

PRACTICING DISCUSSION IN THE FORM OF PYRAMID TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' SPEAKING PERFORMANCE AND CLASSROOM INTERACTION

Buhari

English Teacher, SMPN 1 Praya Timur, Central Lombok

Email: buhari@gmail.com

Abstract

Speaking is an ability to use the language in oral form to express what is on language learners' thinking. Learners have speaking skills if they have skills to practice grammar, comprehension, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency in the oral form. To attain the speaking skills, English teachers are encouraged to meet an appropriate learning strategy to be applied in the speaking classes. This study is a collaborative classroom action research. It is aimed at describing how the use of pyramid discussion to enhance students' speaking performance and classroom interaction. Its steps consisted of Planning, Acting, Observing, and Reflecting. This research was conducted at the 8th-grade students of SMPN 1 Praya Timur, Central Lombok. There were three instruments employed to obtain the data namely test, observation sheet, and questionnaire. After having the cycle 1, the findings showed that there were 16 students who got score more than 70. The calculation of the mean score was 77.30. Meanwhile, the tabulation of the percentage was 88.90. The data of the observation sheet indicated that the students were enthusiastic in classroom interaction and they feel interested in learning English. The research findings showed that the mean score was 83.22. It could be concluded that the use of pyramid discussion was able to improve students' speaking performance and classroom interaction at the 8th-grade students of SMPN 1 Praya Timur, Central Lombok.

Key Words: Pyramid Discussion, Speaking Ability

Abstrak

Bebicara adalah keterampilan pembelajar bahasa dalam menggunakan bahasa secara lisan untuk mengekspresikan apa yang ada dalam pikirannya. Siswa memiliki keterampilan berbicara jika mereka terampil menggunakan tatabahasa, kosakata yang dapat dipahami, pengucapan yang tepat, and lancar. Untuk memperoleh keterampilan berbicara, guru didorong untuk menemukan strategi pembelajaran yang tepat. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian tindakan kelas yang bertujuan untuk menerapkan strategi *pyramid discussion* untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara siswa dan interaksi di dalam kelas. Langkah penelitian ini terdiri atas perencanaan, tindakan, observasi, and refleksi. Penelitian tindakan ini dilakukan di SMPN 1 Praya Timur, Lombok Tengah. Instrumen yang digunakan adalah tes berbicara, lembar observasi, dan angket. Pada siklus 1, ada 16 siswa yang memperoleh nilai di atas 70 dengan nilai rata-rata 77.30. bila dipresentasikan maka berada pada kisaran 88.90. data terkait interaksi siswa belajar keterampilan berbicara menunjukkan cukup antusias dan tertarik menggunakan *pyramid discussion* di kelas. Rata-rata nilai siswa adalah 83.22. berdasarkan temuan ini, penelitian ini dapat disimpulkan bahwa penerapan strategy pyramid discussion dapat meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara dan interaksi siswa untuk kelas VIII di SMPN 1 Praya Timur, Lombok Tengah.

Kata Kunci: Pyramid Discussion, Keterampilan Berbicara

INTRODUCTION

Speaking has been a promising language skill rather than other language skills. It is more beneficial than the three

language skills to be acquired. Speaking is a language skill that is very important to communicate, share your idea and your opinion (Aprianoto et al., 2018). It is used

more than other language skills in our daily communication. According to Richard (2008: 19), the mastery of speaking skills in English is a priority for many second-language or foreign-language learners. Consequently, learners often evaluate their success in language learning as well as the effectiveness of their English course based on how much they feel they have improved in their spoken proficiency.

According to Louma (2004: 1), speaking skill is an important part of the curriculum in language teaching, and this makes it an important object of assessment as well. Brown (2004: 140) said that speaking is a productive skill that can be directly and empirically observed. It is meant that speaking is very important to learn by learners in English because speaking is a tool for communication with each other. Mastering speaking is not as easy as other language skills. Learners are demanded to acquire components of speaking skills such as fluency, accuracy, comprehensibility. Furthermore, speaking skill remains a difficult skill to be mastered by students. It happened because some factors influence poor speaking ability such as lack of creativity from the teacher, frequently used mother tongue over the target language by students in daily conversation. Those problems were found based on the researcher's observation at the 8th-grade students of SMPN 1 Praya Timur, Central Lombok.

Related to the explanation above, the researcher needed a method that can increase students' ability of speaking and the method was "Pyramid Discussion". Pyramid discussion is an activity for the students to develop critical thinking skills, obtained a better understanding of the text and make them active members of the learning process (Marlin et.al, 1978: 19). In this method through working in a group, the researcher hoped that Pyramid Discussion helped the

learners to become more active in the learning process.

Based on the description above, the researcher was interested in conducting research focusing on implementing the pyramid discussion to enhance students' speaking performance and classroom interaction at the 8th-grade students of SMPN 1 Praya Timur, Central Lombok in academic year 2018/2019.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Speaking

The teaching of speaking skills from elementary level to university level is always focused on simple conversation (Irfani, Meisuri, & Rohmatillah, 2018). Among the four skills, English teachers feel that speaking skill is a difficult one to teach and assess.

Yöntem (2014: 13) speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning which comprises producing and receiving information. Based on the definition above, the researcher concluded that speaking is an activity where a language produced by a human being, processed to introduce words or sentences using spoken language. In other words, speaking is a tool used by people to convey and to express what is in their minds. This skill was very important to be mastered by English learners. Some experts have stressed the impotence of it; Brown (2004: 140) said that speaking is a productive skill that can be directly and empirically observed. Speaking skill is an important part of the curriculum in language teaching (Louma, 2004: 1).

Pyramid Discussion

Esfandiari and Paul (2013: 22) said that in the pyramid discussion, the students first undertake a speaking task in small groups where they have to agree on certain items. Then they join another group and have to reach an agreement again. This gave students time to practice speaking in smaller

groups before facing the whole class. As a less controlled fluency activity, it can help the learners to practice a broad range of language that they have both been formally taught in the classroom or acquired from elsewhere. They help students to build up confidence by rehearsing and repeating arguments that they have already used on others. Learners are involved in one discussion. The idea behind a Pyramid Discussion is that learners should come to an agreement when they reach the top of the pyramid.

Procedures of Pyramid Discussion

The Pyramid Discussion and procedures, according to Hedge (2005: 59-60), consist of preparation and procedure. First, Preparation; the students would write a public brochure to their own educational institution. They would, therefore, provide the content to have some short ideas. This can include such things as 1) The appearance of the school and its grounds; 2) any special facilities; 3) the reputation it has for academic work, sport, craft, music, etc. Second, the action phase; (1) Explain the context of the activity to students and that the purpose of the brochure is to promote the worth of the institution in the wider community. Ask what sort of content the public brochure should contain about. What are the very good aspects of their school or institution? What will they most want to promote? (2) Ask students to work individually for a minute. They should jot down some ideas for content;

Afterward, (3) Ask students to work in pairs. Each pair should discuss possible content for the brochure and make a note on it. Give a time limit appropriate to the level of your student; (4) Then organize the class into groups of four, each member from a different pair to allow the widest exchange of ideas. Each student should have a comprehensive list of possible content, and (5) each student decides their own content

from the list and prioritizes in his or her way. Then ask the class to start drafting.

Research Design

The research method used in this research was Classroom Action Research (CAR). According to Elfanany (2013: 22), classroom action research is a research conducted systematically reflective of the various actions taken by teachers as well as researchers. Therefore Kemmis and McTaggart in Burns (2010: 7) said that classroom action research typically involves four broad phases in a cycle of research as follow:

1. Planning: identify a problem or issue and develop a plan of action to bring about improvements in a specific area of the research context.
2. Action: the second step of the observation is acting as an implementation of the plan. It implements the treatment in the classroom.
3. Observation: this phase involves observing systematically the effects of the action and documenting the context, actions, and opinions of those involved.
4. Reflections: reflects on, evaluates and describes the effects of the action in order to make sense of what has happened and to understand the issue which has explored more clearly. The relationship between the four components above showed a cycle. This cycle is one of the characteristics of classroom action research, that classroom action research should be implemented in the form of cycle, not only one intervention.

Subject and Object of the Research

The subject of this research was 18 students consisting of 10 females and 8 males of class at the 8th-grade students of SMPN 1 Praya Timur, Central Lombok in the academic year 2018/2019. The object of this research was speaking performance and

classroom interaction. Both objects are developed by applying the pyramid discussion method at the 8th-grade students of SMPN 1 Praya Timur, Central Lombok.

Research Instrument

In this research, the instrument was intended to measure the students' speaking ability. The instruments of this research were the observation sheet, test, and questionnaire.

1. Observation sheet

The observation sheet was used to monitor the students and teacher activities during the teaching and learning process. The use of the observation sheet hopefully, helped the researcher to observe the class situation.

2. Test

In this research, the researcher used oral pre-test and post-test. The pre-test was done before the teaching-learning process and the post-test was done after the teaching-learning process to know the students' ability in speaking skills. The researcher recorded their performance to make easy in giving a score. Before the test began, the researcher gave the instructions to the students by grouping them then come forward to perform based on the topics.

3. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was a technique to collect the data by giving some questions or statements for the respondent. There were 5 items that were delivered to know the students' responses toward the main mapping; they were items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, with five options (very agree, agree, does not know, disagree, and very disagree).

Techniques of Data Collection

In this study, the test and questionnaire were used to collect the data. The observation was made by the researcher to find out the classroom management and

students' interaction and also activities during the teaching and learning process. The data include speaking activities taken from the result of observation. It was used to decide what kind of reflection for the next action. The test would present at the cycle that consists of some items. The question of the test was based on the indicators of speaking. Finally, the questionnaire was given at the end of the research.

Techniques of Data Analysis

In assessing the students' progression during learning speaking material through pyramid discussion, the researcher used speaking assessment based on indicators of speaking that was intonation which divided into three categories those were accuracy, fluency, and comprehensibility. These assessments were considered to be very important in speaking skills. The data will be analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data were obtained from the calculation of the score statistically and qualitative data were analyzed using descriptive analysis.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding

In this research, the researcher elaborated on the findings dealing with the implementation of the Pyramid Discussion method on the students' speaking ability. The research conducted for one cycle consisting of six meetings was started from Saturday, 2nd of December 2018 to Thursday, 21st of March 2019.

Preliminary Study

The pre-test had been done before conducting the classroom action research. The researcher conducted it on Saturday, 2nd of December 2019 at 07:30 am-08:55 am. The pre-test was an oral test. The students carried out the test which introduces or describes one by one in front of the class

about pictures that were divided by the researcher on the tests such as family, best friend, and myself. It was aimed to know the students' prior knowledge before the researcher uses the treatment.

The mean score of the speaking pre-test was 58.90 while the highest score of students was 83 and the lowest score was 44. It was a formula from Sugiyono (2007: 49). The next step was to know the percentage of students' scores who pass the KKM (Minimum Passing Grade, 75). It was calculated based on (Purwanto, 2013: 102) the students' score percentage was 22.20%. It means that 4 students passed the Minimum Passing Grade (KKM) and there were 14 students still below the KKM (75). Furthermore, the 58.90 meant that the students were low in the three speaking indicators required by the tester namely accuracy, fluency, and comprehension.

Planning

In this case, the researcher collaborated with the two English teachers at the school. The planning was dealing with deciding the solution to the students' problems that had been found in the pre-test. Next to that, the problem could be seen from the result of the pre-test by which the students got 58.90 as the average score. This kind of score indicated that the students did not get the minimum passing grade (75). Furthermore, the 58.90 meant that the students were low in the three speaking indicators required by the tester namely accuracy, fluency, and comprehension.

Based on the problems above, the researcher together with her collaborator prepared five lesson plans, teaching materials, questionnaire, pre-test, and post-test. Besides that, the researcher and her collaborator also determined the criteria of success which was agreed to be an indicator of the success of the research.

Acting

The action of the cycle was done on Thursday, March 21st, 2019. In acting case, the researcher implemented a lesson plan that had been made before. 6 meetings had been conducted by the researcher here, started from 2nd up to 21st of March 2019. In the class, the researcher taught the students about "Making School brochure" by Pyramid discussion and the students responded it well. The time allocation of the lesson plan for teaching was 2x45 minutes in one meeting.

Observing

The researcher observed the class by using the observation note. Observation notes used to write all the teacher's and students' activities while doing the teaching-learning process. For instance in students' note there were: students' enthusiastic when learning process, students' interaction with the teacher, students' interaction with their friends, students' activities in the class and students' activities when finishing the duty from their teacher and teacher's note, there were: teacher's performance, teacher's method and strategy, teacher's interaction with students, teacher's media in teaching-learning process and teacher's style and attitude. Based on the criterion of interpretation score for the questionnaire is showed improvement in teaching and learning by using the Pyramid discussion method.

Reflecting

The last step was reflecting the procedures of the teaching and learning process. It aims to know whether the process and interaction are needed to improve or not. In this step, the researcher collected, analyzed and summarized the data which was collected from the result of the test, observation note, and questionnaire. After the researcher conducted action then the

researcher gave students post-test to know students' improve speaking ability. The post-test had done after gave the material conducting the classroom action research. In this term, the researcher gave a post-test to students to discuss their "Making school Brochure". In post-test, the researcher used oral test, and tools that used the measure of the oral test was handphone for record students' voice. The students form pairs consists of 9 pairs as long as 3 minutes of each pair, then the students form small group consist, 4 groups, every group consist 4/5 students as long as 10 minutes of each group. After that the students form a large group consists of 3 groups, each group consists of 6 students. Then, the test was performed as long as 14 minutes of each group.

Based on the students' post-test score, the mean score of speaking post-test which was the researcher got the formula from Sugiyono (2007: 49). The mean score of speaking post-test was 77.30 while the highest score of students was 94 and the lowest score was 55. The next step was to know the percentage of students' scores who pass the KKM (75). It was calculated based on (Purwanto, 2013: 102). From the computation, the students' score percentage was 88.90%. It means that 16 students passed the minimum passing grade and there were 2 students still under the minimum passing grade enacted by the school. After the researcher implements the classroom action, the researcher and the teacher inputted the result of data including the pre-test and post-test.

The result above showed that the mean score of the post-test was higher than the pre-test. It means that the score of students' speaking by using the Pyramid Discussion strategy was 77 or 77.30. It means that using the Pyramid discussion method improved students' speaking skills. Furthermore, the researcher and the teacher felt satisfied

because the students had significant improvement from the score they got. The students' ability in speaking skill was better than before. After achieving the target research of where minimally 70% of students who pass the standard of the minimum passing grade. Therefore, the researcher and the teacher decided to stop the actions because it had already been reached the passing grade.

Discussion

The guiding question is whether the methods, techniques, and activities applied by English teachers at SMPN 1 Praya Timur are effective to improve students' speaking performance and classroom interaction. To find out the answer to these questions, an action using a pyramid discussion was presented. It was a method and strategy to guide students to perform their speaking ability in the form of discussion.

Based on the researcher found the result of the test, questionnaire and observation note, there were proven that to improve students' speaking skills. According to Brown (2004: 140), speaking is a productive skill that can be directly and empirically observed. So that was why the researcher used the Pyramid Discussion method to improve the students' speaking skills. It could be seen from the result of students' pre-test score was 63.69 or 38.46% and students' post-test was 76 or 76.9 %. That was increasing score every step. So it was been categorized as a success. From the explanation of the mean score above it was seen that the use of the pyramid discussion method improved students' speaking skills. Marlin et al. (1978: 19) states that pyramid discussion is an activity for the students to develop critical thinking skills, to obtain a better understanding of the text, and to make them active members of the learning process.

In this case, the pyramid discussion method was influenced by several factors.

Firstly, using the Pyramid discussion method could make the students easier when the teaching-learning process. The second, students' enthusiasm to studied with this method. The questionnaire showed that the students' quality of learning process in the class was improved day by day. They felt enjoy and enthusiastic during the teaching-learning process. And also, all students active in discussed with the member of their group to "making school brochure" of theirs school and each student share an idea in talking turn to share ideas or arguments with their group. The students' responses through the questionnaire indicated the students' speaking skills.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Based on the data described previously, it can be concluded that using Pyramid Discussion could enhance students' speaking skills. There were several improvements reached by the students, not only on their academic performances but also on their behavior to the lesson. Dealing with the score that the students got, there was a significant improvement. The use of the Pyramid Discussion method can enhance the students' achievement in learning English, especially in speaking skills. It was decided based on the result of the comparison between the mean score of pre-test and post-test in the first cycle. The passing grade of this research is 70. The mean score of the pre-test was 58.90 or 22.20% and the post-test was 77.30 or 88.90%. Therefore, the students achieved the target of the passing grade, so the researcher stopped the research until cycle I.

Suggestion

Knowing the result of the students had reached, the researcher offers some suggestion as follow:

1. For the teacher: Teachers have a crucial influence to be successful in learning English. The teacher should be more creative to create a new strategy in learning English, meaning that the teacher did not only focus on how the material was explained but also how the students could understand the material that the teacher explained. The teacher also could develop the technique as creative as possible.
2. For the Student: The students should develop their awareness in the English teaching-learning process, while English as a foreign language and the students need the English language in this globalization era.
3. To the next researcher; The researcher hoped that the other researcher could take several advantages from this research. This method needed creativity from the teacher for making a good condition in the teaching-learning process. Based on the description above, the researcher would like to suggest the other researcher that the result of this action research could be used as additional references for next researcher, and for the next researcher also could be used the other English skill components such as using writing skill, speaking skill, or listening skill. It might be useful or successful in the teaching-learning process.

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