

Integrating Innovative Experiential Learning in Cyclic Teaching Sessions of English Speaking Classes

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ABSTRACT

The ability to speak English confidently and effectively has been valued as the most essential competence in international communication. The present study is aimed at improving English learners' speaking skill through the integration of experiential learning. A classroom action research was conducted in two consecutive cyclic learnings, consisted of four thematic learning sessions. The data for this study were collected by administering a pre-test to figure out the initial reflection of the students' speaking skill, and post-test was conducted by the end of each cycle to find out the improvement of the students' speaking skill after the implementation of Experiential Learning in speaking classes. A set of questionnaires was also administered to reveal the changing behavior of the English learners after learning to speak through experiential learning. The mean score in the first and second cycles showed the improvement of the students' speaking skill compared to mean score of the pre-test. This indicated that the English learners' speaking skill could be significantly improved through the implementation of Experiential Learning.

INTRODUCTION

The advancement of life nowadays requires higher and higher quality of education in order to be able to encounter the various challenges in globalization era. Therefore, having a good quality education guarantees a better employment which leads to better living standard. Those who have a poor education will certainly face tough struggles in getting a good employment. The demand for higher quality of education impacted on the urgent need of having more professional teachers. In order to be professional, teachers need to acquire four competencies. These teacher's competences consisted of (1) pedagogic competence, (2) personality competence, (3) social competence and (4) professional competence (Maba & Mantra, 2018).

Among those competencies, teaching is one of the most important competencies as it is direct incompetence that can be daily experienced by the students in the classroom. Teachers are required to be professional in teaching. Teachers, therefore, need very need a good knowledge of practical teaching practicing in addition to a comprehension of learning material. A teacher who has a good knowledge about teaching can be seen from how she or he conducts the teaching-learning process in the classroom. She or he will always contextualize their knowledge to the current trends of best teaching practices (Mantra, 2017; Widiastuti, 2017).

As a reaction to globalization, English teachers are required to be more professional in teaching English. They need to be more focused on developing students' skill in order to be able to communicate internationally. This is the reason why the new movement in language teaching often begins with the advancement of the old one. At present, the method that is recommended in teaching English in Indonesia is a communicative method with the mastery of four language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing skill (Cahyani, Mantra, & Wirastuti, 2018). In communicative teaching method, aims of teaching English are means of oral and written communication. A good speaking skill is really needed in communication process. This skill allows people giving feedback for something that has been heard, expressing their feeling, telling about something and have an interaction to each other (Mantra, 2017; Widiastuti, 2017). Besides that, the way how we speak will be the first concern when someone asses us for the first time, moreover it is shows level educational, family background and also the character of the speaker (Mantra & Maba, 2018).

To be able to communicate effectively, students need to develop their speaking skill. Practicing speaking skill every day becomes a must to make all students become competent in communicating in English (Permata, 2017). Teachers need to assess their students also regularly to improve their achievement (Mantra, 2017; Widiastuti, 2016). The teacher also must make sure that all students have sufficient skill in speaking and communicate appropriately. Assessment should be conducted for the improvement of communication skill rather than for grading the students' skill (Widiastuti, 2016; Mantra, 2017). Teachers therefore continually modify their teaching styles and always make an effort to find the best way of teaching.

During the teaching and learning process, teachers have to give their students space of time before delivering the concept or theory of the material being learned and let the students do what they will learn first without giving the theory, but they should still be guided by the teachers (Maba & Mantra, 2018). Then students will do a reflection about what they have done and make the conclusion of it. After the process of self-learning, teachers then give the theory

and students are then asked for re-practice what they have learned. This way of learning is called Experiential Learning. This method is a suitable way to increase the students' ability in speaking because they already have the opportunity to practice and experience before they are given the theory.

Experiential Learning Method is a part of humanistic learning which is usually used for scientific learning. Therefore, using this method of improving students speaking English ability is an innovative way and interesting process for the students since they will face an unusual process of learning. In conventional learning process, theories are usually conveyed first before practice. Experiential learning, however, practice comes first. Theories are learnt subconsciously through experiencing the contextualized learning activity, such as role play, drama, dialogue, and oral performance. By applying this method, students' communication hindrances could be more effectively countered. As a result, students' active engagement in learning can be built up and students eventually find communication activities become interesting thing and students become natural speakers of English.

METHODS

The subject of the study was an EFL class consisted of 23 students which consist of 9 female and 14 male. They were chosen as the subject of the study because after the interview was conducted with the teacher in which the result showed the students still had difficulty in expressing their ideas in speaking classes. Therefore, immediate and appropriate teaching-learning process needs to be carried out to solve the problem. This study was classroom action research (CAR) consisted of cyclical processes in which in every cycle there were four interconnected activities such as planning, action, observation, and reflection.

The purpose of the research is to determine the methodology and design of the research. By this design, the researcher is able to do the research step by step. The research design is the conceptual structure within the conducted research. The teaching and learning process was divided into two cycles. Each cycle consisted of two learning sessions which include four interconnected activities. The four interconnected activities are planning, action, observation, and reflection. The results of the reflection and observation from the first cycle were used to revise the planning for the second cycle.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

All of the data needed for this study were collected in the classroom by conducting pretest, post test and questionnaire to the students as the subject of this study. The pre-test was administered to the subject to obtain their pre-existing ability in speaking skill. The result of pre-test was used as the consideration of giving treatment that consisted of two cycles. Post-test was administered once in each cycle in order to measure the subjects' progress in speaking skill through Experiential Learning Method. As a result, there were two sets of raw scores obtained for the present study, those were pre-test scores and post-test scores.

Based on the preliminary observation which was done by interviewing the English teacher, it showed that the subjects of the study had low ability in speaking skill. Therefore, to solve the problems, the present study applied a cyclical process of classroom action research. After

carrying out the cyclical process into practice, the findings of the present classroom action research can be elaborated as follows. The present study was intended to improve students' speaking skill through Experiential Learning. Based on the result of the post-test in the second cycle, it can be confidently proclaimed that Experiential Learning can significantly improve students' speaking skill.

In pre-cycle, the pre-test was administered in a strict testing situation. The mean score obtained by the subjects under study in speaking skill pointed out the mean score of 45.00 in which it was considered as a very low achievement of the students. This low score obtained on pre-test was also based on the problem showed through the observation which showed that the students found difficulty in speaking, particularly in expressing their specific ideas appropriately. In the first cycle, the Experiential Learning was implemented in speaking classes. In session 1, some subjects were still unfamiliar with the Experiential Learning. They were not confused with the technique being applied. In session 2, the subjects were more active than the previous session. At the end of the cycle, after treating the subjects by using Experiential Learning, the post-test was conducted. The result of the post-test showed the increasing figure of 78.00. The mean figure of the post-test scores obtained by the subjects under study was higher than the one of the pre-test. In the first post-test, the higher mean score was achieved because the students had already had less anxiety in speaking. Some of the students were able to express their ideas, but most of them still low on expressing their ideas correctly using correct vocabulary and grammar. The students' scores, however, were much higher compared with the one of the pre-test. This mean figure convincingly revealed the obvious improvement of the subjects' ability in speaking through Experiential Learning. In order to attain higher score reflecting the higher ability of the subjects, second learning cycle was carried to continually improve the students' speaking skill.

In the second cycle, the subjects were treated by using the revised learning plan using the same technique with some modification in learning stages to maximize the students' involvement in speaking classes. In the second cycle, the subjects were more active and they enjoyed the teaching-learning process. In this cycle, the students were reinforced in speaking by giving them more exercises. In the second cycle, it turned out to show the progressing mean score of 85.20. The comparison between the mean score of first and second cycle showed the increased progress significantly. This significant improvement of the mean score suggested that the teaching of speaking in the second cycle through Experiential Learning could be remarked more effective than the first cycle, in the teaching scenarios in the second cycle were accordingly revised by taking into account the weaknesses found out in the first cycle.

In this cycle, most of the students were able to solve the difficulty in expressing their specific ideas they were able to communicate in English sufficiently effective. It could be concluded that Experiential Learning can improve the student's ability in speaking skill. This research could be ended because the success indicator had been decided. Furthermore, this research was regarded as successful based on the criterion of which 80% of total subjects can achieve the minimum passing grade.

The proportional percentage figures of total response of the questionnaire for item A, B, C, and D were 42.62%, 40.62%, 15.76% and 1%. The comparative percentage of questionnaire obtained for the present classroom action study revealed that the subjects under study gave a

positive response, in which their attitude and motivation were changing after having been taught speaking through Experiential Learning Method. This figure showed that 42.62% of the subjects strongly agreed with the application of Experiential Learning Method, 40.62% of the subjects agreed, 15.76% of the subjects quite agreed, and 1% of the subjects disagreed. The positive response was based on the percentage of 42.62% of the strongly agreed item and 40.62% of the agreed item, it could be seen that those items have the same percentage, it means that half of the subjects under study found that the activity was quite fun during teaching-learning process through Experiential Learning Method.

Additionally, based on the description of the questionnaire statement, the students found that Experiential Learning really gave motivation in learning speaking skill. They considered that the technique also improved their creativity in speaking. This can be seen from the result of the questionnaire, there were 15.76% of the subjects quite agreed. That was proved by some students who found that the technique was not fun enough to apply. It could not improve their creativity in speaking. The technique could not give them learning motivation. Moreover, most of the students strongly agreed and agreed with the application of Experiential Learning Method. This result showed that the subjects responded positively to the implementation of Experiential Learning Method. Therefore, based on the data presented above, it could be summed up that students' speaking can be improved through the implementation of Experiential Learning.

CONCLUSION

Experiential Learning is one of the most effective learning strategies that can significantly improve students' learning achievement. In order to convince the usefulness of Experiential Learning in speaking classes, therefore the present study was conducted in a series of cyclic learning cycles. The main data for the present classroom action study were collected through administering pre-test and post-test on the subjects under study and at the end of the second cycle was administered questionnaire for knowing the students' changing learning behavior after being taught speaking skill through Experiential Learning. The purpose of administering questionnaire at the end of the second cycle was to establish the students' interest, motivation, and attitude in learning through Experiential Learning method. The result of the questionnaire was the students were interested in learning through Experiential Learning. In conclusion, based on the result of pre-cycle, first cycle, second cycle, it could be concluded that Experiential Learning could improve the students' speaking skill. Therefore, this finding suggests that Experiential Learning can be utilized intensively to improve students' speaking skill.

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