

Implementation of Stages of McCourt's Teacher Man in Speaking for Discussion

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Abstract:- The aims of this study is to investigate how literary work written by Frank McCourt entitled *Teacher Man* applied his teaching method that can be implemented in a group discussion in English lesson in lights of the theories of group discussion. Problem Based Learning (PBL) is used as starting point in this research. The researcher collected qualitative data by using observation and taking notes. The respondents were 16 students of Muhammadiyah Surabaya University registered in Speaking for Discussion Class 2022-2023. More than a half of students were be be able to express their opinion in Speaking, they were brave to develop their opinion in discussion class but some of them felt hard to follow. It concluded that implementing McCourt stage in speaking for discussion is bring positive vibes in speaking class and students could speak english better using discussion in pairs.

Keywords:- *Speaking; McCourt; Discussion; Teacher Man.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Speaking English is a communication tool and medium in English Education Study Program, but many students do not have the sense and willingness to use it in the classroom activity. They have no idea in discussing something or developing the opinion even the confuse to talk about. There are many difficulties of speaking English as written by Wendi (2008:3) in Astiti (2012:2) states that the students' speaking difficulties could be caused by inside and outside factors. The inside factors are certain lacks such as lack of self-confidence and lack of motivation which could make students feel ashamed to speak, scared to make mistakes, and have no confidence. Meanwhile, the outside factor is related to the teacher and it was strengthened by Larzarton in Celce-Murcia (2001: 103) that the students are unable to handle the several demands of learning activities at once and are not prepared for actual conversation.

The tendency is obviously marked as waiting other students to respond to the requests, questions, friends' presentation. There is a cultural perspective affected the student's unwillingness to speak in the EFL classroom.

Cultural perceptions are at play right from the beginning of the language acquisition process. The expectations in terms of how much language and in what order it should be acquired are also determined by the culture in which the child is reared. The unwillingness to participate in discussion was also found not only in this class but also in several researches conducted by Ilyas (2022) entitled Exploring University Students' Willingness to Communicate and Unwillingness to Communicate in EFL, Muroya (2023) Interpreting unwillingness to speak L2 English by Japanese EFL learners, and Ramli et al (2021) Factors of Students' Willingness and Unwillingness to Speak English in the Classroom. These three up to date research coined that the inside factors have a very important role to make students gain success in learning a language.

Therefore, new strategy must be utilized. Since the researchers' expertise is English Literature, a literary work was used as the assistance to help students willing to start producing words and sentences in English. There are genuinely many Literary Works which focused on Teaching, the researchers functioned Teacher Man written by Frank McCourt in 2005. This literary work actually is a memoir and reflection of Frank McCourt when he was younger. There were three reasons why the researchers used Speaking for discussion is one of the compulsory subjects in English Education Study Program. It is the second stage after Speaking for Daily Activity and one stage below Speaking for Debate. Much of the literature points out that students who are actively participating in classroom settings will perform better than those who are not (Billings & Halstead; Nunn 1996; Tinto, 1997).

Fear of peer disapproval is found to be a powerful influence on student participation in the classroom (Weaver & Qi, 2005). Student participation is closely observed by their classmates. Student-Student interactions in the classroom, although mostly silent, can have a powerful effect on decreasing participation (Weaver & Qi; Howard & Henney, 1998). Thus, this article is aimed at implementing stages of McCourt's Teacher Man in Speaking for Discussion.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

➤ *The Crucial Part of English in Communication*

Language was used by people to convey their thoughts, feelings, and opinions. English has become an international language which is used by most of people in the world. People will be able to interact with others from various countries by studying English. English is the first foreign language in Indonesia. Students from Indonesia will be given English subject as a compulsory subject in every school so Indonesian will be familiar with this foreign language. In the English subject, we will find four skills which are divided into two kinds of skills. The first one is receptive skill, it is also known as passive skill which consists of reading and listening. In this kind of skill the students are listening and reading to understand the material. Meanwhile, productive skill also known as active skill, it refers to skill which relates to produce language, speaking and writing are included in this skill (Aisyah, 2016).

Speaking is the first to be acquired in the process of language production. In parallel, the absence of communication apprehension and the presence of willingness to communicate are the essential prerequisites for stringing words together. Creatures of the same species communicate with one another in various ways. Man is of no exception. Speaking is among the most important features of human race which makes them such unique beings. Within the field of second or foreign language learning, it is believed that foreign language learners should first decide what they want to say. Next, by using appropriate structures and vocabulary, they will be able to express their ideas in a target language. The process of speaking, however, is much more complex than what it may seem at the first glance (Husna, 2019).

As a part of language learning, it is of the basic needs of any English as a foreign language learner to know how to speak and how to communicate orally. Thus, it is essential for every classroom to spend time on individuals' speaking performance and oral communication (Husna, 2019). Speaking, writing, reading, and listening are the four abilities in learning English that students must acquire. One of important skills that students must learn is speaking. Having a good skill at speaking in language learning is very essential (Richard and Roger, 1986). The speaking skill is very important for their life. Students need to develop their speaking or communication skills as speaking allows them to learn to express themselves and adapt to certain social conditions and cultural rules (Kayi, 2006).

In the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language, the active participation of students in the classroom plays an important role in acquiring the target language. As claimed by Lightbown and Spada (2006) that when the students participate orally with the teachers or among their peers in the classroom it means that they are forced to be involved in the negotiation of meaning. It means that whenever the students reply to the teachers or their peers' questions and give comments, they are able to express and clarify their intentions, thoughts and opinions which are essential to language acquisition.

➤ *The Students' Unwillingness To Practice In Speaking*

In fact, as the students do not often converse in English, most of them find it challenging to master speaking abilities. Although the students appear to be quiet in speaking class, their active participation is crucial. All the language skills are requiring active engagement in class, especially in speaking. It is important to teach speaking to students, because through speaking they can express and learn to adapt in certain social condition (Kayi, 2006). So as a teacher they should teach speaking in a good way, especially choose a method which suitable with the students.

Wendi (2008:3) in Astiti (2012:2) stated that there are many difficulties of speaking English, and it could be caused by internal and external factors. The internal factors are specific deficiencies such as lack of self-confidence and lack of motivation, which can make students feel embarrassed about speaking, afraid of making mistakes, and lose confidence. Meanwhile, the external factor is related to the teacher and it was strengthened by Larzarton in Celce-Murcia (2001: 103) that the students are unable to handle the several demands of learning activities at once and are not prepared for actual conversation.

➤ *Materials from Literary Works*

There are many methods that teachers can use when teaching speaking, one of them is using group discussions. In fact, discussion is a familiar activity for most teenagers. Implementing this method in a classroom is not difficult. One of the reasons why many people recommend the discussion method is because it can develop not only students' speaking skills, but also creative problem-solving, reflective thinking, application, and evaluation skills. Kildsvatter (1996:242) stated that small group discussions that divide large classrooms into smaller groups of students to achieve specific goals give students more responsibilities for their own learning, develop social and leadership skills and become involved in an alternative instructional approach. The students should make several groups contains 3-6 students, and each group must discuss one topic which is different with other group. The positive effect of group discussion is to provide an opportunity for students to become more actively engaged in learning and for teacher to monitor students' progress better, it can also enhance students' cooperation and social skills (Ornstein, 2000).

In an average classroom of 40 students, only about 10 will participate in the classroom activities. Of those, 5 will dominate the discussion (Weaver & Qi). Karp and Yoels (1976), as cited in Weaver and Qi, referred to this common pattern of participation as the "Consolidations of responsibility." By the third week of class, students know who they can rely on to carry the discussion responsibility of the group, and the others will become passive observers (Howard & Henney, 1998). A successful discussion is one in which as many students as possible contribute as much as they can (Penny, 1998: 3). The characteristic of a successful discussion is the apparent motivation of the participants: their attention to the speaker(s), their expression that they are reacting to the humor, seriousness, or difficulty of the ideas being expressed. Students who actively participate in

classroom activities and discussions tend to learn more than those who do not (Nunn, 1996; Weaver & Qi, 2005).

This research attempt to investigate how Frank McCourt in *Teacher Man* applied his teaching method that can be implemented in a group discussion in English lesson in lights of the theories of group discussion. In this study, using discussion for teaching speaking will be focused on the way of the teacher used the group discussion and find what the teacher's reasons in using group discussion to teach speaking are.

➤ *The Teacher Man*

Teaching experienced by Frank McCourt is chosen as source of implementation in learning speaking for discussion. Frank McCourt job is teacher at several schools in the United States. McCourt himself is an Irish-born man who migrated to the United States to achieve what is called the "American Dream". McCourt decided to pursue a career as a teacher after experiencing financial difficulties in pursuing several jobs. McCourt decided to finish his studies and apply as a teacher at a vocational school in America.

In his memoir McCourt stated clearly "If young people want to become teachers they should be encouraged and not intimidated by examiners who seemed to think Santayana was the center of the universe" (McCourt, 2005: 52). McCourt's statement shows that there is justification for understanding the ideal teacher concept where the examiners indirectly imply that they are the benchmark for the ideal teacher concept by putting pressure on new teachers during the interview process. What the examiners do is of course contrary to the ideal concept of the teacher which implies that the concept is not static but dynamic in nature with the times.

McCourt uses several approaches to attract students' interest in learning in his class by telling his past experiences and the cultural differences he experienced in his home country and in the United States. McCourt's learning method is through what he calls "story telling". Initially many students questioned McCourt's method, but in the end the students began to enjoy their classes with McCourt. The enthusiasm of the students was shown when McCourt succeeded in increasing the desire of the students in his class to make an assignment called "Excuse Note". The students were very enthusiastic about the assignments given by McCourt and they did the assignments happily. McCourt examined the work given to the students and concluded that they are fluent, imaginative, persuasive, useful, dramatic, and focused.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

The Research took place in English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surabaya. The respondents were 16 students of English Education Departement. They registered in Speaking for Discussion Class 2022-2023. The data were collected starting from September 17th 2022 until December 17th 2022. Those 16 students were based on lottery every meeting, so their partner will be distinct for each

meeting. Every student was paired by having the same stage taken from *Teacher Man*. These two students then were collaboratively working to discuss same stage then they were urged to create one theme to be presented then discussion endures for 45 minutes for each session starting from the third meeting.

The method used in this research is Problem Based Learning (PBL). Gregory, Kemmis and McTaggart (in Richard, 2000:12) says that action research is used to refer to teacher-initiated classroom investigation that aim to improve teachers' comprehension of teaching and learning in the classroom, and to bring about change in classroom practices. It is strengthened by Stringer (2007:1) that PBL is a systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday lives.

The researcher collected qualitative data by using observation and taking notes. Observation is observing and carefully recording events, incidents, or class interactions, both as participants in the class (participatory observation) and as observers of other class teachers (non-participant observation). The information gained from the observation will be concerned with the teacher's reason in applying group discussion, and also the teacher's obstacle when applying the group discussion. Field notes, recording and logs or journals can be combined with observation. Field notes are descriptions of observed events, including non-verbal information, physical settings, group structures, interaction between participants. In analyzing the data, the researcher took some notes about the situation when the group discussion was applied. In addition, the field note will comprise the material, the students' responses, the technique, and the teaching and learning process. The data was compared and analyze with the theories of group discussion, then the researcher made a conclusion from the analysis in the form of descriptive explanation in this study.

IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

A. *Discussion Based Learning*

By getting to the literature, McCourt hopes to keep a lesson alive. He wants her students to participate in the teaching and learning process by discussing poetry, plays, essays, novels, and other works.

You can't wait to get to the literature. You'll have lively discuss cons about poems, plays, essays, novels, short stories. The hands of one hundred and seventy students will quiver in the air and they'll call out. Mr. McCourt, me, me, I wanna say something. You hope they'll want to say something. You don't want them to sit gawking while you struggle to keep a lesson alive (McCourt, 2005: 5).

The quotation above showed that a lively participation occurs when the students and teachers had the agreement of what should be done during the semester. This functions as the contract between Teacher and Students. Teacher demonstrates what the output which the student have to

accomplish and students understand what they are going to have.

B. Variety Learning Style

McCourt has a distinct teaching approach. He is singing in class to pique the interest of his students. His learning style can be identified as a new learning style.

I sing. The next day, I tell the class that I have a song they'll enjoy, a tongue-twister, and here it is: The bog down in the valley, Oro the nattlin' bog Oro the rattlin' bog, the valley bog O. And there was a tree in that bog, a rare tree, a rattlin' tree, and the tree in the bog and the bog down in the valley O. We sang verse after verse, and they giggled as they struggled to wrap their tongues around the words, and wasn't it wonderful to see that instructor up there singing? Man, school should be like this every day, with us writing excuse cards and teachers suddenly singing for no apparent reason. I thought there was enough information in human history to fill millions of excuse notes. Everyone, sooner or later, requires an excuse. Furthermore, if we sang today, why not sing tomorrow? You don't need a reason to sing. I just wanted to say that that lesson, that project, whatever you were doing in there was fantastic. Top-notch. That's exactly what we need, young man, that kind of down-to-earth instruction. Those students were writing at the collegiate level. He then turns to face the principal and says. That youngster who wrote Judas an excusing note, Brilliant. But I have a few of reservations. I'm not sure if drafting apology notes for nasty or criminal persons is justified or prudent, but then again, isn't that what lawyers do? And based on what I've observed in your class, you may have some bright future lawyers. So, all I want to do is shake your hand and encourage you not to be shocked if your file has a note attesting to your enthusiastic and imaginative teaching. (McCourt, 2005: 90).

C. Research Learning

McCourt teach his student a research paper and he let them to select a topic, engage in basic research, make notes, and so on.

This course involves a research paper, and I am teaching it. The student must be able to choose a topic, conduct basic research, take notes on index cards so that the instructor can figure out where the information came from, and give scholarly footnotes and a bibliography of primary and secondary sources. I take my pupils to the library so that the friendly librarian can show them how to discover information and use the fundamental research tools. They pay attention to her, exchange glances, and whisper in Spanish and French, but when she asks if they have any questions, they stare, embarrassed the librarian, who is eager to assist. (McCourt, 2005: 117).

During the research, there were 16 meetings conducted by respondents and teachers. Teacher applied the 3 stages of McCourt for every meeting, in the 9 times meetings they hold discussions related to poetry, novels, plays, research and also stage of teacher man below. At the last meeting they reflected and shared how they felt after implementing McCourt's stage. In the discussion, a rule was made if there were students who did not use English, they had to sing English songs as a punishment. Below is a table containing the topics discussed at the 3rd meeting. The first column contains the names of students who discussed with peers, it takes randomly so the partner which they will discuss will have changed every meeting. In the second column is the topic they chose for discussion at the meeting. The third column is the topic they created which is taken from stages. Every student has to create one topic for being done as a discussion material in the next meeting. The table is displays as follow:

Table 1 The Topic Taken from Mccourt Stages

Students	Stages of Teacher Man	Proposed Speaking Theme Discussion Based on Teacher Man
Firaz Y.R.M & Annisa H.P	"The Early University Life in Ireland"	The Initial Life as Students"
		"The Beginning of 4 Year Friendship"
Dani R.H & Achmad T.H	"The Move to USA"	"Hectic Moments before Going to New Place"
		"New Dreamt Place to Live in"
Avionilia T & Restu A.A	"The Different culture of Teaching University Students in Ireland compared to Vocational Students in USA"	"Levels of Critical Thinking in University"
		"Students' Freedom to Learn and Study in University"
Elmira I & Naurah A.N	"The Different culture of Teaching students in Ireland and USA"	"Difficulties of Teaching in new Places"
		"Cultural Arrangements in new Class"
Sofia D.A & Dinda N.S.S	"The Use of Neglecting Grammar in Speaking"	"Boosting Confidence by Doing Free Speech"
		"The Importance of Imperfect Grammar for Communication"
Ahmad R & Elma L	"The Use of Singing Selected Songs"	"The Love Song Materials in Classroom Activity"
		"Tone and Rhyme in Songs in Learning English"
Muhammad A.R & Rahmad K	"The Use of Watching Selected Movies"	"Learning Accents from Movies"
		"The Love Song Materials in Classroom Activity"
Candra M & Hani S	"Confrontation with Senior Teachers"	"The Energetic Youngsters Versus Experienced Seniors"
		"Types of Confrontation in Work Space"

➤ *In the last meeting the students give feedback or output for discussion they have done. The whole feedback are as follows:*

• *Firaz Y.R.M. :*

“I was first in UMSurabaya, I did not have courage to initiate friendship all the more speaking english. But after joining little discussion i dare to speak in many people”

• *Annisa H.P.:*

“I am happy to join the speaking english discussion by implementing McCourt Stage because i can freely express my opinion with my partner”

• *Dani R.H.:*

“I personally am extrovert person. So it is okey to speak in private like this discussssion or in front of many people”

• *Achmad T.H.:*

“Actually i have difficulties in speaking english, furthermore the topic in stages of McCort is hard for me. In other hand, this is small discussion so i”

• *Avionilia T.:*

“I feel there is no significant difference, it all depends on how each student can gain the freedom to express their thought”

• *Restu A.A.:*

“it turns out that the way of teaching can be different, I feel that freedom of thought here is there”

• *Elmira I.:*

“I thank to the teacher that have implemented the stage of mcCourt in speaking for discussion because i am driven to speak, then i push my self to think and be brave to speak english”

• *Naurah A.N.:*

“Naturally and conciously i feel i can develop my speaking ability because every meeting i have to think and discuss the different topic that makes me practice english a lot”

• *Sofia D.A.:*

My favorite topic is topic from Ahmad entitled “The Love Song Materials in Classroom Activity” because i do love english song so much! I am very excited in every meeting of discussion”

• *Dinda N.S.S.:*

“Actually i am anxiety every begin the speaking for discussion class because i am too shy to talk, but when the class running my fear is naturally dissappear”

• *Ahmad R.:*

“I like english but its hard for me to speak, day by day as far as joining speaking for disscussion class and through implementing the stage from mcCourt, i feel my speaking is better”

• *Elma L.:*

“I like the topic of this discussion, so it adds new knowledge for me”

• *Muhammad A.R.:*

“Interestingly enough, I came to know how to effectively deal with my peer opinion in a new diverse topic”

• *Rahmad K.:*

“Actually I'm an introvert, so it's quite difficult for me to respond to how all my friends discuss free speech with each other”

• *Candra M.:*

“A topic that is relevant enough to be discussed, bearing in mind that many of us communicate in everyday language that does not conform to the rules”

• *Hani S.:*

“Very interesting, it turns out that many of my friends use this method in delivering material so that it is fun and easier to accept”

From the feedback given by students, it can be seen that most of them give positive statements. They shared naturally what they have done in discussion through topic they take in McCourt stage and also topic they create by themselves. More than a half of students are be be able to express their opinion in Speaking, they are brave to develop their opinion in discussion class but some of them feel hard to follow. It concluded that implementing McCourt stage in speaking for discussion is bring positive vibes in speaking class and students can speaking english better using discussion in pairs.

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