

The Use of Discussion Task in Teaching Spoken Text of Analytical Exposition

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Abstract

This research aimed to investigate the effectiveness of using discussion tasks in teaching spoken text of analytical exposition to eleventh grade students of SMAN 1 Pontianak. In this research, a pre-experimental design was used by the researcher. The researcher administered pre-test and post-test to measure the effectiveness of using discussion task in teaching spoken text of analytical exposition text. The sample of this research consisted of 20 students from eleventh grade students of XI MIPA 3 in SMAN 1 Pontianak. The researcher used the measurement technique to collect the data and the tool of data collecting was in the form of an oral performance test. By doing this research, the researcher expected that the result from computation of t-test would be higher than t-table, the alternative of hypothesis (H_a) would be accepted, and the Effect Size (ES) from this research would be categorized as strong effect which can be indicated more than 1.00. The researcher predicted that the use of discussion task can be effective and give a strong effect in teaching spoken text of analytical exposition to the students, especially to eleventh grade students of SMAN 1 Pontianak.

Keywords: *teaching speaking; analytical exposition text; discussion task; pre experimental study; eleventh grade*

Introduction

Speaking is a crucial part of foreign language learning and teaching because it can be used by students to express their ideas, thoughts, and feelings orally in a foreign language. Richards (2008) stated that the mastery of speaking in English is a priority for many second-language or foreign-language learners. Even more, Nazara (2011) argued that speaking skill is given vital importance during the teaching and learning process of foreign language.

According to the latest curriculum for eleventh grade students in Indonesia, one of the objectives from the learning process of communicating phase is that the students will be able to tell the information of analytical exposition text and present it in front of the class by paying attention to the social function, structure, and the language element. In the curriculum used before (school-based curriculum or KTSP), there is no such an activity like in the learning process of communicating phase in the latest curriculum. Furthermore, regarding the lesson about analytical exposition text, it is a new material for eleventh grade students at senior high school to be learned since they were never taught about this kind of text before. Mastering this type of text both in spoken and written form is expected from eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Pontianak.

Generally, in the teaching and learning process of school-based curriculum previously, students mostly got information from the teacher. The students were not given much opportunity to share their

thoughts, especially orally. On the other hand, in the new curriculum, the students are given more opportunities to share their ideas or arguments orally since there is an activity of communicating phase from the learning process. Consequently, there is a need to implement some tasks or activities in the learning process for students to be able to tell the information of analytical exposition text.

Task-based language teaching is considered an effective approach that fosters a learning environment in which learners are free to choose and use the target language forms which they think are most likely to achieve the aim of accomplishing defined communicative goals (Ellis, 2003; Willis, 1996). Moreover, Richards and Rodgers (2014) mentioned that task-based language teaching had received considerable interest in applied linguistics. Task-based language teaching has presented opportunities to employ effective and meaningful activities. It can promote communicative language use in the language classroom. According to N. S. Prabhu (1987), one of three main categories of task is opinion gap activity. An opinion gap, according to Samuda and Bygate (2008), involves identifying and articulating a personal preference, feeling, or attitude in response to a given situation. One example is taking part in the discussion of a social issue. The activity may involve using factual information and formulating arguments to justify one's opinion, but there is no objective procedure for demonstrating outcomes as right or wrong, and no reason to expect the same outcome from different individuals or on different occasions. With regard to this kind of activity, the researcher provided the discussion task as an effective way which can also be referred to as opinion gap activity to teach spoken text of analytical exposition for eleventh grade students.

Analytical exposition is one of the expositions texts. Yusak (2006) stated that expositions are a text type we use when we want to offer opinions, give suggestions, and convince people to take particular actions. It is a text that elaborates the writer's idea about the phenomenon surrounding. Its social function is to persuade the reader that the idea is an important matter. In analytical exposition text, the students learn how to share arguments about some issues which can be provided with facts, statistics, reasons, examples, or differentiation. It could be a form of writing or speaking. Since the purpose of this text is to persuade the reader that the topic is an important matter to be discussed and concerned about, the students are required to think critically in terms of giving their opinions, ideas, or arguments that can support that topic. This kind of text is important to be learned by students at senior high school and the teacher should consider the technique, approach, and method used in teaching analytical exposition text.

In previous research, there were some researchers who discussed the use of task-based language teaching in teaching speaking. The previous research was conducted by Kesda Thanghun (2012) at Piboonprachasan School. Her finding revealed that there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test at the level of .05. and the mean score obtained from the post test is higher than the pre-test. This difference indicated that task-based instruction resulted in the students' increased English speaking abilities significantly. Furthermore, Huang (2015) showed positive reactions to task-based language teaching among

ELT learners. This study showed that this approach engaged learners and expanded their interests and made them more self-reliant. The learners said the activities in the learning process enhanced their interest in learning the target language and increased their autonomy by actively preparing the task and improving their searching capacity for information-on-information gap activities.

In this case, the researcher only focused on applying the discussion task and to test whether it can be applied to the senior high level and help to support the teacher as an alternative way of teaching spoken text of analytical exposition or not. The researcher also only focused on how effective the discussion task can be applied in the classroom. The researcher chose experimental design as the suitable research design where the strong will in doing this research was to try out the new way of teaching and learning language and not to solve the problems or increase the students' score as the main concern. Furthermore, the researcher chose SMA Negeri 1 Pontianak in consideration that the school just already applied the curriculum 2013 for the first time in 2015 and the researcher ever had teaching practice in that school.

From those explanations, it can be considered that the use of discussion tasks is relatively simple and highly recommended in teaching speaking of analytical exposition text because the students can be engaged with the active speaking activities. The researcher believed that the discussion task can be effectively used in teaching the learning process to the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Pontianak. The researcher hoped that the findings of this research would be able to improve students' speaking skill and also could be one of the teachers' effective ways to be implemented in the classroom.

Literature Review

Task Based Language Teaching in Teaching Speaking

Task-based language teaching was regarded as an alternative method to traditional language teaching methods because it favors a methodology in which functional communicative language use is aimed at and strived for (Brumfit, 1984; Ellis, 2003; Willis, 1996). Task based language teaching was considered also to be an effective approach that fosters a learning environment in which learners are free to choose and use the target language forms which they think are most likely to achieve the aim of accomplishing defined communicative goals (Ellis, 2003; Willis, 1996). Therefore, among the ways to create the language learning context, task-based language teaching presents opportunities to employ effective and meaningful activities and promotes communicative language use in the language classroom.

Authentic language use, the real use of real language in classroom content, fosters a learning environment in which learners have their own say; they gain communicative practice within their own sense of the defined goals in task-based approach. In other words, learners are to learn the language as they use it. Because of this, communicative language use comes into focus as an essential aspect of a task-based framework (Willis, 1996). In addition to developing communicative capability, attention to form is fundamental

for language learning. Even though a task-based approach emphasizes the primacy of meaning, a focus on form has a parallel importance in the language learning process (Bygate, Skehan & Swain, 2001).

Task based language teaching is closer to real life communicative situations and makes it a way of bringing the real world into the classroom. According to Krashen (1985) in task-based language teaching, students learned how to learn and it is suitable for all ages and backgrounds. In other words, task-based language teaching provides a natural opportunity for revision and acquisition of words expression sentence patterns and styles of writing, allows for more meaningful communication, and promotes opportunities to assess learners' progress in communicative skills through activities.

Willis (1996) suggested several effective frameworks for creating task-based learning lessons. These stages are as follows:

a. Pre-task

In the pre-task, the teacher explains the topic and gives the direction to the students in the task phase clearly then begins the students with key vocabulary or grammatical constructs in the lesson. The students are clear with the model of the task and what will be expected. This encourages the students to use what they are comfortable with in order to complete the task. The teachers may present by doing it themselves, picture, audio, or video demonstrating the task. Pre-tests prepare the students to perform the task in ways to promote acquisition.

b. Task cycle

During the task phase, the students complete the task in pairs or typically in small groups by using the language resource depending on the type of activity. The teacher plays a particular role in the task by monitoring students' activities and encouraging students to communicate in target language but not to intervene to correct errors. There are some stages in this stage, as follows:

1. Task stage: Students gain fluency and confidence in themselves as communicators by starting to work in pairs/small groups to do the task. Meaning is paramount and there is often little concern for grammatical accuracy. The students do not have to concentrate too much on the grammatical rules; they have to give attention more to fluency and practicing the target language. The teacher will act as a monitor and encourage students.
2. Planning stage: Students start to plan and prepare, reporting their findings, how they did the task. This is the process that drives their language development forward. The teacher will ensure the purpose of the report is clear, act as language adviser and help students rehearse oral reports or organize written ones.
3. Reporting stage: Students present the information to the class orally or read the written report. They will introduce their findings and allow other students to hear or read what they have done, which provides useful exposure. This stage encourages them to think about the form as

well as meaning, accuracy as well as fluency and to use their prestige version of the target language. In this stage, the teacher may provide written or oral feedback and the students may take notes.

c. Language focus

The teacher reviews what happened in the task and highlights relevant text used earlier in the task cycle. It may include language forms that the students were using, students' problems, and perhaps forms that need to be covered more or were not used enough. Finally, the teacher asks the students to get on with the activity in their own time. The students practice activities to extend their confidence. It is an opportunity for teachers to emphasize key language.

Meanwhile, Ellis (2003) divided the process in task-based language teaching framework in three phases, pre task, during task, and post task. These three stages are as follows:

a. Pre-task

The pre task refers to preparing students for the task, introducing the ways, gives examples of the task together with framing the activities and establishes the outcome of the task beforehand. The teachers should give the participants enough time to plan for their activities.

b. During task

During task refers to the methodology options that are available to the teacher during task based and the matter of under time pressure depending on the number of participants. In this phase, the teachers may provide the students with various instructional options.

c. Post-task

Post task involves procedures to follow up the task performance. The goals in this phase such as to provide an opportunity for repeat performance of the task, encourage reflection of how the task was performed.

Discussion Task as an Activity in Teaching Speaking

Discussion is a form of activity where the students can express their opinion by using the target language. According to Sari Luoma (2009, p. 139) discussion was a conversation with several people having a particular purpose or objective toward a certain topic. Discussion can stimulate critical thinking and encourage average and less able students to become engaged in the learning process.

Discussion is an activity that demands full involvement of every participant. A good discussion can happen when the topic is interesting for everyone to discuss. By choosing an interest, students are actively involved in a discussion. In choosing the topic to discuss, it is important for the teachers to determine the kind of activities which can be applied in the classroom. These influence the material and the way of the students' interaction in the class. They are topic-based activities and task-based activities.

Regarding the topic-based activities, Ur (1996, p. 123) argued topic-based activities simply asks participants to talk about a controversial subject, the main objective being clearly the discussion process itself. The topic in which learners can relate is using ideas from their own experience and knowledge. It could be used in formal debate, where a motion is proposed and opposed by prepared speakers, discussed further by members of the group, and finally voted on by all.

Apart from the topic-based activities, task-based activities actually are to perform something, where the discussion process is a means to an end. A task is essentially goal oriented; it requires the group or pair to achieve an object that is usually expressed by an observable result, such as brief notes or lists, a rearrangement of jumbled items, a drawing, and a spoken language summary. This result should be attainable only by interaction between participants, so within the definition of the task the teacher often finds instruction as a way to find out everyone's opinion.

The aim of doing discussion in the class is to let students make conversation in class in order to become more fluent and confident. Generally speaking, we would likely agree that the best discussions in class are spontaneous, either because of something personal that a learner reports or because a topic or a text in the course book triggers to be discussed. Therefore, the researcher chose a format of group work discussion as the useful way in teaching speaking of analytical exposition text since the format is easy to be understood by the student and the sequences of the activities are commonly used in learning activities.

In previous research, there were some researchers who discussed the use of task-based language teaching in teaching speaking. The previous research which was conducted by M. Mojibur Rahman (2010) in Indian School of Mines University, Dhanbad, found the experience of using task-based rewarding, intrinsically interesting, and educationally beneficial. Students got involved in the task as the tasks were giving the feeling of a real life situation. This is also in line with the research conducted by Kesda Thanghun (2012) at Piboonprachasan School. Her finding revealed that there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test at the level of .05. and the mean score obtained from the post test is higher than the pre-test. This difference indicated that task based instruction resulted in the students' increased English speaking abilities significantly.

In this case, the researcher only focused on applying the discussion task and to test whether it can be applied to the senior high level and help to support the teacher as an alternative way of teaching spoken text of analytical exposition or not. The researcher also only focused on how effective the discussion task can be applied in the classroom. The researcher chose experimental design as the suitable research design where the strong will in doing this research is to try out the new way of teaching and learning language and not to solve the problems or increase the students' score as the main concern. From those explanations, it can be considered that the use of discussion tasks is relatively simple and highly recommended in teaching speaking of analytical exposition text because the students can be engaged with the active speaking activities. The

researcher believed that the discussion task can be effectively used in teaching the learning process to the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Pontianak. The researcher hoped that the findings of this research would be able to improve students' speaking skill and also can be one of the teachers' effective ways to be implemented in the classroom.

Problem Statement

Based on the topic and introduction above, this research was designed to address research problems as follows:

1. Is the use of discussion task effective in teaching spoken text of analytical exposition to the eleventh grade students of SMAN 1 Pontianak?
2. How effective is the use of discussion task in teaching spoken text of analytical exposition to the eleventh grade students of SMAN 1 Pontianak?

Methodology

This research was conducted in a pre-experimental study. Cohen (2000) divides pre-experimental design into three types, they are; One-shot case study, One group Pre-test and Post-test, and Static group comparison. The researcher chose One Group Pre-test and Post-Test design in this research. The researcher chose this research because this research aims to determine an effect before and after the treatment given to a sample of research. This research used pre-test and post-test to investigate students' speaking skill.

The population of this research was taken from grade XI students in SMAN 1 Pontianak. There are 6 classes of grade XI students in the school and the total of the students is 213. According to Creswell (2012), the sample is the selected individuals who are representative of the entire population that the researcher plans to study for generalizing the population. For the technique this research used convenience sampling. Meanwhile, researchers assumed that the sample had the same chance and the population was homogeneous. Therefore, the sample of this research was the students in XI MIPA 3 as they represent the entire population that has the same problem. However, due to the time constraints, the researcher took 20 students in this class to be evaluated in pre-test and post-test. On the other hand, in the treatment the researcher involved all of the students in that classroom.

In collecting the data of students' learning achievement, the researcher measured the students' learning achievement before and after the treatment. First, researchers gave a pre-test to know a student's prior ability in speaking. In the pre-test, the students were asked to make an analytical exposition text based on the students' prior knowledge about the topic which had been decided by the researcher. Then, they presented it as they gave a speech in front of the class. The researcher recorded the performance to make it easy to check and watch it repeatedly. The second is treatment. The researcher gave them the treatment. The researcher

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applied the discussion task in the teaching learning process. Creswell (2012) states, “a posttest is a measure on some attribute or characteristic that is assessed for participants in an experiment after a treatment.” Therefore, after giving the treatment, the researcher tested them again with the same test item in pre-test.

The tool of data collecting was an oral speaking test through speech. To have sufficient data, the oral performance in pre-test and post-test of students' monologue speaking was recorded by using a digital camera and voice recorder. Furthermore, the materials which the researcher gave to the students were adapted from Buku Guru Bahasa Inggris Kelas XI Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan 2014. The aspects that can be measured in speaking are fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, and content (Heaton,1998).

Findings

Researchers have been looking Based on the data analysis, the testing hypothesis on this research is shown as follows.

1. From the result of pre-test and post-test, there was a different significant achievement. The mean difference between post-test and pre-test is 18.81. The result of the *t*-test showed that the *t*-obtained value was 7.83, which was higher than *t*-table value with the 20 degree of freedom which was 2.086 at the 0.05 level. Based on the computation, the alternative hypothesis stated that the use of discussion task was effective in teaching spoken text of analytical exposition to the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Pontianak was accepted.
2. From the detailed computation, the effect size of the treatment was 1.56. The first hypothesis that stated the effectiveness of discussion task was weakly effective in teaching spoken text of analytical exposition to the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Pontianak was not accepted. Then, the second hypothesis that stated the effectiveness of discussion task was modestly effective in teaching spoken text of analytical exposition to the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Pontianak was not accepted. Next, the third hypothesis that stated the effectiveness of discussion task was moderately effective in teaching spoken text of analytical exposition to the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Pontianak was not accepted because the effect size was 1.56. The effect size was categorized as strong because $ES\ 1.56 > 1.00$. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis of this research that stated the effectiveness of discussion task is strongly effective in teaching spoken text of analytical exposition to the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Pontianak was accepted because the effect size was more than 1.00.

That is why the researcher was able to say that there was a strong effect in using discussion tasks to teach spoken text of analytical exposition on the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Pontianak.

Discussion

Based on the findings of this research, it has proven that discussion tasks are very helpful in teaching speaking of analytical exposition text. The researcher found this kind of task that the researcher applied in the classroom does really affect students' learning. It improved their speaking skill. The students' participation was also high and they gave full attention to the lesson. Referring to the advantages of the discussion task mentioned beforehand, it can make the students become more enthusiastic and enjoyed during the teaching and learning process, builds the students' creative and critical thinking skills, motivates the students to be more active and builds the students' self-confidence.

The students always seemed enthusiastic and enjoyed the process of teaching and learning since they dominated the activities. In doing the discussion task, the students were engaged in discussion and exchanged their ideas. The bigger chance was given through group work when they were asked to do an opinion exchange task and present the report of their work in front of the classroom. While presenting their report in front of the classroom, the other students could give feedback to them. The feedback given covered the arguments and recommends that they already be made with their own group. It came from peers, other groups and sometimes from the teacher. The students could use such feedback during the task and after that on the final product during the post task phase. Simultaneously, language use and language learning can take place in doing this kind of task. Therefore, it can be concluded that task-based language teaching in the form of discussion tasks provides students with a natural context for language use. When the students work to complete their tasks, they have abundant opportunities to interact. The interaction is believed to facilitate language acquisition since students have to work to understand each other and express their own meaning (Freeman, 2000, p. 144).

The discussion task can build creative and critical thinking skills for students. By using this kind of task, the students are triggered to maximize their potential to speak out their minds toward some issues. In fact, this advantage was not perfectly achieved due to the condition of eleventh grade students who tended to depend on their teacher in providing the materials. However, the researcher can motivate the students to build their creative and critical thinking skills, for example by giving an opportunity for the students to find the source material which can be useful in doing their task.

Furthermore, the discussion task can motivate the students to be more active and build self-confidence. The students can share their feelings and ideas through discussion in groups. The treatments, which were given twice, allow the students to be more active in participating in discussions, using nonverbal appropriately and conveying factual information, giving relevant opinions about the topic and inviting contributions from the group members. Although not all the students in sample class practice their English frequently, they always practice their speaking in the stages of discussion tasks. By practicing speaking English

a lot during this kind of task, they can decrease their nervousness and hesitation in their speaking English. In other words, they can feel more confident in speaking English than they used to be.

Aside from the advantages mentioned above, there were also some weaknesses in applying this technique. One of them was the limited time available. In each meeting, there were only two hours in which one hour consists of 45 minutes. The researcher only had 90 minutes for each meeting. This was not easy for the teacher to create an effective process of teaching and learning through discussion tasks considering the difficulties of students in oral activities. Besides that, the researcher also had to consider the sample class which consists of 36 students. It was considered as a big class to be observed with limited time available. Seeing this situation, the researcher should have managed the class well and wisely. In addition, there were some students who were also still not confident to participate actively during the process of teaching and learning. In this case, the researcher should have also encouraged the students to increase their participation in the teaching and learning process.

Even though the discussion task has both advantages and weaknesses, there is a contribution in the improvement of students' ability in speaking skill. The important point to believe is that collecting data proves that discussion tasks yield positive results to the improvement of students' oral skill. On the other hand, the weaknesses of the technique proved that there is no perfect teaching technique. Therefore, the technique that would be chosen must be suitable for the students based on their levels and needs, so that the goals of teaching speaking which the students are willing to be able to carry out can be reached.

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Data availability statement

The author confirms that the data supporting the findings of this study are available within the article and its supplementary materials.

Conflicts of interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to declare. The author has seen and agreed with the contents of the manuscript and there is no financial interest to report. I certify that the submission is original work and is not under review at any other publication.

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