Tongue Twister Method in Teaching Pronunciation: A Narrative Inquiry of Pre-Service English Teacher

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ABSTRACT

Since English has become a foreign language in Indonesia, the capability to communicate in English has become ever more crucial. Correct speech is progressively required to prevent misunderstandings in articulating a message to the public. As a result, teaching English speaking is essential for teachers to improve their students’ speaking abilities. As English is a second language in Indonesia, students struggle to acquire it. In the context of communication, the mother tongue or the language used in daily activities is more dominant. Because the use of foreign languages is still descending, one of the alternative techniques that a teacher can accomplish is a tongue twister. Tongue twisters as a teaching method enable pupils to speak more clearly, especially when pronouncing words. This research aims to report on the researchers’ experience using tongue twister to teach pronunciation in speaking practice. This research was conducted in an Indonesian Vocational High School in the Karawang district. Besides that, the role of the researchers was as active observers. The findings are that students relish learning using the tongue twister technique. Relish means that the students vigorously participate in learning because the teaching method is delightful and comfortable for students to comprehend the crux material. Therefore, the tongue twister technique assists students in learning English speaking continually.

Keywords: Pronunciation; Tongue Twister; Pre-Service English Teacher

1. INTRODUCTION

Many languages are utilised as communication tools worldwide, and English is one of them. English evolves to become a Lingua franca in communication. English proficiency is necessary for achievement in all academic fields and recreates a crucial role in students’ cognitive, social, and personal demands. This creates a disadvantage for scientists with English as a Foreign Language (EFL) because they must publish complex texts in a foreign language to advance their careers (Ramírez-Castañeda, 2020). This disadvantage gives rise to global inequalities, especially in countries where the majority of the population receives minimal English training and bilingualism with English is very low (Tardy, 2004). Thus, English proficiency and socioeconomic level influence scientific success, access to knowledge and expatriation, among others.

When seeking to learn English skills, there are four that must be taken into account. There are connections among the several skills like speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Applying English in daily activities consisting of teaching and learning has proven beneficial. Students worldwide are learning the English language because the language used assists them in understanding many topics. Most students become more knowledgeable about the language and give attention to learning. Of the four existing skills, speaking and reading are the most widespread among students to learn. The ability to
reads the text makes them understand what is in the text. Then, speaking English is considered valuable and constructs them to reach myriad details.

On the other hand, speaking is a thought-provoking skill for students. In pronunciation teaching, the goal is neither to help learners to attain native-like accents nor to promote comfortable intelligibility to native speakers, but to ensure mutual intelligibility among non-native speakers of English (Jenkins, 2002; McKay, 2002 as quoted by Moedjito, 2008). Learning English speaking skills has always been challenging for these pupils because English is a foreign or second language. Considerable students struggle to express their thinking using the target language while speaking. Manurung (2020) believed that “this can be demonstrated by the numerous elements of faults that students may make during oral production.” The effects influence various pronunciations, grammar, articles, aids, prepositions, and probable causes appear in writing and pronunciation as errors.

Moreover, several discoveries made during the teaching-learning process highlighted the challenge experienced by EFL students, particularly the students’ speaking levels and speaking skills during the learning process. Students had average results in word choice and fluency in earlier studies, but they needed to sweeten their pronunciation, topic mastery, and attitude during speaking presentations. In further research, Nurvita et al. (2019) express that the teacher should concentrate on students’ difficulties in speaking, the need to improve students’ speaking skills and the development of speaking modules based on students' weaknesses and wants. Nurvita’s idea reflects that the teacher needs to aspire method to overcome students’ challenges in learning English speaking skills to be more satisfactory than heretofore.

Enriching students’ speaking abilities through tongue twisters is applied to assist students in memorizing words and pronunciation. This technique appears re-energized in a method of teaching students speaking performance. Lutfiani & Indri (2017) state tongue twister is a statement or phrase that is challenging to pronounce because it has several identical sounds. Putri (2018) adds that the tongue twister approach taught students how to use tone and word stress when reading basic descriptive phrases. By implementing a tongue twister in improving students’ pronunciation skills in learning English. A tongue twister is a fun game to learn about pronunciation and how fast the speakers can speak as clearly as possible. According to Prošić-Santovac (2009), tongue twisters are a vestige of oral tradition, and they have been applied for a variety of purposes throughout history, ranging from merely didactic to more bizarre. With tongue twister chains, students are motivated to learn to speak English skillfully. Tongue twisters are delightful and they can significantly improve students’ speaking skills. As stated by Gonzales (2009) practicing tongue twisters, people can learn English to strengthen their speaking skills. In addition, the characteristics of tongue twisters are found in the repetition of words and sounds that emphasize aspects of speaking. Those are pronunciation, word emphasis, intonation, speed, and speech.

The previous study about this issue is the role of tongue twisters in improving the students’ speaking skills (Yuniar et al., 2021). A similar study was also conducted by Haz et al (2022) who implemented the Tongue Twister Method to Improve English Pronunciation. Akbarjon (2022) in his research analyzes and discusses the main role and characteristics of tongue twisters in improving elementary school students’ speaking skills. By adding a variable, Mu’thi & Indah (2021) made researched a similar issue about tongue twister within rap music applied in pronunciation class. The last (Sugiharto et al., 2022) discovered how tongue twisters can improve students’ pronunciation skills.

Based on some previous studies in the earlier paragraphs, there are still topics that are not being explored in advance. This present research focuses on exploring speaking skills in the teaching and learning process by employing tongue twisters as a technique to improve students’ English-speaking skills. This issue should be discussed between teachers and students to find appropriate language
learning strategies to help to learn and enhance students’ abilities in vocational high schools. The result of this research seems robust to assist students’ challenging in learning English speaking.

2. METHODS

The researchers employed a research design by reflecting on and analysing experience. The narrative asker considers the investigation’s experience narratively. The narrative inquiry process is continuous and reflective, moving from the field (the origin of storytelling or life) to field texts (data) to introductory and conclusive study texts.

The researchers have finished observing the students’ speaking skills while teaching in their class. The findings of the speaking proficiency test connected to pronunciation are then collected and used as data for this narrative study (practice your skills). The researchers gathered data by observing in the field and then observing pre-service instructors teaching English in engineering and accounting classes.

Furthermore, the outcomes of these observations are recorded in a diary after making observations at school and already having experience and receiving findings during practice. The researcher would create a detailed, accurate picture, assess the narrative, offer detailed information insights, and naturally undertake the investigation. The researchers used a formed diary and reflective journal to gather data using qualitative approaches. This way has many distinct components, including thinking, emotional expression, asking questions, and honing one’s skills. This study used the type of thematic analysis. The technique is used for determining, analysing, organising, characterising, and summarising themes found in a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researchers’ phase is the researchers recorded the theme analysis as a linear, six-pashed technique, which will be provided here. This step is time-consuming, engaging, and introspective, which entails frequent back-and-forth between phases.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before enlisting in the pre-service training program, the researchers’ personal history, feelings, and perspectives on language instruction are the main topics of the first interview. The second and third interviews primarily focused on their educational experience.

“I want to set up a variety of assignments and learning activities in my class to see if the strategy I’m taking will be effective. As they are only children, it is crucial to foster their enthusiasm in language learning, so I will also make an effort to meet their requirements and preferences.”

Regarding the researchers’ experience results, pre-service teachers were mandated to establish a new learning environment while instructing in a classroom because the students were required to improve their speaking abilities. Based on the researchers’ experience, a suitable method can be efficacious when students apprehend the learning instructions and improve their speaking skills.

“I appreciate the vocational high school for giving me a comfortable studying environment in the classroom. A similar sensation was something I tried to provide for my pupils when I taught. I want the students to feel at ease while they are learning so that they may enjoy every class and not have to worry about countless tests or grades.”

Pre-service teachers should provide a new learning environment while maintaining the consistency of previous learning experiences. A new learning environment that values students’ learning processes needs to be implemented. It is not only a theory but also a delightful method to build students’ confidence in learning English.
As a deep concern, the researchers focused on students’ curiosity in a comfortable learning environment and applied the tongue twister technique to learning English speaking skills. The utilising strategy supports students in learning the pronunciation more flexibly. Tongue twister causes students to learn English without suspicion, and it causes students to enjoy the learning process.

The researchers utilised a method that is delightful for students with the purpose that students can learn speaking skills comfortably. Along with making learning simple, this also means that kids will not be disturbed to articulate the phrases incorrectly for nervousness or discomfort; instead, they will find it amusing and enjoy it (Yuniar et al., 2021). Yuniar’s statement is also in line with Gonzales (2009), who believes that tongue twisters are entertaining exercises used in all language classes. Students will engage in the teaching and learning process more willingly if they enjoy what they are learning. Tongue twisters stimulate students to be active as language learners. The attachment of this method makes students desire and practice learning English speaking. Suppose students consistently learn English speaking by struggling, so they can pronounce the word correctly and fluently. Gonzales (2009) elucidates that tongue twisters are employed to repeat a word as quickly and accurately as feasible. Students are better practice English speaking if they desire to read and pronounce tongue twisters fluently. These are some of the tongue twisters the researcher used:

*Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.*

*A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked.*

*If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers?*

*Where’s the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?*

*I’m not the pheasant plucker, I’m the pheasant plucker’s mate. And I’m only plucking pheasants’ cause the pheasant plucker’s late. I’m not the pheasant plucker, I’m the pheasant plucker’s son. And I’m only plucking pheasants till the pheasant pluckers come.*

*How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?*

*He would chuck, he would, as much as he could, and chuck as much wood as a woodchuck would if a woodchuck could chuck wood.*

*Little lady Lilly lost her lovely locket, Lucky little Lucy found the lovely locket. Lovely little locket lay in Lucy’s pocket, Lazy little Lucy lost the lovely locket!*  

The following classroom practice shows tongue twister in English speaking of vocational school majoring in Motorcycle engineering and business.

**Starting the class with greeting**

Before beginning the class, the teacher and students will first greet each other and pray together. The purpose of this activity is typically to strengthen relationships with the students. The environment becomes cozy and vibrant when teaching pronunciation, energising the students.

**Review the topic discussed in the previous class**

The teacher reviews the material that had study at the previous meeting. That helps students recall the material. That material had studied to ensure the level of students’ understanding of the last material. In this class, the material previously studied is narrative text material. At the last meeting, students also did exercises to read narrative texts in front of the classroom. Students experienced many errors in reading and pronunciation activities. Therefore, the researcher gave students material about the tongue twister technique to help students overcome their problems. Tongue twisters require precise articulation and enunciation of sounds. By practicing tongue twisters, students develop better control over their speech organs, such as the tongue, lips, and vocal cords. This improved articulation and enunciation can
Contribute to clearer and more fluent reading of narrative texts. Tongue twisters often contain repetitive or similar sounds, which can enhance students’ phonemic awareness. Phonemic awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate individual sounds in words. Developing phonemic awareness through tongue twisters can assist students in decoding and understanding words while reading narrative texts.

**Explains the pronunciation learning material**

The researchers conveyed the tongue-twister material paper to the learners before describing how to read and pronounce closed to standard. After the teachers started reading slowly to a fast tempo, the researchers encouraged the learners to imitate and repeat once they apprehended. To assist learners in reading tongue twisters precisely, the teacher used the drill method in this procedure. Students are expected to be able to read tongue twisters correctly.

**Practice tongue twister techniques**

The teacher guided the students to practice tongue twisters. This process was carried out three times by each student. When pupils mispronounce tongue twisters, the teacher pays close attention to these pronunciation flaws, evaluates them, and offers corrections.

**Closed the learning**

After all, students came forward to practice tongue twisters; the teacher closed the students and gave recommendations to students to continue learning this technique at home.

Classroom learning develops in a pleasant atmosphere because students enjoy the learning process well. The tongue twister technique in this class has never been applied. It is something new and interesting for students. Teachers in the future should try to apply fun methods so that students are happy and understand English learning material well. The tongue twister method effectively teaches speaking skills and significantly trains students’ pronunciation to be clear and correct. According to Yuniar et al (2021), tongue twisters play a role in improving language skills. According to Juniarti et al., (2020) the use of tongue twisters as a fast, fun, and efficient vocal warm-up encourages students to improve their pronunciation and speaking style in English. Tongue twisters are a new approach to teaching pronunciation that avoids traditional and tedious methods (Nurhandayani, 2009). Sitoresmi (2016) believes that tongue twisters are an entertainment way to teach pronunciation. Students may find it both difficult and fun, which helps them learn more to speak like a native speaker and communicate as quickly as possible. Shavladze (2022) agrees that students find teaching English pronunciation using the tongue twister method to be interesting and fun. Tongue twisters can be an alternative method for students to practice English pronunciation (Aulia, 2020). Tongue twisters have many similar sounds but have several forms and meanings in written language, and some tongue twister sentences are funny, and difficult to pronounce or read so it’s fun to try (Rohman, 2016). Putri (2018) added that the use of tongue twisters can train students’ abilities in word pressure in pronouncing English words.

Students may not be able to follow tongue-twisting rules about how quickly and clearly they can speak. According to research by Lutfiani & Indri (2017) it shows that the use of tongue twisters in teaching English in classes using cycles has shown them some of the shortcomings of passive students, namely they have problems in pronunciation, because they are still new to English. Passive students, and they also found that not 100% of students want to participate in games, half of them might prefer to watch their friends have fun. In this case, as a teacher we must present a pleasant classroom atmosphere to make every student more active and challenge them to learn in a fun way with tongue twisters. Although tongue twisters are difficult to pronounce, the use of tongue twisters as a way to improve pronunciation and strengthen the tongue is very entertaining (Nurhasanah & Zainil, 2018).
Another finding, based on observations, is that the application of the tongue twister technique helps students' speaking skills. Students can improve their speaking fluency with tongue twisters, and the methods used are fun for students, make it easier for them to understand the subject matter and increase their motivation to be interested in learning English. In line with Mu'thi & Indah (2021) states that there are three benefits, namely making pronunciation and speaking more fluent, making learning pronunciation interesting and fun so that it makes it easier for students to understand learning material, and making pronunciation clearer and correct. The results obtained in this study are in line with research conducted by Yuniar et al (2021), Haz et al (2022), Shafika (2022), and Cahyani & Panjaitan (2020) which state that tongue twisters are effective in improving language proficiency and speaking skills English.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study suggest that tongue twisters are an advantageous method for teaching students who have challenges in pronouncing English words how to improve their pronunciation. The students learn the word or phrase through repetition, enriching their speaking fluency. The tongue twisters technique can increase students’ active participation. Using tongue twisters in teaching and learning prompted the learners to practice more to develop proficiency in articulating the words and expressions.

5. REFERENCES


