new information or knowledge in such a way that it makes sense to them in their own frames of reference (their own inner worlds of memory, experience, and response). This approach to learning and teaching assumes that the mind naturally seeks meaning in context—that is, in relation to the person's current environment—and that it does so by searching for relationships that make sense and appear useful. Building upon this understanding, contextual learning theory focuses on the multiple aspects of any learning environment, whether a classroom, a laboratory, a computer lab, a worksite, or a wheat field. It encourages educators to choose and/or design learning environments that incorporate as many different forms of experience as possible—social, cultural, physical, and psychological—in working toward the desired learning outcomes.

Total Physical Response

James J. Asher (1979) defines the Total Physical Response (TPR) method as one that combines information and skills through the use of the kinesthetic sensory system. This combination of skills allows the student to assimilate information and skills at a rapid rate. As a result, this success leads to a high degree of motivation. The basic tenet understands the spoken language before developing the skills of speaking. Imperatives are the main structures to transfer or communicate information. The student is not forced to speak, but is allowed an individual readiness period and allowed to spontaneously begin to speak when the student feels comfortable and confident in understanding and producing the utterances.

Bilingualism/ Bilingual education

Margaret and Thomson (2006) argued bilingualism is the ability to communicate in two different languages. Bilingual education is the use of two different languages in classroom instruction.

Bilingual language development

The majority of studies on the effects of elementary bilingual education indicate that there are more advantages than disadvantages for English Language Learners who participate in bilingual education programs (Cummins, 1999).

Swain and Cummins, 1979, mother tongue maintenance programs are based on enrichment theory, according to which high levels of bilingualism are seen as a cognitive and social advantage. Language acquisition is very similar for monolingual and bilingual children, although some experts view bilingualism as a specialized case of language development. Children growing up in homes where two different languages are spoken usually acquire both languages simultaneously. Although their acquisition of each language may be somewhat slower than that of children who are acquiring a single language, their development in the two languages combined is equivalent to that of monolingual children.

Bilingual education teachers' beliefs

To understand the underpinnings of teachers' beliefs, a socioconstructivists' framework is assumed in which knowledge is constructed and mediated within sociocultural contexts. Gonzalez (1997) also assumed a socioconstructivist posture when analyzing teachers' beliefs. From this ideology, I recognize that knowledge is constructed on two mental planes, that is, interpsychological and intrapsychological. At the point when knowledge construction becomes intrapsychological, some would retain the notion that it is still quasi-social.

Greene (1998) proposed that individuals have implicit theories of intelligence, knowing, and learning. That is, what we think about the nature or origin of knowledge may influence our view of ourselves and others as learners. In the case of teachers, beliefs about how others learn may be socially constructed from theoretical and philosophical ideologies as epistemological beliefs. Epistemological beliefs are implicit or intuitive beliefs or theories about the nature of knowledge, knowing, and learning (Schommer, 1990). Five dimensions have been proposed: (1) certainty of knowledge, (2) control of knowledge acquisition, (3) source of knowledge, (4) speed of knowledge acquisition, and (5) structure of knowledge acquisition (Schommer, 1990). Schommer's notions of structure, certainty, and source of knowledge.

Attitudes and language learning

The students' attitude is one of the determinant parts in achieving good language learning. Certainly, the teacher needs the students to have a positive attitude so that the learning can run well. An attitude as

relatively permanent way of feeling, thinking and behaving towards something or somebody. The students will react naturally with their process of feeling, thinking, and behave when they are put into learning situation.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Data Analysis

The data taken from observation, interview, and comments are analyzed by using Constant Comparative Method (Moleong, 2007). The data are organized and coding. Coding involves analyzing data and identifying themes or topics. The data are categorized and labeled. After labeling the data, the data are interpreted, explained, and connected to review of related literature and previous research findings.

This research uses constant comparative analysis, a method of analyzing qualitative data where the information gathered is coded into emergent themes or codes. The data is constantly revisited after initial coding, until it is clear that no new themes are emerging. It can be used in a study with a single method of data collection, for example, the researcher use S1 for student one, PBL for Problem based Learning, CTL for Contextual Teaching and Learning. After final coding was complete, code files were printed and stored in files are labeled with each code name. The quality of data analysis depends on repeated, systematic searching of the data (Hammersley 1981). In an attempt to achieve this, repeated coding was performed to review interpretations, in the light of new data gathered and as new codes were generated, until no new insights were being gleaned. Established coded sections were compared with other similarly coded segments to ensure consistency of application, as well as adherence to the definition of the code. Where events or conversations had been recorded in more than one of the methods used (for example, in observation and interviews), both transcripts were reviewed together after initial coding. On some occasions, events from interviews, observations, or learning diary entries in the field diary had also been recorded. Then diary entries were reviewed to check if there was any evidence of extraneous circumstances influencing the researcher's interpretation of events, or impinging on the event being recorded, to review any other interpretations that were perceived at the time.

The next is categorizing, the categories derived from each data collection method were then clustered around each research question they contributed to answering. A list was compiled of categories that related to each research question, and some categories were used to address more than one question. Once all the research questions had been allotted input from the categories, the information pertaining to each question was examined and reviewed to compile a report. The findings were finally checked against the diary entries to identify whether the researcher's views recorded before or during the study had unduly influenced interpretation of the data gathered, for example the researcher open the diary, recorded, video to strength the data from teacher and students interview.

The interpretation of the responses and emergent findings were discussed with the case study participants. Nolan and Behi (1995) suggest that in qualitative research, the findings should be presented to participants and their views explored. Others suggest that this should also be applied to qualitative data analysis (Silverman 1993, Wellington 1996).

Discussion

Teacher's approaches in teaching English in bilingual classroom

The English teacher considers the importance of teaching English at junior high school. He thinks that teaching English is very important at junior high school. In teaching English, the teacher is based on junior high school English curriculum (content standard), but he prefers to try to be more creative in teaching by using many medias in classroom.

There are many approaches that the teacher uses in bilingual class; they are Contextual Teaching and Learning strategies and Total Physical Response.

Teacher said: "In this new curriculum the approaches that I use in applying this curriculum is contextual teaching and learning". Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) helps us relate subject matter content to real world situations and motivate students to make connections between knowledge and its applications to their lives as family members, citizens, and workers and engage in the hard work that learning requires".

Contextual Teaching and Learning

Elaine B. Johnson (2002) stated that Contextual Teaching and Learning is a system of instruction based on the philosophy that students learn when they see meaning in academic material, and they see meaning in schoolwork when they can connect new information with prior knowledge and their own experience.

Teacher said:

There are seven aspects that we have to know in Contextual teaching and learning strategies, they are questioning, inquiring, modeling, constructivism, learning community, authentic assessment, and total physical response.

The teacher has his own unique perception on the elements of Contextual Teaching and learning, he adds one more approach namely Total Physical Response (TPR) which is not included as one of the elements of CTL according to Elaine B. Johnson on her book Contextual Teaching and learning (2002: 24).

Total physical response (TPR)

The teacher applies TPR approach by communicate actively to the students in doing or making something like a game.

This is the example of TPR activity in bilingual classroom

Bringing me a.....

The teacher sits in front of the class. Then teacher prepares the picture cards to make game.



Figure 12. The students choose their members

The teacher divides students into six groups. Students are active in choosing their members. Each group consists of five students and they form a circle in front of the teacher. Each group chooses a runner and only the runner can take things to the teacher.



Figure 13. The students are active in collaboration

Group collaborates in trying to find the object and the delegate then takes it to the teacher.

Teacher : bring me a bowl of noodles

Student 4 : wait, sir, I'll bring it for you only

Teacher : good

The improvement of the students' English skills

The English teacher for bilingual class in SMPN 6 Makassar uses Contextual Teaching and Learning as his approaches in teaching the bilingual students. The researcher concludes some questions giving to the students to know the impact of Contextual teaching and Learning approaches in bilingual class, as follows;

Listening skill

Can you understand the way your teacher instructs you in the classroom?.

Twenty students understand eight students little understand, and one student difficult to understand. The one student is from Australia, he finds some difficulties to understand the teacher's pronunciation.

Can you understand the way your friends talk to you in English?

Twenty eight students understand the way their friends talk, but there is one student still confuses to understand what his friends talking is, he is the twentieth students, he comes from Australia.

The researcher assumes that Contextual Teaching and Learning approaches have a good impact to the students' listening skill. Furthermore, the conclusion above is supported by the class average rapport value for listening skill is 84 categorized into good.

Speaking skill

Do you like if your teacher asks you some questions in English?

All students like if the teacher asks them in English, they have many ideas when the teacher asks them, Every time they try to speak, they are positively reinforced with the words, for example, good, fantastic, excellent, and okay. These allow them to break their barriers of risk-taking in speaking the language as well as to boost up their English competence.

The teacher always uses English in giving instruction, asking questions, teacher uses English over the class.

Opening activities; the teacher opening the class by using English for examples "good morning class, how are you students?, today we will study about recount text"

Do you like if you discuss with your friends in English?

Twenty four students like to do discuss in learning activity, they enjoy in speaking activities, and they are attractive in discuss one topic given by the teacher, after discuss the topic they collect the summery on the paper and demonstrate the result of the discussion in front of the class.

Five students do not like discussion activity, they just stay calm and they never talk in English, they just tell their idea by Indonesian language.

Reading skill

Can you understand the meaning of the words in the text?

There are two kinds of reading used by teacher. They are listening reading and silent reading. The teacher uses listening reading to improve students' comprehension toward reading text. It is used to motivate students to read the text or to focus students to read text.

Almost students can understand the meaning of the words in the text; they answer the questions related to the text fast without using dictionary.

Lado (1988) sated that one of the most useful and enjoyable group techniques was to let the learner read silently while listening to the same text read by the teacher. This technique was particularly good when the learner was advancing from reading single sentences to reading longer texts. He continued that the preparation and follow up of listening reading were directed to the normal activity of reading for meaning.

Can you infer the meaning of the text in the reading passage?

All students can infer the meaning of the text in the reading passage given by the teacher; they are active in answering the teacher's questions.

Writing skill

Do you like if your teacher instructs you to write?

All the students satisfied when teacher ask them to make written, they like to express their idea on paper, they do it seriously and quietly.

Can you express your ideas and feelings through writing?

All students argue that they can express their feelings, the enjoy to write text, they have big self confident to let other people read their written, they feel happy if their written read by other, they feel that their written is perfect, and it is proven by one of their writing.

Based on the above interviews' question, the researcher assumes that teachers' approaches have a good impact to the students' writing skill. It is indicated by the class mean score of rapport value for listening skill is 90.5 categorized into good.

Conclusion and Suggestion

Conclusion

Based on findings and discussion, the researcher concluded that the approaches that teacher uses in his teaching and learning process in bilingual classroom is Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approaches and Total Physical response (TPR).

Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) helps the students relate subject matter content to real world situations and motivate students to make connections between knowledge and its applications to their lives as family members, citizens, and workers and engage in the hard work that learning requires.

Total Physical response (TPR) help the student not to be forced to speak, but is allowed an individual readiness period and allowed to spontaneously begin to speak when the student feels comfortable and confident in understanding and producing the utterances.

The improvement of the students' English skills by using contextual teaching and Learning approaches to the students' language skills are categorized into good, it is based on students interview results. Most of the students understand and like the way the teacher instructs them and most of the students understand and like in doing the fourth language skills activity given by the teacher.

Suggestion

Based on the conclusion above, the researcher suggests English teacher at bilingual class have to develop their teaching approaches including their teaching strategy, the English teacher must be creative in applying some new approaches in English teaching strategy.

The researcher suggests the teachers to use Contextual Teaching and Learning approach and Total Physical Response in their teaching activities because they are good to stimulate the students in teaching and learning, it is proved by the students' ability to do some various kinds of activities given by the teacher. Besides that, these approaches also give some motivation to the students in order they can actively participate during learning process.

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