

EFFECTIVENESS OF QUESTIONING RESPONDING TECHNIQUE ON FACILITATION OF SPEECH ACT COMPETENCE

VINITA S GOPALKRISHNAN¹ & SUNAINA BHUTANI²

¹Banasthali University, Banasthali, Rajasthan, India

²Echelon Institute of Technology, Faridabad, Haryana, India

ABSTRACT

Pragmatics is inevitable to enhance communication skills. Amongst the elements of pragmatics, Speech Act is the prime requirement. Speech Acts are used every day in daily interactions. To perform suitably, it is used everywhere- making requests, complaining, complimenting and so on. Factors affecting speech acts are the context in which it is spoken, power, presupposition, maxims, implicatures, politeness strategies, deference and social distance of the interlocutor. Along with the attainment of the professional degrees, it is indispensable to enhance speech act competence. This paper discusses the role of Questioning Responding Technique on facilitation of Speech Act Competence and the interpretation is made by comparing the mean scores of speech acts competence of Experimental group with those of the conventional method group. Results revealed that the questioning responding technique is a promising technique used in the Experimental Group classroom and it is a viable pedagogy in developing speech acts.

KEYWORDS: Communication Skills, Pragmatics, Speech Acts and Questioning Responding Technique

INTRODUCTION

Pragmatics is the study of the use of communicative language, more precisely, how a sentence is spoken in a context. It transmits the meaning of the utterance linguistically and contextually. Pragmatics skills are required in every sphere of life for communicating facts, ideas and emotions. It is practiced in a variety of disciplines and covers wider areas and language behavior in linguistics, philosophy and sociology. It includes politeness strategies, Presuppositions, maxims, conversational implicatures and speech acts. It emphasizes how to minimise ambiguities in a sentence or an expression depending on the context, manner and social distance or deference between the prolocutor and the listener.

Speech Acts

A *speech act* is a form of language usage ability in accordance to a context. It is the knowledge of the linguistic resources. In linguistics, speech act means rephrasing a speaker's intention and the effect it has on a listener. Speech Acts are the actions performed in saying something which can be 'constative' or 'performative' (Austin 1962). Later on, he replaced constative-performative terminology into three different Levels- the locutionary act, the illocutionary act, and the prelocutionary act. Though all three levels are necessary for the speaker to express himself clearly to the listener, but Speech act specifically includes the concept of illocutionary act. It solves the real and intended purpose of using the speech acts. Austin introduced the concept of Speech Act and illocutionary force as elements of pragmatics which were developed by Searle (1976).

He has grouped the illocutionary speech acts into the following divisions such as; assertive, directive, commissive, expressive and declaration.

Techniques for Pragmatic Skill Enhancement

To enhance communication, knowledge of Pragmatic Skills is essential. And as stated earlier, Pragmatics needs to be consciously practiced. For practicing speech acts certain techniques can be taken care during the conduct of the class like Listening Technique, Grammatical Competence, Nonverbal Cues, Empathy/ Emotional Cues, Questioning Technique, Responding Technique, Observation and Feedback. All these techniques help in the facilitation of Pragmatics but Questioning and Responding Techniques are found to be effective techniques which give ample chances to the learners to communicate and practice. As in Pragmatics, Speech Acts is an important component, therefore, in this Questioning Responding Technique can be used to enhance speech acts.

Questioning Technique

Questioning Technique has always been an important and widely used teaching technique where teachers ask questions; react to students' outcomes- their questions, responses, participation and retention; they even monitor their non verbal language. It is the illocutionary act that refers to the purpose a speaker intends to achieve in the course of asking questions or probing answers. Different speech acts are used to convey different ideas in different contexts.

Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Benjamin 1956) has given us another insight about how to use and when to use questioning strategies in teaching. *Lower-order thinking* often closed ended questions can use to consider students' knowledge and understanding. And *Higher-order thinking* often open ended questions can use to relate, analyze, explore, amalgamate and appraise. The questioning techniques and their levels and purpose of the corresponding content are Probing Questions, Leading Questions, Rephrasing Questions, Refocusing Questions, Rhetorical Questions and Funnel Questions.

Responding Technique

The Responding Technique also plays an important role in making the classroom learning effective and interactive. This technique not only helps students to express his ideas, but also encourage them to speak which in turn improves their communication skills. The Responding Techniques are Reflective/ Interpretative Response, Agree/ Disagree Response, Analytic Response, Supporting/Developing Response and Choral Response.

This finding is supported by Robitaille, Y.P & Maldonado, N (2015) who explored teachers and evaluators' perceptions regarding exemplary questioning and discussion techniques. The findings of the study pointed out towards those teachers who acknowledged successful techniques of questioning and discussion for development of students through education and experiences. Toyin. Jamic.E & Stuart T. H (2013) Showed that the taxonomy of questions and strategies helped educators to form a wide range of questions that only encourages the recall of important accurate, theoretical and technical knowledge but also requires learners to investigate, evaluate and construct. Elise J.D, Julie H.H, & Marjorie B. P (2004), Ramirez, M.A., Nunez-Oviedo, M.C., & John Clement (2009). Found that questioning is a teaching technique which helped students to process ideas for deep understanding and expected positive outcomes in terms of the students' participation, concentration and understanding of the contents in the class.

METHODOLOGY

This study is experimental in nature. It includes Pre-Post Experimental Control Group Design. The purpose of the study is to find the role of Questioning Responding technique on facilitation of speech act competence. The questioning responding techniques were adopted while teaching Educational Technology content. Special care was taken to incorporate speech acts in questioning or/and responding.

This study was conducted in four phases. In phase I, two co-educational training institutes were randomly chosen where forty one Teacher Trainees of one institute acted as an experimental group followed by the other forty one Teacher Trainees of the other institute as a control group. Pre test of Questioning Responding Speech Act Program, experimental group and Control Group were conducted. Speech Act Competence Inventory was made by the investigator. Due care was taken to involve five speech acts- compliment, thanks, requests, suggestion and refusal. Routine class was conducted for Control group.

In the phase II, the Treatment, Individual work, incorporated a series of speech act raising activities in reference to analyzing concepts, exploring critical thoughts and probing ideas through Questioning Responding Technique by face to face mode. The conduction of the activities was done in the college hours incorporating the Educational Technology content through Questioning Responding Technique. Five Handouts were given to each and every student to ensure full participation. So that all teacher trainees should be using speech acts, while writing answers to the questions asked in the handouts. The same topic of Educational Technology, System Approach was taught to control group also. No treatment was given to a control group.

In Phase III, pair-work incorporating series of activities using Educational Technology content, Cooperative Learning and Language Laboratory through questioning responding technique was used. In this phase, teacher trainees studied educational technology content in pairs using five speech acts through questioning and responding technique. One teacher trainee asking a question and other one responding using speech acts and vice- versa. A series of production, giving activities through handouts were assigned to the students to practice these speech acts through questioning and responding technique while revising Educational technology content. Through these activities, students implemented all the knowledge acquired by them. Listening and speaking skills were enhanced in this phase. Same topics of Educational Technology, Cooperative Learning and Language Laboratory were taught to control group but through lecture method. No treatment was given to a control group. There was a continuation of routine class in the control group.

In Phase IV questions related to Educational Technology were asked from Experimental group through questioning responding technique. The face to face mode was used. Then, once again the pair work was used so that listening and speaking skills were thoroughly enhanced. Teacher trainers of the experimental group were divided into pairs. One teacher trainee in each pair was asking questions and the other was responding and vice versa. Ample practice was given to the teacher trainees through a series of production, giving activities through questioning responding techniques using Educational Technology content. There was a continuation of routine class in the control group. In total 2280 minutes were taken to complete Questioning Responding Speech Act Program. And then Post Test of both Experimental and Control Group was conducted.

The objective was to compare the mean scores of speech acts competence of Experimental group with those of the

conventional method group. As mentioned earlier, speech act competence was measured through a Speech Act Competence inventory. The data collected was analyzed statistically using SPSS 16.0. The comparison between the mean scores of Post test Experimental group with those of Post tests of Conventional method group is presented in the table given below:

Table 1: N=41

Source of Variance	Df	SS	MSS	F*
EXPERIMENTAL Group	40	524.99	524.99	6.415
CONTROL group	40	8284.33	8284.33	2.804

Sig. at 0.05 level

From Table 1, it can be seen that the F value of Experimental SAP group is 6.415 which is significant at 0.05 level with $df=40$. And F value of Control Group is 2.804 with $df=40$. It indicates that F value of The data collected was analysed statistically using SPSS 16.0. Experimental group differ significantly from Conventional method group when pre speech act was considered as covariate. Further the mean of post test SAP group is 75.46 which is significantly higher than that of conventional method group whose mean score is 55.65. It may therefore be said that the Speech Act Programme was found to be significantly superior to Conventional Method in facilitating speech act of teacher trainees.

CONCLUSIONS

Questioning Responding Technique resulted in the facilitation of speech acts amongst teacher trainees. Speech Act Competence Programme proved to be an effective program for the facilitation of speech acts with Experimental Group as compared to Control Group. Therefore, teacher trainees who were taught using questioning responding technique and were given opportunities for speech acts had enhanced speech act competence as they were given more opportunities to respond to pattern and routinize phrases.

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