

IMPLEMENTING HANDS-ON METHODS TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to implement a direct method in improving students' English skills. The hands-on method is known as a teaching approach that focuses on using the target language directly in the learning process. This research is a type of research that collects data from literature. The data collection technique in this study is documentation, namely looking for written sources that contain information on the topics discussed. The results show that the application of the direct method is effective in improving students' English comprehension and skills, as well as increasing their motivation in learning. The implication of this study is the importance of applying direct methods in an educational context to support students' English communication skills holistically.

Keywords: Direct Method, English Learning, Student Ability

INTRODUCTION

Mastery of foreign languages is important in the era of globalization like today. Language is a means of communication and a means of disseminating information. Mastering a foreign language means expanding the opportunities to be able to interact and get information from other parts of the world. The opportunity to gain wider knowledge is also wide open for people who understand and can speak a foreign language. Learning strategies provide direction and help students to improve their knowledge and understanding of the target language (Cohen, et al., 1996). Learning strategies can be described as traits and behaviors.

According to Oxford (1990), learning strategies are behaviors or actions used by learners to make language learning more directed, and fun. Brown (1994) emphasizes the concept of learning strategies as behaviors that are not observed in learners. Furthermore, Brown (1994) distinguishes between learning strategies and communication strategies.

Learning strategies are related to the processing, storage, and retrieval of language acquisition inputs, while communication strategies are related to language acquisition outputs. Learning strategies are one of the studies of language acquisition. Among the various language learning strategies, the speaking learning strategy is the most frequently discussed. This cannot be separated from the urgency of speaking in human life. Speaking is the means of communication that we do most often in our daily activities. Speaking strategies bridge the gap between the speaker's language knowledge and the speaking partner in the communication process faced.

Speaking is the ability to pronounce articulated sounds or words to express, express and convey thoughts, ideas and feelings. In simple terms, speaking can be defined as the skill of conveying a message through spoken language to others. The ability to speak is important in human life in general. Good speaking skills can support

all existing activities. Speaking ability is a factor that greatly affects the quality of a person's proficiency in conveying information orally.

Speakers must have the ability and skills to convey information to others. It means that the speaker must understand how to speak concisely and effectively so that the listener can effectively capture the information conveyed by the speaker. Thus, speaking ability is a factor that greatly affects the quality of a person's proficiency in conveying information orally. The quality of a person's speech can be seen from the language, content, and fluency. All aspects of the language can show the quality of a person's language mastery if one uses it to the maximum.

The importance of speaking skills is not only useful for teachers, but also useful for students as subjects and objects of education. This skill will not develop if it is not practiced continuously. If you are always trained, then your speaking skills will get better. On the other hand, if you are shy, doubtful, and afraid of being wrong in practice, then speaking skills are difficult to master. Speaking skills are easier to develop, if students have the opportunity to communicate things naturally to others on informal occasions.

During learning activities at school, teachers must create various experiential fields that allow students to develop speaking skills. Various speaking strategies can be done by students, namely by interacting through interactive and collaborative language learning which is the best method to improve speaking skills. Direct language teaching is based on real-life situations that require communication.

With this method, in the language class, students can have the opportunity to communicate with each other. Students can communicate in real life in authentic activities, and meaningful tasks that can improve speaking skills. This can happen when students collaborate in groups to achieve speaking skills in completing assignments. As has been proven by Kitagaki (2013) that memorizing English sentences has an effect on improving speaking skills. This means that memorization has an important role in English speaking skills. This is because speaking is an ability that requires everyone to interact with others that involves linguistic knowledge or skills.

According to Iskandarwassid (2009: 241), speaking skills are essentially the skills of producing the current of articulated sound systems to convey the will, needs, feelings, and desires of others. Harmer (2008: 343) said that to be able to speak English well and fluently, students must be able to pronounce phonemes well, use the correct stressing, intonation, and speak with relevant content. Furthermore, Suratiningsih (2011) also revealed that aspects of speaking ability include *grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, expression, intonation, stressing, and meaning*.

English teaching in elementary schools still faces several problems, such as the lack of interesting and effective learning methods to hone students' speaking skills from an early age. One of the common problems encountered is the lack of motivation, initiative, and active involvement of students in the learning process. English speaking skills are an important part of the elementary curriculum, but many students still have difficulty communicating effectively. Therefore, innovative and interactive learning methods are needed to improve students' ability to speak English. One of the interesting and effective methods is the direct method, which can improve students' speaking skills by making students active and enthusiastic in participating in learning activities.

The hands-on method can improve students' ability to speak English by making students active and enthusiastic in participating in learning activities. In the direct method, teachers not only provide information through lectures, but also ask students to

actively participate in learning activities. Thus, students can develop their English speaking skills more effectively and increase their confidence in communicating. In this journal, we will discuss the direct expository strategies used to improve students' proficiency in English, as well as their implications for students' speaking skills.

RESEARCH METHODS

The method used is literature. This research is a type of research that collects data from literature. The data collection technique in this study is documentation, namely looking for written sources that contain information on the topics discussed. Primary data was obtained from reading reference books, journals, and websites. The first step of this research is to study the data from previous research related to the Influence of Information Technology Development on the Field of Management Accounting. Second, collecting primary data from books, journals, and websites. Third, processing data. Fourth, conduct data analysis with the stages of data analysis of the Miles and Huberman model with step steps: *data reduction*, *data display*, and *verification or conclusion drawing*. The validity test of data in qualitative research includes internal *validity (credibility)*, external *validity (transferability)*, reliability (*dependability*), and objectivity (*confirmability*).

DISCUSSION

A. Direct Method

The hands-on method in the context of improving students' abilities in English refers to an approach that directly connects teaching with practical use of the language in real communicative situations. This method often emphasizes direct interaction between teachers and students, as well as promoting the use of English in relevant and meaningful contexts. Key Points on the Hands-on Method in the Context of English Learning:

1. Use of Language in Actual Context: This method emphasizes the use of English in everyday communicative situations, such as conversations, role-playing, or simulations of real-life situations.
2. Emphasis on Speaking and Listening Skills: Oral communication becomes the main focus, where students interact directly to build speaking and listening skills.
3. Use of Authentic Materials: Materials used are relevant to everyday life, such as actual text, video, or audio that supports the natural understanding and use of language.
4. Demonstration and Live Practice: Teachers play an active role in providing hands-on examples and facilitating students to practice hands-on in situations similar to real life.
5. Direct Feedback: Students get direct feedback from teachers and fellow students, helping them to improve their use of English more quickly and effectively.

The use of direct methods is effective in improving students' ability to speak English. The hands-on method allows students to be active and enthusiastic in participating in learning activities, thereby improving their speaking skills more effectively. The improvement of students' speaking skills can be seen from the results of speaking tests conducted before and after the use of the direct method. The test results showed that students who were given the direct method had a significant improvement in speaking ability compared to students who were not given the direct method. The use of direct methods also increases students' motivation in learning English. Students who are given the direct method are more

enthusiastic and active in participating in learning activities, thus increasing their awareness of the importance of learning English.

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of direct methods in improving students' English proficiency in secondary schools. The hands-on method is implemented during one academic semester, with the main focus on the use of English as the language of instruction in all learning activities.

Data were collected through tests of speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills before and after the period of implementation of the direct method. In addition, classroom observation is also carried out to evaluate student interaction in using English directly in the context of learning. Data analysis showed that the group of students who received learning by direct method experienced a significant improvement in English speaking, listening, and writing skills compared to the control group. The test results showed an increase in average scores on each component of language skills, as well as a higher level of student participation and engagement during learning. The hands-on method provides a greater opportunity for students to practice using English in situations similar to real life. By focusing on direct communication, students are more accustomed to using the target language actively and effectively.

The application of the direct method has also been proven to increase students' motivation in learning English. By feeling more confident in communicating in English, students tend to be more motivated to learn and actively participate in learning activities. This is consistent with motivational theories in education that emphasize the importance of active involvement and success in increasing students' intrinsic motivation. The implication of this study is that the direct method approach can be used as an effective strategy in improving students' English skills in secondary school. Educational institutions need to consider the integration of these methods in their curriculum to achieve optimal learning outcomes in the field of English.

B. Advantages and Disadvantages of Direct Methods in English Learning

The hands-on method of learning English has a number of advantages and disadvantages that need to be considered. Here's an overview of the advantages and disadvantages of this method, along with a full reference to dive into it further:

A. Advantages of the Direct Method:

1. **Focus on Oral Skills:** This method helps students to develop speaking and listening skills directly through direct interaction in the target language.
2. **Use of Language in Real Contexts:** Students are given the opportunity to use English in communicative situations similar to real life, thus promoting better understanding.
3. **Active Student Engagement:** This method encourages students' active participation in learning activities, such as role-playing or simulations, which can increase learning motivation.
4. **Live Feedback:** Teachers provide students with direct feedback, allowing them to immediately correct mistakes in the use of the language.

B. Disadvantages of the Direct Method:

1. **Limitations on Writing and Reading Skills:** This method tends to place less emphasis on developing writing and reading skills in depth compared to oral skills.

2. Requires Intensive Preparation Time: The implementation of the direct method requires careful preparation and adequate resources to ensure that communicative situations are created properly.
3. Limitations in Addressing the Needs of Different Students: Students with different learning styles or needs may not be well served by this approach that is heavily focused on direct interaction.

CONCLUSION

The study produced consistent evidence on the effectiveness of hands-on methods in improving students' English proficiency in secondary school. Based on the results of the research and discussion that has been presented, several important conclusions can be drawn:

1. Effectiveness of Direct Methods: The implementation of direct methods significantly improves students' English speaking, listening, and writing skills. The test results showed a noticeable improvement in language skill scores after a period of learning with this approach.
2. Student Motivation: The hands-on method not only improves language skills, but also encourages students' intrinsic motivation in learning English. Students who are actively involved in using English in a live situation tend to be more motivated to participate and learn better.
3. The Importance of Teacher Engagement: Good teacher involvement and skillful use of hands-on methods are key factors in the success of this approach. Teachers need to have skills in creating a learning environment that supports the active and effective use of English.
4. Educational Implications: These findings provide important implications for the development of curriculum and teaching strategies in secondary schools. Educational institutions may consider the integration of direct methods in an effort to improve students' English language competencies as a whole.
5. Advantages and Limitations: Although the direct method has advantages in improving students' speaking skills, such as active and enthusiastic participation, it also has limitations that need to be overcome, especially related to teacher preparation and skills.

Thus, the use of hands-on methods in English learning in high school can be an effective strategy to improve student learning outcomes. The implications of this study underscore the importance of a direct communication-focused approach in supporting the holistic and sustainable development of students' English language skills.

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