

THE APPLICATION OF CONTEXTUAL TEACHING LEARNING USING REACT IN SPEAKING PRACTICES FOR BUSINESS ENGLISH CLASS

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Abstract.

The implementation of contextual teaching and learning in speaking to the first semester student of Business Administration in Hang Tuah University aims to investigate the strategies of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) and the advantages of using (REACT) as one of the CTL technique. English for business is given to the students who learn English for Specific Purposes. The target of mastering this second language acquisition is able to perform well in spoken English according to their profession. In addition, The findings revealed that the teaching speaking was successful to improve students' pronunciation and fluency. The benefits of applying REACT: (1) engaging students in the speaking activity; (2) increasing students' motivation to participate actively in the speaking class; (3) helping students to solve their problems; (4) providing ways for students to discuss or interact with their friends. Based on these findings, it is recommended that CTL be implemented in teaching speaking.

Keywords: *contextual teaching learning (CTL), relating, experiencing, applying, cooperating, and transferring (REACT)*

Introduction

Communication is the key to success in any business because of the globalisation of trade and the use of the Internet, the position of English as the international language of business is stronger than ever. The research aims to give a useful practice in speaking style which can be applied to any situation. The students who want to develop the skill of good communication in the workplace – from business students to managers, voluntary workers to government officials. Contextual Teaching Learning provides the technique which involves the students to practice language skills based on the real situation. The process of mastering spoken English meets the goal of the fluency in Business communication.

Learning is a process for the students to apply the theory as a key to be successful in the study. Learning is two way communications in which teaching is the teacher's role and learning is the student role (Tippelt, 2003). English for Business Administration offers some

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practices related to the business terms. The role of teacher is providing a creative technique to encourage them to speak and perform professional talk well. The student's role is practicing and applying the technique. The contextual teaching and learning (CTL) applied in this research is based on Crawford's procedures: *Relating, experiencing, applying, cooperating, and transferring* (REACT) (Crawford, 2001). Contextual teaching and learning is considered to be effective in developing students' skills in English. CTL effectively improves students' comprehension, interests, and competence in speaking.

Contextual Teaching Learning means a technique that involves the students to participate actively in the process, namely planning, application, and evaluation of learning. The students are involved emotionally and mentally. The students are not the audiences or object of the learning process, they are the performers. Contextual Teaching Learning has changed our paradigm: from the teacher as learning center to the students as the learning center. Moreover, contextual teaching and learning has been differently defined by many experts. Some experts define contextual teaching and learning as a concept that helps teachers and students relate the meaning and real world situations with the subject matter in the right way (Johnson, 2002; Sears, 2002). In other words, CTL motivates the learners to take charge of their own learning and to relate between knowledge and its application to the various contexts of their lives. CTL approach has some teaching strategies, which include content as a critical component. Those strategies engage students in an active learning process. The strategies can be implemented individually or in group. There are some teaching strategies associated with CTL approach as proposed by Berns & Erickson (2001) as follows: Problem based learning, cooperative learning, service learning, work based learning, project based learning, and react strategies. The context in REACT is related to the real situation in work place in the application of business administration.

CTL is also defined as an education process which aims to help the students to see the meaning of academic material that they learn by connecting the situation context, social, culture and daily life (Johnson, 2002). In simple word, Contextual Teaching Learning is stated according to the context of society and culture where the students live. Here, the students not only apply the knowledge but also act in the reality life. The technique pays attention on the two aspects such as involving the student participation and connecting the knowledge with the society, culture, and daily life. Applying Contextual Teaching Learning is useful, fun and the students are becoming more competent in the material they have learnt. Without the participation in managing, mastering, and applying the materials, they will never know something. (Suparno, 1997)

The implementation of CTL approach in the classroom activities becomes common place throughout United States because this approach is believed to significantly relate the meaning to the students' real world

situations. The implementation of CTL, especially REACT (*relating, experiencing, applying, cooperating, and transferring*) strategies in America, a constructivism method, is used to make students establish their sense of interest, confidence, and a need for understanding. REACT strategies in CTL approach can help students improve their learning (Crawford, 2001). Indonesia has implemented CTL approach. In Indonesia, the CTL approach is implemented in various fields, such as mathematics, sciences, social sciences, and languages (Sears, 2002). Some people have researched the use of CTL approach in the field of education, especially in teaching English as second language. In line with the implementation of CTL or contextual approach, there are some strategies that teachers use in the classroom. Some teachers in America had implemented the strategies. There are five strategies proposed by Crawford (2001) as follows:

1. Relating

Relating is the most powerful element in contextual teaching strategy. It also suggests that students' learning in the context of one's life experiences or preexisting knowledge (Crawford, 2001). In relating, teachers link a new concept to something completely unknown to students. Caine & Caine (1993) called this reaction "felt meaning." That reaction can be momentous, as when a student finds the solution to a problem that he or she has spent significant time and effort in solving.

2. Experiencing

In contextual approach, one strategy relates to another. The previous statement appears to indicate that relating connects new information to life experiences or prior knowledge that students bring to the classroom. Teachers are able to overcome this obstacle and help students construct new knowledge with hand-on experiences that occur inside the classroom. This strategy is called experiencing. In experiencing, students are learning by doing through exploration, discovery, and invention (Crawford, 2001).

3. Applying

Applying strategy can be defined as learning by putting the concepts to use (Crawford, 2001). Clearly, students can implement the concepts when they are engaged in hands on problem solving activities. Teachers can also motivate a need for understanding the concepts by assigning realistic and relevant exercises. Relating and experiencing are strategies for developing insight, felt meaning, and understanding. Applying is a contextual teaching and learning strategy that develops a deeper sense of meaning.

4. Cooperating

Students are not able to make significant progress in a class when they work individually. On the other hand, students working in small groups can handle that complex problem with little outside help (Pintrich

& Schunk, 1996). Teachers using student-led groups to complete exercises or hands-on activities are using the strategy of cooperating. This strategy refers to learning in the context of sharing, responding, and communicating with other learners (Crawford, 2001). Most students feel less self-conscious and can ask questions without feeling embarrassed, when they work with peers in a small group discussion. Another fact of cooperative learning is that it can be unproductive. For example, some students may not participate in the group processes at all, while others may dominate and the group members may refuse to accept or share responsibility for the group's work. Johnson and Johnson (1990), who are the leading researchers in cooperative learning, have established guidelines to help teachers avoid those negative conditions and create environments where students may be expected to learn concepts at a deeper level of understanding. The guidelines are divided into five points: structuring positive interdependence within students learning groups; having students interact while completing assignments and ensuring that the interactions are on-task; holding all students individually accountable for completing assignments and not letting them rely overly on the work of others; having students learn to use interpersonal and small group skills; and ensuring that learning groups discuss how well the group functions.

5. Transferring

In traditional classroom, students' roles are to memorize the facts and practice the procedures by working skill drill exercises and word problems. In contrast, in a contextual or constructivist classroom, the teachers' role is expanded to include creating a variety of learning experiences with a focus on understanding rather than memorization (Crawford, 2001). Transferring is a teaching strategy that we define as using knowledge in a new context—one that has not been covered in class. It suggests that students who learn with understanding can also learn to transfer knowledge (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999).

As it is mentioned that Contextual Teaching Learning connects the learning to the real situation or context, practicing business communication using REACT is suitable for preparing the students to see the daily conversation in the office or business term. People usually communicate in business for several different purposes, circumstances, and the people with whom they are communicating (Bennie, 2009). Here are some communication purposes with others in a business setting:

- (1) To pass on information
- (2) To persuade people to buy a product or use a service
- (3) To discuss an issue
- (4) To recommend a course of action
- (5) To make or answer a request
- (6) To make or answer a complaint
- (7) To keep a record of something that has happened or been agreed
- (8) To explain or clarify a situation

(9) To give an instruction

The purpose of using CTL in speaking practices to the students of Business class aims to give professional communication in which they know how to persuade people buying the product, answer a request/complaint, and all purposes mentioned above. In order to cover the business communication purposes, the students need to select the right language which is suitable for business situation based on the topic chosen, for example, as if you are making a complaint, you are also more likely to speak to someone than to write to them if you want to discuss an issue, the language style and tone are unlikely to be different if you are making a promotion of a product.

This is an example business communication. Below is a transcript of verbal report on the meeting.

Jane Lee : *I must say, I had a really good meeting with Mr Rodriguez. I think he might be the man for us. He seems to know the market very well, and he already does business all over South America.*

Peter Morgan (Managing Director) : *Which countries exactly?*

Jane Lee : *Argentina, Venezuela, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Brazil mainly. He knows the import regulations for the different countries, but I would expect that – we wouldn't be considering him if he didn't! But he also seems to know things like who matters in each country, how they do business there, how we can avoid giving offence without knowing it, any problems there may be about payment, all that kind of thing. He is already agent for quite a few companies – Wilson Fabrics, Richmond Consumer Products and Simon Black Ltd – but they're all in competition with us, so it doesn't matter – sorry, I mean none of them is in competition with us. Oh by the way, I forgot to mention that he's based in Argentina, which is our fastest-expanding market in the area.*

Sarah Brown (Financial Director) : *This all sounds too good to be true. Will he accept our usual commission?*

Jane Lee : *Yes, initially, but instead of being paid a fixed percentage, he would want to be able to negotiate his commission on a sliding scale eventually.*

The dialogue above shows how people in business communicate using the right language based on the situation and the tone according to the purpose of business negotiation. The dialogue points out that business communication rules are clear, precise, brief, uncluttered, direct and to the point (Bennie, 2009). Contextual teaching learning using REACT aims to provide the students some practices on speaking in business term. They are expected to know the right language used for business situation, and

be clear, precise, and direct in addressing the audiences. The technique of addressing the audiences in business should keep track of following rules:

- (1) Recognizing the type of audiences whether they are business people, organization or individual.
- (2) Deciding what sort of language to use .
- (3) The degree of technicality language can vary according to the audiences we are addressing (should it be technical, non-technical, formal, informal, simple or complex)
- (4) Understanding the purpose in the communication.
- (5) Stating what we want to achieve.

The purpose and what to achieve can be different according to the topic of the business. These are some examples to illustrate the difference between the purpose of your communication and what you want to achieve:

- (1) The purpose of a sales letter is to tell people about your product or service. What you want to achieve is a sale.
- (2) The purpose of a complaining telephone call is to point out an error or fault. What you want to achieve is the correction of that error or fault, or else compensation.
- (3) The purpose of a credit control letter is to chase an overdue account. What you want to achieve is payment.
- (4) The purpose of a report on the advantages and disadvantages of different work practices is to inform the decision-makers of the options available. What you want to achieve is acceptance of the most efficient option.

Bennie (2009) suggests that using English for business setting will depend on the circumstances, and to some extent on the person or people you are addressing. The main reasons for communicating orally are:

- (1) **To have a discussion.** It is very difficult to hold a meaningful discussion by letter, memo or e-mail.
- (2) **To receive instant feedback from your audience.** Speaking to someone means that you do not have to wait for their response. However, this can sometimes be a disadvantage; in some circumstances, a considered response might be better.
- (3) **To be able to judge your audience's reaction to what you are saying.** This usually only applies in face-to-face communication, but it can sometimes be useful to be able to judge from your audience's comments, expressions or body language what they think of what you are saying and perhaps adapt your style or tone accordingly.
- (4) **For speed.** Even the fastest typist or writer cannot match the speed at which we speak, so if you want to communicate something quickly, it might be better to do so orally.

Methodology

The research of student mastery in speaking is conducted to explore how the use of CTL approach can encourage the student participation in Business English class and to find out the effectiveness of *Relating, Experiencing, Applying, Cooperating, and Transferring* (REACT) in speaking practices related to Professional communication. The goal of applying this method is to improve the students' speaking ability. To conduct such research, this method has two main objectives: first, to describe, explore, and explain the use of CTL approach in students' business communication; second, to find out the benefit of using that approach. The data of this study is obtained from several instruments, namely class observations, and students' role play/ dialogues which are then analyzed using speaking assessment criteria taken from Rose (2007, as cited by Emilia, 2011, p. 151). One of the characteristics of CTL approach is the use of authentic assessment. The use of final project as the authentic assessment is effective since they are able to combine their ideas, performances, and language choices. The characteristics of authentic assessment are it is conducted during and after the learning process, and it can be used as feedback for the students. Besides characteristics, there are some important aspects to evaluate students' achievement/ final project, such as students' report, homework, quiz, students' presentation or performance, and demonstration. The teachers who want to know their students' English learning improvement, should collect the data from the real activity when students use English. The data should be gained from the students when they do the English activity inside or outside the class, and that is called authentic data (Depdiknas, 2002).

Results

The advantages of contextual teaching and learning approach in a writing class

Data and discussion from observation

Based on the data gained from the observation sheets and teacher field notes, which are conducted in seven meetings, the use of contextual teaching and learning approach in the speaking activity provided four benefits. The benefits are engaging students in the speaking activity, increasing students' motivation to participate actively in the business English class, helping students to solve their problems, providing ways for students to discuss or interact with their friends. Those benefits are similar to the statement proposed by Crawford (2001); Depdiknas (2002); Johnson (2002). Further explanation of each benefit is presented below.

(1) Engaging students in the speaking activity

Most students felt enthusiastic to follow teacher instructions and are willing to participate in the learning activity. From the observation sheets and teacher field notes, it is discernible that in the beginning of

the lesson, students are able to participate in the dialogues entitled *“buying and selling a product.”* The students’ engagement is also shown by the ability of the students to share their expressions in the beginning of the lesson.

The contextual teaching and learning approach can engage students in the speaking activity. In doing that activity, the students are motivated to follow teacher instructions. That is supported by Johnson (2002) who stated that CTL engages students in independent action, which is designed to connect academic knowledge with the context of students’ daily lives in ways that achieve a meaningful purpose, including in one of CTL characteristics.

(2) *Increasing students’ motivation to participate actively in the speaking class.*

Depdiknas (2002) has stated that the advantages of questioning activity are to check students’ understanding, encourage students’ response, motivate students to ask more questions, and refresh student knowledge. In line with the statement above, the data revealed that in the speaking process, students asked some questions that they did not understand and answered teachers’ questions pertaining to the material. The above statement appears to indicate that they participated actively in the speaking class. Another activity which can show the increase of students’ motivation is the fact that the students can ask some questions to their pairs about their opinion on a business product, such as *“What are the strengths of your product?”*, *“What are the special offering for the summer products?”*, *“When will the stock be delivered?”*, and *“How much is the price given to a reseller/customer?”* Questioning activity is also discovered when the students discussed in pairs or group work in the speaking class. Questioning in the learning process is seen as a teacher’s activity to encourage, guide, and evaluate students’ thinking ability. For the students, questioning activity is defined as the important part in conducting learning based on inquiry (Depdiknas, 2002).

(3) *Helping students to solve their problems*

Based on the observation data, students try to be creative to perform the dialogues about business communication. They practice how to use the right language in the real situation that have been set, for example, they perform the dialogue about *“offering a new product to the customer, this presenter knows how to use the right language which is proper as the salesman. Here, he/she can use informal/ formal language according to the situation at that time. Then, when the students as the audiences did not know how to response, other students helped her to convey her feeling and thought. The benefits of group discussion using role play help the students to be a professional worker in the future. This finding is reaffirmed by Hadley (2001), who states that problem solving activity has the potential to affect students’ speaking and thinking skills in their native language, thus extending*

the benefits of language study well beyond the limits of the second language classroom. Similar to the statement above, students should be accustomed to solve their problems and find something beneficial for them.

(4) Providing ways for students to discuss or interact with their friends

The students in the Business English class can enjoy working in group. The students are able to cooperate with their partners to improve the speaking skills. A student who is fluent in English can help the groups who are facing difficulties in spelling words or pronunciation. A manager uses a different tone in his language as he is the leader and speaks louder. A labor uses a lower tone when he talks with the Boss. This Role Playing is used to imagine that they are in the real situation of working place. The data above supported that in the CTL classroom, teachers always did the learning activity in some learning groups (Depdiknas, 2002). Similarly, learning community concept suggests that learning results should be obtained from cooperating with other. Learning results also were gained from sharing between friends and groups.

Based on the results above, it is discovered that there are some advantages of implementing contextual teaching and learning approach to teaching speaking: (1) engaging students in the activity; (2) increasing students' motivation to participate actively in the writing class; (3) helping students to solve their problem; (4) providing ways for students to discuss or interact with their friends. The strategy of using REACT can increase their knowledge in how to speak in business setting. Besides that, the second advantage is that CTL increases students' motivation to participate actively in practicing dialogues and role play. It can be seen by how the students responded to the questions, finds out the solution of the problem, and creatively use Role Play in the performances. The next advantage from the use of CTL approach to teaching speaking is providing ways for students to discuss or interact with their friends. Students feel that cooperative strategy is an interesting learning style. Through cooperative learning, the students can discuss with their friends the way to improve the pronunciation and use the right language style and tone in business communication.

Teaching strategies

Based on the data gained from seven meetings in the speaking class, there are some teaching strategies which are proposed by Crawford (2001) such as relating, experiencing, applying, cooperating, and transferring (REACT). The further explanation about teaching strategies used were explained below.

(1) Relating

Relating is the most powerful element in contextual teaching strategy. In relating strategy, teacher links a new concept to something completely unknown to students and the students learning in the

context of one's life experiences or preexisting knowledge (Crawford, 2001). Based on the observation, the students are able to link their new knowledge and understand easily what they should do in the lesson. According to the previous data, the students discover the solution to a problem that he or she has spent significant time and effort in solving (Caine & Caine, 1993). It can be seen that the students learn and improve the speaking skill by interacting in group discussion. Here, they learn to solve the problem in term of language chosen, tone, fluency, and pronunciation.

(2) *Experiencing*

In contextual approach one strategy relates to another. It is discernible that relating connects new information to life experiences or prior knowledge that students bring them to the classroom. Teachers can overcome this obstacle and help students to construct new knowledge with hands-on experiences that occur inside the classroom. This strategy is called experiencing. In experiencing strategy, students learn by doing through Role Playing a business situation (Crawford, 2001). It can be seen by looking at students are able to express their feeling and thought independently and organize the words/ sentences orally in the right language and tone.

The technique of REACT improves the knowledge through modeling. Modelling in this approach suggests that there are some knowledge or skills to be model for the students. In this research, the teacher gives a Role Play which is related with their real lives. In CTL approach, teacher is not the only one model. Model can be designed through involve the students. As implemented in this research, students asked to give examples relate to the materials. In teaching speaking, Hillocks (1986 cited in Hadley, 2001) has discovered that using model of good communication in speaking instruction provide mixed results, with some studies showing benefits and others showing no significant differences between groups. However, Hillocks maintained that the use of models, especially to explore a feature of purposeful text, including the employment of tangible and comprehensive information can be beneficial at all grade levels. In addition, Modelling aims to introduce and familiarize the students with the communication in business setting.

(3) *Applying*

Applying strategy can be defined as learning by putting the concepts to use (Crawford, 2001). It suggests that the students can apply the concepts when they are engaged in hands on problem solving activities. From results, it can be seen that when the speaking process is conducted, students comprehend the materials easily. So, they could perform the dialogues with minimum mistake. It is also reaffirmed by the students' opinion that they agree the effective way to teach speaking is to do many practices in speaking. Then, students share that learning speaking using REACT strategies improve their

speaking ability. The exercises that are realistic and authentic, can motivate students to learn academic concept in a deeper level of understanding.

In applying strategies, the tasks are designed to be interesting, different, and varied. The aim is to provide students with a wide variety of tasks to engage in and ensure that the tasks have some engaging, interesting, or surprising. For example, in this strategy the students are asked to perform a dialogue about “Buying and selling a product,” which related to students’ real life. In addition, Pintrich and Schunk (1996) also mentioned that teacher should emphasize how the academic tasks that are done in the classroom are relevant and authentic, tasks that have meaning in the real world. In CTL contexts, applying is a contextual teaching and learning strategy that develops a deeper sense of meaning. Accordingly, students also develop their knowledge through their active participation in the teaching and learning process. Based on the data gained, the teacher’s roles to facilitate learning process are: (1) making the knowledge meaningful and relevant to the students; (2) giving chance to the students to find and apply their own ideas; and (3) making students aware to apply their own strategy into learning process (Depdiknas, 2002).

(4) *Cooperating*

Cooperating is the most effective strategy to learn speaking. Students cannot make significant progress in a class when they work individually. On the other hands, students working in small groups can handle that complex problem with little outside help (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). It is reaffirmed by the data from observation that cooperative learning made students easy to learn and discuss the mistakes with their friends in group. It appears that students learn in the context of sharing, responding, and communicating with other learners in a writing process (Crawford, 2001). Most of the students in the research feel less self-conscious and could ask questions without feeling embarrassed when they work with peers in a small group discussion. It can be seen from the data findings, working in group can make students confident to ask others and get English knowledge by themselves. According to Johnson and Johnson (1990), cooperative learning has established guidelines to help teachers avoid the negative conditions and create environments, in which students may be expected to learn concepts at a deeper level of understanding. After the guidelines are implemented in this research, the students can interact while completing assignment, learn to use interpersonal and small group skills, and ensure that learning groups discuss how well the group functions.

(5) *Transferring*

Transferring is the last strategy in contextual teaching and learning approach that is used in speaking class. In this stage, the students use their knowledge in a new context. From the observation’s results,

most of the students try to connect their experiences as professional workers with the dialogues and Role Play in the transferring stage. In this strategy, the students use their knowledge in a new context.

The statement above is in line with Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (1999) who states that *transferring* is a teaching strategy that we define as using knowledge in a new context or novel situation—one that has not been covered in class. It means students who learn with understanding can also learn to transfer knowledge. Furthermore, the evidence is in correspondence with Crawford's (2001) theory about contextual teaching that the teachers' role is to create a variety of learning experiences with a focus on understanding rather than memorization.

The implementation of REACT in speaking

From assessment sheets, it is discernible that the students showed a good progress in their speaking skill. The progress of their speaking has been assessed from the first to the end of their speaking products. Based on Rose's assessment, (2007 cited by Emilia 2011) Pronunciation and the right language choice are the aspects to assess students' ability in speaking. The teaching strategies used in CTL approach to teaching speaking are *relating, experiencing, applying, cooperating, and transferring* (Crawford, 2001). The further strategy used is authentic assessment. Relating strategy is used to link a new concept to something completely unknown to students (Caine and Caine, 1993). Thus, it is expected that students learn in the context of one's life experiences or preexisting knowledge. This strategy is effective to teach speaking because they communicate about their experience.

Experiencing strategy is intended to make the students learning by doing through exploration, discovery, and invention (Crawford, 2001). The students stated that this strategy can improve their knowledge through the teacher who gives the text model to the students.

Applying stage increases students' interest in speaking. The students agree that the effective way to teach speaking is to do many practices in speaking, especially speaking about business communication. Similar to that evidence, in applying strategy students can apply the concepts when they are engaged on problem solving activity (Crawford, 2001).

Cooperating can help teacher avoid some negative conditions and create environments, in which students may be expected to learn concepts at a deeper level of understanding (Johnson & Johnson, 1990). Most of the students agree that cooperating stage is the most effective strategy to learn speaking. In realizing that statement, students argue that working in group can help them know the new way to use spoken languages that are used in the dialogues or Role Play and they feel enjoyable to study in group.

Transferring strategy is implemented when the students said that the benefit from using transferring strategy is that they are able to know

which parts were incorrect. Five teaching strategies had been implemented and discovered in this research. Besides that, the assessment should also be considered to know students' improvement in speaking.

Conclusion

The present study is administered to investigate the advantages of using contextual teaching and learning approach in teaching speaking, especially in Business English class. The technique of using REACT strategy improves the student speaking ability. The data in this study are obtained through observations, and students' performances / final projects. It is found that this approach is beneficial for the students of in learning speaking. It is proven from the teaching strategies used in the classroom that are based on contextual teaching theory (Crawford, 2001). These teaching strategies are *relating, experiencing, applying, cooperating and transferring* (REACT). In addition, authentic tasks are also used to assess the students' speaking.

There are some benefits of using contextual teaching and learning approach in speaking class: (1) engaging students in writing activity; (2) increasing students' motivation to participate actively in the writing class; (3) helping students to solve their problems; (4) providing ways for students to discuss or interact with their friends. Furthermore, the use of contextual teaching and learning approach in a Business English class is responded to positively by the students. This contention is proved by the students' speaking improvement through practices on Business communication dialogues and Role Play

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