

Songs Helped Them Learn the English Connected Speech

Suwartono
ELT. Department
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto
Indonesia
suwartono2006@yahoo.co.id

ABSTRACT: - *In the previous years, the students at the place where the present study was conducted were taught the English connected speech through drill. This used to bring about students' poor attitudes and unsatisfactory achievement. This study was aimed at examining if selected songs would improve the students' connected speech performance.*

Nonequivalent Control Group Design was used in this experimental study. It involved six intact groups of students attending Pronunciation course – three were randomly assigned to the experimental group and the remaining three assigned to the control group. Both groups were pre-tested. The results were equal. After 3 sessions of connected speech lesson both groups were tested again. The post-test results of these two groups were then compared to see if the sample means were significantly different. As the study also aimed to find out the students' perception towards the teaching practice implemented, a questionnaire was employed. The t-test showed that the difference of the sample means was not significantly large. Nevertheless, based on the feedbacks that were elicited through the questionnaire, the use of songs for teaching the English connected speech seemed to remain promising.

Overall, the study showed that the use of songs for teaching the English connected speech tended to indicate a prospective better learning outcome. As the experiment took only 3 sessions, the chance for such treatment to be effective is increased if period of study is extended.

Key Words: - song, connected speech, drill

1 INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation is considered the most difficult aspect to learn for Indonesian learners of English. In the previous years, the students at the place where the present study was conducted were taught English through drill. With this technique the students used to perform unsatisfactorily in the tests. Efforts have been taken to facilitate students' learning of pronunciation. However, results remain relatively the same. A study by Suwartono (2006), for example, showed that the use of dubbing technique in the teaching of the English segmental phonemes, though resulted in positive attitudes in the part of students, gave no significant effect on the learning outcome. Teaching the pronunciation of English that is more communicative has been felt necessary since then.

According to Nunan (2004:10) Communicative Language Teaching is a broad, philosophical approach to the language curriculum that draws on theory and research in linguistics, anthropology, psychology, and sociology. Task-Based Language Teaching represents a realization of this philosophy at the levels of syllabus design and methodology. It is one of other realizations that claim to reside within the CLT family.

Important in Task-Based Language Teaching is experiential learning. This approach takes the learner's immediate personal experience as the point of departure for the learning experience. The active involvement of the learner is central to this approach. Experiential nature of

the process is learning by doing. So, in this approach, learner plays vital role. The Task-Based approach aims at providing opportunities for learners to experiment with and explore both spoken and written language through activities that are designed to engage learners in the authentic, practical, and functional use of language for meaningful purposes.

Teacher is a learning facilitator. For this role he is responsible for preparing and creating an environment in which the students will be most likely to learn. One important part of this job is selecting teaching and learning materials. To teach pronunciation through songs, for example, a teacher of English should review a song as an authentic material and its relevance with the area of pronunciation he is going to teach to the students.

Connected speech is an important aspect in the pronunciation of English. In real communication, the native speakers of English normally tend to link words together rather than say them in isolation. Unfortunately, only a small number of Indonesian learners of EFL give attention to this aspect when using the language. As a result, not only the pronunciation becomes less qualified, but also the comprehension is affected. Even simple utterances with sounds /w/ as in "...do it", /t/ as in "...want you...", or /ta/ as in "Repeat after me" seem strange to them.

In addition to rhythm and authenticity, which are of course motivating to students to reproduce the text or

item deals with the impression the students got from the teaching and learning process and the other one has something to do with their suggestions for future practices.

Among those *Drill* students who expressed their impression, the highest rate of impression fell to the teaching technique (nearly 37%). A bit lower, around 29% of the *Song* students, however, were impressed by the same aspect. Nearly 28% others explicitly expressed their impression towards the use of media in the teaching. Some of the *Song* students seemed to call 'techniques' to refer to media. Few responses to the open-ended options showed the use of the word 'or', or punctuation '/' between the two, or another way like "the teaching technique was very interesting, with music as media so that it's more exciting". Thus, impression towards the use of media was likely to make up around 57% of the whole feedbacks given by the *Song* students. In the meanwhile, suggestions that have relation with the use of media were only addressed by the *Drill* students (more than 19% of all feedbacks. To sum up, this research study has proved that the teaching of the English connected speech through songs was not superior to that with drill. However, based on the gain (pre- and post-test) and the students' perception it is likely that, when provided with longer period, the learning outcome is better.

4 CONCLUSION

Overall, based on the gain and the students' perception, the use of songs for teaching the English connected speech tended to indicate a prospective better learning outcome. This study has shown that there is a hope that teaching the English connected speech through

songs is more effective than that with drills as the main teaching technique.

5 SUGGESTION

As the experiment took only 3 sessions, the chance for effectiveness of such treatment is increased if period of study is extended. For those researchers who have interest in doing research of this area extended period of experiment is recommended. The study also implied that, though it was experimental study, student's "voice" is necessary to hear. Considering the *product* alone might have misled. Student perception as revealed through the questionnaire provided more information/data which otherwise the experiment would give least significance. In regard to overall result of the study EFL classroom teachers should be creative in an attempt to help the students acquire normal pronunciation of English.

REFERENCES:

- [1] Gay, L.R. & Airasian, P., *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application*, Prentice-Hall, 2000
- [2] Nunan, David, *Task-Based Language Teaching*, Cambridge University Press, 2004
- [3] Suwartono, "Pembelajaran Pelafalan Bahasa Inggris melalui Teknik Sulih Suara", *Cakrawala Pendidikan: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan*, Vol. 25, Number 1, 2006.
- [4] Woods, Anthony (et.al.), *Statistics in Language Studies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.