Poster Presentation

The Use of "Look & Speak" Dialogues in ESP Contexts

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This study investigates ESP students' views on "Look & Speak" dialogues employed to encourage communication in ESP classes. The dialogues provide students with the necessary content information, vocabulary, and sentence structure. Students practiced these dialogues over the course of one semester. A survey was then distributed to obtain their views on the effect of these "Look & Speak" dialogues on improving students' speaking fluency, pronunciation, and motivation. The dialogues also helped students understand the reading texts and use the language to communicate.

Introduction

This study focuses on student perception of controlled 'look & speak' dialogues created by the author to help students understand the content of reading texts and speak about it in an ESP context at a Science and Engineering university in Japan. These 'look and speak' dialogues encourage conversation (Al-Murtadha, 2012; Alexander, 2008; Littlewood & Baohua, 2011; Wood, 2002) because they provide students with expressions and hints that can keep the conversation going (Al-Murtadha, 2012).

ESP students tend to focus on receptive skills (de la Fuente, 2002; Webb, 2005) through memorizing the vocabulary and content without practicing speaking. They try to depend on memorization rather than communication (Al-Murtadha, 2012). From the author's classroom observations, it was noticed that his university ESP students tend to favor receptive learning. There are many speaking activities that can be used to help students move from memorization to communication. Guided, controlled, and free activities, can be used depending

on the students' proficiency levels, interests, and needs. This study seeks to understand how "look & speak"' dialogues are perceived by Japanese ESP students.

Methods

The study was conducted at a Science, Technology, and Engineering university. Participants were students enrolled in 11 required English classes. Students practiced (in pairs) dialogues created by the author throughout one semester. At the end of the semester, a short survey was administered to investigate students' views on the effectiveness of the dialogues.

Results

Students' views on the effect of the dialogues on students' comprehension skills as well as other language skills were investigated. Concerning the effect of the dialogues on the content, 78% of the students thought that the dialogues helped them with the content, 17 neither agreed nor disagreed, and 5% disagreed. 81% of the students thought that the dialogues contributed positively to improving their reading skills, 14% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 5% disagreed. When asked whether the dialogues improved pronunciation, 66% of the students thought that the dialogues improved their pronunciation, 28% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 6% disagreed. Regarding speaking, 75% of the students agreed, 21% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 4% disagreed. The last part of the survey investigated students' motivation after practicing these conversations. 72% of the students thought that they enjoyed the dialogues, 23% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 5% disagreed. When asked whether they thought the dialogues motivated students to speak English, 63% of them agreed, 31% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 6% disagreed.

Conclusion

The majority of students believed that these "look & speak" dialogues were effective. The study recommends creating and using "look & speak" dialogues in ESP classes to give students the chance to talk about the content. These kinds

of dialogues are particularly useful for ESP students with low proficiency levels.

References

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Author's bio

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