

An Analysis of EFL Students' Perceptions toward the Dialogic Teaching Implementation in Enhancing Speaking Skills

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Abstract. Dialogic Teaching is a teaching approach that harnesses the power of interactive dialogue to promote student engagement and cultivate critical thinking within the classroom. The implementation of Dialogic Teaching in speaking classes is essential for fostering students' active participation. In the realm of EFL undergraduate students, this approach has been applied in the speaking classes of the English Education Department at Universitas Pancasakti Tegal. This paper aims to analyze the EFL students' perceptions of the implementation of Dialogic Teaching to enhance their speaking skills. The analysis was conducted through a case study research design with a descriptive qualitative approach. A semi-structured interview was employed to gather students' perceptions. This study involved three participants with varied speaking levels to comprehensively understand their perceptions regarding the implemented approach. Following the conclusion of the study, several findings were identified as follows: 1) students' understanding of the lesson was boosted through collaborative teamwork; 2) students' engagement was enhanced along with peer encouragement; 3) students perceived that class discussion helped them improve their speaking skills.

Keywords: dialogic teaching, student perception, speaking skills

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Many EFL students, particularly undergraduates, occasionally find it challenging to speak English. Diverse academic backgrounds, limited vocabulary, shyness, and fear of making mistakes all contribute to freshman students' frequent difficulties in speaking English, as revealed in an interview with the speaking lecturer of the English Education Department at Universitas Pancasakti Tegal. The issues correspond with the findings of Amoah & Yeboah (2021), which indicated that students encounter difficulties in speaking English due to two main factors: linguistic and psychological. Vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar are the critical elements. The second aspect relates to worry, timidity, diminished motivation, and fear of making mistakes. Besides, one of the most frequent issues that teachers deal with in EFL classrooms is passive classes, in which students avoid interacting with teachers (Sulistianingsih, 2018 in Sulistyawati et al., 2021). Teaching speaking is essential for improving the students' ability to communicate in English. In this setting, the teachers are essential in enhancing pupils' speaking abilities. By cultivating an optimal learning environment, they can do this instead of focusing solely on students' grammatical proficiency.

The educator can assist pupils in enhancing their speaking proficiency by employing an effective pedagogical method. Various pedagogical approaches can be employed by educators in the classroom, such as the Dialogic Teaching approach. According to Alexander (2020), "Dialogic Teaching harnesses the power of talk to stimulate and extend pupils' thinking and advance their learning and understanding." Moreover, it enhances students' comprehension of the content by engaging them and activating their cognitive processes. By cultivating a conversation atmosphere, students can enhance their understanding

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of concepts and refine their critical thinking abilities through the formulation and evaluation of arguments.

According to the interview with the lecturer, the speaking for informational function class in the second semester of the English Education Department at Universitas Pancasakti Tegal has adopted a Dialogic Teaching approach. Nevertheless, the students' impressions of those methodologies remain uninformed. Consequently, the author intends to explore it within their speaking class. This study aims to analyze the students' perceptions of the Dialogic Teaching approach employed in the speaking class. The present study aims to analyze the EFL students' perceptions of the implementation of Dialogic Teaching to enhance their speaking skills.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In conducting this study, the author referred to several of the following previous studies.

Romios et al. (2024) did a study titled "Students' Perceptions of the Implementation of Dialogic Teaching for Improving Speaking Skills at A University in West Java." This study aims to examine the effectiveness of a Dialogic Teaching approach in improving students' speaking skills. The findings showed that students reacted positively to the use of the Dialogic Teaching strategy.

Halloush et al. (2021) carried out a study titled "Effect of Using Dialogic Teaching Method on Seventh-Grade Students' Performance in Speaking Skill." This study investigated the impact of dialogic instruction on the speaking skills of seventh-grade EFL students in Jordan. The study's results revealed that dialogic teaching substantially enhanced the speaking skills examined.

There are multiple theories underlying this study.

Student Perception

Schunk & Meece (1992) assert that students' perspectives are shaped by their observations within the learning environment. The interactions between students and teachers alter their perspectives on academic issues, thus influencing their academic attitudes and behaviors. Ultimately, students' perception pertains to the views that students possess regarding their circumstances and the learning environment, which influence their assessment of the learning significance.

Dialogic Teaching

Dialogic Teaching is a teaching approach that harnesses the power of talk to stimulate and extend pupils' thinking and advance their learning and understanding (Alexander, 2020). In addition, Dialogic Teaching utilizes the power of discussion to engage students, enhance their cognitive processes, deepen their comprehension, broaden their perspectives, cultivate and assess arguments, and equip them for lifetime learning and involvement in social and democratic matters.

In the process of the investigation, the author consistently holds the principles of Dialogic Teaching (Alexander, 2018). The following table presents the aforementioned principles:

Principles	Definition
Collective	The classroom is understood as a space of joint learning and inquiry
Reciprocal	Participants listen to each other, share ideas, and consider alternative viewpoints

Supportive	Participants feel able to express ideas freely, without risk of embarrassment over 'wrong' answers, and they help each other to reach common understandings
Cumulative	Participants build on their own and each other's contributions and chain them into coherent lines of thinking and understanding
Purposeful	Classroom talk, though open and dialogic, is structured with specific learning goals in view

Table 1. Principles of Dialogic Teaching (Alexander, 2018)

Speaking Skills

According to Nunan (2003), speaking is a productive auditory skill that entails producing structured verbal expressions to communicate meaning. Speaking is an oral activity that uses sound production to convey ideas and formulate words. Consequently, learners can acquire new information, comprehend its context, and transmit the knowledge to others. In this instance, to implement the Dialogic Teaching principles in the speaking class, the instructor employed the debate technique with various intriguing topics. The pupils were divided into groups, and before they presented their arguments, the teacher allowed them time to discuss with their peers.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this comprehensive study, the author utilized a descriptive qualitative approach as defined by Creswell and Poth (2018), adopting a case study research design as given by Yin (2018). The emphasis of the inquiry was on three second-semester students from the English Education Department at Universitas Pancasakti Tegal, each demonstrating a different range of speaking competency levels. This decision allows for a rich investigation of the intricacies of language acquisition and effective teaching.

To obtain pertinent data, the author conducted semi-structured interviews, a strategy that facilitated in-depth conversations and provided the flexibility to explore emerging themes. This technique not only encouraged participants to communicate their views and experiences in their own words but also allowed the researcher to explore further into certain areas of interest.

The analysis of the acquired data was carried out by a thematic analysis, guided by the five principles of Dialogic Teaching as described by Alexander (2018). This framework functioned as a lens through which the interactions and learning experiences of the students were explored, revealing the dynamic character of dialogue in educational contexts. Through this thorough procedure, the study intended to gain insights about the success of the Dialogic Teaching approach in developing students' speaking skills, ultimately adding to the greater discourse on language education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Collaborative Learning

The first theme is linked with the principle of **Collective**. The question being discussed is to grasp how teamwork affects personal understanding of the subject matter. One of the respondents revealed that:

“In my opinion, teamwork can enhance our understanding of a topic being discussed, since it allows for the exchange of ideas, the exploration of different perspectives, and broadening our knowledge.”
(Ss-2)

“To me, teamwork improves my insight toward the topic, because we can switch our ideas and draw conclusions together.” (Ss-3)

Ss-2 asserted that participating in a group discussion allows her to articulate ideas and consider others' perspectives, facilitating the exchange of thoughts, which can deepen exploration of the issue and ultimately expand her knowledge.

Aligning with Ss-2's viewpoint, Ss-3 respondent indicated that she was able to refine her ideas through a collaborative discussion. Furthermore, she encountered an exciting setting that facilitates the exchange of ideas during group discussions, in contrast to individual tasks. Ultimately, the team will collaboratively reach conclusions as their conclusive judgment.

Emotional Engagement & Feedback

The second theme correlates with the principle of **Reciprocal**. This category is addressed to get insight into the emotions felt when peers interact with one's opinion and the potential for perspective alteration based on their response. One of the students asserted:

“When my mates listen to me and even give feedback on my perspective, I surely feel glad, and if there is a different point of view, we can integrate our ideas to respect each other.” (Ss-3)

“I feel pleased if others comment on my ideas, and because of that, we can develop our thoughts and draw conclusions afterwards.” (Ss-1)

Ss-3 underscored the significance of respect throughout the discourse. While multiple perspectives may exist, the objective is to synthesize the diverse ideas into a singular, conclusive outcome. Conversely, it is feasible to honor one another's perspectives.

Teacher Encouragement

The third theme pertains to the **Supportive** principle. This category is intended to investigate the influence of support from teachers and peers on involvement in conversations. One opinion is provided by the respondent, who stated that:

“The teacher and friends encourage me to participate in the discussions, and I was delighted by that.” (Ss-3)

“I find it very uplifting when my friends and teacher motivate me to

join in the discussions.” (Ss-2)

According to Ss-3 and Ss-2, students indicated that the teacher and their peers motivated them to engage in the conversations. They frequently permit them to express their opinions freely on the subject under discussion. Furthermore, they will enhance their comprehension of the subject by elucidating the assertion and presenting a straightforward example.

Another thought came from Ss-1; she argued that the cultivation of her views was influenced by a variety of perspectives. Additionally, by incorporating a variety of perspectives, it will be transformed into some conclusive concepts.

Peer Support

The fourth theme corresponds to the principle of **Cumulative**. In this instance, this category seeks to clarify how students enhance each other's comprehension of the presented issue. According to the statement of a student, she declared that:

“My classmate often assists me in understanding more about the topic by giving me a practical case.” (Ss-1)

“My friends always help me to grasp the topic by elaborating on it with their language style, and it supports me a lot.” (Ss-2)

Based on the aforementioned explanation, it can be asserted that peers aid one another in understanding the content by offering examples or rearticulating it in their own linguistic style. Consequently, others will find it easy to understand. This mutual support among peers aligns with the concept of scaffolding in learning. Moreover, in reality, scaffolding is a bridge that builds on pupils' prior knowledge to help them reach a new concept. When scaffolding is used appropriately, it will facilitate rather than hinder (Benson, 1997 in Yuvita, 2018).

Speaking Skill Development

The final theme belongs to the **Purposeful** principle, which is intended to investigate how class discussions might improve speaking skills and the associated processes. One revealed that:

“In my opinion, class discussion helps me to improve my speaking skills as it allows me to gain new vocabulary, perspectives, and find something new.” (Ss-2)

“Based on my point of view, class discussion can enhance our speaking skills because when we express our ideas, it automatically hones our public speaking skills in communicating with others.” (Ss-3)

Based on the assertions presented above, students have the belief that participating in class discussion helps them develop their ability to communicate verbally, fosters critical thinking, and encourages mutual respect. These results emerged from the integration of the Dialogic Teaching approach and the constructive debate technique implemented in the speaking class.

CONCLUSION

The study conducted has led to the conclusion that students exhibit a positive response to the implementation of Dialogic Teaching in the speaking class. The students recognize that engaging in class discussions enhances their comprehension of the subject matter at hand. The author selected class

discussion as a representation of Dialogic Teaching. By adhering to the five principles of Dialogic Teaching (Alexander, 2018), the students engaged in a stimulating learning environment, enriched by the presence of a supportive instructor and collaborative peers. They consistently motivated one another to engage thoughtfully in discourse. This enabled them to cultivate a sense of assurance in articulating their thoughts, free from the constraints of embarrassment or the apprehension of error.

The Dialogic Teaching approach extends beyond the enhancement of students' speaking abilities. Furthermore, it encourages them to engage in critical analysis regarding a particular issue. They not only articulate their perspectives but also necessitate the provision of substantiating explanations to bolster their arguments regarding the issue at hand. Moreover, Dialogic Teaching fosters an intrinsic concern for the well-being of others. The assertion made by the student demonstrated that the teacher and classmates consistently inspire each other to engage in the discourse. Moreover, they often aid others in understanding the materials by reinterpreting the intricate meanings in their own linguistic styles, thereby facilitating easier comprehension.

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