The Effect of Reinforcement Toward Students' Speaking Ability (An Experiment at the Tenth Grade Students of SMAN 7 Bengkulu Academic Year 2018/2019)

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Abstract

This Experimental Research was conducted to find out whether the reinforcement given by the teacher while teaching speaking can improve the students' speaking ability or not. The population of the research were the tenth grade students of SMAN 7 Bengkulu. Based on simple random sampling technique, X MIPA 1 was taken as the sample and became the experimental group. The data collected from the scores of students' speaking administered as pretest and posttest. The treatment was given to the students in the form of a set of praises as feedback to each student's oral responses. After doing 6 times of treatment on Experimental Group, the result indicated that the reinforcement affected students speaking ability significantly. In other words, the reinforcement given by the teacher could improve the students' speaking ability.

Keywords: Reinforcement, Speaking Ability.

Introduction

In learning English, there are four skills that have to be learned; reading, writing, listening and speaking. There are many strategies that can be implemented in teaching and learning those language skills. In other words, each skill needs appropriate technique to gain the goals of the learning which are mandated in curriculum.

The skills are classified into two different forms. The first category is receptive skill. Listening and reading are classified as receptive skills. The second one is productive skill where speaking and writing are under this

category. From those skills, speaking is the most important to be mastered. In line with this, Nunan (1991) states that for most people, mastering speaking skill is the most important aspect of learning a second or foreign language, and the speaking ability is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the language.

Commonly, students face difficulties in learning speaking. One of the factors that influence the difficulty is psychological factors which influence the students when they are required to elaborate ideas in spoken production. According to the results of previous researches, psychological or non-linguistic and linguistic problems are faced by the English students (Heriansyah, 2012; Fitriani, 2014). The findings from previous researchers clearly show us that psychological and linguistic problems are exist while speaking at the same time. However, the present researcher only dealt with psychological or non-linguistic problems which is related to students' ability in delivering spoken words influenced by the environment.

As we know, no matter how great a learner in writing, reading and listening, if they cannot speak they cannot communicate well in English. In this research, the researcher thought these problems can be alleviated by selecting appropriate technique that can be used by the teacher in teaching speaking. There are so many strategies or techniques that can be used by the teachers to help students on learning speaking in class. For example, using activities that involved students to do a group discussion and oral presentation. However, these activities will not be worked without willingness from the students themselves.

Besides, speaking requires a high level of self-confidence. It means that the state of being sure of doing something, and not being shy while speaking. Thus, in order to be like a native speaker in a foreign language, self-confidence is one of the keys that unlocks some important communication barriers. However, students who trespass the rules of language will get punishment. The punishment sometimes makes students feel down and lose self-confidence to learn more about English especially in speaking. Some of the responses are might be weakened by punishment.

Based on my preliminary research done when I was doing internship II in SMAN 7 Bengkulu about the reason why they do not want to use English in class, the results showed that The students were afraid to be mocked by their friends or get punishment from the teacher. They were afraid of doing pronunciation and grammar mistakes. In their opinion, words in English are difficult because it is different between what is written and how to pronounce that word. However, the students will not really care about what they friends were saying if the teacher gave them positive feedback such as praises for them. Sometimes, other friends praised their friends as the way the teacher did. This situation increased their confidence in speaking and they would like to do speaking activity on the next meeting or answer teacher's questions in English. Then, the researcher realized that reinforcement was rarely given by the teacher in the class.

Reinforcement is a behavioral consequence that increases the probability that a response will be repeated in the future (McConnell, 1990). As educators, who play the important role in class, a teacher can give reinforcement to strengthen students' motivation. According to Maag (2003) most teachers and administrators continue to have reservations about using reinforcement as a tool for discipline and classroom management. Reinforcement in class is easy to do. The teacher can give the students praises and rewards and expect the students will repeat the behavior in future. Teacher should do various expressions and consistent of giving the reinforcement, so that students will be familiar with it.

According to Downing (2005), reinforcement strategies are more effective than punishing strategies for increasing and shaping positive behaviors in any learning environment. This theory is proved by a descriptive research that conducted by Kelly & Pohl (2012). They indicated that positive behavior modification techniques are more effective than punishment. The findings showed us that reinforcement (negative and positive) could affect students' achievement in academic rather than punishment. Then, Skinner's Operant Conditioning theory in teaching-learning process was related to present research which used the

same theory. (Pintel, 2006; Hoque, 2013). However, their participants in lower grade; 9th Junior High School and 3rd Elementary School students. In this research, the researcher took participants in higher level; 10th Senior High School. The researcher felt that reinforcement was still needed even in higher level or grade.

From the statement above, the researcher believed that reinforcement helped students in SMAN 7 Bengkulu to create a positive behavior in learning environment. It comes from external factor to increase their English speaking ability. Reinforcement is not only give advantages to evoke the students responses in learning, but also give the advantages for both teachers and students. It can create a good relationship between them. It is In line with Banks (2008) who suggests establishing a good teacher-student relationship to help student express themselves on learning by giving them positive feedback.

Therefore, the researcher felt important to conduct a research which aimed to find out the effect of reinforcement that given by the teacher toward students' speaking ability for tenth grade students in SMAN 7 Bengkulu.

Theoretical Framework

Reinforcement

In behavioral psychology, **reinforcement** is a consequence applied that will strengthen an organism's future behavior whenever that behavior is preceded by a specific antecedent stimulus. This strengthening effect may be measured as a higher frequency of behavior (e.g., pulling a lever more frequently), longer duration (e.g., pulling a lever for longer periods of time), greater magnitude (e.g., pulling a lever with greater force), or shorter latency (e.g., pulling a lever more quickly following the antecedent stimulus). There are two types of reinforcement, known as positive reinforcement and negative reinforcement; positive is where by a reward is offered on expression of the wanted behaviour and negative is taking away an undesirable element in the persons environment whenever the desired behaviour is achieved. Rewarding stimuli, which are associated with "wanting" and "liking" (desire and pleasure,

respectively) and appetitive behavior, function as positive reinforcers; the converse statement is also true: positive reinforcers provide a desirable stimulus.[1] Reinforcement does not require an individual to consciously perceive an effect elicited by the stimulus.[2] Thus, reinforcement occurs only if there is an observable strengthening in behavior. However, there is also negative reinforcement, which is characterized by taking away an undesirable stimulus. Changing someone's job might serve as a negative reinforcer to someone whom suffers from back problems, i.e. Changing from a labourers job to an office position for instance.

In most cases, the term "reinforcement" refers to an enhancement of behavior, but this term is also sometimes used to denote an enhancement of memory; for example, "post-training reinforcement" refers to the provision of a stimulus (such as food) after a learning session in an attempt to increase the retained breadth, detail, and duration of the individual memories or overall memory just formed.[3] The memory-enhancing stimulus can also be one whose effects are directly rather than only indirectly emotional, as with the phenomenon of "flashbulb memory," in which an emotionally highly intense stimulus can incentivize memory of a set of a situation's circumstances well beyond the subset of those circumstances that caused the emotionally significant stimulus, as when people of appropriate age are able to remember where they were and what they were doing when they learned of the assassination of John F. Kennedy or of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Speaking Ability

Speaking is an activity of delivering massage, it occurs between speaker and listener orally. In other words, the main point of speaking activity is that speakers communicate their massage to the listeners. In this case, the speaker and listener should be able to understand each other. The speaker can produce the sounds that involved the massages and the listener can receive, process, and response the massages.

According to Byrne (1984) speaking is oral communication. It is a two ways process between speaker and listener and involve productive and receptive skill of understanding, while Huebner (1969) states that

speaking is the main skill in communication. Based on this idea it is understood that through speaking, someone can communicate or express what she or he wants in order to understand one another.

Rivers (1978: 162) says through speaking someone can express her or his ideas, emotions and reactions to other person or situation and influence other person. Furthermore, someone can communicate or express what he or she wants from other and response to other speaker. It means that in order to express someone's ideas, speaker must also attend the aspect of speaking, in order that the massage is understandable to the listener.

According to Brown (1987: 2) in all communication or conversation two people are exchanging information or they have a communication or conversation need. It means that the reason for the people to communicate with other is in order to tell people something, which they do not know, or to find something out from other people.

Johnson (1983: 18) refers to speaking as the ability to produce articulation, sounds or words to express, to say, to show and to think about ideas, taught and feeling. Murcia (1978: 91) says speaking is the primary element of language and it can be developed from the beginning when someone was born, from the first contact with the language.

Furthermore, in speaking, there are some aspects that should be concerned. They are fluency, accuracy (grammar and pronunciation) and comprehensibility. Fluency is the smoothness or flow with which sounds, syllable, words and phrases are joined together when speaking. fluency and accuracy, comprehensibility is also needed in speaking since it reflect how much the speaker understands what he is talking about. If someone says something beyond the topic discussed, it can be said that he has no comprehensibility towards the topic. In other words, comprehensibility determines how well the speaker interprets and responds the massage received. Comprehensibility is defined as measurement of how much interpretation is required to understand the others' responses (http:/wwwkl2.dc.us/teachingandlearning/document/Rubrics.pdf). Harris (1974: 82) adds that comprehension for all communication certainly requires a subject to respond to speech as well as initiate it.

Brown also provides type of classroom speaking performance, they are:

1. Imitative

    A very limited portion of classroom speaking time may legitimately be spent generating" Human tape-recorder" speech, where for example, learner practice an intonation contour or try to pinpoint a certain vowel sound. Imitation of this kind is carried out not for the purpose of meaning full interaction, but for focusing on some particular element of language form.

2. Intensive

    Intensive speaking goes one-step beyond imitative to include any speaking performance that is designed to practice some phonological or grammatical aspect of the language. Intensive speaking can be self-imitated or it can even from part of some pair work activity, where learners are "going over" certain forms of language.

3. Responsive

    The students' speech in the classroom is responsive short replies to teacher-or-students-initiated questions or comment. These replies are usually sufficient and do not extend into dialogues. Such speech can be meaningful and authentic:

4. Transactional (dialogue)

    Transactional dialogue, which is carried out for the purpose of conveying or exchanging specific information is to extend form of responsive language. Conversation, for example, may have more of a negotiate nature to them than does responsive speech.

Research Method

The method of this research is Experimental Research Design. According to Sugiyono (2006), experimental research is a research which has the purpose to find the cause-effect relationship among variables in controlled condition. This research used two variables. Reinforcement is independent variable, and students' speaking ability is dependent variable. In this research, the researcher implemented pretest-posttest

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experimental design where there was only a class as an experimental group.

This research was conducted at an English class at SMAN 7 in Bengkulu. Prior the treatments, the students were given speaking test as a pretest to see their speaking ability, then the treatments were conducted in six meeting. After the treatments, the students were given the posttest to see students' speaking performance.

While giving the treatment, the researcher did the activity that involved all of the students such as oral presentation. In this presentation, the researcher gave the instruction for every group to present their own group task in front of the class by dividing them into their own job while presenting. By this way, every student had the equal portion on speaking. In the end of each member performance, the researcher always gave the student the praises .

The results of the speaking pretest and posttest were scored by two different raters by using speaking rubric proposed by Brown (2001). The speaking scores of pretest and posttest were analyzed by using paired sample t-test to see whether there was an improvement in terms of students' speaking ability before and after they were treated by giving sets of reinforcement.

Result and Discussion

Result

In this section, the researcher presents the result of the research that has been conducted. The result of the calculation showed that T obtained was 18.351 which was bigger than T_{table}, 2.060 with degree of freedom 25. From the result, it could be concluded that there was significant difference in students' speaking ability between pre-test and post-test scores. In other words, it concluded that the reinforcement affected the speaking ability of the students.

Discussion

In researcher's preliminary research when doing the internship at SMAN 7 Bengkulu City for 3 months, the researcher found the problem in

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class. The problem is the students were afraid to practice speaking in class. It was proved that their speaking ability was weak. Whereas, speaking is the most important skill to be mastered as English Foreign Language learners. So that the students need motivation to increase their speaking ability and the teacher needs to create appropriate behavior students' in learning.

According to Downing (2005), reinforcement strategies are more effective than punishment strategies for increasing and shaping positive behaviors in any learning environment. And then, the researcher used reinforcement as a technique to help students in increasing their speaking ability effectively. Also, Yusuf (2007) stated that this technique is more effective in forming people's behavior than a classical conditioning, because most of people's responses characterized intentionally than a reflective.

The researcher used the variety of praises while teaching. By varieties, the students did not feel bored with praises given. It became easier to create the behavior needed. The students were more active in giving responses the teacher's questions by using English. It seems that the students were eager to involve in learning process after receiving reinforcement. This phenomenon was similar to the research conducted by Wood & Boyd (2005). They said that reinforcement is a pleasant or desirable consequences that follows a response and increases the possibility that the response will be repeated.

While giving the treatments, the researcher never forgot to ask questions. In every question, there was always responses from the students to answer those questions. The questioning section in teaching ran well. It helped the teacher reach the goal of teaching the material in classroom. In every oral response, the teacher gave them praises as feedback. By giving them the praises, the students were more attracted to answer other questions from teacher, asking questions to the teacher or even asking questions to their friends. This question and answer activity always used English. The use of reinforcement could manage the students' expected behavior in repetition in order to make them practice more so the ability of their speaking was improved.

The researcher realized that after giving them praises, the students always gave responses with smiles. They asked the researcher more questions not only about the material but also about the strategies of speaking. It was because in this process of collecting the data, the researcher used about 80% of English. Thus, they wanted to learn more about how to increase their speaking ability. For this situation, the researcher was easier to help the students increase their speaking ability.

From the data collected, the praises given could attract the students to be more active to involve in learning process. It could be seen by the ending result after the treatment conducted. The students' ability in speaking were increasing and they were not afraid to speak in English anymore. In line with this, Banks (2008) suggests establishing a good teacher-student relationship to help students express themselves by giving them positive feedback. As what the researcher believed, the good relation between teacher and students could help the students on learning process.

The students in this experimental group were also easy to get involved in learning activities due to the reinforcement given. Thus, the learning activities was more conducive in the classroom. In line with this, according to Davis (2009), student's enthusiasm and willingness to participate in a classroom through these verbal engagement will create a conducive classroom environment. The reinforcement was natural and consistent. The reinforcement given should not consider the active level of students, it should be given in every response.

Thus, the result of this research also supports the result of previous researches which was conducted by Diedrich and Rumfola that proved this technique could improve students' learning achievement. It seems that the students were eager to involve in learning process after receiving reinforcement.

Conclusion and Suggestion

Conclusion

It could be concluded from the result on the previous chapter that there was significant difference effect of using reinforcement toward students'

speaking ability on X MIPA 1 class of SMAN 7 Bengkulu. This statement could also explain that the experiment was successful and the use of reinforcement strategy was more effective to be applied in improving students' speaking ability.

Suggestion

This research had proved that the use of reinforcement could improve the students' speaking ability on X MIPA 1 class of SMAN 7 Bengkulu. Based on conclusion above, the researcher would like to offer some suggestion dealing with teaching speaking in the classroom:

1. For the teacher : Teaching speaking through reinforcement strategy could give positive effect for learning process. It was proved by this research that reinforcement can improve students' speaking ability. The teacher should consider this technique because it is easy to do.

2. For the students : Students are expected to be appreciative and supportive to others to practice speaking.

3. For further researcher : It is expected that the further researcher could find out how the reinforcement affect students' speaking ability by interviewing their perception toward reinforcement given.

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