Lecturers’ methods in teaching speaking at the university of Muhammadiyah Aceh

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Abstract. This research aimed at investigating; 1) what methods were applied by lecturers in teaching speaking; and 2) how were the methods applied in the classroom. This study employed qualitative research and was descriptive in nature. The respondent of this study were two English lecturers who taught speaking subject at the University of Muhammadiyah Aceh. In collecting the data, the researcher used two kinds of instrument; observation and interview. The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman technique which proposed three simultaneous flows of action: a) data reduction; b) data display; and c) verification/conclusion. The result shows that; 1) the most of the methods applied in teaching speaking were communicative language teaching and direct method; and 2) the implementing method in teaching speaking consisted of material presentation by the lecturer and classroom discussion.

1. Introduction

Having a successful and effective English teaching, especially speaking, is inseparable from the lecturers’ competency and the appropriate method of teaching. Despite the importance of those components in good teaching, the outcomes are far from the ideal. Surprisingly, many students at the University of Muhammadiyah Aceh face problems in mastering the speaking skill taught in the classroom. The students’ lack of vocabulary, lack of motivation and less of practicing in using the target language are most common reasons causing this problem. Since a university, especially Education department, is a place which aims to produce effective and qualified teachers, this problem must be solved so that it will not impact on the teachers’ quality in the future.

Therefore, English lecturers are required to adopt and adapt varying and appropriate method of teaching in order to help the students in learning English and increase their speaking ability in terms of both speaking components; accuracy and fluency. Moreover, the lecturers need to provide classroom activities to stimulate the use of English as much as possible not only inside but also outside classroom, so that it will help the students in the process of acquiring the target language. [1] suggest that language is learnt through practices and the students will eventually be better the more they are exposed to the use of the target language. In line with this idea, [2] states that once learners process the language input available, they will need a lot of practices to create comprehensible output. Encouraging the students to use English for social interaction in the classroom is one example of these contributive practices. [3] advocates that students get enough opportunities to practice the language. It will help the students in the process of acquiring the language in much more natural contexts.

The issues discussed above is concerned mainly with the way the lecturer organize set of classroom activities and create a supportive and enjoyable learning process in order to motivate the students in learning the language enthusiastically and increase their academic achievement, especially speaking performance. This leads to the question of whether the lecturer needs to focus on the student or the
learning context. [4] make it clear that it is important to look at not only the characteristics of the individual learner, but also at “the contexts in which individuals learn”. Moreover, good lecturers understand why they do what they do. In other words, they do know their teaching materials, and at the same time they are also familiar with varied and many different methods, techniques and strategies of teaching.

It is in no doubt that different lecturer will have different way and concept in organizing classroom activities and implementing certain method in the language classroom due to different competency, personal experience, knowledge and personality. It is believed, however, that a qualified and well-informed lecturer will be able to make better decisions in the teaching process. Thus, the researcher decided to directly observe and explore the teaching method used by the lecturers in the speaking class and how do they implemented those methods in the classroom.

Theoretical Review

Speaking is one of major language skills used as a language tool to communicate, convey, and share the idea, thought, and feeling amongst people. It acts as a fundamental instrument in an interactive process of constructing meaning involving the process how to produce, receive and process information given in certain contexts [5] [6]. Furthermore, the students must also manage to anticipate and construct the expected patterns on certain discourse situations. [5] also mention that they need to be able to figure the use of several elements of speaking such as rephrasing, turn taking, redirecting and providing feedback.

[6] suggests seven principles for teaching speaking skill; Focusing on fluency and accuracy which considering the students’ learning objective; Preparing techniques to motivate the students intrinsically in learning the language; Authenticating the language use in meaningful contexts during the teaching learning process; Providing appropriate feedback and correction; Integrating speaking and listening; Providing students opportunities to initiate oral communication in learning process as much as possible, and Encouraging the students to develop their speaking strategies.

Over the years many different methods to the teaching and learning of language have been applied by many teachers and lecturers. [7] argue that some methods focusing on teaching general communication skills and emphasizing on the ability to express idea meaningfully and it can be understood by the interlocutor that to grammatical accuracy or perfect pronunciation. On the other hand, other methods specify on accurate grammar and pronunciation from the very beginning or organize to teach the basic grammar in the first phase of learning a language. Some of most common methods used in English language teaching are as follows;

1.1. Grammar Translation Method. This method focused its main teaching and learning activities on grammar and translation practicing. Very little attention paid to speaking and listening as its main focus was on reading and writing. The instruction involved translating to and from the target language. The language of instruction used in the classroom typically was students’ native language [8] [9]. Therefore, when the students can cover both form and meaning their language awareness will improve and simultaneously their ability to study the language autonomously will also increase [10]

1.2. Direct Method. The basic principle of this method is that the second language should be learned like someone learns the first language which means there will be lots of oral interaction, spontaneous use of the language, no translation between first and second languages, and almost no analysis of grammatical pattern [6]. It means that only the target language should be used in the classroom. In this natural way of learning a foreign language, a direct link is built between the word and its meaning without the interruption of the mother tongue. However, the main object of interest of this method was still the sentence and accuracy, even though it took off in almost different direction from Grammar-translation method [11].
1.3. Audio-Lingual Method. [12] define Audio-Lingual Method as a method of foreign or second language teaching which (a) emphasizes the teaching of speaking and listening before reading and writing (b) uses dialogues and drills (c) discourages use of the mother tongue in the classroom (d) often makes use of contrastive analysis. Since audio-lingual theory relied on drilling and repetition, it discouraged the students to take initiative in the learning process because they might make mistakes which then were strictly corrected by the teacher (Roberts and [8]. Therefore, in Audio-lingual teaching, the use of language in any kind of real-life context was limited and discouraged.

1.4. Suggestopedia. Suggestopedia concerns most on the physical environment in which the learning process takes place. It suggests teachers to create a comfortable and relaxed condition for students to learn. Since music was the central point of this method, a soft piece of music was playing during the learning process [6] [11]. Even though this method was criticized by many educational practitioners, it is still believed that we learnt something from it; the power of brain in human process of learning, and the relaxation might be quite beneficial in the classroom [11].

1.5. Community Language Learning. Community Language Learning is an application of ‘counseling’ learning to second or foreign language learning. It suggested the techniques which were developed in group counseling to help the students in learning both psychologically and emotionally. It makes use of small or large groups which is treated as community. Furthermore, it focuses on the learners’ personal feelings and their reactions to language learning. The students can talk freely about what they want in their mother tongue. In this method the teacher acts as counselor who then translates the learners’ sentence into the foreign language and they repeat the translation to other members of the group [12].

1.6. Silent way. The most remarkable characteristic of Silent way is the behavior of the teacher who says as little as possible in the classroom instead of initiating a conversation with the students in the classroom. In other words, the students should be the one who lead the process of the learning. Harmer (2007: 68) claims, based on Caleb Gattegno’s idea as the founder of the method, that they need to create and explore the language by themselves rather than just repeating and memorizing what has been taught.

1.7. Total Physical Response (TPR). According to [13], children tend to use lots of listening rather than speaking in learning their first language. This listening activity is usually accompanied by certain physical response. In a typical TPR teaching the teacher utilizes the students’ mood and focuses on giving the command to get the learners move about and activate their motor activity. It is why no verbal comment is necessary. The limitation of this method is that it only suitable to be employed for students in beginning levels of proficiency [6].

1.8. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The word ‘communicative’ in Communicative Language Teaching was variously explained by teachers when they claimed that they employed this method in their classroom. It means that this method means different things to different people. There is one aspect, however, which embraces all those different concepts; the concept how the language is used [11] [14]. [14] explicitly describes how the students use the language to create a meaningful communication as knowing; 1) how to use language for different purposes and functions; 2) how to differ the use of language based on the setting; 3) how to understand and produce different types of text; and 4) how to continue using the language despite having language knowledge limitations.

[6] offers seven characteristics of CLT, they are; 1) CLT focuses on all aspects of communicative competence; 2) Both form and function are two important components of language; 3) it focuses both on fluency and accuracy; 4) it focuses on the use of real-life context; 5) it promotes students’ autonomous learning; 6) the teacher acts as facilitator and guide in the classroom; and 7) students in CLT classroom are active participants in their own learning process.
There are several activities which can be implemented in teaching speaking [11] [14] [15], they are as follows:

1. Jigsaw; it is grouping students into several which consist of several students. Each member of the group was given a task to study a topic with other members from different group who got similar one, and then teach other members of his/her own group about it.

2. Think-pair-share; it consists of three stages of cooperative pattern. First, individually each student think about the topic, then secondly, each of them pair up and exchange their idea, and lastly, the pair share their opinion with their group.

3. Acting from a script; the students act out scenes from plays, the script from their textbook and/or the dialogues they have written themselves.

4. Classroom Discussion; it can be in a form of a whole-staged formal discussion to small-group informal interaction.

5. Debate; students prepare arguments in favor or against various proposition and then the students present their opinion on certain topic given.

6. Prepared Talks; a student or group of students makes a presentation on a topic of their own choice. The students will be given some times to prepare for their talk.

7. Simulation and Role play; students simulate and/or play roles of real-life encounter, for example; a conversation in a café, a shop, an interview, or business meeting)

There are several characteristics that support the successful teaching of speaking, as suggested by [16] are as follows; 1) learners should be given plenty of opportunities to talk at a time that has been allocated to communicate in the classroom; 2) participation in class discussion is not dominated by only minority talkative students, but all students have the same opportunity to speak, and contributions are distributed fairly; 3) choosing an interested and new topic of learning so as to motivate students to contribute in achieving the learning objectives.

Several previous researches have been conducted on methods, techniques and classroom activities used by teachers in increasing the students’ speaking ability. As [17] suggested the use of Direct Method in teaching oral language. [18] conducted a classroom action research on the use of CLT in changing students’ speaking skill. This study, on the other hand, directly observed the methods used by lecturers in teaching speaking and how they implemented them in classroom.

2. Methodology

In this study Qualitative method was used in collecting data focusing on the methods used by lecturers in speaking class and how they implement the methods. Qualitative research is a research based on descriptive data that does not make use of statistical procedures [19]. This study was conducted from April to August 2018 at the English Department of Muhammadiyah Aceh University.

The participants of this study were two English lecturers who taught speaking class. In collecting the data the researchers employed two primary data collection techniques; observation and interview. As nonparticipant observation, the researchers collected the data by written out and filled out the observation checklist on all teaching activities in speaking class. The researchers then interviewed the participants using the interview guide.

The technique of qualitative data analysis used in this study is the model by [20] who suggested three concurrent flows of action; a) data reduction; b) data display; and c) conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction is the process of summarizing or selecting the main event on teaching activities inside the classroom. Data display applies in form of table, figure or chart to organize and arrange the pattern of the component. Drawing verification could be changed when there is no evident support it in the further process of collecting data.

3. Results and Discussion

The observation and interview data were obtained from teaching and learning activities inside the speaking classrooms at English Department of the University of Muhammadiyah Aceh. All of the data
obtained were analyzed to find out the teaching method employed by the lecturers teaching speaking as can be seen in table 1.

| No | Lecturer Method in teaching speaking at the University of Muhammadiyah. |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | Method                                    | 1st Meeting | 2nd Meeting |
| 1  | Grammar-Translation Method              | -           | -           |
|    | Direct Method                           | √           | -           |
|    | Audio-Lingual Method                    | -           | -           |
| 1  | Suggestopedia                           | -           | -           |
|    | Community Language Learning             | -           | -           |
|    | Silent Way                               | -           | -           |
|    | Total Physical Response                  | -           | -           |
|    | Communicative Language Teaching         | √           | √           |
| 2  | Grammar-Translation Method              | -           | -           |
|    | Direct Method                           | √           | √           |
|    | Audio-Lingual Method                    | -           | -           |
| 2  | Suggestopedia                           | -           | -           |
| 2  | Community Language Learning             | -           | -           |
| 2  | Silent Way                               | -           | -           |
| 2  | Total Physical Response                  | -           | -           |
| 2  | Communicative Language Teaching         | √           | √           |

The checkmark (√) in the table indicates which method used by both lecturers in teaching speaking, while the line (-) refers to the non-existing method used by the speaking lecturers. The data shows that the most method used in teaching speaking were Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Direct method. The lecturers in both classes used English as the only language of instruction in presenting and explaining the materials, giving the students instruction and feedback during teaching learning process. They also encouraged the students to use English more frequently during the learning process.

In using CLT teaching the lecturers provided the opportunities in the classroom for their students to engage in real-life communication. Debate and pair discussion were two examples of this activity used by the lecturers in promoting the real example of how to argue, convince and defend your argument. Discussion, either in pair or group, was also employed frequently by both lecturers. Furthermore, the lecturers acted out as the facilitator and guide during the teaching learning process.

The implementation of the method in teaching speaking and some activities applied by the lecturers can be seen in table 2:

| No | Lecturer Activities in Teaching and Learning | 1st Meeting | 2nd Meeting |
|----|---------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1  | Presentation                                | √           | √           |
|    | Jigsaw                                      | -           | -           |
|    | Think-pair-share                            | √           | -           |
| 1  | Acting from a script                        | -           | -           |
|    | Classroom Discussion                         | √           | √           |
|    | Debate                                      | -           | -           |
|    | Prepared Talks                              | -           | √           |
|    | Simulation and Role play                    | -           | -           |
|    | Presentation                                | √           | √           |
The data presented in table 2 shows that both lecturers employed and combined several activities in teaching speaking. The implementation of method in teaching speaking by both lecturers can be concluded as two major activities; 1) material presentation in which the lecturers present and explain the material to the students in English; and 2) classroom discussion in which the lecturers provided many opportunities to the students to speak using the target language either in pair or group and encourage them to produce as many oral production as possible. The lecturers also provided feedback and corrected the students’ pronunciation.

The data from interview supported the observation result in terms of the method used by lecturers in teaching speaking. It can be seen through their statement in the interview:

“I always try to use English all the time in the class because I want to motivate the students to use English in their interaction among them. By only using English during the class I hope it will encourage them to learn English more in order to understand the lesson” (Lecturer A). “Using English during the lesson is my way to force the students to learn English the same way as they learn their mother tongue. I rarely use translation especially in speaking class” (Lecturer B).

In terms of the activities applied in the speaking class, the participants stated:

“I try to use some activities in teaching speaking in order to avoid the students’ boredom and motivate them to speak more in the class. Sometimes I give more than one task to the students in one meeting” (Lecturer A), “classroom and group discussion is my favorite activity to apply during the lesson because I hope the students can help each other. There are always students who feel shy and need their friends’ assist in understanding the topic” (Lecturer B).

4. Discussion

The result finding demonstrates that the most teaching methods used by lecturers in teaching speaking were; Communicative Language Teaching in which the lecturers provided many opportunities to the students to construct oral interaction in the language classroom using real-world context and promoted the idea of sharing idea in classroom discussion; and and Direct Method in which the students were encouraged to use the target language frequently during the learning process.

Moreover, in Direct method teaching, the lecturers also motivated the students to actively use English by engaging them interactively often by asking questions, and encouraging them to reply only in target language. This concept is in line with the core idea of Direct method teaching where the teachers provide maximum opportunity to students to speak the target language (Brown: 2007). Through the learning activities used by lecturers during the lesson, the students were guided to use the target language as frequent as possible. In CLT teaching, the Lecturers applied several activities in promoting the use of real-life contexts such as the use of language in argumentation and debate, and talk and conversation in daily life circumstances. In addition, they also support the students to communicate and interact actively using the target language through discussion. As mentioned by [6] that the use of real-life context is one of seven characteristics in CLT.

Based on the data of this study, it can be concluded that the lecturers commonly used CLT and Direct method along with certain activities in teaching speaking in order to promote active learning in the classroom in which the students were involved in the learning process actively.
5. Conclusion
Based on the results, the researchers found that;

1. The most common methods used by lecturers in teaching speaking were Communicative Language Teaching and Direct method.
2. The implementation of the methods used consists of the material presentation and classroom discussion.

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