

The Implementation of Teaching-Learning Cycle in English for Hotels Training: A Case Study

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Abstract:

Education and training are now integral elements for all sectors and agencies operating within tourism industry. However, despite the importance of training, many educators and trainers have entered the industry without a well structured tourism training method. The teaching-learning cycle consisting of Building Knowledge of Field, Modelling, Joint Construction, and Independent Construction which is used in our formal educational level can also be used to give well understanding tourism training, particularly in English for hotels training. This study aims to introduce those already working in the industry, particularly hotel employees, to the cycle aiming to improve the participants' speaking performance in English for hotels. Fourteen participants were taking part in this training. In addition, there were fourteen meetings in this training and the final assessment was conducted in the final meeting. The data were collected through the assessment by using the Format of the Cambridge ESOL First Certificate in English (FCE) spoken language test in the last meeting. In addition, the collected data from the final assessment were compared to the collected data from the early assessment before the treatment had been conducted and the parameter of success was evaluated by using the Holistic Rating Scale and the Foreign Services Institute (FSI) Analytic Rating Scale. The result shows that in the last meeting participants were able to increase their speaking ability. The outcome shows that the participants were able to set their rating almost 1-2 level(s) higher. In addition, the study shows that training by using the teaching-learning cycle thrives to improve and motivate most of the participants to be brave to speak or pronouncing the words or sentences better

Keywords: English for hotels, English training, Teaching-learning cycle

1. Introduction

Tourism is a significant factor within the regional economy with a significant cash flow by tourists on a range of goods and services across the world. Within good communication skill especially in English, we can develop the quality of tourism in Indonesia. Throughout the industry we are facing increasing demands and expectations to provide strong evidence for improving performance and support the quality of our human resources. The development of a high quality evidence base is essential to enable us to improve the performance of those who already working in the industry, particularly hotel employees, through the use of well structured training of English for hotels that can support their service quality.

Since service is a high priority, this has an implication to the skill base that needs to be changed toward a better one, for example the range for technical skill for guiding or in hotel hospitality service. There is a demand from the tourism industry that requires the capacity to give an understandable communication, especially in English as one of the international languages used in the world. Moreover, to prepare the expectations from the customer, hotel employees must concern their ability in speaking. Speaking, either delivered for transactional or interpersonal use, is important and this skill is important for the wider workforce in dealing with tourism clients.

Tourism clients, particularly hotel guests, are determining nowadays and they create some needs that should be prepared. As stated in *Policy and Vet Res Mgmt Forum* (2002:4-5) there are several analyses which create the needs of good speaking skill. Firstly, costumer expectations are increasing. They need dedicated hotel employees who are able to give excellent service when they have to stay in the hotel. Secondly, competitive national and international marketplaces demand the hotel employees to compete with other competitors. Thirdly, the world requires a practical tourism moving more dynamically and it demands more active and more communicative development from hotel employees. And that is why, good communication skill especially in delivering English is compulsory.

In conducting English for hotels training, trainers sometimes forget to prepare a teaching method that is going to be used in their training. Most trainers usually only prepare their materials but they do not prepare the way to deliver the materials. According to Subiyati (1974) “teachers, therefore, should know that teaching English involves several things, such as: the method applied, the materials used in teaching”. Moreover, training participants sometimes do not fit with the way trainers deliver the materials because of the monotonous style they bring. In order to deal with the problem, the author tries to develop a method that addresses the problem. The author strives to implement the teaching-learning cycle consisting of Building Knowledge of Field, Modelling, Joint Construction, and Independent Construction. Furthermore, the cycle used in this study aims to introduce the participants with authentic examples in the first two levels in the cycle, namely Building Knowledge of Field and Modelling and carry out a convincing performance in the last two levels, namely Joint Construction, and Independent Construction.

In this study, in order to give a speaking test experience, the participants take the Cambridge ESOL First Certificate in English (FCE) spoken language test. This type of test aims to test one's English proficiency. Saville and Hargreaves (1999:44) state that they "justify this format on the greater reliability and fairness from having ratings of the performance...encouraging the use of pair-work activities in the language learning classroom". Furthermore, the assessment is evaluated by using the Holistic Rating Scale and the Foreign Services Institute (FSI) Analytic Rating Scale.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Teaching Speaking

According to Chaney and Burk (1998:13), speaking is "the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts". Speaking becomes one of the most important parts of second language teaching and learning. However, regardless of its importance, up to now, teaching speaking has been underrated and subjectively studied. Nevertheless, nowadays' communication obliges the ultimate purpose of teaching speaking increase one's communication ability, so that someone can produce natural expressions pertaining to sociocultural conventions in a natural environment of communication.

Speaking is the only noticeable proficiency that someone will be evaluated upon in real-life communication. The way someone's speaks can create judgment and impression toward his/her speaking ability that might lead into the judgment of someone's overall performance. Consequently, as teachers, we must seriously prepare them to be able to speak English inside and outside the classroom. The sole purpose of teaching how to speak English is efficiency in communication. Understanding communication to the fullest by using one's proficiency is the goal of language learners. Language learners need to focus on avoiding communication confusion created by imperfect grammar, vocabulary, or pronunciation and using appropriate sociocultural rules in a natural conversation.

Basic characteristic of speaking that language teachers must put their attention to is that speaking is of spontaneity. In most occasions, the speakers do not have any plan prior to the time they are going to speak. However, the argument cannot be applied to events that need arranged talk, such as speech. This fact affects the way language teachers train their participants. One of the most controversial arguments is stated by Bygate (1987:8). He points out that language teachers must oblige their participants to have more planning and forward-thinking than (English) native speakers do in real communication event. On top of that, teachers must be aware that the goal of teaching English, especially teaching speaking, is related to economic principle, which is preparing the participants to be able to compete professionally in the globalization era.

2.2 The Teaching-Learning Cycle

2.2.1 Building Knowledge of Field

Hammond et al (1992:17) state that Building Knowledge of Field is the first level in the teaching-learning cycle. In this level, there is an interaction happening between:

1) the English teacher and participants and 2) among participants. Furthermore, the teacher produces elicitation in this level. Elicitation is questions that aim to build or structure participants' mind or knowledge about the topic discussed. Richards et al (1985:90) states that "elicitation is, in language teaching, technique or procedure which a teacher uses to get learners to actively produce speech or writing". The knowledge content of the level can come up from shared context of culture, personal experience, and elicitation that structure or bridge relevant vocabularies and expressions. To my knowledge, elicitation plays an important role in this level. To support the argument Richards et al (ibid.) state that elicitation is:

...a technique used to obtain information about how someone uses a particular language item. The subject may be asked to describe a picture, tell a story or finish an incomplete sentence. These procedures are used to get a fuller understanding of linguistic knowledge than the study of naturally occurring speech or writing can provide.

2.2.2 Modelling of Text

The second level is called the modeling of text. In this level, the English teacher intensifies his or her contact to the participants. In this level, the participants only watch and listen to the audio-video formats which are mostly retrieved from the internet, thus they become the passive side. Moreover, the English teacher then explains the language focus which becomes the learning goals. In this level, the teacher shows a language model that can be followed by the participants. One of the most important models is the pronunciation. Richards et al (1985:181) identify the importance by saying that in modeling of text there is "a standard or goal for the learner, e.g. the pronunciation of an educated native speaker". Furthermore, in this study, the teacher explains about the suitable expressions for English for hotels.

2.2.3 Joint Construction

In this level, the implementation of peer group work appears. The participants try to solve problems designed to evaluate their comprehension. However, the participants are obliged to work together. In other word, this stage is famously called as peer-to-peer work stage. In the Joint Construction level, participants actively check their comprehension of the language focus they have already learned in the previous level. Some activities that can be used in this level include: role play, discussion, or language games session.

2.2.4 Independent Construction

In this level the teacher measures the participants' comprehension after they receive specified materials introduced before. Thus, the interaction solely happens between the teacher and participants. In this context, the participants must do the tasks individually. Task, according to Richards et al (1985:289), is "an activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language". In this study, the teacher asks the participants to demonstrate individual speech by giving them questions or stimuli that have to be responded by them.

2.3 The FCE Speaking Test Format

FCE is often used in determining one's English language ability in formal or academic context. FCE is proven useful in some industries, for example tourism industry, where contact with English speakers is unavoidable. The test requires the ability to handle managerial or secretarial tasks, such as dealing with routine business letters and telephone enquiries. In this context, the FCE speaking test format is designed as a direct test of speaking performance using a paired format of two test-takers and two testers. In this study, during the training of English for hotel, I ask the manager in duty to accompany me to assess the participants. Moreover, the test has a number of objectives designed to elicit a number of language functions, so that participants' ability can be evaluated (O'Sullivan, 2008:16). O'Sullivan (ibid.) describes that there are four test formats, they are as follows:

Table 1. Format of the test

1	Interviewer-Participants	Interview Verbal Questions
2	Participants	Monologue Individual Long Turn
3	Participants – Participants	Collaborative Task Visual Stimulus Verbal Stimulus
4	Interviewer- Participants- Participants	Long Turns and Discussion Written Stimulus Verbal Questions

O' Sullivan (2008)

2.4 The Holistic Rating Scale and FSI Analytic Rating Scale

By using the Holistic Rating Scale, the participants will be awarded by a single mark for the performance based on a certain scale showing language competence (Caroll, 1980). Moreover, according to Komuta (2006), Holistic Rating Scale cannot stand alone; it needs to go along with Analytic Rating Scale which is composed of a set of criteria perfecting the former scale. Further, Komuta (ibid.) states that Analytic Rating Scale offers criteria that determine the competence of a speaker as shown from the parameter in Holistic Rating Scale. The explanation is shown respectively below.

Table 2. Holistic rating scale

Holistic Rating Scale	
<input type="checkbox"/> 9	Expert speaker. Speaks with authority on a variety of topics. Can initiate, expand and develop a theme
<input type="checkbox"/> 8	Very good non-native speaker. Maintains effectively his own part of a discussion. Initiates, maintains, and elaborates a necessary.
<input type="checkbox"/> 7	Good speaker. Presents case clearly and logically and can develop coherently and constructively. Rather less flexible and fluent than rating 8 performer but can respond to main changes of tone or topic. Some hesitation and repetition due to a measure of language restriction but

	interacts effectively
□ 6	Competent speaker. Is able to maintain theme of dialogue, to follow topic switches and to use and appreciate main attitude markers. Stumbles and hesitates at times but is reasonably fluent otherwise. Some errors and inappropriate language but these will not impede exchange of views. Shows some independence in discussion and ability to initiate.
□ 5	Modest speaker. Although gist of dialogue is relevant and can be easily understood, there are noticeable deficiencies in mastery of language patterns and style. Needs to ask for repetition or clarification and similarly be asked for them. Lacks flexibility and initiative. The interviewer often has to speak rather deliberately. Copes but not with great style of interest.
□ 4	Marginal speaker. Can maintain dialogue but in a rather passive manner, rarely taking the initiative or guiding the discussion. Has difficulty in following English at normal speed; lacks fluency and probably accuracy in speaking. The dialogue is therefore neither easy nor flowing. Nevertheless, gives the impressions that he is in touch with the gist of the dialogue even if not wholly master of it. Marked L2 accent.
□ 3	Extremely limited speaker. Dialogue is drawn out affair punctuated with hesitations and misunderstandings. Only catches part of normal speech and unable to produce continuous and accurate discourse. Basic merit is just hanging on to discussion gist, without making major contribution to it.
□ 2	Intermittent speaker. No working facility; occasional, sporadic communication
□ 1	Non-speaker. Not able to understand and/or speak

Table 3. FSI rating scale

Analytic Oral Presentation Rubric				
Criteria	1	2	3	4
Speaks Clearly (SC)	Rarely speaks clearly and distinctly.	Speaks clearly and distinctly some of the time.	Speaks clearly and distinctly most of the time.	Speaks clearly and distinctly all the time.
Speaks with Enthusiasm (Engaging) (SE)	Seldom uses facial expressions and body language. Seldom generates a strong interest and enthusiasm about the topic in others.	Sometimes uses facial expressions and body language. Sometimes generates a strong interest and enthusiasm about the topic in others.	Frequently uses facial expressions and body language. Frequently generates a strong interest and enthusiasm about the topic in others.	Consistently uses facial expressions and body language. Consistently generates a strong interest and enthusiasm about the topic in others.

Speaks in a Confident Manner (SCM)	Rarely stands up straight. Rarely establishes eye contact during the presentation.	Sometimes stands up straight some of the time. Sometimes establishes eye contact during the presentation.	Stands up straight most of the time. Establishes eye contact with most everyone in the room during the presentation.	Stands up straight, looks relaxed and confident. Establishes eye contact with everyone in the room during the presentation.
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Komuta (2006)

3. Research Method

This study was a descriptive qualitative one. Moreover, it took form as a classroom research. In this classroom research, the author just observed and determined the level of speaking skill they are best placed to, based on four indexes, namely Holistic Range Scale Index and FSI Rating Scale (consisting of SC, SC, SCM). There was no quantitative procedure used in this study. Following the steps in this study, he conducted the following: firstly, the participants were asked to do an individual speech to measure their ability in speaking; and secondly, fourteen participants were assessed by using Holistic Rating Scale and the Foreign Services Institute (FSI) Analytic Rating Scale. What the author expected when he gave them such assessment was they were not able to speak confidently and deliver English for hotels accurately. In addition, before the hotel employees experienced the English for hotels training using the implementation of teaching-learning cycle, English training was not new for them. But, based on the preliminary assessment conducted by the author and the manager in duty, the rates shown by the participants were poor. Here, the manager in duty was involved in the study, especially during the assessments, as to guarantee the objectivity of evaluation.

Prior to this study, the participants experienced a monotonous English training (textbook based training) in the previous English for hotels training. Based on the points, the author initiated the implementation of teaching-learning cycle in English for hotels training in order to give a range of activities for hotel employees and staffs and improve their ability in speaking. Additionally, in the following chapter, the author simply compared and described the results of preliminary and final assessments bolstered by observation notes on the participants' behavior change during the teaching-learning cycle. The author collected the data qualitatively. Qualitative data included the performances of the groups in individually by using speaking assessment instrument, namely the Cambridge ESOL First Certificate in English (FCE) spoken language test.

This study was conducted at Hotel Santika Semarang for three months. There were 14 participants in the class. The author did some preparations prior the implementation of the teaching-learning cycle in the English for hotels training. He chose several topics to be given in the training. They were: giving information about a hotel, greeting and handling check-in, describing people, giving directions, telephoning, dealing with guests' complaints, checking out and settling payment, and tour guide. Due to time limitation, the author put all levels in the teaching-

learning cycle in each meeting. In other word, he did not give a specific schedule allocation for the stages in the teaching-learning cycle, i.e. Building Knowledge of the Field in the first meeting, Modeling for the second meeting and so forth. Each topic contained several language points.

4. Results and Discussion

Before conducting the training using the teaching-learning cycle, the author conducted a preliminary assessment. He was accompanied by the manager in duty in conducting the preliminary assessment. The participants were assessed by using the FCE speaking format test. After assessing all participants in this class by using the FCE speaking format test, and after getting the result of the group, the author can see that most participants are in the low index rate. In addition, the highest achievement from the participants in the Holistic Scale Index is only reaching rate 4 (3 participants). And most of the participants (11 participants) achieve rate 2 in the Analytic Rating Scale.

In addition, the author discovers that although participants had experienced English training prior the implementation of this cycle, the output was not good. There were some weaknesses for expressing hotel expressions, for example; most of the participants of each group were low in pronunciation, intonation, and many of them were not fluent, soft sound in pronouncing the words or sentences. They were still not brave to pronounce the English words or sentences in a louder and clearer voice. The participants were not able to give a confident performance in speaking. There was an anxiety shown by the participants when they demonstrated their speaking ability. They did not understand the appropriate expressions for particular context of situation. And most of them used Indonesian language to express their arguments.

After finding the results in the preliminary assessment, the author gave the participants an experience of English for hotels training using the teaching-learning cycle. During the implementation of the teaching-learning cycle in the training, he divided the training session into 4 parts. In the first part (Building Knowledge of Field), the author tried to elicit participants' response by using verbal or visual elicitation. The examples of verbal elicitation are as follows: "*what do you say when you meet your new guests staying for the first time?*", "*What is your response if your guests have problems in their room?*", or "*How do you response if your guests lost the way to the nearest ATM?*" Moreover, the example of visual elicitation was the use of pictures. By implementing this stage, participants were encouraged to answer the questions and they could give simple answers and the author found that there was collaboration among participants to complete each other's answer and he discovered if participants' answers or responses were getting more accurate and appropriate.

In the second stage (Modelling), the author played an audio-video format to introduce participants to the real use of English for hotels from native speakers. A good model is the most important one, because without looking at the model, it is difficult for the participants to speak without any guidance and examples. In this stage, the participants were the passive side because they only listened to the audio-

video. But, sometimes the participants were puzzled to follow the speed of the English native speakers in the audio-video format, and the author sometimes had to re-explain the language points. In this level the participants learned about the correct pronunciation, vocabulary, and expression. Additionally, the author found some enthusiasm by the participants when they experienced the Modelling stage using the audio-video format.

In the third stage (Joint Construction) the participants performed their peer work or group work. They usually had role play and discussion as their activities. In addition, verbal and visual stimuli were still used in this stage. In the last stage (Independent Construction), the participants had their individual presentation. They presented the materials that had been given. But, during this stage sometimes the author and the other participants were still involved in the form of correcting and adding.

After implementing the teaching-learning cycle in 13 meetings, the author conducted the final assessment to see the improvement made by the participants. He was accompanied again by the manager in duty in conducting the final assessment. The participants were assessed by using the FCE speaking format test.

Based on the results of the test, it shows that there were some improvements made by the participants. Most of the participants were able to improve their rate index. In addition, most of the participants were able to improve 1-2 rate(s) higher after experiencing the training using the teaching-learning cycle. Moreover, 9 participants (64,28%) were able to improve their Holistic Range Scale Index and the Analytic Range Scale Index on speaking clearly. Furthermore, 9 participants (64,28%) were able to improve their Analytic Range Scale Index on speaking with enthusiasm and 10 participants (71,42%) were capable in increasing their Analytic Range Scale Index on speaking in a confident manner. The most significant increase was in the Analytic Range Scale Index on speaking in a confident manner. It happened because most of the participants were brave enough to establish eye contacts to the examiners (English for hotel trainer and manager in duty), although there were some misuses of English for hotels expressions. In contradiction, not all participants were able to improve their rate index. Some participants did not have a significant improvement after the implementation of teaching-learning cycle. This happened because those who were not able to improve their performance often missed the class and did not pay enough attention during the training.

By implementing the teaching-learning process in the training, the author was able to motivate the participants to be more active and responsive to develop their speaking ability, because the participants felt more confident and relax. The reason is that the participants were able to know the appropriate model from the Modelling stage and after that they demonstrated their speaking ability in their peer first (Joint Construction) before having an individual presentation (Independent Construction). In other word, the participants got good input and correction before performing the individual presentation. In addition, participants were able to imitate and produce expressions that were given by the native speakers via audio-video format. And some participants who achieved high rate were able to demonstrate simple

improvisation in their presentation. Through this structured training method, participants felt that their learning was very systematic and well structured.

However, in implementing the teaching-learning cycle, of course there are some strengths and weaknesses. The strengths of implementing the teaching-learning cycle in English for hotels are:

- a. The participants are interested on it. They try to speak or pronounce some words, sentences or expressions in English. Most of them are brave to speak. The implementation of teaching-learning cycle aims to make variety in teaching and learning process, especially in speaking ability, to motivate participants to be brave to speak, to avoid monotonous way and participants' boredom in learning English
- b. The use of audio-video format in the Modelling stage gives a good model to participants
- c. The implementation of Joint Construction stage gives the participants chances to be corrected by their peers and trainer

On the other hand, some weaknesses can also be found in applying the teaching-learning cycle in English for hotels training. They are as follows:

- a. I felt that the time is limited. The hotel does not allocate sufficient amount of time
- b. The participants' availability to attend the class regularly (because of their obligation as hotel employees)
- c. Some participants' expressions are considered as too "textbook"

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the result, it can be seen that the implementation of the teaching-learning cycle in English for hotels can develop the participants' ability in giving appropriate and accurate expressions in English for hotels. They can perform their argumentation in a good and proper way and it is able to improve 11 participants' speaking ability 1-2 rate(s) higher after the implementation of the teaching-learning cycle in English for hotels training

One of the most important things that the trainers should do before giving their participants the task, the trainers should give clear instruction; what should they do or create, individual or pair or group work, help the participants if they face difficulty, monitor them while they are discussing or having a role play, and giving them a good model, a model that can be imitated or comprehended by them, before asking them to perform. However, in implementing the teaching-learning cycle, of course there are some strengths and weaknesses.

Methodologically, the author proposes next researchers to use quantitative approach to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching-learning cycle. He argues that the approach will produce more objective result. Furthermore, by using quantitative approach or paradigm, the correlation between speaking ability improvement and teaching-learning cycle can be identified soundly.

Lastly, the author hopes English for hotels trainers prepare themselves before they come to the classroom and train English for hotels. Furthermore, they must be able to be a good decision maker in preparing their process of learning English and using innovative media like audio-video format and visual stimulus, such as pictures, to help and motivate their participants. Besides, he hopes the English for hotels trainers to give more accurate and authentic model to the participants. It aims to load the participants with prior knowledge and contextual experience. Moreover, the author also hopes that the classroom activities will lead to real situation and actual experience focusing on the learning process leading to creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving as to be able to be applied in their daily activities as professional hotel employees.

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