The crucial elements of classroom management

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Abstract

The urgency of classroom management in the English classroom is indisputable. It is said so since classroom management is the fundamental component of the successful teaching and learning processes. However, many teachers are still confused about how to practice good classroom management. Coping with the previous dilemma, this paper aimed at describing the five crucial elements of practicing good classroom management. Those elements are listed as follows: teacher talk, teacher talking time, voice management, physical presence, and seating arrangement through a literature review. It is expected that this paper can give a clear explanation related to the five crucial elements. With that in mind, classroom management can be well-practiced.

Keywords: teacher talk, teacher talking time, voice management, physical presence, and seating arrangement

Introduction

What is the most significant element in succeeding teaching and learning processes? Answering this question, various opinions have been declared by the teachers. Some of them put their concerns on the use of teaching materials. Standing on the different pathways, other teachers put their attention on the use of certain techniques and particular approaches to achieve the classroom's objective. Arguing the previous fact, Stevick (1980) in Fauziati (2010) believes in the role of teacher to manage the classroom becomes a more powerful influencer towards the classroom's accomplishment. In other words, when it compared to materials, techniques, and approaches used by the teacher, the teacher's capability to role and organize the classroom gives greater positive implications.

Understanding the previous fact related to the teacher's role in organizing the classroom, a consensus agrees to mention the term as classroom management. Having further talk on it, classroom management, in general, is described as various actions taken by the teacher to facilitate the students' needs such as engaging the students to the classroom's activities, establishing the teacher's orders, and eliciting the cooperation among teacher and students (Emmer & Staugh, 2001). Besides, Kulina et al. (2003) define classroom management as the teacher's actions used to manage students' behaviors. The more practical definition says that classroom management is how the teacher works, how the class works, how the teacher and students collaborate, and how teaching and learning happen (Bosch, 2006). From the previous explanation, the phrase

classroom management can be highlighted as the teacher's capability to conduct and organize the classroom activities as a way to achieve the objective of the lesson.

Since classroom management plays a vital role in succeeding teaching and learning, studies about the tangible impact of it are frequently discussed. According to Marzano et al. (2003), classroom management can be the parameter to differentiate between an effective class and an ineffective one. In the class where good classroom management is applied, students' interruptions are low. Providing this condition, the teacher's instructions would be well understood. In contrast, when there is no good classroom management, the teacher spends more time to clarify and reiterate the same instruction. In the end, the target of the lesson is unquestionably hard to be achieved. Moreover, Oliver et al. (2011) focused their study on the role of classroom management that is utilized to control students' behaviors. Referring to those experts, preventing and reducing inappropriate behaviors in the classroom can be achieved through the existence of good classroom management. Supporting the two preceding findings, Durlak et al. (2011) declared the positive impact of classroom management that covers improving the students' social and emotional skills, building good attitude towards other classmates, triggering the students to promote positive behavior, reducing the students' emotional distress, and optimizing the students' achievement. Seeing those explanations, it can be summed up that classroom management holds a very influential impact, not only for supporting students' academic achievement but also for managing their behavior.

From the former paragraphs, without question, the practice of classroom management is decidedly suggested. However, based on the writer's informal talks towards several teachers, they tend to be confused about how it should be practiced. Consequently, it is predicted that the teacher as the practitioner of classroom management would face a serious problem. To avoid this obstacle, this paper aimed at describing how classroom management should be implemented by explaining its five prior elements proposed by Fauziati (2010) through a literature review. Those five elements are teacher talk, teacher talking time, voice management, physical presence, and seating arrangement. By explaining and describing those elements, it is expected that the teacher's difficulty to practice and demonstrate good classroom management would be solved. Having a good understanding of the practice of classroom management, it is expected that the teacher would run the class well.

Teacher talk

The first crucial element in practicing classroom management is teacher talk. There are many researchers shifted their spotlight of study on it during the previous 20 years (Yanfen & Yuqin, 2010). According to them, at the beginning of the 1970s, researches focused on teacher talk were completed by Gaies and Henzle then followed by Long in the 1980s. Those experts turn out to be pioneers in exploring the notion of teacher talk.

Related to the previous paragraph, the term of teacher talk drags the attention of the experts. As a consequence, various definitions of it have been declared. First, according to Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, teacher talk is described as the type of language used by the teacher in the process of

teaching. Another definition was formulated by Ellis (1985), teacher talk is the language used by the teacher in the second language classroom. Going along with the previous definition, Sinclair and Brazil (1982) believe that a specific language used by the teacher under certain circumstances can be called as teacher talk. From the preceding explanation, teacher talk is described as teacher language used under the specific environment such as a second language classroom.

Related to classroom management, teacher talk is one of the most important elements and becomes the crucial point in practicing it. Supporting the previous sentence, Feng and Qican (1999) in Elismawati (2016) state when the teacher wants to give instruction, cultivate her/his intellectual capability, and manage the activity in the classroom, teacher talk is used as a tool to communicate it. Without having good communication through the teacher's language used, classroom management would not be effective. Besides, another significant point of teacher talk in classroom management can be observed from its function as a linguistics input for the students. Teacher talk becomes the role model for the students to master language, especially in the spoken form. The words said by the teacher can be an example for the students to pronounce certain words. From the students' point of view, teacher talk can be generalized as a precious source for them which is analysed as an indispensable element in learning language (Cullen, 1998). Teacher talk provides language input for the students since the condition confirms that there is limited support from the environment in learning English as a second language. Such a condition happens in Indonesia where most students can only get a direct example from their teacher but not much from other resources (Stern, 1983). Seeing this fact, Lin (2005) considered teacher talk as the most significant teacher's feature in the second language classroom.

Moreover, the broader investigation related to the types of teacher talk has been developed. It is divided into two types: direct teacher talks and indirect teacher talk (Flanders, 1970). Direct teacher talk is used to conduct lecturing, give directions, and criticize or justify authority. Then, the indirect teacher talk can be implemented by the teacher for accepting the feeling, praising or encouraging, accepting or using the students' thoughts, and asking questions toward the students. Until nowadays, Flanders' classification related to the types of teacher talk grows to be a fundamental theory acclimatized by hundreds of researchers after him.

To summarize the above explanations related to the term teacher talk used in classroom management, it can be concluded that the urgency of teacher talks for both direct and indirect types in classroom management takes a very crucial position.

Teacher talking time

The second element that influences the implementation of classroom management is the teacher talking time. Furthermore, teacher talking time can be defined as the percentage of teacher's turn to use the language in the process of managing the classroom. Another term that cannot be separated from it is called as students' talking described as the ratio of students' shift to talk in the classroom.

Related to the term teacher talking time, the proportion of it compared to students talking time is still debatable (Fauziati, 2010). However, some scholars are already

proved the significant value of teacher talking time. It can be utilized as the teacher's medium to manage classroom activities. A finding of research conducted by Davies (2011) in Japan says that the implementation of teacher talking time would not decrease the students taking time. Supporting the previous result of the study, teacher talking time shows its positive impact in clarifying the classroom rules (Critchley, 1999). All the classroom instruction should be explained well by the teacher using a clear teacher talking time to make the students accomplish the task given. Besides, teacher talking time can be utilized by the teacher to drag the students' attention on the material given. Additionally, it turns into a beneficial factor when it is heard by the students in the language classroom as the comprehensible input Krashen's (1982) in Fauziati (2010). From the preceding explanation, the positive influences of teacher talking time should be put into priority.

On the one hand, according to Nunan (1999), the practice of students talking time has a close relation to the students' language acquisition. The higher portion of students talking time, the better students' language acquisition will be. Supporting the previous fact, another expert also believes that a good environment for learning language is the environment that provides an opportunity for the students to practice the language (Lier, 2001). The practice of the target language outside the classroom is significantly limited (Paul, 2003). Students are lack of practice and do not have a chance to improve their level of acquisition. Seeing this fact, it can be concluded that the portion of students talking time should be maximized.

Synthesizing the contrastive theory above, students' opportunity to talk in the classroom should be taken into consideration to give the students' opportunity to practice their language. However, concerning the value of teacher talking time and its implication in managing the language classroom, the practice of it is highly recommended. To solve this dilemma, the teacher as the user of teacher talking time should be able to manage her/his turn to talk well. Not only using teacher talking time for the sake of explaining something, but it also can be used as a triggering factor for the students to speak up. When both teachers talking time and students talking time are practiced in such a way, they would not dominate each other but support the use of another element.

Voice management

The third factor that influences classroom management is voice management. This term is described as the teacher's way to speak in the classroom. The voice becomes the teacher's instrument to conduct teaching and learning activities (Fauziati, 2010). Stated by Geng (2011), the teacher's voice can be used as a device to gain the students' attention and build good communication. Here, voice management shows a positive impact in helping the teacher to deal with classroom management.

Furthermore, there are three important points of voice management proposed by Harmer (2005) in Fauziati (2010) that should be taken attention on. They are audibility, variety, and conversation. To have good voice management, the teacher must make certain that the voice produced can be heard by all the students in the classroom. In this case, the voice must be audible. Besides, the teacher is required to adjust the volume of

it to avoid the repulsive condition. Then, the voice produced by the teacher should have altered intonation. High and low intonations bring different meanings to the words spoken. Last, the teacher's voice must be natural such as in daily conservation. It makes a good classroom atmosphere to learn the language.

Understanding the above explanation on voice management, the practice of it to support the implementation of classroom management is highly proposed. The positive value of voice management turns into a constructive element towards classroom management.

Physical presence

The fourth influencing element of classroom management is the teacher's physical presence. According to Fauziati (2010), the phrase is related to the teacher's physical position in the classroom. The teacher should consider where the best position to stand so that all the students can to see her/him. The physical position can be varied during the following activities such as standing when conducts language presentation, sitting and monitoring while the students read, sitting while students carry an activation control, and moving smoothly when students work in a group (Qureshi, 2010) in (Fauziati, 2010).

According to the previous explanation, it can be well understood that every teacher's physical presence position is vital for the proper administration of the class. However, the teacher must wisely choose which physical presence position should be implemented for a certain purpose. By understanding each position's purpose, it is expected that the teacher can manage well all the activities done in the classroom.

Seating arrangement

The fifth influencing element to conduct classroom management is a seating arrangement. The study in Kenya accomplished by Ngware et al. (2013) revealed that seating arrangement influences the students' achievement. Good seating management can optimize learning achievement even for slow students. Another study conducted by Wannarka and Ruhl (2008) also considers seating arrangement as a significant part of the classroom settings. It potentially declines the students' misbehaviour that might diminish the effectiveness of instruction given. The seating arrangement is one of the crucial factors that should be taken into priority when the teacher manages the classroom.

In daily practice, there are five types of seating arrangement according to Harmer (2005) in Fauziati (2010). They are an orderly row, circle or square, horseshoes, and separate table. The first type, orderly row, the chairs are set up like choral drills. By using this setting, the teacher and the whiteboard can be observed easily by all students in the classroom. At the same time, the teacher has a good vision for every student. There are several activities that suitable for this type of seating arrangement such as watching the video, explaining the material in the whiteboard, and explaining the structure. The second type called circle or square is appropriate for small size classrooms. The teacher can place her/himself in the middle of the circle. Therefore,

every student has the same distance toward the teacher. This situation creates a sense of equality among them. The third type is horseshoes which has a similar pattern with the circle shape. However, in this type, there is an open space that is used by the teacher to stand. The next type is called separate tables. This type of seating arrangement is mainly used to manage the class in several smaller groups. Students can work with the same partner in the same group for the whole time. As a result, for some students, the situation will rather monotonous. To avoid this condition, the teacher can change the type of seating arrangement periodically based on what the lesson needs.

Conclusion

The urgency of classroom management is undeniable to be practiced in the English classroom. To materialize good classroom management, five crucial elements of it should be well understood by the teacher. Those five elements are teacher talk, teacher talking time, voice management, physical presence, and seating arrangement. Teacher talk can be defined as teacher language use in the classroom. Then, the teacher talking time is the talking ratio produced by the teacher compare to students' talking time. Next, the teacher's capability to adjust the voice used by the teacher is the description of voice management. The two last elements are a physical presence that refers to the teacher's position while she/he is teaching in the classroom and seating arrangement is how the teacher organizes the students' sit. By explaining those elements, it is expected that the teacher would have a clear understanding of how to practice each element to support excellent classroom management.

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