Designing The Model of Engaging Activities for Speaking Assessment by Minimizing Students’ Anxiety

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Abstract

In Indonesia, English is learned as a foreign language. Based on study done by Jannah & Fitriati (2016), students had some problems in speaking and one of major problem was anxiety. Students were anxious to speak in English. That situations is commonly found in foreign language class as described by Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986). Moreover, in speaking assessment, students may feel more anxious and this feeling may hinder their speaking skill (Hewitt & Stephenson, 1978; Liu & Jackson, 2008; Wilson 2006; and Woodrow, 2006). This research aimed to design a model of student engaging activities for speaking assessment, specifically in procedure text. This study used the research and development design (R&D) to create an assessment handbook that provided some engaging activities for speaking assessment purpose. There were five phases in this research: defining, designing, developing, implementing and evaluating phase. The results of the research showed the model was not effective. It was obtained that the t-test was less than t table (0,167 < 1,697). Related to students’ anxiety level, however, most students had moderate level of anxiety in both experimental (19 students) and control groups (15 students).

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INTRODUCTION

Based on Curriculum 2013, English is a compulsory subject that has to be taught to students in junior schools and it is learned as a foreign language in Indonesia. In learning English, students may have various experiences and feelings. According to Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986), students may have feeling of anxiety when learning foreign language. Students can feel anxious or worried when they are asked to speak in foreign language. This kind of anxiety can contribute to undesirable result in language learning.

Horwitz et al. (1986) is considered to be the pioneer who proposed the term of Foreign Language Anxiety. Foreign language anxiety refers to self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom language learning that the students have when they learn language (Horwitz et al., 1986). Foreign language anxiety described by Horwitz et al. involves anxious feeling that students may have in different situations such as students who have difficulty in speaking foreign language, or students who get anxious because they fear of failure in testing or fear of negative evaluation.

A study done by Jannah & Fitriati (2016) investigated psychological problems faced by students in speaking English. They identified there were three major problems that students had. One of them was most students felt anxious to speak in English. They were anxious to get the attention from their peers and teacher.

Using the theory of Foreign Language Anxiety proposed by Horwitz et al. (1986) there are numerous studies that have been conducted to investigate students' anxiety in foreign or second language learning. Some studies have shown the negative relationship between anxiety and students' language performance (Aida, 1994; Anyadubalu, 2010; Saito & Samimy, 1996; Sparks & Ganschow, 2007). More specific studies on speaking in relation to students’ anxiety also have been done by researchers. The results revealed that students with higher anxiety in speaking gained lower score in their speaking performance (Hewitt & Stephenson, 2012; Phillips, 1992; Wilson, 2006; Woodrow, 2006). Other study showed apprehensive feeling that students had about speaking and tests (Liu & Jackson, 2008). Even though the results of some studies indicate the negative relationship between anxiety and language performance on students, Curriculum 2013 in which students learn English as foreign language never addresses the issue on language anxiety as well as language assessment that may impede students’ language performance. The question then appears to be how to design activities to assess English speaking skill to students with different anxiety level.

A number of studies have been carried out to seek fruitful and favorable techniques in teaching English to students. Ara (2009) described the benefits of song, rhyme games in teaching English to young learners. Game is the most common technique used in teaching English. Picture game scrabble and wordsearch games were used to teach vocabulary by some studies (Rizki, Rukmini, & Sutopo, 2013; Yulianti & Bharati, 2017). Other study was done by Utami, Pabbajah, and Juhansar (2018) who examined the implementation and the effectiveness of jumbled-sentences as a technique to enhance students’ skill in writing report. From those studies, it can be concluded that the implementation of games is significantly effective to improve students' vocabulary and writing.

Games can also be implemented in teaching speaking. In fact, a myriad of studies have been done to explore different kinds of games that can be used in teaching speaking. Some of the games are ice breaking, what is the question game, crazy story game, four corners game, true or false game (Daulay & Daulay, 2018; Fikri & Sunaryo, 2013; Kasri & Ardi, 2013; Rahayu & Jufri, 2013; Ramadani & Saun, 2013).

Other enjoyable activities that can be implemented in teaching speaking are skit

(Mardian Bs & Amri, 2013), stand-up comedy (Satria & Syafei, 2013), retelling (Firdaus & Amaniarisih, 2018; Kusdianang & Bharati, 2016; Rachmawaty & Hermagustiana, 2015), simulation (Ardriyati, 2009; Ardriyati, 2010) and role play (Adnyani, Seken, & Nitiasih, 2014; Jakob, 2018; Lutfi, Sutopo, & Rukmini, 2018; Mariana, Yufrizal, & Kadaryanto, 2015; Milchatun, Bharati, & Hartono, 2015; Samsibar & Naro, 2018).

The studies on English teaching practices are not limited to the implementation of existing games or techniques. Some researchers have also attempted to develop their own games in teaching and they used R&D approach. Artyani, Anggani, Bharati, & Sofwan (2014) developed battleship game for teaching grammar of procedure text. Hastunar, Bharati, & Sutopo (2014) modified monopoly game for teaching written vocabulary. Focusing on speaking skill, Prastiwi (2018) developed traditional games into speaking games and integrated with character education in junior high school. Budiyanto, Saleh, Rukmini, & Sofwan (2018) developed a model of teaching speaking through discussion and presentation for accounting education students in university level.

Even though there are a lot of studies attempted to develop game or activity in English teaching practices, only a few studies attempt to design low-stress activities in language assessment, especially in speaking. When students can learn English in an enjoyable environment without any pressure, another question that might arise is why students cannot also have the same environment of joy to feel less anxious when they are being assessed.

Given the issues explained above, this study attempted to address three research questions. First, the study aimed to analyze the existing speaking assessment used by English teacher in procedure text material. Second, this study aimed to describe the process on designing the model of student engaging activities for speaking assessment of procedure text by minimizing students’ anxiety. Third, the study aimed to analyze the effectiveness of the speaking assessment model developed in this study.

METHOD

This study adopted different models of instructional design done by some researchers (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2003; Lee & Owens, 2004; Thiagarajan et al., 1974). Each model has different names and steps in conducting R & D. However, they all refer to the same concept on how to conduct R & D. In this study, some adjustments have been made to design the model of student engaging activities for speaking assessment. The adaptation yields five stages with new terms in conducting R & D. Those stages are defining, designing, developing, implementing and evaluating phase. The adaptation is made to find the most effective and efficient steps in conducting R & D. In addition, this study is limited to small range. Therefore, the stage of dissemination as mentioned in Thiagarajan et al. (1974) is eliminated.

Participants

The study was conducted in SMP N 2 Semarang because the school has been implementing the curriculum 2013 in all grades (7th - 9th grade). Moreover, the school has been chosen as the pilot school in implementing the curriculum since 2013. The participants of the study were the students of 9th grade because procedure text is one of text types that students need to learn in grade 9 based on Curriculum 2013.

Instruments

Interview

An interview was done between teacher and the writer. The interview aimed to obtain information about speaking assessment from the teacher. List of questions related speaking assessment was prepared by the writer. The writer particularly asked some questions on how
the teacher assessed students’ speaking skill in procedure text.

**Speaking Assessment**

A set of engaging activities was prepared as part of speaking assessment. Students were given different types of activities in learning procedure text. In the end of the lesson, students were asked to explain and present how to do something based on the procedure text they received from the flash cards. In order to assess students’ speaking skill, the speaking rubric was developed in this study.

**Foreign Classroom Language Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)**

Foreign Classroom Language Anxiety Scale or FCLAS is questionnaire developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope (1986) who conducted researches on anxiety in foreign language learning. FCLAS has been widely used by other researchers. Therefore, FLCAS was used in this study since the writer wanted to find out students’ anxiety when they were learning English, especially when they were having speaking assessment.

**Students’ Questionnaire**

Students questionnaire were given to collect the data on students’ response after they participated in this study. The writer wanted to know what students thought about the speaking activities developed in the assessment handbook.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The results and discussions explain the existing speaking assessment used by teacher in school, the process of designing the model and the implementation result of the speaking assessment model.

**Existing Assessment**

The process of designing the model started by doing need analysis as part of R&D design used in this study. The need analysis was done by doing an interview with the teacher to identify what activities used by the English teacher to assess students’ speaking skill.

To analyze the interview result, the information obtained from the teacher was categorized into 10 aspects: 1) the implementation of Curriculum 2013; 2) teaching procedure text in the class; 3) types of procedure text; 4) the goal of teaching procedure text; 5) the assessment of procedure text; 6) the rubric for the assessment; 7) the media used in the assessment; 8) specific strategies in conducting the assessment; 9) considering students’ feeling in doing the assessment; and 10) engaging activities on the assessment.

It was concluded that the teacher already implemented the Curriculum 2013 and she taught procedure text in the class. There were two type of procedure text used in the class: recipe and instruction manual. The goal of teaching procedure text was in line with the basic competence in the Curriculum 2013. In the end of the teaching and learning process, students were able to arrange and create written and oral procedure text.

Related to the language assessment, she used performance assessment for procedure text. Students were asked to perform in the front of class about their own procedure text. In the end of the activity, the students are asked to make a written report about their procedure text. Students put some photos from their performance to explain each steps in the procedure text. The written report was used by the teacher to assess students’ writing skill. This type assessment is included as authentic assessment and it is line with the Curriculum 2013 that demands teachers to implement authentic assessment as the method of assessing students’ competence (Rukmini & Saputri, 2017).

The teacher has also developed her own rubric how to evaluate the students’ performance. The rubric has 4 criteria: pronunciation (fluency, intonation, stress, pause and the pronunciation itself), ideas (vocabulary, content, and creativity), text organization
In the speaking assessment, students were asked to bring some tools during the individual presentation. They needed to use real media when they were the procedure text. For example, a student had to perform on how to make a sandwich. She had to bring the materials and some tools needed in the presentation. During the speaking assessment, she had to show to make the sandwich using the materials and tools that she had. So, the students used real media in the speaking assessment.

One problem in implementing authentic assessment is time consuming. To overcome the problem, the teacher had specific strategies in arranging the individual presentation. The speaking assessment was held in two days and each student had 5 minutes to perform. For students who had recipe as their procedure text, they had to prepare ready-to-eat food or drinks. For example, if the student needed to toast the bread, she just showed how to do it. She did not need to wait the bread until it was toasted. She already prepared the toasted bread and then just showed it in the class.

Related to students' feeling, the teacher was not aware on the students' anxiety issue. However, she mentioned that her students enjoyed the individual presentation as the speaking assessment. She described that after the speaking assessment was finished, her students who got recipe procedure text shared the food and drinks that they had made to their classmates. They also gave some sample of food and drinks to the teacher.

There was no specific engaging activities found the assessment used by the teacher. The teacher simply used individual presentation to assess students' speaking skill and a written report to assess students' writing skill.

**Process of Designing Product**

From the interview results, the writer attempted to develop more activities for students to create fun, enjoyable and low-stress in learning environment. It was expected that students would engage more in such friendly learning. The study was based on Gall, Gall, & Borg (2003) and then, adopted two different models of educational R&D from (Lee & Owens, 2004) and Thiagarajan, Semmel, & Semmel (1974). The adjustment, then, yielded main five stages in designing the model of student engaging activities for speaking assessment: 1) defining, 2) designing, 3) developing, 3) implementing and 5) evaluating phase.

In defining phase, need analysis was carried out by doing an interview to collect information on the existing speaking assessment used by English teach in school. The interview results were analyzed and categorized into 10 aspects as. From the interview results, it was found there was no fun activities in the class.

In the next phase, designing phase, the writer design syllabus and lesson plan for procedure text. Some fun activities were chosen an added in the syllabus and lesson plan. After reviewing some activities and games, this study developed three activities used for speaking assessment purposes and those activities were games using flash cards, role play, and video recording as student's home project. The flash cards were designed and customized according to the goal of the speaking activity. Also, there were also different procedure texts were adopted and used in the flash cards.

In developing phase, assessment handbook draft was developed. The writer collected all documents needed for this handbook such as lesson plan, speaking rubric, guidelines for each activity and various types of procedure text. The handbook was also completed with the flash cards of procedure text in the end of the book. Once the draft was finished, the writer asked several scholars to review it. Mostly three scholars agreed that the instruction of the assessment book was good. Related to the example given in the handbook, the answer of the scholars varied from adequate to excellent level. Overall, the instruction was in good level. Related to vocabulary, structure and language, the experts agree that the handbook was also good. The vocabulary items and the
structures are appropriate for 9th grade students to learn procedure text. The test administration was good as well followed by the scoring in assessing students’ speaking skill.

Once the speaking assessment model was evaluated by different scholars, the model was tried out in the school. In order to know the effectiveness of the model, this study used the experimental research design with posttest in two groups. In the experimental group, students had fun activities such as games using flashcards and role play. On the other hand, students in control group had reading activity and monologue or individual presentation. Students in both groups were asked to record their performance in video format as part of students’ home project.

In the last phase or evaluating phase, the writer investigated students’ anxiety level and students’ response after they participated in the speaking assessment activities in both groups. Then, the students’ anxiety level and students’ were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.

Implementation Result

To implement the activities, this study used experimental research to find out the effectiveness of the model. The results showed that there was no much difference between experimental and control group. It was obtained that t table = alpha 5% with n = 30 is 1.697. Since t test < t table (0.167 < 1.697), it was concluded that the result of this experiment was not effective.

Related to foreign language anxiety, most students had moderate level in foreign language anxiety either in experimental and control group. The detailed number of students who had anxiety level in both groups is described as follow.

Table 1. Students’ Anxiety Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Group</td>
<td>2 (6.7%)</td>
<td>19 (63.3%)</td>
<td>9 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group</td>
<td>6 (20%)</td>
<td>15 (50%)</td>
<td>9 (30%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), students’ response was divided into 5 categories: strongly agree indicated by 5, agree indicated by 4, neutral indicated 3, disagree indicated by 2, and strongly disagree indicated by 1. Each student responded to each statement in the FLCAS. The students’ anxiety level was obtained by summing all of students’ response to each statement.

From FCLAS, it was found that students were worried to make mistake in English class (33.3% in experimental and 36.7% in control group). Most students agreed that they started to feel panic when they were asked to speak without any preparation (43% in experimental and 33% in control group).

Related to students’ feeling during the assessment, 60% of students chose ‘neutral’ to the statement ‘I usually feel comfortable during the test in the English class’, while 16.7% of students chose ‘strongly disagree’ and 23.3% of students chose ‘disagree’ in experimental group. In the control group, however, 40% of students chose ‘neutral’, 33.3% of students chose ‘strongly disagree’ and 26.7% of students chose ‘disagree’.

In other statement, however, most students in the experimental group (60%) chose ‘disagree’ with the statement ‘I feel confident when I joined the assessment activity in the English class’. In the control group, students who chose ‘strongly disagree’ were 46.7% and students who chose ‘disagree’ were 30%.

From the questionnaire about the implementation of the speaking assessment model, most students in experimental group (63.3%) chose ‘strongly agree’ to respond the statement ‘I feel the assessment activities were fun. It showed that most students enjoyed the games, role play and video recording developed by the writer. Even though there was no game and role play in activities of the control group, most students (66.7%) enjoyed the speaking assessment as well. Students in both groups agreed that the video recording activity was fun. In addition, they agreed to the statement that video recording activity helped to get themselves more prepared in speaking.

From the result of the implementation and evaluation, the writer finds there are some advantages of speaking activities developed in the assessment handbook. First, the engaging activities can motivate students to learn procedure text in more interesting and enjoyable way. Second, dialog and role plays allow students to practice speaking in more authentic way. Students are able to use real English language in their daily life. Third, students are able to express their creativity through video recording project. Fourth, the activities allow students to learn procedure text independently.

On the other hand, there are some challenges of implementing the engaging speaking activities. First, the quality video submitted by students are varied. Some of them had poor quality, especially in the sound. The writer had difficulties to assess their performance. Second, some students find difficulties to record the role play at home since each student lives in different areas. So, some of the students recorded the video in the school with insufficient equipment. Despite having some limitations in creating video, the students have done their best to record their performance.

CONCLUSION

From the results and findings discussed in the previous chapter, some conclusions are made related to designing the model of engaging activities for speaking of procedure text. First is developing phase to create necessary documents needed in producing the assessment handbook and to validate the handbook from the experts. Fourth is implementing phase. In this phase, the assessment product was tried out in the class. Fifth is evaluating phase to obtain students’ response after they participated the speaking activities in the class.

Third, the speaking result from both groups was found that the speaking assessment model developed in this study was not effective test < t table (0,167 < 1,697). Related to students’ anxiety level, most students in both groups had moderate level on foreign language anxiety. However, the questionnaire results shows that there is no much difference between experimental and control groups. Students in both classes enjoy the speaking assessment activities even though students in the control group did not play flash cards and do the role play. Students from both argued that video recording may be fun but it is little bit complicated to do.

Related to designing engaging speaking activities, the writer recommended some suggestions for teacher. First, teacher should consider students’ feeling when they are having speaking assessment. Second, teacher should design speaking activities that allow students to feel less anxious when they are speaking.

This study has some limitations in addressing anxiety in foreign language learning. First, the main goal of this study was to develop speaking assessment model that combined some activities to create less-stress environment in speaking assessment. Second, this study only investigated students’ anxiety level in two classes. This study does not provide any information on relationship between students’ anxiety and students’ speaking performance. Therefore, it is difficult to conclude whether the students’ anxiety may have any influence on students’ speaking performance. Given the limitations above, other researchers can do more studies on anxieties especially on speaking. There are not many studies done to examine students’ anxiety in Indonesia. Therefore, it is great opportunity for other researchers to do
more researches on students’ anxiety in learning foreign language that happens in Indonesia.

REFERENCES


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