IMPROVING SPEAKING SKILLS THROUGH ACTIVE LEARNING STRATEGY OF THE YEAR EIGHT STUDENTS

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Abstract

This research aimed at proving that active learning strategy can improve the speaking skill of the year eight students of SMP Negeri 1 Dako Pemean. The researcher used pre-experimental design. The population of this research was the eighth grade students and the sample was class B consisting of 26 students. The sample was chosen by purposive sampling technique. The data were collected through oral test. The pre-test and the post-test were used to measure the improvement of the students' speaking skill before and after the treatment. Based on the result of the pre-test and the post-test, it is obtained that the t-counted value is 6.920. By applying 0.05 level of significance and the 25 (26-1) degree of freedom, it was found that t-table value is 2.060. It shows that the t-counted value is greater than the t-table value. It means that the use of active learning strategy can improve speaking skill of the year eight students of SMP Negeri 1 Dako Pemean.

Keywords: Improving, Speaking, Active Learning.

INTRODUCTION

Language, the expression of human communication through knowledge, belief and behavior, can be experienced, explained, and shared. This sharing is based on systematic, conventionally used signs, sounds, gestures, or marks that convey understood meanings within a group or community. English is one of the languages that is very important to learn. In Indonesia English is taught as foreign language from senior high school to higher education.

In Indonesia, the students study about four skills in English. They are reading, writing, speaking and listening. In this case, the researcher would like to improve the students' speaking skill. It was caused most of the students still have poor in their speaking skill. Speaking skill its self is productive skill in the oral mode. It is more complicated than

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the other skills. In this skill, the students did not only pronounce the words but they had to interact with the others well. Communication through speaking is commonly performed in face to face interaction. It occurs as part of verbal exchanges. In speaking, the use of body language is great help for the listeners to understand the intended message. Therefore, the non-linguistic features are very helpful to smooth the flow of the interaction between the speaker and the listener. Laratu (2004:6) states,

> Speaking consists of knowledge and skill. Knowledge is what we know about something. It needs to be used in action in order to understand it. Skill is an ability to perform the knowledge. Both knowledge and skill can be understood and memorized. However, only skill can be imitated and practiced.

From the statement above the researcher considers that in mastering speaking, the learners have to know the basic knowledge before using it and not only knowledge but also skill. It makes the speaking more effectively to convey what the speaker means. Moreover, without knowledge and skill, the teaching learning speaking will not be effective.

In accordance with the 2013 curriculum, English speaking cannot be neglected in the learning process because English holds an important role. English is needed for global communication. Therefore, 2013 curriculum states that English is one of the languages to relate Indonesia with other countries. That is why, the awareness in using English must be grown up to the learners for preparing human sources that can communicate by using English as the international language.

In this research, the researcher found some problems in learning English at SMP Negeri 1 Dako Pemean at Tolitoli Regency. The first one is that the school does not have enough facilities for the teaching learning process. Those facilities are the media of learning process such as the internet, infocus, dictionary, etc. These media are needed in the teaching learning process in this 21st century, particularly the implementation of 2013 curriculum. The second one is that the teacher does not have sufficient strategies to teach the students. The last one is that the students lack vocabulary. It made the students difficult to speak English. That is why they were weak in speaking skill especially in fluency and comprehensibility. She limited the scope in improving the students' speaking skill of the year eighth of SMP Negeri 1 Dako Pemean in term of fluency and comprehensibility.

Teaching is a process of transferring knowledge from someone to another person. The teachers have to master the materials that they want to teach. Learning English is not easy for the students of SMP Negeri 1 Dako Pemean. It is because that new thing is for learners. In teaching speaking, the teachers have to know about the roles in speaking such

us how to produce a good pronunciation of the English words, good grammar or structure, and fluently. Harmer (2007:58) states,

> Education should speak to the whole person, in the other words, not just to a small language-learning facility in a humanist classroom, students are emotionally involved in the learning, they are encouraged to reflect on how learning happens and their creativity is fostered.

Based on the opinion above, the researcher concluded that in learning process, the students do not only get the knowledge from the teacher but also they should be more active than teacher in the classroom. The problem that commonly faced by teacher in speaking class is very complicated such as the students who are mostly afraid to speak up. Therefore, It also has to be supported by the teacher who is able to create or establish situation to make interesting environment to promote their communication.

In this research, the researcher used active learning strategy to improve students' speaking skill. Active learning stimulates the students to be accustomed to use English expression at their speaking in appropriate context. According to Silberman (2005), "Active learning is when the students take a participating method through discussion, presentation, simulation or practice. Active learning promotes problem solving, critical thinking analysis, and synthases the information". This opinion means that to make the students to be more active, the teacher also makes the students to speak with their partner in a small group or the entire class in the learning process. Everything that the students do in the classroom in this strategy do not only merely passive listening to the teacher but also they have more practice their materials specially in real life situation or new problem by developing their skills in practice their materials. Therefore, it can make the students to understand about what they were learning about.

In most of the time, based on the researcher's experience of typical classroom setting, the students tend to be passive in learning such as listening to the teacher, looking at the occasional overhead or slide, and reading (when required) the text book. It is different from the active students in the classroom who are able to use and reflect the ideas in learning process as indicated in the 'cone of learning' below. It is proposed by Dale (1984) as shows:
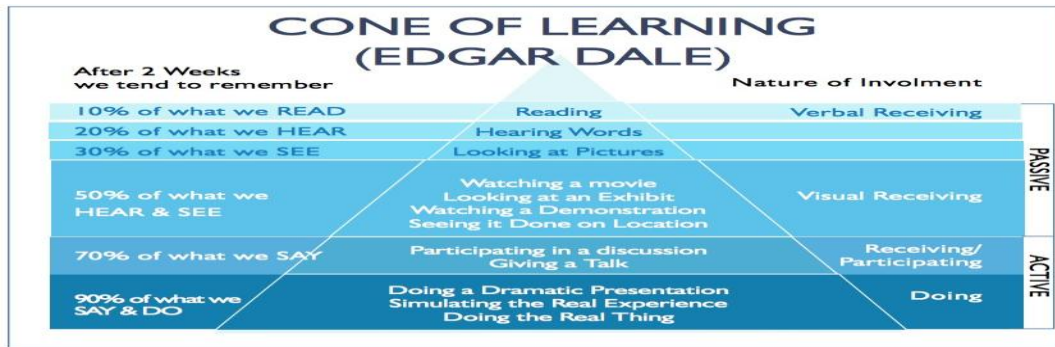
Figure I Cone of Learning

From the statement and the cone of learning above, it shows that active learning is a very good strategy to apply in speaking skill. It involves some instructions like giving a talk and group discussions more over saying and doing. Upon on those instructions, the students can practice their speaking skill directly while teaching and learning process happens. Silberman (2005) modifies and expands the wisdom of Confucius into active learning Credo:

> What I hear, I forget
> What I see, I remember a little
> What I hear, see, and ask questions about or discuss with someone else, I begin to understand
> What I hear, discuss, and do, I acquire knowledge and skill
> What I teach to another, I master

From the statement above, we assume that learning will be more meaningful when students get involve actively, they will retain more course content for a longer time, and are able to apply that material in a broader range of context. Furthermore, to improve speaking skill, we need much students' talking, asking, doing discussion, and practising about some English dialogues because in speaking English the students have to practice their tongue as often as they can.

In relating to the explanation above, the researcher formulated the research problem: *Can the implementation of active learning strategy improve the speaking skill of the year eight students of SMP Negeri 1 Dako Pemean?* The objective of this research was to prove whether or not the implementation of active learning strategy can improve the speaking skill of the year eighth students of SMP Negeri 1 Dako Pemean.

METHODOLOGY

This research focused on improving the students' speaking skills through active learning strategy. By considering the purpose of the research and the nature of the problems, it is quantitative research. The researcher used pre-experimental design. In conducting this research, the researcher used one-group pre-test post-test design. The pre-test was given before treatment, while the post-test was given after the treatment. The researcher used the design proposed by Hatch and Farhady (1982:20) as follows:

$$T_1 \quad X \quad T_2$$

Where:

T_1 = the pre-test
X = the treatment
T_2 = the post-test

Population is the entire date which becomes the concern in a research. According to Creswell (2005:145), "Population is a group of individuals who have the same characteristic". In this research, the population was the year eight students of SMP Negeri 1 Dako Pemean, Tolitoli Regency-Central Sulawesi. There were two classes in this grade and the number of the students was 53. The population can be see in the table below.

Table 1
Population and Sample

No	Classes	Number of Students
1.	A	27
2.	B	26
	Total	53

Sample is an item or a subject selected from the population to observe and analyze. According to Creswell (2005:146), "A sample is a subgroup of the target population that the researcher plans to study for generalizing about the target population." From that statement, the researcher selected a sample from the population. The sample was taken by using purposive sampling. The researcher used class VIII B class that consisted of 26 students.

In this research, the researcher used two variables. They were dependent and independent variables. The dependent variable is the ability of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Dako Pemean in speaking while the independent one is the use of active learning strategy.

In collecting the data, the researcher used an oral test as the instrument in her research, given as a pre-test and post-test. In analyzing the data, the researcher firstly computed the individual scores by using the formula as proposed by Sutomo (1985:123) as follows.

$$\text{Individual score} = \frac{obtain\ score}{maximum\ score} \text{ X } 100$$

After computing the individual scores, the researcher described the ability of the students by interpreting the mean score into percentage mastery as suggested by Hatch and Farhady (1982:55) as follows.

$$\overline{\text{X}} = \frac{\Sigma\text{x}}{\text{N}}$$

Where:

X = mean score in pre-test or post-test
Σx = students' gained score
N = total number of students

To calculate the deviation score between the students' score in the pre-test and the post-test, the researcher used a formula suggested by Sukardi (2009:276) as follows.

$$\text{Md} = \frac{\Sigma\text{d}}{\text{n}}$$

Where:

Md = mean deviation between pre-test and post-test
Σd = total deviation between post-test and pre-test
N = total number of students

To get the sum of mean deviation, the researcher computed the sum of square deviation by using the formula by Arikunto (2006:308) as follows:

$$\Sigma\text{x}^2\,\text{d} = \text{D}^2 - \frac{(\Sigma\text{d})^2}{\text{N}}$$

Where:

$\Sigma x^2\,\text{d}$ = the sum of square deviation
D^2 = square deviation
$(\Sigma d)^2$ = deviation
N = total number of students

To get the value of t-counted in order to analyze the effectiveness of the treatment, the researcher used the formula proposed by Arikunto (2006:314):

$$t = \frac{Md}{\sqrt{\dfrac{\Sigma x^2\, d}{N\,(N-1)}}}$$

Where:

t = t – test (testing significance)
Md = mean deviation between pre-test and post-test
$\Sigma x^2 d$ = the sum of square deviation
N = total number of students
1 = constant number

FINDINGS

In collecting the data, the researcher administered the test to the students before and after the treatment. The pre-test was given before the treatment and the post-test was used to measure the improvement after the treatment. The post-test was administered to find out the improvement of students' speaking skill through active learning. It can be seen by the result of the pre-test presented in table 2 below.

Table 2
The Result of Students Pre-test

No	Initials	Score Components		Gained Scores	Maximum Score	Students' Scores
		Fluency	Comprehensibility			
1.	AS	1	1	2	12	16.67
2.	AH	1	1	2	12	16.67
3.	AL	1	1	2	12	16.67
4.	HS	1	2	3	12	25
5.	IL	1	1	2	12	16.67
6.	IS	1	1	2	12	16.67
7.	JM	1	1	2	12	16.67
8.	JH	1	1	2	12	16.67
9.	KV	2	2	4	12	33.33
10.	MA	1	1	2	12	16.67
11.	MF	1	1	2	12	16.67
12.	MG	2	2	4	12	33.33
13.	MR	1	1	2	12	16.67
14.	MV	1	1	2	12	16.67
15.	MS	2	1	3	12	25
16.	MW	1	1	2	12	16.67
17.	NH	1	2	3	12	25
18.	NI	2	1	3	12	25
19.	NK	1	1	2	12	16.67
20.	PQ	2	2	4	12	33.33
21.	RD	1	1	2	12	16.67
22.	RS	1	1	2	12	16.67
23.	SE	1	1	2	12	16.67
24.	SV	2	2	4	12	33.33
25.	SK	1	2	3	12	25
26.	SS	1	2	3	12	25
Total						550.04

To find out the mean score of the pre-test, the researcher used formula below:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\Sigma X}{N}$$

$$= \frac{550.04}{26} = 21.15$$

By using the formula, the researcher found the students' score in the pre-test (21.15) which is relatively low.

Table 3
The Result of Students Post-test

No	Initials	Score Components		Gained Scores	Maximum Score	Students' Scores
		Fluency	Comprehensibility			
1.	AS	2	2	4	12	33.33
2.	AH	2	3	5	12	41.67
3.	AL	1	1	2	12	16.67
4.	HS	2	3	5	12	41.67
5.	IL	1	2	3	12	25
6.	IS	2	3	5	12	41.67
7.	JM	1	2	3	12	25
8.	JH	1	2	3	12	25
9.	KV	3	3	6	12	50
10.	MA	1	2	3	12	25
11.	MF	2	2	4	12	33.33
12.	MG	4	4	8	12	66.67
13.	MR	1	2	3	12	25
14.	MV	2	2	4	12	33.33
15.	MS	3	4	7	12	58.33
16.	MW	1	2	3	12	25
17.	NH	2	3	5	12	41.67
18.	NI	2	3	5	12	41.67
19.	NK	2	3	5	12	41.67
20.	PQ	3	3	6	12	50
21.	RD	2	2	4	12	33.33
22.	RS	2	3	5	12	41.67
23.	SE	1	2	3	12	25
24.	SV	3	3	6	12	50
25.	SK	3	3	6	12	50
26.	SS	1	2	3	12	25
Total						966.68

After doing the computation, the researcher found that the highest score is 66.67 and the lowest score is 16.67. In the post-test, it can be seen that the students' individual score is better than the pre-test. To find out the mean score of the post-test, the researcher used the formula as follows:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\Sigma X}{N}$$

$$= \frac{966.68}{26} = 37.18$$

From the calculation above, the researcher concludes that the result of the post-test is higher than the pre-test and this shows that the students' speaking ability was improved by giving the treatment through active learning strategy.

Table 4
Deviation of the Pre-test and Post-test

No.	Initials	Students Score		Standard Deviation (D) Range = $(X_2 - X_1)$	D^2
		Pre-test (X_1)	Post-test (X_2)		
1.	AS	16.67	33.33	16.66	277.55
2.	AH	16.67	41.67	25	625
3.	AL	16.67	16.67	0	0
4.	HS	25	41.67	16.67	277.89
5.	IL	16.67	25	8.33	69.39
6.	IS	16.67	41.67	25	625
7.	JM	16.67	25	8.33	69.39
8.	JH	16.67	25	8.33	69.39
9.	KV	33.33	50	16.67	277.89
10.	MA	16.67	25	8.33	69.39
11.	MF	16.67	33.33	16.66	277.55
12.	MG	33.33	66.67	33.34	1111.55
13.	MR	16.67	25	8.33	69.39
14.	MV	16.67	33.33	16.66	277.55
15.	MS	25	58.33	33.33	1110.88
16.	MW	16.67	25	8.33	69.39
17.	NH	25	41.67	16.67	277.89
18.	NI	25	41.67	16.67	277.89
19.	NK	16.67	41.67	25	625
20.	PQ	33.33	50	16.67	277.89
21.	RD	16.67	33.33	16.66	277.55
22.	RS	16.67	41.67	25	625
23.	SE	16.67	25	8.33	69.39
24.	SV	33.33	50	16.67	277.89
25.	SK	25	50	25	625
26.	SS	25	25	0	0
	Total	550.04	966.68	416.64	8610.7

After getting the mean score of the pre-test and the post-test, the researcher counted the mean deviation of the students and standard deviation. Then, the researcher computed the mean deviation of the pre-test and the post-test score computed by using the formula as follows:

$$\text{Md} = \frac{\Sigma d}{n}$$

$$= \frac{383.31}{26} = 14.74$$

After getting the deviation, the researcher computed the sum of square deviation shown as follows:

$$\Sigma x^2 \; d = D^2 - \frac{(\Sigma d)^2}{N}$$

$$= 8610.7 - \frac{(383.68)^2}{26}$$

$$= 8610.7 - \frac{147210.34}{26} = 8610.7 - 5661.94 = 2948.67$$

To get the value of t-counted, the researcher computed the formula as shown below:

$$t = \frac{Md}{\sqrt{\dfrac{\Sigma x^2 \; d}{N \, (N-1)}}} \qquad\qquad t = \frac{14.74}{\sqrt{\dfrac{2948.76}{650}}}$$

$$t = \frac{14.74}{\sqrt{\dfrac{2948.76}{26 \, (26-1)}}} \qquad\qquad t = \frac{14.74}{\sqrt{4.54}}$$

$$t = \frac{14.74}{\sqrt{\dfrac{2948.76}{650}}} \qquad\qquad t = \frac{14.74}{2.13}$$

$$\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad t = 6.920$$

$$t = \frac{14.74}{\sqrt{\dfrac{2948.76}{650}}}$$

From the calculation above, the researcher found that the significant difference between the result of the pre-test and the post-test of the students is 6.920.

DISCUSSION

This research was conducted to improve speaking skills of the year eight students of SMP Negeri 1 Dako Pemean through active learning strategy. It focused on fluency and comprehensibility. She used oral test as the instrument of data collection. The first is that the researcher gave pre-test to find out the students' prior knowledge. In giving the pre-test, she used some questions related to the expressions of speaking. When the researcher asked about it, most students did not understand. They could not respond the questions. In other words, they had problem in fluency and comprehensibility. It was supported by the result of the pre-test showing that the students' speaking skill was low. The result might be described by using the percentage of the students' score. Most of the students had low in their comprehensibility. They were about 58%. Moreover, the students who could not speak English fluently were 42%.

After knowing the result of the pre-test, the researcher conducted the treatment to improve the students' speaking skill through active learning strategy of the year eight

students of SMP Negeri 1 Dako Pemean. In doing the treatment, she focused on the students' fluency and comprehensibility. Relating to the students' result in their pre-test, most of them were still less comprehensibility than fluency. It occurred because they rarely practiced their speaking English in learning process. It can be known when the researcher gave the treatment to the students and she asked orally some questions to them, they did not know how to answer those questions correctly. Some of them only could answer the researcher's questions by using the words "yes" and "no". Moreover, lack of vocabulary also was the problem faced by them. Most of the students found difficulty to understand the meaning of the words. Therefore, they could be more passive in their speaking English in the classroom. To solve the students' problems, the researcher conducted her treatment by using active learning strategy to improve their speaking specially in fluency and comprehensibility. The aim of this strategy was to make the students to be more active in their learning process. In this strategy, the researcher applied some suitable techniques based on the teaching material in speaking skill to make the students did not get bored in their learning process. There were small group discussion, game, and drama technique. One of the examples of the teaching technique in active learning strategy used by the researcher was small group discussion. She firstly explained the material and gave some of the examples relating to the topic. Then, she instructed them to make small group discussion or pair. Next, the teacher asked the students to practice and play their conversation in the classroom. Finally, the teacher evaluated the performance together with the students.

After giving the treatment, the researcher gave post-test to find out whether the technique was effective or not. The researcher gave the same test as in the pre-test. In the post-test the students' fluency and comprehensibility have increased. The number of the students who could not comprehend in their speaking decreased from 58% to 19%. Meanwhile, the students who made mistake in their fluency also have decreased from 42% to 15%. Additionally, in the post-test they could express their ideas related to the topic. Besides, they could pronounce the words, and they can understand what the researcher asked. On the other hand, the students also enjoyed and were interested in their learning process to improve their speaking skill. By using the interesting strategy, she could make the students have good participation and be active during the treatment. Regarding to the many benefits of giving active learning strategy to the students, the researcher might assume that the application of active learning strategy could improve the speaking skill of the students.

The researcher conducted the research based on the previous study. There are two previous researchers related to this research. The first one was from Hasanah (2007) with the title *Teaching Speaking Skill Using Active Learning Method at the Seventh Year of SMP SMART Akselerasi Ekselensia Indonesia-Bogor.* In her research she used *descriptive quantitative research* as the method of her research. She found there are some students who do not obtain yet the English lesson at all from the elementary school. Based on the result, she found that the majority of the students is classified to the category "very good" (55.56%). The second research was written by Fauziah (2012) with the title *The Effectiveness of Active Learning through "Who is the Class Strategy" for Teaching Speaking Descriptive Text at the Tenth Grade Students of MAN Nurul Huda Semarang in the Academic Year of 2012.* This research was aimed to find out the effectiveness of the use of strategy in teaching speaking namely "Who is in Class Strategy". In her research, she found problem that the teacher often uses conventional teaching methods. The result of her research is effective. The students can be more active in the learning process of teaching speaking and they can produce words actively. Students can enjoy the learning process so they absorb the material easily.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

After analyzing and discussing the data statistically and descriptively, the researcher concludes that the implementation of active learning strategy can improve the speaking skill of the year eight students of SMP Negeri 1 Dako Pemean. We can see the significant difference between the post-test and pre-test score. It is proved from the data analysis showing that t-counted value (6.920), is greater than the t-table value (2.060) by applying 0.05 level significance and (N-1) degree of freedom (df).

In this section, the researcher would like to give some suggestions. Teachers should create enjoyable, fun, and interesting way as a teaching strategy. The enjoyment ought to be foremost aim which hopefully will have good effects on the education because they learn what they care about and remember what they understand. In another word, the teachers should make learning enjoyable because students like playing games in their learning. They can study hard when they enjoy the subject. The subject is interesting if the teacher uses suitable teaching strategy. The most important thing is the students understand about what they have learned if they do it by themselves. It means learning by doing. The students need to improve their speaking skill by talking much by using English, searching to

resource information, reading English books, watching western movies, listening to western songs. Then, active learning strategy also is not only used for the teaching English but also it may be applied to teach any subject anywere and anytime.

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