

Developing Speaking Skill through Group Discussion

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Abstract

This research aims at investigating effectiveness of group discussion in developing speaking skill of grade VIII students at SMPN 9 Palu. This is a quasi-experimental research design. Its samples were 48 students of VIII C and VIII D which were selected purposively. Its data were collected through pretest and posttest and analyzed statistically. The pretest was conducted to find out the students' speaking skill before treatments. Mean scores of the pretest are 36.98 for the experimental class and 56.25 for the control class. The posttest was administered to measure their speaking skill after the treatments. Mean scores of the posttest are 75.52 for the experimental class and 72.4 for the control class. By applying degree of freedom (df) 46 and 0.08 of significance level, results of this research indicate that its t-counted value is 5.9 (high) and its t-table value is 2.0129 (low), so that the research hypothesis is accepted. In other words, using group discussion can develop students' speaking skill.

Keywords: *Speaking Skill, Group Discussion*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki efektivitas kelompok diskusi dalam mengembangkan keterampilan berbicara siswa kelas VIII pada SMPN 9 Palu. Ini adalah rancangan penelitian eksperimental semu. Sampelnya adalah 48 siswa kelas VIII C dan VIII D yang dipilih secara purposif. Data dikumpulkan melalui pretest dan posttest dan dianalisis secara statistik. Pretest dilakukan untuk menemukan keterampilan bicarannya sebelum perlakuan. Nilai rata-rata pretest adalah 36.98 untuk kelas eksperimen dan 56,25 untuk kelas kontrol. Posttest diberikan untuk mengukur keterampilan berbicara mereka setelah perlakuan. Nilai rata-rata posttest itu adalah 75,52 untuk kelas eksperimen dan 72,4 untuk kelas kontrol. Dengan menerapkan derajat kebebasan (df) 46 dan 0,08 dari tingkat signifikansi, hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa nilai t-counted-nya adalah 5,9 (tinggi) dan nilai t-tabel-nya adalah 2,0129 (rendah), sehingga hipotesis penelitian itu diterima. Dengan kata lain, menggunakan diskusi kelompok dapat mengembangkan keterampilan berbicara siswa.

Katakunci: *Keterampilan Berbicara, Kelompok Diskusi*

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is a crucial part of language learning and teaching foreign language skill because it can be used by students to express their ideas orally in foreign language. Without speaking skill, they will just keep silent. In order to speak well, they should practice their speaking skill in everyday live. Therefore, their teacher should give them opportunity to practice their speaking skill by giving some more examples or activities that put them into real practice communication.

Based on the preliminary research conducted by the researcher to the grade VIII at SMPN 9 Palu, when the students were studying English, most of them had difficulties in speaking. There are some problems that the students faced while they were speaking. Based on kurikulum 2013, goal of teaching English at SMPN 9 Palu is to provide students to be able to use the language. They are directed to be able to express ideas, feelings, and opinions, and use the language to communicate with other in daily life. In fact, many students of SMPN 9 Palu still get difficulties to speak English fluently. The problems are caused by lack of vocabulary, low selfconfidence, afraid of making mistakes, and nervous to express English orally. The researcher assumes that the problem occurs because of still less interaction between teacher and students in teaching and learning process. Therefore, the teacher uses short conversation in it.

It is essential to consider that speaking should be supported by some components. Lackman (2010) divides components of speaking into three; they are fluency, Accuracy, and Comprehensibility. The students who master the three components can easily perform their speaking.

One of the goals of teaching speaking is to develop fluency in language use. Fluency includes intonation and pronunciation. Both intonation and pronunciation are important in speaking because meaning of language can change if pronunciation is wrong. Good pronunciation in speaking can make listener easy to understand what a speaker is talking about. In this case, teachers and students have to able to convey what they want to say smoothly in ordinary situation. Ferguson (1998:1) argues: "Fluency means the learner is producing the text in ordinary situations, speaking at a normal rate of speed not too fast, not too slow and with sufficient accuracy to be understood by speaker or the language with a minimum effort." It is obvious that when we speak, we do not need much times to think how to respond someone says. Besides, we cannot catch what students say when they

make oral errors or something wrong with their speaking because it makes them confident to speak again. Language teacher who concentrates on fluency help their students to express themselves in speaking English fluently. They will pay more attention to meaning and context and are less concerned grammatical errors.

Accuracy is one of factors which can determine the success of English students in the future. Accuracy is ability to produce correct grammar and vocabulary. In this matter, the speaker is demanded to use correct grammar in using the target language. Bailey (2005:5) states, "Accuracy refers to ability to speak properly which selecting the correct word and expressions to convey the intended meaning, as well as using the grammatical pattern of English." Using the right word in the right order with the correct pronunciation will help the speaker to convey his/her messages to be understood. Lackman (2010:3) argues, "Students need to be able to use and pronounce word and structures correctly in order to be understood." The students will not understand and get confused if other students speak or pronounce the words wrong and certainly it can change the meaning.

Comprehensibility is a process of understanding in speaking. It means that the people can understand what we say and also we can understand what they say. Harmer (1998:48) highlights "if there are two people who want to make communication to each other, they have to speak because they have different information." If there is a 'gap' between them, it is not a good communication because the people still confuse with what we say.

Group discussion is one of the techniques done by a teacher in classroom where the students are put together in several groups. The teacher gives a topic to be discussed together and let the students solve the problem and share information. The teacher monitors the students' activity makes them active in the classroom. According to Sudirjo (1975:54) "teknik diskusi adalah mengemukakan pendapat dalam musyawarah untuk mufakat dalam bentuk komunikasi banyak arah." It also depends on where and in which direction the mood of the discussion moves. In group discussion, each participant is free to speak his views. A successful discussion involves both listening and speaking. This statement indicates that one of important aspects in speaking is a communication or interaction between the speaker and listener. This will also make a good understanding about object of topic. The words that the speakers use must be clear, so that listeners can understand what the speaker says.

Group discussion is also useful for a teacher who wishes to speed up the students oral ability because in this activity they have more opportunity to speak rather than the

teacher. The technique of group discussion makes all the students of the class work in pairs to do the conversation and also can enable the students to create a pleasant relaxed and lively classroom. The students are not in the great pressure of the teacher's control when they are in speaking. When they are speaking, the teacher's role is a listener. He just listens to what they say.

Group discussion can take a variety of formats and useful for all types of students. They can be done in preparation for speaking practice simply to develop fluency. It is important to consider the different sub-skills that are involved in participating in a group discussion and ensure that address each of these. Additionally, structuring, and varying feedback given will help the students to identify areas for improvement.

The advantage of group discussion is to develop the students' speaking skill. Through the discussion, the teaching-learning process and teaching language will be more real in the classroom. The students can practice their language to express the agreement and disagreement. Additionally, teacher will help the students to articulate their own grasp of subject matter and learn from the way of their friends challenge or elaborate their initial suggestion.

Disadvantages of group discussion technique are the teacher must spend time preparing essential materials. Moreover, the process is highly time consuming in terms of assembling the right group and usually a group takes more time in reaching a consensus since there are too many opinions to be taken into consideration, and the time problem increases group size. Accordingly, urgency of arriving at a decision must be considered when group decision making style is selected. The group members may exhibit focus effect. This means that the group may focus on one or few suggested alternatives and spend all the times in evaluating these and never come up with other ideas, thus limiting the choices.

The development of oral ability is a good source of motivation for most learners, who are normally much concerned to speak and understand a foreign language. Apply group discussion technique may become oral communication among the students. According to Byrne (1990:8): "oral communication is a two-way process between the speaker and listener (or listeners), involving the productive skill of speaking and the receptive skill of understanding (or listening with understanding). Both speaker and listener have a positive intention to perform. The speaker has to encode the message to be conveyed in appropriate language, while the listener (no less actively) has to understand and decode the message or what the speaker means.

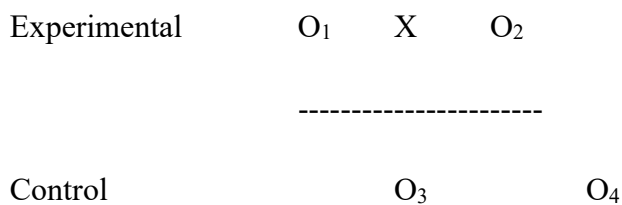
Group discussion is one of the appropriate techniques that the researcher wants to use in teaching speaking skill. Before starting the discussion, the researcher has to know how to manage this technique in the classroom in order to make the discussion alive. To avoid the students from being bored, the teacher has to know to manage the class through group discussion. To avoid the students from being bored, the teacher have to know how to manage the class through group discussion.

Group discussion is one of ways to develop students' speaking skill. The application of the group discussion is good to stimulate inter-students' cooperation in developing their respective abilities. In the process it is easy to understand and quickly by students. Teacher gives a topic to each group and the students are given time to express results of their discussion. Their speaking will be developed because each group member will speak one by one. It is effective for the students because they tend to hesitate to speak out.

Based on the statement above the researcher formulated the following research question: *Can the use of group discussion technique develop speaking skill of grade VIII students at SMPN 9 Palu?* Objective of this research is to investigate whether using group discussion can develop the students' speaking skill or not.

METHODS

In designing this research, the researcher used Quasi-experimental design. There were two classes used in this research, experimental class and control class. The former was given pretest, treatments, and posttest. The latter was given pretest and posttest without treatments from the researcher but a teacher there. These two classes got the same pretest and posttest. The design of this research is adopted from Cohen, Manion, and Marrison (2007:282) as follows:



Where O₁ and O₃ are pretests, X is treatment, and O₂ and O₄ are posttests.

Population of this research are Grade VIII students at SMPN 9 Palu. There are seven classes, VIII A up to VIII G. They are 179 students. Its samples are 48 students of the two

classes, i.e. 24 students of the VIII C as experimental class and 24 students of the VIII D as control class. They were selected purposively.

This research has two variables divided into independent variable and dependent variable. The former is group discussion while the latter is speaking skill. The researcher used one instrument, namely test that consists of pretest and posttest. The former was used before the treatments in order to assess the students' speaking skill. The latter was given after the treatments in order to measure/assess the students' progress.

To find out the students level of speaking skill the researcher employs the following scoring system adapted from Heaton (1988:100):

Table 1: Rating/Score of Speaking

| Rating/ Score | Accuracy | Fluency |
|------------------|--|--|
| 4 | Pronunciation is still moderately influenced by the mother tongue but serious phonological errors. A few grammatical and lexical errors causing confusion. | Although he has to make an effort and search for words, there are not too many unnatural pauses. Fairly smooth delivery mostly. Occasionally fragmentary but succeeded in conveying the general meaning fair range of expression |
| 3 | Pronunciation is seriously influenced by the mother tongue but only a few serious phonological errors, some of which causes confusion. | Has to make an effort for much of time, often has to search for desired meaning. Rather halting delivery and fragmentary range of expression of limited |
| 2 | Pronunciation is influenced by the mother tongue with errors causing a breakdown in communication grammatically and lexical errors. | Long pauses while the searches for desired meaning. Frequently and halting delivery. Almost give up making effort very limited range of expression. |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | Serious pronunciation errors as well as many "basic" grammatical and lexical errors. No evidence of having mastered any of language skill and areas practice in the course. | Full of long and unnatural pauses. Very halting and fragmentary. At times give up making the effort. Very limited range of expression. |
|---|---|--|

Source: Adapted from Heaton (1988:100)

FINDINGS

Results of this research are based on the tests (consisting of pretest and posttest) used in collecting data. The test were focused on fluency and accuracy by using voice recorder as a helping instrument in collecting data related to the scoring system. The researcher scored the students while they were speaking in the classroom and checked them back at home by hearing their voice through the recorder in order to make sure the scores' validity. Results of the pretest and posttest of the experimental class is presented on the following Table 2.

Table 2: Score of Pretest and Posttest of Experimental Class

| No. | Initial | Score | | Deviation |
|-----|---------|--------------|---------------|-----------|
| | | Pretest (X1) | Posttest (X2) | |
| 1 | WLM | 50 | 87.5 | 37.5 |
| 2 | MGN | 50 | 87.5 | 37.5 |
| 3 | RFI | 25 | 87.5 | 62.5 |
| 4 | FRS | 25 | 62.5 | 37.5 |
| 5 | SK | 62.5 | 87.5 | 25 |
| 6 | ARY | 37.5 | 87.5 | 50 |
| 7 | BDC | 25 | 75 | 25 |
| 8 | BAS | 25 | 75 | 50 |
| 9 | ADW | 37.5 | 87.5 | 50 |
| 10 | FGI | 25 | 62,5 | 37.5 |
| 11 | FIY | 25 | 75 | 50 |
| 12 | MAQ | 75 | 87.5 | 12.5 |
| 13 | MAG | 37.5 | 75 | 37.5 |
| 14 | GS | 50 | 62.5 | 12.5 |

| | | | | |
|--------------|-----|-------|--------|------|
| 15 | DJN | 37.5 | 62.5 | 25 |
| 16 | FLM | 37.5 | 75 | 37.5 |
| 17 | SNS | 25 | 87.5 | 62.5 |
| 18 | ART | 25 | 75 | 50 |
| 19 | TR | 25 | 62.5 | 37.5 |
| 20 | PUI | 50 | 75 | 25 |
| 21 | MOR | 25 | 75 | 50 |
| 22 | AFR | 37.5 | 62.5 | 25 |
| 23 | DFT | 37.5 | 62.5 | 25 |
| 24 | FAS | 37.5 | 75 | 37.5 |
| Total | | 887.5 | 1812.5 | 900 |

Based on this Table 2, after counting the pretest scores of the experimental class, the researcher finds that mean score of the experimental class pretest is 36.98. Its highest score is 75 and its lowest one is 25. For the experimental class posttest, its highest score is 87.5 and its lowest score is 62.5. Furthermore, its mean score is 75.52. It means that there is an increase of the speaking achievement result of the experimental class, from 36.98 to 75.52. Results of the pretest and posttest of the control class is presented on the following Table 3.

Table 3: Score of Pretest and Posttest of Control Class

| No. | Initial | Score | | Deviation |
|-----|---------|--------------|---------------|-----------|
| | | Pretest (Y1) | Posttest (Y2) | |
| 1 | KLZ | 62.5 | 75 | 12.5 |
| 2 | ASF | 62.5 | 87.5 | 25 |
| 3 | RO | 25 | 75 | 50 |
| 4 | PIL | 25 | 50 | 25 |
| 5 | DAY | 50 | 75 | 25 |
| 6 | NAP | 62.5 | 62.5 | 0 |
| 7 | MHK | 50 | 75 | 25 |
| 8 | AFZ | 62.5 | 75 | 12.5 |
| 9 | RRP | 62.5 | 75 | 12.5 |
| 10 | ZK | 37.5 | 62.5 | 25 |
| 11 | RVL | 62.5 | 75 | 12.5 |
| 12 | FIZ | 75 | 75 | 0 |
| 13 | AMG | 50 | 75 | 25 |

| | | | | |
|--------------|-----|------|--------|-------|
| 14 | AYR | 62.5 | 75 | 12.5 |
| 15 | JDN | 62.5 | 75 | 12.5 |
| 16 | MUA | 75 | 75 | 0 |
| 17 | MRT | 62.5 | 75 | 12.5 |
| 18 | MYT | 62.5 | 75 | 12.5 |
| 19 | DNK | 50 | 62.5 | 12.5 |
| 20 | SAL | 62.5 | 75 | 12.5 |
| 21 | KR | 62.5 | 62.5 | 0 |
| 22 | MSY | 50 | 62.5 | 12.5 |
| 23 | YDA | 50 | 75 | 25 |
| 24 | PNA | 62.5 | 87.5 | 25 |
| Total | | 1350 | 1737.5 | 387.5 |

This Table 3 contains the students' individual scores of the control class. As a result, mean score of the control class pretest is 56.25. Its highest score is 75 and its lowest score is 25. For the control class posttest, its highest score is 87.5 and its lowest score is 50. Its mean score is 72.4. There is also an increase of the result of the control class. It rises up from 56.25 to 72.4.

Furthermore, value of t-counted was calculated by using t-test formula proposed by Arikunto (2006) to look at significant difference of both classes. Thereby, the t-counted value is 5.9. Afterwards, the researcher compared the value of t-counted to the value of t-table in order to find out the significant difference between them. By applying $N_x + N_y - 2 = 24 + 24 - 2 = 46$ degree of freedom (df) and 0.05 level of significance of two tailed test, he found that the t-table value is 2.0129. It indicates that the t-counted value (5.9) is higher than the t-table value (2.0129). It means that the hypothesis is accepted. In other words, using group discussion can develop the students' speaking skill.

DISCUSSION

Both classes got pretest on March 26th, 2019 before the treatments. The researcher focused on two components of speaking namely fluency and accuracy. He used a voice recorder when testing the students. The result of both classes indicates that in experimental class, only one student got successful, whereas in control class there were six students got good scores. The result was likely caused by the students' difficulty in speaking confidently and lack of vocabularies. Some of the students spoke in normal rate, but most

of them had long pauses in speaking. It happened before the treatments was given. Thus, the researcher used group discussion to solve this problem.

The researcher conducted the treatment to Grade VIII D students at SMPN 9 Palu by using group discussion. The process of instructional treatment was started by asking the previous material. After knowing the materials which had been taught by their teacher, he gave some questions related to the topics to get their attention and also tell them about the instructional objectives. The researcher also explained how to use grammatical features in procedure text and gave example to the students. After giving clear explanation to them, the researcher made groups to build the students' confidence. After that, the students started discussion by describing place, thing, food, and people as the topic given by the teacher.

In facilitating the students' discussion, the teacher put some sentences in the paper that related to the topic. The students also were taught about tenses in order to support their sentences in the discussion. The teacher let the students discuss in their own group. In order to have a better understanding about the procedure text, the researcher gave two questions based on the material. They had to response those questions orally. In this exercise the researcher found that some of the students still got difficulty to answer the questions.

After calculating the students' mean score in the pretest the researcher got 36.98 for the experimental class and 56.25 for the control class. It means that the result of students' speaking skill was low. The teacher and researcher decided to use another technique to make the students interested in the learning process in order to improve students' speaking procedure text. They agreed to use discussion as teaching medium to facilitate the learning process.

The researcher found some progress of the students in every meeting. First, the students', vocabulary has increased. Second, they have high interest and motivation in learning English. Third, they have a good confidence to speak English. Fourth, they get more chance to speak English. Fifth, they can use the language in normal rate smoothly and appropriately. Sixth, they enjoy speaking English. Last, most students are fluent in speaking.

Both experimental class and control one were given posttest on Thursday, April 25th, 2019. The researcher gave the students it by asking them to speak to their friends related to the topic. He used the voice recorder as the tool to get the data. The result of both classes

indicates that in experimental class, there are 17 students got good score, whereas in control class only 6 students got good score.

According to the data, most of the students of the experimental class got score above 75 in their posttest compared with their pretest. It also indicates that the use of group discussion can develop students' speaking skill. Furthermore, in the control class there were most of the students who successfully passed the test because they got score 75 till 87.5, while the several students failed or could not pass the test. However, all of them had development when they used group discussion as technique, and the students' got good scores.

The finding has explicitly shown that the mean scores of the posttest of the experimental class and control one were significantly different. The mean score of the posttest of the experimental class is 75.52 whereas the one of the control class is 72.4. This indicates that the treatments actually work in the process of teaching and learning. In other words, group discussion in teaching speaking can be applied to help students to understand the material and topic and to make easier to express their ideas. So, using group discussion to develop the students' speaking skill was successful.

CONCLUSIONS

Using group discussion can develop students' speaking skill because the speaking skill has developed after being taught by using the group discussion. Moreover, it also can be applied to help the students to build their confidence easily. It is also shown from the mean scores of the posttest in the experimental class (75.52) and in the control class (72.4). Speaking skill of the grade VIII students has developed. Testing hypothesis indicates that the t-counted is 5.9 (high) and the t-table is 2.0129 (low). Thus, the research hypothesis is accepted.

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