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THE EFFECTS OF COMBINED SHARED READING AND PREVIEW-REVIEW METHODS ON STUDENTS' SPEAKING PROFICIENCY

ASRIYAH BINTI ABIDIN

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS
TANJUNG MALIM
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is prepared by me except for the summaries and quotations which I have duly acknowledged.

1st of August 2007.

ASRIYAH BINTI ABIDIN

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Abstrak

Kajian eksperimental ini dijalankan dengan tujuan untuk mengenalpasti sama ada terdapat kesan yang positif daripada penggunaan dua kaedah iaitu *'Shared Reading'* (Holdaway, 1979) dan *'Preview-Review'* (Ulanoff dan Pucci, 1994) terhadap kemahiran bertutur dalam Bahasa Inggeris di kalangan pelajar tingkatan enam di sekolah menengah di luar bandar. Tahap awal kemahiran bertutur di kalangan pelajar-pelajar ini dikenalpasti berdasarkan keputusan SPM yang mereka duduki. Tujuan kaedah-kaedah ini digabungkan ialah agar pelajar diberi pendedahan yang cukup untuk memahami isi kandungan bahan bacaan dan juga perbendaharaan kata supaya mereka dapat mengaplikasikannya semasa sesi perbualan dalam proses pengajaran dan pembelajaran. Data yang dikumpulkan dari kajian ini dianalisa dengan menggunakan perisian SPSS. Keberkesanan kaedah yang digunakan ditentukan oleh penyelidik dengan membandingkan perbezaan antara min markah ujian-pra dan min markah ujian-pos bagi kedua-dua kumpulan. Keputusan menunjukkan terdapat perbezaan min yang signifikan di antara ujian-pra dan ujian-pos bagi kategori *'task fulfilment'*, *'language use'* dan *'communicative ability'* bagi Kumpulan Eksperimental manakala, bagi Kumpulan Kawalan, tidak terdapat perbezaan min yang signifikan di antara ujian-pra dan ujian-pos bagi setiap kategori. Secara keseluruhannya, keputusan yang diperolehi menunjukkan kaedah *'Shared Reading'* dan *'Preview-Review'* memberi kesan positif yang signifikan terhadap tahap kemahiran bertutur dalam Bahasa Inggeris di kalangan pelajar-pelajar tingkatan enam yang dikaji. Dengan itu gabungan kaedah-kaedah ini boleh digunakan sebagai salah satu kaedah untuk mengajar kemahiran bertutur dalam bahasa kedua.

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Abstract

This experimental research was carried out in an attempt to identify any possible positive effects of two Reading Aloud methods namely 'Shared Reading' (Holdaway, 1979) and 'Preview-Review' (Ulanoff dan Pucci, 1994) on form six students' speaking proficiency in English. The selected students were from a rural secondary school in Perlis. At the beginning, students' levels of speaking proficiency were determined based on their SPM results. The purpose of combining the methods was to scaffold students towards understanding the content and vocabulary in the selected reading texts so that they can be applied in the speaking session during the lesson. The data from the pre-test and post-test collected in this study were analyzed using SPSS software. The effectiveness of the methods implemented was determined by comparing the mean differences of the pre-test and the post-test scores between the two groups involved (Experimental Group and Control Group). The results indicate significant differences between the pre-test and the post-test mean scores for '*task fulfilment'*, '*language use'*, and '*communicative ability'* for the Experimental Group, whereas there is no significant difference in the mean scores for the same categories between the pre-test and post-test for the Control Group. Overall, the analyzed data demonstrates that, the implementation of 'Shared Reading' and 'Preview-Review' methods have significantly improved the Experimental Group's speaking proficiency. Therefore these combined methods can be suggested as one of the ways to teach speaking to second language students.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0. Introduction

Language is a medium of communication and interaction. Through communication and interaction people are able to carry out their various daily activities. According to Finocchiaro (1974) language is a uniquely human activity which is often characterized as "species specific". Through language human can receive and transmit messages. Thus they can take the role of both hearer and speaker. Naturally people learn to speak in their native language before they can learn to read and write it. Therefore, spoken language is considered primary to learning and acquiring a language.

Language enables people in a given community or other people who have learned the system of that community to communicate and to interact with each other. According to Finocchiaro (1974), the words communicate and interact signify to understand and to speak: to be able to hear and to respond or react to the spoken word. They also imply the ability to talk about something that happened in the past, that is happening in the present time, or that will happen at some time in the future. In the spoken language, a speaker is free to create new utterances, but in order to be understood, his utterances must remain

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within the 'rules' established by the linguistic system of the community (Finocchiaro, 1974).

Communication through the spoken language means understanding and reacting to what someone says. The response or reaction may be to make a statement; to agree or disagree; to ask question and to carry out a direction. Although people speak for many different reasons, these can be broadly categorized in two ways namely transactional function and interactional function (Brown and Yule, 1983 cited in Nesamalar Chitravelu et al., 1994). Transaction involves the use of language to get things done. For example: to request and give factual information. Interaction involves the use of the language to socialise. For example: conversing, discussing, making friends and story telling. In this case, good speaking proficiency is needed.

Lim Soh Lan (1994) defines speaking proficiency as the ability to produce autonomous utterances which are appropriate to the context of the speech situation fluently and accurately. Crystal (1977); Bryne (1986) and Nation (1991) cited in Lim Soh Lan (1994) define fluency as the ability to get across communicative intent without too much hesitation and too many pauses to cause barriers or a breakdown in communication. Therefore, fluency is the ability to produce speech that has 'normal flow' that is spoken at normal speed. Accuracy refers to the use of the correct forms where utterances do not contain errors affecting the phonological, syntactic, and semantic or discourse features of a language (Bryne, 1988 cited in Lim Soh Lan, 1994). Thus, it is obvious that speaking proficiency enables people to communicate and interact effectively and efficiently to carry out their daily activities.

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In 1991, the former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohammed made a press statement highlighting his worries regarding the poor results of the national English Language examination that was administered at the end of secondary school. He was worried that the "lackadaisical" attitude towards the English subject among students might not only cause Malaysia to lose its economic competitiveness but also lose its progress in the industrial and technical expertise if it workforce was not competent in English (News Straits Times, 1993).

In this multiracial country Malaysia, English Language is generally positioned as the most important second language while, Bahasa Malaysia (Malay Language) plays the role as the unifying language. Most Malaysians are fluent in Malay Language but not in English as it is not the language of all the people in the country. Since English is widely used in trade and commerce, those who are proficient in English, have better market acceptance especially in the private sectors. Therefore, it is very important for the English teachers to realise that something must be done to boost students' English proficiency especially in speaking skill.

In the same situation, the aim of English Language instruction in Malaysian schools is to enable the learners to communicate effectively and efficiently in English in social and professional situations. Malaysians should be able to use English for different purposes such as to ask for and give information, to understand instructions, to read textbooks or manuals and to write reports (Ministry of Education, 1989). This means that the learner has to master the oracy skills (listening and speaking) and literacy skills (reading and writing).

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Unfortunately the oracy skills which are supposed to be the primary skills are the weakest skills among our students. This is evident especially among the students in the schools in the rural areas (Rosli and Malachi, 1990, cited in Fauziah and Nita, 2002). According to Fauziah and Nita (2002), the reasons for students' low proficiency in listening and speaking are the lack of emphasis on the oracy skills in the classroom and examination oriented lessons.

Lim Soh Lan (1994), in her study on fluency and accuracy in spoken English identifies the causes of low spoken English proficiency as follows: firstly, the widespread uses of Bahasa Malaysia in teacher talk in EFL classes; secondly the uses of mother tongue or shared-language in peer-interaction; and thirdly, the motor-perspective of speaking activities. These speaking activities among others are: reading aloud of comprehension passages and model dialogues; answering wh-questions where the answers to these can be read off from the text; and repetition of model sentences displayed on the board, in textbooks, from substitution tables and using cues. These activities according to Lim Soh Lan (1994) help learners to vocalize the sounds of English and to be familiar with the structures of English leading to linguistic competence. However, through these activities the learners are not producing genuine speech that leads to develop speaking skill. Therefore, more effective teaching methods of spoken language are sought after.

Even though speaking is the primary skill in learning a language, many teachers named speaking as the skill that their learners are weakest in (Lim Soh Lan, 1994). Lim's study revealed that speaking is the skill the learners got the least practice. According to Seliger, (1977) cited in Jamali, (1991), practice refers to any verbal

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interaction between the learner and the others in his environment. The interaction usually consists of an output speech act by the learner and an input speech act from some other speakers. The lack of practice in the second language can be considered as the lack of environmental support. It is even worse if the teaching lessons in the classroom only emphasis on grammar rather than communication. Both contribute to the detrimental of spoken language acquisition. According to Dulay et al. (1982), language environment encompasses everything the language learner hears and sees in the new language. Students who are exposed to the list of words and their translations, together with a few readings in the new language will perhaps be able to attain some degree of reading skill in language, but not listening and speaking. The exposure to the classroom communication may enable students to acquire substantial mastery of the skill but do not acquire other areas of social discourse. Without exposure at all, of course no learning can take place.

Second language rich environment is essential to enhance language acquisition and fluency (Steinberg, 1999). However, in the context of the school environment in the rural area in Perlis, especially in the present school where the researcher is teaching, English language use outside the classroom is very limited. Social interaction among the students is carried out mostly either in Malay Language or in Chinese dialect.

Therefore the language rich environment is very much needed in the classroom if the language being taught is not the language of the community. One of the ways to overcome this problem is to encourage students to participate actively in the classroom speaking activities. They must be trained to communicate and to interact with teachers and their peers. The activities carried out should be focused on the production of

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authentic speech from the students. Hence, the role of the second language teacher is to create the second language environment in their speaking classes.

1.1. Need for the Study

The aim of English instruction in Malaysian schools is to enable learners to communicate effectively and efficiently in both social and professional situations. Regarding this aim various communicative teaching methods have been suggested and implemented by teachers in schools. However many experienced teachers are not satisfied with students' achievement in speaking skill which is supposed to be the primary skill in learning a language (Lim Soh Lan, 1994). Due to this situation, more effective teaching methods are needed besides the existing knowledge and practise of teaching spoken language.

According to Lim Soh Lan (1994), one of the ways in teaching speaking is reading aloud comprehension passages followed by answering wh-questions. The answers to the questions can be read off from the text, which actually limits the production of authentic speech. The speeches produced are limited to predetermined and well structured answers. Through this activity, students are deemed to have the competency to speak. However, it can be questioned whether the same students are able to speak accurately outside the classroom. Lim Soh Lan (1994) reported that the students' low performance in spoken English among others is due to the lack of practice in the classroom and outside the classroom. Therefore, practising the language to convey one's own ideas must be given attention in teaching spoken language.

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In this respect, this study looks at different aspects of reading aloud of comprehension passages. Reading aloud activities in this study are used to serve as scaffolding to students' speech production instead of answering the wh-questions. The Reading Aloud methods implemented in this study is a combination of Shared Reading (Holdaway, 1979) and Preview-Review (Ulanoff and Pucci, 1999). Even though both methods are actually used to teach children to read, they have been adapted to teach spoken language to young adults (the form six students). The adaptations made are discussed in Chapter 2 (page 28 and page 30) and Chapter 3 (refer to Table 3.3 page 65; and 3.4.1 page 70). The Shared Reading activity is an interactive activity that 'denies' students from being silent. After the passage is read aloud by the teacher, students are instructed to share their experiences that are related to the reading passage or text. By sharing experiences students cannot avoid from producing utterances and speeches that can be understood by their peers. During the activity, teacher scaffolds students' speech with language input and content input that students need to begin producing language themselves (Cullip, 1999). Meanwhile the Preview-Review activity provides students with extra source of comprehending the reading text as the important points are emphasised and reinforced in the primary language (Ulanoff and Pucci, 1999) that is Malay Language.

Besides enabling students to convey their ideas, the implementation of the methods also hoped to demonstrate positive effects on students' vocabulary and speaking proficiency. The effects of SR and PR on students' speaking proficiency are evaluated through 'task fulfilment'; 'language use' and 'communicative ability' (refer to Appendix

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B5). It is essential to prove that the data obtained from this study is conclusive so that it will support the use of SR and PR in teaching speaking.

Furthermore, the results of this study is hoped to be a useful source to assist educators and teachers of ESL in the selection of appropriate methods in facilitating students' speaking ability in English and other adult learners of ESL in Malaysia generally. Lastly, the study also attempts to serve as grounds for future researchers to probe into other possible teaching approaches or theories that benefit students in their English speaking proficiency.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The main problem that motivated the researcher to carry out this study is the need to select and use suitable techniques and methods to enhance students' speaking proficiency. According to Lim Soh Lan (1994), the key to attain fluency in spoken English is to maximize opportunities for interaction. Accuracy comes through classroom input, instruction and monitoring of use. One of the reasons that hamper students in producing good speech is the lack of vocabulary and knowledge on the use of appropriate words. Without having a good or at least average knowledge about various kinds of words and how they are used, it might demand a great effort for the speaker to produce intelligible speech. Hence, the choice of words is essential for speaking as they help the listeners or interlocutors to understand the discourse.

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In this respect, the implementation of combined Shared Reading and Preview-Review methods attempts to discover alternative effective ways in teaching speaking to second language learners.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

This study aims to investigate the effects of the use of Shared Reading (SR) and Preview-Review (PR) methods on students' speaking proficiency. The implementations of combined SR and PR methods in the lessons are mainly to provide students with sufficient vocabulary about the selected topic, to practice language structure that they have learnt and to enable them to apply their knowledge and the new vocabulary that they have learnt through the reading sessions in their conversations. In short, the purpose of this study is to share methods that can facilitate a teacher's scaffolding of difficult academic/ technical vocabulary and language structures that further (hopefully) enhance students' speaking proficiency.

1.4. Research Question

This study was conducted to answer the following research question:

How effective are the use of combined Shared Reading (SR) and Preview-Review (PR) methods in enhancing students' speaking proficiency?

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1.5. Hypothesis

Based on the research question, the following hypothesis was formulated:

1.5.1. The use of Shared Reading (SR) and Preview-Review (PR) methods will enhance the students' speaking proficiency with respect to the following:

1.5.1.1. task fulfilment

1.5.1.2. language use, and

1.5.1.3. communicative ability

1.6. Definitions of Terms

This section consists of the definitions of the important terms used throughout this study.

1.6.1. Authentic speech

Authentic speech refers to genuine speech produce by students in a given situation. The production of the speech is due to student's comprehension of the task and the language (Brown, 1994).

1.6.2. Communication (in spoken language)

Understanding and reacting to what someone says to carry out various daily activities (Finocchiaro, 1974).

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1.6.3. Communicative ability

The ability to: interact fluently, deliver ideas confidently, interact and maintain discussion, and display initiative and interest in the topic being discussed (Malaysian Examination Syndicate, 1999).

1.6.4. Discourse

Spoken/ written communication between people especially serious discussion of a particular subject (Brown, 1994).

1.6.5. Discourse markers

Discourse markers are words or groups of words that relate thoughts and ideas. The discourse markers help in identifying or differentiating ideas and also in clarifying one's opinions (Brown, 1994; and J.C. Lim, 1999). It helps the listeners to understand and sense relationships within and between sentences.

1.6.6. Language use

The ability to present basic and complex structures of the language, correct pronunciation, stress and intonation, use of appropriate and varied vocabulary and the ability to link ideas (Malaysian Examination Syndicate, 1999).

1.6.7. MUET

MUET is a short form for Malaysian Universities English Test that is a compulsory subject to all the sixth formers, pre-university students and

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undergraduates in local tertiary institutions. MUET test students on the four language skills namely, listening, speaking, writing and reading comprehension (Malaysian Examination Syndicate, 1999).

1.6.8. Preview-Review Method

Preview-review is an activity where through reading aloud the reader (teacher) preview important points and difficult vocabulary in learners' first language (L1, i.e. Bahasa Melayu); review the text in L1 after the reading aloud session (in second language) in order to emphasise and reinforce important points of the text (Ulanoff and Pucci , 1999).

1.6.9. Rote Memorization

Rote memorization refers to the kind of simple memorization where words, phrases and sentences are remembered as they are. These items are stored as they are without any analysis or processing (Steinberg, 1999: 207). Learners or children use memorized words to communicate needs before they can produce their phrases (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982: 23).

1.6.10. Scaffolding

Scaffolding refers to providing contextual supports for meaning through the use of simplified language, teacher modelling, visuals and graphics, cooperative learning and hands-on learning (Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003, p. 345 cited in Bradley and Bradley 2004). The teacher of second language learners has to

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facilitate that support. The scaffold is gradually removed when students become more proficient." (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2002, p. 85 cited in Bradley and Bradley, 2004).

1.6.11. Shared Reading Method

Shared Reading is an interactive reading (in school) that is generally accomplished using enlarged text that all students can see. During the reading activity the teacher involves the reader (children) in reading together by pointing to word in the text (Pavelka, 1995).

1.6.12. Speaking proficiency/ oral proficiency

The ability to produce many responses: in terms of speeches and talks; and the ability to produce autonomous utterances which are appropriate to the context of the speech situation fluently and accurately. (Meredith, 1990; Lim Soh Lan, 1994).

1.6.13. Task fulfilment

The ability to show understanding of the topic through: viewpoints presentation, development of ideas, and relevant response to the task given (Malaysian Examination Syndicate, 1999).

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CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0. Introduction

Spoken language especially conversation, involves thinking, listening and speaking that go on almost simultaneously, and the response is expected as soon as the speaker stops speaking (Nesamalar Chitravelu et al., 1996). In formal conversations such as during a meeting, business negotiation and forum, a speaker has to speak intelligibly so that the audience can be influenced effectively.

In teaching spoken language, teachers have used many techniques. However, according to Lim Soh Lan (1994) the techniques being used to teach speaking by the teachers in schools can produce competent speakers in terms of grammar, but not in social aspect. Therefore teachers need to select the kind of communicative techniques that naturally require students to use the language they have learnt. This means to say that the students have to produce genuine speech or authentic speech.

Authentic speech, according to Brown (1994) is referred to the production of speech in the real and meaningful context. Even though it is a real and meaningful context, one reminder to be considered is that it shouldn't hurt anyone's feelings. Authentic speech

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alone is insufficient as the speech produced must be intelligible. Therefore the teacher needs to accommodate students with appropriate knowledge about the discourse to be discussed together with related vocabulary and discourse markers. These accommodation will then be used by the students as scaffold in negotiating the meaning and producing speech. Some of the ways in facilitating the spoken language of learners are for the teacher to model the correct pronunciations and activate students' content knowledge through reading aloud activities. The reading aloud activities used in this study are utilized through the use of Shared Reading (SR) and Preview-Review (PR) methods.

2.1. Language Learning Theory

Basically the theory underlying this study is the schema theory and the application of the scaffolding concept. Singhal (1998) asserts that schema plays an important role in text comprehension, both in the first language and second language context. For example, whether reading in the first or second language, one can assume that both native and non-native readers will understand more of a text when they are familiar with content, formal, and linguistic schemata.

In the speaking practice, content schema, which refers to a learners' background or world knowledge provides learners with a foundation, a basis for comparison (Carrel and Eisterhold, 1983; Carrel, Pharis and Liberto, 1989 cited in Stott, 2001) so that the learners will not be left behind when such a discourse is being discussed. In fact, every individual

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