

THE USE OF DRILLING TECHNIQUE TO IMPROVE THE SIXTH GRADE STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AT RUNG ARUN SUKSA SCHOOL KRABI, THAILAND IN THE 2015/2016 ACADEMIC YEAR

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2016

Abstract

Abstract: Speaking has two main functions: transactional (transfer of information) and interactional (maintenance of social relationships). It is the means through which learners can communicate with others to achieve certain goals or to express their opinions. However, many students found speaking as one of the most difficult skills in English. In this case, drilling technique was chosen to solve those problem. The design of this research is classroom action research. The research subject is the sixth grade students at Rung Arun Suksa School that consist of 16 students, 10 males and 6 females. Test and observation are used to obtain the data. In order to calculate the students' speaking score, Alpha Cronchbach Formula is used. The data is analyzed using formula $E = A/N \times 100\%$.

Drilling technique improves the students' speaking ability and active participation in two cycles from $M = 57$ in Cycle 1 to $M = 67$ in Cycle 2 and the percentage of students scored 65 was 28.57% in Cycle 1 to 78.57% in Cycle 2. The observation result from 60.77% students' activeness in Cycle 1 to 77.29% students' activeness in Cycle 2. The difference between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 is the process of drilling. In Cycle 1, the students were drilled without understanding to the material first. It made the students be confused what was drilled by the teacher, so they were not active in the class. In Cycle 2, the students were drilled by focusing on speaking aspects first and introducing material well. Flashcards were provided to help in understanding vocabulary. The students could understand what was drilled by the teacher, it made them more active in the class. Speaking aspects in Cycle 2 such as fluency, pronunciation and vocabulary that should be mastered by the students were better than Cycle 1. It can be concluded that drilling technique could improve the students' speaking ability and active participation.

Key Words: drilling technique, speaking ability, active participation.

1. Introduction and Theoretical Background

English is taught as the foreign language, from elementary school until university in Thailand. Learning foreign language is necessary for the students in Thailand because it is very important and essential to daily life (Wongsawat, 2004). The learners can learn and understand differences of languages and cultures, customs and traditions, thinking, society, economy, politics and administration. They also will be able to use foreign languages for communication in the world community.

Speaking is one of the four skills in learning foreign language besides listening, reading, and writing. It is a process of conveying, sharing ideas and feeling orally. Therefore, if students do not learn how to speak or do not get any opportunity to speak in the language, they may not be motivated and lose interest in learning. Brown and Yule (2001:10) said that speaking has two main functions: transactional (transfer of information) and interactional (maintenance of social relationships). It is the means through which learners can communicate with others to achieve certain goals or to express their opinions.

Based on the interview on August 24th 2015 in the preliminary study, a lot of students in Thailand still cannot speak English well, including the sixth grade students of Rung Arun Suksa School Krabi Thailand in 2015/2016 academic year. This is because speaking is difficult for the students, so it is rarely taught. They find speaking as one of the most difficult in learning foreign language. Brown and Yule (2001:25) also said it was difficult. They stated that spoken language production or learning to talk in foreign language is often considered to be the most difficult aspect in language learning. To improve the students' speaking ability, the teacher should give a chance for the students to try or practice, as Brown (2000:276) said that the teacher should give the students opportunities to initiate oral communication.

According to Wongsawat (2004:267) in the Basic Education Core Curriculum, the students should be able to use foreign languages for communicating in various situations, seeking knowledge, engaging in a livelihood and pursuing further education at higher levels. In fact, the students of Rung Arun Suksa School were very difficult in speaking English as a foreign language. They have limited ability in speaking. It can be seen from the mean score of students' speaking score, it was 57. The percentage of students who achieve the target score 65 is only 37,5%. See Appendix 3. Beside that, the problem was found that they were like unmotivated and lost interest in learning. It can be seen when the teacher asked them to perform, some of them were hardly to come forward. They always said "phuut phaasaa Angkrit mai dai" means that they cannot speak English. Whereas, the students should be highly motivated in learning speaking (Harmer, 1998:87).

Based on those problems, it is necessary to find a good technique in improving speaking, and making the students feel interested in following the speaking class. The teacher ever taught English, asked the students to listen and repeat, and they were like fun and enjoy. So that the students' speaking ability will be improved through what the students like. Drilling technique which is about listening and repeating is chosen to solve those problems. According to Larsen and Freeman (2000:45), the teachers have to use drills if they want the students able to speak English communicatively. Tice (2004) stated that drilling remains a useful technique if it is used appropriately because it can provide the students with intensive practice in order to improve skill of practicing on what is learned. The use of this technique gives the students the opportunity to practice saying a new word, phrase or structure in a highly controlled environment (Robertson and Acklam, 2000:19). Their comprehension of the text also can be reached through this technique.

Kartikasari, Arifin, and Salam (2004) have already done the research on teaching speaking by using drilling technique and the result is the use of drilling technique can improve speaking skill. So the researcher also want to try using drilling technique to improve the sixth grade students' speaking ability at Rung Arun Suksa School Krabi, Thailand in the 2015/2016 academic year.

1.1 Speaking Ability

Brown and Yule (2001:10) said that speaking has two main functions: transactional (transfer of information) and interactional (maintenance of social relationships). The interactional function is as communication tool in society. The people can interact with others. The transactional function is refers to what is said and done. The message and making oneself understood clearly and accurately is the central focus (Richards, 2008:24). So based on those functions, it can be concluded that speaking is a tool of communication, not only use for transferring an infomation, interacting with others, but also for transferring a message and making the listener understand what is said by the speaker. So, speaking ability is how successful the speaker speak to transfer an information, interact with others, and make the listener understand. In this case, to determine the success of learning speaking English, it can be seen from two factors, fluency and accuracy (Icaltefl, 1998). Essentially accuracy is the ability to produce correct sentences, and fluency is the ability to produce language easily and smoothly.

1.2 The Aspects of Speaking

There are four aspects of speaking, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar (Linse and Nunan, 2005:150). This assesment in this research focus on fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Grammar is not included because the subject of this research is the elementary school students who still do not get grammar lesson. Here are the list of the aspects that is used in this research, including the explanation :

1. Fluency

Fillmore (1979) in Yang (2014:58) define fluency is the ability to talk at length with few pauses. A speaker is able to express his or her idea in a coherent way and to deal with lexical and syntactic items at a fast speed. Fillmore (1979) in Yang (2014:58) also defined four abilities of speaking fluently: a) the ability to talk at length with few pauses; b) be able to produce the sentences coherently, reasoned and semantically; c) have appropriate expressions in a wide range of contexts; d) be creative and imaginative in language use.

2. Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the way in which a language or a particular word or sound is pronounced (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2010:1175). A speaker who constantly mispronounces a range of phonemes can be extremely difficult for a speaker from another language community to understand (Gerald, 2000:11). It can be concluded that pronunciation is the knowledge of studying about how the words in a particular language are produced clearly when people speak. In speaking, pronunciation plays a vital role in order to make the process of communication easy to be understood. Pronunciation becomes important because it gives meaning to what is being said.

3. Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the collection of words that an individual knows (Linse and Nunan, 2005:121). Everyone knows the words because when they use language in their daily life, they are automatically produce the words. The same as the students in learning speaking, to make an effective communication, the students need to know a large number of vocabularies and also the ability of using it. If the students master vocabulary, they will be easy to speak well.

1.3 Drilling Technique

Drilling is a technique that consists of some practices in order to achieve the goal of learning. There are some definitions of drilling which is almost same based on the experts. At its simplest, Tice (2004) stated drilling can be said as practices. It means listening to a model, provided by the teacher, or a tape or another student, and repeating what is heard. It is done for several times. Robertson and Acklam (2000:15) also explain that drilling is a basic technique whereby we can give students the opportunity to practice saying a new word, phrase or structure in a highly controlled environment. The last is an explanation from Thornbury (2005:63). He explained that drilling is imitating and repeating words, phrases, and even whole utterances. This is likely to be particularly useful in gaining control of short functional chunks and their associated intonation patterns. It also can make the learner became familiar with what is learned.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that drilling is an activity of practicing in listening and repeating which is done for several times and highly controlled.

Larsen and Freeman (2000:47-49) mention some kinds of drilling including the explanation, but this research will be focused on the repetition drill and backward build-up (expansion) drill. In the repetition drill, the students repeat teacher's model as quickly and accurately as possible. They listen to a model, provided by the teacher, or a tape or another student, and repeating what is heard. It is done for several times. In the backward build-up (expansion) drill, the teacher breaks down the line into several parts. The students repeat a part of the sentence, usually the last phrase of the line. Then, following the teacher's cue, the students expand what they are repeating part by part until they are able to repeat the entire line. Kunnu and Sukwises (2014:2731) said that backward build-up (expansion) drill can be used to drill long sentence or paragraph.

Repetition drill and backward build-up (expansion) drill is chosen, because the researcher feel that is easy and appropriate to be implemented in teaching speaking based on the problem which is found in the sixth grade at Rung Arun Suksa School.

1.4 The Steps of Drilling Technique

Drilling can be done with a list of vocabulary items or phrases, a short text or a dialogue at any level. According to Tice (2004), the steps to drill are simple. The students listen to a model, provided by the teacher, or a tape or another student and then repeat what is heard. It is almost same with the explanation of Larsen and Freeman (2000:48) about the steps of repetition drill. The steps are only listening to the teacher as a model and then repeating what the teacher say accurately and as quickly as possible. Larsen and Freeman (2000:48) also explain the steps of backward build-up (expansion) drill. The steps are: a) The teacher breaks down the line/paragraph into several parts, b) The students repeat a part of the sentence, c) The students follow the teacher's cue. d) The students expand what they are repeating part by part until they are able to repeat the entire line.

1.5 The Effectiveness of Using Drilling Technique

Thornbury (2005:64) said that drilling can help the students to memorize something that have been learned. What they have learned through drilling will be familiar. It also can control the students in practicing. So, if it is implemented in teaching speaking, the students will have a controlled practice that can guide them to get a better skill in speaking.

According to Tice (2004), drilling remains a useful technique in the classroom if it is used appropriately. For the learners, drilling can provide for a focus on accuracy. It also can provide learners with intensive practice in hearing and saying particular word phrases. They can help learners get their tongues around difficult sounds or help them imitate intonation that may be rather different from that of their first language.

The other effectiveness of using drilling in teaching speaking are help students notice the correct form or pronunciation of a word or phrase, can provide an opportunity to practice for several times until achieve the goal of learning, and it also help memorization and automation of common language patterns and language chunks might be good for oral communication learners.

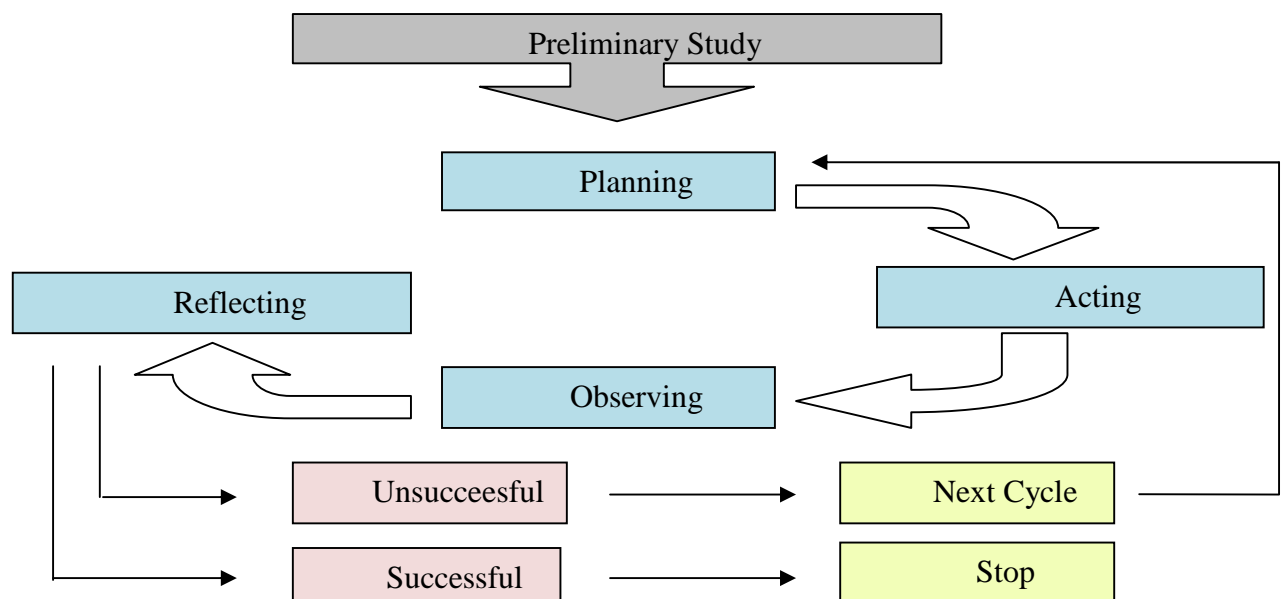
2. The Implementation of Drilling Technique

2.1 Design of the Research

Kemmis and Mc Taggart in Arikunto (2013:137) suggested four main stages in doing classroom action research. There are as follows:

- 1) The planning of the action
- 2) The implementation of the action
- 3) Observation and
- 4) Reflection of the action.

The design of this action research is illustrated in diagram 1.



From the design above, here is the explanation of four main stages. In the planning, the researcher plans the actions to solve the problem in the class, and prepare everything needed in doing the actions. After that in acting, the researcher conducts the research in the classroom where the problem found. The technique is used in teaching learning. Everything has already planned is implemented. The next is observing. In this stage, the researcher helped by collaborator observes the actions to collect a data to be reflected. The last is reflecting. The researcher and collaborator discuss to find the weakness of the actions has been done and will be used to determine what should be done in the next cycle, if the previous cycle is unsuccessful, but if the previous cycle is successful, Cycle will be stopped.

2.2 Subject of the Study

The population of this research is the sixth grade students at Rung Arun Suksa School, Thailand that consists of 16 students with 6 females and 10 males. See Appendix 2. In this case, the subjects were chosen based on the consideration that their speaking ability is needed to be improved because the mean score of their speaking score is 57 with the percentage of students who achieve the target score 65 is only 37.5%. Therefore, that class is chosen to be improved.

2.2 The Area of the Research

The area of this research was Rung Arun Suksa School Krabi, Thailand. This school was chosen based on some considerations: 1) Both the headmaster and the teachers gave the researcher permission to do the research at that school, 2) As informed by the English teacher in the preliminary study, the sixth grade students are still difficult to speak English, and 3) The English teacher at Rung Arun Suksa school never use some technique to teach speaking included drilling technique.

2.3 Classroom Observation Process

During teaching learning by using drilling technique in speaking class, observation is done by the English teacher as the collaborator in this research. It is focused on the activity in the class, and the students' active participation. The indicators are paying attention, responding, listening and repeating, and also performing the task.

2.4 Data Collection and Analysis

This research used two kinds of method in collecting data, test and observation checklist. Test is a method to collect a data quantitatively and observation is a method to collect a data qualitatively. The test is oral test and observation checklist indicators are paying attention, responding, listening and repeating, and also performing the task.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 For Speaking Test

The standard mean score ($M = 65$), the requirement of students scoring ≥ 65 ($E = 75\%$) in Cycle 1 of this research had not been achieved. The mean score of the students' speaking ability was 57 and the percentage of students who got score ≥ 65 was 28.57%. It was because the teacher wrote the vocabulary on the blackboard and the students also wrote on their note, so the time was not used as efficient as possible when introduced the material, and drilling to tell about daily activity. It made the students could not perform well. They were like not having enough vocabulary so they were difficult in conveying what they would like to say. From the reasons above, the action in Cycle 2 needs to be improved by giving more time in drilling by focusing on the speaking aspects and explaining the material well.

Speaking is not only about transferring an information or interacting with the others, but also making the listeners understand what the speaker says (Brown and Yule, 2001:10). In this case, the speaker should not only have to speak fluently, but also accurately (Icaltefl, 1998). That is why it is better if drilling is more focused on the speaking aspects. It makes the students can speak fluently and accurately. In Cycle 2, flashcards were provided to help the students in understanding the words. Sitompul (2013:54) said the teacher can use flashcards in drilling and presenting the words. In this case, the researcher as the teacher could not understand the students' first language, and the

students also were difficult to understand the researchers' languages use. So, providing some flashcards in Cycle 2 was helpful for the teacher to introduce the words and for the students to understand the words. Two kinds of drilling technique were used in drilling to tell about daily activity, repetition and backward build-up (expansion) drill. Kunnu and Sukwises (2014:2731) said that backward build-up (expansion) drill could be used to drill long sentence or paragraph. It could help the students memorize the words.

The mean score of speaking test in Cycle 2 was 67 and the percentage of students who got score ≥ 65 was 78.57%. Based on those result, the students' speaking ability in Cycle 2 was better than in Cycle 1. It means that drilling technique could improve the students' speaking ability.

3.2 For the Observation of Active Participation

In Cycle 1, a lot of students were passive, most of them were paying attention, but not all of them were responding, listening and repeating. The students' active involvement in teaching learning process was 60.77%. The requirement of active student in observation process (75%) in Cycle 1 of this research had not been achieved. It was because the students still did not understand the material. The time was not used as efficient as possible in introducing material, such as vocabulary. According to Robertson and Acklam (2000:24), the students should understand the meaning of the target language before drilling. In this case, the students still did not understand the vocabulary. It made the students were passive during drilling because they did not understand what was drilled by the teacher.

For Cycle 2, it was needed to make the students understand first to what is drilled by the teacher by using the time well, so in the class, the students could respond to the teachers' cue, listen to the teacher and repeat what is heard, pay attention, and also perform the task. It means that the students could more active than Cycle 1. The students' active involvement in teaching learning process was 77.29%. The requirement of active student in observation process (75%) in Cycle 1 of this research had been achieved.

3.3 The Weakness of the Research

Although there was an improvement of the students' speaking ability and active participation, this research has some weaknesses. The first is about the criteria of success. In the classroom action research, the criteria of success is usually more than 70. In this research, the criteria of success for speaking test is low, that is 65. It was determined based on the students' condition and ability in learning foreign language. The subject of this research is the students of elementary school and they seldom learn speaking in learning foreign language. It does not matter to determine the target score 70, but it is needed to pay attention to the human resources. The students in Thailand is actually low in learning English. The second is about the time in doing the research. Each cycle consisted of two meeting. Each meeting was provided 50 minutes, it was based on the school hours. In improving speaking ability, giving more time to practice is important. So that, if each meeting have more time, it will make drilling in speaking class can be done well.

4. Conclusion

Based on the discussion of the result, the conclusions are as follow:

- 1) The use of drilling technique could improve the sixth grade students' speaking ability at Rung Arun Suksa School Krabi Thailand in 2015/2016 academic year by doing intensive practice in listening to the teacher and repeating what is heard. The material was tried to be explained well before drilling and process of drilling was more focused on the speaking aspect such as fluency, pronunciation and vocabulary. If the students master all those aspects, the students will be able to speak fluently and accurately in pronunciation and vocabulary.
- 2) The use of drilling technique could improve the sixth grade students' active participation at Rung Arun Suksa School Krabi Thailand in 2015/2016 academic year. It was because the students were drilled to understand the material first, so during drilling the students could respond to the teacher, pay attention, listen to the teacher and repeat what is heard, and also perform the task. It made the students were more active in Cycle 2.

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