TEACHING SPEAKING IN BLENDED LEARNING COMMUNITY

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Abstract: Speaking is the most difficult skill for most learners who learn it as a second or foreign language due to their low proficiency. The application of blended learning model is expected can be a solution for the learners who has problem with speaking skills. Meanwhile, learners' motivation to study and get involved in learning is also become crucial aspects to achieve the learning objectives since the teacher's role is only as a facilitator. Teaching speaking using blended learning model is divided into three major activities; these are warming up, main activities and closing. Some applications and internet connection are also needed to support the learning process. This learning model will give benefit both for the learners and also the teacher.

Key word: blended learning, speaking skills, teaching speaking

Abstrak: Berbicara adalah ketrampilan berbahasa paling sulit yang dihadapi pembelajar baik itu pembelajar bahasa sebagai bahasa asing maupun sebagai bahasa kedua dikarenakan lemahnya kemampuan mereka. Pelaksanaan model pembelajaran yang berbasis *blended learning* diharapkan bisa menjadi solusi bagi pembelajar yang mempunyai permasalahan dengan ketrampilan berbicara. Sementara itu, motivasi pembelajar untuk belajar serta terlibat dalam pembelajaran juga menjadi aspek krusial untuk mencapai tujuan pembelajaran dikarenakan peran guru hanya sebagai fasilitator. Mengajar ketrampilan berbicara dengan menggunakan model *blended learning* dibagi menjadi tiga kegiatan utama, yaitu pemanasan, kegiatan utama dan penutup. Beberapa aplikasi dan jaringan internet juga sangat dibutuhkan untuk mendukung proses pembelajaran. Model pembelajaran ini akan memberikan keuntungan bagi siswa maupun guru.

Kata kunci: *blended learning*, ketrampilan berbicara, mengajar berbicara

INTRODUCTION

Learners are generally expected to master all English language skills in order to communicate in English orally. English language competence covers four main skills, they are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Dell Hymes (1972) in Waters(1987:28) proposed communicative competence consist not just of a set of rules for formulating grammatically correct sentences, but also a knowledge of 'when to speak, when not... what to talk about, with whom, when, where, in what manner.'

Whereas, according to the importance of English and the necessity to master speaking skills, English is used as the first foreign language in Indonesia. It has been taught from elementary school up to higher education. English is learned by the learners as a compulsory subjects to achieve the higher level of le arning English.

Having a good ability of communication using English, learners should have good capability and self–confidence in speaking. Unfortunately, Indonesian learners, like others, often find some difficulties in producing speech. Learners need more opportunity to practice English and use it communicatively inside and outside the language classroom

In addition, globally, it has been debatable that majority of high school graduates cannot speak English language properly (Alonzo, 2014; Sarwar, *et al*., 2014; Alharbi, 2015). Even the bright learners who get high scores in written examinations are unable to express themselves orally in English language (Sarwar *et al*, 2014). In Indonesia, learners have lack communicative and linguistic competence and they often code switch to use their mother tongue during conversation or in group discussions in class. Mwamba (2015) claimed that learners who have no linguistic competence often speak slowly, take too long to compose utterances, do not participate actively in conversation, their spoken English language do not sound natural, have poor grammar and pronunciation.

In line with observation in Saudi Arabia which has been by made by Alharbi (2015) that learners have low oral skills due to absence of authentic language learning situations outside and inside classroom.

Thus, the problem of low communicative and linguistic competence from secondary school is also carried to the university. It has also been investigated that some of the first year English department learners in STKIP PGRI Trenggalek are not able to sustain in class discussions without code switching in their mother tongue or making grammatical mistakes (Barasa, 2005; Mwamba, 2005; Gudu, et al., 2014). Next, Al-Hosni (2014) observed that learners' anxiety and unwillingness to practice speaking skills are the two main obstacles for learning English. These are caused when learners fear being negatively evaluated in error correction in front of their friends. In addition, those learners with low proficiency and rate self as 'poor' become more anxious and are not willing to communicate (Ibid). Then, it becomes a serious problem which could affect the learners learning of other subjects and long term of their professional career development.

Consequently, Krashen (2005) recommend that learners should be motivated so that they do not feel threatened. Motivation is an important factor which determines the rate at which learners undertake the activities. Littlewood (1984: 53) stated that 'Motivation is the crucial force which determines whether a learner embarks in a task at all, how much energy he/she devotes to it, and how long he/she perseveres.' Thus, it

can be summed up that the communicative skills are developed when the learner is motivated and is provided with opportunity to practice using language in context. Further, Al-Hosni (2014) explained that some first and second language learners have lack motivation to speak English because they do not see the need to learn or speak English. It means that the teachers should endeavor to explain to their learners about the importance of practicing speaking.

Finally, problems explained above could be as a result of various reasons advanced by scholars. Researchers found that speaking is the most difficult skill for most learners who learn it as a second or foreign language due to their low proficiency in English (Alonzo 2014; Alharbi 2015; Al-Hosni, 2014; Zhang 2009). Moreover, Al-Hosni (2014) identifies some factors causing speaking difficulties:

> Learners are worried about making mistakes fearful of criticism, or simply shy. Learners have no motivation to express themselves… only one participant can talk at a time because of large classes and the tendency of some learners to dominate while others speak very little or not at all… learners who share the same mother tongue tend to use it because it is easier and because they feel less exposed if they speak their mother tongue (Hosni, 2014: 123).

The Nature of Speaking Skills

Channey (1998:13) stated that " speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non- verbal symbols in a variety of contexts". Then, Jung (2001:2) provides us with a solid definition of speaking, namely , "converting meaning in the mind to spoken language". Andryani (2012:2) describes speaking skill as the ability to speak the target language to communicate with others with accuracy, fluency, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and compensability. Meanwhile, Nunan (2003:48) states that a speaking skill is the productive aural utterance to convey meaning.

Further, the researcher adapts previous definition that with in mind, the researcher endorses the previous definition that "speaking is a skill of comprehending, pronouncing, and being fluent and accurate in using grammar and vocabulary". Finally, it's clear from what has been explained above that speaking is a complex process including many other processes. It is not just a matter of pronouncing the words. It is a skill which needs the speaker to interact with other people deeply then to be perceived and understood, constructing the meaning, pronouncing, and being fluent and accurate in using grammar and vocabulary.

Whereas, Brown and Yule (1991) in Richards (2007: 2) explained that the functions of speaking are classified into three: talk as interaction, talk as transaction, and talk as performance.

a. Talk as Interaction. To create good communication, interaction is needed to serve a primarily social function, as Rivers (2000: 543) says that "communication derives essentially from interaction. Brown and Yule (1991: 54) illustrate the features of the interaction, they are: a. has a primarily social function, b. reflects role relationship, c. reflects speaker's identity, d. may be formal or casual, e. uses conversational conventions, f. reflects degrees of politeness, g. employs many generic words, h. uses conversational register, and i. is jointly constructed from the description above, the researcher notice the ability to speak a foreign language involves several components that speaker need to acquire in order to communicate effectively.

b. Talk as transaction. Transaction is concerned with what is said or done. Hodson and Jones (2006: 14) clarifies that "in this type of spoken language, learner and teacher usually focus on meaning or on talking their way to understanding." Moreover, Byerne (1991, P: 33) gives a distinction between the two types of talk as transaction: a. Situation, the focus is on giving and receiving information (e.g. asking someone for directions). There is no need to pay attention to accuracy, as long as information is successfully communicated or understood, and b. Transactions, focus on obtaining goods or services, such as ordering food in a restaurant.

c. Talk as Performance. It refers to type of talking that transmits information before an audience, such as public speaking, classroom presentation, public announcement, and speeches. According to Richards (2007:6) talk as performance tends to be in the form of monologue rather than dialogue such as giving a class report or a lecture or a class debate.

Teaching Speaking

The goal of teaching speaking skills is communicative efficiency. Learners should be able to make themselves understood, using their current proficiency to the fullest. They should try to avoid confusion in the message due to faulty pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary, and to observe the social and cultural rules that apply in each communication situation. To help learners develop communicative efficiency in speaking, the teacher can use a balanced activities approach that combines language input, structured output, and communicative output. *Language input* comes in the form of teacher talk, listening activities, reading passages, and the language heard and read

outside of class. It gives learners the material they need to begin producing language themselves.

Teachers should facilitate the learning process by providing learners with knowledge (Alharbi, 2015). This requires that teachers use teacher centered methodology but be tactful to be aware of the culture of the community in order to take care of the learner cultures (Methitham, 2014). Identification of these cultural aspects provides warm, friendlier, and good relationship between teachers and learners by reducing the cultural distance. In addition, teachers should also be fair in error correction so that they do not overcorrect a learner (Borg 2006). This makes learners' error correction to be a natural part of learning process (Alharbi 2015). Teachers should provide learners with authentic language in context (Alharbi, 2015; Hosni, 2014). Achmad and Yusuf (2014: 153):

> In speaking class, teachers are required to create communicative and interactive activities by giving learners a great deal of opportunities to practice the target language. Essentially, the class manifests learner-centered backdrop rather than teacher centered… teachers are to prepare classroom activities that are devoted and best facilitate speaking exercises.

Teachers also carry the burden of knowing how learners from specific communities learn so that the teaching styles are uniform with the learners' learning styles in order to enhance learning (Talley and Hui-Ling, 2014). Tsui (1996) identified six speaking strategies to be employed by teachers when teaching speaking skills lesson for instance i) lengthen wait time between question and answer, ii) to improve questioning techniques, iii) focus on content iv) Establish a warm rapport with the learners, v) to accept variety of answers and vi) To allow for learner rehearsals. Learners also expect their teachers to give them feedback on their performance. A teacher should only correct when there is a problem but should not correct every time a learner makes a mistake because this will affect the flow of conversation, destroy the purpose for the speaking activity, demotivating learners and learners may become afraid to speak. Thus a teacher should endeavour to correct mistakes positively and with a lot of encouragement (Tuan and Mai, 2015).

Meanwhile, the learners also lay an important role in speaking skills lesson. First, learners should be ready to interact with the curriculum being provided. This requires learners who have internal motivation. This increases self esteem, confidence and willingness to communicate (Alharbi 2015). The learners then develop long-term self motivation and determination wich will enable them to put more effort by participating

actively in classroom activities and speaking in English outside the classroom. Archmad and Yusuf (2014) recommend that when a teacher is using the uncontrolled classroom activities, it is important to take cognizance of culture of the learners as it impacts on their learning outcomes. Talley and Hui-ling (2014) observe that learners are expected to agree to initiate, respond, manage and negotiate their part in speaking skills lesson. In addition, they should select, sequence, arrange words and sentences and utterances in order to have unified spoken English. Consequently, learners demonstrate their comprehension and express self through meaningful and grammatical sentences verbally (Ibid)).

Blended Learning

Blended learning is defined as a mixture of classroom learning and use of technology which enable teachers to enrich their courses by using Internet CD-ROMs. The term technology covers a wide range of recent aspects, such as the internet, CD–Roms and interactive white broad. It also includes the use of computers as a means of communication, such as chat and email, and a number of environments which enable teachers to enrich their courses, such as VLES (virtual learning environments) (Pete & Barney 2009:7). In addition, blended learning is very useful for learners in learning English because that enables them to practice language inside and outside the class room, which enhances their ability in the language skills, particularly speaking skills, (Pete and Barney 2009:40).

Interactive materials on web and CD–Rom offer opportunities to develop language skills, such as reading, writing, speaking and pronunciation.

So it is not just about using technology because it is available; blended learning is about finding better ways of supporting learners in achieving the learning objectives and providing them with the best possible learning and teaching experiences, as well as supporting teachers in their role (including the management and administration of courses). Of course, the integration of blended learning in courses will naturally vary according to such factors as: discipline, year level, learner characteristics and needs, course or program learning objectives, as well as the academic's approach to teaching, and confidence and experience in using technology.

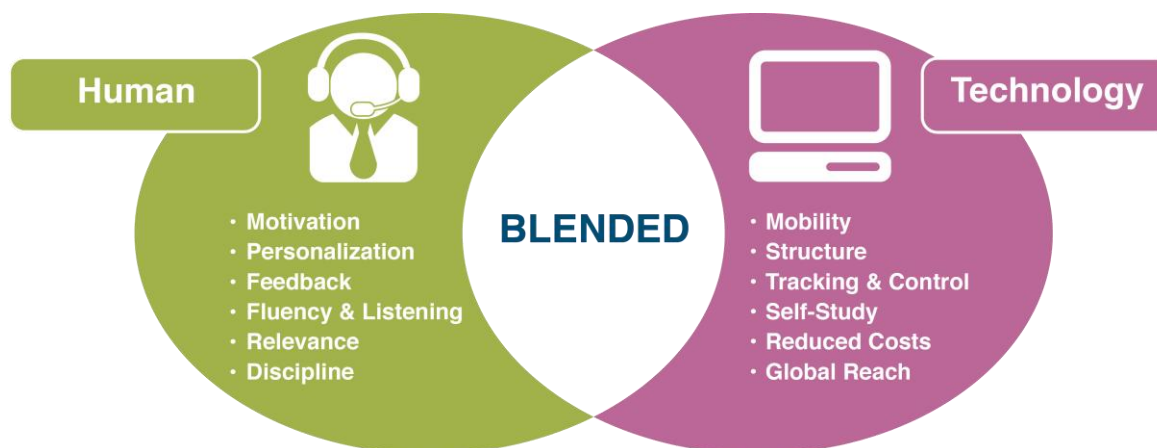To sum up, the blended learning model is figured as follows:

Figure 1. The blended learning model

Teaching Speaking in Blended Learning Community

In implementing the teaching speaking by using blended learning model, teachers must be careful in preparing the lesson plan, they have to choose appropriate technological materials to implement their lessons plan successfully. The teacher took into consideration that the speaking skills intended to be developed in this study and learner centered activities. Moreover, it usually derived from integrated skills texts. Then, the learners share information in online mode by asking and answering question in order to complete a task. Meanwhile, the highlighted words in the texts are chosen as keywords. Thus, the key structure of each lesson is chosen to help in understanding the text. Its function is related to the topic and the main theme of the text for every meeting.

Further, another teaching aids :the workbooks, the work sheets, the evaluation sheets, video, pictures, LCD, laptop and other materials are selected appropriately for each lesson and used as resources and teaching aids.

Procedures and Techniques

The procedures and techniques applied in teaching speaking by using blended learning model is presented in the following:

In warming up stage, the teacher displays some photoes on LCD related to the topic discussed then asks the learners to describe the actions or characters based on the picture. This activity is proposed to help the learners prepares for the lesson and recall information about their own experience to link with the previous material with this new subject matter. This stage is very crucial to arouse learners' attention and help them memorize what they have got in the previous lesson. Next, the teacher draws the learners' attention to title of the chapter and picture and asks some questions related to them.

Next, the learners accompanied by the teacher discuss the key words. They listen to the correct pronunciation of the key words in record mode while the teacher checks the learners' pronunciation of the words.

After that, the teacher divides chapter into two or three parts. They are asked to write some questions about the first part, then asks learners to read and answer these questions by working in pairs with their friends. Then the teacher checks the learners' answers and discusses them, then completes anotherr parts of the chapter in the same way. In this stage teacher takes learners to the multimedia laboratory and displays the video of the chapter on LCD.

Then, the learners are commanded to work in groups and practice summarizing the chapter in oral mode then the teacher checks their summarizing by listening to some learners. After that, the learners work in pairs, and practice answering questions on the worksheet in oral mode. The questions and their answers in the worksheet are designed to display on LCD as technological materials (form and pronunciation). After the learners had answered the worksheet, they review the questions on LCD with their answers

Next, the teacher asks the learners to practice the same questions in oral mode by imitating the same pronunciation that they have listened to on LCD. One learners asks, another one answers.

The teacher evaluates learners by distributing an evaluation sheet. The teacher and the learners will receive feedback about the whole work. Finally, the teacher and the learners start the next chapter in the same way for the next meeting.

Homework

The teacher gives learners homework such as asking learners to open a particular website on the Internet and watch the same chapter. Then, they are asked to write six sentences and listen to their pronunciation from the video of the chapter. In the next lesson the teacher checks their pronunciation to those sentences.

These activities are proposed since they enable the learners to practice the language out of classroom that lead to lengthen the period of learning the language. Further, these activities are believed as good examples to blend between face to face learning with the technological materials, such as websites and another education application on the internet.

CONCLUSION

Teaching speaking is a very important part of both foreign and second language learning. The ability to communicate in English clearly and efficiently contributes to the success of the learner in school and success later in every phase of life. Therefore, it is essential that language teachers pay great attention to teaching speaking. The blended learning model propose various kinds of activity and application that can help learners to master their speaking skill. These activities and application can make learners more active in the learning process and at the same time make their learning more meaningful and fun for them so that it can arouse their motivation and their achievement.

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