

IMPROVING STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY IN GIVING ARGUMENTS THROUGH "I SOLVE" TECHNIQUE

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Abstract

This research was conducted on the eleventh grade students of SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Pontianak in academic year 2016/2017. The research was conducted to improve students' speaking ability in giving arguments. The method of this research was classroom action research. The tools of data collecting were observation sheet and field note. This research was done in three cycles. The result of data analysis showed that the students' speaking ability were improved. "I SOLVE" technique could reduce students' pauses and hesitation, improved students' appropriate use of words to express opinion, improved students' correct use of present tense or future tense, and improved students' interaction in argumentative speaking. Those improvements also supported by the students' speaking ability rate. In the first cycle their average score was 45.4, 71.5 in the second cycle, and improved to 83.6 in the third cycle. Thus, it can be concluded that "I SOLVE" technique did improve students' speaking ability in giving arguments. Teachers could use "I SOLVE" technique as an alternative technique in teaching speaking. However, they should manage the time carefully so that they will have enough time to evaluate and give feedback to the students' speaking.

Keywords: *Students' Speaking Ability, Argumentative Speaking, "I SOLVE" Technique*

INTRODUCTION

English known as one of the foreign languages taught in Indonesia. Most people think that students' ability of English as a foreign language can be seen from how well they can speak. If students cannot express the ideas, opinions, or instructions clearly, people will think that their abilities are not good. In Curriculum 2013 for English subject, it is stated that eleventh grade students are expected to be able to master analytical exposition text. The analytical exposition text also covers the speaking aspects which known well as argumentative speaking. This means that students are expected to be able to deliver their arguments in order to support their opinion about a topic.

Unfortunately, several students fail to meet the expectation. The causal factors of that problem are the students did not know the

words, did not know how to say the answer correctly, and felt shy to speak as they might made mistakes in answering. The teacher had tried to improve her students in some ways. Prior to the research implementation, she used some teaching multimedia and grouping technique. She also used loud voice so that students could listen to her. The teacher liked to throw some questions to the class to make sure no one get lost.

Even so, the teacher's ways of improving students' speaking ability were still unsatisfactory. By using the multimedia, most of the students put too much attention to the video or presentation given, rather than put their attention to the lesson materials. While by using the grouping technique, most of the students did not talk about the lesson, but talk about any other thing as a result of sitting close to their

relatives in the classroom. Also, in the group only some students who are quite smart that would involve in the group discussion. Even, if the teacher asked the students to present the result of their group discussion, the same students would be the one who give the presentation.

Based on the observation in class XI IIS 4 of SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Pontianak, the researcher found that a lot of students showed no interests in the lesson. It can be seen from their behavior during the lesson. Many students kept quiet and talked in low voice. Even some of them were whispering when they talked to one another or when they speak to the teacher. The students did this in order not to let the other students to listen to their speech and would not being mocked if they made mistakes in speaking. From the total of 35 students, only one to seven students took initiative to speak in the teaching learning process. The researcher also found when the teacher asked students some questions according to the lesson, students mostly answered in Indonesian or they asked the meaning of the question first, especially if the answer cannot be found in the textbooks or notebook. In addition, the researcher found that the students' speaking ability rate lay around 30% to 40% with the average number of students being involved in the speaking activity only about 10 to 15 students. This situation made the learning process was not effective and caused the students to fail reaching the passing grade for speaking task.

Numerous researchers have said that students' speaking is closely related to students' achievement in class. The more active the students are, the more successful they will be in doing task or test (Luoma, 2004; Richard & Rodger, 1986). Furthermore, research has the ability to speak fluently presupposes not only the knowledge of language features, but also the ability to process information and language on the spot (Harmer, 2001), and it is therefore important for teachers to explore ways by which they can enhance students' speaking in the classroom.

The importance of teacher support and guidance has been highlighted throughout the research on students' speaking. Modeling, structure, and encouragement are often needed

to engage students who have weaker skills and therefore may not have the ability to complete tasks on their own. Teachers matter when they enjoyed the teaching and subject taught, respected students, cared about students, explained clearly, and responded to requests for help raised the engagement levels of students.

In order to improve students' speaking ability in giving arguments, the teacher and the researcher have adopted the model of problem solving activity that has been shown in several recent studies that exerts a statistically significant influence on the improvement of students' speaking (VanGundy, 2005, Bailey, 2005). This technique is known as "I SOLVE" technique. "I SOLVE" itself stands for Identify, Solutions, Obstacles, Legalize, Validate, and Evaluate. Through this technique, students were supported during speaking lesson and they could maintain their speaking ability. It also developed and refined students' interaction in speaking.

METHOD

The teacher and researcher decided to apply Classroom Action Research (CAR) to improve the speaking ability of 35 students of XI IIS 4 at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Pontianak. According to Burns (2010) action research is a form of study conducted in educational setting based on reflective practice with the purpose of solving the problem faced not only by the students, but also problem faced by the teacher to improve the teaching learning process. This research aimed to reduce students' pauses and hesitation, improve students' appropriate use of words to express opinion, improve students' correct use of present tense and/or future tense, and improve students interaction in argumentative speaking.

According to Kemmis and McTaggart cited in Burns (2010), classroom action research was implemented into the procedures which include planning, acting, observing and reflecting.

Planning

In this phase the teacher and researcher investigated students' problems in speaking lesson. The teacher and researcher prepared the possible solution to improve students' ability in

giving arguments which is using “I SOLVE” technique. The material used in teaching was about analytical exposition text based on the basic competence of the lesson in syllabus of Curriculum 2013. One of the aspects of analytical exposition text is giving arguments, which means that the students could also learn about giving arguments to support their statements. The teacher and the researcher also prepared the lesson plan, observation sheet, field note, and speaking assessment.

Acting

In this phase, the teacher taught the students using “I SOLVE” technique. The teaching processes had been implemented into three steps; introductory activity, main activity, and closing activity. At the introductory activity, the teacher greeted the students, encouraged them by giving some motivations, and gave guiding questions to introduce the topic of the lesson. The teacher then explained the material they would learn on that day, together with the objectives that were being expected to be reach by the students.

At the main activity, there were five stages including observing, questioning, exploring, associating, and communicating. In observing stage, the students read an example of analytical exposition text and identified the structure of the analytical exposition text with the teacher’s guidance. In the questioning stage, students identified the social function of analytical exposition text with guiding question from the teacher. The students were also encouraged to ask about the analytical exposition text and the purpose of the text. In exploring stage, students identify the content of the text with guiding questions from the teacher. The teacher also introduced words to express opinion, present tense and future tense to the students.

In associating stage, students made some sentences using present tense and future tense. They received feedback from their friends and teacher after finishing their work. Some students were asked to write their sentences on the whiteboard and the whole classroom checked the sentences together. In the communicating stage, students tried to solve the problem presented on the paper or handout given by the teacher. The problem should be

solved by applying the topics students have learned before, that is the simple present tense and/or future tense, and words to express opinion. Students present their group discussion result in front of the classroom, asked their friends view related to their solutions, and received immediate evaluation and feedback to better up their speaking.

At the closing activity, students were given the new problem as the assessment. The students then discussed their views related to the problem given, presented the result of their discussion in front of the classroom, and get feedback from their friends, and at last the teacher and students concluded the lesson and close the activity. At this activity, the teacher and researcher also wrote down some notes related to the teaching learning process as the base for them to plan the lesson for the next meeting, it should have been related to the problems appeared in the classroom, and what can they do to solve the problems and improve the students and teacher performances.

Observing

In this phase, the researcher as the collaborator, took note and observed systematically the effects of the action and documenting the actions of those involved. The researcher observed the teacher action, the students’ interaction, and the teaching and learning process holistically. The data collected were using engagement observation sheet and field note. The researcher also used a video recorder to record the classroom situation. It has been done to help the teacher and researcher later to assess the students’ speaking because they can play the recording more than once, and get the exact information to assess the students’ performance.

Reflecting

In this phase, the teacher together with the researcher analysed and evaluated the video recording data, observation outcome, and information recorded from field note. The data collected from observation and video recording were computed in the table of specification in order to know the students’ speaking ability, and their improvement in each cycle applied in the teaching learning process.

In the second and the third cycle, the teacher and the researcher made some changes to some parts of teaching material and lesson plan. Thus included the media used in the classroom, the topic of the problems given to the students, and the time management in order not to take too much time on the next cycle since the first cycle took more than 90 minutes for the students to finish the task given. The changes has been done in order to meet the needs and overcome the problems of the students and the teacher found from the previous cycle. The teacher and researcher then decided to stop the cycle after three cycles since all the indicators were already fulfilled. The minimum score for the students to pass the English subject is 72, which means for the speaking lesson, the students also need to pass the score.

Techniques and Tools of Data Collection

This research used observation technique and recording video to collect the data. Several tools used to collect the data were a video recording camera, observation sheet and field note. The researcher, as the collaborator, observed the teacher's actions and the students' interaction in the teaching learning process by using observation sheet and field notes that had been structured based on the lesson plan. The students' speaking ability data from the video recording were analyzed using a simple formula to measure the students' average score.

$$M = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

In this research, the researcher record the students performance two times, which is in the communicating and the closing activity. At the end of the observations of the video recording, the researcher and the teacher calculated the sum of the individual score and the total number of students who were being observed. The sum score were collected from the total score of the students' speaking. The total number of students being observed were the number of students present in the class that day. The student average score is then calculated by dividing the sum of students' score by the total number of students observed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

On the pre-research observation, the researcher found that a lot of students showed no interest in the lesson. Many students were passive when the teacher was explaining the material. Some students were found talk in low voice and even whispering when they were supposed to talk in English. These students were confused not knowing what to do because they did not know the words, did not know how to say the answer correctly, and felt shy to speak as they might made mistakes in answering.. This situation made teaching and learning process was not effective and many of the students fail to reach the passing grade for speaking task. The researcher then adopted "I SOLVE" technique in the teacher's class to improve the students' speaking ability in argumentative speaking.

The classroom action research was conducted in three cycles. The subjects of this research were 35 students of XI IIS 4 at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Pontianak in academic year 2016/2017. Each cycle of this research carried in 90 minutes. The researcher acted as an observer who observed students' interaction in the classroom. The implementation of first cycle was on 9th March 2017, the second was on 6th April 2017, and the third cycle was on 20th April 2017.

Based on the result interpreted from the classroom observation using video recording, observation sheet, and fieldnotes, "I SOLVE" technique reduced students' pauses and hesitation, improved students' appropriate use of words to express opinion, correct use of present tense or future tense, and students' interaction on the speaking process throughout the class. Therefore, the finding for general research question was the use of "I SOLVE" technique improved students' speaking ability in giving arguments.

The use of "I SOLVE" technique reduced students' pauses and hesitation as they learnt to speak fluently in group discussion and group presentation. The group task not only created a collaborative work, but also allowed the students to practice the use of present tense and words to express opinion that they have learned with the teacher. "I SOLVE" technique also

improved students' interaction by using group discussion, promoting no correct or incorrect answer and by using familiar topics. The teacher's support and guidance during speaking activities helped the students to understand

what the teacher's expect from them to do in their discussion. The students were able to express argumentative speaking individually using "I SOLVE" technique.

Table 1. Summary of the Research

Students' Speaking Ability	Pre-research observation	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
1. Students' pauses and hesitation	-	Talk with many pauses and hesitation	Less pauses and hesitation. Easier to understand	Better speaking. Speech understandable
2. Students' appropriate use of words to express opinion	-	Did not use any words to express opinion in explaining	Sometimes forget to use words to express opinion.	Automatically use words to express opinion
3. Students' correct use of present tense	-	Made occasional mistake in the use of present tense	Did not make more than 4 errors	Did not make any errors
4. Students' interaction in the classroom	-	Half of the classroom did not involve.	Only around 7 students did not involve	All of the students joined the discussion

For more specific explanation, the researcher provided the specific research findings as follows:

“I SOLVE” technique reduced students’ pauses and hesitation in argumentative speaking

The “I SOLVE” technique started with the teacher showing a model of analytical exposition text. The students are told to read the text and identify the words to express opinion used along with the text structure. After that, the teacher and students discussed the meaning of the text. The students are then told to identify the social function of the analytical exposition together with the teacher. Next, students are guided to identify the content of the text with some guide questions from the teacher. Students then encouraged to make their own sentences by using present tense. This activity were intended to build students' vocabulary and present tense understanding before they are given the speaking tasks.

The students were arranged in groups of seven to do the group discussion afterward. The

teacher provided handout with an analytical exposition text that need to be solved. It was expected that the students can be aware of the text's social function, language features, and structure. The teacher reminded the students that they should solve the problem presented on the handout and that there would not be any correct or incorrect answer since every group might have different opinion to solve the problem. The teacher hoped that by telling this fact, the students would speak more because they would not be afraid of making mistakes. The teacher also gave support needed while monitoring them. At the end of the group work, the teacher gave feedback on their task.

The technique reduced students' pauses and hesitation by using group discussion, where the students discuss in their group before presenting the result in front of the classroom. Promoting no correct or incorrect answer, where the students were not afraid to make mistakes because their solutions might be different from the other group. The last by using familiar topic, where the students score increase from the first

cycle to the third cycle following the topic of the text used in every cycle.

“I SOLVE” technique improved students’ appropriate use of words to express opinion

The “I SOLVE” technique implementation is the same in every cycle, where it started by giving the model of the analytical exposition text, identifying the structure, the language features, and the content of the text. The technique improved students’ appropriate use of words to express opinion by using the words directly in delivering their arguments and by using the more familiar topic for the students. The result showed that the students score increase cycle by cycle where in the last cycle the students automatically always used the words to express opinion every time they speak. The students score increase from 60 in cycle one, 87 in cycle two, and 93 in cycle three.

“I SOLVE” technique improved students’ correct use of present tense and/or future tense

Throughout the implementation of “I SOLVE” technique in the speaking activity, the researcher found that students improved their correct use of present tense. On the first cycle, most of the students felt confuse in using the present tense and causing the teacher to explain about present tense more than five times. On the second cycle, the students were required to do peer correction in their group about using present tense. While on the third cycle, the students used the present tense in their speaking correctly. It means, having peer correction is very helpful to remind the students about the language feature of analytical exposition text.

“I SOLVE” technique improved students’ interaction in argumentative speaking

Through the implementation of “I SOLVE” technique, the researcher found out that the students interaction increased in each cycle. In cycle one, there were only around 7 to 10 students involved in the speaking activity. In cycle two, the students involved increased to 15 to 20 students. In cycle three, all of the students joined the discussion with their friends, some students’ even argue intensively in their group.

“I SOLVE” technique increased students’ interaction in argumentative speaking through using group discussion, promoting neutral answers, and by using familiar topic to the students’ life.

Discussion

The teacher and researcher applied the classroom action research in Class XI IIS 4 of SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Pontianak in academic year 2016/2017 to solve the problems found regarding students’ ability in argumentative speaking. In this research, students’ speaking ability defined as students’ pauses and hesitation, students’ appropriate use of words to express opinion, students’ correct use of present tense, and students’ interaction in argumentative speaking. This classroom action research was conducted in three cycles. Each of which consisted of four stages – planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. Before the first cycle began, the researcher had conducted one pre-research observation and found that the class had small number of students who initiated to speak in English. Many students were also seen not put much attention to the speaking lesson with the average number of active students ranges from 7– 10 students.

After three cycles with all the careful planning and implementation of the technique used, the students’ speaking ability in argumentative speaking was improved. In the first cycle, the teacher and researcher used Lifeboat as the topic of the lesson. There were 10 students in total who initiated to speak in English. More than half of the students also worked together in groups and the average number of engaged students was 18 students. Some students finished their discussion within given time when they had the group work. Since most of the students were seen did not involve during the learning activities, the students’ speaking ability score was not satisfactory. The teacher and the researcher decided to conduct second cycle with some improvements for the better result.

In the second cycle, the teacher and researcher used Bullying as the topic of the lesson. It was expected by using this topic in learning argumentative speaking, the students

would get more understanding. The teacher and the researcher decided to choose the topic that is more familiar to the students. From the second cycle, the researcher found that there were 15 to 20 students who initiated to speak in English. The number of students who worked together in groups was improved to 20 to 25 students. In this cycle, from the observation done to the video recording data, the students' showed improvement in their speaking. But, since the score did not reach the standard of speaking score, the teacher and the researcher then decided to conduct the third cycle.

In the third cycle, the teacher and researcher used Save the Nature as the topic of the lesson. It was expected by using this topic in learning argumentative speaking, the students would realize that saving the nature is very important. From the third cycle, the researcher found that there were 20 to 25 students who initiated to speak in English. All of the students seen to worked together in the group discussion. In this cycle, from the observation done to the video recording data, the students' showed much improvement in their speaking and reached the standard score of the speaking. The teacher and the researcher then decided to stop the cycle.

The data found shows an increase of students' speaking ability, namely reduced the students' pauses and hesitation, students' appropriate use of words to express opinion, students' correct use of present tense, and students' interaction in argumentative speaking. As Forrester & Jantzie (2000) said that problem solving activity are usually designed for the specific purpose of furthering personal development, character building, and teamwork. This research proved that problem solving activity supported students psychologically and cognitively in speaking. Guiding students by telling the correct way to implement the "I SOLVE" technique. Thus, the students felt more confident to conduct their group discussion.

In conclusion, the research finding of the classroom action research was satisfying. The students' speaking ability in argumentative speaking improved significantly by implementing the "I SOLVE" technique.

Therefore, the researcher confirmed that the action hypothesis was accepted.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this research, it was found that students' speaking ability, namely students' pauses and hesitation, students' appropriate use of words to express opinion, and students' correct use of present tense, were improved through "I SOLVE" technique. Those improvements are also supported by the students' interaction rate which increase significantly.

The use of "I SOLVE" technique also has changed students' behaviour towards speaking lesson. They do not find speaking activities as scary as before because the teacher gave them support along the way. The use of "I SOLVE" technique made the speaking procedures clear and the students know what the teacher expect from them to do in their speaking. The technique also promoting neutral answer in which they were not afraid of telling incorrect answer. Therefore, the students feel more confident to deliver their argumentative speaking.

Suggestions

After conducting classroom action research with the main focus on improving student' speaking ability in giving arguments through "I SOLVE" technique, the teacher and researcher realized some weaknesses in implementing the process. To apply "I SOLVE" technique interestingly and appropriately, the researcher provided some suggestion; 1) As the concept is Curriculum 2013 (K13), the teacher should create the atmosphere where the students explore more rather than listen to the teacher. 2) The teacher is suggested that she should manage the time carefully so that she will have enough time to give evaluation and feedback to the students. 3) The teacher is suggested that she should choose a topic which relate to students' interest, based on their experience, and relevant to their life. 4) The instruction to do the task should be simple or clear enough to the students. This is to avoid misunderstanding to

the students and help them to finish the task easier.

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