IMPROVING STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY THROUGH TALKING CHIPS

Reni Purnaningsih, Ahmad Dahlan Rais, Teguh Sarosa.
English Education Study Program
Sebelas Maret University Surakarta

E-mail: nippon_ccg@yahoo.com

Abstract: The objectives of the research are to identify whether and to what extent Talking Chips can improve the students' speaking ability, and to describe the classroom situation when talking chips are implemented in the speaking class. The research method used in this research is a classroom action research. In collecting the data, the researcher used questionnaire, observation, interview, document analysis and tests. The researcher conducted the test before research (pre-test) and after implementing talking chips (post test 1 and 2). The mean scores of each test were compared to know the students improvements in speaking ability. The improvement can be seen from the improvement of the mean score of pre-test (49), post test of cycle 1 (69.3) and the cycle 2 (77.8). Besides, the improvement of the classroom situation includes: 1) the class was more alive because the students participate actively; 2) there was an equal participation during the speaking class; 3) the students were motivated to speak English than Indonesian; 4) the students' interaction improved significantly.

Keywords: Speaking Ability, Talking Chips, Classroom Action Research

The students of SMA Negeri 4 Surakarta find difficulties in speaking skill. First, most students were not able to pronounce the words correctly because they have limited background knowledge of pronunciation. Second, some students often produced ungrammatical sentences. For example, the students still found difficulties in using appropriate cohesive devices especially conjunctions in spoken discourse and often used the wrong tenses to express certain meaning. Both the problems were caused by students' limited background knowledge of English grammar. Those problems arose because they did not pay attention with the lesson. They were easily got bored because the teacher often applied lack of teaching technique variation. The teacher stated that she used question and answer as a teaching technique. Third, some students were not able to express their idea because they had lack of vocabulary. Furthermore some students also often produced so many fillers during their speech. Those difficulties arose because they never practice their speaking ability. Some students could not practice speaking because the class was dominated by the teacher and few students.

Talking chips is one of teaching technique in cooperative learning. In talking chips students participate in a group discussion. Before the students speak up, they have to put the chips one by one every time they want to speak up. The chips function as regulators in the talking chips' procedure. The purpose of the talking chips is to ensure the equitable participation by regulating how often each group member is allowed to speak. Speaking up is an obligation for each student in talking chips; this technique encourages the passive

students to speak up. Talking chips can help the students to solve their difficulties in producing the idea to speak because it makes them involve in the discussion. So, they will share ideas with their member group. Talking chips is also useful to solve the classroom condition problem such as dominating or clashing group members.

Drilling is the repetition by the students of a model given by the teacher. At simplest, drilling means listening to a model provided by a teacher, tape or other equipments and students repeating what is heard. This technique offer learners an opportunity to practice pronunciation in a non-threatening dynamic.

The teacher combined the talking chips with drilling technique and discussion. The vocabulary problems can be solved by the teacher help. Drilling was used to solve students' vocabulary problem. It also helped them to produce a better pronunciation. The kind of drilling technique used by the teacher in this research is repetition drilling. The teacher provides some vocabularies which relate with the topic they will be discussed. The teacher did not only provide the vocabularies but also model how to pronounce the words. Then the students repeated what the teacher said. The students also can improve their vocabularies during the discussion. During the discussion, the students also can share their ideas in their own group in order solve the problems.

The grammatical problem in delivering the idea can be solved by using the Grid Sheet during the discussion. Teacher's help is also needed to help students overcome the cohesive devices problems especially conjunctions. Grid sheet is a report paper with one column for the students' names and an additional column or columns for the recorder to note down when each individual speaks. They can write down their friends' mistake or errors in grammar or pronunciation. It can help because in each group there is a leader who has good achievement in speaking. He/she can help the other students to find and to correct the other members' mistakes. When time is up, the teacher asks group members to review the sheets and analyze the interaction. In the analyzing session all the students will learn about their own mistakes or their friends' mistakes both from the grammatical form or the pronunciation.

From the explanation above, it can be assumed that talking chips strategy and drilling can be implemented to improve the speaking skill in the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 4 Surakarta.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research was carried out in SMA Negeri 4 Surakarta. This school is located in Jalan Adi Sucipto no 1, Manahan, Surakarta. It was conducted from April 2012 to May 2012. The research consisted of some stages such as pre-research, writing research proposal, planning the action, doing the action, analyzing the result and reporting the result. The subject of the research was the XI IPA 6 students of SMA 4 Surakarta which consists of 33 students.

This research is an action research. Action research consists of four fundamental steps in spiraling process. Those steps are planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. Kemmis and Taggart (in Hopkins, 1996: 48) develop model of action research in the classroom named: identifying the problem and planning; implementing the action; observing or monitoring the action; reflecting the result, and revising the plan.

There are two kinds of data namely qualitative data and quantitative data. Qualitative data are taken from observation and interview. Thus, they are analyzed by constant comparative. Constant comparative method consists of five steps: (a) assembling the data; (b) coding the data; (c) comparing the data; (d) building interpretations; (e) reporting the outcomes (Burns, 1999: 157). Meanwhile, the quantitative data were taken from the test. The students' speaking ability improvement was analyzed by comparing the mean score of pre test and post test.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The researcher and the collaborator analyzed the result finding in the using of talking chips technique combined with drilling technique in speaking class. The finding includes the using of talking chips which combined with drilling can improve the students' speaking skill which covers fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar and content and also the students' attitude in the class.

1. The improvement of students' speaking skill

The students average score in post test 1 was 69.3 then improved into 77.8 in the post test of cycle 2. The improvement of students' average score in the pretest and post test can be seen in the chart below.
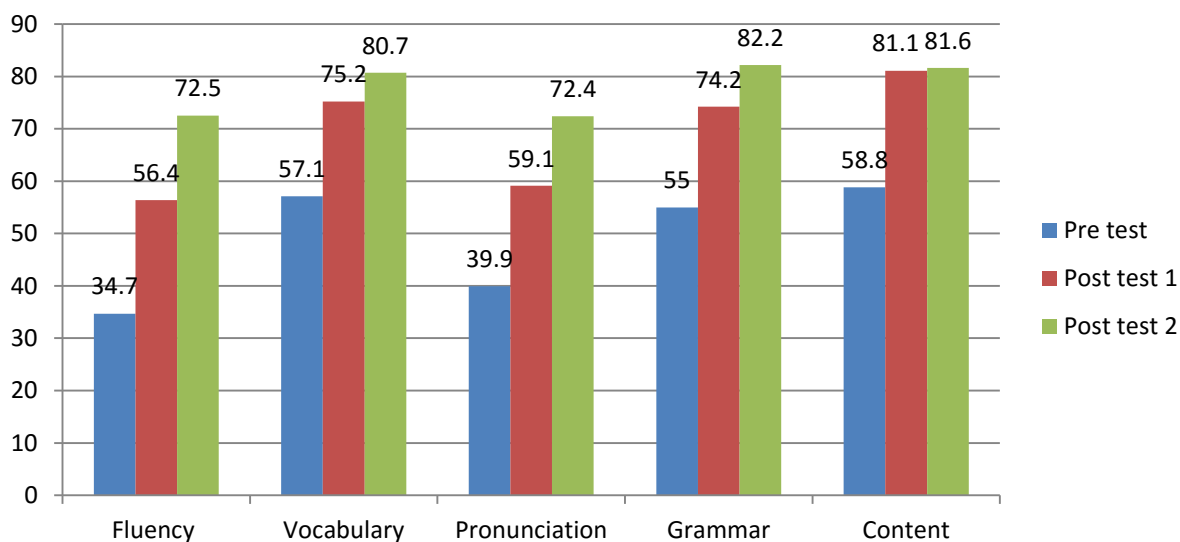
Chart 1

The improvement of students' speaking skill
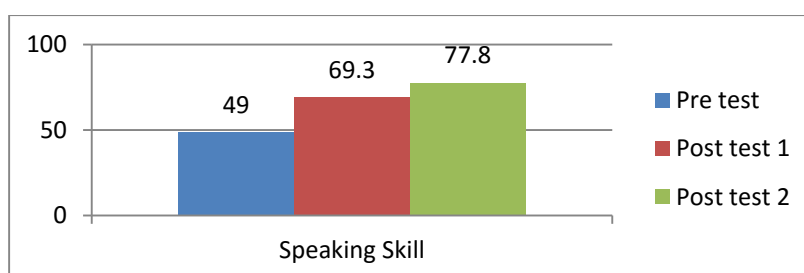
The improvement of students speaking skill of each aspect is described in the chart below:

Chart 2

The improvement of students' speaking skill of each aspect

![Bar chart showing speaking skill improvement across Fluency, Vocabulary, Pronunciation, Grammar, Content]

2. The students' attitude during the implementation of talking chips

Beside the improvement of speaking score, another finding of the research is the improvement of students' attitude in joining the speaking class. The students were motivated to speak up during the teaching learning process. The class is more alive because the students participated actively during the teaching learning process. Even the shy students are very motivated to do the task. They frequently speak in English rather than in Indonesian. They feel confident to speak up during the discussion. It is because working in group is less intimidating than working individually. It is also caused by the researcher support, she always tells to the students that they don't need to afraid in making mistakes during the speaking up.

The using of talking chips also encourages students to actively interact in the class. Comparing to the situation in the observation, their interaction improve significantly. It is caused by the equal chances that each student has.

The overview of the research findings of the applying the talking chips technique has been done to see the improvements of the students' speaking competence. The research findings above showed some important points as follows: (1) the improvements of vocabulary, (2) the improvements of pronunciation (3) the improvements of fluency (5) the improvements of the content and (6) the improvement of students' participation in doing the group discussion.

Referring to the findings in this research, there were two main points to be discussed. They were the improvement of students speaking competence and the improvement of students' participations in the teaching-learning process in applying the talking chips technique. They were discussed as follows:

1. The Improvement of the Students' Speaking Ability

Based on the result of the test done in the first cycle compared to the second cycle,

there were improvements in the score of speaking are almost every aspects of speaking competences. Improvements were on: (a) the students' pronunciation, several students improved their way of pronouncing words and could say the sentences clearly; (b) students' grammar, most of students could arrange text using appropriate conjunction and express their sentence in appropriate tenses; (c) students' vocabulary, students got some new words during the discussions related the topic that they were discussed. Most students could use them properly for creating a hortatory exposition text in a form of speech; (d) students' fluency, most of students could deliver their speech clearly and fluently because in the group discussion, the students were not shy to speak anymore. Moreover there were no interruptions while they were delivering their idea and speech. Therefore, their ideas flow fluently. This is stated by Brown (2004: 270) that fluency can be best achieved by allowing the stream of speech to flow; (e) the content of the text, the students could produce a speech with a good content. The content of their speech is appropriate with the topic provided by the researcher because they shared their idea during the discussions that's why they can complete each other. According to Fulcer (2003: 23-29) states that to be clearly understood by the listener ;(1)

the speaker must mind his accent or pronunciation, intonation and stress; (2) the speech should be correct and fluent. The correctness refers to word order, conjunction, preposition and tenses.

The students were able to communicate with others in the group while preparing the speech. They delivered ideas or opinions with their simple language or in the novice level. It means that by using talking chips which has been applied in this research, there were improvements in each of speaking aspects because this technique enabled the students to interact with the other members of the group. The interactions enabled the students to get support or even challenge from their mates. Thus, the students tented to make effort to be better. It is said by Silberman (1996:99) that one of the best ways to create active learning is to give learning assignment that are carried out in small group of students. The peer support and diversity of viewpoints, knowledge, and skill help to make collaborative learning become a good part of classroom learning climate. Therefore, the students would have chances to interact, to transfer their knowledge, to be the model, and to be supporter and competitor towards their member of the group. The improvement of students speaking scores can be seen in the table 1.

Table 1
The improvements of students' speaking scores

No	Explanation	Pre Test	Post Test 1	Post Test 2
1.	Highest score	64	83.5	86.5
2.	Lowest score	30	55.5	64.5
3.	Average score	49	69.3	77.8

From the table above, it is seen that there are improvements of the students' speaking competence.

2. The Improvement of the Students' Participation in the Teaching Learning Process

Based on the observation in cycle 1 and cycle 2, it was found that there were improvements in each meeting in the cycles. The improvements were on students' participation in joining the English speaking class and students' activeness in the group discussion.

By using talking chips in this research, there were improvements in the students' participation in joining the English speaking class. It happened because collaborative learning techniques focused on the students' participation as stated by Barkley (2005:18-120) that talking chips is one of the collaborative learning techniques which has specific characteristic in emphasizing full participation and encourage reticent students to speak out. It could be concluded that the use of talking chips in improving the students' speaking competence and participation was clearly proved.

Their active participation in the group discussion gradually improved from cycle to cycle because talking chips creates equal joy to learn, equal share of job and equal chance to practice. The students then, have self motivation to finish their job consciously for their own benefit to have the same chance to practice talking as it stated by Barkley (2005:118-120) that by using this technique, the contribution of the members for the success of achieving the meaningful learning is bigger than using individual technique. Besides, active learning, equal contribution and enjoyment are achieved optimally through this collaborative learning.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The result of the research shows that the implementation of talking chips in speaking class can improve the students' speaking competence, especially the eleventh grade students. The strength of the implementation of talking chips is that this technique gives equal chances for each member of the group. This can make the students have similar chances to practice. The high frequency of practices can increase their self confidence to talk. Thus, better pronunciation, more vocabulary, and more familiar to the grammar can be achieved. It is also can make the students' fluency better. Through the discussion the students can communicate and share their idea, so they can create a speech with good content. In short, the implementation of the technique

gives the students chance to be more competence in speaking and of course, it is possible to apply this technique to other classes of same grade or even higher ones.

Based on the result of the research stated in the previous chapter, there are advantages of the implementation of the talking chips in the speaking class. Therefore, some suggestions are given focusing on the implementation of the technique to the followings:

For the teachers, it is suggested to make a good planning for carrying out a good speaking class using the above technique. The teacher should understand the basic characteristics of the collaborative learning technique that it shares equal job to each member and gives equal chance to participate or contribute in the group. To create good speaking class, the teacher should concern of the followings. They are: (a) see what the students needs. Teacher should indentify the students' potential and problems to be reference for determining the suitable topic for the lesson in order to gain the goal easier, (b) be creative in applying the technique. Teachers should know well the characteristics of the techniques or methods they are going to use in delivering a lesson and adjust it in accordance to both the students and the class condition, and (c) treat the students as a subject of learning process not as object. Therefore, the students should know well what to do when they have speaking class with the technique. It is the students who learn the lesson. So, keep them learning in a joyful and conducive situation.

For the students, speaking is easy but become good speaker is a bit difficult. Therefore, it is suggested for them to open their mind to be more confident to use the language more often to communicate with the others as they have equal chance to talk in the group discussion when they implement the technique. It is also suggested to take every chance they have to practice speaking English because practice make perfect. Therefore, never be shy to speak up and never be afraid of making mistakes because mistakes are the part of learning process.

For the institution, the institution should motivate the teachers to improve their competence in using the technique for carrying out good class. Therefore, they can create good classes which enable students to learn their subject well and pleasantly. To support this, the institution should provide more books for references. By reading many references on how to create active classes, build good climate of learning and help students study optimally in class applying the collaborative learning technique using talking chips. The institution should encourage and facilitate teachers to do similar researches in order to be able to develop new techniques in having speaking class. Teachers will not teach in monotonous ways anymore.

For the other researcher, the result may inspire other researcher to do further research on the technique because there is no perfect research. This report of the research may become the step stone for the other researchers to do similar research which may become the answer to the problems that have not been answered in the research. It may also become the reference to the similar research on the same subject bust using different techniques or methods. It is suggested that before making research, search as many as possible books and other similar research to help the complete description on what you are going to deal with or what you are going to talk about.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barkley, Elizabeth F. (2005). *Collaborative Learning Techniques*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Brown, H. Douglas. (2004). *Language Assessment: Principles and Classroom Practices*. San Francisco State University: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.

Burns, Ann. (1999). *Collaborative Action Research for English Language Teacher*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fulcer, G. (2003). *Testing Second Language Speaking*. Great Britain: Pearson Education Limited.

Hopkins, David. (1993). *A Teacher's Guide to Classroom Research*. Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Silberman, Melvin L. (1996). *Active Learning: 101 Strategies to Teach Any Subject*. Massachusetts, A Simon & Schuster Company.