

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

The mastery of the English language, especially for communicative purposes, has been a challenge for many English learners. Developing students' language usage, particularly on speaking proficiency, has always been the primary concern of many language instructors in ESL (English as a Second Language) contexts (Shing and Yin, 2016).

As a crucial part of second language teaching and learning, speaking has often viewed as the most demanding amongst the four skills engaged in a precise language (Amiri, Othman & Jahedi, 2017)

Speaking is one of the skills considered to be the base of mastering and building up the language. It is the way by which learners can contribute and be part of oral communication. It means monitoring and controlling all the language areas, linguistic, psychological, and social (Ziane, 2012). Even though speaking skill is considered to be a substantial base to building up the language, many students do not develop this ability

One of the principal points defended in the Communication Approach is the interaction between the learners so that they can live the target language. This interaction occurs communicatively. However, in the classroom, conversations end up becoming mechanical. Teachers either monopolize talk time with regular activities or take up space by centralizing the class itself (Taylor, 2003; Richards, 2006; SZE, 1995). Richards (2016) says that although the Communicative Approach is at the tip of most teachers' tongue, it is challenging to implement this in daily classroom practice.

Students' ability to communicate naturally in English is one of the long-term goals that language teachers would like to achieve (Hamzah & Ting, 2010), and this is hugely relevant for the student. When a student is involved in real-life communication, he sees value in his work. It can help the student to develop a natural approach to language learning and vocabulary acquisition, moving out of the classroom (LTC Eastbourne, 2018).

Speaking skills became more indispensable and show that it is essential to expose student development in learning a new language (Ziane, 2012). However, improving speaking skills takes a lot of classroom practice (Alzahrani, 2019). For this reason, the current orientation of skills for teaching the second language and the communication activities employed in communicative approaches have increased the amount of practice of speaking in the classroom (SZE, 1995).

For many years the various methodologies that have emerged have neglected the development of the ability to speak. The most traditional of the methods, Grammar Translation, does not currently have much prestige and receives criticism regarding its effectiveness (Howatt, 1984). The practice of the Grammar Translation Method happens mainly through the translation of phrases between the target language and the mother tongue (Richards; Rodgers, 2014). Thus, there is no space for the learner to develop communication skills (Richard & Rodgers, 2014; 2001, p.6 cited in Brown, 2007, p.19).

The development of students' language use, particularly in speaking proficiency, has always been the primary concern of many language instructors in ESL (English as a second language) contexts (Shing and Yin, 2016). Amiri, Othman & Jahedi, 2017, state that as a crucial part of teaching and learning the second language, speaking is often considered to be the most demanding of the four skills involved in a language.

Learning with handouts, books, and videos is a way of learning, but it still brings results at a slow pace. In the learning phase, as well as perfecting the target language, meetings to practice conversational English can be a great option. They are closer to a real situation, in addition to being a more interactive and collaborative form of teaching (Queiroz, 2020), something widely advocated in the communicative approach.

A conversation is a set of structured interactions, not centrally coordinated, possibly simultaneous, between multiple participants. A conversation context is a means in which partners can interact in a conversation (Hugo, 2010). Therefore, the conversation is inherent to the Communicative Approach.

Since “Conversation” is communicative and theoretically helps to improve the ability to speak English, why do teachers no longer explore it?; What is its relevance in the communicative approach to improving speaking skills?; And what is the difference between classroom conversation and the practice of real-life conversation?; Why is its application challenging for the English teacher?

1.2 Research Question

Based on the background, the research question is: What is The Relevance of Conversation in the Communicative Approach to Improve English Speaking Skills? And why the conversation is still a challenging for teachers?

1.3 Objective

This research aims to discuss and clarify the practice of conversation and its importance in the communicative approach to improve the ability to speak English. In order to achieve the objective proposed, a literary review of materials that discuss the subject will be carried out.

1.4 Scope of the Research

To make the students speak the language that they intend to learn and one of the teachers' objectives. However, they often end up monopolizing time with curricular activities and taking conversation time from the student (Afrin, 2018; Richards, 20006; SZE, 1995).

The purpose of processing this data is to analyse and clarify the concepts on Conversation in the Communicative Approach and how it helps learners improving English speaking skills. To achieve this purpose, the researcher will do a Literature Review. The need for this review is since there is much discussion about improving speaking skills, but little time is given to students to practice Conversation. Another point is that the Communicative Approach talks a lot about the interaction between students so that they speak communicatively, and nothing promotes more interaction than a good conversation.

1.5 Research Benefit

It is assumed that students and teachers will rethink the improvement of speaking skills through the Conversation, where students have an opportunity to practice their knowledge as well as challenges to practice the language outside the classroom.

Therefore, the most significant benefit is to bring up the discussion of one of the most challenging techniques that are "conversation" as interaction. Another point is to make clear the differences between the different types of "talk", Many teachers when following the school curricula, and all the orientations that indicate that a particular activity develops the communicative ability of the student think they are practicing the conversation as much as technical. Perhaps this is due to the lack of awareness of the nature of the conversation that resulted in chaos in the teaching of the conversation. As Richards (1990) states, "The conversation class" is an enigma in language teaching."

1.6 Definition of Terms

1.6.1 Communicative Approach

In various nations, secondary or foreign language learning comes typically in the form of programs in schools or higher learning institutions. The demand for teaching the English language led to the emergence of the most diverse methods. The various methodologies that emerged tried to obtain, as a result, the development of the student's speaking ability (Falcao & Spinillo, 2003). However, Howatt (1984) brings a different report, he affirms that many methodologies emerged, but they have neglected the ability to speak. At a certain point, both are right. Diverse methods tried to develop the students' speaking ability, but they failed. Thus, the most traditional methods, Grammar Translation, do not currently have much prestige and receive criticism regarding its effectiveness. The grammar-translation method happens mainly by translating phrases between the target language and the mother tongue (Richards; Rodgers, 2014). Thus, the learner has no space to develop communication skills (Richard & Rodgers, 2014; Brown, 2007). In our days, the programs adopt multiple approaches to language teaching and learning, such as the Communicative Language Teaching Approach-CLT (Maizatulliza, M. & Kiely, R., 2017). Noam Chomsky was the person who gave rise to communicative language teaching based on his theories in the 1960s, focusing on competence and performance in language, but the conceptual basis for CLT was laid in the 1970s by linguists Michael Halliday (Littlewood, 1981). This approach is nowadays the one which has the most prestigious.

The teaching of communicative language establishes the goal of teaching communicative competence. In many grammar practice books, the focus is on grammatical competence. The sentence is typically the only unit of analysis and practice. Although grammatical competence is an essential dimension of language

learning, it is not all involved in language learning. It is possible to master sentence formation rules and still not successfully use meaningful language for communication. It is the last ability that is understood by the term communicative competence (Richards, 2006). This means students well structured as to grammatical rules, however, they do not reach the goal of communicating.

As previously mentioned, the growing need for excellent English communication skills has created an enormous demand for English teaching worldwide. Consequently, this demand for English has created a massive demand for quality language teaching materials and resources. This searching for quality is because students want to master English with high accuracy and fluency, for which they set demanding goals (Richards, 2006). That is why students' ability to communicate naturally in English is one of the long-term aspirations that language lecturers would like to accomplish in the classroom.

The communicative approach is considered the most effective way to teach language to language learners (Revita, 2015). This approach brings the idea that to learn English successfully is necessary to communicate in the language, in meaningful situations, to see learner work's value.

People necessitate communication when they need to say something and convey information. It means every human being needs to communicate to express their ideas, feelings, and thoughts. That urge to communicate is the main reason why communicative activities should integrate into the lesson; students' spoken language is most productive when they are involved in a dynamic learning environment that encourages them to perform their tasks (Toro et al., 2019). Because of that, the communicative approach is a tried and tested method to help a student acquire valuable communication skills in English, in which he sees real value (LTC Eastbourn, 2018). Even if the student is grammatically well structured, understands what he hears but cannot make himself understood, he cannot see the result of his effort in learning the new language. When the communicative approach focuses on developing communicative ability, it makes the learner see this value.

1.6.2 Speaking skills

Speaking Skill is one of the four primary skills that the students have to master (Richards, 2016). The four skills are connecting. For example, Speaking Skill can not be separated from Listening and Writing skills, which is always supported by Reading

ability. Brown, 1994., started that, speaking is the current practice with the others use the oral language.

Speaking is the skill that give us the power to communicate in an effective way. These skills permit the speaker to convey his message in a passionate, thoughtful, and convincing manner.

The definition of the word "skill" is extremely complex. However, the core of definitions conceptualizes Skill with the idea of competence or proficiency. That is, the ability to do something well. The word refers to both physical and mental proficiency. The etymological analysis of the name shows some ambiguity in its definition. Etymologically Skill is the ability to do something. However, the word also indicates a dimension of increasing capacity. So while Skill is synonymous with "competence," it also evokes expertise, mastery, and excellence (Rigby & Sanchis, 2006)

1.6.3 Conversation

Feldman (1999) attests that Conversation, speech, and talk are not the same. He attests that Conversation is more than exchange, speech, or talk. For exchange, speech, or talk to be considered Conversation, it must have specific characteristics. First, there is a conversation between or among people. There must be at least two people involved, and there must be some exchange of words in the form of a dialogue. Second, it is a cooperative enterprise; Third, there is a direction for a conversation; Fourth, a new understanding emerges through Conversation. Finally, conversations, like baseball, are not governed by the clock.

Suparman, 2017 conceptualizes Conversation as an informal talk involving two people or a small group of people. Richards wrote that when people meet, they exchange greetings, engage in a small talk and chit chat, recount recent experiences, and so on because they wish to be friendly and to establish a comfortable zone of interaction with others.