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*Current Belief in ELT and Its
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Triggering Students Critical Thinking and Active Participation in Large Language Class

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Abstract

In teaching a language a teacher needs to enhance students' competence and performance of the language. Performance is associated with someone's ability to use the language that links to mastery of language skills, while competence embraces knowledge relates to the language- content course.

Both language skills and content course teachings require students' active learning. One strategy to trigger active learning in teaching content course as well as providing chance for the students to use the language is by conducting students' presentation. However, problem appears when the presentation is given in a class consists of about 40 students. Audience tends to ignore the presenters due to the absence of students' eagerness. To deal with the problem, 'Hedwig' strategy can be an alternative solution.

'Hedwig' strategy requires teacher to group students into small groups consisting of not more than 5 students at the beginning of the course. This grouping is fixed and valid for the rest of the semester. Then, when it comes to small groups' presentation on a topic, the class is divided into some big groups containing more or less 8 students. These big groups' members are chosen randomly and only valid for that meeting only. This grouping is done prior to each presentation. Then, as a big group, students are asked to discuss certain part of the topic and should result in at least one question to be asked to the presenters. Ensuring that all groups has true understanding of the topic and is ready with their questions, the teacher then asks the presenters to present the topic. Classroom discussion and feedback are performed afterward. Then, the students are required to sit in their small group to make a resume of the whole discussion. The resume is submitted to the teacher to be checked and used as feedback.

Keywords: critical thinking, active participation, large class

INTRODUCTION

In general, English teaching in university level in Indonesia offer two main categories; language skills mastery and subject matter courses relate to linguistics, literature, or education. Language skills mastery is intended to guarantee that all students have a good working command of English as their working command of English may diverse due to their English learning experience. On the other hand, subject matter materials are given to equip the students with underlying knowledge of linguistics, literature, or education depends on the major the students are taking. As a whole, the English language teaching is offering improvement in both linguistic performance and competence of the students.

In order to master a language one need the knowledge of how to articulate sounds in a comprehensible manner, an adequate vocabulary, and a mastery of syntax add up to linguistic competence as those are needed to know and be able to do (Dell Hymes, 1974). On the other side, Widdowson (1984) argued that competence in the Chomskyan sense is a set of abstract rules which are manifested through analytic models of description made as explicit as possible in the interest of scientific inquiry. It is what needs to be accounted for in language acquisition is linguistics competence, or speaker-hearer's underlying knowledge of language. This is distinguished from linguistics performance, or speaker-hearer's actual use of language in specific instances as performance is a realization of language resources for communicative purpose. (Saville-Troike, 2006; Widdowson, 1984).

However, while linguistic competence is necessary, it is not sufficient for someone who wants to communicate competently in another language. The sociolinguist Dell Hymes in 1974 proposed the notion of communicative competence which includes Chomskyan linguistics competence and a range of other sociolinguistics and conversational skills that enable the speaker to know how to say what to whom, and when. Savignon defined communicative competence as 'the ability to function in a truly communicative setting – that is, in a dynamic exchange in which linguistic competence must adjust itself to the total informational input, both linguistic and paralinguistic, of one or more interlocutors'. Communicative competence is also context-specific, which means that a competent communicator knows