

TEACHING SPEAKING IN ENGLISH USING CONTEXTUAL TEACHING AND LEARNING

By
Sofhia Annisa

Syiah Kuala University, Banda Aceh

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to investigate the effect of using the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach in teaching English speaking to second year students at a state vocational senior high school in Lhokseumawe, Aceh. This study employed two classes as the sample: one as the experimental class and the other as the control class. The experimental class was taught using CTL, while the control class was taught using the conventional method (teacher-centered). In collecting the data, tests and a questionnaire were used, and then the collected data was analyzed using SPSS computer software. The research findings showed that the mean post-test score of the experimental class at 74 was significantly higher than that of the control class at 60.9. Furthermore, the result of the t-test showed that the scores of the experimental class were higher than that of the control class ($11.51 > 4.06$). The data showed that the students taught using CTL achieved significantly better scores in speaking than those taught using the conventional method. Hence, the alternative hypothesis was accepted and the null hypothesis was rejected. Amongst the speaking sub-skills, comprehensibility was the most improved with an average score of 3.4 out of a maximum of 4.0. This shows that the students got a better understanding by the use of CTL. Moreover, the result of the data analysis from the questionnaires indicated that almost all the students (93%) in the experimental class responded positively towards the application of CTL since it effectively improved their speaking skills.

Key Words: *Teaching speaking, Contextual Teaching and Learning.*

INTRODUCTION

In the Indonesian context, skill in English speaking is regarded as important as the other English language skills taught in Indonesian schools. This is based on the decree of the Ministry of Education and Culture (*Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan* or *Depdikbud*) No. 22 (2006) for secondary schools that speaking is taught along with the other three language skills, listening, reading and writing. In vocational schools, the purpose of teaching English is to help students master the basic knowledge and skills of English to support and develop skills in English to communicate both verbally and in written form at the intermediate level (Depdikbud, 2006).

The curriculum for the second year students at the vocational senior high school expects that the students will become capable of communicating in English (Depdikbud, 2006). They should be able to produce simple English speech adequate for elementary functions and to understand simple exchanges in everyday, professional or personal life. They are also expected to communicate effectively with the non-native speakers, describe job responsibilities and academic background, discuss past and future projects, use a directory, understand simple instructions, and write short notes, directions and lists (Depdikbud, 2006).

However, some difficulties have been encountered by the second year students of SMKN 3, a state vocational senior school in Lhokseumawe, Aceh. From a preliminary study, the first problem faced by the students was their anxiety of making mistakes in their speaking performances. The teachers said that they often encountered this difficulty when they asked students to say something in English in the class. The second problem was the lack of speaking practice which may lead to the failure of students to learn to speak English.

These problems indicated that an appropriate teaching strategy was needed in teaching English speaking to the students at the school in order to help stimulate their ability to speak English. One of the popular approaches for teaching English speaking is the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) technique. This is because CTL unites concept and practice (Johnson, 2002). CTL enables the language learners to learn about the concepts of the language whilst practicing with one another in speaking activities. The students in the CTL classroom play an active role in their learning through exploring, investigating, validating, and discussing (Smith, 2010).

Moreover, Johnson (2002:25) defines the CTL system as “an educational process that aims to help students see meaning in the academic material that they are studying by connecting the academic study with the context of their daily lives, and their personal, social, and cultural circumstances.” In other words, CTL helps students to connect the content of their study to contexts in life. This assists them to find more meaning in their learning which creates more meaningful teaching-learning activities.

Therefore, there are three research questions posed for this study:

- (1) Is there any significant difference in the English speaking performance of students who are taught using CTL and those who are taught by using the conventional method?
- (2) Which speaking sub-skills (accuracy (grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and task), fluency, and comprehensibility) were most improved after the implementation of CTL?
- (3) What are the responses of students on the use of the CTL to learn speaking in English?

Based on the research questions above, the objectives of this study were to find out if there is any significant difference in the English speaking performance of students who are taught using CTL and those who are taught using a conventional method. Then, to discover speaking sub-skills (accuracy (grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and task), fluency, and comprehensibility) was most improved after the implementation of CTL. It is also aimed to find out the responses of students towards the use of CTL in learning to speak in English.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching Speaking

The mastery of speaking skills is a priority for many students of English. It is an aspect which is needed by a language learner for effective verbal communicative. According to Spratt, Pulverness, and Williams (2005), speaking is a productive skill which involves speech to express meanings to other people. Mostly, it requires quick, impromptu responses from the speakers that allow a limited time to think of what to say. This skill enables people to exchange information by using verbal and body language to keep the people involved as well as to ensure that they understand the essence of conversation. Bailey (2005) defines speaking as an activity that produces systematic verbal

utterances in order to convey meaning. Hence, speaking does not only involve producing sounds but also delivering ideas and/or content.

In line with the communicative purpose, Richards and Rodgers (2001, as cited in McDonough & Shaw, 2003) offer several characteristics of communicative view of language. First, language is a system for the expression of meaning. Second, the primary function of language is for interaction and communication. Third, the structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses. And fourth, the primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse.

Even though the characteristics above show that speaking skills play roles in language learning, teachers play an essential role in language learning. Therefore, when teachers ask the students to speak English in the classroom, they should not only require the students to pay attention to the language forms and functions, they also need to encourage the students to take part in activities that involve a general knowledge of interactions between a speaker and a listener. These activities are intended to clearly convey meanings. As McDonough and Shaw (2003) state, speaking is an interaction between the speaker and the listener that the listener has to interpret the speaker in real time and that sometimes very little time is allowed for the response.

Additionally, the goal of teaching speaking in schools is to help the students to be able to express their feelings, opinions, and ideas in English and to use its expressions in greetings, introductions, apologies, etc. The teaching process is carried out in many different ways and for different reasons. Some teachers are likely to be concerned with correct pronunciation whilst others are more concerned with comprehensibility and fluency in speaking (McDonough & Shaw, 2003).

Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL)

The Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) technique was first introduced in the United States. It was derived from the John Dewey point of view in 1916 who proposed the theory of curriculum and teaching methodology related to the students' experiences and interests. According to this theory, the students will learn more effectively when the subject matter relates to their experiences, and they are actively involved in the classroom teaching-learning activities (Nurhadi, Yasin, & Senduk, 2004). Principally, this theory helps teachers to relate the subject matter to the experiences of the students and to motivate them

to relate English to their experiences. So they, along with the teacher(s), conduct meaningful classroom activities, rather than learning about foreign concepts that have no relevance for them and are hence easily forgotten.

There are some characteristics of CTL that distinguish it from other teaching methods. Johnson (2002) lists eight important elements.

Making Meaningful Connections

There are many ways to connect teaching-learning to the lives of students. Johnson (2002) proposes the most effective methods as:

- to connect the academic content to the experiences of students,
- connecting study material to the context of the lives of students,
- introducing material from other disciplines studied by the students,
- linking courses by combining separate courses and sharing with other classes,
- integrating courses by bringing together two or more disciplines into a single class,
- combining school and work which helps students to cope academically and grow personally by making partnerships between classrooms and companies, and
- service learning that links schools and service organizations and aims for students to get specific knowledge whilst helping others.

Doing Significant Work

In the CTL classroom, Johnson (2002) says the students can perform significant work that will help them see meaning in what they study. Those actions will guide them to find a relationship between the materials learned and real life situations.

Self-Regulated Learning

Self-regulated learning is a learning process that engages students independently or in a group which is designed to connect academic knowledge with the daily lives of the students to achieve a meaningful purpose (Johnson, 2002). It requires students to possess some specific knowledge and skills. They should possess certain skills in order to take action, create questions, and make independent choices and to think creatively and critically.

Collaborating

Collaborating, basically, has a significant role in self-regulated learning because self-regulated learners usually collaborate in small autonomous groups (Johnson, 2002). Collaboration can overcome mental blinkers imposed by limited experience and knowledge. It also stimulates students to respect others, listen to others, and to build agreements.

Critical and Creative Thinking

Johnson (2002) explains that CTL is a system of intellectual accomplishment that begins with active participation in significant experiences. Critical thinking is a process by which mental activity is used to solve problems, make decisions, persuade others, analyze assumptions, and make inquiries using scientific data. Furthermore, creative thinking is a mental activity that requires originality and insight.

Nurturing the Individual

Johnson (2002) further mentions that CTL asks teachers to identify and understand other students, including their interests, talents, learning styles, emotional temperament, and treatment by peers. The teachers cannot motivate students if they are unaware of the problems and drawbacks of the students. If teachers can minimize these limitations, school can be a fun place to study.

Reaching High Standards of Performance

The main objective of CTL is to enhance the academic performance of the students (Johnson, 2002). Students should comprehend and be able to perform activities, complete tasks and assignment etc. These are aimed to prepare the students to be responsible citizens, wise decision makers, and diligent employees.

Using Authentic Assessments

Finally, Johnson (2002) states that authentic assessments challenge students to apply new academic information and skills to real life situations for particular purposes. It focuses on objectives, involves hands-on learning, and requires making connections and collaborating. Therefore, with authentic assessments students are allowed to demonstrate their mastery of objectives and depth of understanding, while at the same time increasing and deepening their knowledge.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In conducting this research, the writer used an experimental research technique using two groups. The experimental group (EG) was taught using the CTL approach and the other, the control group (CG), was taught using the conventional method usually used by the teacher for teaching speaking English.

The population of this study was all the second grade students at SMKN 3 Lhokseumawe. In choosing the sample, the writer used an accidental sampling technique. Gay, Mills and Airasian (2006) state that accidental sampling is a sampling design applied to choose the sample because of its availability. Although there were 9 classes of second grade students, some of them were on work practice at various offices and companies in Lhokseumawe. When this study was conducted, there were only four classes which had finished their work practice, and were available for this study. In this case, the sample chosen was taken from the students with the same study major, namely accounting. These classes had the same characteristics, interests and initial English abilities. From these four classes, two were randomly chosen. One was as EG and the other as CG. There were 30 students in each class; hence the total number in the sample was 60 students.

To collect the required data, a verbal pre-test was used to measure the English speaking ability of the students before the start of the treatments. There were ten topics prepared which were suitable to the syllabus of the second grade students of vocational senior high schools. These topics were based on the target language performance to be achieved in the second semester. The students were asked to perform a dialogue in pairs based on a chosen topic. Firstly, each pair chose a slip of paper and then in 15 minutes the pair had to create a dialogue based on the topic written on the slip of paper that they chose. After 15 minutes, the teacher randomly called on each pair to perform the dialogue that they had prepared to be recorded and assessed.

In addition, a questionnaire with 25 statements was used to investigate the responses of students towards the use of CTL in learning speaking. The questionnaire was constructed based on the theory of CTL proposed by Johnson (2002), Nurhadi, Yasin and Senduk (2004), and Berns and Erickson (2001). It was employed after the students completed the post-test. Each item on the questionnaire was rated on a five-point Likert scale via *strongly agree*, *agree*, *undecided*, *disagree*, and *strongly disagree*.

In order to analyze the data and prove/disprove the hypothesis, the writer used the SPSS. statistical program. Finally, the data from questionnaires was analyzed using the percentage procedure proposed by Sudjiono (2005).

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

A paired test was conducted to calculate the differences in the performances of the students in both EG and CG before and after the treatments were given. The dependent t-test was obtained by pairing the results from the pre-test and the post-test scores from each group.

Table 1 shows the statistical summary of t-test results from the pre-test and post-test of EG.

Table 1. Statistical Summary of t-test Results from the Pre-test and Post-test of the Experimental Group.

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Post-test	74.000	30	13.55194	2.47424
	Pre-test	48.5333	30	13.7332	2.50734

Paired Samples Correlation				
		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Post-test	30	.606	.000
	Pre-test			

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair 1	Post-test	25.46667	12.11648	2.21216	20.94230	29.99194	11.512	29	.000
	Pre-test								

Meanwhile, Table 2 shows the statistical summary of t-test results from the pre-test and post-test from CG.

Table 2. Statistical Summary of t-test Results from the Pre-test and Post-test from the Control Group.

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Post-test	60.9000	30	13.38901	2.44449
	Pre-test	50.3000	30	14.22274	2.59670

Table 2 continued...

Paired Samples Correlation				
		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Post-test	30	.466	.009
	Pre-test			

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Post-test	10.60000	14.28672	2.60839	5.26525	15.93475	4.064	29	.000
	Pre-test								

Based on the data from the tables above, it can be seen that the t-test from EG is 11.512 and the t-test from CG is 4.064. The t_{table} for $df=29$ at the level of significance 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$) is 2.04. The results show that $t_{obtain} > t_{table}$ in which $11.512 > 2.04$ for EG and $4.064 > 2.04$ for CG. This means that there was a significant difference in the speaking ability for each of the two groups before and after the treatment. However, the result of the t-test for the experimental group was much larger than the t-test result for the control group ($11.512 > 4.064$). This indicates that there was a significant improvement in the speaking ability of EG compared to that of CG. The group taught using CTL got a much higher score than CG which was taught using the usual technique used by the teacher in teaching speaking.

Then, the data collected from pre-tests and the post-tests were analyzed in order to identify the scores from the students in EG for each category in the assessment. This was aimed at finding out which speaking sub-skill from amongst accuracy (grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and task), fluency, and comprehensibility was most improved after the implementation of CTL. The scores of students for each category were summed and the average calculated for both the pre-test and post-test scores. The following Figure 1 shows the scores from the pre-test and the post-test for each category.

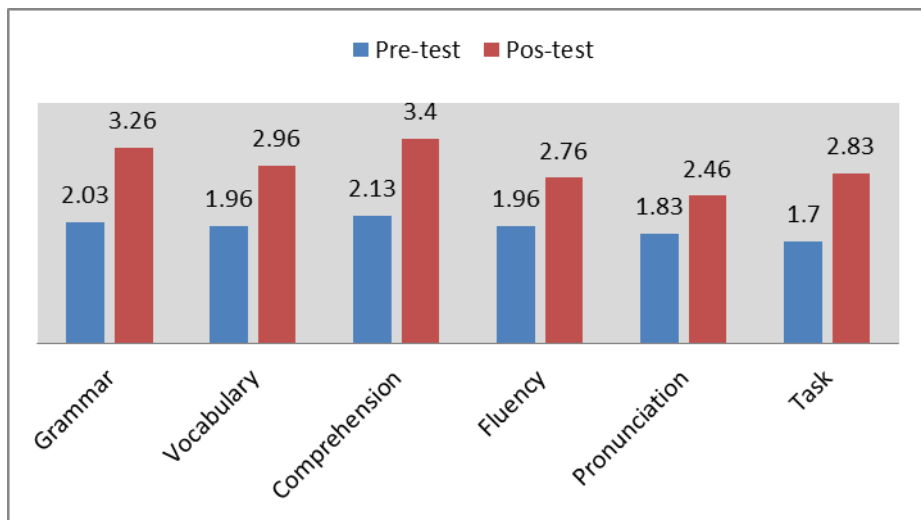


Figure 1. Comparison of Results for each Category from the Experimental Group from Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores.

It can be seen from Figure 1 that in every category of the assessment there was a marked improvement from the pre-test to the post-test. The increases in each category respectively were 1.23 for grammar, 1.00 for vocabulary, 1.27 for comprehension, 0.80 for fluency, 0.63 for pronunciation, and 1.13 for tasks. From these results, it can be concluded that comprehension improved most after using CTL compared to the improvements of the other speaking sub-skills.

Finally, based on analysis of the questionnaires, a majority of the students gave positive responses toward the use of CTL for teaching speaking. Almost all students (93%) in EG responded positively towards the application of CTL since it effectively improved their speaking skills.

Discussions

Based on the research results, it was shown that the students who were taught using CTL achieved much better speaking scores than those taught using the conventional method. This was proved by the results from the dependent t-test of each group, EG and CG. By pairing the pre-test and post-test results, the t-test from EG was higher than the t-test from CG ($11.5 > 4.1$). This indicates that there is a significant improvement in the post-test results from EG after CTL was used. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Thus, it can be said that CTL is an effective approach for

teaching speaking that can improve the English speaking ability of students.

Reflecting on the results obtained from the application of CTL in teaching English speaking, it was effective for several reasons. First, CTL encouraged the students to be self-motivated learners. It assumes that individual students have unique skills, interests, and cultural backgrounds which should be addressed to make them feel valued and to get respect from others (Sears, 2002). In CTL, the students used their individual skills, interests, and cultural backgrounds to build their own knowledge which led them to discover meaning in the study of English rather than something elaborated by the teacher. Then, the students were trained to think and formulate their own ideas and to participate actively in the speaking activities.

Next, CTL encouraged the students to become active learners. The students were encouraged to actively participate in the teaching and learning activities. Trianto (2009) explains that CTL is able to create an active classroom where the students actively participate in many activities and become more responsible for their own study and practice. Additionally, CTL is able to help the less competent students through learning communities or learning in a small group. The more competent students in each group must help and share ideas with those students who need more support, explanation, and guidance. Sears (2002) explains that learning is a social process which can be enhanced when the learners have opportunities to interact with each other in instructional activities. Hence, learning groups have a significant role in the success of the learning process.

Concerning with the speaking sub-skills that were most improved after using CTL to learn speaking English, the results showed that comprehension increased most after the implementation of CTL. Even though all the speaking sub-skills (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and tasks) scores improved, it can be seen from the data in Figure 1 that the average scores for the students in comprehension were 2.13 in the pre-test, and this was increased by 1.27 points and became 3.40 in the post-test. This result proves that CTL does provide much opportunity for practice and encourages the students to be involved in meaningful activities. As a consequence, the students' post-test results improved since they understood and remembered their lessons by heart.

Lastly, a majority of the students gave positive responses towards the use of CTL in teaching speaking. This may be due to the fact that CTL enabled them to engage actively in the English speaking classroom activities. Furthermore, they all could actively participate in the learning process since they were encouraged to speak with their peers in their groups. They were able to ask about or correct mistakes in the groups by discussing, questioning and answering questions. This signifies that CTL enabled them to engage actively in the English speaking classroom activities. They did not have to worry about making mistakes because the teacher did not correct their mistakes directly, but correction was given after performances by all students by teaching them to be aware of the common mistakes.

In conclusion, CTL successfully improved the English speaking skills of EG from the second year at SMK 3 Lhokseumawe. CTL had shown to be able to develop the English speaking skills of the students by learning in context, promoting their engagement and motivation in the learning process, practicing critical thinking by participating in problem solving activities, nurturing better study attitudes by working in groups, and it helped the students to improve their performances. Moreover, the students looked happy and enjoyed the English speaking lessons that reflected their positive attitude toward the application of CTL in learning English speaking.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

The results of the research indicate that the speaking skills of the students in EG improved much more than those in CG. This means that the implementation of CTL significantly improved the abilities of the students studying speaking English. Next, comprehensibility was found to be the sub-skill that was most improved after the application of CTL. Finally, the results from the questionnaires indicated that the students were interested and had positive attitudes or responses toward the implementation of CTL in learning to speak English.

Suggestions

CTL has been found to be an effective approach for teaching English speaking. Nevertheless, some weaknesses may occur in applying this approach. In relation to the performance of the teachers, it is suggested that they should have good understanding on the proper

use of CTL to teach English speaking. This approach needs to be implemented properly according to the theory of CTL. Moreover, they should prepare the materials and activities prior to starting the class to ensure efficient classroom activities during the teaching-learning process.

It is also suggested that teachers should vary their techniques in grouping the students in order to stimulate the cooperation of the students in doing group work. This will strengthen relationships between the students, and encourage them to work together. More importantly, the students need to realize that learning is a two way process, not only teacher-centered. This means that they also play a significant role in determining their success in their studies. Thus, they need to be actively involved in the teaching-learning process.

Moreover, the writer suggests that further studies on the application of CTL for English speaking classes should be conducted in order to get more information on the application of CTL, especially in EFL contexts.

REFERENCES

- Bailey, K. M. (2005). *Practical English Language Teaching: Speaking*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Berns, R. G., & Erickson, P. M. (2001). Contextual teaching and learning: Preparing students for the new economy. *The Highlight Zone Research @ Work No. 5*. Retrieved from: http://www.cord.org/uploadedfiles/nccte_highlight05\contextualteachinglearning.pdf
- Depdikbud. (2006). Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional Republik Indonesia Nomor 22 Tahun 2006. Retrieved from: http://www.aidsindonesia.or.id/uploads/20130729141205.Permendiknas_No_22_Th_2006.pdf
- Gay, L. R., Mills, G. E., & Airasian, P. (2006). *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications*, 8th ed. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Johnson, E. B. (2002). *Contextual Teaching and Learning: What it is and Why it's Here to Stay*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, Inc.
- McDonough, J. & Shaw, C. (2003). *Materials and Methods in ELT: A Teacher's Guide*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

- Nurhadi, Yasin, B., & Senduk, A. G. (2004). *Pembelajaran Kontekstual (Contextual Teaching and Learning/ CTL) dan Penerapannya dalam KBK*. Malang: Universitas Negeri Malang.
- Sears, S. (2002). *Contextual Teaching and Learning: A Primer for Effective Instruction*. Bloomington: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.
- Smith, B. P. (2010). Instructional strategies in family and consumer science: Implementing the contextual teaching and learning pedagogical model. *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences Education*, 28(1), 23-38.
- Spratt, M., Pulverness, A., & Williams, M. (2005). *The TKT Courses*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sudjiono, A. (2005). *Pengantar Statistik Pendidikan*. Jakarta: PT. Raja Grafindo Persada.
- Trianto. (2009). *Mendesain Model Pembelajaran Inovatif Progresif*. Jakarta: Kencana.