METHODS AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING ENGLISH AS EIL IN SMA LTI IGM PALEMBANG

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Abstract: English as an International Language (EIL) is used for communication in most activities and fields in the world. This encouraged schools in Indonesia to find out the appropriate method and practice in teaching English. SMA LTI IGM had concerned about the use of English teaching methods. This study would find out (1) What were methods and practices/strategies of English applied in teaching and learning English as EIL in SMA IGM Palembang? (2) How did teachers of English improve the students` ability in teaching English at the school? (3) What programs or activities provided from the school to facilitate creating English atmosphere in this school environment? The research finding of English teaching and learning at SMA LTI IGM Palembang was shown from the observation`s result toward the teachers, students and teaching and learning process for one semester. The method of teaching and learning English as EIL applied was English communicative teaching and learning or CLT. Per level class was applied, where the students are grouped based on their same characteristics of English competence, ability and grade. Students` class setting and situation were also classified into per skill class setting where students were taught in the same skill learned. Moreover, the facilities of the school were complete to support the teaching and learning practice process and to fulfill the wide variety of activities used of this technique.

Key words : Method, practice, teaching English

English as an International Language (EIL) is used for communication in most activities and fields in the world. For some time now, English teachers and applied linguists in third world communities have been concerned about the use of English teaching methods and pedagogical paradigms developed in the West. We now acknowledge that cultures and languages of former colonizing nations have attained nativized status in many third world communities, such as Indonesia. It is also not clear that third world students do not want to be acquainted with foreign language teaching methods and materials.

The methods trade parallels in many ways the traditional commercial relations in industrial products in the international market. Just as the technologically and economically developed nations of the West or centre hold an unfair monopoly over less developed or periphery communities in industrial products, similar relations characterize the marketing of language teaching methods. The dominance of centre applied linguistic circles is helped by their resources for conducting sophisticated research with hi-tech facilities and then popularizing the knowledge globally through their publishing networks and academic institutions (Canagarajah 1996).

The word "methodology" is itself is the study of pedagogical practices in general. Whatever considerations are involved in "how to teach" are methodological. It is a generalized set of classroom specifications for accomplishing linguistic objectives. Methods tend to be primarily concerned with teacher and student roles and behaviors and secondarily with such features as linguistic and subject-matter objectives, sequencing, and materials. They are almost always thought of as being broadly applicable to a variety of audiences in a variety of contexts (Renshaw, 2007).

Many teachers in periphery communities believe that the methods propagated by centre applied linguistic circles through their textbooks, research journals, teacher training programs, and professional organizations are the most effective, efficient, and authoritative for their purposes. Teachers and institutions spend their limited resources on purchasing the new teaching material. To learn to use these, the institutions have to spend more resources for getting the assistance of centre experts for re-training their teaching cadre. Methods are cultural and ideological constructs with politico-economic consequences. Methods embody the social relations, forms of thinking and strategies of learning that are preferred by the circles that construct them. In the context of a heightened ideological sensitivity in language teaching circles today, some applied linguists in the centre have attempted to devise ways of transferring methods to other socio-educational contexts in a culturally harmless and politically neutral manner.

One school in periphery community in Indonesia is Indo Global Mandiri High School. This school, however, one of good schools in technology facilitation and have good English teaching and learning program. This school is well-known for having good English atmosphere at the school environment. Based on this view, the writer tried to find out the methods and practices of English as EIL in SMA IGM Palembang in order to improve the students ability in teaching English at the school.

This discussion was to find out not only the methods and practices of ELT applied to students in SMA LTI IGM Palembang but also knowing how the English improve their students` ability in English, and seeking ideas for its improvement, the questions were formed as follows:

1. What were methods and practices/strategies of English applied in teaching and learning English as EIL in SMA IGM Palembang?
2. How did teachers of English improve the students` ability in teaching English at the school?
3. What programs or activities provided from the school to facilitate creating English atmosphere in this school environment?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Models of Methods Transfer

Adrian Holliday (1994) and Martha Pennington (1995) have attempted to come up with models that explain the possibility of introducing new methods in culturally diverse contexts. Holliday (1995, p.705) endeavors to explain the process by which teachers universally adapt to pedagogical change in any teaching context. Since she also claims that her model explains 'adoption of innovation', and derives her model from research in a periphery ELT context, her model will be treated seriously by periphery teachers as explaining what it takes for a new method to successfully get implanted in a different pedagogical environment. Therefore, the models are remarkably interactive and dialectical – open to negotiating with periphery cultures for appropriate adaptation. She admits also that the pedagogy will be internalized in accordance with the constraints teachers experience from the context such as: student motivation, cultural influence, availability of facilities. She also recommends that with additional support, teaching/research material, and encouragement teachers should be made to move towards more mature stages of internalization.

Labelling his work as an effort to develop an 'appropriate methodology', Holliday explores ways of evolving methods that are relevant to and effective in periphery

contexts. He argues that it is possible to define the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach in a suitable manner. Holliday (1994, p.54) specifies the ideal condition for language learning as endorsed by his understanding of the research tradition: 'This learning group ideal sets the conditions for a process-oriented, task-based, inductive, collaborative, communicative English language teaching methodology'. He refers to this ideal as what is established in ELT research and professional circles as 'the optimum interactional parameters within which classroom language learning can take place'.

The scholars are prepared to acknowledge that the method itself could go through changes when it gets adjusted to the periphery culture, even as it modifies the beliefs and practices of periphery teachers. Both scholars acknowledge that there can be competing cultural values informing alternative language teaching methods. Furthermore, both models are deductive approaches that start with a method before they understand the teaching context. Having decided on the superiority of a chosen method, they explore the complications in classroom practice. But there are other starting points available when one attempts to devise an appropriate teaching practice for a specific context. The approach limits the process of cultural and pedagogical negotiation in classroom practice.

The Pedagogy of Postmethodism

A series of research and theoretical advances have challenged the whole concept of method, and have led to the 'postmethod condition'. What teachers practice in language classrooms rarely resembles any specific method as it is prescribed in manuals or materials. What is supposed to be the same method can differ from teacher to teacher, and class to class, depending on the many logistical, cultural and institutional forces at play (Sheen 1994). It has been pointed out that classroom realities rarely correspond to any recognizable methods. Furthermore, applied linguists now recognize that we can never discover the 'best method' (Prabhu 1990; Kumaravadivelu 1994). He goes on to analyse that no method can be empirically proven 'the best' for all classrooms. Research only shows the different levels of effectiveness of different language teaching approaches in different learning contexts.

How does classroom practice proceed in a context where there are no formalized, formulaic methods to deal with? This is perhaps the right moment to empower the local knowledge of teachers, deriving from their years of accumulated experience, wisdom, and intuitions about what works best for their students. Though terms like experience, wisdom, and intuition are unscientific to base a pedagogy upon. People have been teaching languages quite successfully even in pre-modern communities from pre-scientific times. Some of them don't have any advanced professional training. The teachers` curiosity towards the language, the ability to intuit linguistic rules from observation of actual usage, a metalinguistic awareness of the system behind languages, and the ability to creatively negotiate meaning with speakers and texts. These are the secrets of successful language acquisition.

Though teachers may adopt slight variations to suit their contexts, methods exert a pressure to mould teacher and student roles and activities in carefully orchestrated ways. Employing a more exploratory approach to language learning, strategy models attempt to understand the typical strategies learners use in everyday life to negotiate language acquisition. The underlying assumption of this approach is that making students aware of learning strategies will motivate them to discover their typical learning styles for

greater optimization of the acquisition process. This awareness also enables them to be more self-directed and independent to achieve greater control of the learning process. Since learning strategies can differ from student to student, according to their personal and community-based styles of learning, there is scope to develop a context-sensitive and community-specific approach to language teaching pedagogy. Strategies are therefore, different from methods in that they are not prescriptively/rigidly defined approaches that have to be used almost universally in any learning context. Method neutral does not mean methodless; rather it means that the framework is not conditioned by a single set of theoretical principles or classroom procedures associated with any one particular teaching method (1994, p.32). A typology of learner strategies would look like the following (Chamot and O'Malley 1994; Oxford 1990; Wenden 1991): (1) affective strategies for anxiety reduction, self-encouragement, and self-reward, (2) social strategies such as asking questions, cooperating with native speakers, and becoming culturally aware, (3) metacognitive strategies for evaluating one's progress, planning for language tasks, consciously searching for practice opportunities, paying attention, and monitoring errors, (4) memory-related strategies, such as grouping, imagery, rhyming, moving physically, and reviewing in a structured way, (5) general cognitive strategies, such as reasoning, analyzing, summarizing, and practicing. (6) compensatory strategies (to make up for limited knowledge), such as guessing meanings from context and using synonyms and gestures to convey meaning (Green and Oxford, 1995, pp.294–5).

The choice of these *strategies* would vary according to the different learning *styles* students bring with them (e.g. visual, auditory and hands-on; reflective and impulsive; analytic and global; extroverted and introverted, etc.). For this pedagogical approach to be effective, learners have to be made sensitive to the range of strategies available and the strategies that work for them. The fact that students are taught learning strategies so that they become aware of them and manipulate them to their advantage holds great potential for developing a meta-pedagogical awareness. Available research shows that successful L2 learners are aware of the strategies they use and why they use them (Abraham and Vann 1987). The best learner training includes an explicit and clear focus on specific strategies, has frequent practice opportunities for strategies, is integrated with regular class work, and shows students how to transfer strategies to new situations. In fact, students continue to learn themselves, as they reflect on strategies that produce better results for them, and then consciously employ such strategies in future acquisition process.

There should be clear principles guiding the employment of strategies according to divergent contexts and student groups. Kumaravadivelu (1994, p.32) defines his macro-strategies as 'a broad guideline, based on which teachers can generate their own situation-specific, need-based micro-strategies or classroom techniques'. He lists the following: (1) maximize learning opportunities; (2) facilitate negotiated interaction; (3) minimize perceptual mismatches; (4) activate intuitive heuristics; (5) foster language awareness; (6) contextualize linguistic input; (7) integrate language skills; (8) promote learner autonomy; (9) raise cultural consciousness; and (10) ensure social relevance.

To some extent, these strategies sound like the common-sense maxims many teachers live by. Letting the teachers foster these strategies according to the preferred styles of learning of their students is less intrusive than the implementation of traditional methods. Others are working in their own pedagogical contexts to understand the strategies that work for their students.

Understanding the strategies preferred by the students to accomplish their pedagogical tasks will help teachers to encourage students to adopt their own styles of learning rather than imposing methods from the outside. But it is important to display to students the implications of using their chosen strategies.

The teaching methods are based on the assumption of moving from one language to another, one at a time. They are also instrumental and objectivist, keeping the assumptions and processes opaque, making students and teachers focus on the target to be reached rather than on the path to be taken. Strategies are more transferable across languages, communities and cultures. They also develop useful meta-linguistic skills of negotiation. It must be emphasized that it is not adequate to simply use the strategies students are comfortable with. Using, alternately, the strategies that are uncomfortable to them enables students to gain different skills/competencies in language. Students need the practice of moving between strategies and perceiving one from the perspective of the other. This may help them understand the limitations of strategies they prefer and, contrastively, the advantages of strategies they are not comfortable with. It is significant that Green and Oxford (1995, p.289) find in their research that successful learners 'reported using a number of strategies more often than other students, and they reported using them in combination with other strategies used frequently or moderately so by students at all levels'. Letting students participate in the negotiation of appropriate pedagogical strategies and styles empowers the students to take control of their learning experience. This lets them take responsibility for what they learn according to their linguistic and social needs.

The kind of teaching practice may suggest that learning strategies need not totally displace methods. In response to the set of strategies proposed by Kumaravadivelu, Liu (1995) asks whether strategies are 'an alternative to' or 'in addition to' methods. He argues that teachers have always been adopting this kind of approach – they pick and choose methods according to the contextual needs of the classroom. But still using the framework of methods may limit the teachers as they are under pressure to think in terms of packaged techniques that come with the method. The writers` proposal here is to shift our orientation radically to first think of the students and the contextual realities before adopting a suitable pedagogical practice. Also, one doesn't have to choose one's classroom techniques from the existing packaged methods. Teachers may choose techniques that have worked for them in their instructional experience and are stored in their local knowledge.

Adult learners of English tend to favor product oriented activities, compared to children who profit greatly from a holistic, involved, introverted, hands-on style of learning. Other differences in learner identity (gender, culture, educational level, etc.) may lead to learning strategies that favor either product oriented or process oriented methods. So the learning strategies approach stands outside both camps, functioning as a heuristic to decide which approach would work in a specific context.

Periphery teachers have shared their teaching strategies orally in their local contexts. So it is inevitable that we cite only the strategy models available in published form in the West. On the other hand, negotiating with different pedagogical cultures to critically reflect on one's classroom practice is important.

Implications of Method and Strategies for Students and Teachers

How does the learning strategies approach deal with the thorny problem of centre periphery inequalities in pedagogical transfer? This approach encourages teachers and students to become more reflective and critically conscious of the strategies they themselves find useful according to a variety of contextual determinants. This is an ongoing process of development for students as they try out and exploit strategies that work for them.

Apart from the affective, cultural, material and ideological peculiarities of the students' context, there are other more pedagogically related shaping factors behind the choice of strategies: task demands, proficiency, aptitude, situation, attitude, motivation, previous success, anxiety, self-confidence, sanctions against strategy use, goals, and criteria for success (MacIntyre 1994).

It is important to realize that the abandonment of the notion of methods is empowering for periphery teachers as well. In the absence of ready-made methods, they are thrust into the classrooms to discover their pedagogical approaches in negotiation with students. Rather than looking at the classrooms through spectacles offered by pre-constructed pedagogical models, they open themselves more fully to the realities of their educational context. They are liberated from centre expertise to become more sensitive to their local classroom and socio-cultural context. This also makes periphery teachers truly creative in integrating experience, imagination, and knowledge to devise learning strategies with/for students. Teachers start inductively with the classroom situation to devise appropriate methods – gains its true meaning. This approach also helps teachers develop their own tradition of professionalism and expertise. Teachers now need to study many things: the strategies preferred by their students; the effectiveness of the strategies adopted; the social and educational consequences of the differing strategies employed. They must realize that expertise doesn't necessarily come from abroad, but needs to be developed in terms of local knowledge. Although they will profit from reading publications by centre researchers – reporting research on strategy use in other contexts – there is no compulsion to adopt the ways in which strategies are used by those communities.

Interestingly, this pedagogical approach also takes away the crutch many expatriate teachers use when they travel to teach in the periphery. For many, it is the techniques/methods authoritatively learnt from centre institutions that give them the license to teach in a foreign classroom. But post-method pedagogical practice would compel them to understand the uniqueness of each language teaching situation they enter in order to teach effectively. It would also compel them to engage with their students more intensely in the exploration of the strategies and styles that interest/suit them. The post-method condition calls for a deeper investment in the local language classrooms from travelling teachers. Since teachers always have to learn the strategies students adopt and be sensitive to their linguistic and pedagogical consequences, they cannot be sound teachers without active classroom research.

FINDINGS

The finding of research of English teaching and learning at SMA LTI IGM Palembang was taken from the observation toward the teachers, students and teaching and learning process for one semester. It was different from other schools in periphery community. This school applied one of the newest method from the West proposed by

applied linguists. The method of teaching and learning English as EIL applied was English communicative teaching and learning or CLT. The theory of learning is not great deal has been written about the learning theory behind the communicative approach that some principles may be inferred: (1) activities that involve real communication promote learning, (2) activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning, and (3) language that is meaningful to the learner promotes learning. The objectives are: (1) students will learn to use language as a means of expression, (2) students will use language as a means of expressing values and judgments, and (3) students will learn to express the functions that best meet their own communication needs.

This method provided as wide as possible using English as for communication among the teachers and students. The English globalization in this school was supported by all the school components, starting from the headmistress, teachers and even the office boys create the English atmosphere at the school environment. The English day program was proposed in this school on Fridays, meaning that, all persons in this school must communicate in English on that day.

The choice of the strategies in this school would varied according to the different learning styles students bring with them for this pedagogical approach to be effective, learners had to be made sensitive to the range of strategies available and the strategies that work for them.

Moreover, the facilities of the school were complete to support the teaching and learning practice process and to fulfill the wide variety of activities used of this technique. For instance, the school provided the laboratory room for listening skill and multimedia room. All of the students and teachers might use media as their teaching and learning support (hot spot, laptop for slide, and tape recorder for realia, and speakers for listening). This school prepared media or equipment needed to support teaching and learning English. The Findings from the instruments used in this school seemed to bear interesting and reinforce each other in many ways. Both positive feedback was given to use technology and internet facilities in teaching to improve the skills of students and ideas for improvements teaching and learning.

In responding the material, the students were clever enough. Because the strategy in teaching and learning English is quite different from other schools. Because the learners class situation is very important part to be considered in this school. Since it can influence the students` process of learning English. Learners class situation can be classified into random class where the students are grouped randomly in a class. This class type is the most common one applied in senior high schools. And per level class where the students are grouped based on their same characteristics of English competence, ability and grade. Learners class setting and situation can also be classified into per skill class setting where students are taught in the same skill learned, for example speaking class, listening class, writing class and reading class.

As the interpretation, teaching and learning process by using communicative method supported by good facilities, such as computer technology and internet facilities in teaching and learning English as EIL in this school, could improve the four skills of students and also can create a fairly positive learning environment for these EFL students. It was very effective compared to the traditional approach. Because it took a different approach from the traditional teacher-centered language instruction. It motivated and engaged students with authentic sources, activities and technology information. Students learn English not only communicatively but also get knowledge

about the language itself through textbooks. This finding reinforced the perspectives to help and motivate literacy development among students and student-centered approach and constructivist learning environments were conducive to learning.

CONCLUSION

To return to the laudable attempts of centre applied linguists to work out democratic pedagogical relations globally, it is a post-method pedagogical practice that realizes another of Holliday's well motivated desires – a 'becoming-appropriate methodology'. He articulates a position unfortunately not realized by his model where the negotiation for a suitable teaching approach will go on progressively as contexts and purposes change. Along with post-method pedagogical practice, this negotiation between teachers and students will continue creatively. As students continue to become aware of their strategy use, their mature needs and competencies will call for newer strategies.

This can become the new orthodoxy that gets defined as the 'appropriate method' and gets marketed everywhere. However, such a turn of events would be in contradiction to the liberating forces unleashed by the post-method paradigm. The notion of negotiating learning strategies as a post-method pedagogical practice ensures that language acquisition doesn't get reduced to another method, but evolves to form an ongoing teaching and learning agenda.

Related to the English teaching and learning at SMA LTI IGM Palembang, it applies English communicative teaching and learning or CLT. This method provides as wide as possible using English as for communication among the teachers and students. The English globalization in this school is supported by all the school components, starting from the headmistress, teachers and even the office boys create the English atmosphere at the school environment. The English day program is proposed in this school on Fridays, meaning that, all persons in this school must communicate in English along the days.

Moreover, the facilities of the school were complete to support the teaching and learning practice process and to fulfill the wide variety of activities used of this technique. The students were clever enough. Because the strategy in teaching and learning English is quite different from other schools. Because the learners class situation is very important part to be considered in this school. Since it can influence the students` process of learning English. Learners class situation in this school can be classified into random class, per level class and per skill class.

The teaching and learning process by using communicative method and supported by good facilities, such as computer technology and internet facilities in teaching and learning English as EIL in this school, can improve the four skills of students and also can create a fairly positive learning environment for these EFL students. It was very effective compared to the traditional approach. It motivates and engages students with authentic sources, activities and technology information. Students learn English not only communicatively but also get knowledge about the language itself through textbooks.

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