The Effectiveness of Independent Learning Method on Students' Speaking Achievement at Christian University of Indonesia Jakarta

Lamhot Naibaho*

Universitas Kristen Indonesia

Jl. Mayjen Sutoyo No. 2 Cawang Jakarta Timur, 13630

Corresponding author: lnaibaho68@yahoo.com

Bio-Profile:

Lamhot Naibaho is an Associate Professor at English Teaching Study Program at *Universitas Kristen Indonesia*. His research interests Linguistics, Pyscholiguistics, language teaching, and curriculum. He has attended and presented in national and international conferences such as Asian EFL Journal, ESP Journal, TESOL ASIA Conferences, IAFOR Conferences, and ICALLE, APKASI and ARISUTA RESEARCH CENTER, and many more.

Abstract

This study is about the effectiveness of independent learning method on students' speaking achievement, and it was done to know whether independent learning method is effective on improving students'speaking achievement. The method of this study was classroom action research, and it was done at the Christian University of Indonesia located on Jl. Mayjen Sutoyo No. 2 Cawang, East Jakarta. The subject of this study was the fourth-semester students of English Department. Speaking test, documentation using an audiovisual recorder, diary note, and observation sheet were used as instruments of this study. The data taken were qualitatively and quantitatively analyzed. The results of the study show that there is an improvement on students' speaking achievement (51.07%), it means that independent learning method is effective in improving students'speaking achievement. Then it is concluded the students' speaking ability improved when they were taught using independent learning method, so it is suggested that teachers should apply independent learning as one of the strategies to improve students' speaking skill.

Keywords: speaking skill, independent learning method

Introduction

Speaking skill is an essential productive skill in learning English, and it is so because speaking is done to share information verbally. Besides, speaking is helpful for the students to learn a language because through speaking, they are provided many advantages such as; improving their capability on grammatical mastery, putting correct diction and idiom, and speaking will also enrich their' ability in language use. Through speaking, students will be encouraged to express the ideas they have in their mind. Harmer (2004) said that speaking is a vital skill for English language learner as much as for everyone using their first language. To be able to speak, of course, students should have learned first the language whether it is formally or informally. In this process of learning, of course, there should be someone who facilitates them, they are usually is called a teacher, tutor or lecturer.

Process of teaching and learning is generally considered as an important thing to be well mastered by an English teacher, therefore the teacher just needs to know the approaches and methods used in teaching speaking. Finding the more appropriate approaches and methods in teaching speaking has been focused to be found by the researcher trough research and conferences, and then the result of the research and conferences are documented in the form of audios, videos, and books which are used as teaching media and teaching sources (Dawes et al, 2005).

Lately, the English speaking ability is very important, this is because the use of English is now in various aspects of life. This is what drives all countries to compete in mastering English. But in Indonesia, on the contrary, when other countries have updated themselves in the mastery of English, Indonesia still has not established an attitude that encourages its people to be able to communicate in English. Graves (2008) emphasizes learning the English language to broaden one's horizons or horizons as well as to enhance or develop one's economic prospects, due to the sources of information in the world of education or non-education are mostly written in English. Besides, a person's English language skills will also help him to be more competent in developing the business or work he does so that it can help him improve his economy.

Therefore, English language skills are very important to be mastered by those who study English. However, despite several studies were done to help students mastering English language skills, a lot of EFL learners are still find it difficult to master (Hinkel, 2005). Research, in this case, is also still not done so much, as for some research that has been done, namely research on the perspective of students about learning to speak in EFL classes. To prove it. Small-scale observations have been made at school by researchers. The results found through

these observations are that there are still many students who have problems in speaking, this happens because of the following factors: a) vocabulary mastery is still small (8%); b) students find it difficult to make ideas correctly (16%); c) students have limited knowledge of a particular topic (20%); d) students do not have the motivation or are motivated to speak (20%); e) and students have confidence in speaking with grammar skills that are still lacking (36%). With the results of these observations, it can be said that the English teacher still has a big responsibility to fix the problems mentioned earlier. The English teacher must be able to determine, choose, implement and even evaluate the right teaching method or strategy so that the problems faced by students can be overcome properly. That is, whatever and however the conditions of the class, the English teacher should be able to implement the appropriate strategies in teaching. This is what encourages experts to more intensely exploring and research so that recently many experts try hard to find what strategies are possible to apply in class.

From all of the theories about teaching strategies and methods ranging from good to less good, then after reading several theories about teaching the speaking method, researcher is very interested in applying a method to overcome the students' problem in speaking, namely "independent learning". The reason why the method is said to be good is that some researchers have also conducted research using the method in the speaking class and the results are quite satisfying. As for the researchers who have applied the method in class as follows: Meyer and Faraday (2008), found that independent learning is a significan method to be implemented in improving students' speaking ability. This means that this method can be applied to be applied in the speaking class. The second researcher is Zumbrun et all (2011), they encourage their students to learn to speak by using independent learning and the results are satisfying.

This is what drives the researcher to conduct a research, entitled "Improving Students' Speaking Ability through Independent Learning Methods at Indonesian Christian University". The problem examined in this study is "can independent learning improve students 'speaking skills?", where the purpose of conducting the research is finding out that the independent learning method improves the English ability of the student in speaking.

Theoretical Review

Through speaking activities, the information that a person wishes to convey is received and understood and responded to by the other person. Speaking is the production of systematic verbal that convey meaning (Nunan, 2003; Benito, 2019). The ability to speak is not only limited to being able to express to others, but the ideas or ideas conveyed must be systematic and not violate the rules of grammar that have been set. Whereas Torky (2006) says that

speaking is a motor perception skill which is produced by auditory. It means that speaking can cause stimulation to the listener, so he can respond to the message conveyed by the preacher. Howarth (2001) said that is a process of communicating the ideas, informations or feelings in a two-way direction. That is, in every conversation, there must always be a speaker and listener who respond to each other's utterances spoken during the conversion process.

Speaking is a cooperative processed and a multi-sensory activity which is based on the contributions, the assumptions, the expectations, and the interpretations of the involving participants. This means that the content of each conversation must complement each other (Thornbury, 2005). That is, that in speaking, there are several organs of the human body that function to be able to produce sounds or utterances that come out of the mouth, and the sounds or utterances are utterances that have been arranged so that they can be understood by the listener. These definitions conclude that speaking is a mental motor skill, consisting of voice coordination, mechanism, which is produced by our muscles and also has a mental aspect. It is a skill in managing meaningful words and sounds.

Viewed from the conditions when it happens, speaking usually occurs two or several people face to face (Van, 1989), which makes it very interactional and social. Speaking skills are a skill in thinking, an expert in speaking can be sure to have good skills in thinking. Based on the explanation above, then to measure students' speaking ability, which consists of five competencies such as; pronunciation as sound production, grammar as a determination of good or bad language (Chung and Pullum, 2010), vocabulary as a word list (Igbaria, 2011), fluency as the use of language without hesitation (Binder et al, 2002), and self-confidence.

There are several facts found in speaking, such as a) Speaking is a face-to-face activity, as it allows the participants involved and interlocutor to make a direct response from the interlocutors; b) talking is interactive (Cornbleet & Carter, 2001); c) Speaking is taken place in real-time condition (Foster et al., 2000).

In teaching languages (Richards & Rodgers 2007; Larsen, 2000), a teacher must be familiar with a variety of teaching methods. Thornbury (2002) says that there are several methods used in language teaching such as a) grammar translation method; b) direct method; c) audio-lingual method; d) total physical response; e) the silent way; f) suggestopedia; g) community language learning; h) independent learning. This research is focused on one of the language teaching methods, it is independent learning.

Independent learning is part of cognitive learning theory which states that the behavior, motivation, and aspects of the learning environment affect a student's achievement. Independent learning is a method in learning where the students were given a chance to control

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themselves during the teaching-learning. Students who have been able to do independent learning will be reflected in their ability to actively participate in learning both in terms of metacognitive, motivational and seriousness of behavior in achieving learning goals (Mayer et al., 2008).

An independent learning strategy is a learning strategy that aims to build individual initiative, independence, and self-improvement. Independent learning can also be done with friends or as part of a small group. The independent learning strategy is strongly built by the students' learning motivation. Therefore, the teachers should be able to foster the studnets' intentions, besides, the teachers also have to be well performed in the study field and the strategies in teaching. The independent learning strategy allows students to learn independently from printed, broadcast and recorded material that has been prepared in advance, the term independent emphasizes that learning control, as well as the flexibility of time, and place of learning, lies with learners who learn. Thus, independent learning as a strategy can be defined as a learner who positions the learner as the person in charge, the holder of control, the decision-maker or the initiative in fulfilling and achieving his learning success with or without help from others. The most important part of the concept of an independent learning strategy is that each student must be able to identify sources of information because identification of this source of information is needed to facilitate the learning activities of a student when the student needs help or support (Weiss, 2004; Piaget, 2001; Bullock dan Muschamp, 2006; Bishop, 2006). Due to the independent learning concept, then students are expected to: a) Realizing that the relationship between the teacher and him still exists, but the relationship is represented by teaching materials or learning media; b) Knowing the concept of independent learning; c) Knowing when he should ask for help, when he needs help or support; d) Know who and from where he can or should get help/support (Birenbaum, 2002; Taggart et al, .2005 dan Weiss, 2004; Paris, 2001; Neber & Schommer-Aikins, 2002; Hinds, 2007).

While independent learning several steps will be carried out by the learner, either one person or group, namely: a) setting goals - Learners choose or participate in choosing, to work for an important purpose, both visible and invisible, that is meaningful to themselves and others. The goal is not the end of everything. That goal will provide an opportunity to apply academic professional expertise to everyday life. When learners achieve meaningful goals in daily life, the process helps them achieve high academic standards; b) making a plan - Learners set the steps to achieve their goals. Planning here involves looking further ahead and deciding how to succeed. The plan students decide depends on whether they want to solve the problem, determine the problem, or create a project. A plan made by someone depends on its purpose.

Both goals involve solving the problem, solving the problem, all of which require taking action, asking questions, making choices, gathering and analyzing information, and thinking critically. The ability to do these things enables the success of independent learning; c) following the plan and measure your progress - From the beginning, learners must not only realize their goals, but they must also be aware of the academic expertise. Besides, the students must evaluate how well their plans are going; d) producing the final results - Learners get an outcome both visible and invisible to them. There are thousands of ways to display the results of independent learning. The most obvious is that a group might produce a portfolio, and can also provide information using graphs, or appear to present their learning outcomes and be ready to be commented on by other learners; e) demonstrating skills through authentic assessment - Learners demonstrate skills especially in independent and authentic assignments. By using standard values and assessment markers to assess learners' portfolios, journals, presentations, and performances, teachers can estimate their level of academic achievement. Besides, the authentic assessment shows how deep the learning process that students may get by implementing the independent learning method in learning. The effectiveness of Independent learning is depended not only on the knowledge and dedication of the students, but also the dedication and expertise of the teacher.

Research Methodology

This study was classroom action research (Naibaho in Robertson, Adamson, & Guzman, 2016). The location of the research was at the Christian University of Indonesia at Jl. Mayjen Sutoyo, No. 2 Cawang, East Jakarta. The subjects of the study were the fourth-semester students of the speaking class. The number of subjects was 38 students. It was done in two cycles. Besides, each cycle was done based on the research plan, and in conducting the action research, four steps were included such as; planning, action, observation, and reflection. Speaking test was used as the instrument, besides the speaking test, the writer also used an interview, questionnaire sheet, diary note, and observation sheet. The technique of data analysis used in this study was qualitative and quantitative analysis. The qualitative data were used to describe the situation during the teaching process through interview sheet, questionnaire sheet, observation sheet, and diary note and the students' speaking test was analyzed quantitatively.

Findings and Discussion

The quantitative data were taken from the test result which had been carried out in two cycles and each cycle consists of 6 times meeting. The result of the tests was presented as follows: Here is the score taken from the students' speaking test result in the cycle one.

Table 1. Pre-test and Post-test Result in Cycle One

Students' Pre-test score	Students' Post-test score
40, 59, 55, 66, 67, 54, 47, 56, 55, 53, 65, 54, 52, 49, 49, 49, 51, 49, 47, 48, 48, 45, 51, 51, 55, 47, 61, 50, 48, 51, 50, 48, 48, 50, 53, 50, 48, 64.	51, 61, 60, 67, 67, 69, 61, 62, 69, 54, 60, 51, 66, 67, 59, 54, 56, 60, 61, 63, 63, 51, 60, 67, 64, 58, 69, 60, 57, 60, 66, 56, 67, 60, 63, 61, 63, 68.

At the first cycle, the students were tested twice, and from both the result of the test, it is concluded that there is an improvement on the students' score. It can be seen from the percentage of improvement in each test, it can be seen as follows.

The mean of Pre-test

$$\overline{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

$$\overline{X} = \frac{1991}{38}$$

$$\overline{X} = 51$$

The mean of Post-test in cycle one

$$\overline{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

$$\overline{X} = \frac{2331}{38}$$

$$\overline{X} = 60$$

So the percentages of improvement are as follows:

To see the improvement of both test in the first cycle, so the mean of Post-test is deduced to the mean of Pre-test, as follows:

Mean of Post-test of cycle one - Mean of pre-test of cycle one

$$= 60 - 51$$

$$= 9$$

$$= 17\%$$

Table 2. Distribution of Frequency in the Cycle One

Range	Frequency	Σ	Percentage
91-100	0	0	0%
81-90	0	0	0%
71-80	0	0	0%
61-70	21	1364	61%
51-60	17	967	39%
40-50	0	0	0%

The above table shows that there were still some of the students could not achieve good achievement (by achieving the excellence score 70-80 and 90-100). It means that the students did not make a good improvement. Due to this achievement, a reflection was done to steps and process which had been done during the cycle one. It was done to know the weaknesses which were found during conducting the cycle one and those weaknesses were given solution when the cycle two were conducted. Things which were done to check out those weaknesses were: a) checking the diary note; and b) checking the observation sheet. After checking the diary note and the observation sheet, it was found that during the teaching-learning process, there were some of the students who did not pay good attention during the teaching-learning. Therefore, at the beginning of the cycle two, the students were motivated and manipulated the teaching technique in delivering the content of the learning. After doing the reflection and found the weaknesses and solution to the weaknesses, then it was decided to continue the research into the cycle two.

In conducting the cycle two, the teaching strategy used by the teacher was changed and improved to make a more comfortable situation then the students find it more enthusiastic learning to improve their ability speaking in order to get a very good criteria in speaking namely by getting score above of 80 for the speaking test.

After the cycle two was done, then the test speaking test was conducted. This test was the post-test of the research, and the result of the post-test is written the form of score as follows:

Table 3. Post-test in Cycle One and Post-test Result in Cycle Two

Students' Post-test score in Cycle one	Students' Post-test score in Cycle two

51, 61, 60, 67, 67, 69, 61, 62, 69, 54, 60, 51,	79, 77, 76, 83, 83, 92, 77, 78, 94, 77, 76, 78,
66, 67, 59, 54, 56, 60, 61, 63, 63, 51, 60, 67,	82, 81, 79, 79, 76, 76, 77, 79, 79, 75, 80, 77,
64, 58, 69, 60, 57, 60, 66, 56, 67, 60, 63, 61,	80, 75, 85, 76, 78, 76, 82, 75, 82, 76, 79, 77,
63, 68.	79, 84.

The mean of the post-test in the cycle two.

$$\overline{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

$$\overline{X} = \frac{3008}{38}$$

$$\overline{X} = 79$$

To see the improvement of the post-test on the cycle one into Post-test so the mean of Post-test on the cycle two and the mean of Pre-test at the cycle two were deduced, the calculation can be seen as follows:

Mean of Post-test in the cycle two - Mean of post-test at the cycle one

$= 79 – 61$

$= 8$

$= 29\%$

Base on the table above could be described the distribution of the students' score was as described as follows.

Table 2. Distribution of Frequency in the Cycle two

Range	Frequency	Σ	Percentage
91-100	2	93	3%
81-90	10	832	25%
71-80	26	2009	72%
61-70	0	0	0%
51-60	0	0	0%
40-50	0	0	0%

The table shows that the improvement made by the students was very good, it is shown by their achievements on the score gained at the post-test in the cycle two. This could be attained because at the cycle two, the students were encouraged to be more enthusiast in learning and by adapting the teaching strategy made the teachers. It means that the problems

that occurred during the cycle one that made the students could not achieve good performance in speaking were solved, where two students got the excellent score, 25% students got a very good score, and 72% got a good score.

Table 3. The Percentages of the Students' Speaking Test Progression

Test	Percentage
pre-test – to post-test 1st cycle	17%
to post-test 1st cycle - post-test 2nd Cycle	29%

The total percentage of the improvement from the pre-test into post-test was gained by deducing the mean of post-test in cycle one to the mean of pre-test, it is shown as follows:

= 79 – 52

= 27

= 51%

From the analysis above, it can be seen that the total improvement made by the students indicated that the ability of speaking passed the "good" criteria.

The qualitative (diary notes, interview, and observation sheet) indicates learning independent is an interesting method to be implemented in speaking class, it is proven through improvement made in each test, where the score gained kept increasing. The result of the data taken through interview showed that speaking class is much more interesting when it is taught using independent learning. While the data taken through observation sheet also showed that at first, the students find it uninteresting to learn speaking, but when the teaching strategy is adopted and manipulated by the teachere and students were remotivated, then there is a huge difference and improvement on their desire to learn speaking.

From all of the analysis and discussion, it is concluded that the students' ability in speaking is improved when it was taught using independent learning. It is proven by the achievement made by the students: a) the mean of the score made by the students in the Pre-test was 51; them mean made by the students for Post-test in cycle one was 60; and the mean of Post-test made by the students in cycle two is 79. It means that there was improvement made by the students during the test conducted to them as their achievement. Besides, the total percentage improvement from the Pre-test to Post-test in cylce two also showed a great improvement. It is about 51%. This conclusion is also supported by the data taken through interview, diary note, and observation sheet that shows a great interest on the implementation

of independent learning in speaking class it means that the students find it more interesting to learn speaking if it was taught by independent.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this research is that independent learning is a very good method to be implemented in teaching speaking and it improves the students' English ability (The mean of the test score improves from 51 to 60 and from 60 to 79) and the percentage improvement from Pre-test to Post-test in cycle two is 51%. This conclusion is also supported by the result of qualitative data analysis that is the students find it more interesting to learn speaking if it was taught by independent.

Pedagogical Implication

This finding of this research has some pedagogical implications, they are: a) the finding of this study develops the theory of English teaching strategies which has been scientifically proven through research; b) academic English instructor can make use the finding of this research to help them enlarging their knowledge on teaching strategies which is applicable in speaking class; and c) academic writing instructor also can use the finding of this research to help researcher improve the writing ability on publication might be in terms of article's structure and sentence composition.

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