

ABSTRACT

One way of acquiring the speaking skill, states Halliday (1964: 252), is through experience of using the language in real situations. To enable students to experience the language actively in the conversation class activities, a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere is needed. It is the teacher's responsibility to provide students with sufficient motivation and guidance in order to make students feel at home.

Based on the explanation above, the writer tried to carry out a research of one of the first year students' speaking classes. For the research, the writer carried out a survey and she also distributed a questionnaire to the students in the speaking class. The research was meant to enable the writer to see the 'real' situations which took place when the conversation activities were held. The writer tried to find out the students' feelings, likes and dislikes, and their reactions toward the teacher's techniques of teaching.

From the research, it was found out that the students tended to feel bored and uninterested in joining the activities. It seemed that they needed a more active role in the activities rather than acting like parrots and listeners. Although they required a more active role, most of them tended to feel afraid and shy when they were to present dialogues in front of the class. From the facts above, we can see that the teacher's techniques of teaching did not work well, except when there were native speakers in the class. The native speakers helped the teacher create a more lively atmosphere, for they provided the students with the 'real' voice, pronunciation, and facial expressions.

The impossibility for the teacher to provide a

native speaker in every meeting period made the lessons tend to be dull and boring for the students. The situation encourages the writer to suggest an alternative which might help the teacher to provide a more comfortable classroom atmosphere, that is the use of pictures. As an inexpensive and easy-to-find instructional aid, pictures can be an effective tool for language teachers to provide students with a less formal learning situation which stimulates students to release their shyness and anxiety so that they can learn using the language actively.

The use of pictures in conversation class activities may give some advantages. First, it helps teachers avoid verbalism; teachers do not have to talk too much so that they provide students with more opportunities to speak. Secondly, it enables teachers to provide students with images of the every-day life of the people whose language they are learning. The use of pictures also enables teachers to change the subjects of conversation rapidly. They do not have to talk too much in order to make students understand the situation. Pictures help students focus their attention and avoid boredom. With pictures, teachers can provide students with an interesting atmosphere in the classroom.

Teachers' as well as students' creativity and imagination will maintain the effectiveness of the use of pictures in a conversation class. Without teachers' and students' creativity and imagination, pictures, as an instructional aid, will not work well.