

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The first thing that a child learns is to listen. Then she learns to speak in order to give responses. When she learns to speak, she will pay attention to what she has listened to and try to imitate it. Furthermore, she begins to read and write. Lundsten (1971:3) says “children listen before they speak, speak before they read, and read before they write.” These four language skills are closely related to each other. Specifically, speaking is as important as listening because communication means the exchange of information or message. While, information cannot be exchanged if someone listens only.

However, speaking English is not an easy thing to do especially for children in Indonesia, as English is a foreign language for them. As speaking English is needed for international communication, this research focuses on speaking skill as one thing to be concerned. In general, teaching speaking can be done in many ways, but not all ways or techniques are proper and effective when we teach English at a certain age. As Abe (1991:6) says, “the teaching of English and the teaching of adults both in technique and in attitude are entirely different proportions.” Hence,

there are some problems dealing with teaching speaking to children or most young learners.

Children have varied characters. Some of them are explorative, brave and curious while other are shy and intimidated. Knowing their varied characters, a teacher should find a good way of teaching aided with proper media. In one side, teaching speaking to explorative and curious students is easy but it is entirely different when a teacher faces shy and intimidated students. Those two types of children somehow have something in common: they naturally have big interest to play. “They love stories, they love characters, and they love drama. Puppets are the perfect way to combine story, character, drama. They are easy to make, and easy to use” (<http://www.edsnet.na/Resources/TBCM/TBCM10/M10p17.htm>). Then, it is now just a matter of how to teach speaking to those students in one room with puppet/s and how the teacher brings the puppets in class. It seems that puppets are suitable for the two types of children since puppets are mostly likeable.

“As quoted in Nellie Moccasin’s book Created Drama in the Classroom and Beyond, John Warren Stewig said the children generate more verbal language during dramatic play than in any other situation” (Karen Dutcher, 1998;127). It means that puppets can be the stimuli for them to speak. Teaching speaking to young learners helped by puppets is better given by putting the students in a fake-real situation. It means that the situation is made up but it is connected to what really happens in real

life. Therefore, an English teacher should teach speaking in a situation where the students must use the language as an instrument to express their mind, thoughts, feelings, interests, opinions, etc.

During the pre-observation, the writer could see the situation of the class was very much peaceful. It was the teacher writing some numbers of questions on the blackboard, while the students wrote them down on their book. Once the board was full, the teacher stopped and sat down on her desk. Here, she waited for the students finished writing the questions at the upper part of the board and then she continued writing on the blackboard.

After sometime, the teacher finished writing the fifteen questions on the board. Then, she gave sometime for the students to finish writing them down and then continued to write the answer of those questions. After more or less 15 minutes, she started to discuss question number one. Here, the discussion was broadened not only answering the question but also explaining the sentence structure. The discussion was up to number five when the bell rang, the sign for the English class had to be over.

Thus, the writer concluded that students were learning English in a quite passive way. The writer considered that the class should improve the class interaction. It might be more refreshing for the students to facilitate them with a media that suits their characters. Concerning with what the writer had seen during the pre-observation, it seemed that puppet is a good media to be brought in English class to find out how they could help the

students learn speaking in English interactively. It is because puppet is considered to be able to provide the chance of interaction.

Personally, the writer is interested with class interaction because she realizes the importance of interaction to happen in English class. It is based on the writer's teaching belief that improving interaction in English class can open the chance of English learners in the country to have a better speaking ability. As stated by Abarca (2004), "the interaction that occurs in EFL or ESL classroom is considered of great importance during the learning process."

1.2 Statement of the Problems

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the kinds of class interaction during the teaching learning process aided by puppets?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses in making use of puppets in English class, specifically in teaching speaking class?

1.3 Objective

The objective of this research is to find out the kinds of class interaction during the teaching-learning process aided by puppets and to find out the strengths and weaknesses in making use of puppets in English class, specifically in teaching speaking class.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The study is based on Communication Theory and Teaching English to Young Learners.

Communication Theory

Robert Craig (1999) suggests ‘seven traditions’ of Communication theory. Particularly, this study is based on the fifth tradition. It is Socio-Psychological which says that communication is theorized as expression, interaction and influence. This study puts interaction as the main aspect of discussion because of the importance of interaction in a language teaching-learning process. As stated by Abarca (2004), “the interaction that occurs in EFL or ESL classroom is considered of great importance during the learning process.”

Principles of TEYL

The main point that teachers have to consider in teaching children is their ability to get into their world, both in terms materials and in the teachers’ attitude towards the children because these two factors will determine the success of the learning process. However, Wong Fillmore (1985) in McLaughlin (1995) recommends a number of steps that teachers can use to involve their students.

- Use demonstration, modeling, and role-playing.
- Present new information in the context of known information.
- Paraphrase often.
- Use simple structures, avoid complex structures.

- Repeat the same sentences patterns and routines.
- Tailor questions for different levels of language competence and participation.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to give a contribution to the success of teaching English especially speaking skill to young learners. Since this study offers puppets as an alternative media of teaching speaking, the results might be of help for teachers of SDN Dukuh Menanggal II Surabaya improving their students' speaking ability. Most importantly, the study might also be of a contribution for the students of Widya Mandala University majoring in English education to make better research.

1.6 Scope and Limitation

The subjects of the study were the 4th grade elementary students of SDN Dukuh Menanggal II Surabaya. There were two classes of grade 4; they were 4A and 4B. The writer was allowed to have Class 4B as the participants. The Class 4B consisted of 24 students. As the study had limited samples, the findings of this study could not be generalized to embrace a larger population. This was the limitation of this study.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1.7.1 Puppets

In Hornsby's Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary the currents, the definition of puppet is a doll, small figure of an animal, a person or other living being with joint limbs moved by hands or by wires or string (1983:678). Taken from wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webn, puppet is "A doll with a hollow head of a person or animal and a cloth body; intended to fit over the hand and be manipulated with the fingers." Therefore, here in a study what is meant by puppets are small figures of animal, persons, famous cartoon characters completed with its trend mark fashion or other ornaments moved by the hand or fingers.

1.7.2 Media

Media is a means or instrumentality for storing or communicating information (taken from <http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=media&r=2>).

1.7.3 Teaching Speaking

Teaching is showing or helping, giving instruction, guiding in the study of something, providing with knowledge causing to know or understand (Brown, 1987:7). Gove (1976:453) states that speaking is to give oral expressions to thoughts, opinions or feelings, engaged in a talk or a conversation. Teaching speaking then means guiding someone how to communicate with other persons properly, to give oral expressions of thoughts in opinion or ideas.

1.7.4 Young Learners

Young learners refer to children from the first year of formal schooling (5-6 years old) to 11 years of age (Phillipe, Sarah, 1993:5). So, the nature of young learners used in this study is students from 5 to 12 years old and/or those who formally just learn English.

1.7.5 Class Interaction

Interaction means the process referring to ‘face-to-face’ action (Robinson in Julie Willson, 1999). So, here in a study the meaning of class interaction is the process of ‘face-to-face’ action between the teacher and the students in a class.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 describes the introduction of the study in terms of the background, the statement of the problem, the objective, the theoretical framework, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation, the definition of key terms, and the organization of the study. Chapter 2 gives account of the theoretical frameworks and the problems to be investigated by reviewing some concepts about puppets, some theories, and related studies. In chapter 3, the writer presents the method of the research. The next chapter, chapter 4 describes the data presentation and findings and the analysis of the writer’s observations about the teaching of speaking using puppets. Finally, chapter 5 describes the conclusion, implication, limitation and recommendation.