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The Role of Silent Way Method to English Teaching in a Private Islamic Middle School

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Abstract

In the third millennium of quickly globalized world, teaching English as a worldwide communication tool has become more significant than half a period of 100 years ago. In Indonesia, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is taught in many government and private schools where the English teacher plays a key role to attain success in the process of EFL teaching-learning in the classroom. To reach it, the teacher surely needs an appropriate and effective teaching method to be implemented. Because it is not a simple task to do make the teacher tends to use a conventional teaching method within a teaching – learning process. The present investigation attempts to discuss concerning the roles of Silent Way Method (SWM) as a working and effective teaching method to EFL teaching which was implemented in MTS Mifatahul Ulum Pagendingan, as one of private Islamic middle schools in Pamekasan Madura-East Java, by employing the color rods as a visual aid tool of teaching. The results of this study reveal that SWM was utilized by the tutor in the school could create the students possessed a number of accomplishments in producing EFL.

Keywords: Silent Way Method (SWM), EFL teaching-learning, English Teaching

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INTRODUCTION

In the third millennium of quickly globalized world, teaching English as a means of worldwide communication has become more significant than half a period of 100 years ago where the English teacher play a key role to attain the remarkable results hoped in the process of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching-learning in the classroom. It is certainly not a straightforward effort to realize it. There will be many problems came across and faced. One of the big problems faced by the EFL teacher of MTS Mifatahul Ulum Pagendingan, as one of private Islamic middle school in Pamekasan Madura-East Java, was that of creating their students independent or autonomous during the learning process. It was due to the teachers and students' attitude in the classroom. When EFL teaching-learning process went on, the teachers of MTS Miftahul Ulum still employed their excessive time to talk in explaining the EFL materials and their students just sat in the class while listening to their teachers' speech. Consequently the

students of MTS Miftahul Ulum became passive and the teachers became talkative in the EFL learning-teaching interaction in the classroom. This was begot the method carried out by the teachers of the MTS School was not considered as effective and creative method of teaching. Besides the time of the EFL learning-teaching interaction was dominated by the teachers and this won't create the students become autonomous or independent.

Students should not learn a lot only by sitting in the class while just listening to their teachers, memorizing some given-tasks, and saying some answers. But they have to do a quantity of must, viz: they must talk concerning what they are learning, must write concerning it, must connect it to their experiences and must use it to their day to day life. Today, the teacher is no longer regarded as the individual who is in charge of the whole of learning-teaching activities but the student is, therefore the time of the learning teaching interaction should be dominated by the students. In another words the students are the individuals who are responsible and involved in their own learning.

In Dam's statement (2000), he stated that to make environment conducive to learning within the limits of the educational system, the students are given the possibility to be intentionally involved in their own learning. Whereas the teacher's main role is to transmit and assess his knowledge to his students (Kudryashova et al, 2016) by employing the proper and effective teaching method, so that it can create all students are actively engaged in the learning process.

Silent Way Method (SWM) is a visual method of foreign-language teaching which its main element is colored wooden sticks (also called colored Cuisenaire rods) devised by a linguist, Caleb Cattegno. The purpose of implementing SWM in this study is to build the students' personality becomes individuals who are autonomous, independent and responsible and become involved actively in the learning process. It is an agreed outlook that the students should become main actor and actively involved in the learning work to get knowledge or skill more than just become passive receivers of instruction. The SWM, as a creative teaching and appropriate method, was implemented for the first grade students of MTS Mifatahul Ulum Pagendingan Pamekasan in the EFL learning.

One of reasons the SWM was utilized in the school is to avoid the use of the students' mother tongue (i.e Madurese language), accordingly to do so; an EFL teacher requires providing the instruction creatively in the classroom by utilizing a visual aid of teaching, such as: some colored Cuisenaire rods in order that the students will focus on their target language, that is EFL as opposed to their own native language. Hence by

committing this visual aid, the students' power of consciousness and ability to learn EFL can be activated with the intention that they are able to have skill of using English language fluently, mastering both English grammar and vocabulary. As what Richards (2013) states in his words as follows:

“The Silent Way Method is intended to activate the learner's power of awareness and capacity to learn. Both input and output are more or less taken for granted. While mastery of grammar and vocabulary and the ability to use language fluently and accurately are at the core of language mastery in the Silent Way, these require little detailed pre-planning and will be the outcome of the activities generated from the use of Cuisenaire rods and other items manipulated by the teacher”

METHOD

Language can viewed as set of sounds arbitrarily which can be connected to particular meanings and be organized into sentences or strings of meaningful unit by utilizing grammatical rule. Thus, in the EFL learning the first grade students of MTS Mifatahul Ulum, amount eighteen students, initially needs to be brought in regarding the sounds of the EFL (such as: pronouncing the sounds '*the red rod*') in the classroom before they understand the meanings of the sounds in order that they are more prepared to learn the EFL as their target language. To implement the SWM, the tutor employed the colored Cuisenaire rods made from small blocks of wood with the different color and varying size (see Figure 1) as the physical object of EFL teaching.



Figure1. Colored Cuisenaire rods

SWM as the effective and appropriate teaching method was employed for teaching EFL in the MTS Miftahul Ulum Pagendingan. In implementing the method, the tutor tended to be silent as possible as he could and asked the students to produce as much language as possible when they were engaged in the EFL learning process in the classroom

so that they would be more active in producing their target language. Besides, when the learning EFL process was taking place, the tutor asked the students to be considerate of others' EFL utterances since they could be models of the EFL as their target language. It meant that by doing so the students would be so familiar with thinking first before producing any EFL utterances that they would comprehend the concept of what they were going to utter before they utter it. The purpose-implemented SWM in the MTS Miftahul Ulum's EFL classroom was not only avoiding the use of the students' vernacular i.e. Madurese language when learning EFL but also promoting peer group interaction among the students so they didn't feel intimidated to be involved in the EFL learning process. Consequently it could create a more students-centered learning in the classroom.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Process of learning English as Foreign Language is of course dissimilar with process of learning native language for the Madurese students of MTS Mifatahul Ulum Pagendingan Pamekasan. Hence the appropriate method needs to be implemented to reach success in learning EFL accordingly the students are able to have the language's proficiency, in this regard, i.e. having EFL's proficiency. And SWM is deemed as the best method of EFL learning, because in silence the students will focus on their task to be accomplished and the potential means to its accomplishment (Richards and Rodgers, 1986). The view indicates that through the implementation of the SWM, the students of MTS Miftahul Ulum will become accomplished in producing a number of EFL accomplishments, viz they become accomplished in pronouncing EFL correctly, in EFL grammar and also become autonomous learners.

1. Becoming accomplished in pronouncing EFL correctly

Pronunciation teaching is considered very important for the students' verbal communication. Because the major aim of teaching and learning in any language, according to Harmer (2001), is to make students able to communicate in the target language (i.e. EFL). To have a good capability of communicating in the context of EFL use, the students are highly advised to learn how to pronounce the EFL sounds correctly to make a good communication. Because the correctness of pronouncing the EFL sounds so merit to be considered to produce a good speaking in the language learning that the students are able to improve both their own inner criteria for producing the EFL sounds correctly and their ability of doing a good communication.

In teaching EFL pronunciation, at the beginning the tutor instructed the students to ‘pay attention’ as his oral introduction and prepared a container consisting of the various color rods. Then he began the pronunciation teaching by picking two red rods, for instance, up out of the container and displaying them to the students, then the tutor paused, and uttered ‘*two red rods*’ by pronouncing the sound /s/ in the word *rods* very clearly. Then the students uttered ‘*two red rods*’. The tutor did the practice again by displaying another rod which was different in number and color to them, four black rods for instance, he paused, and uttered ‘*four black rods*’ by pronouncing the sound /s/ in the word *rods* very clearly, and then gave the students a signal by miming to ask them to utter the word that had just been uttered. The students uttered ‘*four black rods*’. And after that the tutor silently displayed another rod which was different in number and color to them for example three white rods and urged the students to say the words that had just been displayed by providing the signal. The students did what the tutor had urged i.e: uttering ‘*three white rods*’. The process of the tutor’s work could be repeated as much as possible until the whole words (such as *two red rods*, *four black rods* and *three white rods*) describing every single of the colored rods became so complete that the students’ EFL pronunciation started to be correct when uttered *three white rods* for instance, although the students often pronounced the EFL sounds (*three white rods* for instance) incorrectly before. And the correct pronunciation for the sounds of EFL are /θri: wa t ra:dz/. Moreover the students would instinctively have knowledge regarding how to pronounce sound ‘s’ correctly in the word *rods* i.e.: /ra:dz/ as the final ‘s’ in it has to be pronounced /z/ it is because the word ends voiced sound.

2. Becoming accomplished in EFL Grammar.

Learning the EFL grammar by employing SWM in the MTS Miftahul Ulum was learned through inductive processes. It means that learning EFL grammar in the silent classroom, the students are supposed to discover by themselves how the patterns of the EFL grammar. The tutor’s work was simply providing the signs that could guide them to produce EFL utterances employing the grammar’ patterns that were being used without explaining the usage of grammar rules.

As an example of the EFL grammar learning is concerning noun determiner. In this respect, the tutor picked one blue rod for instance, up out of the container and displaying them to the students, then paused, and uttered ‘*this is a blue rod*’ and used his non-verbal gestures, then strongly persuaded the students to utter the word that has just been uttered.

Then the students uttered ‘*this is a blue rod*’. The tutor did the practice again by displaying another rod which was different in color to them, one white rod for instance; he paused, and uttered ‘*this is a white rod*’ and gave the students a signal by miming to urge them to utter the word that had just been uttered. The students uttered ‘*this is a white rod*’. And after that he silently displayed another rod which was different in color for example one black rod and then the tutor strongly asked the students to speak the words that had just been displayed by giving them a signal by miming. The students did what the tutor asked, i.e they uttered ‘*this is a black rod*’. The process could be practiced over and over again so that the students can be ensured having a capability of uttering the words using the correct grammatical patterns, such as uttering *this is a blue rod* which has word order: Subject (this) + Verb (is) + Object (a blue rod). Moreover by practicing the method the students are independently able to have not only the grammatical knowledge regarding the kinds of word classes in the displayed words (viz: *this* as an article, *is* as main verb, *a* as an article, *blue* as an adjective and *rod* as a noun) but also concerning how to place the word classes in the words correctly.

3. Becoming autonomous learners.

According to Zhuang’s opinion (2010) “autonomous learners must be reflectively engaged with their learning”. In connection with the view, the students of MTS Miftahul ULum Pagendingan Pamekasan will be thinking carefully and quietly to get better understanding regarding the lessons (i.e: EFL pronunciation and grammar) the tutor provided when they were engaged in the EFL teaching-learning process. Within the process, the tutor was practically more silent before uttering something. It was done to avoid the tutor’s tendency to talk a lot and to give the opportunity to the students to become active participants, not passive ones in producing as much target language as possible, for example the students were given many opportunities to utter the EFL pronunciations and grammar repeatedly. So the time of the EFL learning-teaching interaction in the classroom was absolutely given to the students. In other words, the students were supposed to become active partakers in the EFL learning process in the classroom as opposed to become passive recipients of taught instructional information. In teaching EFL in the school, in this regard, the tutor just played a role as a guide in the classroom viz by guiding the students to develop their critical proficiency when learning EFL materials thus the students will be autonomous.

CONCLUSION

Silence was committed by the tutor in teaching EFL employing the color rods for the students of MTS Miftahul Ulum Pagendingan Pamekasan constitutes a working and effective teaching method which can assist to foster them becomes autonomous and accomplished in EFL pronunciation and grammar.

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