Teachers' Methods to Gain Students' Attention in Teaching English at Elementary School in Magelang

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Abstract

In teaching and learning, there are some difficulties that are faced by teacher especially in elementary school. One of the difficulties is to gain students' attention in English classroom. This study aimed to know the teachers' method in gaining students' attention, difficulties in applying the methods and also to reveal the most frequently used methods used by teachers. The data were collected from three English teachers in elementary school in Magelang, and the participants were selected based on their experience in teaching English in elementary school. Moreover, the researcher used descriptive qualitative method to describe the data. To obtain the data, the researcher used interview as a data collection method. The data were analyzed by using these steps: data collection, member checking, data reduction, and data presentation. The data collected revealed that teachers' method to gain students' attention is using icebreaking and media. The challenges in applying the methods comprise three factors: students' factors, teachers' factors and also class factors. And the teachers' favored methods used by teachers are using game and picture.

Keywords: students' attention, icebreaking, media, teaching activities.

1.   Introduction

There are many difficulties faced by English teachers in elementary schools that are in the rural areas because students may have never known English before. Facing such a condition, teachers have to find the suitable methods for teaching the students by gaining attention and motivating them to learn English. At hand, gaining attention may become a door to the solution in learning English problem. Robert Gagne (1989) explained that for an effective learning teacher should be able to gain students attention. The idea is to grab learners' attention so they will become involved in the learning process. These activities are commonly known by teachers as icebreaking activity. Ice-breaking activities are important in the learning process to refresh the environment of learning, eliminate the boredom and drowsiness that faced by anyone, including students and to create positive attitudes towards learning process (Johnson, 2007). In my observation when doing internships, I asked to teachers about how to gain students' attention and some teachers said that they had difficulties in gaining students' attention. There is a problem found by teachers in gaining students' attention regardless their effort in using various methods like using icebreaking, and media. Teachers were used those methods but sometimes it does not work properly. From this case, the researcher makes a research about teachers' methods in gaining attention, and the data were taken in elementary school in Magelang.

2.   Literature Review

2.1   Definition of Attention

Attention is one of the many psychological symptoms in human beings. Attention is a psychological factors that have the properties that stand out, both from inside and from outside individuals who can assist in teaching and learning interactions that show the activity, concentration, and awareness. The state of attention comprises a mental activity that occurs

involving the brain and senses. According to Ramayulis (1998), attention is one of the psychological factors that can help the interaction in the learning process. Psychological conditions can be formed by two things. Firstly, the conditions come up intrinsically, and secondly the conditions derive from teaching materials (content). Attention is an activity of the soul that is directed to an object, both inside and outside of the object (Ahmadi, 2013). Solso (2007) also added that attention is the concentration of the mind in the form of clear and explicit, of an object simultaneously or group mind. Paying attention is an activity that is carried out in directing to objects effectively (Slameto, 2011).

2.2   Types of Attention

According to Suryabrata (2010), attention can be divided into several groups. The first is based on its intensity. The more awareness that accompanies an activity or inner experience, the more intensive attention will get. If an activity is conducted having a lot of intensive attention, the activity is most likely done successfully. The second is based on how it arises, it consists of spontaneous attention (unintentional attention) and deliberate attention (reflexive attention). Spontaneous attention is attention that arises accidentally, arises by itself and related to someone's interest. Deliberate attention is attention that is done deliberately because there must be a willingness to cause it. The third is based on subject matter of concern. This comprises is distributive attention and focused attention. Distributive attention is attention that can be directed to various objects at one time. And focused attention is attention that only be focused on limited object at one time. Ahmadi (2013) also stated that attention can be divided into several types, there are: 1). Spontaneous attention arises by itself by being interested in something and not driven by willingness, and deliberate attention arises with willingness because of certain of objects, 2). Static attention is attention that constant driven to a certain object. In static attention,

people will get strong attention because it's in a long period. Dynamic attention is easy to change, easy to move from one object to another object, 3). Concentrative attention only focused or directed into one object, and distributive or divided attention is people can divide their attention in more than one direction at the same time, 4). Narrow attention can easily focus on a limit object even in noisy environments. But for people who have broad attention, they are easily attracted to activities or events around them. 6). Fictitious attentive person easily focus on one thing. He or she can stay focus on the object for a long time. Whereas people who have fluctuate attention generally can pay attention to various kinds of things at once, but mostly they are not careful.

2.3   Methods in Gaining Attention

There are many activities in gaining students' attention, some of teachers name these activities as icebreaking activities. Ice breaking activities are very important in the learning process for refreshing atmosphere of learning, eliminating boredom and drowsiness that can be faced by anyone including students and creating a positive attitude toward school and learning. There are nine types of ice breaking activities that can be used to gain students attention (Sunarto, 2012). They include yelling, clapping hands, song, gestures, games, humor, stories/tales, magic, and video. Teachers also use media as instructional tools. Media can be tools in gaining attention if media that teachers use are interesting. The use of media can help students in focusing their attention. Basically, media describe abstract concept becoming more concrete so that students will be more familiar or understand the material conveyed by the teacher (Ahmadi, 2011).

2.4   Challenges in Applying the Methods

In gaining students' attention, there are also having challenges in applying the methods. Ice breaking activities can be effective if they can be great tools in lowering defenses, modeling

appropriate teaching behavior, aiding communication and teamwork in groups, and enhancing the learning (Chulp, 2010). However, if ice breaking activities are not facilitated properly, they can be bored or worst, damage group solidity, and be disadvantageous to teaching and learning activities (Kornik, 2006). Millbower (2009) also state that sometimes teachers forget to bring the material because teachers only focus on doing the ice breaking activities. Not only ice breaking activities that can be harmful in teaching and learning activities, media can make teaching and learning activities become not effective. The disadvantages for audio are sometimes the communication of this media is only one way and the broadcast is centralized so that the teachers cannot control when using audio. For the projector, the disadvantages in use these media are these media are easy to lose and only able to present objects silently. This media also need dark space condition too so if there is a lot of light, the picture or object will not be seen by students (Sudjana, 2000). There also have disadvantages in using 2D or 3D media. The disadvantages are the cost of manufacture is expensive and takes a lot of time and requires skill in making this media. For the computer, the disadvantages in use this medium are in operating the computers. To use the computers, teachers and students need knowledge about computer.

2.5   *The Teachers' Favored Method in Gaining Students' Attention*

The method that is often used to gain students' attention is icebreaking activity. Icebreaking can increase learning motivation, refreshing the learning atmosphere, and eliminating the boredom of the students by playing while learning. It requires stimulation in accordance with the needs for students' growth and development to achieve optimally (Yulianti, 2010). Pramudyo, cited in Setyani (2016) also stated that teachers usually use icebreaking as a method to gain students' attention because these activities can make students know each other, students become more active in learning, and learning atmosphere become relax.

3.   Methodology

3.1   Participants

In this research, the participants were selected three English teacher from one of elementary school in Magelang who have experience in learning English in elementary school at least 3-5 years and taken teaching and learning seminar. Researcher expects that from attended the teaching seminar, teachers will have several methods in teaching the students especially in elementary school. The reason of choosing that category was for getting rich data from three participants.

3.2   Instrument

In collecting the data, the researcher used an in-depth interview that was associated with the qualitative research. The interview questions was about methods in gaining students attention. The researcher had 3 main question that can be improved and answered by teachers. The researcher used Bahasa for the questions to help both the researcher and the teachers to do the interview.

3.3   Data Analysis

After collecting data through interviews, the researcher made transcripts to process the collected information into a form of writing so that it would be easy to understand and analyze. Then, the researcher focused on coding to ease the research to categorize the collected data. Member checking is important process in qualitative research to evaluate the participants' speech for truthfulness (Harper & Cole, 2012). Member checking was done for ensure the data collected from participants by asked them to prove whether the transcript written by researcher is same as the interview had been done. After that, researcher choose things that are primary, focusing on things that are important, looking for themes and patterns and discard things that are not needed

in the research (Sugiyono, 2009). At this stage, the researcher draws conclusions from data analysis that has been done. The conclusion in qualitative research was able to answer the problem formulation formulated from the beginning. Conclusion expected in qualitative research had a new finding that had not been there. The discovery could be a description or picture of an object that previously was not clear so that after the investigation become clearer.

4. Discussion

In this part, the researcher discusses the result of the interview that are related to the research question. From the data that have been analyzed, the result can be discussed as follows:

4.1 Teachers Methods in Gaining students' Attention

4.1.1 Games

Reffering to the data, all of the participants were used game to gain students' attention. The participants sometimes used games in exercise too. They argued that by used this activity, it can make students know each other, refresh the classroom environments and also create a positive attitude toward school and learning (Johnson, 2007)

4.1.2 Outdoor Class

Outdoor class is aimed to relax the body after a few hours sitting in class and also to make students more active in learning. This activity is known as field practice activity. This activity can make students more understands about the object or the lesson.can make students active to get the lesson and teacher can explore the students'problem solving skill.

4.1.3 Room language

Room language activity is like solemn and silent activity. This activity can make students easily understand the material in learning process. With these activities, it can make the students' thinking process become fresh and creative (Johnson 2007).

4.1.4 Song

Learning will be more exciting when cheerful songs inserted. Low grade students will be happier if the learning process uses a song (Sunarto 2012). Songs also can improve students' intelligence into the music and can improve students' ability in learning process (Adi, 2012).

4.1.5 Gesture

Students' attention can arises from teacher gesture like teacher position in teaching, or doing funny activities or funny movements in teaching. Gesture can make students more interested to the teachers because if teachers have good gesture or appearances when teaching, it can make students pay attention to the teachers and can motivate them to study (Sunarto 2012).

4.1.6 Pictures or Objects

In teaching and learning activities, teachers also use pictures as a tool to gain students' attention. Teacher can use interesting picture or object that is related to the lesson. Media can help teachers deliver the message or material to the students and make students more interested in the learning process (Djamarah, 2010).

4.1.7 Video

Some of teachers use this method in gaining students' attention at the beginning of, middle, and the end of learning activities. Motion sound or funny films that are still related to materials also can be inspiring or motivating the students to study harder (Sunarto, 2012).

4.2   Challenges in Applying the Methods

4.2.1 Inappropiate Methods

Icebreaking activities can be worse if the teacher uses inappropriate activities. The activities become inappropriate because it is not related to the material, inappropiate implementation or aims to have fun only (Millbower, 2009).

4.2.2 Differences attention Level

Students have different types of attention, teachers should give clear instruction and procedure output when they want to use icebreaking activities so that students will understand easily and do not take much time in giving instruction (Ahmadi, 2013 and Suryabrata, 2010).

4.2.3 Teacher's Drawing Skill

If teachers use their own picture or subject, at least teachers should have a good skill in making the media so that it is clearer. Teachers should have skill to make good media so that students can easily understand the material (Nata, 2008).

4.2.4 Teachers' Creativity

Teachers should be creative as well in making icebreaking activities in order to avoid boredom of the students. In doing the icebreaking activities, teachers should be creative so teacher will have various activities in gaining students' attention and can avoid repeated activities (Kornik, 2006).

4.2.5 Lack of Facility

Sometimes teacher has difficulties in using LCD or projector to show the media that will be used by teachers. The problems are not all classes have LCD or projector and teachers should swap to another class that has LCD (Sudjana, 2000).

4.3   The Teachers' Favored Methods in Gaining Students' Attention

4.3.1 Games

Icebreaking activities can accelerate the learning process, motivate the students and also can increase students' attention (Pramudyo, cited in Setyani, 2016). This activity also can refresh learning atmosphere and eliminate boredom of the students (Yulianti, 2010).

4.3.2 Pictures

Another way of gaining students' attention is the use of media. Media that is usually used by the teachers is picture. They argue that when teachers use picture, students will automatically pay attention to the teachers without being shouted or called by the teachers and also can make students understand the lesson easier.

5.   Conclusion

There are some problems faced by the teachers in teaching activities especially in English classroom. One of the problems is in gaining students' attention. Teachers should have suitable methods in gaining students attention to make teaching and learning activities become effective. There are several methods that teachers used in gaining students' attention namely; games, outdoor class, room language, song, gesture, pictures or objects, and video. Teachers also use media to gain students' attention. The types of media that teachers use are pictures, flashcards, LCD, and objects. Teachers also use interesting shape or funny pictures. Students will get more excited to see pictures they have never seen before, which are, in this context, still related to the lesson. As a result, students will automatically or immediately pay attention. There are also some challenges or problems in applying the methods. When teachers do the methods, some of students sometimes are not interested in the activities. Students are not interested in the activities because of the teachers repeated the activities or teachers already tell the students the name of activity that they will do. In addition, when it comes to using games, students sometimes do not understand the rules of how to play it and students start to lose their attention. Consequently, teachers need to be patience in dealing with it. Another challenge is teachers' drawing skill. This becomes challenging for teachers when they realize that their skill to draw is not good. The next problems are regarding facilities. It becomes difficult to teach when LCD and stationary are not well-provided. In using LCD or a projector, teachers need to swap the class, which is not

effective because it is time-consuming. Meanwhile, it is undeniable to provide marker more than one color because it is one of the ways to attract students' focus to study. The favored method that teachers use to gain students' attention are games and pictures, even teachers also use icebreaking activities like games when using pictures in gaining students' attention. These activities can be used in practice and exercise so that students do not feel bored and afraid, instead they feel motivated to practice and do exercise.

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