The Implementation of Magic Tricks in Collaborative English Learning

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ABSTRACT

This research paper was aimed to describe the implementation of magic tricks in ELT and the students' perception towards the method. The writers expected that students' ability can be improved by using this technique. The writers used qualitative method to conduct this research, which created an idea of a model of teaching technique. The suitable learners for this kind of teaching media should be young adult learners of the intermediate level. Magic tricks were used as the teaching media and also to make the class' atmosphere in active and enjoyable learning discussion. The data in the research were indicated based on the students' engagement to do and/or develop the tricks. After the data from the observation were collected, the writers interviewed the students to see their responses to this technique when it was applied in teaching and learning process. The interview was used to support the primary data from the observation of teaching learning activities. The finding of the research described the process of the teaching English using magic tricks were conducted. At the end of the research, it could be concluded that teaching English using magic tricks collaboratively was effective.

Keywords: teaching English, magic tricks, collaborative, vocabulary, public speaking.

Introduction

Indonesia, it is a huge country in Southeast Asia which comprises of various ethnics, linguistics and religious diversities. The data from Secretariat of the Ministry of the Republic of Indonesia (2010) shows in 2006, more than two hundred million people live in 17,508 islands, Indonesian people has numerous traditional language. It indicates that for most Indonesian people, traditional language becomes the first language (mother tongue) before they acquire Bahasa Indonesia. Imagine that you teach English in twenty pupils in your class, and there are more than five languages in your classroom. Therefore, teaching English in Indonesia becomes huge challenge for English teacher because English is considered as foreign language rather than second language.

Language learning is a process of wondering and exploring, of discovering the agreements of language in society so that people can use language fully for their own purposes. People learn language by studying it in a particular society by practice (Tchudi, 1989: 47). It implies that language is learnt naturally when people are using language for specific purposes. Doing what people see as important with it. Just like in Indonesia, English is considered as the first foreign language. Although it is learned in any levels of education, needs the skills of teachers to teach. Teachers should be creative to apply an interesting method and technique in order to get good results and avoid students' boredom. Therefore, teaching skills mastery are a basic needs for a teacher. As a profession, teachers must have teaching skills that can make them become a professional in their field.

Despite teaching English as foreign language needs creative and/or innovative methods to be applied, Larsen-Freeman (2010) argues that methods serve as a good contrast for reflection that can aid teachers in bringing to conscious awareness the thinking that underlines their actions. Teachers are freely to choose any kind of teaching method that used in the classroom. Therefore an English Language teacher needs some kind of awareness that led them to a successful language learning process. Hence, the researcher tries to apply magic tricks as instrument of collaborative English learning.

Magic trick is known as an artwork, and some people think that magic is not a science. However, in fact of the application, magic has relation to other science fields as stated by Tarbell (1999). Those who learned magic knew that magic was really the fount of almost all knowledge. It must be realized that although magic is known as an entertaining art, it was the root form which sprang some of world's great sciences. The great sciences for which magic was the foundation are now the foundation for magic. Therefore, as an English teacher and also magician, the writer is motivated to write this paper. The writer tries to bring and relate the magic trick as a medium of collaborative English learning in the classroom.

The problem formulations of this research are:

1. How are the implementation of magic tricks as medium in collaborative English learning?
2. What is students' perception of the use of magic tricks to help them increase their English skills?

Theoretical Framework and Methods

Theoretical Framework

In any language, including English, there are four skills that can be learnt: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In listening skill, Wilson (2008) states that humans learnt to listen and listen to learn. Humans have reason to listen, it is because sounds can stimulate the imagination and enrich humans' lives. So that, listening is a basic fundamental aspect that needs to be learnt when learning a language. Meanwhile, in speaking skill, Thornbury (2011) states that the study of written grammar may not be the most efficient preparation for speaking. Speaking is a skill and needs to be developed and practiced independently of the grammar curriculum. Listening and speaking can be related into a sort link of teaching-learning activities. The writer considers that the basic need in language learning is listening and speaking skill. Therefore, the writer focuses in those two skills to be analyzed in this paper.

Some students considered that listening and speaking is a difficult skill as its factors mentioned by Wilson (2008), listening and speaking are related to characteristics of the message, the delivery, the listener, and the environment. Meanwhile, Thornbury (2011) states that there are common dilemmas expression of the teachers when teach English speaking. In short, it is related to the speech production, conceptualization and formulation, articulation, self-monitoring and repair, automaticity, fluency, and managing talk.

In this research paper, the writer tries to relate the listening principles that are mentioned by Harmer (2007) with the magic routine which was performed in the collaborative English learning classroom:

Principle 1: Encourage students to listen as often and as much as possible. Magic trick triggers students' curiosity about how did the magician do the trick. Therefore, at the end of performance, the writer give students the gimmick or the magic tools to perform the trick. It could encourage the students' focus to get information in details to solve the trick based on the explanation of the trick which was performed.

Principle 2: Helps students prepare to listen. Again, the show of the trick by the magician (the teacher) was the key. When the teacher wanted to perform the magic trick, it was a signal to make the students were ready to listen.

Principle 3: Once may not be enough. Magic trick is a skill that needs practice to be mastered. And to make it smoothly and perfectly done, it will need practices more and more. It would encouraged students to discuss the revelation of the trick with their classmates repeatedly, not only once.

Principle 4: Encourage students to respond to the content of a listening, not just to the language. The content of the listening and speaking material was the revelation of the trick. The indicator of the students respond can be seen with the students' reaction after discussing collaboratively through the revelation. Some of the students tried to perform the trick. The minimal reaction of the students was they could explained of how the magician did the trick.

Principle 5: Different listening stages demand different tasks. The teacher tends to manage what kind of tricks will be played. At basic stages, the teacher showed simple magic trick, and so, the revelation was also in simple explanation. Upper stage will present a trick which carried detail information, such as mental game which used certain numbers or playing card. It would made the students needed to be focused on what they were listening to.

Principle 6: Good Teachers exploit listening text to the full. By using magic trick and its revelation as the listening material, it became an important additional knowledge which can encouraged students to practice their listening skills.

Another skill which needs to be discussed is reading skill. Harmer (2007) states that there are also six principles of English reading skills. The writer tried to relate with the magic routine which is performed in the classroom:

Principle 1: Encourage students to read as often and as much as possible. Magic trick triggered students' curiosity about how did the magician do the trick. Therefore, at the end of performance, the students discussed the revelation of the trick also in the form of reading materials. It could encouraged the students focus on getting information in details to solve the trick based on the explanation of the trick which was revealed.

Principle 2: students need to be engaged with what they are reading. When the students tried to reveal the trick, curiosity of how to do the trick can engaged students with the topic and the activities they were asked to do.

Principle 3: Encourage students to respond to the content of a text (and explore their feelings about it), not just concentrate on its construction. The message of the text had same importance with the use of the language, the structure of the paragraph and the use of relative clause. In this part, students had a chance to respond that message in some way. One kind of the respond was students tried to do the magic trick, moreover developed it.

Principle 4: Prediction is a major factor of reading. The content of the reading material is the revelation of the trick. Before the teacher give the reading material to the students, the teacher shows how magician (possibly the teacher) do the trick. It gives opportunity to the students to predict what they are going to read.

Principle 5: Match the task to the topic when using in intensive reading text. Teacher needed to choose appropriate tasks to the students depended on the level of the trick and also the text. Therefore, it can be seen from how easy the students completed the tasks in the classroom.

Principle 6: Good Teachers exploit listening text to the full. By using magic trick and its revelation as the reading material for discussion, it became an important additional teaching-learning sequence as their knowledge which can encouraged students to drill their reading skills. At last, the teacher should integrate the reading text materials (revelation of the

trick) with the lesson sequences and/or curriculum. The teacher should correlated the materials with the using of language for study.

Method of Research

The design of this paper is descriptive analysis in form of qualitative research. Moleong (2010) states that the characteristics of qualitative method are natural setting in an entity context; the instrument is human; analysis of the data using inductive analysis; the research has descriptive character; theory developing is grounded theory (bottom-up); process is more important than result; the design is temporary; and result of the research is discussed and agreed together.

To collect the data, the researcher uses *observation method*. According to Mahsun (2005), observation method is a method which is used to find the data by observing the use of the language. This method has a basic technique in the form of *tapping technique* i.e. the writer taps the use of the informant language. Meanwhile, the follow-up of this method is the writer as a participant in the conversation, and observes the conversation. In this case, the researcher is involved directly in the conversation.

In this paper, the writer uses descriptive analysis to analyze and describe the data. Because the data are gathered trough teaching-learning activities, so that, the writer contributes as participant and observer to explore uniqueness that happens. Furthermore, the type of the data is in the form of sentence and narration from the students as participants which are collected during teaching-learning process. In addition, the writer interviews some students who are involved in the classroom.

Finding and Discussion

The process of collaborative English learning

The activity was conducted through four steps. The first step was preparation, the second step was demonstration, the third step was group discussion of the trick, the revelation, and the last step was to gather students' feedback.

Preparation

Before entering the classroom, the teacher needed to do "backstage preparation". The teacher chose what trick which was going to be performed in the class. After choosing a trick, the teacher prepared some properties which were used. For example, the teacher wants to perform "sleight of hands with cup and ball", the teacher would prepared the gimmick balls, the cup, and the close-pad. Then preparing and practicing the three important fundamentals of magic: Angles of Visibility, naturalness, and misdirection (Tarbell, 1999). After it was all clear, the teacher prepared the learning skills which will be learnt.

Demonstration

Started from the basic trick like *palming*, *switching,* and *forcing.* The teacher performs the trick twice, the first one fast movement, and the second one slower.

Group discussion

To encourage students' English skills, the teacher put the students into a small groups to explore the discussion topic. The teacher gave different trick and its revelation to each group, then the teacher provided time for the students in their group to discuss each other related to the trick. It enhanced their listening and speaking ability. The teacher gave an opportunity to the students to explore the trick, whether they wanted to develop the trick, or at least duplicating what the magician did with his routine. After that, the group sent its representative to perform in other group. After the performance, the teacher gave task to the

group to write a report related to the performance, the tricks, and –if possible- the revelation by using their own words. This process were able to enhance their writing skill.

Students' feedback

To get the feedback from the students, the teacher needed a reflection about their feelings after the activity in the class. To make it objectively, at the end of the meeting in the class, the teacher asked the students to write a reflection towards the activity in the class. Those would be the additional supporting data for the teacher in order to analyze their attitude and also their feelings toward the activity.

Analysis of Questionnaire's Result

The researcher needed to use a questionnaire to support the primary data. The researcher distributed questionnaire to ten students randomly, which is held on Friday, January 22nd, 2016. The researcher gave four items to be answered. Some opinion was needed.

Question number 1 asked about the students' opinion about the activity. All of students (100%) gave opinion that they enjoyed the activity. Based on the answer of the first question, it was clear that the whole students were interested in the use of magic tricks.

Question number 2 asked about whether the activities helped the students in learning vocabulary. Eight students (80%) answered "yes" and only two students (20%) answered "no". Based on the answer of the second question, it was clear that majority of the students' vocabularies were increased.

Question number 3 asked about whether they want this activity will be regular or not. The whole students (100%) answered "yes". It was surprising that all of the students expected the program to be given regularly.

Question number 4 asked about students' opinion about what benefits that they got from this activity. The whole students gave positive opinions. One of the students said that her vocabularies increased, learn how to be a good public speakers, learn about giving tolerance to each other, helping each other, and willing to accept the advice from friends.

Conclusion

Based on the explanation and the researcher's experience, it can be concluded that:

a. The students were very interested in the magic trick which is given by the teacher.

b. The treatment using magic trick has some advantages. It can help the students in mastering English skills, and it can be used to increase their motivation.

c. The vocabularies in the topic offered in this action are needed in their daily lives. And the treatment using magic tricks can enrich the students' vocabulary.

d. Besides reading and writing, the students can improve their speaking skill while performing the magic tricks in front of the classroom.

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