Teaching vocabulary communicatively (a classroom action research in the second grade of sekolah menengah tingkat pertama Kanisius Hati Kudus Delanggu on the academic year 2006/2007)

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Doing teaching in a classroom is very interesting to most language teachers. It is also felt when the writer (the researcher) performed his teaching practice -as extra time study- in Sekolah Lanjutan Tingkat Pertama (SLTP) Kanisius Hati Kudus Delanggu in August until September 2003. As everybody knows ‘teaching’ is ‘actions’ the word of ‘teach’ and ‘teach’ itself means to show the way or to communicate something to other persons. On the other hand, teaching is the imparting or informing the instruction or knowledge, and usually the occupation which deals with teacher. In this action, the writer found that most of students in that school (a single class of each grade) got difficulties in comprehending English lesson, especially the meaning of certain vocabulary in each level of material. They also got difficulties in producing them orally correct.
For example when the writer gave some vocabularies (of course depend on their level) to them and ask them to translate into Indonesian words as the meaning which are understood by the students. The writer again, found that many of them fail in producing oral practice. To the writer it becomes one of the indicators that English lesson is hardly comprehended by those students. Further effects are that the students get difficulties and find much trouble when they had to comprehend the meaning of sentences and or make one or more sentences orally and written as well. This statement makes teaching language interesting, like which is stated by Rivers and Temperly that, “…teaching a language is an interesting and exiting occupation. Since the nature of language and its complex operation still a matter of controversy and since the psychologists have still much to learn about how language is acquired – the native languages as well as a second or a third language – we, as language teachers, have an open field. We are free to experiment and innovate. We can appropriate what has proved successful in other times and places. We can repeat and refine what we have found to be effective in our own circumstances with our own students. We can share success and explore failures with our colleagues, learning much from each other” (Rivers and Temperly-vii).

The difficulties in gaining the meaning of words (vocabulary) and producing it orally could be due to many factors. Some of them are mentioned bellow: firstly, in many cases English language is different from Indonesian language, and these differences make the students get difficulties in understanding and using English (in their study and their daily live after all ); secondly, English is considered as a foreign language for Indonesian students which is learned only
in the classroom and they know (hearing and seeing) English vocabulary through the movies or book or advertisement board and show, and English vocabulary is hardly used in the real complete communication, they only adopt the familiar words, as the result the students never get input of language, which is one of the important factors in language acquisition; and thirdly, the students used Indonesian and Javanese (as their mother tongue) to communicate with other people in their daily activities and they feel satisfied and enjoyed with their own language, this related to the language habit. Fourthly, the students’ generally knowledge and skill of language are probably low. Even there are many problems the writer agree with the statement that “…young children do not come to the language classroom empty-handed. They bring with them an already well-established set of instincts, skills and characteristics which will help them to learn another language. We need to identify those and make the most of them (Halliwell-3).

Since the ability to gain the meaning of words is very important in comprehending English wholly, it is necessary for the students to improve their competence in understanding the vocabulary and produce it orally as well. On the other hand, the teachers need to identify some components which are directly or indirectly related to the competence in order that he or she can help their students improve it. And it makes the situation seems to become teachers’ responsibility, this make there is some techniques like in teacher preparation programs today, there is most attention to techniques for teaching vocabulary. One reason is this: In many ESL classes, even where teachers have devoted much time to vocabulary
teaching, the results have been disappointing. Some times – after months or even years of English – many of the words most needed have never been learned. Especially in countries where English is not the main language of communication, many teachers want more help with vocabulary instruction than they used to receive (Allen-5).

In the learning activities, students are probably afraid of the teacher in their classroom, or they do not feel eager to follow the lesson. Even though, the students are in the same division class and they receive the same instruction. It can be seen from the classroom situation, when the writer did his duty as the trainer in Sekolah Menengah Pertama Kanisius Hati Kudus Delanggu. He found that most of the students are passive students. They look like satisfied when they had entered the classroom and sat at their chairs and listened to the trainer (writer) when he started to teach them. Even the trainer gives time to them for asking any questions, no one of them raised their hand and asked something. It seems that the lesson is done without any single problem. But the trainer doubt about this situation. He thinks that the students are afraid of saying something, and they feel afraid of making mistakes when they ask something. The same situation happened when the trainer turn over the case, to ask the student (wholly students) what had been studied during that period of time. There was no response from that class, it seems that none of them could not answer what the trainer had asked to them. Further the trainer asked one by one, to make sure that the lesson was well taught by him. He found different situation, which some of them prefer to be silent and some of them answer the question with short sentence or even a single word.
Knowing this situation in that classroom, the writer eager to conduct his action research. It means the research which leads to the establishment and implementation by project of researchers of method designed to alleviate the problems under review. The writer wants to build a kind of activeness to the students during the English lesson, which is conducted by the writer in his action research. The writer’s assumption is that the lesson (especially English lesson) usually was conducted structurally, where the students do not have chance to speak freely, including asking some questions by breaking the learning process in the other word monolog teaching or one-way speech. Further the writer wants to make the English lesson has two-sided communication (communicatively teaching), or the real communication where the students have a kind of action of imparting or exchanging the ideas, knowledge and or information. The speaker and the hearer are both in the same positions in the same occasional of time and place. In other words, the speaker communicates information to the hearer and the hearer turned to be the speaker in other occasion of time in communicating his ideas in the familiar relation in society as possible. This is relevance with Littlewood statement, that communication is two-sided process, and it could equally well be argued that the speaker had failed to verbalise his massage adequately. He had failed to judge the linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge of the child, and had therefore not selected linguistic forms that would be interpreted as he intended (Littlewood 1998: 3).

Further he stated, when we speak we are constantly estimating the hearer’s knowledge and assumptions, in order to select language that will be interpreted in
accordance with our intended meaning. Being able to speak is one of the enormous skills that human have. By this skill, people can communicate to others. It is actually the basic characteristic of people in creating communication with another, because this communication may create social contact and relationship between them. By then, the most usable language that is usually used by people is speech. In other words, people make use of language in order to participate in the activity of social interaction and communication.

To be able to interact in a language is essential. Therefore, language instruction should provide learners with opportunities for communicative behaviour about relevant topics by using learner-learner interaction as the key to teaching a language for communication. Teachers must arouse in the learners a willingness and need or reason to speak. Interaction is the aim, it is necessary to create a suitable and enjoyable situation that would allow the students to express themselves freely and make them feel eager to communicate. A teacher-centered classroom would never provide the opportunities for the students to interact. It should be a learner-centred classroom that is suitable to establish the learner’s interaction. Pair work and group, therefore, are often implemented in the language teaching.

One of the ways to stimulate the students to talk is by the discussion method in teaching. In the discussion activity the learners have many opportunities in expressing their ideas and opinions and to interact in meaningful and realistic context. The learners can also generate their own discourse. The environment will not be threatening so that the students are eager to communicate.
The focus is on the process of learning, not on the errors which are made by the students. Freeman (1986: 129) says that the communicative approach, errors are tolerated and considered as natural outcome of the communication skill development. Discussion also provides an opportunity to develop accuracy and fluency, and keeps the learners highly motivated.

B. Identification of the Problem

Identifying the problem means the researcher goes on to the crucial step. This step will lead him to the final purpose of the study. By considering on that reason the writer would like to identify the problems which are probably related to his research and need to be elaborated in the next section, as follows:

1. Why are the students’ abilities in comprehending the English vocabulary low?
2. Does the communicative technique in teaching English make the students improve their ability in comprehending the English vocabulary?
3. Can the two-way communication be gained in the classroom as naturally as possible during the English lesson?
4. Are the students already correct in pronouncing the English vocabulary during their lesson and its implementation?
5. What factors make the students hardly acquire the English vocabulary?
6. Does the teacher realize such factors, influencing the students’ ability in comprehending the English vocabulary?
7. What should the teacher do to help the students improve their competence in comprehending the English vocabulary?

8. What should the students do to improve their own competence in comprehending the English vocabulary?

C. Limitation of the Problem

Considering to the problems which are listed above, it can be seen that there are complex problems in learning process, especially in this case teaching English vocabulary to the students of Sekolah Menengah Pertama. It makes impossible for the writer to discuss all the problems. The writer assumes that the students are actually eager to follow the English lesson, later in the teaching vocabulary process. So the writer limits the problem to the students’ ability in gaining the meaning and using English vocabulary as naturally as possible. While the research subject in his action research is the second grade students of Sekolah Menengah Pertama Kanisius Hati kudus Delanggu in the academic year 2006/2007.

D. Formulation of the Problem

In this research what the writer wants to find is the capability of the second grade students of Sekolah Menengah Pertama Kanisius Hati Kudus Delanggu in the academic year 2006/2007 in gaining the meaning of English Vocabulary and producing it orally as possible by communicatively teaching technique. In other word the problem can be formulated as follows:
1. Can the two-way communication activates the students and improve the students’ ability in comprehending English Vocabulary in the English lesson?

E. Research Objectives

In this research the researcher use Communicative Technique in gaining some objectives during research implementation and further teaching-learning process. The research objectives are:

1. The communicative technique will improve students’ ability in comprehending vocabularies that are proposed in the teaching-learning process.

2. The communicative technique will activate the students in the teaching-learning process.

3. The communicative technique will make the students and the teacher have same opportunities in communicate and express their ideas bravely without afraid of making mistake during the teaching-learning process.

F. The Benefit of the Study

In this study, the writer knows that there are many problems when the teaching process in his action research will be held. Some of them are already mentioned in the previous section. By considering those problems and especially the research problem, this study also has its own purposes:
1. It is expected that the result of the study will prove that teaching vocabulary communicatively in the second grade students of Sekolah Menengah Pertama Kanisius Hati Kudus Derlanggu in the Academic year 2006/2007 will be better.

2. The contribution of the communicative technique will make the second grade students of Sekolah Menengah Pertama Kanisius Hati Kudus Delanggu in the Academic year 2006/2007 gain the two-way communication and become active in the English lesson.

3. Teaching communicatively means teaching with several communicative activities. In communicative activity the teaching process to the second grade students of Sekolah Menengah Pertama Kanisius Hati Kudus Delanggu in the academic year 2006/2007 allows natural learning. Natural learning is that the students follow the learning process in the same way as when they communicate with other people in their own mother tongue. In other words, the students feel comfortable when they follow the learning process.

4. Being able to communicate as natural as possible in language learning is hard to be gained. But by communicative technique, it is not impossible to make the language learning become enjoyable. After all, the second grade students of Sekolah Menengah Pertama Kanisius Hati Kudus Delanggu in the Academic year 2006/2007 are hoped to improve their motivation in following the English lesson.
5. Through communicative activities, the second grade students of Sekolah Menengah Pertama Kanisius Hati Kudus Delanggu in the Academic year 2006/2007 have many opportunities for positive relationship among the students, and between the students and the teacher. These relations can help ‘humanise’ the classroom and create an environment that support the individual in his effort to learn.