TEACHING SPEAKING WITH THE TEAMS-GAMES TOURNAMENTS TECHNIQUE

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ABSTRACT

The teams-games-tournaments technique (TGTT) used in this study are based on the difficulties that students have in mastering the skills of speaking ESL. This technique aims to involve the students in speaking in real life situations. The objective of this study was to investigate if in the mastery of speaking of the students improved after they practiced speaking through TGTT. In order to find out this study used two groups from one sample, an experimental group (EG) and a control group (CG). The EG was taught using TGTT, while the CG was taught by using a traditional technique. Experimental study procedures were followed to collect data for the study with pre-tests and post-tests to collect data. The research findings show that the mean score from the post-test from the EG, 79, was higher than that from the control group, 53. Furthermore, the result of the Z-score revealed that the score of the EG was significantly higher than that from the CG. Thus the data indicated that the students taught by using TGTT achieved significantly better scores in speaking than those taught by using a traditional technique.

Key Words: *Teaching Speaking, Teams-Games-Tournament Technique.*

INTRODUCTION

English has become more and more important, especially after the 2004 Tsunami when Aceh opened up to the global community. Many job opportunities were then on offer requiring a variety of skills.

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However, unfortunately, often our school and university graduates did not have English that was good enough for them to get the jobs on offer from both government and non-government organizations assisting Aceh's rehabilitation and reconstruction programs. That fact is also proven by many of the writer's former students who came to report to the writer that they had had difficulty in finding a job since they did not have a good command of English, these even included ex-students who had got good results in the written exams.

Furthermore, The Ministry of Education (2006) states that the aim of teaching speaking is to train the students to be able to express their ideas meaningfully in real life; this standard also directs students to apply ESL in daily communications even outside of school. By practicing speaking, students will become more familiar with collocations, phrases and patterns of speaking English that they are can use frequently in day-to-day speaking. Many students still make very limited attempts to practice English both inside and outside of the classroom. There were two types of factors which caused this problem. The external factors were factors such as the teaching strategy, the class management, the materials available, the availability of evaluation, and the availability of suitable media. The internal factors came from the students themselves. Most of the students were afraid to make mistakes when they spoke English whether to the teacher, the class or their friends. But overall the biggest problem was the students did not practice nearly enough to get good English

The writer made preliminary observations at MAN Beureunuen, in Pidie District of Aceh Province. He found that most of the students could not speak English well although they were fairly good at ESL grammar and reading comprehension. This was certainly partly because the time allocation for ESL was limited and the teacher did not make much time available to train the students to speak English. The students were not given enough opportunity to experiment with English. Many of the English teachers still teach speaking by reading and memorizing techniques based on the dialogues in the text books, the strategy and techniques they use are monotonous, from pre activities until post activities they only ask the students to read and practice dialogues from the text books and to evaluate these in post activities. The teacher that I observed did not give her students a good chance to speak freely or to express their ideas; they just had to follow their teacher's instructions so that they did not develop their own ability in speaking. Some of them did not want to speak because they were afraid of making

mistakes. As a result they (the students) were not interested in speaking. To get the students to speak, a teacher needs to create various interesting ways for her students to learn to speak with interesting things to do. This can arouse interest amongst the students and they will be more active in learning to speak English.

Sadtono (1997:23) has said that the main causes of the failure to teach English well are:

(1) the limited number of hours for English classes,

(2) the overcrowded classes,

(3) the expensive supplementary reading materials needed for the students, and

(4) the social situation which is not particularly conducive to learning English as English is not spoken in society.

So we can conclude that the ESL teaching-learning process is not running well because of the aforesaid reasons.

Another factor that causes difficulties in teaching-learning speaking was that the students were rarely given any idea of what to say. This caused the class to be passive and the students just kept silent when the teacher asked them to speak. Ur (1996:121) states that the problems faced in speaking activities are:

1. Inhibition. Unlike reading, writing, and listening activities, speaking requires some degree of real time exposure to an audience. Students are often inhibited about trying to say things in a foreign language in front of others in a classroom; worried about making mistakes, fearful of critics especially of losing face amongst their peers, or simply shy and not wanting to draw attention to themselves which would happen if they gave a speech.

2. Low or uneven motivation. Some students want to talk while others just keep silent or speak very little.

3. Mother tongue use. In most of the ESL classes, this always happens. Students tend to use their mother tongue since it is easier for them. They perhaps feel unnatural speaking to one another in a foreign language.

4. Nothing to say or the student has no ideas. Even if they are not inhibited, the students complain that they cannot think of anything to say, they have no motivation or no-one to motivate them to express their ideas.

Accordingly, the writer tried to find a more interesting way to teach ESL speaking to these students. The reason the writer chose to use the TGT is because it is a useful and effective technique to improve the

ESL speaking ability of students. This is supported by DeVries, Mescon, and Shackman (1975) that TGT is created with the objective of increasing the academic achievements for all students, particularly those who have difficulties in mastering the learning materials. TGT not only helps students to improve their academic achievements, but can also give a positive outcome in their social life. TGT is capable of producing positive outcomes in society, in attitudes, and in academic performance dimensions.

Moreover, it is believed this interesting technique can give a chance for students to be more involved in discussions, to encourage and train them to use critical thinking and to take responsibility for their own learning. Although it considers that an active role for students is more important, it does not mean that the teacher in the classroom is not participating. In the learning process, the teacher has roles as a designer, a facilitator and as a guide in the learning process.

Research Questions

Is there be a significant difference in the improvement in speaking performance between students who are taught ESL speaking using the Team-Games-Tournament (TGT) Technique and those from a control group taught by using a traditional technique for teaching speaking?

Research Objectives

To find out if there could be a significant difference in the improvement in speaking performance between students who are taught by using (TGT) and those who are taught by using a traditional technique for teaching speaking.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Speaking as a Skill

Speaking as one of the four language skills is very important in processes for teaching-learning ESL. To speak is to express our ideas to others in oral communication. Scoot (2002:70) defines oral communication "as an activity involving two or more people in whom the participants are both hearers and speakers having to react to what they hear and make their contributions at high speed". In other words, to communicate is a process in which speaker(s) convey information or messages to listeners. Therefore, speaking is an activity on the part of the other to understand what is in the mind of the first (Foss, 2003).

However, speaking ESL is not an easy thing to do. When we speak, not only do we make a sound but we must also have other skills such as pronunciation, structure of speech, vocabulary and collocation. Danough (1969:11) supports this saying that "if you are now studying, or have studied some foreign languages, you realize that learning to speak a language is not a simple task."

If we think about how we use our first language, then it is obvious we spend most of our time expressing our utterances and making sentences, and very little of our knowledge in trying to compose perfect sentences. We would find it most difficult to describe and explain all the decisions we make when we speak. Therefore, knowledge is only part of the puzzle; we also need skills. What is the difference between knowledge and skills? A fundamental difference is that while both can be understood and memorized, only a skill can be practiced.

Definition of Speaking

Speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts. Chaney and Burke (1998:13). Speaking is a crucial part of second language learning and teaching. Despite its importance, for many years, teaching speaking has been undervalued and English language teachers have continued to teach speaking just as repetition of drills or memorizing of dialogues. However, today's world requires communicative skills, because, only in that way, can students learn to express themselves and learn how to follow the social and cultural rules appropriate in each circumstance requiring communication. In order to teach ESL learners how to speak in the best possible way, some speaking activities are provided below, that can be applied in ESL classroom settings, together with suggestions for teachers who teach oral ESL.

In teaching speaking, the teacher should teach the students the following aspects of speaking (Nunan, 1999:11):
1. Produce the English speech sounds and sound patterns.
2. Use the word sentence stress, intonation patterns and the rhythm of the second language
3. Select appropriate words and sentences according to the proper setting, audience, situation and subject matter.
4. Organize their thoughts in a meaningful and logical sequence.
5. Use language as a means of expressing values and judgments.

6. Use the language confidently with few unnatural pauses and fillers, which is called fluency.

It means that in teaching speaking, the teacher should teach the students how to create good patterns and directions of conversations.

Elements of Speaking

The ability of speaking fluently presupposes not only knowledge of language features, but also the ability to produce the language on the spot. The elements of speaking according to Harmer (2001:269-276) are:

1. Language features, among the elements necessary for spoken production are the following:
   - Connected speech
   - Expressive devices
   - Lexis and grammar
   - Negotiation
2. Mental processing
   - Language processing
   - Interacting with others
   - On the spot information processing

It means that in processing the speaking, it should be connected directly with the opponent.

Teaching Speaking Using the Team-Games-Tournament Technique

The Team-Games-Tournament (TGT) Technique was originally developed by David De Vries and Keith Edwards in 2006 at the University of Johns Hopkins as a cooperative learning method. It uses teacher presentations and teamwork and replaces quizzes with weekly tournaments, in which students play academic games with members of other teams to contribute points to their team scores.

TGT is one type of cooperative learning that places students in study groups; each group has 5 to 6 students who can have a variety of abilities, genders and cultures. The teacher presents the material, and the students work in their respective groups. The teacher gives a worksheet to each group. Each group assigns work tasks to each member of the group. If any member of the group does not understand his assignment, then the other group members are responsible to provide answers and/or explain it to him, before submitting the answers

to the teacher. Finally, to ensure that all group members have mastered the lesson, all students will participate in an academic game.

Slavin (1995) explains that in this academic game students sit around tables (a table tournament), where at every table there are 5 to 6 students, each one a representative from a different group. In each table game the participants are not from the same group. Students grouped at each table should be homogeneous in terms of academic ability; this means that at any single table each of the participants should have about the same ability or knowledge. This can be determined by the scores that they earned in the pre-test. Each participant in the game gets scores as the game is played that are recorded on a recording sheet. The total group score is obtained by summing scores that each member got while playing the game to get a total which is then divided by the number of members in the group to get the mean score for each group. The group with the highest mean score is the winning group and is rewarded by being given a certificate for winning, whilst the other groups should get certificates for participation. Each member of each group should get a separate certificate.

Slavin (1995) says that the TGT co-operative learning technique consists of five steps via: class presentation, team formation, games, tournaments, and group recognition. He explains them as follows:

1. Class presentation
    The teacher delivers the material, usually by direct instruction from the teacher, or in a teacher led discussions about the material for the class. At the class presentation, students should pay attention and must try to understand the material presented by the teacher.

2. Team formation
    Each group or team usually consists of 4 to 6 heterogeneous students. The teacher forms the groups or allows the groups to form based on the ability and gender of the students to make groups that can work properly and optimally in the game.

3. Games
    The game consists of numbered questions. Students select a numbered card and try to answer the question(s) on it. The student who answers the question correctly gets a score. These scores are added up to get the group score.

4. Tournament
    Usually the tournament is conducted after the teacher does a class presentation and the students complete a group work sheet.

5. Group Awards

Here, the teacher announces the best group and gives rewards to the winning group, which got the highest mean score.

Based on what Slavin (2009) mentions that the TGT model of cooperative learning has characteristics as follows:

1. Students Work in Groups

Students are placed in small groups – study groups each with 5 to 6 students with varying abilities, genders, and ethnic or racial backgrounds. The heterogeneity of group members is expected to motivate students to help others among their group who are less capable to master the subject matter. This will result in a growing sense of self-awareness amongst the students that co-operative learning is fun.

2. Tournaments

In this game, each student is a representative of his/her group and is placed at a tournament table. Each table has 5 to 6 tournament participants with one participant from each group in the class. The game is preceded by announcing the rules of the game. In the first stage, the teacher gives the first question to the participants. And then the participants compete to answer each question with the best answer. After a player give his/her answer then the teacher will ask the other player to give a comment about the answer given. After that the teacher will open the answer key, if the comments given are wrong the player wins. Scores are also given to players who answer incorrectly but are active in the games. Then the game continues to the next question until there are no more questions.

3. Appreciation Group

The first step before the award is calculating the mean score from each group. This is done by summing the scores obtained by each member of the group divided by the number of members in the group. The awards are based on the mean scores from each group. After the awards are announced the teacher gives each member of the winning group a certificate of recognition for the group, students from the other groups should also get certificates for participation.

It means that in TGT, there are five steps that should be fulfilled: class presentation, team formation, games, tournaments, and group recognition.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This experimental research is categorized as quantitative research intended to find out whether the TGT technique can make a significant contribution to improving the speaking skills of students. McMillan (2008:218) argues that in order to find out cause-and-effect relationship a researcher should use experimental research. This argument is inferred in his statement as follows: "experimental design is the best approach to investigating cause-and-effect relationships". McMillan (2008) also argued that there is one essential characteristic of all experimental research: direct control of the independent variable, this means that the investigator determines when the subjects receive the treatment and how much of it they receive.

Population and Sample

The study was conducted at MAN Beureunuen, located at Kampung Meunasah Paga, Kec. Mutiara, Kab. Pidie, which is a Standard Islamic High School [or Sekolah Nasional (SSN)] with fifteen classes in three grades (grades X, XI and XII) with five classes in each grade.

The writer selected two classes as the sample by using random sampling using a simple lottery draw to get a total sample size of 80. Class XI A with 40 students was chosen as the experimental class (EC or EG) to be taught using the Teams-Games-Tournament (TGT) Technique whilst, Class XI B, also with 40 students became the control class (CC or CG) to be taught using the standard traditional technique. The students in the sample taken had mixed socioeconomic backgrounds and various levels of proficiency with mixed genders combined in both classes. There were 12 males and 28 females in the EG class and 24 males and 16 females in the CG class.

Research Instrument
Pre-test

The pre-test was given in the first meeting to find out the base ability of the students in both classes before starting the treatment. The students were given some questions orally and they had to answer orally. For example, *"Do you like coffee?"* (Asking for opinion, fact and expressing like and dislike), *"Why do/don't you like coffee?"* (Asking for an opinion),"*Please tell me how to make a cup of coffee!"*

(Asking for facts), etc. If a student could express good answers to all the questions, he got 100 points.

Post-test

The post-test was used to measure the students' ability in speaking ESL after the treatments. Once again, the students were asked to answer questions orally. The writer followed the curriculum outline for the second grade (year XI) students of MAN Beureunuen based on aspects of speaking namely pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehensibility.

Data Collection Procedure

In order to get the data needed, the writer used two classes in this study; one class the EG and the other, the CG. The EG was treated using the TGT Technique and the results from the EG after the TGT treatment were compared with those from the control group after being treated with a traditional technique. The writer preparing teaching materials related to the syllabus for the second grade (year XI) at MAN Beureunuen, the researcher used a pre-test and post-test. At the start of this research the writer gave each group the same pre-test on the same day but at a different time.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, the researcher used both quantitative and qualitative analysis (Borg & Gall, 1989). The quantitative analysis was used to analyze data for the first research question. The data analysis was conducted by organizing the data gained from the pre-tests and the post-tests. Based on these results, the researchers used statistics to form a table of frequency distribution and to calculate the means, standard deviations and Z-scores.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to the results from the tests, the differences in achievement between the EG and the CG can be seen from the differences between the pre-test and post-test scores. For each class, a mean post-test score was calculated. The difference between the mean post-test scores of the EG and CG was compared by employing an independent sample Z score.

Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected and consequently the alternative hypothesis (Ha) was accepted as there was a significance positive difference in the post-test scores for speaking from the students who were taught through TGT with those who were taught through a traditional technique.

In fact, Colon-Vila (1997) commented that the TGT technique helps EFL learners become more self-confident to express themselves spontaneously and creatively. Based on the research findings it was found that TGT is a teaching technique that shows real effectiveness because it can truly help students to improve their ESL speaking abilities. Therefore, TGT in the EFL speaking classroom is motivating and immensely interesting and can best attract listeners and promote communication.

The students also gave positive responses to the TGT technique and the materials given. The materials which were taught to them were about a family introducing, how to make a cup of coffee, asking opinions and giving opinions. It encouraged the students to learn the passages because they were materials with which they were familiar Thus, it could be said that the responses of the students to the use of the TGT for teaching speaking was positive. As a result, the students not only improved in their ability to speak ESL but also got positive outcomes in social relationships with their friends. So, teaching-learning using TGT is an effective technique to use which has been proved in other previous studies done by other researchers and which concur with the findings from this study.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

Based on the theories, findings, and discussion in the previous sections, the conclusion that can be drawn is: The use of the TGT for teaching ESL speaking to the second grade (year XI) students of MAN Beureunuen resulted in a significant improvement in the free speaking ability of the students in the EG and this improvement was significantly greater than any improvement in the speaking ability of the students in the CG taught using a traditional technique. The Team-Games-Tournament (TGT) technique also encouraged the EG students to develop their speaking ability and the EG students feel that it was a very useful technique that helped them improve their speaking ability.

Suggestions

Some suggestions for further research and for practical purposes to enhance and find better techniques for teaching ESL especially speaking are set out below.

It is suggested that English teachers at senior high schools apply TGT based on the co-operative learning model because it has many advantages for developing ESL skills especially in speaking. TGT uses group work to improve speaking skills. Moreover teachers can also use this technique for other English skills. However the technique must follow certain procedures which are a bit complex. If the teacher does not apply these procedures appropriately and the students do not understand how to be involved in the teamwork activities the results may not be satisfactory.

Furthermore, the writer suggests that other researchers conduct similar studies with larger samples of senior high school students. The samples should also involve students with different levels of proficiency, gender and socio-economic backgrounds to get their results. This learning model should also increase self-confidence, social interaction, individual accountability, group skills and individual responsibility of students even though they are learning in groups. Finally, researchers should strive to find solutions to overcome any weaknesses in the TGT Technique.

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