

Business Meetings' Project Reinforce Students' Oral Communication Skills in ESP Course

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Abstract

A positive classroom atmosphere is created through engaging and entertaining a class. According to research, learners will learn better and engage more if a good classroom environment is provided, it is one of the most effective and powerful strategies teachers can use to motivate learners to learn. One of them is by conducting a natural atmosphere, it is a business meeting project that is going to be implemented in the ESP Classroom. The project would also boost learners' oral communication skills, and it is extremely important in the lives of students. Career advancement is aided by effective communication, which would help students make a good impression and earn the job they deserve. Communication skills are essential for academic purposes and career employment opportunities for students. The purpose of doing the study is used to see the effectiveness of the project assigned, including to see the learners' motivation from the strategy implemented. The method used is action research with 32 students of the Accounting Department at the State Polytechnic of Malang. The result of the study shows that the students' language skills is improved well especially on the speaking skill.

Keywords: *Business Meetings, Reinforce, Oral Communication*

Introduction

One of the goals of teaching English to EFL students is to instill confidence, so students can express themselves verbally. It is critical to assist students who are scared to speak in class since their reluctance will lower their motivation to learn the language. When students only have a limited amount of time to practice using the target language, the problem gets even worse, and they are unable to progress in their learning. Oral communication, without a doubt, serves a crucial purpose as a means of communication in both professional and academic settings.

Gosling and Ward (2002, 42) mentioned that oral communication is valued as an important aspect in the professional setting which undeniably is a required skill for men and women to be successful in pursuing a business career. Focusing on oral communication and nurturing this talent helps students sharpen their skills and prepare for life in the working environment, as stated previously. Because oral communication is so vital for students' success, one of the examples used in the Accounting Department is conducting Business Meeting presentations as a manner of practicing real-life oral communication.

Conducting Business Meetings presentations in EFL classrooms provides valuable opportunity for students to improve oral communication by expressing ideas and learning about the expectations, needs, and intentions of other students. Students in the Accounting Department are required to practice following instructions, listening skills, conversational skills, negotiating skills, public and colleague communication, meeting skills, handling complaints and conflict resolution skills, and many other skills by completing the challenge of conducting business meetings. The authenticity of the real-life action here also becomes one of

the prerequisites of ESP classes that can assist students develop their English skills for future application in a professional situation.

Johns and Price-Machado (2001, 44) mentions one of the characteristics of ESP is that it is designed to meet the learners' needs and should relate the content to a particular discipline, occupation, or activities. This emphasizes the importance of learning materials as well as media to support learning for Accounting Department students who are preferably covered on Accounting-related issues, such as the Business Meeting Project in this study for third-semester Accounting Department State Polytechnic of Malang.

Apart from the legitimacy of learning materials, autonomous learning has recently been a hot topic. Aini & Sukirno (2013, 69-70) mentioned that built-autonomous learning media aimed at assisting the learning process to be more effective, engaging, interactive, and also fun and should be developed based on the needs of the students in each meeting. This will almost certainly improve the chances of meeting and exceeding learning objectives. As a result, students' enthusiasm to learn will improve, and their academic achievement will rise as a result.

Methodology

Action research, according to Lewin (in Kemmis and Taggart 1992, 8), follows a spiral of steps, each of which includes preparation, action, and evaluation of the action's outcome. Planning, as described by Kemmis and Taggart (1992, 11), is built action that must be prospective to action—it must be forward oriented. It must be acknowledged that any social action is in some way unpredictable and thus dangerous.

The overall strategy must be adaptable enough to account for unanticipated consequences and previously unknown limits. While the activity was purposeful and controlled, it was a careful and thoughtful variation of practice that was influenced by critical thinking. They also emphasized that observation serves to document the outcomes of critically informed action, while reflection recalls action as it was recorded in observation while also being active. Reflection was the final phase in a circle. Reflection aimed to make sense of the processes, concerns, and constraints that emerged from strategic action. These four phases are to be interpreted as times in the action research spiral of planning, action, observation, and reflection in action research.

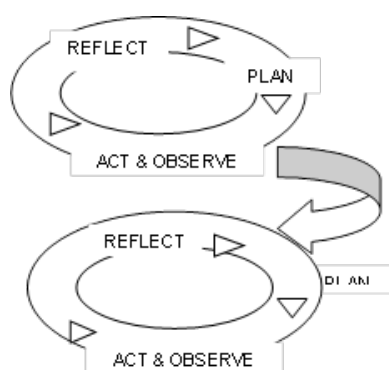


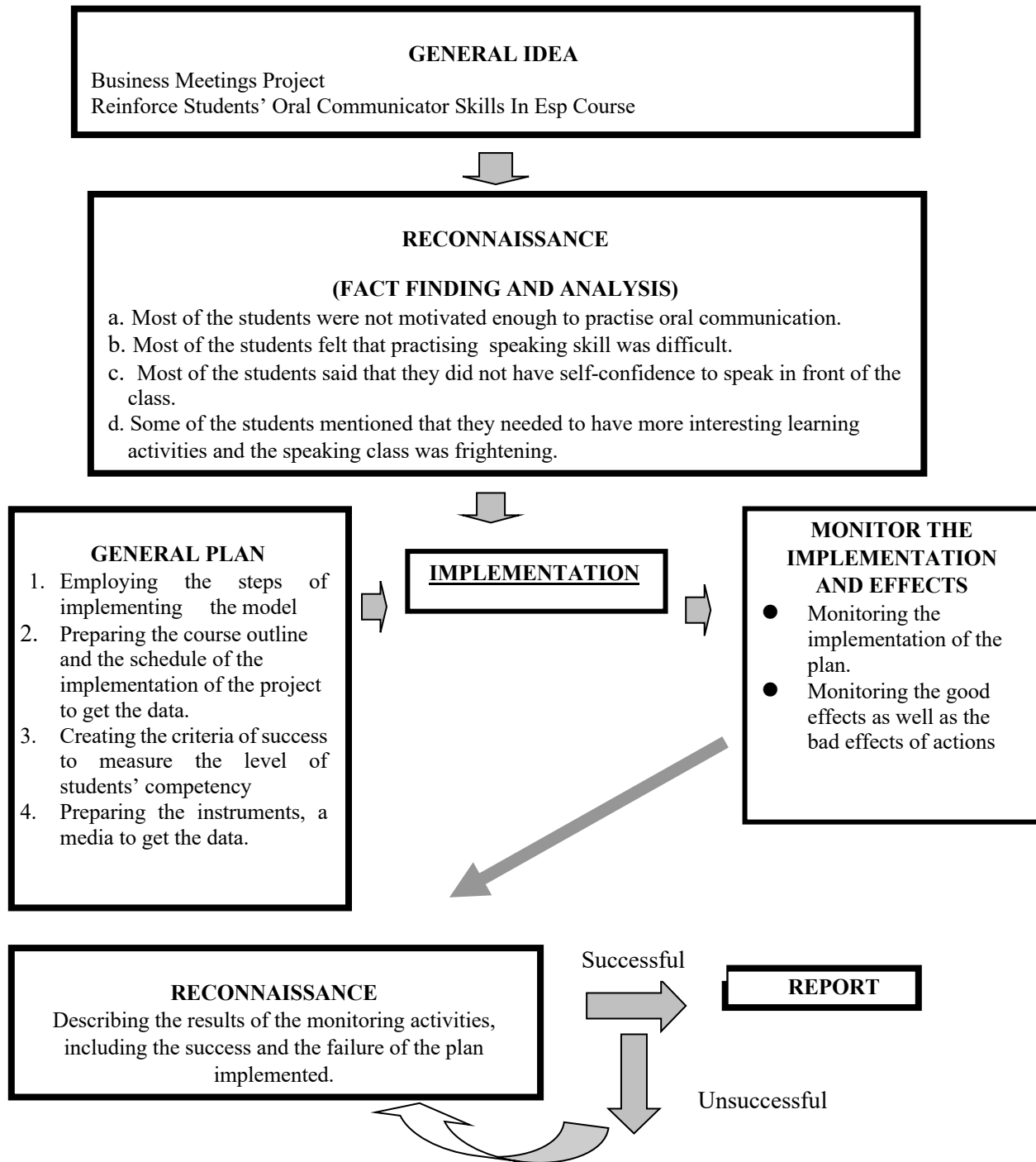
Figure 1. Phase of Action Research

The Subjects

The study involved 32 students from the third semester of the Accountancy Department at the State Polytechnic of Malang 2021/2022.

In the third semester, students had four hours per week (4 x 45 minutes).

Classroom Action Research Procedures



(Adapted from Elliot, 1992)

Figure 2. Classroom Action Research Procedures

Steps of doing the project;

No	Activities	Meetings
1	Searching for the materials (Authentic course books- students learnt & online learning materials from the internet) – project 1-4	1
2	Comprehending, summarizing and synthesizing	2
3	Creating ppt, drafting dialogue	3
4	Practicing the concept	4
5	Performing the Business Meeting – group 1 & 2	5
6	Performing the Business Meeting group 3 & 4	6

Result and Discussion

Design and Procedure

This study employed a pre-test/post-test design and was concerned on Business Meeting Projects that involved the four skills of a language. It was aimed to see the effectiveness of the strategy implemented. The data collection of this study took place in some stages. The pre-test was comprehending a text and they were required to deliver a summary of the text assigned and answered some questions related to the text. The test was intended to determine the participants' initial knowledge of the English' Language especially on the oral communication.

The result of the test was;

No	Number of students	Remark
1	2 students	Good on English
2	8 students	Enough - the number of English mistakes and the correct number of Grammar, fluency, pronunciation delivered either in speaking and writing (a draft of the students' performance) was more or less in balance
3	22 students	Poor on English test required

Stage 2

Informing and explaining the project assigned to the students.
Doing Consultation related to the project assigned

Stage 3

Students assigned to conduct on a Business Meeting Project.
The Project was doing a performance on creating of a Setting Up 2- presentation

Setting Up 2 Project

Assignment

In this topic students were introduced to a business meeting atmosphere, discussed about "SETTING UP 2." Students were placed as important people in a company (Director and Managers), and asked to: 1). Create a product' design, 2). quality of the product, 3). element of the quality, 4). decide the product's price, 5). logo of the company, and 6). brochure

Students discussed their creation of the product's design in the presentation of a business meeting

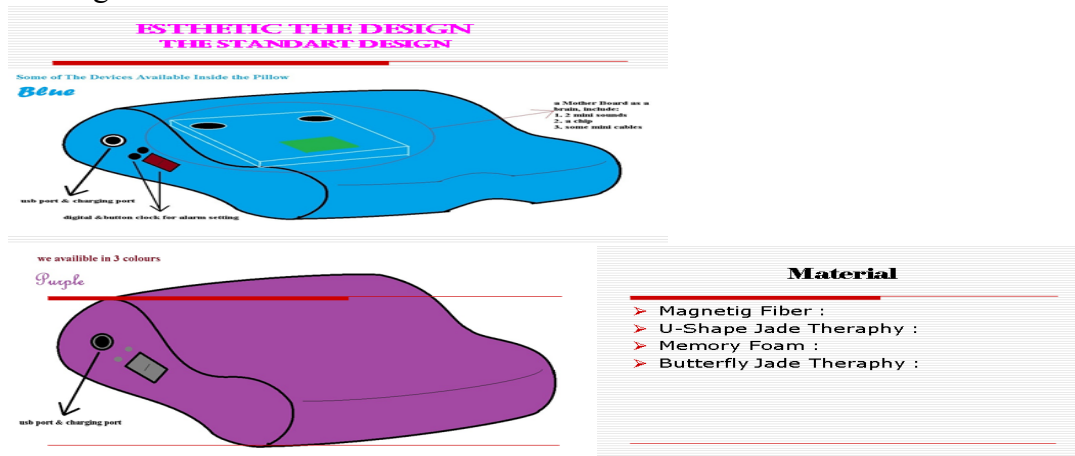


Figure 3. Product Design

Students debated the quality of the product during the presentation

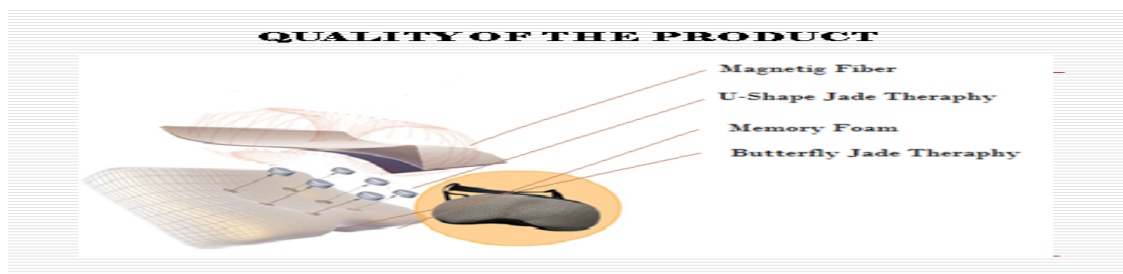


Figure 4. Product Design

Students discussed the element of the quality

1. Quality is the first
2. Quality is way of life
3. Quality is our most important product
4. Quality is a degree of excellence
5. Quality is leadership
6. Quality is center of the customer
7. Quality is personal responsibility
8. Quality is measurement & improvement
9. Quality is infrastructure

Students discussed their creation of the company's logo including the philosophy



Figure 5. Students discussed their creation of the company's logo

Students discussed the brochure created



Figure 6. Students discussed the brochure

Below was the students' mistake during the presentation and consultation;

1	Grammar's mistake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mostly, students did not pay attention to the past and the perfect tenses, some students seemed to have no knowledge of the tenses - When students used the present tense, they intended not to use the ending 'S' for the verbs of the subject he/she - A lot of mistakes in the pronunciation - Some mistakes in the article and preposition; e.g., on and above, in and at, the Mrs. Joko, the Mr. Dika (was often mentioned by some students) - Improper in choosing the vocabulary; e.g., like and prefer, cancel and delay, etc. - Students intended forgot to differentiate a single noun, or plural noun, such as a catalogue and catalogues
2	Fluency	Mostly students had problems on the fluency
3	Performance	The students' performance was still awkward, since it needed more practice. The dialogue was memorized and was not comprehended, so it was looked unnatural
4	Creativity	Students' creativity was still weak

After having experienced with the first project, the students' motivation was increased. It happened because of the atmosphere created. The students' fear was decreased a lot. The project was challenging as the researcher put the position as a facilitator and a consultant.

Below was the students' result on the second project – the project of problem solving;

1	Grammar mistake	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Only Some students did not pay attention to the tenses- Some students made mistakes in the pronunciation- Only some students still forgot to differentiate a single noun, or plural noun such as a brochure or brochures
2	Fluency	Some students showed improvement in fluency
3	Performance	Students' performance was better
4	Creativity	Students' creativity was increased

The number of students' capabilities of having grammar mistakes, bad fluency, bad performance, and creativity was decreased. The students' self-confidence was increased and it had an influence on the students' fluency and performance. Since the students had already made the mistake in the grammar and they had learnt the knowledge of it, they did the improvement. The students were challenged to get better performance either in the performance or in the content, so the creativity was also improved.

Result of the Questionnaire

Students were used to learning the simplified reading passages. When assigned to comprehend the authentic texts, they were really having a problem. The researcher advised students to obtain the simplest authentic materials to cover it.

To deal with the students' low self-confidence, the researcher took a personal approach to build a stronger relationship with them. Students were convinced that mistakes in learning English were unavoidable, and that making mistakes should not be avoided. Students would benefit from making mistakes in order to learn.

When students' confidence grows, it also influences on the students' fluency

The first performance had an awkward and unnatural atmosphere created as it was the students' first presentation, and what they did was primarily based on presenting the power point they created. Students left the discussion as it was. There was almost no expression, no body language, no gesture, no tone, or no creativity; the meeting was flat.

On the second project, the transformation began. The students' confidence grew as they learned from their previous project's mistakes; they now know how to deal with their anxiety and panic; they responded automatically; gesture, eye contact, innovation, and creativity all played well during the meeting; the meeting was done in a lively and dynamic manner.

The researcher was more convinced that using a natural environment to perform a business meeting project was an effective teaching model. The technique encouraged students to become more autonomous learners, more creative, to expand students' knowledge, and to solve problems, all of which were abilities that were needed in the workplace.

The opportunity to practice authentic classroom setting boosted classroom dialogue and involvement. Natural language production is aided by activities that focus on life skills. This is consistent with Newberry and Hughes (2006) findings that students were more likely to draw connections and hence recognize the value in what they were learning when they encountered a problem throughout the learning process.

Conclusion

It is critical to provide students with opportunities to practice oral communication. This is due to the fact that language learners are expected to be proficient in both linguistic knowledge and language use. Students' performance and self-confidence improve when communication is defined as the process of passing information from one person to another. Setting up a realistic environment in the classroom creates a non-threatening environment that challenges students' cognitive capacities, engages them personally, and enhances engagement. As a result, genuine refers to the expectation of exposing students to the real world in order for them to learn the target language effectively.

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