

The Use of Small Group Discussion as Learning Interaction to Activate the Second Year Students to Speak English at Machine Department of SMK Negeri 2 Payakumbuh

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ABSTRACT

This research was aimed to find out whether or not the use of small group discussion could activate the second year students of Machine Department of SMK Negeri 2 Payakumbuh to speak English. This research employed a pre experimental method, and it used one group pre test and post test design. Treatment (X) was given between pre-test (T1) and post-test (T2). The population of this study was the second year students of Machine Department of SMK Negeri 2 Payakumbuh, and the number of sample was 30 students. The instruments used in this study were observation checklist and speaking test. The finding of this study showed the use of small group discussion could activate the students to speak English. It was indicated by the improvement of activities done by students from meeting to meeting as much as 93.19%. It was also indicated with the fact that the t-test value (10.740) was higher than the t-table value at significant level of 0.05 and degree of freedom n-1 (1.711). In other words, the use of small group discussion technique was able to give greater contribution in teaching and learning speaking.

Keywords: small group discussion, activate, improvement

INTRODUCTION

Up to know English has become an important tool of interaction and communication among people in the world. In modern era, with the progress and advance of science and technology many people learn English to support their understanding about the documents, literature, written information, written science and technology, cultures etc. If one is able to communicate in English, he will be able to catch the useful information spreading through many kinds of media, such as television, computer, internet and social media. In this case someone who learns English as a second/foreign language should learn speaking skill. It is one way of finding information through oral communication in the world, and it makes him able to communicate with other people all over world. Besides, by having such capability he or she easily applies for a job.

The aims of language teaching and learning are often defined with reference to the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening and reading are receptive skills while speaking and writing are productive ones (Byrne, 1995). In this study, the writer focusses her attention to one of these skills that is speaking. Teaching Speaking is considered to be the most difficult among the four basic language skills. Chastain (1976) states that learning to speak is obviously more difficult. More effort is required on the part of the students and more concern of sequential arrangement of activities is required on the part of teachers. He further states that it is not enough for students to hear or to listen to speech only. Relating to this, Rivers (1981) argues that teachers need to give the students opportunity to practice speaking skill. She further states that if the students were able to practice the new speech habit throughout the day as a child did in his native language, the problem of speaking fluency of the foreign language would be lessened. Drekurs and Gunawan (1982) found out that speaking English for the students who learn English as a foreign language is very hard to do. Whenever they want to speak, they always feel afraid or reluctant of making mistakes.

Bourdons in Nunan (1993) states that spoken language needs the mastery of vocabulary, pronunciation, grammatical structure, discourse and the social context of culture and situation. For the purpose of communication, Bryne (1995) states that the second or foreign language learners should be able to use the language both with accuracy and fluency. It is clear that they must master as much of the language systems, namely grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation in order to be fluent users of the language being learned orally. In other words, the learners need sufficient opportunities to produce or practice the language for themselves.

Teaching speaking at Vocational High School in Indonesia is one of the main focuses of the English teaching. The principle of teaching English is that all the process of teaching should be communicative because graduates of vocational high school are directed to have life skills for communication to meet the need of job opportunity besides going on their study to higher level. The result of writer's observation at SMK Negeri 2 Payakumbuh in 2022/2023 academic year showed the ability of students to speak English was low. Most of them just focus on listening to what their teacher say; as the result, the teacher is forced to give the chance to speak English to the clever students. The students who have low motivation and low achievement in speaking English are probably due to lack of opportunity in practicing it. Rivers (1981) states the teacher should give the students opportunities to practice speaking. She further states that if the students are able to practice new speech

habits throughout as the children do in his native, the problem of speaking fluency of foreign language would be lessened.

Many ways in communicative activities can be used to activate the students to speak English, and small group discussion is one of them that can be used to do it both in classroom and outside of the classroom including in their environment. Small group discussion is a form of speaking in which the speakers attempt through cooperative exchange ideas to solve a problem or more toward its solution by a better understanding of it. Although it has same characteristics with conversation, it tends to be more definitely planned, more formal, and more carefully directed (De boer 1987). Furthermore, Frederick (1993) enhances that small group sessions force students to take the active role. By contrast most teachers should give students a good amount of pre digested knowledge. Students learn facts and concepts best when they use them to solve problems. Small group must be stimulating, provoking and exciting. This guarantees learning. The teacher only presents the problem, not give answer and reward for good thinking.

Small group discussion is extremely important in activating the students to speak English because they can get their notions, emotions and wishes conveyed in communication (Aleen 2001). Moreover the students who are shy of saying something in front of the whole class or to the lecture, often find it much easier to express themselves in front of small group of their peers or small group discussion, and working in small groups has been shown to improve students understanding retention of material and problem solving abilities. One of the underlying educational philosophies that has been attributed to the success of small group discussion is the theory of constructivism. The characteristic of constructivism, which is generally accepted is that the learner is an active participant in the learning process who constructs a personal meaning from situation. It is suggested to students not passively accept knowledge but instead they activate existing cognitive structures or construct new ones as a method to include the new input. Keachie (1999) suggests that teacher who has centered instruction such as lecture, has the advantage of communicating information in a complete orderly form, but student centered methods such as discussion are considered more effective in developing higher-order intellectual skills. He indicates that student centered techniques of learning improve application of concepts, problem solving, attitude, motivation group membership and leadership skills.

In relation to the explanation above, small group discussion is very important to achieve speaking skill. For this reason, the teacher tries to see the students' participations as well as to improve their speaking skills through small group discussion. She assumes that small group discussion will be interesting because the students will be more active. However,

this assumption is still in doubt, whether or not the students at SMK Negeri 2 Payakumbuh can improve their speaking skills through small group discussion.

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS RELATED LITERATURE

Many researchers have been conducting studies related to this research. Their findings are briefly cited as follows. Aleen (2001) found that small group discussion or working in small groups has shown that it can improve students' understanding, retention of material and problem solving abilities. It can be applied not only for speaking class but also for all language skills. Then, Muttakin (1992) in his research about activating students to speak English through pair task found that implementation of combining, cooperating, superior, and emperor tasks engage students actively in speaking English. Students use English most of the time and are most never confused or silent in taking activities. He also found the students are interested in pair work and are simulated to speak. They do not feel ashamed and afraid of speaking English as well.

Richer et al (in Noni. 2003) on communication between teacher-students interaction found that one form of the teacher-students interaction is through pair work. Question is of the teacher talk functions. Question consists of utterances, which are commonly used by teachers in their foreign language classroom. The way the teachers ask questions influence the students attainment and way of thinking. Asking question that positively influences students classroom. Therefore the teachers need to understand and possess the questioning techniques. There are three aspects of questions that lead to meaningful communication in their foreign language classroom, namely types of questions, modification of questions and pattern questions.

Based on those findings above, the researcher draw an inference that using small group discussion proposed in this research can activate as well as improve the students' speaking skills of the second year students SMK Negeri 2 Payakumbuh. It is extremely important to activate the students to speak English because they can get their ideas, emotions and wishes conveyed communication.

- **The Concepts of Speaking**

Most of people in the world learn about speaking because it is so important to interact with other people in the daily activity. However learning to speak involves developing a number of complex skills and different types of knowledge about how and when to communicate. Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information. Its form and meaning are depended on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective

experiences, the physical environment and the purpose for speaking. It is often spontaneous and open ended. However, speech is not always unpredictable. Speaking requires learners not only know how to use the specific points of language such as grammar, pronunciation or vocabulary (linguistics competence), but also the meaning. Another basic distinction we can make when considering the improvement of speaking skills is between monologue and dialogue or pair work. The ability to give an uninterrupted oral presentation is quite distinct from interacting with one or more other speakers who have the ability to extemporize on given subject to a group of listeners, and this ability generally has to be learned and practiced.

Bygate in Nunan (1993) distinguished between motor perceptive skills, which are concerned with correctly using sounds and structure of the language, and interactional skills, which involve motor perceptive skills that one needed in order communicate successfully. Besides he suggested that, in particular, learners need to develop skills in the management if interaction involves such thing as knowing when and how to take floor, when introduce a topic or change the subject, how to invite someone else to speak, how to keep a conversation going on, when and how to terminate the conversation. Negotiation of meaning refers to the skills of making sure the person you are speaking has correctly understood you and that you have correctly understood them.

Speaking lesson can follow the usual pattern of preparation, presentation, practice, evaluation and extension. The teacher can use the preparation step to observe, draw and establish a context for speaking task on certain objects and thing. and to initiate awareness of speaking skill to be targeted in presentation. The teacher can provide learners with a reproduction model, and the learners can comprehend and help them become more attentive observes of language use. Practice involves learners in reproducing the target structure, usually in controlled or highly supported manner. Evaluation involves directing attention to the skill being examined and asking learners to monitor and assess their own progress. finally extension consists of activities that ask learners to use strategy or skill in a different context or authentic communicative situation or to integrate use of new skill or strategy with previously acquired one in other words, the pattern of preparation, presentation, practice, evaluation and extension become one unity. They cannot be separated each other.

- **Speaking As A Productive And Interactive Skills**

The aim of language teaching course are very commonly defined in terms of four skills: listening, reading, and writing. But what is the nature of the skill ? By reference to the medium, speaking and listening are said to relate to language expressed through the aural medium and reading and writing are said to relate to language expressed through the visual

medium. By reference to the activity of the users, speaking and writing are said to be an active or productive skill, whereas listening and reading are said to be passive or receptive skill.

It is difficult to prepare the speaking skills from listening skills clearly. In normal speech situation, the two skills are interdependent that is impossible to hold any meaningful conversation without understanding what is being said and without making oneself understood at the same time. Canale quoted by Richards and Schmidt (2002) states that oral communication involves the exchange and negotiation of information between at least two individuals through the use verbal and non verbal symbols and production and comprehension process. Communication involves a system of giving and receiving information. Crane et al (in Jabu 2000) defines communication as a process in which information is transmitted from a source, the sender to a goal, the receiver. This process involves the steps : encoding the information into a symbolic system, selecting a mode of communication, delivering the symbols through a medium, perceptual processing of symbols by the receiver and decoding of the symbols to obtain the information.

- **The Components Of Speaking Skills**

There are three components of Speaking; accuracy, fluency and comprehensibility. Accuracy in speaking means someone can produce correct sentences in pronunciation, grammar and word choice so can be understood. They are three components accuracy (1) pronunciation, (2) vocabulary, (3) grammar. Fluency is a highly complex notion related mainly to smoothness of continuity in discourse. It includes a consideration of how sentences are connected, how sentence patterns vary in word order and omit elements of structure and also certain aspects of prosody of discourse. Comprehensibility is the process of understanding of the utterances sent by speaker done by the listeners. Comprehensibility in speaking means that the people can understand what we say and we can understand what they say. Harmer (1998) says that if there are two people want to make communication to each other, they have to be speaking because they have different information. If there is a gap between them. It is not a good communication if the people still confuse with what we say.

- **Successful Speaking Activity**

The teacher should know the characteristics of a successful speaking activity in order to be succeeded in teaching speaking improving the students' ability to speaking English in small group discussion. In accordance to this, Ur (1996) classifies the characteristic of a successful speaking activity as follows :

1. Learners talk a lot. Learners should get as much as possible chance to speak but, it is most usually time is taken up with teacher talk or pauses.
2. Participation is even. All students should get some chance to speak and give contributions : a minority of talkative participants dominates classroom discussion.
3. Motivation is high learners are full of desire to speak because they are interested in the topic and have something new to say about it.
4. Language in an acceptable level. Learners expresses themselves in utterance that are relevant, easily comprehensible to each other and of acceptable level of language accuracy.

Actually, the teacher can help to solve some problems in teaching speaking activity by:

1. Monologue. In monologue when one speaker uses spoken language for any length of time as in speechless, lectures, reading, new broadcast, the hearer must possess long stretches of speech without interruption the stream of speech will go on whether or not the hearer comprehends.
2. Pair work. Pair work involves two or more speakers and can be subdivided into those exchanges that promote social relationship interpersonal and those for which the purpose is to convey propositional or factual information transactional in each case. Participants may have a good deal of shared knowledge
3. Question and answer drills. The teacher can begin these by simply questioning the learners. But if the learners have mastered the question and answer drill can cover a wide variety of topics. There are many topics about which questions can be asked, questions about students own picture for example surroundings, well known and explanation which everyone has listened.
4. Retelling. It is an interesting activity of speaking games for making relax of the students while speaking. It can increase motivation of the students to speak English like guessing games, speech through actions and tell again what their partner explained.

- **The Concepts of Small Group Discussion**

The most simple way for learners to talk is by conveying some ideas or opinions, and then discuss it and move toward its solution by a better understanding (De boer in Yusu; 2003). Steven et al (1979) state that discussion may be defined as a communicative process involving a group of people usually under direction of a leader, who are working together toward solution to a problem. In short, discussion is a serious sharing of information designed to help solve a specific problem. O'driscoll (1987) states that a group discussion is a meeting in which the group discusses and make decision is a meeting in which the group discusses and makes decision concerning the operation of the classroom, discusses the action

and feelings of a group members in the process of making change. Clark and Clark (1977) state that a discussion is a conversation not a monologues or a series of questions. In addition in a really effective discussion, everyone should participate although it is not always necessary for each person to talk. Michael in Rosma (2002) defines that a group as two or more figures forming a design or a unit, a cluster, an agregation, an assemblage of objects having some elationships, resemblance or common characterictics.

A really successful discussion is not only purposefull but it is also achieves its purpose. If it is all possible, the discussion should lead to some sort or conclusion. Certainly even is not conclusion is reached, it should always cultivate in some sort of summing up. Sometimes the summary may have to conclude a minority report. Eventhough through discussion have many advantages, discussion is not vehivle for conveying the teachers device by which to win particular position, in warm discussion, all members of groups give opinions and ideas.

Small group discussion is a tool for students to express their ideas. Students have self initiated in convey their ideas. Small group discussion force students to take the active role by contrast, most teachers should give students good amount predisgeted knowledges. Students learn facts and concepts best when they use them to solve problems. In small group discussion, teacher divides the whole class into group perhaps five or fewer students for each group that is students are to discuss a topic given by the teacher. Every student in each group must give his opinion about topic. Discussion in small groups is an activity in which the students try to arrange their ideas, opinion or point of view. To make this activity run well teacher should strong differences so that there will be a few groups or students who have different opinions. At this activity, the teacher explains some inportant things relating to the topic talked about .

Group discussion in the classroom is a necessary procedure in a democratic. It is the means by which the children can integrate themselves into the class as a unit with status, responsibility, and active voluntary participation (Dekurs and Gunawan 1982). Many classroom teachers are currently using pertinent version of strategy that is offered by Glasser in Glistrap and Martin (1975). There are three types of classroom meeting:

1. Problem solving meeting which is usually concerned with behavioral and social problems in this type, the students attempt to share responsibility for learning and behaving by resolving problems within classroom
2. Open ended meeting in which students are asked to discuss of the classroom
3. The educational diagnostic meeting, in which it is directly related to what the class has understood the lesson and what member know to do know.

In all types, the most popular aspects of the class discussion is that it can be used to change behaviour of students they will become increasingly more responsible integrated and responsive.

Some researchers have found the advantage of small group discussion. Brown (1994) states that small group provide opportunities for students in initiating for face to face give and take for practice in negotiation of meaning. for extended conversational exchange and for students adoption of rules. Gilstrap and Martin (1975) state the advantages of the small group discussion as follows :

1. It frees the teacher to assume additional helping role within the class such as that of silent recorder at the board or as participant in group discussion.
2. It involves directly in the process of learning as they serve as participant group leaders and frames of discussion question.
3. It can provide opportunities fo all students to participate particularly if the discussion is caried on in small group.
4. It may cause participation in a discussion to gain self confidence.
5. It urges to learn and practice intelectual process such as oraganizing fact, asking discerning question and thinking reflectively on relationships within and among personal ideas, the ideas of other and the realities of the situation.

The advantages of small group discussion are to maximize success to developed collegial practices to arrive understanding to share knowledge and to allow for focusses on teaching.

- **Resume**

In our daily life, speaking is one way to convey our feeling, ideas and information. That is why someone who can speak English fluently means that they can share their ideas, feeling and information to to their people without getting much trouble. Teaching English particularly teaching speaking using small group discussion can activate as well as improve the English speaking skills of the students in a foreign language classroom, since small group discussion is extremely important in activating the students to sepak English because they can get their ideas, emotions and wishes conveyed in communication. The students must involve cooperatively taking the active role to arrange their ideas, opinions or points of you in given issues. More importantly, small group discussion not only activate the cognition of the students in this case they are capable of performing task that is speaking English and arise the students motivation in case they initiate or attempt to speak but also to support the social contact that the students can work cooperatively.

Teacher should know that one of the difficulties in expressing ideas of participating actively and effectively in speaking is that students have very low in English mastery, particularly vocabulary and certain expressions. They want to say many things but they have no power to say them out. Therefore before students work in small group discussion, they should be taught some language expression e.g how to ask and give opinion, how to say agree and disagree, like and dislike, how to address polite question etc. Interaction is a kind of action that occurs as two or more objects have an effect upon one another. The idea of a two way effect is essential in the concept of interaction as opposed to one way casual effect. Learning interaction device is a way of learning in transfered knowledge from teacher as center of learning to the students as receiving knowledge. According Mikundan (2008) active speaking are :

1. Respond quickly to begin each customer interaction with an immediate indication that you are ready to help, use your greeting as soon as you are connected to the customer.
2. Tone of voice. The only way a customer knows how you feel is by the way your sound, Even if you are feeling stressed and angry. You can use your tone of voice to show the customer that you are concerned about their needs and eager to help be upbeat.
3. Speak clearly and concisely
4. Ask questions
5. Provide progress report
6. Summarize the resolution and calls by making sure that the customers understand
7. End on a positive note remember.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework underlying this research will be presented in the following diagram :

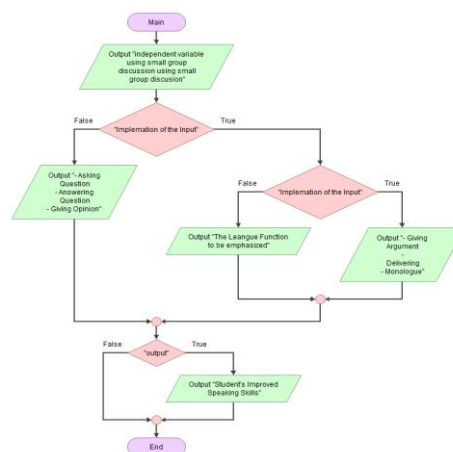


Figure 1. framework

Based on theoretical framework as shown in the diagram above, there are two main elements to be explained.

1. Input refers to the materials taught in the English Class in general and speaking class in specific. They are selected based on Kurikulum kurtilas (K 13). The material proposed are about language expressions / functions such as how to ask and give opinion, how to saya agree and disagree, like and dislike and how to deliver a monologue of exposition.
2. Process refers to the teaching and learning process using small group discussion.the students are practicing the language functions in arranging their notions or ideas, feeling or emotions and information toward a given topic. During the learning process, they will also be observed about their active participation to speak English. The result of the students speaking performance is evaluated by emphasizing on accuracy, fluency and comprehensibility.

METHOD

This reseach employed a pre-experimental experimented method using one group pretest and posttttest design. Treatment (X) is given between pretest (T1 and posttest (T2) (Hatch and Lazaraton, 1991). It has two kinds of variables, namely indenpendent variable (the use of small group discussion as a learning interaction media in the classroom) and dependent variables (the students' participation to speak English and the improvement of their speaking skill). The population of this study was the second year students of machine department ofSMKN 2 Payakumbuh, who registered in 2021/2022 academic years,and the number of its members was 30 students (27 Males and 3 Females). In collecting data, the reseacher applied two kinds of instruments; observation checklist and speaking test. The observation was administered during the teaching implementation, and it aimed at finding out the students' active participation. Speaking test was administered in pretest and posttest. Pretest was intended to find out the prior level of students speaking performance while posttest was intended to find out the improvement of the treatment.

Data of this study were collected through the procedures as follows. 1) Pretest was administered before implementation of small group discussion. In this research the reseacher interviewed the student one by one, scored individually while they were responding, and recorded or wrote down the students responses to find out more accurate data. 2) After giving pretest, the reseacher gave treatment to the students in 7 meetings, and each meeting lasted 90 minutes with procedures; a) teacher introduced the language functions that are usually used in discussion, b) students then practiced the language functions in small goup discussion, c) then teacher reemphasized the expressions. 3) Post-test was undertaken after the treatment

through small group discussion, and it was done as pretest was. The purpose was to measure whether the technique can or cannot significantly improve the speaking performance. Data of this study were analyzed by using t-test through the application of SPSS Program 22 for windows. If the value of t test is greater than the value of t table at the level of significance 0.05, and degree of freedom n-1. It means that there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest. In other words, using small group discussion as a learning interaction device can make the students active to speak English.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The finding of this research revealed the students' activeness to speak in small group discussion. Based on the result of data analysis, it was found that t-test value was greater than the t-table value at the level of significance .05 and the degree of freedom 24. It showed the students' achievement on each of components of speaking after getting seven meetings of treatment using small group discussion technique could be significantly improved. It means that using small group discussion technique can improve the speaking skill of students of TPM1 SMKN 2 Payakumbuh. In detail, the t test value on accuracy, fluency and comprehensibility respectively was 7.333, 8.629, and 7.668. It was greater than t table value at the level significance 0.05 and the degree of freedom 24 (1,711). It was indicated by the fact that the students' achievement on accuracy, fluency and comprehensibility in speaking after getting seven meetings of treatment using small group discussion was significantly improved. It can be concluded that the use of small group discussion technique could improve students' accuracy, fluency and comprehensibility in speaking. This finding was in line with theory stating that group discussion in the classroom is a necessary procedure in democratic setting. It is a mean by which the students can integrate themselves into the class as a unit with status, responsibility and active voluntary participation (Drekurs and Guanawan, 1982). Furthermore Gilstrap and Martin (1975) state that one interesting point relating to discussion is that teachers who generally use students' ideas for some periods of discussion and those who build to have positive attitudes toward school, teachers and subject matter under study.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research findings and discussion as already discussed previously, the researcher concluded that small group discussion could make the students of XI TPM1 SMKN 2 Payakumbuh active to speak English. This finding indicated by the improvement of activities done by students from meeting to meeting. Small group discussion improved the students

speaking performance. It was indicated by the t-test value (7.333 for accuracy, 8.629 for fluency and 7.668 for comprehensibility) which was higher than t-table value (1.711) at the level significant 0.05 and degree of freedom n-1. In a nutshell, the use of small group discussion technique was able to give greater contribution in teaching and learning speaking because it could improve the students' speaking skill.

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