ADAPTING PROJECT-BASED LEARNING IN TEACHING PRONUNCIATION

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ABSTRACT

Learning a language can be a daunting activity for the foreign language learners. It is because there are so many skills that the learners have to master such as speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Especially in spoken language, the learners must also work hard to be as closer as native-like accent and become intelligible. Students have great difficulty in learning spoken language features, such as pronunciation due to some different aspects in their first language. The differences start from the individual speech sounds to a more communicative aspect of connected speech. Today, pronunciation teaching is experiencing a new renewal by increasing awareness of the communicative function of supra-segmental features in spoken discourse like stress and intonation. In fact, the time spent for practicing these aspects and the involvement of the students in real situation, are still limited. Thus, teachers must be creative in creating teaching strategy in order to achieve the pronunciation teaching's goal. This article discusses one way of teaching pronunciation aspect, i.e. intonation through the use of board games.

Key words: pronunciation, board games, intonation.

INTRODUCTION

Almost all English language teachers or instructors get students to study grammar and vocabulary, practice functional dialogues, take part in productive skill activities and try to become competent in listening and reading. Yet the teachers make little attempt to teach pronunciation in any overt way and only give attention to it in passing. It is possible that the teachers are nervous of dealing with sounds and intonation. Perhaps the teachers feel that they have too much to do already and pronunciation teaching will only make things worse. The teachers claim that even without a formal pronunciation syllabus and without specific pronunciation teaching, many students seem to acquire serviceable pronunciation in the course of their studies.

However, the fact that some students are able to acquire reasonable pronunciation without overt pronunciation teaching should not blind the teachers to the benefit of a focus on pronunciation in the class. Pronunciation teaching not only makes students aware of different sounds and sound features, but can also improve the students' speaking immeasurably. Concentrating on sounds, showing where they are made in the mouth, making the students aware of where words should be stressed. All these things give extra information about spoken English and help them achieve the goal of improved comprehension and intelligibility.

Pronunciation also known as phonology, includes the role of individual sounds and sound segments, that is features at the segmental level, as well as supra-segmental level such as stress, rhythm, and intonation. The fact that few foreign learners are able to speak a foreign language without showing evidence of the transfer of pronunciation features of their native or first language is evidence of the difficulty of acquiring a native-like pronunciation, but also of the goals learners set for themselves. Many learners are quite comfortable to show evidence of their native language on their foreign language pronunciation since it is sometimes viewed as a core part of their cultural identity.

Nowadays, approaches to the teaching of pronunciation have changed significantly throughout the recent history of language teaching. Moving beyond an emphasis on the accurate production of individual speech sounds to concentrating more on the broader, communicative aspects of connected speech. Under the political and phonological considerations it has become customary for language teachers to consider intelligibility as the prime goal of pronunciation teaching. This implies that the students should be able to use pronunciation which is good enough for them to be always understood. If the students' pronunciation is not up to this standard, then clearly there is a serious danger that the students will fail to communicate effectively.

Today, pronunciation teaching is experiencing a new trend filled largely by the increasing awareness of the communicative function of supra segmental features in spoken discourse (Brown & Yule, 1983). It means that the teaching pronunciation give more emphasis on meaningful aspects of phonology in connected speech rather than practice with individual speech sounds. One of these supra-segmental aspects is intonation or the music of speech.

However, the teaching of supra-segmental features (such as intonation) has at times been considered a luxury in the English foreign language curriculum, unlike reading, writing, listening and general speaking fluency. But nowadays, intonation has come to be recognized as essential components in most English foreign language instructional programs. Especially at UIN Banten, pronunciation has become one of the components of the syllabus which comprises of pronunciation I and pronunciation II and intonation is one of the aspects the students must learn. However there are still many students who are not confident with their English pronunciation because of various reasons such as: afraid of making mistake, have less vocabularies, less practice, and many more. Some of the students consider pronunciation is a difficult subject to learn and the students must practice hard to have an accurate and clear pronunciation. It is also acceptable reason that there are many different system of pronunciation between *Bahasa Indonesia* (students' first language) and English that make the pronunciation learning is more difficult. For example the use of intonation in English has much connection with the meaning of the utterances.

Intonation is described as the music of speech. It includes the moments at which a speaker changes the pitch of his or her voices in order to give certain messages. The pitch itself is considered as the level at which someone speaks. One of the uses of intonation is to show the grammar of one is saying. It is absolutely crucial for getting one meaning across. The word "Yes" for example, can be said with falling voice, raising voice or combination of the two. By

changing the direction of the voice, one can make "Yes" mean "I agree" or "Perhaps" or "Are you kidding me?" or any number of options. The instructors usually use arrows or wavy lines to show intonation tunes (pitch change). Since the use of intonation is very important to determine the meaning and its presence is unpredictable in the utterances, this sometimes creates difficulty for the students. This finally will impede the students' intelligibility. Based on the reason above, this study focused on the intonation teaching. Thus, one way of teaching intonation is adapting the Project-Based Learning through the use of board games.

Board games are familiar game types for children. This type of games mainly involves moving markers along a path (Lewis and Bedson, 1999). Almost all board games are the imitations of situations in real life. Board games have also been used to teach children basic fact and information about the world in which they live. The option to choose board games is based on some considerations. Games are used as methods or techniques to involve students in learning. Appropriate and well-designed games are very valuable as they give students a break and at the same time allow learners to practice language skills.

The benefits of games range from cognitive aspect of language learning to more co-operative group dynamics and as a result games are highly motivating since they are amusing and at the same time challenging. Ersoz (2000) states that games can be used to give practice in all language skills and they can be used to practice many types of communication. Games encourage learners to interact, cooperate, to be creative and spontaneous in using the language in a meaningful way. Games also encourage learners to keep interested in the work and a teacher can use them to create contexts in which the language is useful.

According to I-Jung (2005) the benefits of using games in language-learning include that games are learner centered, encourages creative and spontaneous use of language and foster participatory attitudes of the learners. Besides providing language practice, games can also be used to present materials and to assess learned materials in a way that appeal the students. Games have an ability to introduce new or difficult material to the students. Because the game format is playful, the natural challenge of new or difficult material is much less threatening than it is ordinarily. So the use of games as one of the alternatives is taken by the teachers or instructors to teach and introduce the intonation in English.

Based on the above explanation, the researcher wants to examine more on the using of board games, in helping the learners to practicing and enhancing their English pronunciation, especially the use of intonation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This descriptive qualitative study is based on an observation of English pronunciation class in which students create and demonstrate their board games with their group. The purpose of this study is to know whether the use of board games could enhance the students in learning the intonation.

The Setting of the Study

The research took place at Pronunciation classroom of English Education department of State Islamic University (UIN) "*Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin*" in the city of Serang, Banten province. The participants of this study consisted of 37 students in the 2nd semester, who were divided into 7-8 groups.

Instruments of the Study

The instruments of data collection include (1) classroom observation: the activity of the teaching learning process using board games (2) close and open ended questionnaire conducted a few days later after the initial implementation of the with board games.

Research Procedures

This study adapted the Project-Based Learning (PBL) for classroom activity. Project based learning emphasizes learning through student-centered, interdisciplinary, and integrated activities in real world situation. In particular, Project based learning focuses on content learning rather than on specific language target. It is a student-centered approach, although the teacher still plays a major role in offering the support and guidance throughout the process. In this study, the writer adapted the procedures of activities in project work in the classroom proposed by Sheppard and Stoller (1995). The procedures of doing the Project based learning are as follow:

1. Step 1: Agree on theme for the project
2. Step 2: Determine the final outcome
3. Step 3: Structure the project
4. Step 4: Gather information
5. Step 5: Compile and analyze information
6. Step 6: Present final product
7. Step 7: Evaluate the project

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The aim of this study is to investigate the using of board games in enhancing the process of teaching intonation for students as English foreign learners. This study emphasized that the students who were taught and engaged by using board games as teaching technique can show better performance in their skill. The data were collected through observation from the beginning of the project until the students showed and demonstrate the games. The data were also collected through the questionnaire which was delivered to the students after a few days the students demonstrated the board games. Following the project work procedures proposed by Sheppard and Stoller, here are the complete description and result of the study.

Step 1: The students and the teacher agree on a theme for the project

To set the stage, the teacher gives some instructions to the students about the project that they are going to engage. In this stage, the teacher used *semi-structured* project that is the project defined and organized in part by the teacher and in part by the students. In this case the teacher

defined the topic and methodology, meanwhile the students defined the kind and material of the board games. The words for the board games content were taken from the dialogues that are used by the actors in the movie of "*The Jungle Book*". On the other part, the students are free to choose and search the materials in making the boards games. The students may see the examples from a variety of sources such as from the internet.

Step 2: The students and the teacher determine the final outcome

Whereas the first step of the project involves establishing a starting point, the second step includes defining the end point or the outcome. Students and the teacher consider the nature of the project, its objective, and the outcome of the project. In this particular project, the teacher had already decided that the final outcome would be board games which convey the title "*How to say this sentence*? In every board game the students must display sentence along with its intonation line. The sentence must be taken from the transcription of the dialogues of "*The Jungle Book*" movie. The board games themselves must be attractive and interesting

Step 3: the students and the teacher structure the project

After the start and end point has defined, the teacher and the students consider a few things such as: (1) information needed for the project, (2) sources of information, e.g. World Wide Web, book, videos, etc. (3) students' role within the group in making the project, e.g. who does what, and (4) time estimation in finishing the project. In this study, the teacher has decided the main information is taken from the dialogues of "*The Jungle Book*" movie. The teacher distributed the movie to every chairperson of the group. After every member of the groups has watched the movie, then they started to make a job description within the group to start doing the project. The students started the project after they have mid-term examination in the semester. So, approximately they have around 3 weeks to finish the project from the start until the end of the project.

Step 4: the students gather information

In this step, students collect the information needed for the project and discuss it within the group. To make the board games, the students first reread the course materials that will be the main content of the board games that is about intonation in English. Then, they search the dialogues of "*The Jungle Book*" movie. The students must listen to the dialogues and transcribe them into sentences. Meanwhile, the students choose and create the design of their board games.

Step 5: The students compile and analyze the information

The students compile and analyze the information to identify data that are particularly relevant to their board games. In this stage, the students shorted the dialogues they have collected, discarding some because of their appropriateness for the project and keeping the rest which are appropriate. In this step, the students start to practice the dialogues and the intonation that will be the content of their board games. Each students gives feedback to each other before final presentation.

Step 6: The students present the final product

In this stage the students present the final outcome of their project. Each group must demonstrate the board games by playing them within the group. The teacher visits the group one by one to see the students' performance in practicing the intonation. During the visit, the teacher also makes evaluation of the group performance and gives feedback. The teacher used rubric to evaluate the students' project. The rubric consists of some criteria such as: (1) knowledge gained, (2) accuracy of content, (3) attractiveness, (4) rules, (5) cooperative work, and (6) creativity. From the board games rubric analysis it can be seen that most of member of the group showed improved skill in saying the intonation. The board games that the student created were also attractive and interesting. The students showed their creativeness by resulting a very well design, communicative, colorful, and unique character board games. The students seemed to enjoy the activity when they played the game with the group. The complete form of the rubric is shown in the table below. While observing the performance, the teacher also makes some notes and feedback to each group concerning the board games they have created.

Picture 1. Student's Board Games

Picture 2. Playing the Board Games

Table 1. Board Games Rubric

Category	4	3	2	1
Knowledge Gained	All students in group could easily and correctly say the intonation in the board games.	All students in the group could correctly say the intonation in the board games	Most students in the group could easily and correctly say the intonation in the board games.	Several students in the group could NOT correctly say the intonation in the board games.
Accuracy of Content	All information made for the game are correct.	All but one of the information made for the game are correct.	All but two of the information made for the game are correct.	Several information made for the game are not accurate.
Attractiveness	Contrasting colors and at least 3 original graphics were used to give the board games visual appeal.	Contrasting colors and at least 1 original graphic were used to give the board games visual appeal.	Contrasting colors and \"borrowed\" graphics were used to give the board games visual appeal.	Little or no color or fewer than 3 graphics were included in the board games.
Rules	Rules were written clearly enough that all could easily participate.	Rules were written, but one part of the game needed slightly more explanation.	Rules were written, but people had some difficulty figuring out the game.	The rules were not written.
Cooperative work	The group worked well together with all members contributing significant amounts of quality work.	The group generally worked well together with all members contributing some quality work.	The group worked fairly well together with all members contributing some work.	The group often did not work well together and the game appeared to be the work of only 1-2 students in the group.
Creativity	The group put a lot of thought into making the game interesting and fun to play as shown by creative questions, game pieces and/or the board.	The group put some thought into making the game interesting and fun to play by using textures, fancy writing, and/or interesting characters.	The group tried to make the game interesting and fun, but some of the things made it harder to understand/enjoy the game.	Little thought was put into making the game interesting or fun.

Step 7: The Teacher and the students evaluate the project

Even though the teacher and students have viewed the demonstration of the board games at the last stage in the project work process, it is worthwhile to ask the students to reflect on the experience as the last and final step. Students reflect on the language skill they mastered to complete the project, the content they learned about the use of English intonation, the steps they followed to complete the project, and the effectiveness of their final product. Some shortcoming of this project is that the students cannot control the member who are not active or do not give any contribution to the project. Also since this is a long term project students feel that making the board games is quite tiring and cost a lot of money.

Based on the analysis of the questionnaire it can be seen that most students showed positive attitude on using board games in learning and practicing the intonation. Students thought that learning intonation can enhance their spoken language skill. There are many aspects the students could learn from this board games project work such as collaboration, creativity, and group dynamic. Students consider that creating a board game while learning intonation of English is a very fun and interesting way. The students can enjoy playing the game while at the same time learn the content materials.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicated that the using of board games through project-based work can enhance the students' skill in expressing the intonation. Attractive environment like learning through playing the game also promotes the effectiveness of using board games as an instructional tool. Using games as teaching instruction can promote interaction, thinking, learning, creativity and collaboration. Through this activity, the students build upon their previous knowledge and use it in a new and real situation. Through this project work that promotes student-centered learning, the instructor can also monitor each student's performance and progress through their interaction in the group, so feedback can be given immediately.

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