

IMPROVING STUDENTS' SPEAKING ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH PUBLIC SPEAKING TASKS

Dra. Rahmah, M.Hum.

Puspita Sari

ABSTRACT

This study deals with improving students' speaking achievement through public speaking tasks. This study was conducted by using classroom action research. The subject of the research was class XI AP2 SMK BM Taman Siswa Lubuk Pakam consisted of 32 students. The research was conducted in two cycles and every cycle consisted of four meetings. The instruments for collecting data were oral test for quantitative data and diary notes and interview for qualitative data. Based on the oral test scores, students' score kept improving in every test. In the orientation test, the mean score was 55.9, in the first competence test, the mean score was 64.4 and in the second competence test, the mean score was 73. The improvement also can be seen from the percentage of the students' speaking achievement, in the orientation test only 3.13% (one student) got 65 points. In the first competence test 65.63% (twenty one students) got 65 %. It means there was an improvement about 62.5%. In the second competence test 93.75% (thirty students) got 65 points. The improvement was 31.25%. It can be concluded that public speaking tasks could improve students' speaking achievement.

Key Words: Speaking, Achievement, Public Speaking, Tasks

INTRODUCTION

Speaking as one of the basic language skill has an important role in communication. Clark and Clark (1977:3) states in speaking, people put ideas into words and talk about perceptions they want other people to grasp. Speaking is an interaction process between a speaker and a listener. In speaking, there is a process of communication, which conveys a message from a speaker to a listener and he or she has to interpret the message, which contains information. Nunan (1999: 236) states communication is a collaborative achievement in which the speakers negotiate meaning in order to achieve the goals. It means that a speaker and a listener have to understand each other.

Harmer (2003:269) states the ability to speak fluently presupposes not only a knowledge of language features, but also the ability to process information and language 'on the spot'.

The Curriculum of Educational Stratified Level (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan: KTSP) of vocational high school should be able to actively communicate in English in the elementary level. Communication skill consisting of the students listening, speaking, reading, and writing skill is one of the life skills that must be mastered by the students (Depdiknas: 2006). Problem of teaching English as the foreign language, most students cannot speak English well. In general, some people realize that there are some factors of the difficulties of speaking ability.

To solve the problem faced by the students in speaking, English teachers are expected to be able to apply an appropriate teaching technique. Public Speaking Tasks are suggested in teaching speaking (Shea: 2009). She defines that public speaking tasks include any tasks where the participant addresses an audience orally. Those focus on two types of tasks; student presentations and debates. In public speaking tasks, student presentations may consist of either individual or group speeches based on class lessons or outside projects. Debates are interactive tasks, and usually require a greater degree of organization. They can be held with two or more students who take speaking on either side of an issue. The public speaking tasks suggested here rely on authentic language use and communication toward an audience. The writer believes that public speaking tasks is effective and interesting for the students to improve their speaking skill.

This research is conducted to investigate how public speaking tasks can significantly improve the students' speaking skill, particularly to find out an empirical evidence of applying public speaking tasks in teaching speaking by conducting treatment

Speaking

Speaking is one of four language skills. It is a productive skill in the sense that a speaker produces sounds of the language. Basically, speaking is intended for two-way communication. The speaker and listener negotiate the meaning of what they say.

Harmer (2003:40) says that communication occurs because there is communicative purpose between speaker and listener. The communication purpose for the speaker could be:

1. They want to say something

2. They have some communicative purpose; speakers say something because they want something to happen as a result of what they say.
3. They select from their language store. Speakers have an inventive capacity to create new sentences. To achieve this communicative purpose, they will select the language they think is appropriate for this purpose.

There are two types of speaking, named monologue and dialogue. The term 'monologue' in Oxford (1995:753) is defined as "it is a long speech by one person in a conversation."

In monologues, when a speaker uses spoken language for any length of time, as in speeches, lectures, readings, news broadcasts, and the like, the listener must process long stretches of speech without interruption- the stream of speech will go on whether or not the listener comprehends. Planned, as opposed to unplanned, monologues differ considerably in their discourse structures. Planned monologues (such as speeches and other prewritten material) usually manifest little redundancy and are therefore relatively difficult to comprehend. Unplanned monologues (impromptu lectures and long "stories" in conversations, for example) exhibit more redundancy, which takes for ease in comprehension, but the presence of more performance variables and other hesitations can either help or hinder comprehension.

While dialogues involve two or more speakers and can be subdivided into those exchanges that promote social relationships (**interpersonal**) and those for which the purpose is to convey propositional or factual information (**transactional**).

Some linguistic experts state that interpersonal has the same definition as interactional. 'Transactional language' is said to be that which contains factual or propositional information. The language used by the participants is primarily 'message' based. In each case the message has to be clearly communicated. Spoken language, however, is also used to establish and maintain social roles, and this is termed 'interactional communication.'

The definition of transactional and interactional language according to Nunan (1999:228) "transactional talk is produced in order to get something, or to get something done. Interactional language is produced for social purposes." Moreover, Brown (2001:273) asserts that "transactional language, carried out for the purpose of conveying or exchanging specific information, is an extended form of responsive language while interactional language is a form of language which is related to make social relationship."

Public Speaking Tasks

The concept of fluency reflects the assumption that speakers set out to produce discourse that is comprehensible, even though this goal is often not met due to processing and production demands.

Hieke as quoted by Richards (1990:75) states that the prime objective of the speaker is the generation of maximally acceptable speech in both content and form and a concomitant minimization of errors by the time an utterance has been articulated. The primary goal in teaching the productive skill of speaking will be fluent speech.

Public Speaking Tasks in English Language Teaching (ELT) (Shea, 2009) include any task where the participant addresses an audience orally. There are two types of the tasks; student presentations and debates (Shea, 2009). Student presentations may consist of either individual or group speeches based on class lessons or outside projects. Debates are interactive tasks, and usually require a greater degree of organization. They can be held with two or more students who take turns speaking on either side of an issue. The public speaking tasks suggested here rely on authentic language use and communication toward an audience.

Public speaking tasks may be central or supplementary to your lessons; there are advantages to including these activities at any level. There is no one set method or time commitment necessary for including these tasks in a curriculum. They can be used as a formal culminating activity or at the end of a single lesson to summarize information and make connections with previous work.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted by applying classroom action research based on Kemmis and McTaggart (1988: 14) with two cycles. Each cycle consisted of four meetings. Every meeting covered four steps, namely: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The subject of this research was students of the second grade of AP2 SMK-E TAMAN SISWA Lubuk Pakam, consisting of 32 students.

In collecting the data, the quantitative and qualitative data was applied. The qualitative data was found by describing the situation during the teaching and learning process, taken from the oral test, interview, and diary note. The quantitative data was found by computing the score of speaking tests of the students.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of the research implementation is described in the following cycles.

The First Cycle

The first cycle was done in four meetings. Here is the explanation.

Planning

The plan was arranged before doing the research. First, the lesson plan and speaking expressions that were related to the lesson were prepared. A controversial issue was prepared for the student presentations. The issue was about “public transport in Indonesia”. A recorder and diary note were also prepared.

Action

In the first cycle, the students were divided into some groups and each group consisted of four students. It was based on Gina Iberri-Shea public speaking tasks. The total number of the students was 32 students.

The teacher explained the definition, rule and format of Gina Iberri-Shea public speaking tasks. Then the teacher taught students the phases of public speaking tasks. At the end of cycle I, each group of the students was asked to present in front of the class, then the rest of the students acted as the audience who could state or ask the group presenting by pro-con statements or questions. In the first cycle, three meetings were used for teaching learning process and the fourth meeting was used for group presentation.

Observation

The observation was done to observe the students' behavior and what the students' problems during the teaching learning process. Most of the students had participated effectively in public speaking tasks. They were enthusiastic and enjoyable in speaking about a controversial issue by using public speaking tasks. However, they were still lack of vocabulary, pace and accent while presenting. The result of pretest was only 3.13% (one student) who got 65 points. The post test of cycle I was 65.63% (twenty one students) who got 65 points.

Reflection

Based on the result of the score of the test and observation, action of improvement was needed. It would be done the second cycle by doing public speaking tasks in teaching speaking. It would be done by repeating the steps in the first cycle in order to solve the students' problem of mastering speaking.

The Second Cycle

The second cycle was done in four meetings, the explanation as follows:

Planning

The plan was arranged before doing the research. First, the lesson plan and speaking expressions that were related to the lesson were prepared. A controversial issue was prepared for the student presentations. The issue was about “early marriage”. A recorder and diary note were also prepared.

Action

The students were divided into some groups and each group consisted of four students. It was still based on Gina Iberri-Shea public speaking tasks. The total number of the students was 32 students.

The teacher explained the definition, rule and format of Gina Iberri-Shea public speaking tasks. Then the teacher taught students the phases of public speaking tasks. At the end of cycle II, each group of the students was asked to present in front of the class, then the rest of the students acted as the audience who could state or ask the group presenting by pro-con statements or questions. In the first cycle, three meetings were used for teaching learning process and the fourth meeting was used for group presentation.

Observation

The observation was done to observe the students’ behavior and what the students’ problems during the teaching learning process. Most of the students had participated effectively in public speaking tasks. They were enthusiastic and enjoyable in speaking about a controversial issue by using public speaking tasks. Their speaking skill was improved.

Reflection

Having been evaluated, the students’ score showed the improvement. Based on the observation and the result of their presentation, it could be concluded that the students could speak English better through public speaking tasks. The students’ score in the second cycle had increased more than in the first cycle.

The percentage of students who had mastered speaking skill through public speaking tasks in cycle I was only 65.63%, while in cycle II the percentage was 93.75%. This improvement made the writer stop the research in the cycle.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

After analyzing the data, it was found out that the students’ score increased from the orientation test to the first cycle and the second cycle. It means there is an improvement on the students’ speaking achievement by using public speaking tasks. It

can be seen from the improvement of mean of the students' score namely: the mean of the orientation test (3.13%) increased to the mean of post test of cycle I (65.63%) and to the post test of cycle II (93.75%). It can be stated the score continuously improved from the orientation test to the post test of cycle II. It is then concluded that the application of the public speaking tasks improved students' speaking achievement.

The result of this study showed that the use of public speaking tasks could improve students' speaking achievement. Therefore the following suggestions are offered:

- a. to English teachers, it is better to use public speaking tasks in teaching speaking because the students can practice their speaking directly and public speaking tasks can stimulate students' critical thinking.
- b. to the students, it is necessary to practice public speaking tasks by using the variety of pro-con expressions. Moreover, it is suggested for students to practice public speaking tasks by using the controversial issues being relevant to the lesson material.

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