

Using brainstorming technique to improve English speaking performance for 6th graders

Ngô Thị Việt Chinh*, Nguyễn Quỳnh Trang**, Nguyễn Thị Hồng Nhung***

*Giáo viên Trường THCS Nguyễn Văn Cừ - Từ Sơn- Hà Nội

**TS. Giảng viên Bộ môn Ngoại Ngữ- Đại Học Y – Dược – Đại học Thái Nguyên

***TS. Giảng viên Bộ môn Ngoại Ngữ- Đại Học Y – Dược- Đại học Thái Nguyên

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Abstract: The study aimed to evaluate the effects of brainstorming techniques applied to speaking performance of the 6th graders' students. To fulfill the aim, the study employed a CAR research design with the participants of 41 students from one class in Bac Ninh Province. A pre-test, a post-test, a questionnaire, and interviews were the main sources to collect data for the analysis.

The findings revealed significant positive effects of brainstorming techniques on speaking performance for students. Furthermore, results from the two cycles pointed out that this technique brought back positive academic performance in teaching and learning English. The speaking ability of students and their interests in learning English were improved significantly. However, the results would have been more trustworthy if the implementation had been carried out with more classes of students.

Keywords: Improving speaking skills, speaking performance, brainstorming techniques, 6th grade...

1. Introduction

English language is vital to our lives because it facilitates communication. Worldwide, it is also the primary language of instruction for all subjects. For students, English is crucial because it expands their horizons, helps them build emotional intelligence, and enhances their quality of life through employment prospects. Furthermore, Speaking is also necessary for humans to engage and generate meaning and knowledge, which is confined and includes the creation, receiving, and processing of information. Speaking is the key to both of these interactions.

There are a variety of methods and strategies that students may use to improve their English-speaking performance. Instructors need to consider ways to help students comprehend and appreciate the information more easily. Nonetheless, the goal of the research is to discover a different method - the brainstorming technique - for helping students improve their speaking abilities. This method makes sense to utilize with secondary school pupils, particularly at a secondary school, as many of them have limited proficiency in speaking English.

2. Content

2.1. Speaking performance

Speaking performance can be measured using many methods (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005), including word count per minute, “for fluency, and “number of errors per word” for precision. In this study, the

characteristics of numerous speaking performance assessments are examined.

Fluency, accuracy, and complexity are among the many dimensions of speaking performance addressed in this study due to their recent widespread use and importance as learning objectives (Skehan, 1996, 1998).

According to Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998), fluency refers to a learner's ability to talk quickly and without dysfluency markers such as functionless repetitions, self-corrections, and false starts while coping with real-time processing (p. 14). Lennon (1990b, p. 403) distinguishes between two types of fluency measures: “temporal” and “degree of freedom from various dysfluency markers.” Accuracy relates to how often a student speaks without errors in real-time communication (derived from Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998), and there are two types of associated measures: general measures and specific measures (e.g., Ortega 1999; Skehan & Foster 2001). According to Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998), complexity is the extent to which a learner employs a variety of sophisticated vocabulary and structures when speaking.

2.2. Brainstorming

One way to describe brainstorming is as a method of thought process. According to Brown, brainstorming is a method that facilitates the start of a thought process. When students are getting ready to study a material, tackle a challenging topic, or write

about it, brainstorming is frequently a very helpful tool. During a brainstorming session, students quickly identify concepts, ideas, facts, or feelings that are connected to a particular topic or situation.

Furthermore, brainstorming is described by Carroll and Wilson as a cooperative prewriting technique that mimics how the brain functions. Its goal is to release mental constraints and capture thoughts. Additionally, brainstorming aids in the selection, sifting, and collection of ideas for speakers, particularly students. According to Littell, brainstorming aids in pupils' topic selection. Furthermore, according to Kendall and Khuon, brainstorming allows pupils the ability to refine their ideas before speaking. Muscle promotes brainstorming as a method for locating, developing, and refining speech ideas.

2.3. Teaching speaking performance by using brainstorming techniques

According to Roestiyah (2001), brainstorming is a method for generating as many original ideas as possible inside the group. It may be seen as a quick and efficient method of gathering a wide range of opinions from a group of individuals. Asking as many questions as we can during brainstorming helps us come up with concepts and specifics. If speakers already have a topic or concept they'd like to explore, brainstorming can also be utilized to steer them in that area. This practice aids the speaker in compiling their ideas and thoughts.

The primary guidelines of the brainstorming process are to improve the ideas by focusing on them. Using the brainstorming process is one of the finest techniques to come up with several ideas quickly. Through the spontaneous contributions of all group members, brainstorming promotes group collaboration, pushes students' imaginations, and produces creative thinking.

2.4. The results of the test

2.4.1. Results of students' speaking performance in the pre-test

In the pre-cycle, students have some mistakes in pronunciation and vocabulary and their speaking is not detailed with the subject of the theme. The students' speaking performance was assessed in the pre-test using five criteria: vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and comprehension. Overall, no one was rated Very Poor in any of the five categories, and only a few students were rated Poor, particularly in the pronunciation and fluency areas. Approximately one-third of the cadets achieved a Fair level in each

category. Furthermore, half of the pupils, who reached the Good level, were highly proficient in speaking and had a large and diverse vocabulary, while the rest achieved the Very Good level.

In conclusion, the percentage of cadets who had good marks before the action execution was fairly high, and there were no Very Poor pupils. As a result, the author chose to execute the following procedures and intended to give a better situation.

2.4.2. Results of cadets' speaking performance in the cycle 1

Table 2.1: Results of cadets' speaking performance in the cycle 1

Criteria	Level and Number of Cadets				
	Very Poor (1 - 2)	Poor (3 - 4)	Fairy Good (4 - 6)	Good (7 - 8)	Very good (9 - 10)
Vocabulary	0	1	8	22	10
Pronunciation	0	1	10	19	11
Grammar	0	0	9	23	9
Fluency	0	0	11	20	10
Comprehension	0	1	9	20	11

The calculation showed that the student's average speaking ability was "good" category. In comparison to the previous test, pupils improved in all criteria. There were no students rated at the Very Poor level. Ten students achieved the Very Good level in vocabulary and fluency, while eleven students achieved the Very Good level in pronunciation and understanding.

Regarding the vocabulary, the students had few difficulties expressing their views because the teacher had already supplied them with appropriate vocabulary and useful language, and they had time to prepare. As a result, 22 of 41 pupils performed at a Good level. The remaining students employed enough vocabulary and achieved the Fair level, with only one student having difficulty utilizing vocabulary during the test. As shown in the table, 23 students (56.09%) scored Good on grammar criterion, indicating that they had improved more than the pre-test. Nearly one-fourth of them, 9 out of 41 (21.95%), achieved the Fair level. There were no students that had a bad level. When speaking, students still made grammatical errors, such as utilizing improper tenses, which influenced the content of their words.

2.4.3. The students result of speaking performance in the cycle 2

According to the pie chart above, pupils in the second cycle improved more than before, although the change was not statistically significant. The findings revealed that 29.26% of students scored between

80 and 100 (very excellent), while 60.98% scored between 60 and 79 (good). Both the percentage of students who performed at the very good and good levels increased significantly.

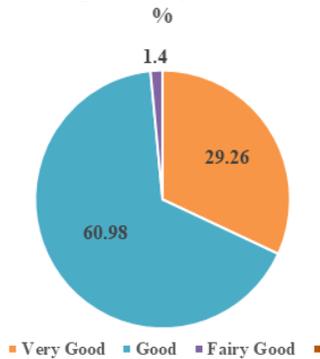


Chart 2.1. The students result of speaking performance in the cycle 2

In contrast, the students in the fairly good level comprised only 29.26%, and there were no students in the average group. The results indicate that the children’s speaking abilities have improved. According to the computations, the pupils’ average speaking ability was classified as “good “.

2.4.4. Survey questionnaire findings

Based on the data collection in survey questionnaire, we can see that brainstorming activities are quite beneficial in teaching kids to talk and enhancing their speaking abilities. At the same time, these exercises help pupils feel less anxious during speaking courses. According to the data, the majority of students have a favorable opinion about participating in speaking lessons through brainstorming activities. No student stated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed. This considers a fairly good outcome of the research.

2.4.5. Summary

Overall, there was a significant improvement between the pre-test and post-test. The average pre-test score was 70.32, while the average post-test score was 78.82. As can be seen, the pupils’ speaking skills improved significantly after the brainstorming technique was used. They demonstrated a high degree of participation during the speaking session by expressing curiosity and motivation. The author believed that the use of the brainstorming technique was successful, as it provided engaging activities that gave cadets ample opportunities to practice speaking in class. Students were also actively involved in the debate process, expressing their opinions. Thus, it is evident that brainstorming techniques should

be applied in teaching speaking to pupils at the secondary level.

3. Conclusion

Based on the findings, brainstorming can enhance students’ speaking performance through the practice, explanation, and performance of ideas. The students were able to express themselves more freely and naturally. It encourages students to actively participate in the teaching and learning process. By categorizing their ideas, students can share them more effectively. Students’ fluency and accuracy in grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and comprehension can be improved.

Students were divided into pairs to gain confidence in answering questions on the whiteboard. This approach encourages active participation in the teaching and learning process, allowing them to exchange ideas with one another. As a result, students have increased their ability to communicate and enjoy the learning experience.

Students should recognize the importance of speaking skills in the curriculum and real life, and then devise a strategy to enhance their speaking ability. They should speak English more frequently and actively, not just in speaking lessons but also outside of them. Furthermore, to feel more confident speaking English in class, students should devote more time to lesson preparation before class

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