

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Background of the Study

The world is now experiencing numerous stages of social, economical, and demographical transitions. The emerging global economy is very competitive. In this age of technology, information concerning the speedy development in various fields of technology and science is mostly conveyed through electronic media, such as internet.

Globalization and the free trade market have made English extremely important because there is no other language that has wide - spread use throughout the world. It is inevitable that Indonesia, as a developing country, is in need of the English language as information concerning advanced technology and science is conveyed in English:

One of the basic problems in foreign language teaching is to prepare learners to be able to use the language. There are some needs and be able to do in order to speak in another language, one needs to know how to articulate sounds in a comprehensible manner, one needs an adequate vocabulary, and one needs to have mastery of syntax. These variations add up to linguistic competence. However, while linguistic competence is necessary, it is not sufficient for someone who wants to communicate competently in another language.

The teaching of English as a foreign language in Indonesia is not much different from foreign language teaching in many others parts of the world. In Indonesia, the unsatisfactory results of the teaching of English as a foreign

language have been widely recognized. A survey conducted by the Department of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (2003: 17) has reported that teachers (95.4 % of public and 91.9% of private schools teachers) admitted that the English instruction has been unsuccessful.

Many colleges in Medan now demand their students to be able to communicate in English. So, they make syllabus on their college that English is taught since the first semester until eighth semester. The researcher is one of the English teachers in the college. Not only the researcher has difficultness to teach the students but also another English teacher. However, so far the approach to deal with these concerns has been focused on methodology rather than on more fundamental issues derived from linguistic studies.

Teachers and educators tend to identify the methodology as the scapegoat. The old method is replaced with a new one, and the introduction of a new method is intended to correct the previous one.

However, in the transitional period, teachers are often blinded by the newness of the method instead of critically reviewing whether the unsatisfactory learning outcomes do in fact relate to methodological problems (see Hubbard, Jones, Thornton and Wheeler, 1983).

Being concerned with the communicative competence of students, for example, English educators then turned to the communicative approach did not culminate in evaluation process of the skills that the approach was supposed to aim at. This problem is evident in the national final evaluation and university

entrance test, which still emphasize structural knowledge rather than communicative skills.

Modern language pedagogy emphasizes a focus on meaning over form as the best path toward communicative competence and accuracy (Bran and Cadlin, 1980; Widdowson: 1978). The Communicative Language Teaching lesson centered on giving students opportunities to practice using the communicative function of making predictions. In these approaches rather than "learning to use English," students "use English to learn it" (Howart: 1984). Content – based language teaching provides an important means of achieving this focus on meaning (Crandall: 1987; Swain: 1999). Context can come from a variety of sources, such as personal matters, e.g., students' favorite music and food, occupational areas as in language for specific purposes, e.g., future engineers reading about engineering, and global issues, e.g., peace, human rights, and environmental education (Cates: 1990).

Tasks refer to activities carried out in the classroom by students who use the target language in ways that relate to what they might have to do outside the classroom. As students work on purposeful tasks, they are engaging in meaningful activities which focus on meaning and comprehensibility of the language, these may enhance their learning (Foster and Skehan: 1996). For example, a teacher may assign students to do a summary because they may encounter such a task in their real academic life, and so they are engaging in meaningful activities.

Because of those reasons, the researcher is interested to conduct a research to find out the effectiveness of these two instructions, content and task based instructions on students' communicative competence.

1.2. The Problem of the Study

Based on the background which is given above, this study will investigate the use of content – based instruction and task – based language teaching in teaching English class. It means that the study will investigate the ongoing English teaching without content and task based approaches as its basic measurement. Based on the notion, the problem of the study can be stated in the following questions:

1. Do the content – based instruction and task – based language teaching significantly affect student's communicative competence?
2. Which of the content – based instruction and task – based language teaching is the more effective to the student's communicative competence?

1.3. The Scope of the Study

There are a lot approaches that teachers can use in enhancing the students competence in English especially in communication. But in this case the writer just focuses her research on the use of two teachings, they are content – based instruction and task – based language teaching. These two teachings are teachings that can help the students to learn English in a good and relax situation.

1.4. The Objectives of the Study

In carrying out the research, it is necessary to state what are the objectives of this study clearly. Otherwise, this research will be useless and only wasting the time. So the objectives of this study are:

1. To find out whether the content – based instruction and task – based language teaching significantly affect students' communicative competence
2. To find out and make sure whether the content – based instruction or task based language teaching is more effective on students' communicative competence

1.5. The Significance of the Study

This research findings are expected to be useful for English teachers to improve students' communicative competence and also for further researchers concerning with language use and teaching learning research.

This study is expected to provide information, which may have practical as well as theoretical values for English language teacher. Theoretically, the result of the study will add what has been found in the area of English teaching in foreign language. Meanwhile, practically the result of this study will inform English language teachers in their attempts to decide which of the best method and approach in enhancing the student's communicative competence.