Innovations

Analyzing the Techniques of Teaching Speaking Skills in Grade Ten English Textbook

Wubshet Mengistu Mekonnen (TEFL)

Lecturer in English language and Literature, College of Social Science and Humanities, Jigjiga University, Ethiopia

Abstract

Issues: The purpose of this study was analyzing the techniques of teaching speaking skills and identify the types of classroom organization in grade ten English textbook.**Methods:**To achieve the purpose of the study both qualitative and quantitative research methods were employed. The study used textbook analysis and semi -structured interview. For this study, all 51 speaking lessons and all English language teachers who were teaching English in Mustahil and Ferfer secondary and preparatory schools were taken as participant of the study. The data were analyzed and organized thematically.**Findings:**The finding of the study depicted that the majority of the speaking lessons require learners to apply discussion, picture describing and role-play techniques of teaching speaking skill. It also showed that the majority of the speaking lessons are done using group and pair work types of classroom organizations. Furthermore, the techniques of teaching speaking lessons are integrated with the students' real-life situations.**Conclusion:** To sum up, the author of the textbook should prepare lessons that require learners to apply storytelling and re-telling, communication game, picture narrating and debate techniques to make the techniques fairly distributed in the speaking lessons.Moreover, toimprove the students' speaking skill using group and pair work types of classroom organizations teachers had better motivate and encourage learners actively to involve in the activity to make the lessons fruitful.

Keywords: 1.Techniques 2.Analyzing 3.Classroomorganization

1. Introduction

The modern world of media, mass communication, and internet demands a good knowledge of English, especially of spoken English. It is impossible without the working knowledge of English language and good communication skills to get the benefits of modern education, research, science, trade, etc.The vast number of English speakers throughout the world confirms that speaking English has gained worldwide importance, and, furthermore, that a global trend of English as a foreign language teaching and learning has emerged (Krashen,2006).Speaking skill is one of the language skills that have given more emphasis to enhance learners speaking skills for real life communication. The serious consideration of speaking as a decisive skill on second/foreign language teaching-learning, the governments of many countries have paid much attention to English education in order to help learners have good communication abilities.

In consideration of the growing importance of English language, the Ethiopian government has paid much attention to English education especially for speaking skills in order to enhance learners' communication skill. However, learners do not show good communication abilities as expected of them. Considering this, in recent times, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Education (2011) published a new textbook in order to help learners to use the target language in their real life communication. In other words, this new textbook is published based on the belief to achieve the objectives of General Education Quality Improvement project (GEQIP) designed by MOE. The main purpose of this project is to improve the quality of education given to grade one to twelve students in the government schools throughout the country.

In the Ethiopian context, the grade ten English language syllabus (2011) shows that the speaking lessons in the textbook are designed to develop students speaking skills.Nevertheless, the learners do not actively participate. In support ofthis, idea Abdisa (2011) showed that, this is due to the traditional way of teaching speaking which reading dialogues dominate aloud. It implies that the inappropriate speaking practices in the classroom leads to the weak performance of students speaking ability.

2. Literature Review

Different scholars define speaking in different ways and give different concepts about speaking skills. Speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning with verbal and nonverbal symbols, in a variety of contexts. It is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing andreceiving and processing information (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997). Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking.

Speaking is the ability to convey our thoughts, ideas, feelings, requirements and opinions through the oral medium. It is also the very first medium through which we start to express ourselves since a very young age, and quite naturally, just by being exposed to and having the possibility to interact in a

language, and by using the resources at our disposal, such as our breath force and of our speech organs. It is spontaneous and can be very effective (Richards, 2006 b).

Speaking is making use of language in ordinary voice; uttering words; knowing and being able to use a language; expressing oneself in words; making a speech. Students must choose how to interact in expressing themselves and forming social relationship through speech (Carter and MacCarthy, 1997).

In Ethiopian context, the practice of teaching speaking skills is based on the traditional way of teaching and students do not actively participate in the teaching of speaking skills that will help them to enhance their speaking skills. In support of this idea, Zerihun (2009) suggested that the importance of teaching speaking skill is undermined and teachers are not fully committed to teach.

To develop students speaking skills, the techniques that are found in the textbook and employed by teachers are important factors to be considered. Teaching speaking should be taught in attractive and communicative way.Different scholars suggested different techniques in teaching speaking skills. Harmer (2001:348-352) states the following techniques. They are acting from script, communication games, discussion, prepared talks, questionnaires, simulation, and role-play, debate, storytelling and re telling.

In teaching speaking skill, the types of classroom organizations have a great value to make the teaching –learning process more effective. Thus, the speaking lessons, which are found in the English textbook, should consider the classroom organizations and teachers should implement appropriate classroom organizations for the betterment of students' speaking skill. The most preferable classroom organizations in teaching speaking lessons are pair and group work. There is evidence that opportunities for learners to engage in conversational interactions in group and paired work can lead to increased fluency and the ability to manage conversations more effectively in a second language (Ligthbown and Spada 1993).

The roles of textbooks in teaching English language skills have a significant value for the development of learners English language skills and the effectiveness of English language teaching-learning process.Besides, one of the basic functions of textbooks is tomake the existence knowledge available and apparent to the learner in a selected, easy and organized way. Hutchinson and Torres, (1994) argues that the textbook has a very important and a positive part to play in teaching and learning English to enable learners to practice language skills in their real life situations. Furthermore, the textbooks provide the necessary input into classroom lessons through different activities, and explanations. Hutchinson and Torres (1994) conclude that the textbook is an important means of satisfying a wide range of needs that come out from the classroom.

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the techniques that the speaking lessons follow in the English textbook.

2. To identify the types of classroom organizations that the techniques of speaking lessons are based on in the textbook.
3. To examine how the techniques of teaching speaking lessons integrate with the students' real life situations.

4. Methods of the Study

In order to achieve the objective of the study, the researcher used mixed method approach (both qualitative and quantitative).The qualitative method was used to examine how the techniques of teaching speaking lessons integrate with the student's real -life situations.The quantitative method, on the other hand, used to identify the techniques that the speaking lessons follow in the textbook and the types of classroom organizations that the techniques of teaching speaking skills are based on in the textbook.

This study took place in Ethiopian Somali regional state Shebelle zoneMustahil andFerferworeda at Mustahil and Ferfer secondary and Preparatory school in the case of grade ten English textbook.

In this study, available sampling has employed to take English teachers as a source of data.. Besides, all 51 speaking lessonshave taken as a primary source of data and analyzed by using textbook analysis. In this study, two data gathering instruments were employed. These were textbook analysis andsemi -structured interview.

5. Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data, the researcher used mixed method of data analysis (both qualitative and quantitative).The qualitative method of data analysisused to analyze and interpret the data gathered in the form of a narrative way .The quantitative method of data analysis, on the other hand,used to analyze the data obtained inthe form of percentages.

6. Results and Discussions

This part of the study deals with the analysis results and discussions of data obtained from textbook and teachers through textbook analysis and semi-structured interview. As indicated in the objective of the study, the aim of the study was analyzing the techniques of teaching speaking skills adopted in the grade ten English textbook. This section therefore, deals with general features of grade ten English textbook in relation with speaking lessons and evaluation and interpretation of speaking lessons in the grade ten English textbook. In this study,the datawere analyzed and interpreted qualitatively and quantitatively, and finally organized thematically.

General features of grade ten English textbook in relation with speaking lessons

The grade ten English textbook, which was published (2011), consists of 12 units. Eachunit divided into two sections A and B and it begins with the specific objective of each lessons. The units contain

speaking lessons that require learners to apply different techniques of teaching speaking skill and require learners do the activitiesin pair, group and whole class discussion. Totally, in twelve units there were 51speaking lessons without including the revision lessons since they were treated under the preceding lessons.

Evaluation and interpretation of the speaking lessons in the grade ten English textbook.

This part of the study deals with the types of techniques that the speaking lessons follow in the textbook, the types of classroom organizations that the techniques of teaching speaking lessons are based on in the textbook and the integration of the techniques of speaking lessons with the students' real-life situations. The speaking lessonsin this section are analyzed and discussed using adapted speaking skill checklist proposed by Cunning worth (1995).The sample lessons are analyzed and interpreted under this section.

Types of techniques that the teaching of speaking lessons follow in the textbook

This sub- section of the study deals with the techniques of teaching speaking lessons which are found in the textbook.

Table 1 .Results of the types of techniques that the speaking lessons follow in the textbook.

No	Types of techniques	Frequency	%
1	Discussion	10	19.6%
2	Picture describing	8	15.7%
3	Role play	8	15.7%
4	Information gap	7	13.7%
5	Inter view	6	11.8%
6	Brainstorming	5	9.8%
7	Storytelling and re-telling	2	3.9%%
8	Picture narrating	2	3.9%
9	Communication games	2	3.9%
10	Debate	1	2%
Total		51	100%

As table 1indicates, 10 (19.6 %) of the lessons invites learners to do the activities using discussion techniques. Picture describing and role-play cover 8 (15.7%) each. Information-gap, interview and brainstorming technique account 7(13.7%), 6(11.8%) and5(9.8%) respectively. Storytelling and re-telling, picture narrating and communication game cover 2(3.9%) of the speaking lessons each. Debate accounts the least percentage that is one (2%).

Even though all the techniques, which are listed in the table above, have significance value for the development of the learners' speaking skill, the textbook gave a better percentage for discussion technique of teaching speaking skills. Discussion technique helps learners to arrive at a conclusion, share ideas about an event or find solutions in their discussion group.

Based on the obtained data from semi-structured interview result indicated that discussion plays a pivotal role for the betterment of the students speaking skills that will enjoy themselves when they discuss with their friends or talk with their teachers. Besides, it contributes for the effectiveness of learning since it demands the learners to participate actively in the discussion rather than passively engage in a teacher –centered learning.

The results from teachers interview also shows that using picture describing in teaching speaking skillcan help learners to develop their speaking skill.From the results of textbook analysis and teacher'sinterview it is possible to conclude that picture describing as a technique of teaching speaking skill can help students to develop their speaking skill. However, the speaking lessons require applying picture-describing technique are not enough to improve learners speaking skill and some of the lessons lack of adequate examples.

In addition to textbook analysis, teachers were asked about the effectiveness of storytelling and re telling for improving students' speaking skills. All teachers replied that story telling and re-telling is important to motivate and encourage learners to make communication by telling and creating a story.However, in the grade ten English textbook there are only two lessons that can be done using store telling and re-telling technique. Therefore, they are not enough to motivate learners to make communication inside and outside the classroom to enhance their communication.

Generally, in the grade ten English textbook there are two speaking lessons that enquire applying storytelling and re-telling techniques. Thus, they are not enough to initiate learners to make meaningful communication.The result obtained from teachers also shows that picture narrating as a technique of teaching speaking skill plays an important role for improving students' speaking skill. The results of teachers interview shows that picture narrating for teaching speaking skill has its own role for the improvement of the learners speaking abilities, but in the grade ten English text book there is no enough speaking lessons that require students to apply such techniques.

Communication game like picture narrating as one of the techniques of teaching speaking skills has it is own contribution for the enhancement of the students' speaking skill. But in the grade ten English textbook, there are only two speaking lessons that require students to apply communication game technique. The results from teachers interview also shows that using communication games in teaching speaking skill is important for learners to have good communication abilities. Accordingly, all teachers replied that although communication games are important for teaching speaking skill, the

speaking lessons that need to apply communication game technique are not enough to enable learners to have good speaking abilities.Generally, using communication games in the speaking class contribute a lot for the improvement of the students' speaking skill. However, the speaking lessons that require learners to apply communication game techniques are not enough to motivate learners to make meaningful communication with their friends. There are only two lessons that can be done using such techniques.On the other hand, teachers were asked about the effectiveness of using debate techniques for teaching speaking skill. The data collected via interview shows that debate in teaching speaking skill can help learners to improve their speaking skill if they are actively participating during the debate. However, in the grade ten English textbook there is no enough speaking lessons that orders learners to make debate. Generally, debate as a technique of teaching speaking skills has a great value to improve the learners speaking capabilities.Nevertheless, in the grade ten English textbook there is only one lesson that orders learners to make debate. Thus, it is not enough to motivate learners to make a meaningful communication and improve their speaking skill. Therefore, teachers by themselves needs to prepare lesson that help learners to make debate.

Types of classroom organizations that the techniques of teaching speaking lessons are based on in the textbook

This sub- sections of the analysis deals with the types of classroom organizations that the techniques of teaching speaking lessons are based on in the textbook. Each type of classroomorganizations is described in the form of frequency and percentage in the table two below.

Table 2: **Results of the types of classroom organizations that the techniques of teaching speaking lessons are based on in the textbook.**

No.	Types of classroom organizations	Frequency	%
1	Pair work	20	39.2%
2	Group work	21	41.2%
3	Pair and group work	5	9.8%
4	Group work and Whole class discussion	5	9.8%
Total		51	100%

As table 2 shows the majority of the lessons are done using group works and pair works which account 21(41.2%) and 20(39.2%) respectively. While speaking lessons that require learners to do in pair and group works in one lesson accounts 5(9.8%). Like pair and group works, lessons that enquired students to do the activities in group and whole class discussion in one lesson accounts

5(9.8%). Group work as a type of classroom organization has it is own role for the development of students' speaking capabilities.

The integration of the techniques of teaching speaking lessons with the students' real –life situations

The integration of the techniques of teaching speaking lessons with the students 'real –life situations is very important for learners to improve their speaking skills. The speaking lessons that require applying different techniques of teaching speaking skill and encourage learners to make a meaningful communication on their daily basis is indispensable for students to have good speaking abilities . Concerning the techniques of teaching speaking lessons which are found in the grade ten English textbook almost all of them encourage the learners to communicate in the target language and motivate the students to communicate with their friends inside and outside the classroom for the enhancement of their speaking skill.

The results obtained from teachers interview also shows that the techniques of teaching speaking skills that are found in the grade ten English textbook encourage and motivate learners to practice speaking skill in their daily basis. They replied that the techniques of teaching speaking skill that are found in the grade ten English textbook can help learners to practice speaking outside the classroom. They also replied that although the techniques of teaching speaking skill encourage learners to practice the activities in their real life situation, they need students' interest. Therefore, teachers should motivate and encourage learners to practice the lessons outside the classroom to improve their speaking skill.

7. Conclusions

This study was aimed at analyzing the techniques of teaching speaking skills adopted in grade ten English textbook. The focus was specifically to identify the types of techniques that the speaking lessons follow, to identify the types of classroom organizations that the techniques of teaching speaking lessons are based on and to examine how the techniques of teaching speaking lessons integrate with the students' real-life situations.

From all that has been discussed and analyzed so far, the followingconclusions have been drawn.

1. The majority of the speaking lessons require learners to apply discussion, picture- describing and role-play techniques of teaching speaking skill respectively. In other words, the author of the textbook gave a better percentage for discussion, picture- describing and role- play techniques of teaching speaking skill when they compare with other techniques .This indicates that there is unfair distribution of the techniques of teaching speaking lessons in the textbook. The interview result obtained from teachers also depicts that although all the techniques which are found in the textbook for teaching speaking lessons are indispensable for improving students' speaking skill, they are not fairly distributed in the textbook because less percentage is given for storytelling and re-telling, communication game , picture-narrating and debate techniques of teaching speaking lessons.

2. The majority of the speaking lessons are done using group work and pair work that account 41.2% and 39.2% respectively. These types of classroom organizations encourage learners to make a meaningful communication in their target language. Nevertheless, the result collected from teachers through interview shows that even though group and pair work help learners to make good communication with their friends, they need the students' active involvement and teachers should give direction for their students the way how the activity can be done.

3. The finding of the study also depicts that the techniques of teaching speaking lessons that are found in the textbook integrate with the students' real-life situations. The result obtained from teachers also shows that the techniques of teaching speaking lessons encourage and motivate learners to practice speaking in their daily basis .However; their effectiveness depends on the students' active engagement in the lessons.

8. Recommendations

In light of the findings obtained from the study the following recommendations canbe drawn.

1. Although the author of the textbook gave a better percentage for discussion, picture describing and role-play techniques of teaching speaking lessons. On the other hand, the teachers themselves should prepare lessons that require learners to apply storytelling and re-telling, communication game, picture narrating and debate techniques to make the techniques fairly distributed in the speaking lessons and to make them more communicative to develop students' ability to use English in communicative way.

2. To develop the students' speaking skill using group and pair work types of classroom organizations teachers should motivate and encourage learners actively to involve in the activity to make the lessons fruitful.

3. Even though the techniques of teaching speaking lessons integrate with the students' real-life situations, teachers should motivate students to practice speaking in their daily basis to enhance their speaking skill.

References

1. Abdisa, G.,(2011). The practice of Teaching Speaking Skills at Ayertena secondary school. Addis Ababa University.
2. Brown, H.D., (1994).Teaching by principles: an interactive Approach to language pedagogy New Jersey: prentice Hall Regent.
3. Joyce, H., (1997). Focus on speaking. Sydney National Center for English Language Teaching and Research.
4. Lightbown, P. and Spada, N.,(1993). How Languages Are Learned. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
5. Zerihun, S., (2009).A study on teaching speaking skills in secondary school. M.A Thesis. Addis Ababa University.