MOTIVATING VOCATIONAL STUDENTS ON EXPRESSING THEIR ENGLISH USING MULTIMEDIA

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ABSTRACT
This paper is a report of an observation conducted on teaching English to vocational students of a college from time to time, especially on teaching Speaking and Writing. In this era of modern technology, learning English becomes more and more important especially for students from vocational colleges or institutes. Multimedia as one of the products of high technology is able to be used as one of teaching media for motivating students on expressing their English, at least it stimulates students to be eager to speak or write something they think. The most important thing is it depends on the lecturers’ creativity on using the media.

Keywords: vocational students, multimedia, motivation

INTRODUCTION
Nowadays, English is very important because most of companies or job markets always ask for graduates who are able to speak and write English well. Learning-teaching English to English students will be easier than to vocational students because their basic is not English. They learn something else. Vocational students are special, they learn how to do something practical, and they learn something real. But, most of vocational students are not interested in learning English.

Media for learning teaching activities is very important. An English lecturer will not be able to guide his or her students well without having suitable media. There are many kinds of media for guiding students on learning English, but the media may or may not promote learning, depending on how it is used. It is also happened when a lecturer uses multimedia.

Using multimedia stimulate students to a better language learning motivation. Multimedia offers many kinds of pictures (static and motion pictures), graphics, and sounds which can be used to make students more interested on trying to express something using their English. Based on my own experience when I worked at a company, it is my intention on guiding vocational students on mastering English both on written and spoken languages and it is interesting on trying motivating vocational students – that usually lack of mastering English – to be more active on expressing their English using multimedia.

This paper will discuss Motivating Vocational Students on Expressing Their English Using Multimedia. It is divided into three sections, Introduction, Discussion on Language Learning and the Needs of Learning the Language, and the last is Conclusion of the discussion.

Language Learning And The Needs Of Learning The Language
When someone does, studies, or learns something, there must be another thing that he wants to be gained or mastered. When he wants to be able to cook, he will learn how to cook; when he wants to be able to drive a car, he will go to the driving course and learn how to drive properly; etc., and when a graduate wants to get a good job after finishing his or her study, he or she has to fulfill the requirements of being an employee of a company. Unfortunately, English is usually one of the requirements that have to be mastered.

A. Vocational Students and Their Needs of Learning the Language
The problems of teaching English to vocational students are: 1). It is usually done in the first or second semester, and they only have English for two semesters. It is luck if they also have the language practicum for a semester. It will give the students more chances to try expressing or using their English for communication; 2). English in vocational college or school is not one of their vocational subjects; it makes students unaware of the importance of English for their future. They can sing English songs, but sometimes they do not understand the whole meaning of the words; 3). Their lacks of motivation on learning English make them get the difficulty of getting a job, and then they have to take English courses for mastering the language.
There are four skills of learning the language, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They are all important because the skills are related to one another, and for vocational students, the most important skills are speaking and writing because when they enter the real world of what they have studied and learnt at school by understanding and responding the instructions, or maybe they have to give or write some instructions too. The new job market, offering employment, for example, in hotels, hospitals, construction, or manufacturing, welcomes workers with specific occupational skills, and, more importantly, the ability to interact in specialized forms of English (Keith, 1990, p.1).

Speaking and Writing are the active language skills that have to be mastered by vocational students, because when they have graduated, they have to write the application letter and curriculum vitae, and also do the interview in English. Later, after they are accepted as an employee at a company, still they have to use their English on explaining or describing the plan, the job site condition, or some kinds of tools and engines; they have to make reports too.

B. Language Learning in Modern Age

As English is used as one of the international languages, English has become a compulsory component of education in Indonesia. It is chosen because it considered as a useful tool to access world knowledge of science and technology. Most of educational people have known that English is very important to be taught and learnt, and now, it is taught earlier than before in very various age and institution. However, though the importance of English has been recognized, how it is taught can often be questioned (Bui Thi Minh Hong, 2006, p.1). It can be seen that the proficiency in English of graduates still creates disappointment among lecturers themselves as well as parents.

In a traditional English class, the lecturer was the center of all kinds of information and the students listened to the speech. It was happened in the first time I taught vocational students, it was frustrated. The former lecturer gave the students some reading texts and asked them to translate the texts and analyzing what the tenses are in the texts. Then I had to explain the grammar of the tenses.

It is still happening today in some places, but it is better if the lecturers explore and use a better way of teaching. By doing this, students will not only study about the knowledge of the language but also they are able to learn the skills of the language, they are speaking and writing. In this modern age, there are many kinds of media from high technology. Those products will be useful on motivating students to communicate their ideas or opinions, for as we have known before that the objective of learning a language is to be able to make communication or using the language for communication – in certain situations or in daily activities both in written and spoken language.

After teaching for several months, I changed my way of teaching, the materials, and media. I used discussion, but it did not work well. Then I used a series of funny pictures to be told or written, the pictures made them relax and they used their time to speak and write. Based on that experience, I sometimes use pictures, photographs, or body language (pantomime) that deal with their own subjects to build or to prepare their self confidence to have a talk. In my opinion, the most important thing of learning and teaching a language is mastering the language to be used in communication. Spiro, Bereiter, and Brown said that, “A key goal of instruction is to provide opportunities for learners to develop mastery in the areas of life they are each involved in. One important step that learners take in developing that mastery is in building effective mental models”. (1991)

Transforming the role of lecturer in the classroom can be carried out by changing the usage of teaching media. Multimedia is one choices of teaching media, but the lecturer has to be careful on choosing it because there are many kinds of multimedia, like: a). Static media are: photographs, series of pictures, wordless pictures; b), animated pictures are: some clip arts, and engineering pictures. Both static and animated media are effective to be used in learning teaching process for vocational students.

Multimedia; both static and animated; offers colorful pictures and some simulation of its animated interesting schemes or pictures. There are movements on the pictures that show simulation of an industrial process or a machine works. Here are some examples of using multimedia (static and animated) which have been done in my English classes so far; in small class – 12 to 15 students – I am able to ask students to bring pictures or photographs that deal with their subjects to the classroom, ask them to study their own pictures, and ask them to present the story of their pictures in front of the class. If the class is very big – there are usually 60 to 70 students in a class – I ask them to make groups of 3 to 4 students; it needs more time on executing the activities. When one of the students or
groups present or explain the story of their pictures, the other students may say or express their agreement or disagreement, give any other ideas, or ask questions on the topic of the student or group. I let them free on having their time to talk about their topics, no interruptions and corrections when they do their discussion. I usually give the corrections at the end of the class after their presentation. It makes the class more alive. The students make their own conversation based on the topics which are chosen by their friends. In teaching writing, usually, I give them a series of funny pictures or animated engineering pictures or graphs, ask them the names of the objects in the pictures, and ask them to write the story of the pictures.

Learning-teaching English using multimedia is very different with the traditional one. In the traditional English class, it is a teacher centered learning activity; most students are not active – mainly in a very big class. Using multimedia on learning-teaching English makes students more active, relax, and creative because they may use their own imagination and ideas or opinions on interpreting the pictures, graphs and motions. Most of students always try to express their English even they have to look forth and back in their dictionaries on finding the words they want to use for expressing their sentences.

CONCLUSION
A. Findings
In my experience and observation of teaching vocational students, we need more creativity on the way of teaching and choosing teaching media to make students more active on participating their speaking class and eager to try to write sentences using various tenses, sentences, and vocabulary. I found that using multimedia stimulate students to a better language learning motivation, even some of them still have constrain on omitting their shy and developing their self confidence; the students feel free on saying anything they want to say about their pictures or texts. The numbers of students in a class influence the learning-teaching activities for the bigger the class is there would be numbers of students’ language learning strategies such as motivation, gender, and cultural background, also type of task, age, second language stage and learning style. It makes me difficult to get close to all of the students to find out their problems and guiding them on using English for communication.

B. Suggestions
Nothing is perfect in the world, so does multimedia – especially animated pictures. They are simple motion pictures; they are able to interest students to learn to speak, but still the teacher or lecturer is still needed as the one who is able to make the class to be active. For, sometimes, there are of course some disadvantages like limited animated pictures for a certain major that can be downloaded from internet or sometimes the pictures cannot express or give ideas like what we dream of.

REFERENCES