

Chapter 5

Discussion, Implications, Limitations, and Directions for Further Research

5.1 Discussion

There was a considerable improvement in the speaking ability of young learners after carrying out vocabulary activities with them in this study and there are other factors that contributed to this improvement.

Some learners, especially the beginners, may experience difficulty in pronouncing certain words and groups of sounds in another language. Some Chinese and Japanese speakers of English, for example, have trouble with /l/ and /r/. Some learners have trouble with the beginning sounds in words “three” and “they.”

As mentioned in the previous chapter, fewer error corrections by the researcher may have contributed to the improvement in the students’ speaking ability. Giving too much attention to the correction of pronunciation in the early stages of language learning

can make learners worried and reluctant to speak because of fear of making errors. This assumption may be further investigated in a study focusing on the teaching methods used to enhance the student's speaking ability.

The high frequency of pronunciation errors committed by the students shows a need for more activities and exercises in this area. The audiolingualism method argues that native-like pronunciation is one of the most important aspects of language proficiency.

However, as Ueno (1994) reports: "The research on this issue (whether specific instruction can improve students' pronunciation) is inconclusive. In a recent survey...almost half of the recent experiments on this subject show no improvement in students' production of target-language sounds" (Ueno, 1994).

Translation of Bahasa Malaysia words to English could not be avoided. The students were unable to identify many items in English but were able to identify the items in Bahasa Malaysia. The researcher also translated instructions to some of the activities. These were deemed necessary because the instructions were quite

complicated and any misunderstanding could result in a waste of time and energy in carrying out the activities.

5.2 Pedagogical Implications

From this study the researcher strongly believed that teachers should incorporate more vocabulary and speaking activities into their lessons as a means for the students to practice the language in a meaningful way. When the students know how to use the language and are given more opportunities to use it, they become more confident and motivated to use it on their own.

The researcher believed strongly in the principle of 'learning by doing' and the best way for teachers to ensure effective learning by students is through activities which give students exposure and practice in a pattern of interaction as close as possible to real life.

The researcher also suggested that teachers should not rush into error correction, but should consider whether the error is worth the interruption and, if it is, the teacher should also consider possible causes and then think of appropriate ways of dealing with the error.

Teachers must also realize the value to feedback. Students need to be able to assess their progress so that they can identify areas for further practice.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

At the beginning of this study the researcher did not find out which members of the class have already learned more vocabulary than their classmates. This information could have been used to identify students who may need extra attention and also in the grouping of the students. By administering such tests, the results of this study would have carried extra weight.

The researcher also did not use any tests to determine how much has been achieved by individuals in the class after carrying out these activities.

One of the main limitations of the study was the inconsistency in the number of subjects. Initially the class consisted of fifteen students, but due to the school holidays and fasting month, the number of students declined to only four in the last class. With so few students in class, the students felt the class was too quiet and boring. As a result they could not concentrate and kept asking if they could have an early break.

The researcher also encountered problems while recording the third speaking activity. The quality of the recording was very poor due to heavy rain, which interfered with the sounds produced during the lesson. As the lessons were conducted on school premises, there was a lot of noise from outside the classroom when other students were present.

In order to avoid these problems in future studies, careful considerations should be taken in selecting the appropriate location and factors, which may affect attendance, quality of audio recording and the overall environment and mood of the class.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Although this study answered part of the queries posed by the researcher, other questions appeared which this study was not able to satisfy. Investigations in the area of error correction and pronunciation practice and their effects on the students speaking ability should be considered. As mentioned previously the teaching methods used may also affect to the speaking ability of these young learners.

Other potential areas to be studied are in the development and use of teaching materials, such as activities and board games, which can facilitate vocabulary learning and how teachers can further promote the use of these vocabulary. Relationships between vocabulary learning with other skills, such as listening, reading, and writing should also prove to be an interesting area to study.

Conclusion

The students were very excited and interested in the vocabulary and speaking activities carried out. During the lessons, the students were very attentive and cooperated remarkably well. In the few weeks it took to carry out this study, the researcher learned many new things about her students and about herself.

Through the audio recordings of the lessons and journals kept by the researcher, weaknesses and strengths in her teaching methods were brought to the surface and it was hoped that this new information would further improve the teaching methods applied and the lessons taught to other classes.

This study has also made the researcher realize the serious need for improvement in vocabulary in order to enhance the learning of students not only in speaking but in all the skills, that is listening, reading and writing as well.