A SET OF CIRCULAR BOARD AS A MEDIUM TO TEACH SPEAKING FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT: Speaking is an essential skill that should be taught at the elementary school. It is in line with the objectives of the teaching of English for young learners stated in the Standards of Content of 2006 in which elementary school learners are expected to develop simple communication competence. This study aims at developing a set of circular board as a medium to teach speaking for young learners. Adapting Borg and Gall’s research and development model as the basis of the study, a set of circular board has been produced.

Key words: a set of circular board, speaking, young learners

According to BSNP (2006), the purpose of teaching English focuses on the development of the English skills in a particular literacy level. Those literacy levels consist of performative, functional, informational, and epistemic (Wells, 1987). Among those four levels, the teaching of English in the elementary school aims at gaining performative level. It is stated that one of the purposes of teaching English in elementary school is to develop students’ communicative competence in a limited way as an accompanying action in school context. Furthermore, BSNP states that the teaching of English in the elementary school should cover limited oral communication in which reading and writing skill support students to develop their communicative competence. Indeed, it can be interpreted that the teaching of English in the elementary school is more on the teaching of oral communication.

Following the statement afore-mentioned, Huda (1999) states English can be taught in the elementary school if the local community thinks that it is relevant to learn English. The idea is supported by the Ministry of Education and Culture in the National Conference in 1992. In addition, English lesson as a local content subject is intended to develop young learners’ ability to understand simple oral and written expressions. Therefore, it is obvious that English instruction for elementary school students is focused more on simple oral and written expressions.

Responding to the statement above, the researcher affirms that speaking is one of the essential and fundamental skills in mastering English that should be taught in the elementary school. One of the objectives of English instruction in the elementary school is to develop students’ oral and limited communicative competence for accompanying action in school context (BSNP, 2006).

As English is a new language to learn for most elementary school students, it can be a good idea to introduce English to them. Fachrurazy (2011) states that young
learners are interested in learning something new. The teaching of speaking English to young learners can be interesting when English teachers always consider young learners’ characteristics. Moreover, research shows that 87% of young learners are happy learning English though more than a half (53%) of them finds it difficult (Suyanto, 2010). It is then suggested that the teaching of English in the elementary school be interesting and better. However, the teaching of speaking can be quite challenging since it is the least practiced skill. Paul (2007) states that the children can listen to English at home, read English at home, and even write English at home, but most of them have few opportunities to speak English at home. This is probably due to the fact that it is hard to find certain group of society and/or family using English as a means of communication, where young learners can get the exposure to practice their English orally. Therefore, it is the teacher’s job to design lots of speaking practices for them at school.

In line with the teaching of English to young learners, the notion of teaching them should be based on certain theories. One of the theories is comprehensible input theory (i+1) proposed by Krashen in 1980. This means that learning experience should contain an amount of language that the students can fully understand, plus just a little more (Harmer, 2007). By applying this theory, it is expected that the learners will be able to understand as well as gain new knowledge in such a comprehensible way. This theory provides a powerful reason for an exclusive use of the target language for all classroom purposes. However, complete use of target language is not enough. It must be used in such a way so that the students can achieve a full understanding. In addition, using gestures, illustrations, examples, and the like are some of the way to teach English to young learners (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2010).

Based on the points afore-mentioned, in order to design an appropriate way of teaching speaking to young learners, a teacher needs to build a sort of joyful and fun activities. There are lots of ways of creating such atmosphere. One of them is by using instructional media. Briggs, (1970) defines media as physical means which are used to send messages to the students and stimulate them to learn. Thus, using media is essential since it helps students to understand the materials presented and at last reach the learning objectives.

In relation to the teaching and learning English by using media, during the preliminary study conducted in SDN Pandanwangi 5 Malang, the researcher found a fact that the instructional media for English teaching and learning were not sufficiently provided. As the result, the teaching and learning process is usually done by asking the students to copy the materials written by the teachers on the blackboard. In this way, the
learners have insufficient opportunities to practice their speaking skill.

Based on the problem found during the preliminary study, the researcher believes that the existence of instructional media is needed to achieve a better comprehension in learning English. There are lots of media that can be used to teach speaking. One of the media is by using a circular card. According to Suyanto (2010), a circular card is an appropriate medium to introduce new vocabulary or sentence patterns. Moreover, a circular card is a great medium to encourage students to use English in a short dialogue and/or an interactive activity in pairs and/or in groups. Based on what Suyanto (2010) has said about the circular card, it is obvious that a circular card is an appropriate medium for teaching and learning speaking.

The circular card is a sort of medium that consists of two thick papers in a circular form. It has handlers to make the circular card turn around. Furthermore, since a circular card has several layers. Each layer has its own function. The first layer is divided into several parts; usually 6 or 8 parts. Then, on each part, there is a picture with or without any words. Then on the very first layer of the circular card, one part of the paper should be cut so that the students will be able to see the pictures and the information. Finally, all those layers are combined into a single medium by sticking the round-thick papers with melted cotton bud. In terms of the size, a circular card usually has a diameter of 15-30 centimeters but it can be decreased to 15 centimeters. In using the medium, the students and/or the teachers need to turn around the cut-part so that the pictures within the other parts can be seen.

The circular card is designed to encourage elementary school students to interact orally in English. By using this sort of medium, the teacher is expected to be able to make the students more active during the teaching and learning process. In short, the idea of developing a circular card is to promote a fun way of teaching English to young learners. To be more specific, it is a joyful way of teaching speaking in English.

The use of circular card in the teaching and learning English is flexible. It can be modified based on the need of the students. From the basic materials point of view for example, using paper as the base material is too risky because paper has vulnerability which makes it possible to deteriorate after multiple usage. Therefore, the practitioners may modify the material of the circular card depending on the needs.

The size of this medium is designed based on the instructional needs. For a small class, the teacher may use the circular card with approximately 15-30 centimeters in diameter. Then, if the teacher is teaching in a big class, this instructional medium can be made with a bigger size up to 80 centimeters in diameter.

The notion of using a circular card as teaching media is flexible. It is up to the
teachers to make modifications based on their needs. In this study, the researcher also makes several modifications based on several considerations.

Firstly, the researcher modified the material used. As paper is vulnerable, instead of using the paper, the researcher used wood. Secondly, the researcher modified the size of the circular card. Since the circular card is intended for a whole class usage, the size of the circular card is expanded to 80 centimeters. Consequently, due to the modification made by the researcher, instead of a circular card, it is then called a circular board.

The circular board for speaking media may be appropriate for fifth graders as the potential users. One consideration is because fifth graders belong to upper group in which they have already had the basic knowledge of English and are ready to improve their skills in using English. Another reason of choosing fifth graders is because it is stated in the standards competence of 2006 for the fifth graders in the second terms that fifth graders should be able to communicate to ask and give information acceptably involving the language functions to give information.

**METHOD**

This research was aimed at developing an educational product, i.e a set of circular board for fifth graders to encourage their speaking ability. In line with the model proposed by Borg and Gall (1983), this study adapted the steps of the model. Originally, Borg and Gall research and development framework consists of ten steps. However, the researcher made adaptation by omitting two steps namely planning and dissemination and implementation. The planning step in which the researcher had to define the skills, stating objectives, determining course sequence, and small scale feasibility testing had been done during the need analysis phase. Then, the dissemination and implementation in which the researcher had to report the product on professional meetings and in journals was not performed due to the limitation of the time. As the result of adaptation, the researcher took the following steps; (1) need analysis, (2) the product development, (3) product validation, (4) product revision, (5) product try-out, (6) product revision, (7) product try-out, and (8) producing the final product.

Needs analysis was the initial step done in this research. In this phase, the researcher analyzed the need of the target students. Also, this analysis aimed at knowing whether or not the medium developed by the researcher was needed by the target students. The data of the interviews, classroom observation, and students’ questionnaire were analyzed. Firstly, the researcher identified the needs of the students by interviewing one English teacher of SDN Pandanwangi V Malang who was responsible for teaching the fifth graders. The information about the media used during the teaching and learning
process was obtained. Furthermore, the researcher asked about the problems faced by both the teacher and the students in the teaching and learning speaking such as the problem of uttering the idea, choosing vocabulary, and pronouncing the vocabulary. In addition, the researcher asked about the solutions done to overcome the problems.

Secondly, classroom observation was done to see the situation during the teaching and learning activities. This stage of need analysis aimed at knowing the real classroom condition so that the researcher had the real depiction of the classroom. By doing the classroom observation, the researcher was able to determine whether or not the targeted students needed the product of the research.

Next, the researcher distributed questionnaire to the target students. This questionnaire was intended to find out the students’ point of view toward the teaching and learning of speaking in English. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part dealt with the students’ problem throughout the teaching and learning of speaking in English such as problems of uttering ideas, choosing vocabulary, pronouncing the words. The next part dealt with the media used in the classroom. Here, the researcher provided two questions about the students’ opinion on the use of media in the classroom.

Based on the results of the need analysis, the researcher came to a next stage of the research namely the product development. In this phase, the researcher started to develop the circular board by providing the design of the product, collecting the materials needed during the process of producing the product, and producing the draft of the product. Within the process, the researcher underwent three steps namely deciding the topic, creating the design, and producing the first model of the circular board.

After the first design of the circular board was done, the next thing to do was to validate the product. This validation, indeed, was intended to know whether or not the circular board was suitable for the targeted subjects. The validation was given by the expert who had sufficient experience in the instructional media development. Furthermore, the validation by the expert focused on several points such as design of the product, relevance, accuracy of the material, and possible problems occurred.

After the validation stage, the researcher came to the next phase i.e revision. Here, the result of the validation was used as the guideline to revise the circular board. Furthermore, the revision was necessarily carried out for the sake of the circular board betterment.

One of the revisions made by the researcher is the choice of the colour. The choice of the colour of the circular board’s cards is not contrast. Therefore, the researcher needs to thicken the cards. Another revision is to add an arrow mark as a sign to which part the circular board should be rotated. With the additional sign, the teacher may find it easier
in using the circular board. The manual of using the circular board was revised. At first, the researcher did not use detail procedure of using the circular board. The expert then states that the existence of the procedure in using the circular board was needed since not all people know how to use the circular board. Therefore, the procedure of using the circular board would be of a great help for those who want to use the instructional media.

The next stage to perform in this research was the first try-out of the product. The try-out was needed to see whether or not the product needed some improvement. In addition, the try out was needed to see whether or not the product worked well when it was used in a real context, the English class.

At the first try-out, the researcher used small group consisting of four students that were randomly taken from the target group. The aim of selecting only small group in the first try out was to measure the samples’ responses when they had to work with the circular board. In addition, the try-out was carried out to see whether the prototype of the product worked in the implementation of teaching and learning process.

After conducting the first try-out, the researcher had to use the information to revise the circular board. After the second revision was accomplished, the researcher expected that the circular board would be applicable in the real English classroom.

The next thing to be accomplished after the second revision was the second try out. This time, the try-out was carried out with a bigger group which included one class of the fifth grade.

After conducting the second try-out, the researcher carried out the third revision. This sort of revision was the last revision done by the researcher before producing the final product. This revision was done to minimize the weaknesses found during the try out.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

To identify the applicability of the circular board, the researcher conducted two try-out sessions with small group and big group. The first try-out was done with only four students. The purpose of conducting a small group try out was to know the students’ reactions toward the teaching and learning of speaking by using a circular board.
First of all, the students stated that they were not familiar with this sort of medium. Indeed, it was their first time dealing with the circular board. As the result of this unfamiliarity, they became curious. The students asked questions about the media which was presented in front of them including the name of the media and how to use the media.

Secondly, when the students were asked to make a dialogue based on the pictures presented in the circular board, they showed their enthusiasm. Although the students seemed to be shy, they were willing to speak in English by using the circular board as their guidance.

Then, when they were asked to tell what made the medium interesting, they came up with different answers. All of them stated that the circular board was big and looked good. Besides, two of them added that since the medium could be rotated, it became more interesting.

Relating to the small group try out, the researcher also asked the students about the teaching and learning activity by using circular board. They affirmed that they did not find any difficulty in comprehending the material. Based on the observation, it showed that the students had already acquired the idea of the shopping items included in the circular board such as ice cream, hamburger, and doughnut. However, when they were asked to practice using them in complete sentences of asking and giving information about the price, they still made several mistakes.

After obtaining data from the small group try-out, the researcher revised the circular board based on the data acquired. Then, after revising the product, the second try-out was conducted in a bigger group of students. Since the researcher developed a medium which was supposed to be used for the whole class activity, conducting a bigger group try out was considered essential. The big group try out was conducted with 37 fifth graders of SDN Pandanwangi 5 Malang. In this try out, the researcher was accompanied by the teacher as the observer. The result of the try out would be presented as follows.

The researcher obtained the data from the students by using questionnaire. The questionnaire given to the students consisted of three main questions. The first question was about their impression toward the teaching and learning activity. The next question was about whether or not the circular board used by the researcher helped them to speak in English. The next is about the illustrations. Then, it was about whether or not the circular board was interesting. The last aspect was about their comment and suggestion toward the media.

When it came to the first point relating to the students’ impression toward the
teaching and learning activity during the big group try out, 32 out of 37 students (86.49%) stated they were interested in the lesson. In fact, 5 remaining students (13.51%) stated they did not like the lesson. Those who did not like the lesson provided a reason why they did not like it. 2 out of 5 students stated they did not like the lesson because they could not answer the questions given by the researcher. 1 student stated that she did not like the lesson because she did not get any token from the researcher. Another student affirmed that she did not like the lesson because the class was crowded so she could not pay attention to the discussion during the lesson. However, the other student did not give clear explanation why she did not like the lesson. Secondly, the students were asked about whether or not the circular board helped them learn speaking in English. There were 36 out of 37 students (97.30%) who stated the circular board helped them to speak in English. Only one student stated that the medium did not help him to speak English. Unfortunately, he did not give clear reason why he had such opinion.

Then, there was a question asking about the clarity of the illustrations in the circular board. Fortunately, all of the students (100%) stated that the illustrations were already clear. It means that all of the students sitting in any parts of the classroom could see the medium clearly.

Furthermore, the students were asked about whether or not the circular board was interesting. Overall, the students stated that the circular board was interesting. However, they had their own reason. 5 out of 37 students (13.51%) stated that the circular board was interesting since it could be rotated to any directions. Besides, only 1 student (2.70%) argued that the illustration and the title in front of the circular board were the thing that made it good. Furthermore, the remaining students which were 31 children (83.79%) affirmed that the size and colorful cards made the circular board good and interesting.

The result of this study was a set of circular board consisting of the circular board and 12 colorful cards which were supposed to be stuck on the board. The circular board itself had 80 centimeters in diameter whereas the cards had 19.5 centimeters width and 23.5 cm centimeters length. The circular board had two layers. Some parts of the first layer of the board were cut so that the second layer could be seen. Then, in the part where there was no cut-part, there were stickers stuck onto it. The stickers were a picture of a boy and a girl holding a banner. In the banner, there was written “Let’s Learn English”. Below it, there was another banner “Circular Board” as the title. Then, the second layer of the circular board which was divided into six parts was used as an area to put each item.
As mentioned before, there were 12 cards provided for the teaching and learning activities. The first six cards contained the illustration of the items. Among those six cards, the items were divided into two main themes namely clothes and food. For clothes topic, the cards provided the illustration of t-shirt, belt, and cap. In addition, the food topic contained the picture of hamburger, ice cream, and doughnut. Then, the six remaining cards were the price tags for the items.

To help the user of this medium, the researcher provides the general descriptions of the circular board as well as the basic procedures of using the circular board. However, the procedures of using the circular board developed by the researcher can be very flexible. It is possible to modify the cards based on the topics under the discussion. For example, it is possible to use it to introduce daily activity, procedure text, or narrative text.

By the end of the study, several strengths of the product were identified. First of all, the set of circular board do not rely on electronic devices such as computer, laptop, and/or LCD. This is considered beneficial since not all of the elementary schools have access to use the computers and LCD freely. In SDN Pandanwangi V Malang for example, the availability of such electronic devices is limited. Therefore, the set of circular board is of a great help to English teachers who are not able to use electronic devices as the instructional media.

Secondly, in terms of its size, the circular board is big enough. This definitely is an advantageous aspect since it can be used in a big class with approximately 40 students. Also, due to its size, all students sitting in any parts of the classroom can see it clearly.

Thirdly, the set of circular board is colorful. This is important since it can attract young learners’ attention during the teaching and learning activities. Therefore, by using this medium, it is expected that the learners will be more enthusiastic in following the lesson.

The other strength of the set of the circular board is its multi-tasking usage. It means that the materials that can be used with the circular board can be varied. During the study, the researcher used “how much does it costs?” as the basis material of developing the set of circular board. However, the material can definitely be modified. Narrative text and procedure text are several examples of the materials that can be used with the circular board.

Despite all its strengths, several weaknesses appear in this set of circular board. In terms of the material, the researcher merely provides twelve cards which are considered not enough for the whole class usage. However, this appears due to the time limitation.
Another weakness is the weight of the circular board. Since it is a big size medium, it is also heavy. Therefore, it is a bit difficult to bring.

The researcher deems that this product is far from perfection. It still needs lots of improvement for its betterment. Therefore, this product can be used as reference for future researchers who are interested in conducting similar study. Therefore, a better product of the medium can be produced.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

As previously mentioned, the aim of this study was to develop a teaching aid in the form of a circular board to encourage young learners’ and improve their speaking ability. Based on the study, the circular board developed by the researcher can be used as a medium to teach speaking to young learners. Indeed, this circular board is one of the ways to avoid boredom during the teaching and learning English. By using this medium, the students can learn as well as play with the circular board. According to Linse and Nunan (2005) play is a vital and important aspect of a child’s development, and in fact learning a language is a part of that play. Therefore, using circular board is a splendid way to learn as well as to play with English. As the result their English learning will be much more meaningful and fun. In addition, the students will comprehend the material better. In general, this research and development product is a good teaching aid and can be used as a preference for practitioners to conduct more fun activity during the teaching and learning process.

Suggestions

English teachers are suggested to use this medium in the classroom to support the teaching and learning activity. Also, the teachers are recommended to modify this medium by adding more cards with various illustrations and/or text.

For future researchers who are interested in conducting a similar study, it is suggested to develop circular board with different targeted students, covering different topics and activities. The future researchers are recommended to modify the design of the circular board, the presentation of the circular board, and the material for making the circular board in such a way which makes the circular board work more effectively and efficiently.
REFERENCES


