

SHORT DIALOGUES MEMORIZATION TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY

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Submitted: 2021-09-22

Accepted: 2021-10-26

Abstract: This research aimed at improving students' speaking ability using a short dialogue memorization technique. It was a classroom action research. The study was conducted in a cyclic process, starting from planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. It was implemented in two cycles. The subjects of this research were the elementary level students from Timothy English School, Sintang. The study found out that the implementation of the short dialogue memorization technique has improved the active involvement of the students in class. The students also improved their speaking ability well. In the first cycle, only some students participated in class actively, and most of them were very active in the second cycle. Referring to the data, more than half of the students got higher score in each aspect. Compared with Cycle 1, Cycle 2 was dominated by the students who got a score of 3 in each aspect, while Cycle 1 was dominated by the students who got score 2 and 1. Almost all students passed the criteria of success, 65. Therefore, the teachers were recommended to improve the students' speaking ability using short dialogue memorization technique.

Keywords: short-dialogue memorization; speaking ability; teaching technique

INTRODUCTION

As an international tool of communication, English is used for various purposes in such fields as bureaucracy, academics, social and cultural concerns, business, and religion (Lumettu & Runtuwene, 2018). The students learning English in Sintang speak English only during the teaching-learning process; they do not have the people around who speak English to practice with (Sudarsono, 2018). The students participating in the present research lacked confidence and were afraid of mistake-taking risks in learning English speaking.

Due to the absence of people speaking English outside the class, the students require some schoolmates to practice speaking in English with. By having other students, they can share vocabulary to support their speaking in English. With a reasonable speaking skill, the students get facilitated with the oral productive language skill to express ideas, commands, requests, arguments, opinions and the likes (Anugraini & Manurung, 2020). One of the difficulties that the students encountered in speaking English concerned asking and giving an opinion.

With partners, the students that learn to speak English may increase their confidence to have an oral interaction (Anugraini & Manurung, 2020). To enable them to communicate well, an appropriate language teaching and learning strategy needs to employ. Paudel (2019) refers a language learning strategy to an attempt "to develop linguistic, communicative, discourse and

sociolinguistic competences in the target language that is by employing various and appropriate learning strategies they can enhance all round growth and development in language and language use”. The teachers and the students apply a particular learning strategy to make the students learn the language “easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations” (Oanh & Hien, 2006).

The present research implemented a short dialogue memorization to teach speaking ability to the students. Memorizing refers to “the process of establishing information in memory ... [and] ... to the conscious processes” (Richards, Platt, and Platt cited in Oanh & Hien, 2006). As a learning strategy, a short dialogue memorization is advantageous for the students because memorization is powerful to draw better attention that the students require to have a stronger linkage between the language learning and practice developing (Oanh & Hien, 2006).

Through this learning strategy, the students may be encouraged and motivated well for a better skill (Ariffin, Abdullah, Suliaman, & Ahmad, 2013). Boredom in English speaking practice may be reduced, too. Therefore, it is significant to improve the students’ English speaking skill by applying a short dialogue memorization technique through classroom action research.

Dialogue memorization is a technique to encourage students to speak by providing them with a short conversation between two people. To complete the activity, they need to memorize their partner's line. Hanson (2010) claims that for the students who want to have a higher skill of speaking, they must have time to memorize during the speaking activities. The students with good memorization are potential to acquire the target language well and the students with poor memorization may have significant constraints in performing the speaking ability (Oanh & Hien, 2006).

Short dialogue memorization is beneficial for the students. It represents honest communication in which the students can learn and use the language correctly and appropriately; a number of students can apply dialogues in various learning and teaching activities and this technique is suitable to teach the intermediate and the advanced level of students; through a short dialogue, the students could memorize the lesson, content, and diction of the dialogue easily; a short dialogue provides the students with listening and speaking activities; and through a short dialogue, the students can practise pronunciation and grammar in a context. In addition, they can master and memorize more vocabulary without fear of making mistakes, too.

The short dialogue memorization technique can make the students write while they

complete the speaking activity to reach the learning goal. A number of studies reported that the dialogue memorization technique could improve the students' speaking ability (see Amu, Said, & Mashuri, 2015; Nina, 2016; Chen, Yang, & Lin, 2016; Putri, Delfi, & Jismulatif, 2017; Hoque, 2018; Anugraini & Manurung, 2020). These studies showed that this technique succeeded in improving the students' speaking ability. Unfortunately, such a research topic has not been conducted in Sintang. Thus, this gap was the niche of the present research.

METHOD

The present research is classroom action research. It is a systematic approach to improve the teaching practices in class (Patria, Sudarsono, & Rosnija, 2020). This type of research aims to improve teaching practice, understanding of the practice by practitioners, and how the practice occurs. The classroom action research design is cyclical that covers planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting (Kemmis & McTaggart cited in All, 2010). The number of cycles depends on the result of reflection in each cycle.

The data were collected through a direct observation. It covered the observation to the behaviors of the teachers and the students during the teaching-learning process. The data were gathered with a measurement technique, as well.

The tool to do the observation was a checklist. It was to record the activities of the teachers and the learners during the cycles. The instrument to measure the improvement of the students' speaking ability was an oral test. It was a closed-question type and distributed at the end of each cycle. A small interview to some students was employed to ask whether the short dialogue memorization technique was functional to run the speaking activities. The test was organized before doing the first cycle to have the students' speaking ability as the benchmark and after Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 to measure the improvement after having the actions in class.

The scoring rubric was used to compute the students' fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar in speaking. This rubric was applied in the cycle to measure the ability of the students in performing a short dialogue. To compute the result of the observation, the following formula was applied.

$$P = (\sum X/N) * 100\%$$

Legends:

P = Percentage of score

$\sum x$ = The score result observation

N = the number of the participating students

The present research came to an end when the test result met the defined criteria of learning success defined by the school.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The first cycle included three meetings. It started from planning, implementation, action, to reflection. In the planning stage, the researcher developed the lesson plan and designed the instructional materials and media. The instructional materials dealt with the dialogues about asking and giving an opinion. The lesson plan was developed for three meetings to run the first cycle and one meeting for the second cycle. The teacher explained the materials about the expressions in a short dialogue of asking and giving an opinion in the first meeting. The activities in designing the lesson plan covered selecting the topic, as well as preparing the instructional materials and media.

The class in the first meeting was run in three stages. They were pre-speaking, whilst-speaking and post-speaking. In the pre-speaking stage, the teacher asked the students to open the relevant page in the textbook. On this page, five dialogues were available. They were the expressions of asking and giving an opinion. Acting as the model, the teacher read the first dialogue. Then, he wrote some mispronounced words on the whiteboard and showed how to pronounce them correctly. In the whilst-speaking stage, the students were given four dialogues to memorize. The teacher explained about what activities the students were required to do. In the post-speaking, the students were instructed to perform the dialogue in front of the class. They performed the dialogue step by step when they did not succeed in memorizing or remembering the given dialogues. The teacher called the students in pairs randomly to perform the dialogues in front of the class. Working in pairs or groups enables the students to do their tasks enthusiastically (Patria, Sudarsono, & Rosnija (2020); Darmadi, Sudarsono, & Regina (2019), to take part in practicing the patterns, and creating the dialogues as well as the settings (Paudel, 2019).

Following the recommendation proposed by Darmadi, Sudarsono, & Regina (2019), the other students were instructed to keep memorizing the dialogue to prepare their turn. Thus, the class was boisterous because the students competed for performing the dialogues. Hoque (2018) argues, "... consistent and challenging exercise is the key to staying brain fit ... [and functions as] a very useful way to work out our brain for better mental health." They were enthusiastic to perform the conversations. Unfortunately, the students failed to complete all dialogues because of the time. After the students performed the conversations, the teacher let the students discuss the mispronounced words.

In the second meeting, similar texts with the different contents were delivered to the students to develop their diction or vocabulary. In the pre-speaking stage, the teacher distributed five dialogues to the students, and asked them to examine the concerned dialogues. The teacher, acting as the model, read the first dialogue and asked the students to repeat the first dialogue since repeating is a significant instrument that children need to have (Hoque, 2018). After that, the teacher questioned the students whether they encountered the words in the dialogues challenging to master.

In the whilst-speaking stage, the teacher initiated to explain about the lesson to enable the students to memorize the given dialogues for 15 minutes. The teacher prepared the dialogues on the orange cards and placed the pictures related to the conversations on the desk. While the students were memorizing the conversations, the teacher walked around, monitoring the students' learning activities.

In the post-speaking stage, the students were instructed to perform the dialogues in front of the class. If they failed to memorize or remember the given dialogues, the students were permitted to perform the dialogue step by step. The teacher, then, invited the students in pairs randomly to see whether or not the students performed the task in front of the class enthusiastically and successfully.

It was identified that most students were shy, kept silent, got confused, and lacked of confidence in a discussion. They did not improve their speaking ability yet. Their mark was still under the minimum score of learning mastery defined by the school, namely, 65, categorized as "good". The students with such factors as feeling shy, keeping silent, getting confused, and lacking confidence during their learning process may fail in their learning (Anugraini & Manurung, 2020; Patria, Sudarsono, & Rosnija, 2020).

In Cycle 1, two students performed the task very well, categorized "very good"; one student did well, and seven students did so so. It indicated that the average score did not match the criteria of success yet in learning English. Thus, the application of the short dialogue memorization technique has not improved the speaking class activities, and the researcher was required to do another cycle.

In the second cycle, the class finished in two meetings. New attempts were introduced in this cycle, for example, reducing the length and the numbers of conversations to remember that were offered in Cycle 1.

There were two meetings in this cycle. The researcher still kept using similar media as in the first cycle. However, the materials were different from those delivered in Cycle 1. The

focus of Cycle 2 was on the conversation practice and pronunciation drill.

In the first stage, the teacher asked the students to pronounce the words that they mispronounced in the previous meeting. After that, the teacher instructed the students to request and to deliver an opinion in the proper pronunciation. In the second stage, the students memorized the relevant dialogues for 15 minutes. While the students were memorizing the dialogues, the teacher walking around the class, monitoring the students. In the third stage, the students performed the dialogues in front of the class. The students were allowed twice to perform the dialogues. After that, the other students gave comments on whether or not the relevant students pronounced words correctly and performed the dialogue fluently.

In this cycle, the teacher found the students show improvement in speaking. Firstly, most students showed higher motivation in speaking. Secondly, they were more active in participating the teaching and learning process. Thirdly, they were more confident in speaking English in class. Fourthly, they conversed in English more fluently. Lastly, the students had a conversation in English more accurately.

Furthermore, based on the observation checklist stated in the lesson plan, the students participated the class actively and responded the actions in class enthusiastically. Active and enthusiastic participation in a cyclical activity leads the students to a learning success (Patria, Sudarsono, & Rosnija, 2020). The teaching-learning process was deemed a success because more than 75% of the students achieved a score of 3.00, categorized "good" in their speaking activities. In the first cycle, there were only 3 students scoring 65, categorized as "good", and seven students ≥ 65 or failed.

In the first cycle, the students were passive in class and had low motivation in learning English. They were afraid of making mistakes. However, their involvement improved in Cycle 2. All of the students were engaged actively and enthusiastically in the learning activities. If the students are not shy to discuss their learning difficulties in class, the students are potential to succeed in improving their speaking ability (Patria, Sudarsono, & Rosnija, 2020; Oanh & Hien, 2006)

Based on the scores that the students achieved, more than half of the students got a higher score in each aspect. Compared with Cycle 1, Cycle 2 was dominated by the students scoring 3 in each aspect, while Cycle 1 was dominated by the students who got scores of 2 and 1. Almost all students got the score of 65 and above, showing that they passed the criteria of learning success. From the result of the second cycle, all aspects that belonged to the indicators of learning success in implementing the Short Dialogue Memorization Technique got improved, and the implementation of the second action satisfied the criteria of success. This finding was supported by Hoque (2018) claiming that Short Dialogue Memorization Technique can solve

the problems that the students encountered in speaking activities because the students that are taught through memorization frequently succeed in getting more capacity to concentrate on learning tasks.

CONCLUSION

The present classroom action research found that the teaching of speaking using the short dialogue memorization technique improved the students' pronunciation, vocabulary and fluency successfully. Besides, the technique could improve the students' motivation to get involved in speaking actively. Most of them were highly motivated, confident, fluent, and accurate in speaking English. The improvement could be identified from the data of the students that involved in speaking activities. Before conducting the action, the participating students were considered poor in working memories, meaning that they did not have “enough information in their minds at one time to make sense of what is coming in” (Hoque, 2018).

Finally, it is reasonable for the teachers to apply the short dialogue memorization technique in their class when teaching English speaking skill. But, the teachers should adjust and modify the behaviors of the participating teachers and students as required by the settings based on the observation. The teachers need to delete the obstructing behaviors of both the teachers and the students in class; they also need to adapt the teaching and learning behaviors for a better involvement of the students; and they need to find or create the new behaviors that potentially support the favorable class for the teachers and the students.

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