SONGS HELPED THEM LEARN THE ENGLISH CONNECTED SPEECH

Tono Suwartono, Puspita Mayaratri
Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto, IAIN Tulungagung
suwartononewton@gmail.com, puspitamayaratri@iain-tulungagung.ac.id

Abstract:
In the previous years, the students of university were taught the English connected speech through drill. This used to bring about students' poor attitudes and unsatisfactory achievement. This study was aimed at examining if selected songs would improve the students' connected speech performance. Nonequivalent Control Group Design was used in this experimental study. It involved six intact groups of students attending Pronunciation course – three were randomly assigned to the experimental group and the remaining three assigned to the control group. Both groups were pre-tested. The results were equal. After 3 sessions of connected speech lesson both groups were tested again. The post-test results of these two groups were then compared to see if the sample means were significantly different. As the study also aimed to find out the students' perception towards the teaching practice implemented, a questionnaire was employed. The t-test showed that the difference of the sample means was not too large. Nevertheless, based on the feedback elicited through the questionnaire, the use of songs for teaching the English connected speech seemed to remain promising. Overall, the study showed that the use of songs for teaching the English connected speech tended to have a prospective better learning outcome. As the experiment took only 3 sessions, the chance for such treatment to be effective is increased if period of study is extended.

Keywords: *song, pronunciation, connected speech, drill*

In the previous years, the students of university were taught English pronunciation through drill. With this technique the students used to perform unsatisfactorily in the tests. Efforts have been taken to facilitate student's learning of pronunciation. However, results remain relatively the same. A study by Suwartono (2006), for example, showed that the use of dubbing technique in the teaching of the English segmental phonemes resulted in positive attitudes in the part of students but gave no significant effect on the learning outcome. Teaching the pronunciation of English that is more communicative has been felt necessary since then.

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

Task-Based Language Teaching is an important thing in experiential learning This approach takes the learner's immediate personal experience as the point of departure for the learning experience. The active involvement of the learner is central to this approach. Experiential nature of the process is learning by doing. So, in this approach, learner plays vital role. The task-based approach aims at providing opportunities for learners to experiment with and explore bot spoken and written language through activities that are designed to engage learners in the authentic, practical,and functional use of language for meaningful purposes.

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

area of pronunciation he is going to teach to the students.

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

Songs provide examples of authentic, memorable and rhythmic language. They can be motivating for students keen to repeatedly listen to and imitate their musical heroes. Here, we look at some aspects of pronunciation that can be focused on through songs: using songs to focus on sounds, using songs to focus on words, and using songs to focus on connected speech (Elbong & Sabbadini, 2006). Furthermore, Elbong & Salbadini stated that connected speech is the natural way we speak, linking together and emphasising certain words, rather than each word standing alone. Contractions (two words forming one) are an extreme example of the way we connect speech, to the extent that the written form too is affected.

In addition to rhythm and authenticity, which are of course motivating to students to reproduce the text or its parts, song provide most aspect found in spoken language, including connected speech. In relation with the teaching of pronunciation of the English connected speech, songs are really helpful. One argument is that some songs are slow so that recognizing how the words flow becomes easier. Therefore, the teacher who wants to use songs for teaching connected speech should make sure that the chosen song is the one that is not too fast for the learners› level and with clear voice. Lots of slow pop songs could be employed for this purpose. However, the teacher should use songs with numerous occurrences of connected speech to provide learners with more examples.

It seems difficult for students because they normally learn words

individually and, especially at lower levels, tend to pronounce each word separately. Students frequently misconceive contractions as being ‹incorrect›, only used in ‹slang›. Not all words within a phrase carry the same weight. Here, the role of songs is clearly mentioned by Elbong & Sabbadini (2006) as follows:

"Songs, and especially the chorus, provide real and ‹catchy› examples of how whole phrases are pronounced often to the extent that students find it difficult to pick out individual words. The music further emphasises the ‹flow› of the words.Songs, like other spoken texts, are full of contractions. Students can be keen to reproduce this, in order to sing the song as they hear it."

Related Literature

There were some researches conducted related to the use of songs to learn English connected speech. The first research was the one by a Spanish teacher of English as foreign language, Ulate (2007) under the title "Using Songs to Improve EFL Students' Pronunciation". She analyzed the importance of using songs in the English classroom and how it can be implemented to teach pronunciation. Her research was based on her own experiencess as a learner and teacher of English. The research showed that the use of songs in the EFL classroom can make learning more enjoyable and interesting. At the same time, students acquire the target language and feel comfortable in a relaxing atmosphere . This helps them lower their affective filter, and become more receptive to learning. In addition , songs help learners improve their understanding and production of important pronunciation features.

. Second was a research entitled "The Effect of English Verbal Songs on Connected Speech Aspects of Adult English Learners' Speech Production"by Ashtiani, Farshid T & Zafarghandi, Mahdavi A, 2014). This research was about an attempt to investigate the impact of English verbal songs on connected speech aspects of adult English learners' speech production with 40 participants. The result concluded that providing the EFL learners with English verbal songs could positively affect connected speech aspects of both modes of speechproduction, reading aloud and speaking. This surely

rise teachers'awareness of the benefits on using songs in improving students' connnected speech.

The latest research was conducted recently by Supeno with his research "Using Songs to Improve Students' Pronunciation". He took the high school level for the participants. This descriptive-qualitative research came to positive results at the end. The use of songs in the High School classroom can make learning more fascinating and interesting. At the same time, students acquire the target language (in the form of improved pronunciation) and feel comfortable in a relaxing atmosphere during the teaching learning process. This helps them lower their affective filter, and become more receptive to learning. In addition, songs help learners improve their understanding and production of important pronunciation features.

Those threee previous studies led to positive effect on students' pronunciation (especially connected speech) which was a good vibe for the researcher to implement the songs in learning pronunciation to enhance students' connected speech. In the previous years, the students at the place where the present study was conducted had been taught the pronunciation of English through drill. The only teaching resource was the handbook. The test used to show unsatisfactory result. Besides, the student did not seem to show positive attitudes.

The purpose of this study was to examine if the selected pop songs would improve the connected speech ability. The hypothesis was that the teaching of the English connected speech through songs was superior to that with drills.

METHOD

This research is experimental. Nonequivalent control group design was used. It involved six intact groups of students attending pronunciation course - three were randomly assigned to the experimental group and the remaining three assigned to the control group. The research was started when the course came to the topic of connected speech. Working with songs

as media for teaching connected speech took most of the class time in the experimental group. In the control group, however the students were taught the English connected speech without media and drill was dominant.

Before the connected speech lessons began, both groups were pre-tested. The test result were equal (Mean1; 14,28; Mean2; 15.06). After 3 sessions of connected speech lessons, both groups were tested again. Post-test result of these two groups were then compared if significant difference existed. As the study also aimed to find out the students› perception of the teaching practice implemented, a questionnaire was employed.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

At the end of the lessons, there was a 44.6% increase in the achievement of song students; while that of drill students rose by 43.5%. Up to this point, again,the achievement of the song students was higher.

Table 1. Group differences in connected speech ability

Drill		Song	
M1	32.79	M2	33.73
Σd21	36600	Σd22	40956
N1	84	N2	79

To see whether the sample means are significantly different, statistic test was done. Using t-test, it was found that the t-ratio = 0,272. With degree of freedom (above 120) the critical value of t for a one-tailed test at the 0,05significance level is 1,645 (0.272<1,645). It means that the difference of sample means is insignificantly large and, therefore, the research hypothesis that predicts teaching the English connected speech through songs is superior to drills is not true. Nevertheless, viewed from the gain of each group and the data that was collected through questionnaire, the use of songs in the teaching of the English connected speech seemed to remain promising.

From the seven questionnaire items, some important points can be presented here. Most students (over 90%) of both groups agreed that the

teaching of pronunciation during the semester was quite helpful or helpful enough (Q1)

When asked about which lesson of pronunciation they liked most, both groups chose connected speech. However, there is a gap between the two groups. The rates are 59.52% for drill students and 70.88% for song students (Q2).

The common reason why they liked the English connected speech most was the teaching technique employed (over 60% students in each group). However, a large difference between the groups is their choice dealingwith the use of media, nearly 38% of student taught connected speech using songs found it interesting to learn connected speech because of the teaching media, which were the selected songs. Only 7.14% of student taught connected speech using drills perceived that they liked it because of the teaching media brought into the classroom (Q3).

Still related with finding above, the students through that the easiest lesson of all during the semester is connected speech.But,there is a slight difference. Less than a half (45,2%) of drill students thought so, while within the song group this reached 56.9% of student (Q4).

Further, when asked about what made the perceived- easiest material easy to learn, the song student who responded that it was because of the presence of media reached 32,9%, while the drill students who responded the same were only less than 4% (Q5).

It has been quite clear from the questionnaire data that the students of the experimental group benefited from the use of songs as media for teaching the English connected speech. The selected pop song facilitated their learning of connected speech. This has been supported by data elicited through a couple of open questionnaire items. Oneitem deals with impression the students got from the teaching and learning process and the other one has something to do with their suggestion for future practices.

Among those Drill students who expressed their impressions, the highest rate of impression fell to the teaching technique(nearly37%). A bit

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

CONCLUSION

Overall, based on the gain and the students' perception, the use of songs for teaching the English connected speech tended to have a prospective better learning outcome. This study has shown that there is a hope that teaching the English connected speech through song is better than that with drills as the main teaching technique. Concerning the result of this research, further study us encouraged to hold in order to explore more effective ways in developing students' connected speech.

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