

USING SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION AS PART OF PROBLEM BASED LEARNING IN TEACHING SPEAKING SKILL FOR ESP STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Using small group discussion as teaching method has been widely used by teachers but study about the use of small group discussion as part of Problem Based Learning in teaching speaking for ESP students in Indonesia context is quite limited found. Seeing the lack of the research the writer conducted it which has the aim to examine the effectiveness of using Small Group Discussion in teaching speaking skill for ESP students at UHAMKA. The research method used in this research was pre-experimental research. The sample was taken from the third students of Cardiovascular Engineering and Pre-test as well as Post-test were given to that class. The findings indicated *t-observed* is 9.69 and *t-table* is 1.70, it means the Null Hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and H_1 is accepted. In conclusion the Small Group Discussion as part of PBL is effective in teaching speaking skill for ESP students.

Keywords: *Problem based learning, Group discussion, ESP*

INTRODUCTION

In the world of higher education, English skill is generally an ability that must be learned by students. By mastering English students will be able to reach the wide knowledge which is usually sent in English. One of the common skills in English which is used to show any ideas or to ask something to others in daily communication is speaking. Overall speaking is expressing ideas verbally which is related to the understanding of the world in general, or of the life of their specific society. In speaking, the process of the activity seems complicated. The speaking activity is related to the ideas which is produced verbally in clear structure to the interlocutor. The words that will be produced also need to be pronounced well to get understanding between speaker and listener. The activity seems hard to do, but if it is practiced well it will not be hard anymore and all of the process of speaking will be done unconsciously.

The difficulties of doing speaking from the higher education students also happened in Cardiovascular Engineering students (ESP). They felt less confidence to speak in English. It was because when they were trying to speak in English they were afraid of making mistakes in grammar or pronunciation. They were also afraid of being mocked at the mistakes when they did speaking in English in learning process by others in the class. The second problem was about the way of their teachers in high school when teaching in the class. The teacher used the similar teaching technique in almost every meeting. Students were served the texts from paper or book, after that they were asked to speak loudly the expressions or texts on the paper. This way only made students felt bored and got stacked by the texts from the paper or book.

In the speaking class, teachers should teach well and students should be able to speak in English well. Teachers should apply appropriate and various technique in teaching speaking in the class. It has purpose to make students enjoy and motivate in learning process. It is important for a teacher or lecturer to make the students become stimulated to speak actively and improve their speaking ability. Teacher or lecturer needs to find something to solve problem of the students in learning speaking such a method or technique which stimulate students to speak without feeling pressured. Victorina and friends state that small group can provide interesting challenges, permit the students to progress at their own pace, provide a psychologically safe situation in which to master the material, and encourage them to contribute to class activity. It shows small group discussion is beneficial technique to use in teaching. It is because it provides students to be stimulated to commit without feeling oppressed in learning process. (Victorina, 2000)

Problem-based learning (PBL) is an increasingly integral part of education that reform around the world, especially in the medical, and in pre-professional and professional programs (Michel et al., 2002). The essence of PBL can be summarized as the use of a “real world” problem or situation as a context for learning (Barrows, 1985; Boud, 1985; Domin, 1999; Duch, 1995; Morgan, 1983). In PBL, the small-group discussions encourage students develop their critical thinking skills, their problem-solving abilities, knowledge acquisition, and the ability to work productively as a team member and make decisions in unfamiliar situations and the acquisition of skills that support self-directed lifelong learning, self-evaluation, and adaptation to change (Albanese and Mitchell, 1993; Engel, 1991; Ryanand and Quinn, 1994). All of these

are achieved by using situations or problems presented in class that resemble reality. The students grouped need some skills for successful teaming such as consensual decision making skills, dialogue and discussion skills, team maintenance skills, conflict management skills, and team leadership skills. Students who have these skills have a better opportunity to learn more than students who do not have these skills.

Many universities have adopted Problem Based Learning (PBL) or case method to promote active learning. However, quantitative evidence of the effectiveness of small group discussion in PBL is still weak. Therefore, the writer was curious in knowing the effectiveness of small group discussion as part of PBL steps in teaching speaking skill to the ESP students in this case the Cardiovascular Engineering students at the third semester. Problem based method in which group discussion is prominent part among other steps become the tremendous method implemented. In the speaking class, teachers are responsible to make the situation where students are able to communicate verbally and communicatively with others. They need to design activities in the classroom so that student becomes more communicative, and also motivated to speak actively.

It is a fully integrated program offering problem based on small group, learning with appropriate lecture to increase the students speaking skill. In implementing this method, the writer randomly assigned small groups of 4 or 5 students will consider a problem together. During the first small group session (brain storming session), the student group were given an update certain case happen in Indonesia and they were asked to find the causes of the problem and gave the problem solving. The solutions mentioned orally by the group were not absolute answer. They freely stated their opinion proved by the their argument. In finding their answer the students were expected do independent study outside the small group to research and elaborate upon new information and concepts. As they return to their small group (review or debriefing session), they would bring this new knowledge and information to the group until they finally found their final solution.

METHODOLOGY

The writer used quantitative research for the research. The research was conducted by using pre-experimental design or also known as *The One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design*. The writer only focused on teaching one class as the 'experimental group' without any 'control group'. It was done because the class available for the 3rd semester was only one class so there was no control class.

The writer had 7 meetings in conducting this research. The first meeting used to give pre-test. The second until sixth used to do treatment. The last meeting used to give the post-test. Then, the writer collected all the data and analyzed them. To obtain the data, the writer used speaking test of making monologue about certain topics.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

RESULTS

This section provides discussion of research findings. All data were collected from research instruments in the form of speaking test. The research findings can be seen in the following figures.

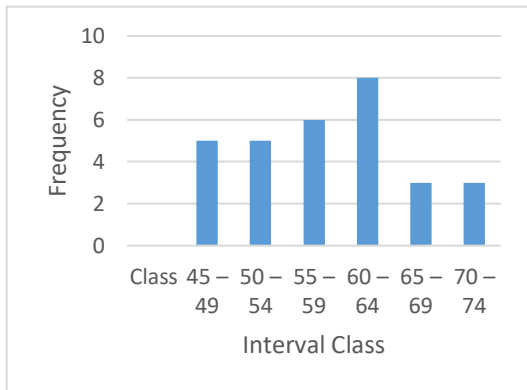


Figure 1
 The Graphic Bar of Pre-test Score

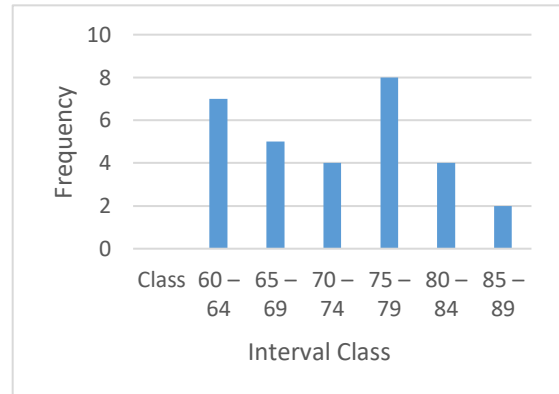


Figure 2
 The Graphic Bar of Post-test Score

The figure 1 shows that there are 5 students who gained the lowest score among 45-59 and 3 students who gained the highest score among 70-74. In addition the figure 2 shows that there are 7 students who gained the lowest score among 60-64 and 2 students who gained the highest score among 85-89. It can be seen that there is improvement on the students speaking score after having small group discussion as PBL steps in their class.

Furthermore after doing the t-test by using the t-test formula the writer got the result as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
 t &= \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \mu_0}{s/\sqrt{n}} \\
 &= \frac{70.3 - 56.33}{8.02/\sqrt{30}} \\
 &= \frac{13.97}{13.97} \\
 &= \frac{8.02/\sqrt{35}}{13.97} \\
 &= \frac{1.35}{1.35} \\
 &= 9.69
 \end{aligned}$$

The t-test showed that t-observed is 9.69 which was higher than t-table 1.7. It means that small group discussion as part of Problem Based Learning is effective in teaching speaking skill for the ESP students.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of using Small Group Discussion as part of PBL method in teaching speaking for the ESP. The overall student's scores showed that the performance of those students who attended the English class sessions using small group discussion were significantly higher comparing before and after the treatment. This suggests that students benefited appreciably from this program with an increased students' score in speaking test in the form of making monologue and their interactivity in studying process in their class. Additionally, based on the students' responses to the questionnaire delivered to them, the

students attributed also in their achievements in discussion and teaming skills and consequently improve individual and group performances.

It was evident that PBL method where there is small group discussion implementations in English class have motivated students to be better speaking practice. They finally felt confident, never mocked other friends and never afraid of making mistakes. Yet this study has many limitations. It is limited in its' scope and it included only limited number of students available in TKV (ESP) class so the writer can not conduct the control class. Before the writer could suggest the generalization of the study finding, more studies are needed to support the effect of the small group discussion session on the students' achievements.

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