

A PPP (PRESENTATION, PRACTICE, AND PRODUCTION) PHASE METHOD OF TEACHING SPEAKING TO UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract

Teaching speaking is considered as the “interesting and challenging activity”. Indeed, it needs various ways in order to make students “active in speaking” during the class. This article would like to present the three phases, namely a PPP (Presentation, Practice, and Production) method in “teaching speaking to university students”. The fundamental principles of using this method is that the “students are smart and creative”. Eventhough, they are considered as “intelligent and creative”, teachers still need to guide or control them to anticipate any errors made by the students. Furthermore, it is important for teachers to know when to give “instant correction” in class. When the class is focused on accuracy, teachers can give an “instant correction”. On the other hand, when it is focused on “fluency”, it is not suggested that teachers give “instant correction” and this may interfere with the goals of activity.

Keywords: Presentation, Practice, Production, accuracy, fluency

Abstrak

Mengajar kelas speaking bisa dianggap sebagai aktivitas yang menarik dan menantang. Berbagai cara benar-benar perlu dilakukan untuk membuat para siswa aktif dalam berbicara selama pelajaran. Artikel ini membahas tentang tiga tahapan, yaitu sebuah metode PPP (Presentation, Practice, and Production) yang diterapkan dalam “mengajar speaking” pada mahasiswa. Landasan dalam menggunakan metode ini adalah bahwa mahasiswa pandai dan kreatif. Meskipun, demikian pengajar masih perlu “membimbing atau mengontrol” mereka untuk mengantisipasi adanya kesalahan. Di samping itu, pengajar harus tahu kapan waktu yang tepat untuk memberikan “koreksi langsung” di kelas. Ketika kelas sedang difokuskan pada “ketepatan”, pengajar bisa memberikan “koreksi langsung”. Sebaliknya, ketika kelas sedang difokuskan pada “kepasihan/ kelancaran”, sebaiknya pengajar tidak memberikan “koreksi langsung” dan hal ini bisa mengganggu tujuan aktifitas kelas.

Keywords: Presentation, Practice, Production, accuracy, fluency

A. Introduction

Teaching speaking especially to university students is considered as the “interesting and challenging activity”. Indeed, it needs various ways in order to make students “active in speaking” during the class. A PPP (Presentation, Practice, and Production) is one of good methods for this class for these phases provide a space for them before they show their best performance in “practising speaking”.

There are two fundamental principles of using the PPP method: the students are “smart and creative”. This refers to the assumptions proposed by Scrivener (1994: 4) that “*people learn more by doing things themselves* rather than being told about them and “*learners are intelligent, fully-functioning humans*”, not simply receptacles for passed-on knowledge”. Learning is not simply “a one-dimensional intellectual activity, but involves the whole person”.

This paper would like to present the three phases, namely a PPP (Presentation, Practice, and Production) method in “teaching speaking” to university students, the fundamental principles of using this method, and the appropriate time to give the “instant correction”.

B. Is a PPP method applicable for “teaching speaking to university students”?

Baker (2000: 23) points out that ‘one of the best ways of helping students to reach the objectives of the lesson is to introduce the new language well in the first phase of the lesson: this is “the presentation phase”. Then, students need to have “plenty of activities” to help them to practice the new language: this is “the practice phase”. Lastly, it takes times for the students to use the new language they have learned in order to communicate with each other: this is “the production phase”.

I personally believe that the PPP framework is a good method for “teaching speaking” and this method can be applied to “teach speaking to university students”. When I teach the course of Speaking to the

students of University, I usually use this method since it gives them the opportunity before “they show their best performance of speaking”. For example, in **the presentation phase**, I use “*elicitation* to collect the students’ ideas” (e.g. ‘Do you like living in a city or a countryside?’, ‘Why?’), etc. By this way, the students will try to “respond or collect their ideas”. Besides, the weak students will probably get some help from the strong students (e.g. new vocabularies, phrases, and so on). This happens when the students answer the questions. The “weak students often get difficulties expressing their ideas”, while the “strong students may know the issue a lot” more than those who are the weak. While listening to the answer of the strong students, the weak students “indirectly get information” of expressing something in English. After this, I give them an issue to discuss or debate, for instance “Living in a countryside is more pleasant than living in a city”. Baker and Westrup (2003: 58) claim that *elicitation* is a useful way to involve students and it will also help teachers find out how much the students “know or remember” the previous lessons. Eliciting is a form of questioning. “Elicitation can be very specific”, for example, collecting students’ ideas or opinions about a picture, some sentences or a topic. In addition, I make use this phase as warmers to lead them to be “active in speaking” and not to be shy of sharing their ideas.

Scrivener (___: 98) defines that eliciting refers to “drawing out information, language, ideas”, etc. from the students. It is a technique based on the principles that:

- a. students probably “know a lot more than we may give them credit for”;
- b. starting with what they know is “a productive way” to begin new work;
- c. involving people in “a question-and-answer movement towards new discoveries” is often more effective than simply giving ‘lectures’.

In addition, there are “three steps need to be performed in eliciting”, they are: a. “convey a clear idea” to the students, perhaps

by using “pictures, gestures or questions”, etc., b. next, they supply the appropriate language, information, ideas, ect. and c. give them feedback. (Scrivener,___: 99).

After getting the students’ ideas or opinions by using elicitation, I give them feedback. If I find their utterance is correct, I usually “say ‘OK’, ‘good’, etc.” By this way, they may be happy. However, when their utterance is incorrect, I ask them to repeat it “two or three times and to correct” it. The repetition is useful to give them an opportunity to do “self-correction”. Some students are aware of their mistakes and they are able to “correct them quickly”. Sometimes, however, some students get difficulty in correcting their utterances by themselves. In this case, to make the class active I invite all students to correct the mistakes. I do this with the consideration that they will get used to “sharing their knowledge” to their friends and get used to “correcting the errors”.

Scrivener (___: 100) mention the following advice for elicitors:

- a. Give sufficient information. Eliciting doesn’t mean “guess what’s in my head”. Don’t try to elicit your grandmother’s maiden name.
- b. “Use hand gestures” to indicate who is being asked to speak, either a gesture for ‘anyone’ or to ‘a specific individual’. If everyone speaks at once, it will be hard to determine the correct answer.
- c. Give very “clear feedback” on each student’ utterance. They want to know if what they said was acceptable. You could use “simple gestures or facial expressions” to register ‘OK’ or ‘Not OK’ to students.
- d. If some gives an incorrect answer, get them to repeat it “two or three times” and then say the correct answer yourself.
- e. If they can’t provide an answer, “don’t stretch the eliciting out too

long”. Silence or wrong answers are evidence that they need your input.

- f. When you have an appropriate answer, make sure it is clearly established as a good answer, perhaps by getting it repeated by “a variety of individuals”.
- g. Use eliciting regularly as a basic technique in most lessons for keeping your class “active and involved”.

Next, in **the practice phase**, I ask the students to share their ideas to their friends. In this activity, they “work co-operatively” with others. There are some benefits of such activity. Cottrell (1999: 88-89) mentions that “working co-operatively” provides opportunities to: 1. share ideas – so each of you has more ideas, 2. get “extra perspectives and points of view”, 3. “tap into a wider pool of experience”, background knowledge and styles of work, 4. “stimulate each other’s thinking”, 5. clarify your own thinking through talking and through answering questions, 6. get other’s help to focus on the main point – “freeing you up to explore a thought”, 7. learn to deal with “challenge and criticism”, and 8. realise that there are more “dimensions and answers” to a question than you can discover on your own.’

In this phase, It is necessary to notice the “arrangements of students’ seats”. I frequently ask them to arrange the seats in “a large circle or semicircle”. This enable them to talk to their friends more freely during discussion since they can “speak face-to-face”. In addition, the students can “communicate more with their friends” and I can control them more easily. The effect of this arrangement of seats is different from that of ordinary arrangement (students who sit behind see their friends’ backs only). McKay and Tom (1999: 24) note that “the arrangements of seats” in the classroom may encourage communication. Students who can move the seats tend to communicate more with each other because they are able to “see faces (rather than the backs) of their classmates”. Furthermore, the arrangements

of seats in “a large circle or semicircle or in rows facing each other” may help them to increase communication.

Besides the arrangement of a large circle or semicircle, the students sometimes need to be involved in “pairwork or groupwork activity” to avoid the same partner in every meeting and to lead them to socialize with their all friends in the class. In addition, pairwork or group work has several advantages. Here are the advantages of pairwork or groupwork mentioned by (Doff, 1988: 141):

- a. Students have more chance to practise speaking.
- b. Students are more involved to concentrate on the task.
- c. Students feel secure. Students who are usually shy of saying during the class will be more active to speak.
- d. Students help each other. They are encouraged to share ideas or knowledge in a discussion activity.

The arrangements of the seats and the activity of pairwork or groupwork above also enable teachers to control everything that the students say, to correct any error or to give feedback more efficient since teachers can control them in group instead of personally.

Baker and Westrup (2003: 67-68) explain that “during the practice phase of a lesson”, teachers work with students to practise speaking in different ways at different stages: 1. controlled practice stage; and 2. guided or less controlled practice stage. At the beginning of the practice phase, the teacher “controls everything students say and corrects or gives feedback” i.e. the pronunciation, sentence construction and use of the language. There are many ways to do this kind of speaking practice so that students may learn “accuracy”. Later in the practice phase, students do activities with “less help and control from the teacher”. Students practice the language in “pairs or groups”, but now the teacher needs to guide the activity. The teacher still needs to “monitor the work, walk around the pairs or groups, listen, sometimes correct and make sure students know what they have to do”. At the

end of the practice phase, students should be able to “use the new language reasonably well, and to speak more fluently using the language they have learnt”.

In addition, it is necessary for teachers to consider “accuracy and fluency”. Regarding the focus on **accuracy**, teachers should know the appropriate time to give an “instant correction”. On the contrary, when the class is focused on **fluency**, it is not time for teachers to give “instant correction” and this may interfere with the goals of activity (Scrivener, 1994: 68).

Finally, in **the production phase**, after I control the students, including correcting the error of “pronunciation, sentence construction”, etc., I ask them to “speak as fluently as possible” in front of the class. At this point, I usually ask them to present the topic that has been discussed or ask them to debate the related topic to be discussed (e.g. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement. *Living in a countryside is more pleasant than living in a city.* Use specific reasons and examples to support your position) which allow them to express their opinion. I do not correct them as I do in the practice phase since this is the production phase – “the fluency phase or the free phase”. In addition, I am sure that in this phase, they are able to “speak confidently” as they have a lot of ideas and correction in the previous phase. If it is still found that there are some errors, I correct them and “give feedback at the end of the class” so that those who make errors during their practice do not feel embarrassed or nervous. One important thing to do by teachers is that there must be “correction or feedback”. The correction and feedback are important to do to avoid the repetition errors. Allwright & Bailey (1991) cited in Tomkova (2013: 79) state that “the basic options regarding timing are either delayed or immediate correction”. The problem of immediate correction is that “it often involves interrupting the learner in mid-sentence – a practice which can certainly be disruptive and could eventually inhibit the learner's willingness to speak in class at all”. In addition, McDonough, *et al.*

(2013: 179) say that ‘Generally we tend to correct oral mistakes through speech, but the ‘how’ and ‘when’ obviously requires a great deal of sensitivity on the part of the teacher. If we are trying to encourage our learners to speak fluently, “correcting regularly during oral work will tend to inhibit further those learners who may already be rather taciturn in class”. Most teachers feel that correcting a student in mid-sentence is generally unhelpful unless the student is “floundering and is asking for some help”.

Baker and Westrup (2003: 90) explain that in the production phase, language learners “concentrate upon using recently learnt grammar, functional language and vocabulary with fluency when they speak. Fluency means speaking with ease and without thinking about possible errors. We all speak our first language fluently and we do not worry about mistakes, but concentrate on communicating what we want to say”. This indicates that in the production phase, students need to speak freely without any hesitation of making errors. The main point of this phase is that they are able to “speak fluently and confidently”. Therefore, in this phase, it is suggested that teachers not to correct any errors directly. It’s the students’ time to show their best performance.

By this way, all students become more active to speak during the class. Those who are usually shy of speaking will be more “encouraged or confident to express their ideas” in front of the class. Furthermore, students will be able to learn to socialize more because they are involved in a “discussion with their friends” in turns. Finally, they are able to speak fluently and confidently.

C.What are the fundamental principles of using the PPP phase?

I intentionally formulate the above learning activities using the PPP phase for the university students with two assumptions that they are creative and smart. This refers to the assumptions proposed by Scrivener (1994: 4) that “*people learn more by doing things themselves* rather than being told

about them and *learners are intelligent, fully-functioning humans*, not simply receptacles for passed-on knowledge. Learning is not simply a one-dimensional intellectual activity, but involves the whole person”. This may indicate that learners do not like to be told only “without being given an opportunity to do things by themselves” and they are smart; they have knowledge which can be “beneficial to be shared one another” during a teaching and learning process. These assumptions tend to be based on the “characteristics of good learners”.

In line with characteristics of learners, Rubin and Thompson (1983) cited in Thompson (2005: 4) mention that among good language learners’ characteristics are: they “find their own way, they find strategies to practice the language both inside and outside the classroom, they learn to make intelligent guesses, and they learn to keep ‘a conversation going’” adapted from: Lightbown, Patsy M. and Spada, Nina (1997), “How Languages are Learned (7th Impression)”, Oxford University Press, page 34. <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-artslaw/cels/essays/secondlanguage/essayGLLSThompson.pdf>.

Considering the students of university are “smart and creative”, it does not mean that teachers need not control them. Teachers still need to “control them to avoid a possibility of errors” (e.g. pronunciation, grammatical errors, etc.) that may be made by them. Therefore, it is suggested that this class be taught by the teacher categorized as “the enabler”. Scrivener (1994: 6) explains that this kind of teacher knows about the subject matter, methodology, and individuals’ and groups’ thought and feeling in the class. In addition, his or her task is to design a condition which leads the students to “learn by themselves”. This doesn’t mean that he or she doesn’t control them. When needed, he or she becomes a ‘guide’ or a ‘counsellor’ or a ‘resource of information’.

D.Conclusion

Teaching speaking skill, especially for university students, requires a “creative way”. The PPP phase is really one of good

strategies. It contains some activities which lead students to express their ideas, work co-operatively, and speak fluently and confidently. Although they are considered as “intelligent and creative”, teachers’ guide or control is still needed to anticipate any errors made by the students.

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