

ENHANCING STUDENTS' ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILL THROUGH COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES

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Abstract:

This action research aimed to improve students' English speaking skill of PGSD students in STKIP PGRI Pacitan through communicative activities and to describe the classroom situation when communicative activities are implemented in the speaking class. The research method used in this research is a classroom action research, which conducted in two cycles. In collecting the data, the researcher used questionnaire, observation, interview, document analysis and tests. The researcher conducted the test before research (pre-test) and after implementing communicative activities (post test 1 and 2). The mean scores of each test were compared to know the students improvements in speaking ability. The improvement can be seen from the improvement of the mean score of pre-test (50), post test of cycle 1 (70) and the cycle 2 (77). Besides, the improvement of the classroom situation includes: 1) the class was more alive because the students participate actively; 2) there was an equal participation during the speaking class; 3) the students were motivated to speak English than Indonesian; 4) the students' interaction improved significantly.

Keywords: *Speaking skill, communicative activities, classroom action research.*

Abstrak:

Penelitian tindakan kelas ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan berbahasa Inggris pada mahasiswa PGSD di STKIP PGRI Pacitan melalui *communicative activities* dan untuk mendeskripsikan keadaan ketika *communicative activities* dilaksanakan di kelas. Metode penelitian yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah penelitian tindakan kelas, yang dilaksanakan dalam dua tindakan. Dalam pengumpulan data, peneliti menggunakan kuesioner, observasi, wawancara, analisis dokumen dan tes. Peneliti melakukan test sebelum penelitian (*pre-test*) dan setelah implementasi *communicative activities* (*post-test* 1 dan 2). Nilai rata-rata pada tiap test dibandingkan untuk mengetahui peningkatan siswa dalam kemampuan berbicara. Peningkatan dapat dilihat dari nilai rata-rata di *pre-test* (50), *post-test* pada tindakan 1 (70) dan di tindakan 2 (77). Disamping itu, ada peningkatan pada situasi kelas termasuk: 1) kelas menjadi lebih hidup karena para siswa secara aktif berpartisipasi; 2) terdapat keterlibatan yang sama selama pelaksanaan kelas berbicara; 3) para siswa termotivasi untuk berbicara dalam bahasa Inggris daripada bahasa Indonesia; 4) interaksi siswa meningkat secara signifikan.

Kata kunci: *Kemampuan berbicara, communicative activities, penelitian tindakan kelas.*

Speaking in one of the productive skill in English learning. Hornby (1995) defines that speaking is the skill that the students will be judged upon most in real-life situations. It is

an important part of everyday interaction and most often the first impression of a person is based on his/her ability to speak fluently and comprehensively. Additionally, Speaking is one

of the skills that have to be mastered by students in learning English. Speaking is an essential tool for communicating (Grognet A.G, 1997).

The observation in the field shows that in English subject, students of PGSD in STKIP PGRI Pacitan showed low motivation to learn and low curiosity to know something new. They tended to be reluctant to do the activities in the classroom and seemed to be careless to the lecturer's explanation when the teaching and learning process was taken place. These factors would influence it, whether the lecturer using techniques was not attractive or without trying to apply an interesting activities. Therefore, in the writer's opinion communicative language teaching (CLT) has been brought to the classroom to enhance students' participation through communicative activities.

Communicative activities refers to the classroom activities that provide a genuine information gap and make it possible for language learners to communicate with target language in Communicative Language Teaching Approaches (Liao, 2000). In other words, communicative activities are activities that give students both a desire to communicate and a purpose which involve them in a varied use of language. According to Moss and Feldman (2003), communicative activities include any activities that encourage and require the learners to speak with and listen to other learners. Communicative activities serve two important language needs: preparing learners to use language in real life situations and supporting the atomization of language knowledge (Thornbury, 2008). By using communicative activities, students can also receive whole-task practice, improve their motivation, have opportunities to learn natural language and create a social context which supports learning (Littlewood, 1998). Communicative activities have real purposes: to find information, to break down barriers, to talk about oneself, and to learn about the culture. Even when a lesson is focused on developing reading or writing skills, communicative activities should be integrated into the lesson. Communicative activities are fluency-based activities (Tait, 2001). While such activities may involve students to practice a particular grammatical form, they are likely to do more than this. The key element is that the activity

is based on a realistic situation. This could be anything from an encounter in a department store, to a group of friends discussing holiday plans, etc. Within this kind of context, students should be required to negotiate for meaning. This is likely to require multiple turn taking.

The communicative activities that can engage students to focus on their classroom participation especially in speaking skill include: (1) using various interesting activities: questioning answering, role play, TPR games, and information gap activities; (2) arranging interesting tasks: a simple task which is divided into four steps (warming up, focus on comprehension, focus on language, and focus on communication); (3) using media: wall pictures, words cards, picture cards, toy balls, and work sheets; (4) showing good respect to the students; and (5) using classroom English effectively.

From the explanation above, it can be assumed that communicative activities can be implemented to improve the students' English speaking skill of PGSD students at STKIP PGRI Pacitan in the academic year of 2015/ 2016.

METHOD

This research on enhancing students' English speaking skill through communicative activities of PGSD students in the academic year 2015/2016. It is an action research, which focuses on the effort to improve the real condition of the English teaching process. It consists of four fundamental steps (planning, acting, observing, and reflecting). Kemmis and Taggart (in Hopkins, 1996: 48) develop model of action research in the classroom named: identifying the problem and planning; implementing the action; observing or monitoring the action; reflecting the result, and revising the plan.

There are two kinds of data namely qualitative data and quantitative data. Qualitative data are taken from observation and interview. Meanwhile, the quantitative data were taken from the test. The students' speaking ability improvement was analyzed by comparing the mean score of pre test and post test.

The subject of this research is class B of PGSD students in the academic year of 2015/ 2016, which consist of 33 students: 9 males and 24 female. Their low English achievement and

motivation were first taken into consideration in choosing the class.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

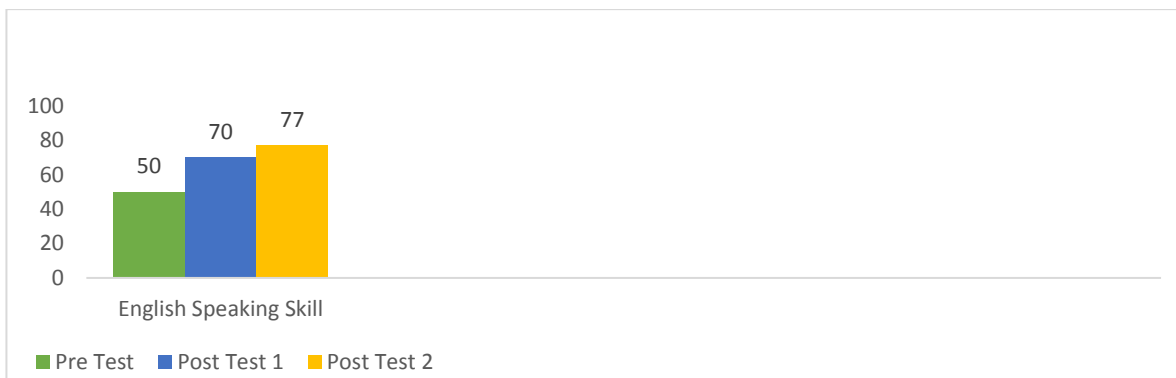
The researcher analyzed the result in the using of communicative activities in speaking class. The finding includes the using of communicative activities can improve the students' speaking skill which covers fluency,

vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar and content and also the students' attitude in the class.

The improvement of students' English speaking skill.

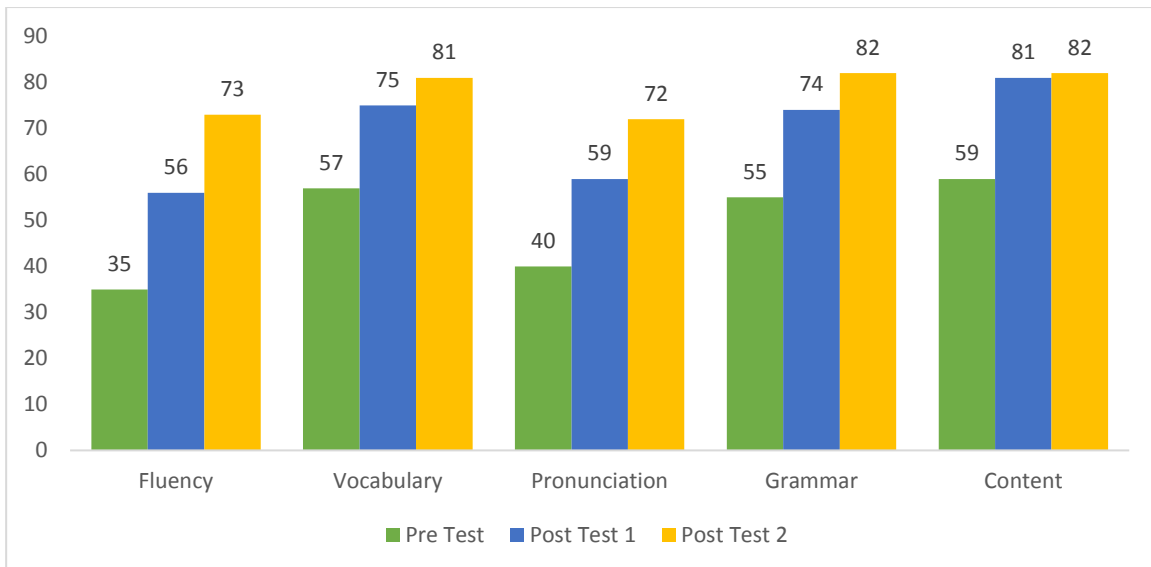
The students average score in post test 1 was 70 then improved into 77 in the post test of cycle 2. The improvement of students' average score in the pretest and post test can be seen in the chart below.

Chart 1. The Improvement of Students' English Speaking Skill.



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

Chart 2. The Improvement of Students' skill of each aspect.



The students' attitude during the implementation of communicative activities.

Beside the improvement of speaking score, another finding of the research is the improvement of students' attitude in joining the speaking class. The students were motivated to speak up during the teaching learning process. The class is more alive because the students participated actively during the teaching learning

process. Even the shy students are very motivated to do the task. They frequently speak in English rather than in Indonesian. They feel confident to speak up during doing the activities. The using of communicative activities also encourages students to actively interact in the class.

Comparing to the situation in the observation, their interaction improve significantly. It is caused by the equal chances that each student has. The overview of the research findings of the applying the communicative activities has been done to see the improvements of the students' speaking competence. The research findings above showed some important points as follows: (1) the improvements of vocabulary, (2) the improvements of pronunciation (3) the improvements of fluency (5) the improvements of the content and (6) the improvement of students' participation in doing the activities.

Discussion

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

The Improvement of the Students' Speaking Ability

Based on the result of the test done in the first cycle compared to the second cycle, there were improvements in the score of speaking are almost every aspects of speaking skill. Improvements were on: a) the students' pronunciation, several students improved their way of pronouncing words and could say the sentences clearly; b) students' grammar, most of students could arrange text using appropriate conjunction and express their sentence in appropriate tenses; c) students' vocabulary, students got some new words during the discussions related the topic that they were discussed. Most students could use them properly for creating a hortatory exposition text in a form of speech; d) students' fluency, most of students could deliver their speech clearly and fluently, the students were not shy to speak anymore. Moreover there were no interruptions while they were delivering their idea and speech. Therefore, their ideas flow fluently. This is stated by Brown (2004: 270) that fluency can be best achieved by allowing the stream of speech to flow; e) the content of the text, the students could produce a speech with a good content.

The communicative activities used to enhance students' English speaking skill such as:

a) The TPR games are very interesting for the students since the students are very energetic. In doing this task, the students could put their best effort; b) Information gap activities are very effective to make them speak English. Although some students were still in doubt and not confident to speak English, they tended to be more active to speak English when they were assigned fun activities; c) The use of classroom English (including English routines) has proven to be helpful in the acquisition of English competencies. Although at the first time the students found many difficulties in responding the teacher's instructions and questions, eventually they tended to be active in responding to the teacher's instructions and questions; d) the drilling activity has shown very effective to make the students pronounce English words correctly. Although this activity was quite new for them, they found that this activity was fun. They could imitate how to pronounce the words correctly. The improvement of students speaking scores can be seen in the table 1.

Table 1. The Improvement Students' English speaking Score

No.	Explanation	Pre Test	Post Test 1	Post Test 2
1.	Highest Score	65	82	90
2.	Lowest Score	35	65	73
3.	Average Score	50	70	77

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

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

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

When inviting the students to write their answers on the whiteboard, it is very effective to motivate them to write and involve in the teaching and learning process since the students did not love writing. Therefore it must be an alternative activity for them. The students are very energetic. They liked the activities when the activities were designed in the form

of competition. So, most of the students could actively participate in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, the game in the form of competition could improve their motivation to actively participate in the teaching and learning process.

The students also have a short attention-span, so that there must be something that could maintain their attention. The use of pictures has proven effective to help the students understand and comprehend the lesson. In addition, the pictures could maintain and center their attention to the teacher's explanations.

The last is showing good respect to the students. It was very effective to arouse the students' mutual acceptance and trust to the lecturer, and to improve the students' self-confidence.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

The result of the research shows that the implementation of communicative activities can improve the students' English speaking skill, especially for PGSD students in STKIP PGRI Pacitan. The finding includes the improvement of the students' speaking skill which covers fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar and content and also the students' attitude in the class. The students average score in post test 1 was 70 then improved into 77 in the post test of cycle 2. The improvement of the classroom situation includes: 1) the class was more alive because the students participate actively; 2) there was an equal participation during the speaking class; 3) the students were motivated to speak English than Indonesian; 4) the students' interaction improved significantly.

The communicative activities that can engage students to focus on their classroom participation especially in speaking skill include: (1) using various interesting activities: questioning answering, role play, TPR games, and information gap activities; (2) arranging interesting tasks: a simple task which is divided into four steps (warming up, focus on comprehension, focus on language, and focus on communication); (3) using media: wall pictures, words cards, picture cards, toy balls, and work

sheets; (4) showing good respect to the students; and (5) using classroom English effectively.

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

Suggestion

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

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

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

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

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

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