

THE USE OF HUMOR IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR NURSING TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILL WITH HIGH OR LOW LEARNING MOTIVATION

Ahmad Nur syafiq

Stikes Muhammadiyah Kudus, Central Java, Indonesia

ahmadnursyafiq@stikesmuhkudus.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study aimed at investigating the effectiveness of humor as English foreign language teaching material to improve students' speaking skill with of high or low motivation for the students and the effect that the use of humor gives to their teaching. Furthermore, this study was quasi experimental research named two-way (two-by-two) factorial design. The population of this study was the fourth semester Students of S1 Nursing Science Program of STIKES Muhammadiyah Kudus which covered 125 students. 80 students, later on, were chosen to be a sample, 40 as experimental group and 40 as control group. Both groups were distributed the pre-test to measure students' speaking skill. For treatment, Shade's (1996) classification of verbal humor was used. It means that the teacher in experimental group used humorous materials such as jokes, riddles and anecdotes related to the topics in each part of the lesson, during the warm up, discussing the topic and teaching new words. While in control groups used story telling material based on his or her life best experience. After 3 times treatments, both groups were distributed the post-test. The results of this quantitative study revealed that humor as teaching material has significant effect on the students' speaking skill to those who have high and low learning motivation the way that fourth semester Students of S1 Nursing Science Program of STIKES Muhammadiyah Kudus expressed that humor in the classroom situation affected their learning positively to those who have high or low motivation rather than conventional material. Further study may also be conducted to determine whether teachers' use of humor appears to reduce student anxiety and stress in the classroom to improve students' speaking skill, retention, and student-teacher relationships. Since a small number of subjects were involved in this study, the results may not necessarily be extended to make a prediction about the entire population.

Key words: *students' learning motivation, Humor material, Speaking skill.*

INTRODUCTION

English has become the primary language in the global world, yet Indonesian's students tend to lag behind in acquiring adequate communicative skills in the language. Studies have shown that in general students have very low English speaking skills (Pattaranon, 1988; Jong-Utsah, 1988: 14). In general, at a large number of workplaces, employers are looking for applicants who are proficient in English speaking skill and some of them may request that schools and universities focus on developing such skills in students (Kulawanit et al., 2005: 8).

College Students of STIKES (*Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Kesehatan*) Muhammadiyah Kudus are supposed to be master in English Language. Thus, they are required to join the subject in class allowing them to be fluent in English communication. However, it is still lack of the reaching the outstanding result in the way that there are some factors dealing with that. One of them is by selecting great material since the students are easier and more comfortable to use it as they communicate in the classroom.

For this reason, it is of paramount importance for English lecturers to find effective pedagogical techniques to help enhance students' speaking abilities, among other English skills they also

need to develop. Furthermore, realizing that speaking is very important for English learners, it is essential for English teachers to encourage the students to speak. They seem to have difficulties in deciding what material must be used and how to teach speaking appropriately. Moreover, they must be able to find out the ways of how to make speaking easier and be the fun activities for the students to learn. In this case, teachers have responsibilities to guide the students during the learning process and to give motivation to them to improve their English especially in speaking skill.

Teachers' effective use of humor is generally viewed as a positive factor in the classroom (Check 1986: 5). It may even influence the effectiveness of college teacher power and compliance-gaining strategies. Wheelless, Barraclough, and Stewart (1983) note that compliance is an enactment of power. Likewise, if college teachers exert humor in the classroom, they will be seen as more powerful by their students. Possibly, college teachers could gain more compliance from students through the utilization of humor.

Another issue is that motivation is one of the most important factors that will influence students' English achievements or Performance. It has a close relationship with students' success or failure in English teaching in college. Therefore, Teachers must pay more attention to this aspect. As Gardner (1985: 2) emphasized that the motivation constructed the primary factor to influence students on English learning. He believed that motivation for language learning can not only include goal orientation but the combination of effort, desire to achieve the goal of learning the language and favorable attitudes toward learning the language.

The main focus of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of humor as teaching material to improve students' speaking skill with high or low learning motivation at the fourth semester Students of S1 Nursing Science Program of *STIKES Muhammadiyah* Kudus and the effect that the use of humor gives to their teaching. Further, the study attempts to find solutions and strategies to make teachers have a formed opinion of the use of humor in delivery of subject matter while teaching so as to be more effective.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

This study employed the quantitative research. Quantitative research is explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods in particular statistics (Aliaga and Gunderson: 2002 in Muijs). This study used the Factorial design. An experiment using factorial design allows one to examine simultaneously the effect of multiple independent variable and their degree of interaction. According to Shuttle Worth (2009), a factorial design is often used by the scientist wishing to understand the effect of two or more independent variables upon single dependent variable. A factorial design, in this sense, indicates relationships between variables. It may be that while one variable increases, the other one decreases, or an increase in one gives rise to the other variable. In this study, the population was the fourth semester Students of S1 Nursing Science Program of *STIKES Muhammadiyah* Kudus. There were three classes from 2A-1 to 2C, each class had 42 students, so the total population was about 125 students. Furthermore, two classes consisting 80 students were selected as the sample by using sampling technique in choosing the class.

The data was collected into several ways in this study. They are: delivering questionnaires toward learning motivation to all participants, classifying the participants who have high and low motivation, choosing groups who have high and low motivation as control group, choosing groups who have high and low motivation as experimental group, doing pre-test of both control and experimental group, treatment by using both humor as teaching material and conventional material, doing post-test of both control and experimental group, and Inputting the data into the one-way ANOVA with *F*-test at the 5% level of significant. Having got the data from pre-test and post-test then it was analyzed and tested using ANOVA Test. ANOVA test is a statistical method that is used to see if two sets of data differ significantly. It was to answer the problem that claimed whether there was significant difference of students score in speaking ability between the students who are taught using humor and those who are conventional technique.

To test the hypotheses, Two-way analysis of variance with *F*-test at the 5% (0.05) level of significance will be used. Two-way ANOVA requires two basic things including normal distribution score for each cell and homogeneity of the score variation (Irianto, 1989). It is to answer the problem that claimed whether there is any effect of the use of humor on the development of student speaking skill to those who have high and low learning motivation.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Data of pre-test showed the achievement of test of experiment and control group before the treatment. The lowest score from the overall experimental group was 40 and the highest score was 80. In the way that the lowest score to those who have high learning motivation of Experimental group was 55 and the highest score was 80. To have more detail, it could be seen in the following diagram and the lowest score to those who have low learning motivation of Experimental group was 40 and the highest score was 80. Meanwhile, the lowest score from the overall control group was 30 and the highest score was 80 in the way that the lowest score to those who have high learning motivation of control group was 45 and the highest score was 80. To have more detail, it could be seen in the following diagram and the lowest score to those who have low learning motivation of control group was 40 and the highest score was 80.

The result of improving students' speaking competence by humor material with high motivation of fourth semester Students of S1 Nursing Science Program of *STIKES Muhammadiyah* Kudus was very high. It was seen by score between 70 up to 95 with the average of speaking competence result was 81 and standard deviation was 7.36. The highest score was 95 and the lowest score was 70 with score range 15 from $N = 20$. Later on, the result of improving students' speaking competence by humor material with low motivation was quite high. It was seen by score between 45 up to 85 with the average of speaking competence result was 69 and standard deviation was 6.97. The highest score was 85 and the lowest score was 45 with score range 40 from $N = 20$.

The result of improving students' speaking competence by using life-experience story with

high motivation of fourth semester Students of S1 Nursing Science Program of *STIKES Muhammadiyah* Kudus was high. It was seen by score between 60 up to 90 with the average of speaking competence result was 72.75 and standard deviation was 7.75. The highest score was 90 and the lowest score was 60 with score range 30 from $N = 20$. The result of students' speaking competence test with high motivation using humor material could be described in the following histogram. Moreover, the result of improving students' speaking competence by using life-experience story with low motivation was low. It was seen by score between 50 up to 80 with the average of speaking competence result was 66.5 and standard deviation was 8.28. The highest score was 80 and the lowest score was 50 with score range 30 from $N = 20$. The result of students' speaking competence test with low motivation using humor material could be described in the following histogram.

There was significant difference among high and low motivation by using humor material to improve the result of speaking competence of fourth semester Students of S1 Nursing Science Program of *STIKES Muhammadiyah* Kudus. Generally speaking, achievement results illustrated that more students were in favor of humor as teaching material in the classroom in improving their speaking skill than conventional method. Most of students pointed out that humor helps them in progressing their speaking skill thus it indicated that jokes help them pay more attention during class time and increases their level of concentration and anxiety. In comparison, only a few students believed jokes do not have an effect on increasing speaking skill in the classroom. He or she claimed that humor does not help in learning English as second language, and only sometimes boost their attention. Moreover, supporting previous research (Fisher 1997; Cornett 1986), the results of this study show that humor can be beneficial in the EFL second language classroom. Humor promotes the feeling of understanding and helps to hold the attention of EFL students, regardless of the cultural learning situation.

Humor as teaching material is effective to improve the student speaking skill than the conventional material because all students found humor to be contributing to positive atmosphere

in the classroom in the way that student who got the highest score was (90) and lowest score (50) with mean (69.62) and standard deviation 8.87. This indicated number of students favored having humor as part of their English speaking classroom and quite a high proportion of all students felt that humor even encourages them to improve their performance of speaking using English.

Furthermore, high learning motivation has significant effect on the development of student's speaking skill. This was proven by the result of achievement of both experimental and control group who have high learning motivation got higher score than low learning motivation however, their motivation does not play totally in their speaking class achievement. It means that the students who high motivation will not always get good score in their presentation. Thus, the grades obtained by the students are more likely related to their background knowledge and aptitude rather than only their motivation.

On the other hand, their high motivation generally helps them pass or even get good grades in their English speaking skill. These students do not experience regulative motivation. They are slightly more instrumentally motivated than interactively motivated. Since this study covers English major students only, it might be worthwhile to undertake similar study using other college students as well as students from other universities in Indonesia.

And last, humor as teaching material has significant improvement of the student's speaking skill to those who have high and low learning motivation. It was proven by different range of pre and post test of both experimental and control. Some students reported that humor in the classroom situation affected their learning positively to those who have high low motivation rather than conventional material. College students of S1 Nursing Science Program of *STIKES Muhammadiyah* Kudus expressed specific opinions about humor and the teaching atmosphere. Comparing to conventional material some students reported that humor reduces barriers between them and their teachers. Also, they felt that humor reduced their "fear" in speaking performance, and other said that humor makes the learning environment more enjoyable. Clearly, students feel the need for the humor

factor as part of their English learning process to improve their speaking skill.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

On the basis of the findings of this study, the following conclusions are in order that the result of improving students' speaking competence by humor material with high learning motivation of fourth semester student, S1 Nursing Science Program of *STIKES Muhammadiyah* Kudus was very high. It was seen by the average of speaking competence result (81%) with the progress in the term of pronunciation (77.5%), grammar (68.8%), vocabulary (80%), content (97.5%), and fluency (72.5%). Meaning that humor together with learning motivation supported students get better achievement in speaking skill. Meanwhile, the result of improving students' speaking competence by humor material with low learning motivation was quite high. It was seen by the average of speaking competence result (69%) with the progress in the term of pronunciation (66.2%), grammar (61.2%), vocabulary (66.2%), content (86.2%), and fluency (65%). It meant that humor was quite good to be a material for students with low motivation rather than conventional one.

On the other hand, the result of improving students' speaking competence by using life-experience story with high learning motivation of fourth semester student, S1 Nursing Science Program of *STIKES Muhammadiyah* was high. It was seen by the average of speaking competence result (72.7%) with the progress in the term of pronunciation (72.5%), grammar (65%), vocabulary (75%), content (86.2%), and fluency (65%). The result of improving students' speaking competence by using life-experience story with low learning motivation was low. It was seen by the average of speaking competence result (66.5%) with the progress in the term of pronunciation (68.8%), grammar (60%), vocabulary (71.2%), content (71.2%), and fluency (61.2%).

Humor as teaching material is more effective to improve the student speaking skill than the conventional material because all students found humor to be contributing to positive atmosphere in the classroom. Meaning that number of students favored having humor as

part of their English speaking classroom and quite a high proportion of all students felt that humor even encourages them to improve their performance of speaking using English.

High learning motivation has significant effect on the development of student's speaking skill however; their motivation does not play totally in their speaking class achievement. However, their motivation does not play totally in their speaking class achievement which means that the students who high motivation will not always get good score in their presentation.

Humor as teaching material has significant improvement of the student's speaking skill to those who have high and low learning motivation in the way that some college students of S1 Nursing Science Program of *STIKES Muhammadiyah* Kudus expressed that humor in the classroom situation affected their learning positively to those who have high low motivation rather than conventional material. Comparing to conventional material some students reported that humor reduces barriers between them and their teachers. Also, they felt that humor reduced their "fear" in speaking performance, and other said that humor makes the learning environment more enjoyable.

Suggestion

The role of pedagogical humor in the classroom is truly multifaceted and thus requires examination and analysis from a variety of perspectives. A great deal of research has been conducted in the area of general pedagogical effects of humor on affective variables in the EFL classroom. Despite some uncertainty concerning the degree to which humor benefits the classroom, the vast majority of literature and experimental evidence in this area has generally acknowledged significant benefits to the pedagogical employment of humor. Further study may also be conducted to determine whether teachers' use of humor appears to reduce student anxiety and stress in the classroom to improve students' speaking skill, retention, and student-teacher relationships. Since a small number of subjects were involved in this study, the results may not necessarily be extended to make a prediction about the entire population.

REFERENCES

- Check, J. F. (1986). Positive traits of the effective teacher-negative traits of the ineffective one. *Education*. 106. 326-334.
- Civikly, J. M. (1986). Humor and the enjoyment of college teaching. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*. 26. 61-70.
- Garner, R. (2005). *Humor, analogy, and metaphor: H.A.M. it up in teaching*. Retrieved July 17, 2010, from http://radicalpedagogy.icaap.org/content/issue6_2/garner.html
- Kulawanit et al. 2005. A study of foreign language teaching and in the Central, Western and Eastern provinces of Thailand[Online]. Abstract from: The Thailand Research Fund: http://www.trf.or.th/research/project_detail.asp?PROJECTID=RG47H0001
- McGhee, P. E. (1979). *Humor*. Its Origin and Development San Francisco: Freeman.
- Muijs, D. 2004. *Doing Quantitative Research in Education*. New Delhi: SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd
- Pattaranon, S. 1988. *A level of English speaking ability of students at the upper secondary education level*. Master's Thesis. Secondary Education, Graduate School, Chulalongkorn University
- Streubert & Carpenter (1995) *Purposive Sample* at <http://www.deenislam.co.uk/midwife/Dis/5.htm> [accessed on August, 13 2011]
- Stuart, W. D., and Rosenfeld, L. B. (1994). Student perceptions of teacher humor and classroom climate. *Communication Research Reports*. 11. 87-97.
- Tamborini, R., and Zillmann, D. (1981), College students' perceptions of lectures using

humor. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*. 52. 427-432.

Wheeless, L., Stewart, R., Keamey, P., and Plax, T. (1987). Locus of control and personal constructs in students' reactions to teacher compliance: *A reassessment Communication Education*. 36. 250-257.