TEACHING SPEAKING IN ENGLISH BY USING THE PICTURE SERIES TECHNIQUE

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ABSTRACT

This study is aimed at finding out if there are any significant differences in achievement between the students who are taught speaking by using the Picture Series Technique (PST) and those who are taught by using the Drill Technique (DT), and to find out which speaking sub-skills are better taught by using PST. This study was an experimental research project using quantitative and qualitative methods, which employed a true experimental design of two classes: one as the experimental group taught using PST, and the other was the control group taught using the typical DT. There were 30 students in each group of the second-year at SMKN 1 Lhokseumawe. The instruments were a questionnaire sheet and a speaking test sheet. The data from tests were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Meanwhile, the data from questionnaire was analyzed by using the percentage system. The findings indicate that PST used in teaching speaking affected the students’ speaking score. The experimental group students had higher speaking scores (x=80.10, S1=10.29) than the control group (x=67.67, S1=12.86). The students’ speaking ability in both groups was significantly different as indicated by the t-test (the t-obtained (4.136) > t-table (2.00)). This showed that the students who were taught speaking skills by using PST got better results in speaking than those who were taught speaking by using DT. Furthermore, the students were seen to be more active and creative in expressing their ideas, and more confident in speaking.

Key Words: Speaking, Picture Series Technique.
INTRODUCTION

The graduates of vocational high school are expected to be professional in their study so they can find jobs easily or they can create their own businesses after graduation. The purpose of teaching English in a vocational high school is to prepare the students to be able to use English in their field of work, such as in job interviews, reading instruction manuals, communicating with foreign colleagues or getting job overseas. By mastering English, especially speaking skills, they will be more ready to face their future career. The objective of vocational schools is to prepare their graduates to enter the workforce using their vocational skills (Hasanah, 2012).

There are several factors that contribute to the failure of students in English especially in speaking skills. Generally, many of the students still have poor vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar, so they cannot speak fluently and accurately. They are also anxious and not confident when practicing speaking in English. In addition, in the learning process, they are not accustomed to English speaking atmosphere. It is well known that many teachers hardly apply communicative technique in teaching speaking. So, the students have minim chances to practice their English speaking. The teachers usually use the text of the conversation from the text book or from the other sources. Then, the students are asked to practice the conversation alternately with friends. Therefore, they are only able to perform the dialogue rather than comprehend the concept of how to produce utterances in order to communicate in English.

According to Bailey (2005), there are three principles that should be considered in teaching speaking which can influence and inform our decisions as we teach speaking to beginning and false beginning learners. The principles are: provide something for learners to talk about, create opportunities for students to interact by using group work or pair work, and manipulate physical arrangements to promote speaking practice. Those principles should be considered in choosing the method or technique that will be used in teaching speaking. One of the techniques considered that can cover these principles of teaching speaking is the Picture Series Technique (PST). PST can stimulate students to talk. It also gives them an opportunity to speak in pairs or in group discussions. Bailey (2005) says that pictures provide something to talk about. They can take the focus off the language learners and put it on the picture being discussed. In addition, Schwartz (2000) states
that pictures are great incentives for language production and can be used in many ways in the classroom.

Based on the previous description, there are three research questions in this study:

1. Is there any significant difference in achievement between the students who are taught speaking by using the Pictures Series Technique from those who are taught by using the usual Drill Technique amongst the second year students of SMKN 1 Lhokseumawe?

2. What speaking sub-skills are better taught by using the Picture Series Technique with the second year students from SMKN 1 Lhokseumawe?

   In accordance with the research questions above, the objectives of this study are to find out if there is any significant difference in the results obtained by the students who are taught speaking by using PST from those who are taught by using the Drill Technique (DT). It is also to know which speaking sub-skills were performed better by the students after they were taught by using PST.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking Skills

There are several resources that explain and clarify the definition of speaking. Brown (1994) defines speaking as an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information. Speaking consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning (Nunan, 1999). It means that speaking is a productive skill that requires the speakers to produce words or sentences with particular meaning that can be received and comprehended by the listeners.

   In addition, Kearney and Plax (1996) says that human communication is a process by which sources use verbal and non-verbal symbols to transmit message to receivers in such a way that similar meanings are constructed and understood by one another. Communication is a process, which is a series of stages in which something undergoes transformation at each step. In communication, a person serving as a source transforms her thoughts and ideas (meanings) into messages by selecting appropriate words and gestures (verbal symbols and nonverbal symbols).
Furthermore, Florez (1999) in Bailey (2005:2) says “speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information, it is often spontaneous, open-ended, and evolving but it is not completely unpredictable”. Chaney and Burke (1998:13) further say that “speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and nonverbal symbols, in a variety of contexts”.

Based on the previous definitions of speaking, the researcher concludes that speaking is a process of conveying meaning to other persons in various contexts. To be a good speaker, a person should master several aspects of speaking. Some of the aspects are fluency, accuracy and comprehensibility. Therefore, the researcher composes an operational definition of speaking skills for this research as the skills to build and share meaning with other people fluently, accurately and comprehensibly.

**Picture Series Technique**

In teaching speaking skills, there are several principles that should be considered by the teacher. One of the important principles is to provide something for learners that will encourage or stimulate them to talk. There are many things that can be presented to stimulate them to talk. In this case, visual stimuli in the form of a picture series were used in teaching speaking.

Linking to visual or aural stimuli, Hill (1990) says that visuals have the advantages
- of being inexpensive,
- of being available in most situations,
- of being personal, that is, they are selected by the teacher, which leads to an automatic sympathy between teacher and materials,
- consequent enthusiastic use, and
- of bringing images into the unnatural world of the language classroom.

Moreover, Harmer (1991) points out that the teacher can stimulate the students to produce oral compositions by showing them a series of pictures, miming a story, or playing them a tape with a series of sounds. Therefore, the Pictures Series Technique was used in teaching and learning speaking.

In addition, Bailey (2005:37) states that, in a speaking lesson, pictures and “manipulables” can provide the motivation for talking. Then, he also stated:
Using pictures as the basis of speaking lessons also gives the learners something to talk about, something to focus on other than their own uncertainty with the new language. Whether you use colored photographs from calendars, advertisements cutout from magazines, or pictures you locate on the internet, pictures add interest to speaking lessons and can motivate people to speak. Bailey (2005:37)

Speaking and writing are both productive skills and pictures can often be used in similar ways to promote them. Wright (2006) additionally states that pictures can stimulate and provide information to be referred to in conversation and discussion as in storytelling.

Moreover, Bowen (1991) states that a sequence of pictures are a series of pictures on a single subject. They reveal their story or theme, like a strip cartoon. In a connected set of illustrations, for good selection and display, the teacher must:
- Make the titles and captions large enough to read, or omit them all together and do the describing orally;
- Link pictures. There should be continuity of characterization, setting and subject from picture to picture, with figures of uniform size and recurring landmarks;
- If book or magazine illustrations are copied, they should be simplified and parts not essential to teaching aims should be left out;
- The pictures themselves should all be the same size and similarly mounted in order to make a set.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted on the second year students of SMKN 1 Lhokseumawe. Two classes from the Multimedia Department were taken as the sample in this study. They were selected by using convenience sampling technique. One class (II MM₁) was chosen as the experimental group which was taught speaking by using PST, whereas, another class (II MM₂) was the control group which was taught speaking by DT. Each class had 30 students. So the total number in the sample was 60 students.

The procedure used in collecting data for this research is an experimental study procedure. Data were collected from both the
experimental group and the control group. The data were in quantitative form obtained from the students’ pre-test and post-test scores.

A pre-test was given to both the experimental group and the control group. The test was an oral test. The students were asked to create a dialogue in pairs. The dialogue was created based on the clues given by the teacher. They had fifteen minutes to prepare the dialogue, and five minutes to perform it in front of the class.

The students in the experimental group were then taught speaking by using PST. The sequence of pictures was presented in teaching speaking. While in the control group, the students were taught speaking by using DT. After five meetings of teaching, both of the groups were given a post-test. This test was intended to find out the students’ speaking ability after the process of teaching and learning was finished.

To analyze the data, quantitative analysis was used. The data analysis was conducted by organizing the data gained from the pre-test and the post-test. The data obtained were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

To find out whether the data set has normal distribution or not, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used. Meanwhile, the Levene statistical test was used to explore the homogeneity of the scores from the experimental group and from the control group. To find out the different achievement between the experimental and control groups, the independent t-test was used. To calculate the difference of the students’ achievement both in experimental and control group before and after giving the treatment, a paired (dependent) t-test was used.

**RESEARCH FINDINGS**

Table 1 shows the statistical summary of the t-test results from the pre-tests of both the experimental and the control groups.

Table 1 Statistical Summary of The t-test Results from the Pre-tests of both the Experimental and the Control Groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Statistics</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>59.900</td>
<td>59.900</td>
<td>2.45528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>56.333</td>
<td>56.333</td>
<td>2.26940</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 continued...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Levene’s test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variance assumed</td>
<td>.276</td>
<td>.602</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that $t_{obtain}$ from the pre-test of both groups is 1.067. The $t_{table}$ for df = 58 at the level of significance 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$) is 2.00. The result shows that $t_{obtain} < t_{table}$ that is $1.067 < 2.00$, so $H_0$ is accepted in which students who were taught speaking through PST achieved a similar performance with the students who were taught speaking through DT. This means that there is no significance difference in achievement between the students in both groups.

Table 2 shows the statistical summary of the t-test results from the post-tests of both the experimental and the control groups.

Table 2. Statistical Summary of the t-test Results from the Post-tests of both the Experimental and the Control Groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Samples Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Levene’s test for Equality of Variances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test Equal variance not assumed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 2 shows that the \( t_{\text{obtain}} \) from the post-tests of both groups is 4.136. The \( t_{\text{table}} \) for \( df = 58 \) at the level of significance 5\% \( \alpha = 0.05 \) is 2.00. The result shows that \( t_{\text{obtain}}> t_{\text{table}} \) that is 4.136 > 2.00, so \( H_0 \) is rejected in which the students who were taught speaking through PST achieved a better performance than the students who were taught speaking through DT. This means that there was a significant difference in the results obtained by the students in both groups.

Table 3 shows the statistical summary of t-test results of differences between the pre and post test results of the experimental group.

**Table 3. Statistical Summary of t-Test Results of Differences between the Pre and Post Test Results of the Experimental Group.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Samples Test</th>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Upper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>Pronunciation post - Pronunciation pre</td>
<td>.23333</td>
<td>.62606</td>
<td>.11430</td>
<td>.00044</td>
<td>.46711</td>
<td>2.041</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 2</td>
<td>Grammar post – Grammar pre</td>
<td>.20000</td>
<td>.55086</td>
<td>.10057</td>
<td>.00570</td>
<td>.40570</td>
<td>1.989</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 3</td>
<td>Vocabulary post – Vocabulary pre</td>
<td>.36667</td>
<td>.61495</td>
<td>.11227</td>
<td>.13704</td>
<td>.59629</td>
<td>3.266</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 4</td>
<td>Fluency post – Fluency pre</td>
<td>.33333</td>
<td>.60648</td>
<td>.11073</td>
<td>.10687</td>
<td>.55980</td>
<td>3.010</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 5</td>
<td>Comprehensibility post – Comprehensibility pre</td>
<td>.46667</td>
<td>.57135</td>
<td>.10431</td>
<td>.25332</td>
<td>.68001</td>
<td>4.474</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 6</td>
<td>Task post – Task pre</td>
<td>.26667</td>
<td>.58329</td>
<td>.10649</td>
<td>.04886</td>
<td>.48447</td>
<td>2.504</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Samples Test</th>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Upper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>Pronunciation post - Pronunciation pre</td>
<td>.86667</td>
<td>.62881</td>
<td>.11480</td>
<td>.63187</td>
<td>1.10147</td>
<td>7.549</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 2</td>
<td>Grammar post – Grammar pre</td>
<td>.93333</td>
<td>.58329</td>
<td>.10649</td>
<td>.71553</td>
<td>1.15114</td>
<td>8.764</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 3</td>
<td>Vocabulary post – Vocabulary pre</td>
<td>1.23333</td>
<td>.81720</td>
<td>.14920</td>
<td>.92819</td>
<td>1.53848</td>
<td>8.266</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 4</td>
<td>Fluency post – Fluency pre</td>
<td>90000</td>
<td>.60743</td>
<td>.11090</td>
<td>.67318</td>
<td>1.12682</td>
<td>8.115</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results from Table 3 indicate that $t_{\text{obtain}}$ is larger than $t_{\text{table}}$ for six speaking sub-skills between the mean scores of the pre-test and post-tests of the experimental group. The $t_{\text{table}}$ for $df = 29$ at the level of significance 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$) is 2.04. $T_{\text{obtain}}$ for pronunciation is 7.549, for grammar is 8.764, for vocabulary is 8.266, for fluency is 8.115, for comprehensibility is 8.610, and for task is 6.595. It can be seen that $t_{\text{obtain}}$ for pronunciation is $7.549 > 2.04$; for grammar is $8.764 > 2.04$; for vocabulary is $8.266 > 2.04$; for fluency is $8.115 > 2.04$; for comprehensibility is $8.610 > 2.04$ and for tasks is $6.595 > 2.04$. This shows that using PST increased the scores of the students in all six speaking skills (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, comprehensibility and tasks) significantly for the experimental group. This means that the students’ speaking ability has improved after they were taught speaking by using PST.

**DISCUSSION**

From the pre-test scores of both groups (the experimental and the control group), it can be concluded that the students in both groups had similar ability in speaking. This can be seen from the results of the independent t-test analysis of the pre-test scores from the experimental and the control groups, that $t$-obtain (1.067) < $t$-table (2.00). This means that there is no significant difference in ability between the students in the experimental group and those in the control group.

While in the post-test, the results from the independent t-test show that the experimental group is better than the control group. The $t_{\text{obtain}}$ (4.136) > $t_{\text{table}}$ (2.00). This indicates that there is a significant difference in the ability post-test between the experimental and the control groups. The experimental group performed better than the control group. So, it can be concluded that the students who were taught speaking by using PST performed better than those who were taught speaking using DT.

The data from the students’ scores for each speaking sub-skill shows that for each speaking sub-skill the results from the pre-test were
seen to improve in the post test results. This is based on the average scores for each speaking sub skill in the post tests. The students in the experimental group had better scores in speaking in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, comprehensibility and tasks. In addition, the paired t-test of speaking sub-skills mean score showed that $t_{obtain} > t_{table}$. $t_{obtain}$ for pronunciation is 7.549 > 2.04, for grammar is 8.764 > 2.04; for vocabulary is 8.266 > 2.04; for fluency is 8.115 > 2.04; for comprehensibility is 8.610 > 2.04 and for tasks is 6.595 > 2.04. So, it can be concluded that using PST improved all six speaking skills (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, comprehensibility and tasks) significantly for the experimental group. This means that the pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, comprehensibility and tasks are better taught by using PST.

In the process of teaching and learning speaking in the experimental group, it could be seen that the students enjoyed learning speaking using PST. The atmosphere in the speaking classroom became more conducive and interesting. So the students were more comfortable and confident in producing sentences. They became more active and creative than before. This is relevant to the statement of Bailey (2005) that pictures can promote creative and critical thinking and can be used in many ways by different teachers for various lessons. They are not tied to any particular teaching method, class size, or proficiency level. The same photograph can evoke many different kinds of language use in different contexts. Moreover, by using PST, the students can be more creative and have more fun in learning, especially in learning speaking. Harmer (2007) also states that pictures can also be used for creative language use, whether they are in a book or on cue card, flashcards or even are wall pictures.

Moreover, learning speaking by using PST can increase students’ participation through group work. According to Bailey (2005), one way to overcome students’ reticence and increase their opportunities to speak is to use pair work and group work. Using group work can improve learners’ motivation and promote choice, independence, creativity, and realism. In interacting among the students in their group, they can appreciate each other, express their ideas more freely, and share their ideas. So, the students in this research got inputs from their friends and each got much time to speak in their group.

In addition, pictures can make meanings clearer. The California High School Speech Association’s Curriculum Committee (2004) states that a great deal of our conversation takes place in sight of the objects
about which we are speaking. Seeing an actual object can clarify meanings for the audience. Therefore, the materials given by the teacher were more easily comprehended by the students in this research.

In addition, PST was seen to increase the students’ enthusiasm in learning speaking, so they improved their speaking ability more easily. This is in line with the statement of Ellis (1994) that motivation is the primary determinant of L2 proficiency. When the students are likely to be highly motivated to learn the L2, they will acquire a high level of proficiency. Conversely, when they are unmotivated, they will achieve only a low level of proficiency. Furthermore, Harmer (1991) states that students’ progress in speaking a foreign language depends on motivation. To motivate the students, interesting communicative activities should be presented. In this research, it can be concluded that PST improved students’ motivation to engage actively in practicing their speaking.

After a series of treatments, the students seem to have acquired some new vocabulary related to the materials given. Pictures provide something for learners to talk about. This is as stated by Wright (2006) that pictures can stimulate and provide information to be referred to in conversation, discussion and storytelling. So, the students could produce sentences more easily and more confidently. The students could speak more easily because they had some ideas to speak about. Then, they did not feel so much anxiety in speaking. Furthermore, they also developed better pronunciation, because the researcher also asked each student to correct their friends’ mistakes in pronouncing words and contribute to give each other correct pronunciation.

The findings of this research are in line with previous studies on PST. The research by Lailawati in 2009 indicated that PST was successful in improving the students’ speaking ability as well as increasing their involvement in the teaching and learning activities. Another study on PST was conducted by Agustina in 2011, who also found that PST gives satisfactory results for the improvement in students speaking skills in storytelling. Therefore, it is recommended that English teachers use PST to improve students’ English speaking abilities.

In conclusion, PST is an effective technique for teaching speaking. The use of PST in the teaching learning process was easily understandable and went very well. The students were attentive and became actively involved in the learning process. They both built good
interactions during the teaching learning process by using PST. This technique helped the students to be braver to speak up and express their ideas so they became more confident, more creative and more motivated in learning speaking. As a result their speaking skills improved.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

PST is one of the communicative techniques that can be applied in teaching and learning speaking. The technique helped the students to improve their ability in speaking. There was a significant difference in achievement between the students who were taught speaking using PST from those who were taught by using DT from the second year students of SMKN 1 Lhokseumawe. This was proved by the t-test results on the post-tests for both the experimental and the control groups. Therefore, PST is an effective technique to be used in teaching speaking.

Besides, the students who were taught by using PST performed better in each of the sub-skills of speaking (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehensibility). This result was based on the average scores for each of the speaking sub-skill in the speaking assessments, where the students got higher average scores on each of the post-tests. So, it can be concluded that the five speaking sub-skills are better taught by using PST. Furthermore, this technique was seen to increase the motivation of the students to learn speaking, so they became more active and participated more in the speaking activities in the classroom.

The findings of this study suggested some implications for the teaching of speaking to the second grade students of SMKN 1 Lhokseumawe. It is clear from the results for the two hypotheses that the experimental group subjects’ speaking ability has improved more. Therefore, this study has the following suggestions for the development of speaking skills amongst the school students:

1. Speaking has to be emphasized over the other English language skills.
2. PST should be an integral part of the speaking class syllabus.
3. PST activities must be emphasized over and over again. Students’ interactive creativity must be continuously encouraged.
4. Teachers should encourage their students to practice speaking English. Encouragement can work if a teacher can present an interactive technique in teaching that the students find interesting.
5. To get good results in speaking, students need to practice speaking extensively in their daily activities with their friends. They should prepare themselves well, especially before joining their classes.

6. It is important to give recommendations about better ways to improve students’ English L2 speaking abilities to curriculum designers and decision makers, school administrations and supervisors, teachers, researchers and even to students themselves.

REFERENCES


